

Readings from the works of
Emily Clemens Pearson and Harriet Beecher Stowe

Compiled by Cathy Saunders for the Oct. 31st, 2008 D.C.-area American Women Writers Study Group
discussion of Celebrity and Obscurity

As you will see from the timeline on the following page, Emily Clemens Pearson shares a number of things in common with Harriet Beecher Stowe (whom I'm assuming needs no introduction); both are white Congregationalists from Connecticut who wrote abolitionist novels before it became popular to do so. However, Stowe had achieved considerable fame by the time *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published in book form in 1852, while Pearson was known only in a much smaller circle when her second antislavery novel, *Cousin Franck's Household*, was published in 1853.

I suggest that we focus our discussion primarily around the first two selections: the prefaces to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Cousin Franck's Household*. These two pieces show the authors grappling with some of the same issues, including authentication of the underlying truth of their fictions, from the differing positions of celebrity and obscurity.

To provide some sense of how Pearson differs from Stowe, I have also included a copy of the final chapters of *Cousin Franck's Household*, which appeared only in the book version of the novel. The narrator of this epistolary novel is "Miss P.", or Pocahantas, of Connecticut, who seems to be a stand-in for Pearson herself. As chapter XIX opens, Miss P. is on her second visit to relatives in Virginia. These relatives include her cousin Franck Cameron, who was raised in New England by a Quaker mother, Aunt Clara, traveled south as a tutor, and ended up marrying a wealthy widow, Regina, who has two daughters by her first marriage, Ruth (an abolitionist somewhat disabled by a humped back) and Rosalie (a self-centered belle). As Miss P. learns during her first visit, Regina's father, Henry Hartley, also had four children by his slave mistress, Milly. One of these children, Selma, has remained in the household as Regina's slave until escaping with her son, Hannibal, in the preceding chapter. Early in Chapter XIX, the visitor who aided in the escape, whom the family knows as Mr. Oglethorpe, reveals himself to be another of Henry Hartley's slave children, William, who was sold by his father as a child, and later bought, freed, adopted and educated by a wealthy bachelor. The ensuing denouement, in which the biracial William/Mr. Oglethorpe rearranges for the better the lives not only of the plantation's slaves, but also of his white relatives, then settles near his family in New England, strikes me as a markedly different vision of a possible future for the United States than that suggested by the dual endings of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in which the freed Shelby slaves remain in (salaried) tutelage on the Shelby plantation, and the Harris family moves to Africa.

Emily Clemens Pearson

Chronology & Selected Bibliography

1818	Born Emily C. Clemmons (also spelled Clemons or Clemens) in Granby, CT
1818-37	As far as I can tell, Pearson spent her first 20 years in Granby. Later in life, she wrote, probably autobiographically, of "a young lady" "in a village academy in Connecticut," who, "having a thirst for knowledge," "commenced the study of Latin," to the surprise and opprobrium of her peers. If the narrator of "Old Delia" is a representation of herself, then Pearson may have visited relatives in the south, probably Virginia, around 1833, when she would have been fifteen; another possibility is that she visited or taught in the south after her attendance at Mount Holyoke.
1837-38	Attended Mount Holyoke during its inaugural year (like most of the women in the first class, she did not officially graduate)
1843-1846	As Merlin D. Burt has established, Pearson moved to Rochester, NY in 1843. There, she became, as mentioned in her obituary, "principal of the young ladies' department of Rochester Collegiate Institute." As Burt's work shows, by February 1844, she was also actively involved as an author and editor in the Millerite movement, which expected the second coming of Jesus in fall 1844, and which eventually evolved into present-day 7 th -Day Adventism. In March 1845, Pearson moved to Portland, Maine, where she worked with John Pearson, brother of Charles H. Pearson, in writing for and editing the <i>Hope of Israel</i> and <i>Hope Within the Veil</i> , two early Adventist publications. Later in 1845, she became engaged to Charles Pearson, whom she married in 1846, and moved back to Granby. Around the time of their marriage, they both ceased writing for Adventist periodicals.
1849-50	Charles became a minister, probably sometime after 1850, when he was listed as a "student" in the Granby census. A daughter, Catharine, born c. 1849, is also listed in that census.
Feb. 1851	In the preface to <i>Jamie Parker, The Fugitive</i> (published under the name Emily Catharine Pierson and copyrighted by Charles Henry Pierson), Pearson claimed the book was based on "materials...gathered during a residence at the South."
(June 1851- Apr. 1852	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , by Harriet Beecher Stowe, serialized in the <i>National Era</i>)
Sept. 1851- Apr. 1852	"Letters from Virginia," the serial that became <i>Cousin Franck's Household</i> , appeared in <i>The Watchman & Reflector</i> , a widely-distributed Baptist periodical
(Mar. 1852	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> published in book form)
1853	<i>Cousin Franck's Household</i> published in book form under the pseudonym "Pocahantas" (republished as <i>Ruth's Sacrifice</i> in 1863)
1858	A son, Henry Clemens Pearson, was born while the Pearsons were living in Le Roy, Minnesota, apparently as frontier missionaries, an experience Charles Henry Pearson chronicled in <i>On the Frontier</i> (1864)
Oct. 1863- Mar. 1864	"Plantation Pictures," an unfinished serial "by Mrs. Emily C. Pearson, author of 'Cousin Franck's Household,'" appeared in <i>The Liberator</i>
1864	Charles Henry Pearson took up the editorship of the <i>Home Monthly</i> , a periodical to which both he and Emily had already contributed. Emily apparently continued to supply a substantial portion of the content. "Old Delia" published in July.
1864	<i>The Poor White, or the Rebel Conscript</i> , "by the author of Ruth's Sacrifice," published
1867	<i>Prince Paul, the Freedman Soldier</i> published by the Mass. Sabbath School Society
1868	<i>Echo-bank: a Temperance Tale</i> published by National Temperance Society under pseudonym "Ervie"
1870	<i>Gutenberg; or the world's benefactor</i> , the first of several books on Gutenberg, some for children and some for adults, published
1879	<i>Lydia: A Cantata for Sunday-School Exhibitions</i> published
1890	<i>Madonna Hall, the Story of our Country's Peril</i> published
1900	Died in Medford, MA at the age of 82

