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AND THE CHILDREN'S TEETH ARE SET ON EDGE

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• CHAPTER 2 •

Letters from America

Westward the course of Empire takes its way,
The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day,
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Bishop Berkeley

In 1824 Adam Hodgson published *Letters from North America Written During a Tour in the United States and Canada*.¹ It was edited from letters written to his “domestic circle” and business partners during a tour of the United States. The trip was a political and economic intelligence gathering operation on behalf of his business partnership with the wealthy Liverpool merchants William and Richard Rathbone, trading as Rathbone, Hodgson & Co.²

The Company operated a fleet of ships sailing to America and the Baltic carrying a wide range of goods including turpentine, timber, grain, wood ashes and cotton. For these family concerns market involvement of this kind was considered essential to success by establishing personal contacts, assessing credit worthiness, and taking first hand soundings of market conditions.³ His uncle, Samuel Greg, expected all his sons to tour the markets and learn the business, the equivalent of the aristocratic grand tour but with an eye to a manufacturer’s profit. Sometimes this was a bone of contention between father and son, to be soothed by their mother but always complied with.⁴ Adam Hodgson’s published letters give few commercial details, but concentrate on political and social observations. There is little of the usual anecdotal material of the tourist and little of the natural history of the country. Nevertheless the letters represent a fascinating snapshot of a nation in transition and provide a window through which can be seen not only the life and manners of America at this time but, strongly reflected in the glass, the person of the author. The work is a powerful insight into the man and his times recording the attitudes, politics and domestic life of a young American nation through the eyes

Letters from America

of a wealthy young, Lancashire merchant extending his knowledge of the world, and researching his political and economic allies and competitors.

Adam Hodgson was rising thirty, at the height of his powers, an educated and sophisticated English 'gentleman' of his time, and a man of strong religious convictions. He was completely at home at the dining tables of the rich and powerful of the Washington elite, but equally able to hold his own among the rolled up shirt-sleeves in the log-cabin kitchens of the Alabama backwoods. He spent 16 months in the United States and travelled 8000 miles. His letters offer a vivid snapshot of the moment when North America was finally off the European leash and free to expand. His trip began in October 1819, roughly 5 years after the Battle of New Orleans and the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, which brought to a close the War of 1812 and 4 years after the Treaty of Paris ended the almost continuous 23-year war with France. The end of British colonial ambitions on the American mainland, the exploitation of the Louisiana Purchase negotiated with Napoleon through Jackson's forays into Alabama, Mississippi and Florida during the Creek Wars meant that the back country was open to expanding American ambitions. Louisiana (1812) and Mississippi (1817) were already states of the union and Alabama would be admitted whilst Adam was crossing the Atlantic. The rest of the American West beckoned.

Of the United States of America which then existed, Adam Hodgson paid house calls and log-cabin calls over the greater part of it: - Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and the newly opened up states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana and finally taking in what was then Upper and Lower Canada. The mid-west was the only significant omission but he took great interest in what he could learn, by account, of this region as well. Hodgson was well connected at the highest levels of the American political and economic elite. He was armed with introductions to the very top and was adept at obtaining introductions to anyone he wished to meet. It took several layers of introductions and a considerable detour on the ground for him to meet Thomas Jefferson.

Denying any literary pretensions, the work was written to excite interest in the political, social and domestic currents flowing through this vast new nation. One senses there was another account, now inaccessible, and breathtaking in scope containing tables of facts and figures describing the economic life of the nation; sizes of cotton factories, inputs, outputs, accounts of plantations, commodity prices, immigration statistics, lists of names, addresses, occupations, of bankers, merchants, politicians, plantation owners, and shippers and crucially, their credit worthiness. The best a prepared mind could do in the space of 16 months to take the pulse of the nation and ensure the capital of Rathbone, Hodgson & Co was deployed to greatest effect. Some additional letters, written to his business partners exist which reveal some of the business contacts made but much has been lost and one suspects he brought back reams of data in notebooks in addition to these almost daily updates on his activities.

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

He was persuaded to publish some letters about emigration, since many were leaving Britain to seek “*subsistence in the Western Wilds*”, in the evangelical publication *The Christian Observer*. These were followed by further extracts intended to counter prejudices in Britain about America and Americans.

“If the statements which I have made, and the impressions I have communicated in the following Letters, ...shall contribute, in the slightest degree, to dissipate error and prejudice; to cherish those more liberal and friendly feelings, which are at length beginning to subsist between England and America... I shall derive from the reflection, a purer gratification than any literary distinction could possibly impart.”

The spur to publication was the appearance of a ‘bootleg’ edition of these extracts in America⁵ with the prospect that it might be republished in Britain. At least some of his correspondents can be discerned from the letters including, William and Richard Rathbone, Isaac Hodgson, his brother, the Reverend Thomas Gisborne, and the Rathbone’s mother. Many letters were of a commercial nature, giving details of the state of the markets and banks, details of business contacts, the state of the cotton crop and so on. Letters on more general matters were intended to be circulated among the recipients although addressed to one or other in particular. For instance, in a commercial letter to William Rathbone, he referred him to his last letter to his brother for an account of the voyage across the Atlantic. Many were tailored to the interests of his correspondents and some were written in response to their questions. Throughout his letters he mentioned conducting business and from the unpublished letters it is clear that he was negotiating commercial contracts and orders.

New York and Washington.

Adam Hodgson, with 23 fellow passengers, sailed aboard the *Courier*, a fast Philadelphia packet of 380 tons, belonging to the Rathbones, offering “*uncommonly extensive and commodious*” accommodation on a “*short and pleasant passage*” of 32 days. Because of the prevailing winds they headed out of the North Channel past Carrickfergus, the Mull of Kintire and the Giants Causeway. The Irish coast dropped behind them on October 4th 1819. For ten days they were driven further north by the winds and he was on deck most of the time, despite the cold, suffering from sea-sickness. On the 20th they reached the Newfoundland banks and on Monday November 1st they dropped anchor off Sandy Point some twenty miles from New York.

Later he alluded to a report that had caused unease at home but said, “*We were never spoken till towards the end of the voyage, and then only by outward bound vessels.*” “Spoken” means “spoken to” of ship to ship communication. Presumably there was concern that the vessel was overdue and no word had been received, the explanation being the unusual northern passage and that they passed no homeward bound vessels. However, in an unpublished letter to William Rathbone he was more forthcoming.³

“We were twice near losing our masts though on the whole the weather was very moderate. In one of the cases when we had retired to bed with a fine wind

Letters from America

and all sails set, I was awakened with a sudden shock and a loud cry of "all hands on deck". I thought we were on a bank, and on jumping up and looking out I found my companions in the cabin in great dismay. Every face was pale with fear. The ladies with their hands over their faces supposing we were every moment going to the bottom. ...The wind had suddenly shifted twelve points and coming right ahead filled the sails aback and bringing with it a violent sea which struck the vessel bows, stopped us in a course of ten knots an hour and drove us some distance stern foremost. Bonne assures us we were only in danger of losing our masts and it would be well to say nothing that would give the impression of his having carried sail too long."

On arrival Adam Hodgson spent some time in New York, traveled to Philadelphia, and thence to Washington from where his first published letter was dated. His connection in Washington – "*his excellent friend*" – took him to meet The Secretary of State, The Secretary of the Treasury and The Secretary at War. William Crawford, the Treasury Secretary, took him to meet the President and his wife, Mr. & Mrs. Monroe, at a crowded 'at home', in the White House.

His "*excellent friend*" was William Lowndes, Member of Congress for South Carolina who was born in Colleton SC in 1782 and married Elizabeth Brewton Pinckney, the daughter of Thomas Pinckney. The Lowndes family had merchant connections in Liverpool, interests in the West Indies, and were cotton planters in Carolina. This commercial contact may have gone back a generation and been enjoyed by many of his relations and associates. The family's ancestry can be traced back to Charles Lowndes, a Cheshire landowner who emigrated to St Kitt's about 1700. Charles Lowndes had three sons in St Kitts, William ca. 1718, Charles ca. 1719, and Rawlins in 1721. William's grandson, John Lowndes (died 1812), became the surveyor general of the Island of Dominica. Charles Lowndes moved to Carolina about 1730 where his son Rawlins Lowndes became a prominent lawyer and politician and President of South Carolina from 1778 – 1779 and Senator for Charleston from 1782 - 1787. He was a federalist opposed to the US constitution of 1787. Adam Hodgson's "*excellent friend*" William Lowndes was Rawlins Lowndes' eighth child. He died at sea in 1822.⁶

Adam Hodgson wryly described the ramshackle and temporary feel of Washington; though resembling an English spa town, it was more like a plan for a town than a real town. The feeling was that the capital would inevitably move to St Louis in time to be at the centre of the union. He spent his mornings either in the Senate or the House of Representatives and was impressed by the level of debate, admitting their style was; "*fluent, forcible, and perspicuous; and in cases where it is not possible that their arguments should be sound, they seldom fail to be specious and acute*".

It was "*usual for ladies to attend when any interesting debate is expected*" and already he turned to the question of slavery which became a recurring theme; "*the question of the admission of slavery into Missouri, which has lately been agitated, attracts all the beauty and fashion to the Senate.*" The debates over the Missouri Question formed a constant backdrop to his time in Washington.

Later Hodgson summed up his Washington impressions in a letter to Rathbone's mother. William Lowndes had introduced him to many distinguished families and shown him considerable kindness. Hodgson listed the important

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

connections he had made. In Philadelphia he met Langdon Cheeves of South Carolina, President of the Second Bank of the United States, Senator James Brown of Louisiana, both useful contacts for his projected tour. When Congress was in session Mrs. Brown gave a party every Monday evening and supported Mrs. Monroe, the president's wife, in her Wednesday drawing rooms. From Mrs. John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State's wife, he learned that the secretary laid his own fire in the mornings, and he wondered, jocularly, whether the British Secretary of State was also his own, "*ex-officio*", fire maker.

He dined with Samuel Dana the member for Connecticut and met the Senators for Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Portland some of whom offered hospitality on his projected trips north. The Senator for Rhode Island offered to obtain introductions into the cotton mills there in which he had an interest. This was James de Wolf who introduced Arkwright Mills into Coventry, Rhode Island. He was one of the wealthiest men in America, a former slave trader and slave ship captain, who had once been indicted for murder for throwing a female slave overboard, bound and gagged.⁷

On another occasion he dined with the Secretary of State at War, John Calhoun, Lowndes, the Vice president Daniel Tompkins, the Navy Secretary, Governor Barbour, Governor Dickerson, Judge McLane, Mr. Edwards the Senator for Illinois, the Senator from Georgia, Mr. Randolph from Virginia and Mr. Macon the only senator remaining from the Senate's first formation. He reflected on the perspective he gained from his introduction to so many leading men on the American scene;

"nor did I ever feel so desirous that our Government, and my countrymen in general, should awaken from their supercilious disregard of the growing greatness of America, to a more attentive observation of the rapid development of her resources, and a more correct appreciation of their ultimate extent. It was a great advantage to me to reach Washington so soon after my arrival in America, and to meet there the most distinguished men from different parts of the United States."

On an excursion to Mount Vernon, he seemed to reveal a touch of republicanism in his sentiments when he wrote of Washington's tomb, "*I am sure you have often visited it in imagination, and will have anticipated my sensations when bending over the ashes of this illustrious patriot, and paying my tribute of veneration to his intellectual and moral worth.*" He was told by Washington's nephew, Judge Bushrod Washington, that the crews of British ships on their way to sack the capital, "*showed strong demonstrations of their respect for this place*".

