The American Magazine, March, 1910, pp. 656-669.

THE AMERICAN WOMAN.

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CHAPTER V.

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What was the American Woman doing in the '40's and '50's that she went on her way so serenely while a few of her sex struggled and suffered to gain for her what they believed to be her rights? Was she too dull or too ignorant to understand her own wrongs? Was she so tightly bound by man's charms that she dared not raise her voice? If one confined his survey of her field to the history of the moment one would be justified in believing both. Sometimes dulled to the point of non-comprehension of her own position, again chained down until the idea of resistance had come to be unthinkable. But as a matter of fact the American Woman of the '40's and '50's failed to be swept into the Woman's Rights movement in any general fashion for quite other reasons - reasons on the whole simple and noble. She was too occupied with preserving and developing the great traditions of life she had inherited and accepted. She was firmly convinced that these traditions were the best the world had so far developed, not merely for women but for society, for this women of the '40's and'50's was not individualistic but eminently social in her point of view. She did not deny that women had not the full opportunity they should have, but as she saw it no more did man. She saw civil and educational and social progress going on about her. She rather feared its coming too fast than too slow, and so as in all ages she as men do, held to the great traditions, honoring them and viewing with watchful and generally suspicious eye the sweeping movement proposed for her emancipation.

And it was no unworthy thing that she was doing. Take that part of her life so often spoken of with contempt - her social life. Those who would pass society by as a frivolous and unworthy

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institution are those who have never learned its real functions - who confuse the selfish business of amusing oneself with the serious task of providing an intimate circle for the free exchange of ideals and of service, for stimulus and enjoyment. It is through society that the quickening of mind and heart best comes about - that the nature is aroused, the fancy heightened. It is the very foundation of civilization - society - the church and the state work through it. Morals are made and unmade in it. Ideas find life or death there. Every community big or little, is what its society is - dull, unwise, ambitionless, alert, happy, achieving. And since civilization began to develop what society is has depended on women. Any man or woman who will search his experience can find proof of the statement. Recall the American towns of to-day you know and you will find if you really know that those in which traditions of temperance, courtesy, dignity and thrift rule are held to their standards by some woman or group of women whose frown is more feared than all the town council and all the police. Take a town of corrupt and extravagant habits and its the women who set the pace and follow it. Fifty years ago - the period we are considering - there were several women in the United States exercising large influence through their individual circles. They are part and parcel of the development of the American Woman and in their careers is to be found one reason why the militant monument for Women's Rights remained a struggling cause.

To select the women who are the most perfect examples of this kind of social activity is not easy. It means passing by many who deserve to be remembered, but the writer is not trying to make a biographical dictionary. She simply aims to illustrate by well-chosen types the activities, interests and tendencies of the women in the period considered. And for any one at all familiar with the social life of the '40's and '50's there will be no question of the propriety of choosing Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis of Boston, a woman who in the '40's and '50's, after a seven years

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residence abroad, boldly undertook the task of lifting the social life of Boston from its old ruts of pretensions, formality and exclusiveness, and of breaking up its stiffness and self-satisfaction. Only an independent and courageous spirit would have dared such an enterprise. Mrs. Otis had such, as Boston well enough knew from its memories of her in the '20's and early '30's. In her youth as "Elizabeth Boardman", the daughter of one of Boston's richest merchants, she had been a famous beauty and belle. In 18 Miss Boardman had married a nephew of James Otis and of Mercy Otis Warren, Harrison Gray Otis. years later she was left a widow with three sons. According to the gossip of the day she was a dashing enough widow. She was accused of "dancing and displaying" from Boston to Washington and numbering in her train even men like Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. But in 1835 (?) she left her followers and took her sons to Europe for study. To a woman of her alert mind and buoyant friendly nature life abroad is a great enrichment. Mrs. Otis mastered several languages. She circulated freely in various sets in various countries. She interested herself in all sorts of activities. She came back to Boston alive to the tips of her fingers, too much alive, she at once discovered, for the upper circles of Boston where she belonged. Its social machinery was of the heavy, putty self-complacent kind. It operated ponderously and expensively and it opened its doors only to the elect. The kingdom of Heaven was much easier of access Mrs. Otis found than her circle. An experience of a few years in flexible, lively, stimulating, intellectual circles of Europe had given Mrs. Otis convincing proof of what a woman might do for a community if she handled a social circle with brains and independence and she set out at once to build up in her home a circle where naturalness, openness and simplicity ruled. She first attacked the machinery. Elaborate formal dinners for the elders, balls for the younger set - these were the accepted functions. Eating was a chief business at all gatherings, Charles Dickens speakers particularly of the supper

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at parties, an invariable feature of whichwas "two mighty bowls of hot stewed oysters in anyone of which a half-grown Duke of Clarence might be smothered easily." There was little informal visiting, and calling by women was done largely in the morning. There were practically no regular "evenings" or days at home. Mrs. Otis swept all of the machinery out of her house - eschewed "functions" and banquets and balls. Instead she threw her house open every Saturday morning and every Thursday evening to all her set - and many more. No rising young writer or singer or artist, no attractive man or woman of any set who fell in Mrs. Otis' way that was not welcomed. Foreigners naturally sought her house because of its familiar ways. A big, wide-awake informal circle was soon about her. Her open house was made easy by a system of refreshments which left Boston agape. The "mighty bowls of hot stewed oysters" Mrs. Otis dared to drop. She substituted tea and cakes. No matter what the occasion tea and cakes was all you got to eat in the lively circle at the corner of Mount Vernon and Jay Street. For years it was related with a gasp that in at the opening of the Boston and Montreal road, although Mrs. Otis kept her house open for a week - entertaining President Fillmore, Lord Elgin and many other dignitaries "tea and cakes" it was and nothing else!