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UNCLE TOM'S CABIN;

OR,

LIFE AMONG THE LOWLY.

BY

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.



VOL. I.

FIFTIETH THOUSAND.

BOSTON:

JOHN P. JEWETT & COMPANY.

CLEVELAND, OHIO:

JEWETT, PROCTOR & WORTHINGTON.

1852.

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BOSTON.

Printed by Geo. C. Rand & Co., No. 3 Cornhill.

P R E F A C E .

THE scenes of this story, as its title indicates, lie among a race hitherto ignored by the associations of polite and refined society ; an exotic race, whose ancestors, born beneath a tropic sun, brought with them, and perpetuated to their descendants, a character so essentially unlike the hard and dominant Anglo-Saxon race, as for many years to have won from it only misunderstanding and contempt.

But, another and better day is dawning ; every influence of literature, of poetry and of art, in our times, is becoming more and more in unison with the great master chord of Christianity, "good will to man."

The poet, the painter, and the artist, now seek out and embellish the common and gentler humanities of life, and, under the allurements of fiction,

breathe a humanizing and subduing influence, favorable to the development of the great principles of Christian brotherhood.

The hand of benevolence is everywhere stretched out, searching into abuses, righting wrongs, alleviating distresses, and bringing to the knowledge and sympathies of the world the lowly, the oppressed, and the forgotten.

In this general movement, unhappy Africa at last is remembered; Africa, who began the race of civilization and human progress in the dim, gray dawn of early time, but who, for centuries, has lain bound and bleeding at the foot of civilized and Christianized humanity, imploring compassion in vain.

But the heart of the dominant race, who have been her conquerors, her hard masters, has at length been turned towards her in mercy; and it has been seen how far nobler it is in nations to protect the feeble than to oppress them. Thanks be to God, the world has at last outlived the slave-trade!

The object of these sketches is to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race, as they exist among us; to show their wrongs and sorrows, under a system so necessarily cruel and unjust as to

defeat and do away the good effects of all that can be attempted for them, by their best friends, under it.

In doing this, the author can sincerely disclaim any invidious feeling towards those individuals who, often without any fault of their own, are involved in the trials and embarrassments of the legal relations of slavery.

Experience has shown her that some of the noblest of minds and hearts are often thus involved; and no one knows better than they do, that what may be gathered of the evils of slavery from sketches like these, is not the half that could be told, of the unspeakable whole.

In the northern states, these representations may, perhaps, be thought caricatures; in the southern states are witnesses who know their fidelity. What personal knowledge the author has had, of the truth of incidents such as here are related, will appear in its time.

It is a comfort to hope, as so many of the world's sorrows and wrongs have, from age to age, been lived down, so a time shall come when sketches similar

to these shall be valuable only as memorials of what has long ceased to be.

When an enlightened and Christianized community shall have, on the shores of Africa, laws, language and literature, drawn from among us, may then the scenes of the house of bondage be to them like the remembrance of Egypt to the Israelite,—a motive of thankfulness to Him who hath redeemed them !