His conversations with Judge Washington turned on the American Colonization Society of which Washington was the president (but also a slave owner).⁸ The society aimed to return former slaves to a colony in Liberia⁹ and the first vessel was due to sail from New York a few days later. Judge Washington regarded the colonists as moral and intelligent "*especially those of the Methodist or Baptist persuasion.*" Hodgson summarized the arguments raging around this scheme – ranging from those who thought it impractical to those who believed it would only "*rivet more strongly the chains of those who are already in bondage*" and who preferred the "*increasing influence of a free Negro population.*" A black petition he had seen accused the Society of attempting to perpetuate slavery –

Letters from America

some believed it was a conspiracy to supply the sugar plantations of New Orleans – a truly terrifying prospect. Hodgson believed that only if these attempts at colonization were shown to be successful would such misconceptions vanish.

Charleston, South Carolina.

Adam Hodgson left Washington by the mail-stage at the end of January 1820, “*the only public conveyance to the southward*” and “*a wretched contrast to the excellent coaches in the north.*” “*It is a covered wagon, open at the front, with four horses; and although it was intensely cold, I was obliged to take my seat by the driver, in order to secure a view of the country.*” The roads were no better, consisting of “*woody labyrinths, through which the driver seemed to wind by instinct; and we often jolted into brooks which were scarcely fordable.*”

The 50 mile journey to Fredericksburg took 16 hours. They crossed the Rappahannock by moonlight but were up at 3 am the next morning to continue south through Bowling Green, and Hanover, arriving at Richmond, Virginia at 7 pm covering 66 miles in seventeen hours. It was court-day as they passed Hannover and 150 horses were tied up among the trees. He was impressed by the Virginia bloodstock, “*which appear to deserve their reputation.*”

Leaving Alexandria he noted the changing landscape and the worsening roads, “*the track sometimes contracting within such narrow limits that the vehicle rubs against the trees: at others expanding to the width of a London Turnpike road, yet so beset with stumps of trees that it requires no common skill to effect a secure passage.*”

He remarked on the hospitality and easy familiarity of the tavern keepers met every ten or fifteen miles and of the inhabitants of the scattered log-cabins. (“*I rather like than otherwise*”) He also noted the increasing proportion of the black population as they travelled south and made his views abundantly clear to his correspondent.

“*I believe you are aware that the importation of slaves into the United States has been prohibited by law since the year 1808; and that in many of the northern states, slavery is either extinguished already; or will be so on the arrival of certain fixed and early periods The states, however, to the south of Pennsylvania, with the exception, I believe of Delaware, have made no provision for its extinction, and are termed slave-holding states; and although their legislatures may profess to be, and perhaps are, opposed to slavery in the abstract, yet conceiving that the climate renders the use of negroes indispensable to cultivation, and that their emancipation would be attended with difficulties which have hitherto appeared insurmountable, they may be regarded as practically contemplating the perpetuation of slavery to the remotest period to which their political views extend. We will hope, however, that some ray of light will break in on this gloomy prospect, even though it should condemn to perpetual sterility the arid sands and pestilential swamps on which the negroes are employed.*”

Hodgson related conversations with such slaves as he had met so far. “*You will believe that it was not without the most painful emotions that I for the first time contemplated the revolting spectacle of man in bondage to his fellow-man,*”

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

Though he had met few plantation slaves he was surprised by the “*ease, cheerfulness and intelligence*” of domestic slaves, “*their manner, and their mode of expressing themselves, have, generally, been decidedly superior to those of many of the lower classes in England.*” Almost all the servants in southern hotels were slaves, some belonging to the landlord, and some to neighbouring farmers, rented out by the year.

“The first I talked with was at Washington, where he came into my bed-room to make my fire. On seeing me disposed to converse with him, he leaned his arm on the chimney-piece with considerable ease, and said he was to be free in three months; when he should be twenty-eight years of age; that he liked the thoughts of it, but did not suppose he should be better off than at present; that, in fact, he should have to do precisely as he did now, except that he might change his master, if he had a bad one; to set against which was the consideration, that now his master was obliged to maintain him, and then he must starve if he was idle;- but that he understood the common people in my country were so oppressed, that they were “worse off than the slaves in America!” Here I endeavored to extricate him from his egregious mistake.”

He discussed the daily lives of the slaves, and their holidays, - in Virginia they had Sundays off, a day’s holiday in April, one in May and four at Christmas. He had been “*contemplating a class of fellow creatures excluded from the benefits of the social compact – not voluntarily relinquishing a portion of their natural liberty to secure the free enjoyment of the remainder, but forcibly,* He admitted that “*there is a bondage from which all our national privileges may be insufficient to secure us... when the African will burst his manacles forever.*” There was a freedom which benevolent advocates of anti-slavery may overlook. He quoted John Philpot Curran. He is redeemed,” *regenerated, disenthralled, by the Spirit of “universal emancipation,.”* from his speech in the Somerset case in defence of James Somerset, a Jamaican slave who declared his freedom upon being brought to Britain by his master, where slavery was unknown to the law.¹⁰ It became widely quoted by American Abolitionists such as Harriet Beecher Stowe who later visited Adam Hodgson in Britain.

He traveled on to Richmond, and Petersburg where, in an amusing passage, he described an American hotel mealtime comparing it to a school-boys scramble rather than a social repast. He also found the sleeping arrangements of American hotels not to his taste, a room holding as many as 6 or 7 beds, but, he reassured his readers, since leaving New York he had, “*managed by early and earnest application, to secure a separate bed-chamber, for I cannot reconcile myself to these gregarious habits.*” He left Petersburg for Raleigh, NC on February 3rd arriving on the afternoon of the 4th covering 137 miles in 38 hours, noting that tavern signs, in places big enough to need them, were invariably of Sir Walter Raleigh, Pocahuntas or General Washington. From Raleigh he traveled to Fayetteville and although it was February the weather was like an English June day where only three days before, not much further north, the wagon made no impression on the track because of the intense frost. They left Fayetteville at 5 am on the 10th passing through Lumbertown and Georgetown and arrived at Charlestown at 10 pm. He remarked on their slow progress and the deficiencies of transport in the South.

Letters from America

“This, you will say, is wretchedly slow traveling, in the only public conveyance between Washington and the Southern states. Yet this vehicle is dignified by the title of the ‘United States’ Mail’, although it is only an open wagon and four, with curtains which unfurl; and the mail-bags lie lumbering about your feet, among the trunks and packages which the passengers smuggle into the carriage. Indeed, there is a strong temptation to make companions of your trunks; for otherwise, as they are merely laid on behind, they are in imminent danger of being lost, although the driver dismounts every few miles to see that they are safe. As this kind of attention, however, seemed better adapted to ascertain your loss than to secure your property, I bought a chain and padlock; one end of the chain my servant introduced into the stage: if he had a nibble, his attention was awakened; and a bite showed that it was high time to stop. We broke two chains, but brought our luggage safely. The principal reason why the conveyance is so wretched, is, that few persons travel from the Southern to the Northern States by land, except in their own carriages; ... the opulent families generally prefer the packets.”

From Petersburg to North Carolina the inns, the people, and the country degenerated. *“Their demeanour became more rude and familiar and their conversation more licentious and profane: their appearance also was dirty, ragged, and uncomfortable”*. He saw large tracts of land cleared by ring barking trees and the system of turpentine production by excavation of reservoirs within the trunks of pine. Production was by slaves, each slave being allocated 3-5000 trees, producing, by emptying the reservoirs 5 or 6 times a year, up to 75 barrels of turpentine between May and September. He came upon his first rice plantation at Georgetown, 60 miles from Charleston, and was shocked by the vacant looks and ragged appearance of the slaves. Crossing the bay at Charleston by ferry, he saw several ships riding at anchor laden with rice and cotton, ready to sail for England with the first fair wind. Here then lay the rub, his abhorrence of slavery, and his trade in these irrevocably tainted goods, – the produce of the slaves of the Southern Plantation System.

In Charleston he stayed at the Planter’s Hotel and set down his impressions of the flourishing city. *“On entering the city, we seemed to be transported into a garden. Orange trees laden with ripe oranges, peach trees covered with blossoms, and flowering shrubs of a description which I had been accustomed to see only in hot-houses, gave me impressions similar to those which I suppose you experienced on visiting some of the cities on the Mediterranean.”* Whilst in Charleston Hodgson was invited to visit the rice plantation of a planter; *“Descended from one of the old patrician families who form, as it were, the nobility of Carolina, educated at one of our English public schools and universities, and enjoying a high reputation, acquired in arduous military and diplomatic situations, he would be regarded, I am persuaded, as second to few in Europe, as a statesman, a scholar, and a gentleman”*. He went on to say; *“I took an early breakfast with him at his handsome townhouse, from whence we proceeded to the ferry. After crossing the bay, we found the General’s carriage waiting for us, with a few periodical publications in it, and with led horses, in case we should wish to vary our mode of conveyance”*. His contact was again William Lowndes and the General, Thomas Pinckney, Lowndes father-in-law, who was educated at

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

Westminster and Oxford, and served under Gates and Lafayette in the revolutionary war, was sent by Washington as Ambassador to Britain, and who served again in the War of 1812.¹¹

The General's estate showed him "a very favourable specimen of Negro slavery" though the poverty was apparent despite a reasonable diet and medical care provided by two black doctors. It did nothing to mitigate his fundamental objections to the system. The slaves worked from sunrise to 3 or 4 and sometimes 5 or 6 at night, had Sundays off, three days at Christmas and a day in spring to sow, and one in autumn to reap a small allotment. Around Charleston he visited several plantations with their grand porticoed homes, the grounds planted with Live Oak resembling an English park. He remarked on their single storey construction and the number of windows "which do not put one in good humour with our window tax". He described "the season" for the planters in Carolina, with winter spent on the plantation, and summer in town because of the risk of yellow fever, the two being broken by a month of horse racing in February. Some went instead into the mountains or to the resorts of Ballston or Saratoga in New York State.

Contemplating the arrival of the oppressive summer heat which would soon transform Charleston's present lively state, he observed: "*Having visited Cadiz and Lisbon, you are no stranger to the melancholy feelings excited by a view of the graves of our countrymen who have fallen victims to an epidemic on a foreign shore*" His correspondent thereby identified as his brother or Robert Hyde Greg who had been involved in some disastrously unprofitable trading in Spain following the Iberian Campaign of the recent war. The thought prompted further observations on slavery.

"But the real plague-spot of Charleston is its slave population; and the mixture of gaiety and splendour, with misery and degradation, is too incongruous not to arrest the attention even of the superficial.

I shall never forget my feelings on being present, for the first time, at a sale of slaves, which took place here in a public street through which I was passing the other day. Turning from a fashionable promenade, enlivened by gay parties and glittering equipages, I came suddenly in sight of at least 80 or 100 Negroes sitting on a large heap of paving stones; some with most melancholy and disconsolate faces, and others with an air of vacancy and apathy, apparently insensible to what was passing around them. Several merchants and planters were walking about, examining the unhappy creatures who were to be offered for sale. A poor woman, apparently about 28 years of age, with a child at her breast, her two little boys, from four to six years old, and her little girl, about eight, composed the first lot. They were mounted on a platform (with the auctioneer,) taking hold of each other's hands, and the little boys looking up at their mother's face with an air of curiosity, as if they wondered what could make her look so sad. The mother then spoke a few words, in a faltering voice, to the auctioneer, who repeated them aloud, in which she expressed a strong desire to be purchased by some one who lived near Charleston, instead of being sent to a distant plantation. They were then put up with all the ordinary, auction slang, and finally knocked down at 350 dollars each. ... I could not stay to see the repetition of the sad process on the

Letters from America

person of a field labourer, who composed the next lot, and who appeared depressed and dejected beyond what I had conceived.

The melancholy feelings with which I quitted this scene were not diminished by the reflection, that it was my country which first transported the poor African to these western shores; that it was when they were the shores of a British colony that slavery was first introduced, by British ships, British capital, and with the sanction and encouragement of a British Parliament. Would that I could forget that, in a single year, no less than 30,000 slaves were introduced into America by more than a hundred vessels belonging to a single British port”

He went on to discuss the difficulties of emancipation as he saw them;

“Do not think me insane enough to overlook the difficulties of this subject and to discuss the consideration due to those whose property is invested under legislative sanctions and the cruelty of liberating slaves till they are prepared for freedom”.