Her innovations founded as they were on good sense, and a genuine love of people and ideas were a success from the start. Boston society was limbered up, enlivened and liberated in a way hardly believable. The theory on which she worked she embodied in a story, "The Barclay's of Boston", which if not exactly literature is nevertheless a valuable document in the manners and customs of Boston in her time and the way by which in her judgment its life was to be made more genuine and enjoyable. Here for example are some bits of her social wisdom:-

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From the first days of their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Barclay were always at home in the evening, cheerful and happy, and delighted to see pleasant faces around them. This being perfectly understood, and, also from its great rarity, extremely appreciated, there was no lack of visitors. Indeed, no one can exaggerate the value of such a house as theirs had always been in a community where so few are opened in the same way. They conferred a great social blessing on many, who, having no ties of kindred, looked upon their fireside as an oasis in the desert; their house was, also, a resource for strangers; they received all the nobilities who passed through the city, and thereby derived a very signal advantage from foreign intercourse, which does a vast deal, in America, towards rubbing off the dust collected by describing, diurnally, the same circle of opinions and feelings.

Everything was in daily use in Mrs. Barclay's home; she had no one article of table equipage that was better than another, and this saved a world of trouble, time and temper, the two latter of dominant importance in all households; for, if there is a bit of porcelain that excels another, it is sure never to be forthcoming, in an American establishment, when it is most required. Her dinners were excellent, and served unpretendingly, she having no desire to ape foreign fashions with a few servants, and to adopt the affection of forcing three waiters to perform the service of thirty. If any shortcomings occurred, they were never perceived, or commented upon, simply because there was no ostentatious pretension.

Mr. Barclay, being eminently hospitable, invited his friends freely; his wife gave them a gracious welcome, and he a hearty one; and their guests were not confined to the prosperous and those who revelled in luxuries, but embraced poor scholars, artists and others, to whom a well appointed repast was a boon indeed, and the charm of social intercourse, a greater one still.

All of which sounds genial and certainly is good sense. Applied as Mrs. Otis applied it the results altogether were both beneficent and stimulating.

In a more formal and less original way the stimulus Mrs. Otis applied to Boston's cumbersome social life Mrs. James Rush applied in Philadelphia in this same period. She, too, had learned social democracy abroad where American women are still frequently obliged to go to learn it - and refused to be fettered by Philadelphia customs and exclusions. She had been born abroad so that in spite of her Quaker parentage, European social traditions came naturally. She was a lover of conversation and exceedingly brilliant as well as well-informed and philosophical in it. Her husband one of the great physicians of his day and a man of wide cultivation, a student, and sought by all who were worth while here and abroad, gave her a splendid field in which to exercise her social genius,

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when she settled in Philadelphia.

Mrs. Rush introduced a machinery of her own. Among other things a "day". To be always at home, to callers, to spend all your mornings in visiting was wasteful of time she declared. She wanted her time protected for her books, her music, her household. Then she made a kind of reception of her afternoon promenade, indeed to walk to the river with Mr. Rush of an afternoon became a much sought for privilege. Miss Anne Wharton who has written fully and authentically of Mrs. Rush, gathering her facts first hand from the family and her friends, says of these walks:-

"Men and women, still in the prime of life, distinctly recall the rubicund face and portly form of Mrs. Rush as she appeared on the street while taking her vigorous constitutional. One person remembers her in a crimson silk gown, which may have served tp throw her far too brilliant complexion into the shade, while still another recalls the stout figure of the lady of fashion, enveloped in a green velvet 'mantilla,' as she stood upon the sidewalk enjoying raw oysters, in a truly democratic fashion, at Tatem's famous oyster-stand on Twelfth Street near Spruce."

Mrs. Rush's dinners and receptions were affairs of state. She took these gatherings seriously and studied to bring together an interesting crowd. She had no artificial rules of making up her companies - anybody who was worth while for anything was included: young authors, musicians, inventors, scientists, found a cordial welcome to her house where they met the great of the earth. Miss Wharton says Mrs. Rush's recipe for making up a party ran: "An ex-president, a foreign minister, a poet, two or three American artists, as many lady authors, a dozen merchants, lawyers, physicians, and others who are there on the simple footing of gentlemen - their wives who come as respectable and agreeable 'ladies' - fifty young men who are good beaux and dance well, fifty pretty girls without money but respectable, well dressed, lively, charming, are always indispensable at a party." Certainly the lists of her visitors which Miss Wharton has made out from an examination of the visiting cards preserved in the Rush family show that she actually succeeded in bringing together this ambitious and catholic society. Her cards

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show all the names worth while in American life of her day - all our most distinguished foreign visitors and the names of many only just starting not yet ariore. Besides there is an enviable list of great artists who sang or played or read for her guests, among them Mario and Grisi. Her gatherings were always carried off with much ceremony, elaborate refreshments, costly dressing, but this was but her frame. Mrs. Rush's great point was the talk - and in her house every topic of the day was debated with freedom - every bit of news of the world of letters, politics, and science was first heard. The effect in a community of such a circle is incalculable. It starts a hundred lines of thought, it works for suppleness and health of opinion, it breaks down prejudices and caste. It is the great mixing bowl of a town. There is no activity of a community, political, social, philanthropic, educational, artistic, which does not receive impulses from circles made up as Mrs. Rush did hers on the base of character and achievement. And these circles sometimes very small and inconspicuous, to be sure, existed everywhere in the United States at that time. Many of them were gathered about the girls who came from Emma Willard's Seminary at Troy. Mrs. Willard was herself a great social leader. She placed the same strong emphasis on ceremony, elegance in dress and manner, beauty of setting, that Mrs. Rush did and she insisted in the same way on welcoming brains and skill to her circle. She had too much fine Democratic sympathy. The life at the Seminary reflected in those years in a rather unusual way the strong social instincts of its great founder. Girls went out from there with some serious social ideals and with ideas of both the opportunity for wholesome influence and the responsibility which lay in a home however simply. All over the country their effect was felt, for it is a mistake to take it for granted that outside of the great cities there was not in the '40's and '50's any stimulating social circles in this country. The unfinished state of the towns, the difficult communications, the ugliness and barrenness of the outside of things, the lack of schools and books, the