Hodgson also visited the prison in Charleston, as he did everywhere he went. The turnkey was drunk and he learned little, but from his assistant he learnt that the prisoners had no work and no instruction, except for occasional visits from clergy, of whom the black ministers were the most attentive. He saw one minister in prayer with a man committed for the murder of his master and noted the segregation of black and white prisoners. His interest in prison reform and the provision of useful work and training is evident and suggestive of his connection with William Roscoe whose views on punishment without reformation were well known.¹²

Flint River Indian Agency

From Charleston he traveled to Savannah by two-horse mail coach, traveling in stages, some over thirty miles in length. There was broiling sun in the day but the nights were bitterly cold, even in their sea-coats. Hodgson left Savannah on March 11th for Augusta where he found immense cotton plantations surrounding the town. The streets were crowded with carts, tradesmen and agents. The wharves were laden with bales and steamboats darkened the air. He visited a “*very extensive and opulent cotton planter*” who had come from Charleston “*to superintend his plantation for two or three weeks*”.

In Augusta he purchased horses for himself and his servant to go overland to Mobile and New Orleans and they left on March 17th. The English gentleman turned cowboy prompted the remark,

“With our long tailed greys, our saddle bags, our blankets, and our pistols we made, I assure you, no despicable appearance.”

That night they stayed at Harris’s Tavern, a small way side inn;

“Two female Negroes were hand-picking cotton by the kitchen fire, where I took my seat, till I was unexpectedly invited to another room, where a fire had been made for me. The first question my landlady asked me was the price of cotton at Augusta; a question which was eagerly repeated wherever I stopped. Indeed; the fluctuations in this article came home to ‘the business and bosoms’ of the poorest family; since every one is concerned more or less in its cultivation. While

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

my hostess poured out my coffee, I asked her if there were any schools in the neighbourhood. She said, Oh, yes; there was an academy to which her daughter went when cotton was thirty cents per pound; that she paid three hundred dollars per annum simply for board, and fifty more for learning the pi-a-no! but that, as cotton had fallen to fifteen cents she could not afford to buy an instrument, and supposed her daughter must forget her music."

Later he stayed with a Cotton Planter (also miller, shop keeper and farmer) on the Ogeechee River, to whom he had a letter of introduction, and where he stayed until Monday. Mr. Adam Hodgson keeps the Ten Commandments, it would be fatuous to say religiously, but it is the case, and if it can be humanly avoided he will absolutely not travel on a Sunday. He kept to this principle throughout his life and when the Liverpool & Manchester Railway proposed a Sunday Service - Adam Hodgson resigned his position on the board and sold his shares.

In the evening three backwoodsmen arrived from the Mississippi and urged them not to proceed as the bridges over the creeks were washed out and the swamps were nearly impassable. However, undeterred, they set out next morning and reached Milledgeville, the Georgia capital, some 36 miles away. At Milledgeville he described the Oconee, presumably in flood, as "*nearly twice as broad as the Lune under Lancaster Bridge*" which is highly informative, but to a limited audience!

They left Milledgeville at 8am on the 21st and arrived at Fort Hawkins at 4pm passing orchards of Georgia Peaches and a convoy of 90 slaves bound for Cawhawba, Alabama. Cawhawba, then just laid out on the banks of the Alabama River proved to be a mistake as the Alabama capital because of flooding which partly destroyed the statehouse in 1825. The capital was then moved to Tuscaloosa (1826) and finally to Montgomery (1846). Cawhawba remained a major distribution point for cotton from Alabama's Black Belt until the civil war.¹³

Fort Hawkins consisted of a quadrangle of wooden buildings, built to intimidate the Lower Creeks who had fought with the British in the war of 1812. The clearing was about half a mile square with thick pinewoods beyond extending to the horizon. Leaving on the 22nd along a pine avenue they met a variety of travelers, Indians with their guns and blankets, wagon loads of emigrants from Georgia and Carolina heading for Alabama, and many parties of slaves being taken to Alabama and Mississippi. There was one solitary party of slaves coming the other way, returning to Georgia from New Orleans. Their master had moved them to New Orleans three days before Christmas. In less than a fortnight he found it not to his taste and ordered them back again. Setting out on the 1st of January this was as far as they had got.

The Indian agency, on the Flint River consisted of a log house for the Inn, another for the shop, and a few miserable cabins for the slaves.

"This Agency is on the Flint River, about as wide as the Ribble near Preston. It is the first river we have seen which falls into the Gulf of Mexico, having previously joined its waters to those of the Chatahouchy. Their united streams form the Apalachicola, which runs through West Florida. ... I have been taking a beautiful star-light walk by the River, thinking of you all. The rivers are all subsiding, and there is nothing now to apprehend. We have been near swimming twice, our horses' tails having almost disappeared."

Letters from America

They crossed the Flint River at 5.30 on the 23rd and arrived at Spaine's Inn at noon.

"As we Approached it, we saw some Indians in their wigwams on the road-side, one was lying asleep before the door, his head covered with a blanket; and when I pointed to him, a woman, who was sitting over him said, " Whiskey sick-- Whiskey sick."

They bought provisions, so that they could camp out, as there was nowhere to stay on the road ahead. The landlord was white the partner of an Indian – *"the Creeks allowing no white man to settle in their nation except as partners, husbands or in some way connected."* They bought coffee, corn-bread and bacon and a large bundle of Indian corn leaves, fodder for the horses. That night they camped with an Alabama cotton planter bringing his daughter back the 3 or 400 miles from school in Milledgeville in a little Jersey Wagon and were closely examined that night by a party of Indians. They set off at dawn passing the Indian town of Cooseta on the Chattahoochee which consisted of about 100 houses elevated on poles 2 to 6 feet high built of unhewn logs with roofs of bark. Indian corn grew at the doorways and the women were at work digging the ground and pounding corn whilst the men were either going into the woods hunting or idling in the doorways.

"In the centre of the town, we passed a large building, with a conical roof, supported by a circular wall about three feet high: close to it was a quadrangular space, enclosed by four open buildings, with rows of benches rising one above another. The whole was appropriated,to the great council of the town, who meet, under shelter, or in the open air, according to the weather. Near the spot was a high pole, like our May-poles, with a bird at the top, round which the Indians celebrate their green-corn dance."

They arrived at Ouchee Bridge about one o' clock on the Federal Road which *"though tolerable for horses would by us be considered impassable for wheels"*.

Mobile, Alabama.

They left Ouchee Bridge on March 26th passing through Fort Bainbridge, situated on a ridge between the rivers Chattahoochee, Coosa and Tallapoosa, *"where we found a stand in which the "Big Warrior" is a sleeping partner, and a head waiter from one of the principal inns in Washington, the efficient man! There is, however, another partner, of the name of Lewis, whom I found highly interesting, He had lived fifteen years in the heart of the Indian country, having married an Indian wife, and adopted the manners of the natives. He appeared to unite great mildness and intelligence; and has contracted so ardent a love of solitude, by living in the woods, that he lately removed his stand from the most profitable situation, because there was a neighbour or two within four miles."*

He went out hunting with Lewis and heard of the baleful influence of whiskey and the white man on Indian life. He spoke of their sadness at the little assistance given by the British in the war but appeared to believe that the American government had *"evinced an active solicitude for their civilization"*. He learned that the Creeks had a general idea of a supreme being but no religious days

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

except the green-corn dance when the tribe came into town with war whoops and danced around the totem pole in the central square. After this they took emetics and fasted for two days dancing round the pole through the night. Then all the fires in the village were extinguished, the hearths cleared and new fires kindled. The elders believed they had a choice between “*civilization or extinction*” and were establishing schools and farms. His pleasure in seeing the latter was “*alloyed by observing, that the labour generally devolved on the African Negro, or the Indian wife*”.

They left Fort Bainbridge on March 28th, the 27th being a Sunday and a day of rest. “*I was a little surprised to find there the son of the owner of one of the principal inns in Preston, in Lancashire, projecting the introduction of a woolen manufactory among the Creeks, under the sanction of the Natives.*” He had been living there with his Indian wife when Tecumseh arrived from the Shawnee nation on the borders of Canada to persuade the Lower Creeks to take up the hatchet and join his confederacy with the British. It was to quell this rising that Jackson built the forts and stockades he had visited. By a strange juxtaposition of superstition, oratory and geophysics this fifth column tactic fell to ruin. Tecumseh left the war party of the Creeks – the Red Sticks – waiting for his signal to strike. “*Soon shall you see my arm of fire stretched athwart the sky. I will stamp my foot at Tippecanoe, and the very earth shall shake.*”¹⁴ The largest earthquake in American history struck New Madrid on February 7th 1812. Some took this for the sign. The resulting sporadic attacks on white settlers were certainly taken as a sign by General Jackson, with a personal eye on lands in Florence, Alabama, that the time had come to deal with the Indian problem for good. By the time Admiral Cochrane landed his marines in Pensacola in August 1814 the Red Sticks had been massacred and reduced to beggary.¹⁵

“It was with mingled sentiments of shame and regret, that I reflected on the miseries which we have at different periods introduced into the very centre of America and Africa, by exciting the Indian warrior and Negro king to precipitate their nations into the horrors of war; but I endeavoured to dispel these melancholy feelings by the recollection of our Bible and Missionary Societies, and of that faithful band of veterans who, through “evil report, and good report,” amidst occasional success, and accumulated disappointment, still continue the undismayed, unwearied friends of the whole family of man.”

Adam Hodgson was highly devout; an evangelical with a belief in bringing Christianity to fallen man for his salvation and civilization. Leaving Fort Bainbridge they passed the Calabee and Cubahatchee swamps and journeyed 40 miles to Lime Creek, the border between the Creek Nation and Alabama, encountering on the way many parties of emigrants and slave gangs.

“Indeed, at the edges of the creeks and on the banks of the rivers, we usually found a curious collection of sans soucis, sulkies, carts, Jersey wagons, heavy wagons, little planters, Indians, Negroes, horses, mules, and oxen; the women and little children sitting down frequently for one, two, or three, and sometimes for five or six hours, to work or play, while the men were engaged in the almost hopeless task of dragging or swimming their vehicles and baggage to the opposite side.”

Leaving Lime Creek they arrived at Point Comfort, a Cotton plantation in a more populated area. They had left the pine forests of the Indians behind and

Letters from America

entered the rich bottom lands of Alabama, but the roads were poor and the swamps punishing to the horses.

“...we paid dearly for the advantages offered to the landholders by the rich soil over which we were passing. Our road, which had hitherto been generally excellent for travelling on horseback, became as wretchedly bad, and we passed through three swamps, which I feared would ruin our horses. They were about a mile long each; but we estimated the fatigue of crossing any of them as equivalent to at least 15 or 20 miles of common travelling. ...These swamps are ten times more formidable than even the flooded creeks, over two of which, in less than three miles, we had this day to have our horses swum by Indians, whose agility in the water is beautiful. The traveler himself is either conveyed over in a boat, or, if the creek is very narrow, crosses it on a large tree, which has been so dexterously felled as to fall across and form a tolerable bridge.”

The next day they passed Pine Barren Spring and spent a night at Fort Dale where the inn was run by a member of the Alabama Legislature and, as he often did, he noted the contents of the man's library. *“Our landlord was an intelligent man; and among his books I saw the Bible, the Koran, a hymn book, Nicholson's Encyclopedia, Sterne, Burns, Cowper, Coelebs, Camilla, and the Acts of the Alabama Legislature...”* Adam Hodgson took an inordinate interest in other people's bookshelves. It is almost a new species of travel writing. Whereas most travelogues describe the scenery and the exotic biology he seems more interested in the diffusion of knowledge to remote areas, a forward indicator of the state of cultural forces perhaps.

They passed a night at Murder Creek among a family from Georgia who regaled them with tales of revenge killings by the Indians – the name marking the spot where 20 whites were massacred by the Indians 15 years before. Leaving on April 1st and passing Burnt Corn, instead of taking the direct road to Mobile they diverted to Blakeley.

“The only thing which attracted my attention during the morning, was a fingerpost of wood fastened to a tree and pointing down a grass path, and on which was written " To Pensacola." I felt more lonely and more distant from home at that moment, than at any time since I lost sight of my native shores.”

They found nowhere to stay and had to spend the night in the woods. He was keen to reach Blakely to be at church on Sunday and was setting a pace of 45 miles a day. Unfortunately, there was no church in Blakely and so they crossed the bay to Mobile, however, *“to the disgrace of protestant America, no place of worship is established here except a Catholic Church built by the French or Spanish”*. Once again he has revealed a lifelong characteristic.

Later, writing from Natchez Adam Hodgson confessed that his trip through the backwoods had been exhilarating. *“My solitary ride through the woods I enjoyed exceedingly; and except for my anxiety to be proceeding in the immediate objects of my journey, I should not have been tired if it had been twice as long. From Augusta and to Mobile, the way we came, was 460 miles nearly, which we accomplished in about 15 days, during two of which we rested.”*

The horses were left in Mobile to be sold and he assessed the area's economic potential where Blakely and Mobile were competing to become; *“the great emporium which must shortly spring up in the vicinity of this outlet for the*

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

produce of the young fertile State of Alabama. The surface drained by the rivers Tombigbee, Black Warrior, Alabama, Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Cahawba, all of which fall into Mobile Bay, exceeds 26 millions of acres, possessing a very great diversity of soil and climate, and enjoying commercial and agricultural advantages, which are attracting towards them, with unprecedented rapidity, the wealth and enterprise of the older States."

He was not at all overwhelmed by the chaotic state of development on the ground, but sharply focused on economic and social relations, supported by appropriate statistics, and underpinned by a firm grasp of economics and a comprehensive general knowledge. The qualities called for in traveling through the backwoods seem testimony to the breadth and strength of the man's character. He got on with and respected the diverse people he met. There had been one or two nights of real fear, and at times the imminent possibility of losing their mounts must have been a matter of real concern, but he and his servant have come through in excellent shape.

Blakely he found was an American town of yesterday with a fine range of warehouses and with the stumps of felled trees still standing in the streets. Mobile on the other hand was an old Spanish town with traces of the manners and language of the French and Spaniards.

"The change from the quiet homely cabins in which we were entertained in the woods to the noisy dirty tavern of Mobile, was by no means an agreeable one. I sat down with about thirty or forty persons to every meal but I saw much more of men than of manners. And I was convinced that there was some truth in what I had been told, that in travelling westward in this country, you may take your longitude by observing the decrements of the time occupied at meals. At Mobile 5 or 6 minutes might possibly be the average."

"Profaneness, licentiousness, and ferocity, seemed to be characteristic of the place; and the latter, as manifested in barbarity to the Negro servants, was beyond even what I had anticipated. You continually hear the lash upon their backs, with language which would shock you, even if applied to brutes; and the easy and intelligent expression which I had observed in the countenances of many of the slaves in Carolina and Georgia, had here given place to the appearance of abject timidity or idiotic vacancy. I have seen men, after receiving a severe flogging, and uttering the most piercing cries, the moment their tyrant's back was turned, burst into a loud laugh, dancing about the room, and snapping their fingers, like a school-boy who wishes to appear as if he 'did not care.'"

His impression of Mobile crisply summarized; *"I never left a place with more satisfaction."*

Natchez.

On the 4th they boarded a small schooner and were soon in the gulf with pelicans flying about the boat. On the 6th they passed the Bay of St Louis to which the wealthy inhabitants of New Orleans retired during the sickly season, *"the ravages of which are dreadful and make the most distressing blanks in the society of Louisianians."* One of the passengers was from Bermuda traveling to New

Letters from America

Orleans because his ship and cargo had been seized at Mobile as he had a black servant traveling without a certificate of his parents' freedom and he was forced to repair to New Orleans to obtain a certificate to release his vessel.

"I mention this merely as an instance of the vigilance with which the smuggling of slaves is watched; and I am happy to say, ... slave-smuggling in this quarter is at present extremely limited. The piratical establishment at Galveston, which was one of the principal channels for the introduction of slaves, has solicited and obtained permission to sail out of the Gulf."

These were Jean Lafitte's Baratarian pirates who brought ship's cannon to Jackson's aid at the Battle of New Orleans and may take much of the credit for the carnage on the battlefield – for that sterling work they received a full pardon for their piratical activities.¹⁶

Hodgson found New Orleans decidedly unpleasant, very French, and with a miscellaneous population. There were Americans from every state from Maine to Georgia, English, Spanish, French, Creole, Indian, and African and *"not the best of their nations."* He stayed at the best boarding house in town along with a general, a judge and a captain of the U.S. navy whom he knew. He wanted to leave, so appalled was he by the landlady's treatment of her slaves, but realized such behaviour was too general to escape.

Appalled by the depravity he observed that its rising prosperity was attracting *"a class of settlers far more respectable than those whom bankrupt fortunes and battered character formerly drove hither."* He had stern words for those who did not accept the civilizing force of Protestant Christianity; *Let those who feel any doubts of the efficacy of the public ordinances of religion, or of the necessity of missionary efforts, once see to what depths of depravity human nature will slide even in civilized society, where there is no regular annunciation of Christian truths, and then declare, if they are of opinion, that they can reconcile their indifference to the diffusion of religious instruction with an enlightened interest in the improvement of the human race.*

During his stay in New Orleans he met the cream of society, judges, lawyers, merchants and the Attorney General who was likely to be the state's next governor. They left on the 19th by steam boat to journey 320 miles up the Mississippi to Natchez. On the rich alluvial soil along the Mississippi he saw many cotton and sugar plantations stretching half a mile or a mile into the forests, protected from the river by an embankment 4-6 feet high, 30 or 40 yards from the river.

In Natchez he stayed in the upper town *"the lower town being a perfect Wapping, crowded with Kentucky boats, and an odd miscellaneous population of back-woodsmen and others from the western Country."* The Governor of the state, George Poindexter, was in the same boarding house and although a man of property from a respectable Virginia family he ate at the common table with *"a promiscuous assemblage of merchants, agents and clerks."* Hodgson didn't recognize him, and kept his letter of introduction in his pocket for two days. *I mention this circumstance, as a trait of the manners of this part of the country, which surprised me a little, as I had met at Washington Governors of other States, with far less solid titles to personal and hereditary respectability, aristocratical enough in their behaviour.*

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

He visited the principal cotton planters around Natchez and compared the landscape with its grand trees containing 70 or 80 different species of oak, hickory, tulip and above all Southern Magnolia to scenes from eastern romance. He tried to sum up his impressions so far on the landscape of America. *With regard to the general aspect of America, the most correct idea you can form of it... is that of one immense forest, interspersed occasionally with patches, cleared for towns, or cities, or plantations, and sometimes with natural meadows or prairies. I had no expectation of finding this so literally the case. The streets of many considerable towns ...can be lengthened only by cutting down fresh timber.*

He was agreeably surprised by the culture of the planters and compared the estate of the independent planter with £1-2000 per annum to that of a 2nd or 3rd rate English farmer dining with his workmen, the wealthier planters he compared to 2nd rate country gentlemen or yeomanry of 70 or 80 years before, the girls being strictly brought up with little education, and the men filling the office of soldier, justice, and planter. There were others whose lifestyle was comparable to the higher English social classes. *"In the society of some of these families I passed a few days very agreeably; and while listening to some of our own favourite melodies on the harp and piano-forte, I could have fancied myself on the banks of the Lune or the Mersey, rather than on those of the Mississippi."* The banks of the Lune or Mersey as a latter day Venice? He is being perfectly serious.

Education, he believed, particularly in the north, would eventually mitigate the slave system and yet he had come across examples of owners who had shot slaves merely for running away, and he recounted several tales of casual but horrific mistreatment. Some western states were finding it more profitable to breed slaves for market than raise produce. 4-5000 slaves were sent down annually to New Orleans from Maryland and Virginia recalling the slave gangs met on the Federal Road into Alabama. The prospect of New Orleans struck terror into the hearts of slaves and free Negroes alike and he recalled how some believed the Colonization Society was secretly shipping slaves to New Orleans. He discussed the problems Free-blacks experienced in the south with the ever-present danger of being forced back into slavery by the laws governing manumission. He then mentioned the many respectable men who were slave holders including General Washington and *"an excellent friend"* (William Lowndes), who was a Carolinian slave-proprietor; *"and some of our most estimable friends in England possess Negroes in the West Indies"*. Those estimable friends would certainly include his Uncle Samuel Greg and the Gladstone family of Liverpool. However; *"The fact is, that it is not the body of planters in either country, but the nation at large, that is chargeable with having introduced this deplorable system, and on the nation rests the responsibility of devising some safe and equitable mode of ultimately extirpating it."* He asked whether his generation could be content to hand down the system to posterity without taking one step towards its extinction. He consistently held the view that the planters could not be expected to manumit their slaves without compensation – which would penalize one class for the whole of society's ills. Later he and his brother along with James Cropper founded The Liverpool Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery, with William Roscoe as its president. Small wonder that the abolition of colonial slavery was so expensive for the nation and so profitable for the slave holders.

Letters from America

Adam Hodgson discussed plantation economics in answer to a question from home about what price a planter could afford to sell his cotton. Fluctuation in the market price of cotton produced effects on the price of slaves, corn, and land and thus the same return on capital could be achieved at different market prices. He discussed alternatives to cotton growing, such as corn, or indigo, and the effect of a fall in the price of cotton on the slave system. Here he rehearsed arguments later used in his tract, “*A Letter to M. Jean Baptiste Say on the Comparative Expense of Free and Slave Labour*”,¹⁷ where a fall in the price of cotton would drive the system toward the use of free labour.

Does not this view of the subject throw a gleam of hope over the dark picture? But it is not from free labour alone that the West India and American planters have much to fear. They have already most formidable competitors in those foreign colonies into which the importation of slaves is still admitted. But I will not pursue the subject. - I will only add that the great revolutions which the natural course of events is silently effecting in the West, are calculated to rivet the attention both of the planter and of the philanthropist, and to inspire each of them with feelings of the most intense interest, though not a little differing in their complexion.

He visited the family of the late William Dunbar at “The Grange” eight miles outside Natchez, who accumulated a fortune by Cotton Planting. Dunbar invented a screw press and square bailing system for cotton and was commissioned by Jefferson to explore the Red River.¹⁸ Hodgson remarked that, *With the superiority of the cotton from his plantation, our English cotton-spinners are well acquainted. He also made considerable literary acquisitions; and was denominated by Mr. Jefferson, the philosopher of the woods.* Here he spent two agreeable days; the interior of the house, and the domesticity resembled that of a wealthy country gentlemen whose manners were “*such as you would expect to meet with in well-educated and well-bred society in England.*” He gave few details about his stay and yet the family were large slave-holders, and involved, at least later, in the American Colonization Society.

Returning to Natchez he set off, again on horseback, to cover the 11 or 1200 miles to Virginia, “*our horses and ourselves in high spirits*”. They followed the Natchez Trace, the return route from Natchez to Kentucky and Tennessee for the boat men who sailed down the Mississippi and returned by road, having broken up their boats in New Orleans. At Dokes’s stand his horse got Colic and looked liked dying, however, the Indians treated it by opening a vein in its mouth and making it swallow a considerable quantity of blood. Then they forced down its throat a quart of soot and whiskey and walked it about for 2 or 3 hours.

He spent some time observing the customs of the Choctaws – their way of mourning the dead and a ball game.