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necessity for continuous hard work in order to earn a living, all of these features of their life have been so emphasized that much that was enjoyable and stimulating has been overlooked by those who know it only from deceptions. Certainly Cincinnati and Louisville in these years were active intellectual centers. The group of people which the Beechers joined when Lyman Beecher went there in the '30's was able, serious and important. Take a town like Springfield, Illinois, too, which Lincoln went to live in in 1837, and where he was at first considerably disconcerted by what he described as "the flowing about in carriages". The women who led in its social life were superior women, their homes were dignified, their hospitality generous, and as for an animated circle - think of of what the quality of talk must have been in the homes of Mrs. Speed and Mrs. Marion Edwards, when they could gather at their table and at their "parties" as they constantly did such men, then young, as Abraham Lincoln, Stephen A. Douglas, John J. Hardin, James Shields, the Edwards, John Stuart, Judge David Davis, Edward D. Baker and many more. All men who were to distinguish themselves in our history and some of them to lay down their lives for the freedom. With such men to handle what could not a group of women not do! And they exercised their power. Springfield was one of the liveliest places in the West intellectually. Moreover, the women over the entire state were actively interested in politics and affairs. One of the conspicuous features of the Lincoln and Douglas Debates were the number of women who attended them, women alive to the issue and able to discuss it. This same interest existed the country over among women. They would travel any distance to hear the discussion of a public question and indeed they were then as to-day the chief strength of the travelling lecturers and later of the established lyceums.

Through all of the West indeed there flowed a spirit which made up for everything else. Carl Schurz in a beautiful chapter of his great Reminiscences tells of the Western society - as he

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found it in the early '50's:

"Life in the West," he says, "especially away from the larger towns, lacked, indeed, the finer enjoyments of civilization to a degree hard to bear to those who had been accustomed to them, and who did not find a compensation in that which gave to Western life - and American life generally - its peculiar charm: a warm living interest in the progressive evolution, constantly and rapidly going on, the joy of growth - that which I have attempted to call in German 'dee Wer de lent'. Now and then we have heard persons of culture, perhaps, complain that this country has no romantic ivy-clad ruins, no historic castles or cathedrals, and in general, little that appeals to sentiment or to the cultivated esthetic sense. True, it has the defects common to all new countries, and it will be tedious and unattractive to those who cherish as the quintessence of life the things which a new country does not and naturally cannot possess. But it offers more than any other country that compensation which consists in a joyous appreciation not only of that which is, but of that which is to be - the growth we witness, the development of which we are a part."

The women of the West were a part of this growth - a conscious part. They always felt the responsibility in the Westward movement, the obligation of Democracy laid on them, the obligation of establishing the home while the man established the town, of looking after education while he looked after the money to pay for it, of preserving and developing morals, while he did the same for politics. It was a defunct program which lay before these women. They understood its importance, respected the work, and gave themselves unflinchingly to meet its difficulties.

It is a mistake to take it for granted that these women who gave themselves so seriously to developing their circles had no outside public interests. Take Mrs. Otis, for example. She was the busiest of women in outside work. "If she had been alive to-day she would have been absorbed in the 1915 movement," a descendant of hers declares! And so she would, and in its settlements, its lectures, its music, everything worth interest. From the beginning of her re-establishment in Boston she interested herself in its enterprise, philanthropic and public. Her great patriotic passion was George Washington. She found it shocking that his Birthday was not observed - his home at Mt. Vernon in private hands - and she undertook a campaign in the interests of both. For years Mrs. Otis resplendent in purple velvet and rare old lace, opened her house on

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February 22, from morning until night, to the whole town. On this day there was something more than tea and cakes offered - the Boardman sherrys and ports, famous old wines imported by Mrs. Otis' father were on the table for all who came. And everybody came. Her reception was the center of the day's celebrating and every organization which paraded made it a point to march by and salute or serenade her to the scandal of the conservatives! It was her work that made the day a legal holiday in Massachusetts, and gave the strongest impulse towards making it a national day. It was natural making a cult of Washington as she did that she should have taken a leading part in the enterprise of buying Mt. Vernon for a National Monument. The money which completed the purchase of this lovely spot - one of the few places in this country where the most urrelevant and disorganized of up-to-date minds is for a moment at least studied and solemnized - was raised by a ball engineered by Mrs. Otis and given in the Boston theater on March 4, 1859.

This Mount Vernon Ball of Mrs. Otis' is typical of a kind of activity which engrossed American women all over the country in those years. Fairs and balls for this or that cause were given on a scale which we rarely or never hear of now-a-days. Boston saw one especially famous fair long before Mrs. Otis' ball. This was the Monument fair, given in 1840 to raise the fund necessary to complete the Bunker Hill Monument. This fair like the Mount Vernon ball, originated with a woman - Mrs. Sarah Goseplea Hale - the best known editor at that time among American women. An ardent patriot Mrs. Hale had been distressed by the unfinished condition of the monument and the entire apathy on the part of the committee towards its completion. She suggested to them that this was a task for women. The idea was welcomed by the Monument Association and Mrs. Hale undertook to raise a subscription from women and children. Over 3000 persons responded but the sum raised was not large. Mrs. Hale did not lose her interest, however, and a few years later in 1840 became the chairwoman of the executive committee of well known

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Boston women who organized and carried through one of the greatest affairs of the kind previous to the Civil War. It was held in Quincy Hall opposite Faneuil Hall and lasted seven days. All New England contributed to it. Mrs. Hale edited a paper, "The Monument," to which many prominent men and women sent articles and poems. A copy of this sheet is among the curiosities of the Boston Public Library. Thirty thousand was netted for the monument!