The men were elegantly dressed in cotton dresses of white, or red, or blue, with belts, handsomely embroidered, and moccasins of brown deer skin. Several of them had circular plates of silver, or silver crescents, hanging from their necks, while others had the same round their arms, and others silver pendants attached to the cartilage of the nose. (The silver crescents were officers’ gorgets and may have been from any of the various European and US armies and would have been obtained as presents, or booty.) ... the men stripped, previous to the dance,

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

retaining only their girdle, and a long white tail, like that of a wild colt, which gave them a most whimsical and savage appearance, and reminded me of Lord Monboddos theory.

Lord Monboddos was the first to suggest the evolution of man from ape. In a couple of places in the manuscript Hodgson demonstrates a knowledge of the natural sciences of the day, for instance in discussing the geology of the Niagra falls. He seems, at least in youth, not to have seen in this any conflict with his Evangelical views – *“the trees of science bending with glorious fruit.”*

Cumberland Mountain, Tennessee

They set off early the next day and in the afternoon arrived at Elliot, a Christian mission to the Choctaws, where he met the missionary Cyrus Kingsbury. The boys were taught agriculture and the girls domestic skills but the principal purpose was religious instruction. The Choctaws supported the mission on their annuity from the government for their ceded lands.

I contrasted them in their social, their moral, and their religious condition, with the straggling hunters, with their painted faces, who occasionally stared through the windows, with the half-naked savages, whom we had seen in the forests a few nights before, dancing round their midnight fires, with their tomahawks and scalping knives, rending the air with their fierce war-whoop, or making the woods thrill with their savage yells. But they formed a yet stronger contrast with the poor Indians, ...on the frontier - corrupted degraded and debased by their intercourse with English, Irish, or American traders.

Leaving Elliot he spent two nights with a Chicasaw and Choctaw couple who explained the marriage relationship to him; the husband joined the wife’s clan, Panther, Bird, Raccoon, or Wolf, and the wife’s brothers had more responsibility for the children than the husband. People of the same clan could not intermarry even though there was no blood relationship and their families lived in distant nations. Of their religion,

“.. it is a prevailing opinion among them that there is a Great Spirit, who made the earth, and placed them on it, and who preserves them in their hunting journeys, and gives them their “luck in life”... that many expect a great day, when the world will be burnt and made over again, far pleasanter than it is now, when the spirits will return from the spirit country, and settle again upon it; and that near the place where they were buried, will be their future home. He here pointed to a sermon book ...and said the following sentence conveyed the opinion of many Indians: “Wheresoever the body is laid till the resurrection, thither, as to a dwelling-house, death brings us home.” or, as an Indian would express himself, “the Great Fire brings us home.” He also heard of the attachment of the Choctaw to the British and the divisions that had arisen during the war when some were put to death for refusing to fight when the tribe sided with the Americans.

They traveled by Indian path with some difficulty. They had to cross ridge after ridge, and deep creeks, often across felled tulip trees. The ground was often covered with cypress knees (aerial roots of the swamp cypress) which, without care, could have ruined the horses.

Letters from America

They regained the Kentucky trace and on the 25th they crossed the Alabama-Mississippi line and reached Muscle Shoals. The price of Federal land had fallen by half and many settlers planned to abandon their second payment in hopes of buying the forfeited land at a lower price. They wanted for little; making their own cotton and woolen clothes and their own soap, candles, and sugar. They raised sheep, pigs, and cattle in the woods, by simply putting a bell around their necks. Unfortunately those who wanted to buy luxuries or foreign produce were forced to resort to slavery and cotton planting. On the 27th they carried on to Athens, Georgia a town of 20 or 30 log cabins and to Cambridge a village of four or five and thence to Huntsville “*a small town full of stores, or shops.*” “*We then proceeded to a comfortable inn, commanding a delightful view. Here I had proposed to spend Sunday; but found our landlord such a sporting character, and was told the house was such a Sunday lounge, that I determined to proceed to one of a different stamp.*”

On the 29th they left on the Huntsville to Knoxville road, a proper road unlike the broad grass path of the Kentucky Trace. They crossed the Cumberland Mountains on the 30th of May and stayed with a highlander married to a Cherokee where they found “*a good library, maps and American and English Newspapers – the latter most acceptable.*” They carried on to Brainerd, a Cherokee missionary station run by the same missionaries as founded Elliot, where they joined in the service.

I was much gratified by hearing the children sing their Cherokee hymns and many ancient prophecies came forcibly to my recollection, when joining with my English servant in this Indian country, with Americans, Indians, and Africans, in singing the following verse of one of our hymns

*“Let every nation, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him full majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all”.*

Leaving Brainerd on June 2nd, they crossed the Tennessee River once more, bidding “*a last adieu to Indian Territory.*” He reflected on the Indians position.

“Sovereigns, from time immemorial, of the interminable forests which overshadow this vast continent, they have gradually been driven, by the white usurpers of their soil, within the limits of their present precarious possessions. One after another of their favourite rivers has been reluctantly abandoned, until the range of the hunter is bounded by lines prescribed by his invader, and the independence of the warrior is no more ...”

“It is not in our naval, our military, or our commercial character, that we have as yet appeared generally as a blessing to benighted nations. It is not when we press into the wars of Christians, the tomahawk or scalping knife of the Indian; it is not when, deluging his country with spirituous liquors, in the prosecution of an unequal traffic, we send forth a moral pestilence, before which the frail virtues of the savage fall, like the dry leaves of his forests in the blasts of autumn; it is not when thus engaged, that we either conciliate his affections, or elevate his moral tone.”

“The time, I hope, will come, when not our Missionaries only, but our naval and military commanders, our soldiers, our sailors, and our merchants, will all

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

carry with them to every country where they hoist the British flag unequivocal demonstrations that they are from a Christian land; and it is animating, indeed, to regard our colonial establishments, our extended commerce, and our vast marine, as instruments in the hands of Providence, to open paths for those who are destined to extend the glad tidings of salvation to the darkest and remotest regions of the habitable globe.”

They had been eating and sleeping at the homes of settlers who were willing to serve them food and provide a bed or at least a rug. Everywhere they stayed Hodgson remarked on the books he found. At one breakfast stop the landlord's son's books detained him for a couple of hours – Homer, Ovid, Virgil, Cicero, Dugald Stewart, Adam Smith, Ferguson's Astronomy, Rees Encyclopedia, etc. *“It was delightful to meet our old friend Dugald Stewart in such a place”*

This is a significant sidelight on his education and beliefs; Dugald Stewart was for twenty five years, from 1785, the professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University. His courses included, ethics, political philosophy, theory of government, political economy and the economic philosophy of Adam Smith.¹⁹

Richmond Virginia.

They continued along the valley between the Cumberland Mountain and the Tennessee River to Kingston where the mountains reminded him of the Coniston Fells and the Langdale Pikes. From Kingston they traveled to Knoxville where he stayed at Ray's Tavern *“which being built of bricks, and divided into convenient rooms, appeared like a palace, after our late accommodations.”* By now the summer heat was growing and they could only travel in the evening; in the south they had benefited from the shade of thick woods. The crops changed and he was reminded of home by the wheat and barley and the cut hay; *“the smell of which transported me for a time to ---“.* – He doesn't specify, but it is surely Caton, in Lancashire. At Richland Creek, the style and manners of the people reminded him of the country people of the Lake District. Some customs were different as when he was placed at the supper-table with *“labourers in their shirt sleeves. But those labourers appeared as cordial, obliging and accommodating as those with whom I have ventured to compare them”.*

He became aware, in East Tennessee, of plans to improve communications by connecting the Tennessee River with Mobile via the Tombigbee and Alabama Rivers. Thus produce could travel by this route instead of via New Orleans and the Gulf. He had seen, at Mobile, that flour was selling at prices *“extravagantly higher”* than New Orleans, demonstrating his keen eye for market economics. The project was not completed until 1985!²⁰

They crossed the Alleghany Mountains on the 12th of June and descended into the valley of the Roanoke where they saw the first river since leaving Oakmulgee in Alabama which discharged into the Atlantic. Of the valley between the north mountain and the Blue Ridge, often indiscriminately called the Shenandoah Valley he remarked *“With the richness of this luxuriant valley I know you are already acquainted. It required no great stretch of my imagination to fancy myself near Windermere.”*

Letters from America

On the 14th he visited a retired judge in Fincastle, the home of the Fincastle Resolutions which were brought by delegates to the first continental congress. The court house in the town of Botetourt was designed by Thomas Jefferson. Hodgson was visiting a historic site and person, on his way for a chat with Jefferson himself. He cannot stay to the disappointment of the judge since *“in connection with calling at Mr Jefferson’s at a proper hour, it would cost me an entire day.”* So he left and crossed the James River toward nightfall. The next day he heard a clock strike for the first time since he left Georgia prompting him to remark that everything in the south is regulated by the sun. *“If you ask what time it is, it either wants so many hours of noon, or it is so much before, or so much after sundown. Meals are regulated by the sun, even in families where there is a watch, or a timepiece, as it is called, and I have very often heard evening service announced at church, to begin at early candle-light. This want of precision would run away with all the spare hours in our country.”* And finally – heavy irony – *“A pair of stocks, which I saw on a village green in the valley, at last furnished a decisive proof that we were again within the pale of civilization.”*

He inevitably returned to the subject of slavery and noted an alteration in the relative numbers of white and black in the population of Virginia and an increase of free labour engaged in agriculture. *“Not that these lovely scenes are unpolluted by slavery; there is scarcely a family without slaves, and almost every tavern is branded with the most disgusting advertisements for runaways; but the heart is less frequently sickened at the sight of large gangs (excuse this hideous but technical term) broiling under a vertical sun, and goaded to preternatural labour, as in Louisiana, by the lash. Here their masters, or other White labourers, occasionally work among them, and the cereal productions of this part of the country are less powerful stimulants to excessive exertion, than the sugar, rice, or cotton of more southern states. I shall be truly glad when I pass beyond the limits of slavery.”*

On the 16th he arrived at Wainsborough a *“peaceful little village at the foot of the blue ridge and very like one of the little villages in the north of England.”* They ascended the Blue Ridge at RockFish Gap and stayed at Hayes’s tavern at its foot on June 18th. From there they proceeded to Gooch’s Inn for breakfast where, *“I saw the arrival of the Albion, at New York, with newspapers to the 30th April, and the sentence ‘pronounced on Thistlewood and his associates.’”* The news was of the Cato Street Conspiracy, an attempt to assassinate the British cabinet, the causes of which lay in the Six Acts passed following the Peterloo Massacre in August 1816 in Manchester, which made any meeting in favour of radical reform an overt act of Treasonable Conspiracy.²¹ His silence on the subject and remarks elsewhere hint at a whiff of the radical in the young Hodgson, no doubt influenced, in part, by his non-conformist relatives, but if present it was not to last.

He visited Judge Archibald Stuart in Staunton, *“to whom I was recommended by the late amiable and very popular Governor of Mississippi”* in order to obtain an introduction to Jefferson. This was a friend of Jefferson who built a neo-classical home in Staunton in 1791 (120 Church Street). Stuart had bought some of Jefferson’s books and 16 were found in the attic last century. These are the only books from Jefferson’s library that still survive since Jefferson sold his books to

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

the Library of Congress to pay off his debts and they were all burnt by the British in the War of 1812.²²

After breakfast he passed through Charlottesville where General Tarleton, scion of the Liverpool slave trading family, had almost captured Jefferson and the State Legislature during the Revolutionary War "*being prevented by a female relation of one of the officers, a few miles distant, at whose house the General and his suite had invited themselves to breakfast.*" He saw the new university being built under Jefferson's auspices. At Monticello, some three miles further on, he sent in his letter and was politely received and led through a hall hung with mammoth bones and Indian artefacts. He talked with Jefferson about the state of the Indian nations and about American timber. Later, after dinner, they talked about the current situation in Britain, the state of relations between the two countries and expressed the hope that the two countries might come to a better understanding. Unfortunately Hodgson omitted the details of his conversation saying in a footnote that there has not been time to obtain Jefferson's permission.

He left Monticello about six in the evening reflecting on all he had seen in the last six months, from the Indians of the southern woods to the densely populated cities. "*I had traced man through every successive stage of civilization, from the roaming savage, whose ideas scarcely extend beyond the narrow circle of his daily wants, to the statesman who has learnt to grasp the complicated interests of society, and the philosopher, to contemplate the system of the universe.*"

They crossed the Rivannah and travelled to Boyd's Tavern where the landlady had a good library and he "*recognized many old friends, the Edinburgh Review, Matthew Henry, Mrs. Hannah More, &c. &c.*" Hodgson was a descendant on his mother's side of the non-conformist divine Phillip Henry, the father of Matthew Henry who wrote a biblical commentary. After another overnight stop he reached Richmond on the 20th, four months after his last visit, to find letters from home which had "*accumulated over so many weeks.*" He stayed at a hotel kept by a brother of the Attorney General of the state and of the governor elect of Louisiana. "*The brother of Governor H who was so kind to me at Natchez was staying there being a Supreme Court Judge.*" Here the initial H may be a misprint as the Governor of Louisiana was Thomas Robertson and the Attorney General, John Robertson.

On the 26th he travelled to Washington where the weather was hot and Congress had risen and all his friends had "*migrated like birds of passage to colder climes.*" The next day they continued to Baltimore where he met Charles Carroll, one of the richest men in America, and one of the last surviving signatories of the declaration of independence. He watched him ride ceremonially through Baltimore during the 4th of July celebrations carrying the declaration of independence. At times Adam Hodgson behaved like a star struck autograph hunter anxious to meet all the venerable radicals of the revolutionary war.

He sold the horses which had carried them from Natchez to Richmond and "*although they are much thinner than when we started, they are in good spirits*". He reckoned up the cost of the journey, a distance of 1250 miles, at an average of 30 miles a day including stoppages, or 35 excluding Sundays and the day spent at Elliot. The cost came to £23 and when the loss on the horses was included, £48, or 9 pence a mile, "*which, for two persons, is reasonable enough.*" Clearly it had

Letters from America

been a successful and enlivening trip, for the execution of which, and their survival without any major upset, he was justifiably proud. It was quite a contrast to the fashionable Grand Tours of Europe. He brought to the trip a keen interest and considerable learning and brought away valuable and in depth knowledge of a new and rising world power. He was reflecting upon and embracing a huge shift in the global balance of power and of markets. His book seems to represent a prophetic analysis built upon the new sciences of economics and political economy – of which Adam Hodgson was quite clearly a leading practical exponent.

Niagara.

He left Baltimore by steam boat for New York where he collected letters from home just before leaving on the steam boat for Albany. He met friends from Carolina and Georgia on the boat and in Albany they pressed him to join them at the springs, however *“I found I should be closely occupied for two or three days in replying to my commercial letters from England.”* Thus on his fact finding, contact making trip, there were matters of immediate importance to be arranged which were not neglected – the efficient man! He stayed at work in Albany for 3 days and left on the 27th by stage. At Geneva he again worked on commercial letters. The next day being Sunday he went to the Episcopal Church in the morning and the Presbyterian in the afternoon. They left Geneva at 2 next morning in a crowded opposition stage and drove furiously to Canandagua, changed horses and dashed off again *“jostling the other stages with the most animated competition, and except that we had ‘Indian Queens,’ ‘Oneida Chiefs,’ and ‘Montezumas,’ instead of ‘Regulators,’ ‘Umpires,’ and ‘Bang-ups,’ we might have fancied ourselves in England”*. Finally they arrived at Buffalo on Lake Erie 100 miles from Geneva and 300 miles from Albany.

The farm houses were neat and comfortable; but the farmers, like a large proportion of the rest of American population, south of New England, are at present deeply in debt.... It is high time that this nation should learn economy, for habits of extravagance had been gradually diffused through almost every class of society, ... even a horse, was often sold on credit and few had fortitude to forego indulgences, however unsuitable, which those around them, with ampler means, were enjoying. On August 1st they left Buffalo at six in the morning in a stage with two other passengers and rode two miles to Blackrock, where they took the ferry-boat across the Niagara.

“We soon landed in his Majesty's dominions; and it was with no common satisfaction, I assure you, that I set my foot on British territory. For some time, I felt at home again, and found myself unconsciously doing the honours to the American strangers. I had been tolerably indifferent about accommodations, while travelling in America; but I now felt a sort of responsibility, and an anxiety that the Canadian inns should be at least clean. This has, so far, been an inconvenient feeling; and if the inns do not improve, I must dismiss it.”

They viewed the falls and he discussed their geology and the fact they must have receded over time a distance of some 7 miles from Queenstown where the

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

high table land ended. A couple of days later at Niagara he was mortified to find the British fortress decaying whilst the old French fort of the Americans was far more formidable although the garrison was smaller. He deplored the issue of 1 and a half gills of rum per day to the men and the fact they could buy a gallon more for a dollar. He was forced to witness the humiliating spectacle of a soldier being given 300 lashes in full view of the American fort and the American travelers. *“Who exulted in their superiority from which this disgrace is banished”*. He talked for a while with an Irish soldier who thought Niagara a fine situation simply from the cheapness of the liquor. The place was such that he decided not to wait for the American steamboat and they left in an open boat to meet the British steamer **Frontenac**. There was no wind and a journey of 5 hours took a day and a night, nevertheless they arrived in time to catch the steamer from York, to take them back to Niagara.

He journeyed on to Rochester to view the falls which he compared to those of the Clyde. There was also a *“handsome cotton mill”* and a thriving town. However, the town had no bank; even the smallest American towns had numerous banks, the Farmer's Bank, the Merchant's Bank, the Planter's Bank, the Mechanic's Bank, the Franklin Bank, the Patriotic Bank etc. He then sailed down the St Lawrence to Ogdensburg where in an open boat with a party of 25 and their baggage and 25 barrels of flour they shot the rapids which carried them 48 miles downstream in four hours to Montreal. Again he was occupied with commercial engagements which took all week but there were dinner parties given by the merchants every evening. From Montreal he journeyed to Quebec by steam-boat where he visited some Catholic Hurons and his comments made clear that he found Catholic beliefs idolatrous, another lifelong belief.

He left Quebec on August 25th by steamboat carrying 100 Scotch emigrants and their families. More than 10,000 had passed through Quebec that year on their way to the land of promise. Many he felt would be amply rewarded *“but it is much to be regretted that the inducements to emigrate to Canada should be so much exaggerated as to insure disappointment”*. He continued on to Montreal crossing the St Lawrence by canoe and thence by stage to Laprairie and St Johns. He then took the Steamboat for Burlington where he took the Boston stage. Arriving in Concord on the 2nd of September he described it as a neat little town with a handsome Presbyterian church where he attended divine service.

He traveled on to Montpelier in Vermont which he says was like the towns in other states *“with its church and ministers house, with the usual compliment of medical and legal practitioners. With respect to the latter, I am told that they abound most extravagantly throughout the United States... At Mobile, a bookseller, who had brought an excellent collection of books from New York, assured me that he sold at least ten law books for one of any other description; and at Washington Mr. L- told me, while showing me the library in the capitol, that the number of law-books which were poured into it was a real grievance.”*

His servant was ill and so they travelled through Vermont by hiring Jersey Wagons from stage to stage. His admiration of the scenery of Vermont prompted an aside contrasting the different attitudes to landscape in Britain and America; the romantic and the savage.

Letters from America

In the eye of an Englishman, the trees which generally cover the American mountains, even to their summits, detract somewhat from their sublimity. In the imagination of an American, on the contrary, they invest them with whatever of dreary desolation, desert magnificence, and savage nature he has learned from infancy to associate with his interminable forests, and with the wild beasts, and wilder Indians, which inhabit them.

They carried on into Massachusetts and arrived back in Boston on the 5th of September. He had little leisure from commercial and social engagements but was struck by the similarity of Boston to Liverpool, in the appearance of the houses, their furniture, domestic arrangements and the manners of the people. He visited cotton mills at Waltham and was surprised to see the skill they had developed both in spinning and in weaving by power loom. *“They very obligingly showed me their books, and all the particulars with respect to speed, waste, wages, expenses and profit. The last has been such as to induce them greatly to extend their works. I will give you all these particulars when we meet. They will confirm your impression... of the rapidity with which America is advancing in the manufacturing skill. The general appearance of the workmen and children was more orderly and respectable than I have ever seen in England, even in those mills in the country, where the apprentices receive the most attention.* Probably he was referring to the mills at Quarry Bank and Caton owned and operated by Samuel Greg & Co but, in Caton, formerly established by his own father. He preferred the commercial character of Boston to anywhere else in America except perhaps Salem whose wealth was derived from the East India trade which he contrasted with the East India Company which had never exploited the trade as effectively.

He visited a small lace works and heard from the Governor of Ohio about his cotton mill and the prospects of Ohio becoming a great manufacturing state. Mill seats were numerous and subsistence low. Indian corn was below 20c/bushel and cotton transport costs on the Mississippi were less than 1 and a half cents per lb; more valuable commercial intelligence had been gathered.

In Boston he saw the *Constitution*, the *Independence*, and *Java* frigates lying in the harbour and dined with one of the “Indians” who took part in the “tea party”; another addition to his collection of revolutionaries shaken by the hand. Leaving Boston he travelled to New York by stage to Providence and Norwich and thence by Steam boat into New York.

Philadelphia.

Arriving in Philadelphia on October 31st 1820 Hodgson received letters from home by the *Ann Maria* and one written on October 4th in Cheshire had reached him in just 27 days. Almost certainly from the Gregs at Quarry Bank the time from posting to receipt was remarkably short – almost below the average time for the crossing. During his stay he visited an orphans and a widows asylum, the penitentiary, and the hospital, commenting on its present inadequacy to their needs. In a note to the book he quoted from William Roscoe’s *Additional Observations on Penal Jurisprudence and the Reformation of Criminals*. Roscoe seems to have been a family friend and was associated with Adam and Isaac

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

Hodgson in the abolition movement. In an unpublished letter Adam Hodgson wrote to William Rathbone about Roscoe's bankruptcy which occurred in 1816.³

".....before I proceed to business let me congratulate you sincerely on the Roscoes having obtained their certificate. I am surprised and shocked at the detention they experienced and feel deeply for this afflicted family. What a comfort must your brother have been to them!"

He stayed at Mechanic Hall where many Georgians and Carolinians were still deterred from returning south by the prevalence of fever. He then embarked on an amusing description of American manners. *"...in many cases their coldness amounts to the English 'cut direct.' At first, it incommoded me excessively, especially in the women in the country, who showed it the most, and I have sometimes been disposed to ride on, not in the best temper, when, arriving at an inn, after a long stage before breakfast, and asking, very civilly, 'Can we have breakfast here?' I have received a shrill, 'I reckon so,' from a cold female figure, that went on in its employments, without deigning to look at us, or to put any thing in motion to verify its reckoning. In due time, however, the bread was baked, the chicken killed, and both made their appearance, with their constant companions, even in the wildest part of America, ham, eggs, and coffee."*

Writing from Philadelphia Adam Hodgson addressed the subject of emigration which he had been asked about. Emigration to Canada was an important issue and Liverpool was one of the principal ports of embarkation. Land was being distributed in Upper Canada parallel to the St Lawrence and the Great Lakes by lot, emigrants receiving 100 acres of land which could not be sold for three years and 5 acres had to be cleared in the first year; *"easy conditions on which to obtain the fee simple of a hundred acres: and the proposal must therefore be a tempting one to a starving labourer or mechanic."* However he believed this was not what it appeared as the settler would find himself 500 miles from his plot. He would spend at least £5 pounds getting to the land office where there were fees of about £13; almost half the cost of outright purchase without conditions.