A great deal of the money devoted to church, school and charity in those years was raised like the money for Mt. Vernon and Bunker Hill Monument. The anti-slavery fairs were famous. Charity balls and fairs were a feature of every winter in every community. They drew the women together in much the same way that club undertakings do to-day. They were on the whole one of the chief, if not the chief, opportunity for mixing in the town - since all classes could and did patronize them. One may deplore as much as he likes this method of raising money. It is of course a bad way - as bad as any other kind of indirect taxation of sugar coating the thing which ought to be done manfully because it is right and proper to do it. It is wasteful of strength and time and often utterly immoral in the petty trickery, wheedling and swindling, but that is not the question here. It was the recognised method of the day of raising money. Just as not so many years earlier a lottery had been (the persistency of the lottery at church and charity-fairs long after it was outlawed is one of many curious evidences of the indifference to means which characterized these undertakings so long as the end was attained). The point here is how the the women of the country conducted them. Nobody who has had experience in these undertakings can but have been struck with the energy, self-sacrifice and superior executive quality which was put into them. The women of the '40's and '50's in such undertakings as the Mt. Vernon ball and certain great charity fairs notably one held in 1856 in the Crystal Palace of New York for the benefit of the hospital of the Sisters of Charity

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the hospital of the Sisters of Charity* showed publicly that they were capable of engineering difficult and complicated enterprises, and that they were willing to sacrifice their own leisure, strength and means to the public good. Incidentally, too, the women of the day got through these undertakings a large experience in public life. It was a broadening business - as disinterested work always is.

A phase of their efforts generally overlooked is their struggle to make up for their own lack of education as well as to provide schools to educate their daughters. The touching testimony of Dr. Emerson already quoted** as to the large number of women advanced in years who entered his schools side by side with young girls is typical of the eagerness to know which prevailed through the country. It was this spirit which as early as the late '20's and in the '30's brought together audiences for Frances Wright and Ernestine Rose, wherever they might go, and which later built up the lecture lyceums. You could always get an audience of women anywhere in the country then as now. The most distinguished form of intellectual work developed by a woman in the period was no doubt Margaret Fuller's Ossolis Conversations in Boston. Margaret was then about thirty years old, with the reputation probably deserved of being the most learned woman in the country. She had more interesting qualifications than learning - a thirsty searching mind - a hunger for beauty, a determination to express himself which no obstacle could long stop and with these qualities a sense of duty as rigid as New England ever produced. Her father had taken her education upon himself when she was a child and had driven her too hard, as she felt later. She had mastered Latin and German. She had

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* $34,000 was netted by this fair. It was organized and carried through by a very lovely woman, Mrs. James M. White. See Elliot's Queens of American Society.

** See "The American Magazine" for December, 1909.

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read enormously. She became engrossed in the transcendental philosophy of the day and forced her way to its leaders, beating down Emerson's first distrust of her until they became intimates. With Dr. Clarke and Channing and Alcott she became equally familiar. True, a class of the Boston intellectual circle never could abide her. Lowell, for example, felt very much towards Margaret Fuller as Napoleon towards Mme. de Stael, as Dr. Johnson towards Mrs. Macauley. He ridiculed her rather maliciously as it has always seemed to the writer in Fable for Critics:

> "But here comes Miranda Zeus! where shall I flee to?
> She has such a penchant for bothering me, too!
> She always keeps asking if I don't observe a
> Particular likeness 'twixt her and Minerva.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> She will take an old notion and make it her own,
> By saying it o'er in her sibylline tone;
> Or persuade you 'tis something tremendously deep,
> By repeating it so as to put you to sleep;
> And she well may defy any mortal to see through it,
> When once she has mixed up her infinite me through it.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Here Miranda came up and said: Phoebus, you know
> That the infinite soul has its infinite woe,
> As I ought to know, having lived cheek by jowl
> Since the day I was born, with the infinite soul."

But however irritating Margaret Fuller's self-assertion, eagerness, and insistence on her own discoveries of world-old facts and thoughts may sometimes have been she was a wonderfully stimulating teacher and talker. Forced to earn her living and help her family she began teaching. She tried writing but it was not there her power lay as she knew very well. It lay in Conversation. She was interested in women, felt as keenly as Mary Woolstoneroft the defects of their education and was philosopher enough to see that the only real solution of any problem in society lies in education. It was quite natural that she evolved the scheme of talks or conversations for women. The suggestions was well received by such women as Elizabeth Peabody, Mrs. Emerson, Miss Green, afterwards Mrs.

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Phillips and Miss Maria White, afterwards Mrs. Lowell, and in November, 1839, the first gathering was held in Miss Peabody's rooms. What she arrived at she stated at the outset:

"Women are now taught, at school, all that men are. They run over, superficially, even more studies, without being really taught anything. But with this difference: men are called on, from a very early period, to reproduce all that they learn. Their college exercises, their political duties, their professional studies, the first actions of life in any direction, call on them to put to use what they have learned. But women learn without any attempt to reproduce. Their only reproduction is for purposes of display. It is to supply this defect that these conversations have been planned."

She proposed in them

"To pass in review the departments of thought and knowledge and endeavor to place them in due relation to one another in our minds; to systematize thought, and give a precision and clearness in which our sex are so deficient, chiefly, I think, because they have so few inducements to test and classify what they receive."

A good deal of fun was poked at Margaret Fuller's Conversations which she continued with increasing success for five years, but they cannot be dismissed lightly, for they were taken seriously by serious women and were a powerful stimulus to a kind of intellectual activity which has been gaining impetus ever since and which is rarely so well and authoritatively done as Margaret did it. The secret of her success in these conversations lay, I think, in what Ednah Cheny characterizes as "her power of vitalizing all knowledge, by bringing it into relation with life, not in its practical but in its ideal aspects," - a power which has a mighty hold on the mind of woman.

Another woman who in Boston at this time did an enormous amount to quicken the intellectual life of the town was Margaret's staunch supporter, Elizabeth Peabody - the "Grandmother of Boston" as she came years later to be fondly called. Miss Peabody was Margaret's senior by some six years and the path she had gone was no doubt something of a guide to the younger woman. Like almost every serious minded girl of her day Elizabeth Peabody had heard the call to teach. In an unpublished letter to Sarah Josepha Hall, dated on

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Miss Peabody's 74th birthday the writer recently came across this amusing and illuminating bit of reminiscence. "The education of the young American," Miss Peabody told Mrs. Hall, "from the beginning was presented to my childish imagination by my mother when I was so young that mistaking the word ancestors for Ann-sisters, I got an impression that I never have quite lost that women were the originators of the American nation and responsible for its education."

Here is the key to Miss Peabody's career as it is, as already insisted on to the career of the great body of noted American women in the first seventy-five years of the life of this republic. The realization that the most essential duty of women in this Democracy is keeping its stream of life pure at its source.

Of course she went early to teaching. Her most interesting experiment at the start was assisting Bronson Alcott in his Concord undertaking described in his "Records of a School." In 1836 in Salem Miss Peabody opened classes for women in literature and history, forerunners of Margaret Fuller's Conversations in Boston. A little later she made a venture which as long as it lasted gave to Boston a unique intellectual center and that was establishing a shop where she handled French and German books mainly. In connection with this shop she did considerable publishing - her idea being of course eventually to build up a publishing house. Miss Peabody's little book shop on West Street became at once a center of conversational if not of commercial activity. The fine and serious mind, the splendid personality of the proprietor drew to her room the Concord lights: Emerson, Hawthorne, Alcott and all the Brook farm and Harvard crowd women flocked there, particularly idolizing school girls. Miss Cheney in a few sprightly pagagraphs on Miss Peabody speaks of the shop as a "kind of Transcendental Exchange". This at least is certain for ten years it was there one heard as good talk as could be heard in town so engrossed did Miss Peabody become in her publishing work that she saw the necessity of

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outside visiting and she claims to have been the first Boston woman who set aside a regular evening for her friends - a claim also made for Mrs. Otis. However that may be it was the book shop which as long as it lasted, until about 1850, was her really important center. Unfortunately the undertaking was a failure commercially. A combination of book publishers to put her out of business is usually stated as the reason, but one can read between the lines of her story another explanation which must have had something to do with it and that was that Miss Peabody was much more deeply interested in the ideas in her books than in their sale. It was but an episode in a career destined to bring into American educational life fresh knowledge and fresh stimulus, for it was through Elizabeth Peabody that Froebel and the kindergarten first became known in the United States - a story which belongs to a later chapter of this narrative.

If it is impossible to find in any other American town two women exactly like Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody, it is not difficult to find everywhere women of the same quality of intelligence, the same eagerness for knowledge and the same zeal in acquiring and spreading it. The quickening of the mind of their sex was what they sought. But they were neither pioneers nor exceptions, except in degree. An amazing amount of intellectual work of one kind or another aside from the educational and reform work on which we have touched in the previous chapter was going on. If one will run over the files of the North American Review from 1840-1860, he will find that there is not a volume which does not give some space to the consideration of the books by women. In poetry and romance they were particularly productive. There are many writers seriously considered that are now forgotten, but there are names which never will be forgotten and several whose works must remain as among the best documents of the life of the times we have, as for example, Mrs. Kirkland's Western studies, fresh, sparkling, wise and kind sketches of Michigan Territory life; Mrs. Elliot's "Women of the Revolution," material gathered with what the Review

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calls a "patience which deserved to be called pious" and much of which would have been lost if it had not been for her zeal and persistence, and of course that book of all time "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Not only were American women doing a great deal of good writing, as much if not more I am inclined to think all things considered, than they are doing now. She was proving herself a successful editor. In Boston Margaret Fuller's work from 1840 to 1844 on the DIAL is familiar, but an even more difficult task was well performed from 1843 to 1848 by Cornelia Wells Walter, who then took entire editorial charge of the Boston Daily Evening Transcript. Many women who succeeded with books were called to editorial tasks as Greeley called Lydia Maria Child to the Tribune. As Mrs. Kirkland was called to Philadelphia in 1848 to take the editorship of Sartain's Magazine.

If one seeks a fair and trustworthy expression of the interests, the ambitions and the attitude of mind of the average American woman at this time - the women of whom the above were the leaders, he can not do better than to study one of these editors, Sarah Josephs Hale - the same Mrs. Hale whose efforts for Bunker Hill Monument have already been referred to.

Mrs. Hale came into her position as editor of the leading Woman's journal of the day by a path she blazed for herself. She had received the fine home training which the early New England fathers and mothers gave their daughters and in 1813 had married a man of superior intelligence. Throughout their married life the two made it a rule to carry on a systematic course of reading and study. But their life together lasted only some eight years, and Mrs. Hale found herself without means and with children to educate. Untrained as she was, she immediately determined to utilize her knowledge of books and a certain happy facility in versification. Poems which she had written in happier days she collected into a subscription edition and sent them out with a pathetic little circular, stating that it was not vanity or the desire of fame which com-

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pelled her to rush into print, but only the necessity of earning money for her children. The poems were followed by her first novel, "Northwood," a story of the North and South, famous in its day. Twenty-five years after its first appearance, in 1852, Mrs. Hale got out a new edition of "Northwood", in the preface of which she said the book had been written with her babe, born after its father's death, in her arms, not for fame, but to support her children. She submitted the manuscript of "Northwood" to Putnam and Hunt of Boston, and on the strength of it, they asked her to undertake the editorship of a magazine which they wished to start, "The Ladies' Magazine" to be devoted exclusively to the interests of women. Novel as the offer must have been to a woman in 1827, Mrs. Hale did not hesitate. "The Ladies' Magazine", which the announcement declared to be devoted to "female education and the moral improvement of society", was an immediate success, but the editor-in-chief, although she seems to have written herself well to half of the contents of every number, was not satisfied with this means of expression. Volume after volume of "Juvenile Miscellany", of "Tokens," "Keepsakes," "Annals" written wholly or in part by Mrs. Hale appeared. It was in one of these volumes, dedicated "To All Good Children in the United States" and published in 1830, that the classic rhymes "Mary Had A Little Lamb" first appeared, probably the last thing that Mrs. Hale ever wrote which she supposed would have anything more than a temporary life.