By combining their efforts some might succeed but in reality it required capital of between £100 and £500 to be comfortably successful in the first year. He also considered emigration to the southern states. He was not entirely disinterested, as his servant had been mulling the question for himself. The majority of settlers he had met were satisfied with their move although, in Alabama, the high price of corn was a setback. However, his servant objected to slave states, and since title could only be had by purchase, and as his servant could have no more than £80 or £100 capital there was little inducement to emigration. *"My servant, I believe, is disposed to think, that he is better at home than in America; except in his present capacity, in a city where his wages might be ten pounds per annum higher than in England, and where his wife's services as a dress-maker, fine washer, &c. would be productive."*

He stayed in Philadelphia throughout November leaving on December 7th by steamboat for Newcastle, Delaware, where they were packed in stages and driven across state to Frenchtown on the Susquehanna to board a steam-boat and by 3 the next morning they were moored at Baltimore, 139 miles from Philadelphia. On the 11th of December they left Baltimore for Norfolk by sail through Chesapeake Bay taking 22 hours to cover the 210 miles, including two hours anchored in the night.

Letters from America

“This is rapid travelling indeed I arrived here (New York) in less than a fortnight after leaving Philadelphia; traveling 780 miles, and spending five days and nights at Baltimore and two at Norfolk.”

It is not merely impressive to have covered this distance in so short a time but an important economic matter. Transport costs as he indicated time and again were an important component of the costs of any article of produce or manufacture. No doubt he could quote the reduction in transport costs occasioned by the building of the Bridgewater Canal between Manchester and Liverpool. His later involvement in the formation of the Manchester & Liverpool Railway was based on sound economics.

Hodgson also considered how a farmer with £1000 capital would fare in coming to America. He had been asked about the fortunes of Morris Birkbeck, a Quaker from Settle, Yorkshire, who after farming in Surrey emigrated to America frustrated by the taxes and tithes of a society from which he was politically excluded. He was a writer and publicist for emigration and in 1818 purchased a large tract of land in Illinois to which his friend George Flower organized the emigration of colonists from England. He was also influential in ensuring, through his writing, that Illinois did not become a slave state. He died by drowning in the Fox River in 1825 on his way back from visiting Robert Owen’s settlement at New Harmony, Indiana.²³ Hodgson attempted some analysis of these early socialist conceptions of harmonious industrial communities.

He had not visited them and had only met two people who had, one during the summer of 1819, and one just weeks previously. Birkbeck had a comfortable house, good fences, and 60-80 acres of Indian corn, but had raised little or no wheat, preferring to purchase it at Harmony. Hodgson could not remember if this was Birkbeck’s second or third year in the colony but either way *“the result differs so widely from his anticipations, as to render it difficult for him to elude the charge of being a wild and sanguine speculator.”* He had also heard rumours that some people had left the colony through fever and ill health the effects of which he had already seen in the south.

I became sadly too familiar with this melancholy spectacle, on my south-western route, scarcely one family in six, in extensive districts, in the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi, being exempt from fever and ague, and many of them exhibiting tall young men, of eighteen to thirty, moving feebly about the house, completely unfitted for exertion, after 15 or 18 months residence, or rendered indolent or inefficient for the rest of their lives. In Georgia and Carolina, we were told, in a jocular way, that it was not uncommon for a person, who was invited to dinner on a particular day, Wednesday for instance, to begin reckoning ‘Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday – No, I cannot come to you on Wednesday, for that is my fever day.’”

He remarked that Birkbeck would maintain that the political advantages outweighed the material disadvantages. He suggested that in the west, with so many living on the land, and without access to European markets, raising crops could never be very profitable. In time this would change as the population grew resulting in an increase in domestic manufactures. East India goods had already been displaced and the import of Irish linen had almost ceased through cultivation in Philadelphia. He extolled the benefits of free-trade at length, combining Adam

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

Smithian economics with Christian moral philosophy in setting the direction of industrial development. The influence of Dugald Stewart and Paley is obvious.^{19, 24} If American domestic manufacture required import tariffs of 40 or 50%, plus transportation costs, then its time had not arrived. However, if Britain continued to impose the Corn Laws America must limit the import of manufactures. When the government imposed a duty of 6d in the lb on imports of raw wool they simply caused Americans to cease exporting. All his correspondents were instructing him to purchase wool from South America and lodge credits in Germany, Spain, and Portugal for the supply of woolen manufactures from the US. The system was by then too entrenched for repeal of the duty to have much effect. The Corn Laws were equally pernicious since America had to spend twice the labour to manufacture than they would spend directly on corn and the British had to give twice the quantity of manufactures for corn than was necessary.

“It has always appeared to me, that, the strongest argument against the gradual repeal of our corn laws, is, its tendency to alter the relative proportions of our agricultural and manufacturing population; ... I am very sensible of the evils to which a manufacturing population is exposed; but, lamentable as they are, I confess, I think they are not to be compared with those incidental to a half-starved, lawless, and exasperated peasantry. Besides, I sincerely believe that the rapid extension of moral and religious education will ultimately eradicate many of the evils which generally prevail, wherever manufactures have collected the population into large masses.”

Adam Hodgson combined progressive views on free-trade with a firm belief in the improving power of Christian morality. Later in Life Adam Hodgson would find his religious convictions in conflict with his liberal economic views. He added that he saw no reason why cotton spinning could not be profitably established in Ohio.

“From what I hear of Ohio, I know of no place where a young, enterprising, skilful cotton-spinner, with from £5000 to £15,000 capital, fond of farming, and exempt from those delicate sensibilities which would make his heart yearn towards the land of his nativity, would pass his time more to his mind, or be in a fairer way of realizing a large fortune.”

He discussed the deployment of capital of £5000 and the relative standard of living that could be expected, making some wry observations on the strength of the coffee, the quality of the wine, and the magnitude of the spread on the table. Of his informant from Ohio he said, *“In dress and manner he is of about the same ‘grade’ as the Americans would say, as a respectable Yorkshire farmer, possessing an estate of £600 or £800 per ann., and lives, I should imagine, somewhat in the same style, Such men as the overlooker of your mill, or others equally steady and experienced, but more acute, would prosper well in Ohio.*

New York.

He left Norfolk on December 14th for Baltimore to take leave of his friends. On the 18th they set out for Philadelphia through York and Lancaster by open stage. The driver used to drive the Lancaster mail from Preston and had emigrated

Letters from America

from Macclesfield and knew many of his friends there. *“He came out, he said, in his ‘uniformal dress of an English coachman,’ with a broad hat, long great coat, woollen-cord breeches, and jockey boots, all which he has discarded for an uncharacteristic, shabby blue coat, black waistcoat, and blue pantaloons. He procured employment in two days, and his gains have averaged, for the last two years, 26 dollars per month, with part of his board. I told him that I hoped, when he made his bargain, he did not count upon any money from the passengers; he said, ‘Oh no! Please to remember the coachman, would not do here; it would be degrading to ask, although genteel people sometimes press me to take something, which I do not refuse.’ After this hint, I did not hesitate to follow the natural impulse I felt to give an old Lancaster driver a trifle, and some rum and water.”*

He wrote from New York on January 1st 1821 that he had hoped to be within a few days sail of England, but circumstances which he had already told his correspondents about, but unfortunately not us, had prevented it. New York was astonishingly cosmopolitan and the old families, familiar from Mrs. Grant, the Author of *Memoirs of an American Lady*,²⁵ were intelligent and refined but the merchant community was less cultured than in Boston or Philadelphia. There was snow and on Broadway painted sleighs with scarlet cloths and buffalo skins and strung with bells dashed along at great speed, some harnessed as tandems and others as four in hand.

He visited wealthy friends on the Hudson, and attended a dinner party at City Hall with the mayor, where he also attended a meeting of the Society for Preventing Pauperism. He was not impressed and upset by remarks on the state of pauperism in England. The question of prison reform and the situation of the poor had been raised and he discussed it with some of his American friends; in particular an article by Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* in May 1820 which took to task a book published by Janus Walsh on British attitudes to America which pointed up Britain’s faults.²⁶ It is possible that this literary dispute was a motivation for writing his own book. He had also been discussing Roscoe’s, pamphlet, *“that enlightened and distinguished friend of humanity”*, *Additional Observations on Penal Jurisprudence*.²⁷

“I have met some persons who do not like it; but it appears to me, to place the question so cleverly on its proper tooting, and to exhibit such a fine specimen of dignified moderation, that every candid and reasonable American ought to be fully satisfied with it.”

Rhode Island.

He left New York on the 25th to visit Dr Benjamin Silliman, Professor of Chemistry and Mineralogy at Yale College and one of the first American Science Professors. He was also an opponent of slavery which is perhaps why Hodgson sought him out. They discussed a friend in common, Roscoe, and the current disposition of their two countries. Here he got much of his information about the Unitarian Church, the subject of a later letter. He set out next morning to travel to Hartford and Providence. Collecting letters from home at New Bedford he perhaps learned the latest news from England about the royal divorce, and the

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

parliamentary investigation into the morals of Queen Caroline. The affair was causing him a deal of embarrassment.

“As soon as we are known to be Englishmen, ... the first question at every pot-house is, ‘Well, and what are you going to do with your Queen?’ Even the old widows, in the Asylum in Philadelphia, took a private opportunity, while my conductor’s back was turned, to squeeze out of me all the information they could on the subject. I grieve to think how the details of these proceedings have penetrated into the remotest corners of the Union.

In Providence he dined *en famille*, a rare occurrence in America, with one of the principal merchants in the East India trade and was mortified to learn he had 20 ships in the trade and that some 16,000 tons of American shipping were involved. *“They often taunt me, by asking me what our Government can possibly mean by prohibiting us from engaging in a profitable trade, which is open to them and to all the world.”* He might well be mortified; his own father had joined the campaign against the East India monopoly in 1792!

Pawtucket proved to be an interesting place for some of his correspondents. In the north there was evidence of increasing competition for the cotton industry but here was an interesting historical slant – a story they might already know in outline.

“The village had something of the uninviting appearance of Stockport or Bolton. I returned in time to drink tea at Mr. S. He told me, that Slater, (an old workman of Sir Richard Arkwright) who first introduced cotton-spinning into the United States, is still living at Pawtucket, though very old. He came over about 1789, but did not succeed for three or four years. He and his partners have made a handsome fortune in the business, though not very extensively engaged in it. The number of spindles in the immediate neighbourhood of Providence was I was told from 100,000 to 130,000 and the annual consumption of cotton about 15,000 bales, and increasing. The small window panes and narrow streets gave it more the appearance of a dirty manufacturing town, than any I had before seen in America.”

Those dirty manufacturing towns were to greatly increase in Adam Hodgson’s lifetime and efforts directed toward the moral and social improvement of Liverpool would figure large in his life. On the other hand the economic development of the United States was a matter of concern and he estimated their annual cotton consumption at nearly 60,000 bales and rapidly increasing.

On the 1st of February he set out for Newport and was astonished to find that a British Consul *“vegetated there.”* He found himself engaged by a commercial acquaintance’s daughter to accompany her, her sister and cousin to a party given by the Consul.

“You would really have been surprised at the general appearance and manners of the young ladies, of the young men I will say little. One of them, joking my fair conductress on reading Dugald Stewart, I was not a little pleased to find, in the conversation which it gave me the opportunity of pursuing, that she was just finishing his Elements, and proceeding to Paley.” Surprised to discover that his beloved Dugald Stewart, author of Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind along with Archdeacon Paley’s Moral Philosophy, were read at all, let alone

Letters from America

by “young ladies”, he remarked, “*So you see they are not perfect savages even in the ruins of a New England seaport*”.

He was glad to leave Rhode Island but noted in passing that Bishop Berkely composed his work the Minute Philosopher there, a defence of the Christian Religion against free-thinkers, and he quoted the prophetic lines of poetry which began the chapter. He left New Bedford on the Boston stage at 6 o'clock on the 7th on a cold dark morning with rain and sleet, arrived in Boston, 62 miles distant, at six in the evening. He was again impressed by the culture and refinement of Boston Society finding it much closer to the English than elsewhere in America.