The success of Mrs. Hale in the Ladies' Magazine attracted the attention of Louis A. Godey of Philadelphia, who conceived the idea of buying out the journal and Mrs. Hale with it and annexing both to the Ladies' Book of his own town. In 1841 he succeeded in the undertaking and Godey's Ladyes' Book with Mrs. Hale as editor began its career. This famous journal which only flicked out a few years ago was founded on the principle that an editor should give the public he aims to reach what it believes and wants, that he should never shock it. Mr.. Godey believed that nobody in the

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United States understood and believed in the ideals and interests of the average well-to-do American Woman as Mrs. Hale did and he was right. In the first place Mrs. Hale was a woman, who found the key to life in the interpretation of the Bible which then prevailed and in this she had the American women with her. They got from the church the reason of things as they found them - the reason for their submission to masculine authority - the explanation of their place in society, their program of activities. From it they got, too, their vision. To be sure it was a vision of the future - Heaven was their home not the earth. Heaven was to realize the pure democracy - earth never could. The emphasis of Christian teaching was placed on patience and endurance and the activity to which it urged was saving souls by teaching and exhortation and charity. The church failed to grasp that the evils which it counselled should be endured were for the most part preventable, that its first business was keeping souls from corruption, not submitting to conditions that forced ruin and then trying to patch them up, that its chief effort was remedy when it should have been prevention. Woman took the teachings as a rule quick, liberally and dwvoutly. They were not sticklers for creed. Men might spend their days in fighting over immersion and predestination and the meaning of the six days of creation, etc., etc., but it was the practical and social activities which engrossed them, raising money for church extension, feeding the poor, getting up donations for the preacher, packing boxes for frontier teachers, helping support a missionary, teaching in Sunday School. These were the best ways they then saw for making their own little worlds better and happier and always and forever that is what the mass of women are trying to do - the real necessity of the good woman's heart.

Mrs. Hale always edited and wrote in entire sympathy with this interpretation of Christian duty. Nothing was permitted in the Lady's Book that was not in harmony with the Orthodox teachings of the day.

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Another stronghold of Mrs. Hale was her belief in gentility. That beautiful tradition then ruled among American Women. It went to funny, even sinful extremes. They ran from the prim notions of propriety illustrated by the tale of a famous New England spinster, Marm Betty, the tragedy of whose life was that Gormon Brooks had once seen her drinking out of the spout of her tea-kettle to the sinful modesty of a woman like Susan B. Anthony's mother who before the advent of her children hid herself from everybody, never mentioning the little one to even her own mother. In its reasonable interpretation gentility meant gentleness, self-restraint, unselfishness, courtesy and these were the ambitions of the American mother for her girls - the mark of the lady, the tests of birth and breeding - that gentility was sadly mixed with evasions of the facts of life was its weakness, the defect of its quality.

On this foundation of religion and gentility Mrs. Hale built Godey's. As in her first venture, "female education and the moral improvement of society" was her most cherished object-belt. She did not insist on these aims to the detriment of the popularity of the journal. It is interesting to examine the files of Godey's to see how constantly Mrs. Hale limbered up, trying to meet the demands of the day. It was something of a wrench for her at first to add fashions to her highly moral journal, but she applied the same seriousness and intelligence to them that she did to the rest of her departments. It was Mrs. Hale who made the interesting attempt to Americanize the French fashions. "Godey's Americanized French Fashion-plates" are one of the most successful efforts to influence the dress of women ever made in this country. Her activities outside of the regular work of the journal were endless. It is undoubtedly to Mrs. Hale that we owe the fact that we have a national Thanksgiving Day. For years she agitated this, regularly every fall sending out to the governors of all the states her appeal that they choose the last Thursday of November for the celebration in their states. She persistently appealed to Congress and to

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various eminent men, and finally in 1860, for the first time, Mr. Lincoln proclaimed a National Thanksgiving Day. She wanted it declared a legal national holiday, which has never been done, of course, though the practice amounts to that. Another campaign she carried on with great persistency was substituting the word "woman" for "female." In her early days the latter word was used almost entirely, but largely due to her persistent correspondence and agitating through the "Lady Book" the use was discontinued. She was greatly interested in the medical education of women, particularly for women who might be going out as missionaries, and in order to spread the idea she carried on an extensive correspondence with the bishops of the church.

Much of her editorial correspondence in the earlier years of Godey's is still preserved by her grand-daughter, Miss Mary Stockton Hunter of Philadelphia, who courteously has allowed the writer to examine it. It shows not only her zeal in trying to get the best work for her journal, but the respect and friendliness which the best men of the time had for her. Poe was not an unfrequent contributor to "The Lady Book" and wrote her most appreciative letters. He liked her verse and was especially complimentary about her romance in rhyme, "Alice Ray." Oliver Wendell Holmes, who had been a fellow boarder of Mrs. Hale in the years when she was editing "The Ladies' Magazine" in Boston, wrote her in one letter, apropos of her own work, "Your perseverance and spirit in literary labor fill me with admiration. How much you have done, and always with a high and pure aim." There is a letter in the file from Charles Dickens in the same tone. But though Holmes' letters are always most friendly, I find only refusals to write for "The Lady's Book." In one letter dated March 4th, 1847, he tells her, in excusing himself: "I do not really think it worth while to count me as one of the regular army of literateurs. I claim to be only a volunteer. I rarely write. I often refuse entirely to print what I have written, and when I do, I always have to look over my proofs twice

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that no nonsense but my own may get into them. In short, I am one of the class of impracticables, a worthless set who cost a great deal in postage, and like the famous trout that Mr. Sullivan used to tell of, take more butter to cook them than they are worth."