“The style of living in the best circles is rather expensive and luxurious for so pure a democracy, but there is a simplicity, frankness, liberality, intelligence, and cultivation, which, combined with their English taste and habits of thinking, gives the society of Boston an agreeable “Je ne sais qoi” which distinguishes it from any other state in the Union.” Something perhaps of what he meant may be gleaned from his reassurance to his correspondent that the servant he has borrowed to accompany him on his trip has not been spoiled. Whose servant it was is not clear. It must strike the modern reader as class ridden snobbery but it would be difficult to paint a clearer picture of the society in which Adam Hodgson lived.

“I have not mentioned your old acquaintance, James, much of late. He has been a great treasure, indeed, and, infinitely to his credit, he is returning to England about as good a servant as he left it. At one period, he degenerated a little, when visions of American estates floated before his imagination, but I desired him to sift the apparent advantages offered to him by this country to the bottom, and to embrace them if they were solid, and his excellent judgment, I think, has decided that he is best at home. Occasionally, while the people at an inn were asking me ‘when the gentleman, who was cleaning the horses, would come to his breakfast,’ I have heard him talking about ‘the other man in the parlour’ but the delusion soon passed away, and he is now, in every respect, I think, as attentive and respectful as when we landed in this Republican country. In his fidelity I have implicit confidence, and am become much attached to him. It is difficult to travel in this country with a servant without spoiling him. In the stage coaches he is probably at least equal to many who are, for the time, on an equality with his master, and although he may not have read Euclid, he is conversant with the axiom, that ‘things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other.’ In the wilderness, too, it would be sulky and ungracious to ride all day, without some interchange of thought, with a worthy intelligent servant, excited and interested by objects as new to him as to yourself. In the wild parts of the country the natives always wish to set a servant down at the same table with his master, and both are thus occasionally placed in an awkward situation. My servant, however, was very dexterous in avoiding dilemmas of this kind...”

Portsmouth.

Arriving in Portland he was not impressed by the lack of sophistication of the legislators of this new state. However this lack of experience was likely to be temporary and he saw advantages in the confederal nature of the states which

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

allowed room for experiment without jeopardizing the whole structure. He discussed the American constitution at some length and was at pains to point out the democratic nature of American government which his correspondents had failed to grasp. He had done considerable research, for example reading the Federalist papers of Hamilton, Maddison and Jay. He also realized that secession was not a completely unlikely, as the Missouri question had demonstrated.

As usual he examined his landlord's books finding; Scott's Bible, Burder's Village Sermons, Baxter's Saint's Rest, Watt's Hymn Book, and Saurin's Sermons. He even made a contribution to his library; adding the evangelical tale the Dairyman's Daughter he had found "*in a shop at Mobile, in that land of darkness on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico.*"

They left Portland at five in the morning, on February 19th in deep snow by tandem sleigh *about as large as a parlour coal-box, or a little larger*. The journey was difficult with the horses falling through the snow or becoming stuck in drifts. 11 hours and 60 miles later they reached Portsmouth where they stayed overnight. The chronological account was interrupted here for some remarks on the state of religion in the United States and on the manners and morals Americans. These were addressed to the Rev. Thomas Gisborne of Yoxall in Staffordshire,³ and summarized impressions gained throughout his journey. His evangelical stance is made clear when mentioning having met Bishop White in Philadelphia "*who went over to England after the Revolution, to be consecrated, in order that Episcopal authority might be transmitted to the latest generations of America, through the legitimate channel in which it had flowed since the laying on of Apostolic hands. Our excellent Granville Sharp, and his active efforts in this cause, came forcibly to my recollection.*"

The Episcopal Church was "*increasing in numbers and piety*" but he regretted in New York "*no small portion of that intolerant and exclusive spirit which appears to identify Christianity with episcopacy.... and so much at variance, as it appears to me, with the spirit and principles of the gospel.*"

In the same ecumenical spirit he wrote a long letter on the Unitarian church in America. Needless to say his tolerant ecumenism does not extend to idolaters, Catholics. Two days later he again wrote on American morals dwelling particularly on intoxication and prostitution. Spirits were widely drunk throughout the day, especially in the South, and yet he had not seen above half a dozen instances of drunkenness except among the frontier Indians. Although a great deal of time was wasted lounging in bar-rooms it was in cigar smoking unlike in England.

"Drams are taken, as it were, 'en passant,' solitary, and in a parenthesis; not in a social circle, round a blazing fire, where I, in fancy, at this moment, see John Bull, sitting in an old arm chair, a three-legged deal table before him, his heart expanding as his bosom warms, one hand on the knee of his next neighbour, or patting him on the back, the other pushing round the common tankard, the band of good fellowship, which, after a few more circuits, will too probably convert this exhibition of rude enjoyment into a melancholy scene of intoxication."

With respect to prostitution he has this to say; "*if they exist in the same degree as with us, which I am disposed, from the prevalence of early marriages, to question, it is under the shade of secrecy; for the cities, except New Orleans,*

Letters from America

present nothing of the disgusting effrontery and unblushing profligacy, which the streets of our large towns exhibit after dark."

Crimes of theft, burglary and murder were much less common in America but dueling was more common and often fatal. Bribery of customs officials, common in England, to obtain speedy dispatch, was almost unknown in America. One of Hodgson's major concerns was the credit worthiness and honesty of the American merchants he met. He displayed considerable caution, a trait maintained throughout his life, and he would not enter transactions where this was in the least doubtful. He also abhorred the tendency of debtors to give preference to particular creditors. Equal division of assets he claimed never to have heard of. Such preferential treatment of creditors was illegal under British law although periodically examples would appear before the courts.

Hodgson and his servant left Newburyport and traveled 25 miles to Salem where he spent several days visiting friends in the town and in nearby Marblehead. He noted habits descended from the Pilgrim Fathers which were still in evidence, the celebration of Thanksgiving instead of Christmas Day, the abhorrence of heretic mince pies, and the duration of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday Evening – "and the evening and the morning were the first day". Writing of the beauty of the Connecticut valley he compared it to his home. *The part of the valley of Connecticut through which we passed, is generally admitted to be one of the finest portions of the cultivated regions of America, Of the beauty of the valley, I cannot convey to you a more lively impression than by telling you that it reminded me forcibly of Lonsdale, with all its features expanded in due proportion With the exception of Lonsdale, it is by far the most beautiful valley I have ever seen.*

Last Days in New York.

They left Hartford on March 2nd 1821 in the Albany stage to visit a Missionary School at Cornwall. Here students from all over the world were instructed in Christian principles. Many were Native Americans but others were from Tahiti, Malaya and New Zealand. Here he acknowledged again the difficulties facing the aboriginal population of America in the face of the advancing colonists.

After what I have seen at the institution at Cornwall, and at the settlements among the Indians, in the southern forests, I anticipate the most important results from the vigorous and judicious exertions which are now directed to their civilization. ... we have it in our power to teach them to become agriculturists; that they are ignorant, and we can give them knowledge; barbarous, and we can teach them the arts of civilization; heathens, and we can extend to them the blessings of Christianity. Their situation, as possessors of land within the limits of the United States, is a very peculiar one, and the validity of their title to lands they do not occupy involves some very important and perplexing considerations. I heard some of the Indians declare they would part with no more of their land, unless General Jackson should be sent with a superior force to compel them, ... he told them, that their land he would have, by one means or another, and that he

And the Childrens Teeth are Set on Edge

gave them one, or perhaps two cents per acre, while the Government resold it for two dollars per acre; that they were sure their great father at Washington, did not authorize such cruelty and extortion.

It would not be very many years before the great father in Washington was General Jackson and not only would they lose title to their lands, they would be forcibly removed. Before leaving Cornwall he again presented a book to his hosts, this time Legh Richmond's Little Jane – an evangelical tale of the conversion and death of a little girl from TB. They travelled toward New York through Sharon and stayed overnight in Poughkeepsie in an Inn overlooking the Hudson with a view of the Catskill Mountains which he considered the most beautiful in America.

“They are not higher than the fine range of the Lake Mountains, which we see from Lancaster Castle, nor, I think, either more beautiful or sublime; but it is difficult to compare objects, where the one is present to the eye, the other only to the imagination.” His travels were drawing to a close. *“We had a glorious sunset behind the distant mountains, and as the sun went down I appeared to take leave of America, for I anticipated little time either to think or feel during the ensuing week of preparation.”*

He left at four o'clock the next morning in the stage and reached New York after midnight where he wrote his last Letter from America which surveyed all he had seen and heard in his 16 month long American journey.

In little more than a year, I have visited Upper and Lower Canada, and traversed the United States from their northern to their southern extremity, ...I have conversed with the polished circles of the Atlantic cities, the forlorn emigrant in the wilderness, the Negro on the plantation, and the Indian in his native forest. In successive intervals of space, I have traced society through those various stages which, in most countries, are exhibited only in successive periods of time. I have seen the roving hunter acquiring the habits of the herdsman, the pastoral state merging into the agricultural, and the agricultural into the manufacturing and commercial.

However he had lost none of his fondness for his home despite his perception that he has been witness to the birth of a new and more vibrant world.

“Our woods and rivers will appear more diminutive, perhaps, than before, but not less picturesque, and Ingleborough and Lonsdale, Coniston Fells and our Lake scenery are surpassed in beauty by nothing which I have seen. You must not be surprised however if I feel a strong emotion, on bidding a last adieu to these western shores, to a country where I have passed so many happy hours, where I have found so much to stimulate and gratify curiosity, and where I have experienced a degree of attention which I never can forget. In the interest which I must ever feel in the destinies of this favoured land, in her European, her African, and her Aboriginal population, I seem as if I were endowed with a new sense. I see in the Americans, a people who, are to show to generations yet unborn what British energy can accomplish, when unfettered by the artificial arrangements of less enlightened times, ... and when bringing to the boundless regions of a new world, fair and fresh from the hand of its Creator, the intellectual treasures which have been accumulating for centuries in the old.”

Letters from America

Hodgson and his servant left America on March 10th 1821 aboard the *Albion packet* and by March 31st, after a rapid but tempestuous voyage, they were back in Blighty. A Liverpool merchant had learned all he could of the market in which he was to be involved for the rest of his life as a cotton broker and banker. His tour had been as comprehensive and meticulous as he could make it. A man of his times, he was enthusiastic about the latest in scientific and economic theory, enthusiastically embracing the benefits of progress. Intellectually infused with the spirit of the Romantic movement of his day he held the high moral ideals of Evangelical Christianity. In this he was doctrinaire only in his view of idolatrous Catholicism, the efforts of the protestant world to civilize and convert the rest of the world were of paramount importance. The aboriginal peoples of the world would only survive by embracing modernism and Christianity. But the most striking feature of his account is his abhorrence of slavery, and he would soon be in the forefront of the movement to emancipate the slaves in British possessions. As an evangelical his moral commitment needs little explanation. As an economist it can also be understood in his adherence to the teachings of Adam Smith and Dugald Stewart. In 1825 he published *Letters to Say* attacking the French Economist Say's views on the economic benefits of slavery. Using economic theory he was at pains to show the benefits of free labour over slave labour. It was a highly influential work among the abolitionists of the day. These aspects of the man's character made him one of the powerhouses behind the development of Victorian Liverpool.

Some of his views were shared by his immediate circle. His brother Isaac was a prominent member of the Anti-Slavery Society. His cousin William Rathbone Greg wrote widely on economic issues, particularly on the factory question, where he opposed regulation, and on the self help movement to improve the condition of the working poor. His cousin William Rathbone was a prominent social and political reformer. Adam Hodgson's education within the intellectual atmosphere of the day, the influence of Adam Smith, Dugald Stewart and Archdeacon Paley on his economic and moral perspectives, seem quite sufficient to account for the character of the man. What other explanation could there be?