The success of Godey's Lady's Book is one of the wonder tales of American journalism. It reached the phenomenal circulation at one time of 150,000 copies, and it was commonly said that no lady would think her drawing room table complete without it.

Now how did the Woman's Rights Movement impress the ladies who read Godey's, women like Mrs. Hale, Mrs. Otis, Mrs. Rush, Margaret Fuller? These women it should be remembered believed themselves truly progressive - and were. Enough had been said of them to show that they had all broken with the conventions of their conservative circles and sought for themselves and these about them fuller lives. They were all advocates of the great Democratic movement for the higher education of women and each in her way worked for it - were themselves educated. But they were not supporters of the Woman's Rights Movement and why?

After Mrs. Hale's death in 1879 a society of which she had been long a member passed this resolution:-

Resolved that we admire and would emulate the noble industry that made her work of more than seventy-five years a moulding element in the character of the women of our country - that while guarding with jealous care Women's real rights and highest culture she so mingled in her daily life and writings the spirit of progress with true conservatism that she never compromised true womanly nature.

In that paragraph one has the principle stated in the position of the day in which thousands of American Women were acting in the '40's and the '50's: "The spirit of progress," without compromising "true womanly nature." It was this conviction the Woman's Rights Movement somehow few of them could have explained who violated this rule that kept a great body of women out of the movement - the fear that they were going to lose something of their womanliness. Even staunch supporters of the movement shared this fear. Mrs. Blackwell herself has told the writer with what oriti-

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cal eyes she watched herself and friends to see if they were determinate in character and gentleness.

A powerful influence against their acceptance of the new views was their belief in the interpretation long given to what the Bible has to say about women. The old liberal teachings caused them all more or less struggle. Mrs. Hale felt keenly the need of squaring up certain features of the movement for emancipation which she could not but admit, with Biblical teachings and worked out one of the most ingenious arguments produced for this purpose. This is found in the preface to what she always considered her magnum opus - the Woman's Record - a work in which she undertook to show by sketches of all the women of achievements in all times, where women excelled, where they failed, and where they could best direct their efforts. Upwards of eight hundred women, ancient and modern, are sketched in the work - but not merely sketched, each has to stand Mrs. Hale's measuring rod. In her preface she lays down her position as to women's place in the world - basing it necessarily on the Scriptures. According to her interpretation woman is the superior to man, was intended so to be by the Creator. She argues that the first Chapter of Genesis shows that there was a care and preparation in forming woman which was not bestowed on man. Moreover, she was "the last work of creation" - "The crown of all" - and the theory of evolution shows that the last is best! She argues that St. Paul meant to teach the superiority of women when he ordered that she remain covered and man uncovered in the churches. "Is it not the privilege of the superior to remain covered in the presence of the inferior" she askes triumphantly.

In the affair of the apple she finds that while the man fell utterly we did not. She confessed and took her punishment meekly, but Adam threw the blame on her and "like a felon he was condemned to hard labor for life on the ground cursed for his sake." Eve was to suffer for her children and be subject to her husband, but she was not "cast down by fall - like man." "To her was confided by

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the Creator's express declaration the mission of disinterested affection - her 'desire' was to be to her husband," but not for his pleasure, for his elevation. And from this argument she concludes that "Woman is God's appointed agent of morality." Anything that leads her away from this mission, that leads her to aspire to intellectual, professional or industrial equality with man is to obscure her real and higher calling - to weaken her powers and to debase rather than elevate her. And there is no measure of doubt that this argument or a variety of it worked powerfully with a vast body of women - and for that matter does still.

But aside from the general fear that in some way their gentility and their womanliness would be broken down by the new views - aside from their inability to accept any view which seemed to be in opposition to Biblical teachings. The most powerful of all things against the movement in the writer's judgment was a fundamental connection of the Worth-whileness of the woman's life.

To bear and to rear, to feel the deependence of man and child - the necessity for themselves - to know that upon their backs depended the health, the character, the happiness, the future of certain human beings - to see themselves laying or preserving the foundations of so imposing a thing as a family - to build so that these families would become a strong stone in the state - to feel themselves through this family perpetuating and perfecting church, society, Republic. This was life - this was worth while. They knew it. They might not have been able to state it, but all their instincts and experiences convinced them of the supreme and eternal value of their place in the world. They dared not tamper with it. The women who honored it most were the least willing to tamper with it.

Respect for your calling brings patience with its burden and its limitations. The changes they might desire they would only work for conservatively if at all. They might deplore the laws that gave a man the power to beat his wife - but as a matter of

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fact few men did beat their wives and popular opinion was a powerful weapon. They might deplore the laws of propriety - but few of them were deeply touched by them. The husband, the child, the home, the social circle, the church, these things were infinitely more interesting and important to them than diplomas, rights to work, rights to property, rights to vote. All the sentiments in the revolting Women's program seemed trivial, cold, profitless beside the realities of life as they dreamed it and struggled to realise it. It was the woman's life which barred the way most effectually to the growth of the cause of Woman's Rights.

But this did not mean that these women who held back were incapable of being swept into a great national movement if some impelling need stirred their hearts - that they could not put aside home and child and husband - give themselves and all they had if the call should come. They were to be put to the test at the moment when the advocates of Women Rights were most bitter against what they felt to be their narrowness and selfishness and their response makes one of the noblest chapters in American Womanhood.

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There was no place in the country where this activity was more feverish than in New York. Ten days after the fall of Sumter, the New York Evening Post reported under the title of "Movements of the Ladies' Relief Association" nine different groups of women, most of them connected with churches, as having organized to collect "money, flannel, muslin, old linen, preserved and dried fruits, wine, brandy, tapioca, farina, arrow-root, etc." It was here that the first attempt at something more than local organization was made. The suggestion came in a meeting, which as a matter of fact had been stampeded by people entirely outside of those for whom it was intended. One of the most interesting young institutions in the city at that time was a small infirmary for women and children, entirely under the management of capable physicians, the first thing of the kind ever started in this country. It had been founded by Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell. One of Dr. Blackwell's objects in the infirmary was training nurses. She saw immediately, after the call to war, that one of the difficulties was going to be to get women for the hospitals who really were fit for the service, and with the hope that they might in her institution do something toward aiding in this particular, she called together the women on her board of directors. The notice by accident got into the New York Times, and instead of the lady managers alone, there appeared in the little infirmary a company of some fifty or sixty women, many of them prominent in New York, eager to help if they could. Among them came a few men also prominent in the town. Instead of discussing nurses, as was intended, the meeting turned to a discussion of the need of organizing the scattered efforts which were breaking out all over the town in such an astonishing numbers. It was proposed that a mass meeting be held in Cooper Union to see what could be done.

Two days later, on April 27th, a call for a mass meeting was issued, signed by ninety-two women, the best known names in the city. The result of this mass meeting was the organization of The Women's Central Relief Association which proposed to absorb all of the scatter-

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ed societies through the city and its suburbs, in order to organize and direct their efforts. But the Women's Central Relief Association was hardly under way before a larger scheme had been developed by the very men and women who had brought it into existence.

There was fresh in the mind of the country at this time the work which Florence Nightingale had done in the Crimean, and all of the wise suggestions about army sanitation and nursing which had grown out of it. To utilize these in the coming war seemed to be the height of wisdom and a so called Sanitary Commission was organized which proposed to supplement the Medical Department of the army in the work of caring for the soldiers.

The men having this commission in charge felt that the Women's Relief Association could better work in connection with that body than alone, that they could fulfill towards the central commission the most important work of furnishing supplies and nurses. It was something of a wrench for some of the women, at least, to merge their society, but it was very promptly done. The common sense of the plan appealed to most of the women. Almost before it was realized the Sanitary Commission was at work and the women were pulling with it in the most natural and systematic way.

As has been said, their first work was furnishing supplies. Lint and havelocks had been the two chief objects to which they had turned their attention at the start, but through the Sanitary Commission there now was sent out

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The fact is that

As soon as the war was really over and the disorder it had in regular pursuits had begun to be cleared away it was plain there was a new American woman in the field. ~~In less than twenty years after the war was over, it was obvious~~ that a revolution had ~~come in the attitude of women~~ taken place. ~~Not all of course, but majority, towards their own higher education and their public work with men in professions, on the platform and in organizations.~~ New colleges for women, the admission of women into state universities on equal terms with men, the opening to them of staid old institutions, the multiplying of women doctors and the beginning of the training of nurses, the organizing of charities on a scale unknown before, women working with men in multitudes of new callings, a steady improvement in civil laws concerning - these were the phenomena which men and women saw going on all around them rapidly & as of themselves. The fact was the "Women's Rights" were in the main achieved - if we concede that a right is achieved when those who want it are not only free to exercise it but have taken them, a majority - of the people supporting and encouraging them in that exercise. So sweeping had been the change that those women who had been the leaders in the Woman's Rights Movement - Mrs. Stanton, Miss Anthony, Lucy Stone, Mrs. Gage soon began to turn their attention almost exclusively to one plank in their original platform - the Suffrage plank.

~~For th~~ It was a tremendous lesson in one eternal fact which had always been two generally overlooked by the advocates of Woman's Rights, that you get your rights in the world because it is necessary for the good not of yourself but of the whole that you have them; moreover, that the body of women will never demand a right because it is a right, but that when they need it to accomplish some good for which they feel themselves responsible they will seek and get it because ~~the good of all requires it~~. Necessity, need, is what forces new tools into human hands - not argument and agitation. The civil war put women face to face with the necessity of dealing with men as members of the republic equal. Here was the mo-

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the Freedman's Bureau of work begun in ... on in 1863 by ... ine Griffing of Ohio,- th Soldier's Hor ... the Orphan's Asylums and Schools - were working in a small ... dozen places, usually under the direction of women. When the war closed they had ready the beginnings of the great institutions which were to handle these mighty problems.

They had no hesitation in falling into line with the men and doing whatever they could to help them. They had learned they could work with men - on the battlefield, in the hospitals, in the counting-room, anywhere they were needed, and lose nothing in self-respect or public respect. The country had learned it too. The complete revolution in popular feeling in this matter was one of the most interesting effects of the great experience. Hundreds of women who held strenuously to the old traditions of reserve had been doing all kinds of unheard of tasks, unconsciously and naturally, simply because it was necessary they should do them, and in doing them they had established without argument their right to do them. The swagger of independence, the ~~tinge~~ of defiance which ~~those who looked on had always felt in~~ the demand for rights, and which unquestionably frightened away persons who intellectually were convinced of the soundness of the arguments had been entirely wanting in the war's great movement of women of all classes into organized public work with men. They had come in as naturally as they came into church or drawing-room, and they were accepted as naturally as they were there.

The close of the war did not leave the women of ~~the coun~~ ... ~~ness~~. On the contrary it had created a new set of burdens, a new group of problems - "to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans" - these tasks the women who had been working both as individuals and in organizations saw long before the close of the war were to be their peculiar care and they had begun to make ready for them. All of the peculiar relief institutions which followed the war -

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