For, while politicians contend, and men are swerved this way and that by conflicting tides of interest and passion, the great cause of human liberty is in the hands of one, of whom it is said :

“ He shall not fail nor be discouraged

Till He have set judgment in the earth.”

“ He shall deliver the needy when he crieth,

The¹ poor, and him that hath no helper.”

“ He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence,

And precious shall their blood be in His sight.”

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COUSIN FRANCK'S HOUSEHOLD,

OR

SCENES IN THE OLD DOMINION,

BY

POCAHONTAS. *100 d.*
Mrs. C.H. Pearson
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FOURTH EDITION.

BOSTON:
UPHAM, FORD AND OLMSTEAD,
122 WASHINGTON STREET.
LEWIS COLBY & CO., NEW YORK; MOORE & ANDERSON, CINCINNATI.

1853.

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CAMBRIDGEPORT.

P R E F A C E .

It is Macaulay, we think, who complains of a class of historians, that they do not give us *men and women*. We have tried not to forget our men and women in the following tale, wherein we have sought to exhibit, as Willis has it, "truth under a thin veil of fiction." Nor let any of our more fastidious readers run a tilt against our taste, if they find our style occasionally descending to the lowest strata of dialectical peculiarities. We have let our men and women, whether white or black, rich-white or poor-white, do their own talking. We took some pains during our residence in Virginia, as our voluminous note-books attest, to secure accuracy in the nondescript vernacular of the cabin and the hut; and it afforded us satisfaction to have our accuracy in this respect strongly commended by com-

petent judges in the case, while these Letters were in process of publication in the columns of the Watchman and Reflector, in which able and enterprising religious paper they originally appeared.

The "poor whites," a phase of Southern life not so well known at the North, and to which we have given some prominence, are not an accident of the slave system, but a necessary result, bound to it by the immutable law of cause and effect. No picture of Southern "institutions" is complete, in which this is not seen distinct in the back ground.

Whilst we hate slavery more than we can tell, and the more for what we saw of it, and hardly less for its influence on the whites than on the blacks, we have no desire to wield the vengeance of Heaven against the slaveholder. Alas! we saw too plainly a curse everywhere silently at work, in all the moral, social, intellectual and economical results of the system. But while we saw weaknesses to pity, errors to lament, and vices to execrate, we also saw excellencies to admire and imitate; and if we have not dwelt upon these, it was because it did not comport with our design.

But works of the present class are charged by some with



exaggeration. In one sense they are exaggerations. There are points in which they do not correspond with the reality. It is, however, only in those respects in which all works of fiction resting on a basis of fact transcend the actualities of life. The tame, the common-place, the repetitious are thrown out of view, just as the painter omits many of the trivial objects in his landscape, and yet is true to nature and fact. In this sense, all of Scott's immortal fictions are exaggerations; but who is so weak of brain, or so green in literature, as to hazard such a criticism? And who of his readers does not feel, and not merely because the wand of a mighty magician is on them, that they are drinking in the spirit, and mingling in the scenes and strifes of Scottish life?

Were we content to be an humble imitator, we know of no one whom we should be prouder to follow than the noble author of that wonderful work, "Uncle Tom's Cabin." But we owe it to ourselves to say, that our little book was projected before the publication of the latter; and our Jamie Parker, we think, had only one predecessor—and that we had not seen—in this species of literature.

LETTER XIX.

THE WILL.

WILLOW CREEK, Va., Oct. 1, 18—.

DEAR S.—It was nearly sunrise when we reached home. Juniper was perfectly nonplussed, and did not venture a word during the ride. We all knew he would soon make up this want of volubility. Ruth and I were nervously solicitous that he keep silence, but Mr. Oglethorpe was quite easy on the subject. Indeed, the dark cloud seemed to have been lifted from his heart, and a sunshine let in to which he had before been a stranger.

“Juniper,” said cousin Franck, as we sat down to breakfast, the morning of our return, “you may leave the room.” “That servant,” he continued, as Juniper disappeared, addressing Mr. Oglethorpe, with an agitation of manner that he vainly endeavored to conceal, “is so full of deception, that I never know what part of his stories to believe. Why, he assures me that he found Hannibal; that he started in pursuit; that you went with him to help take the fugitives; that, on arriving at the place where they were secreted, you joined hands with them, and leaving him fast bound, carried them to the landing; but of course I don’t listen to such nonsense;”

and cousin Franck laughed faintly, as if he thought there might be some shadow of truth in it.

"He is mainly correct," said Mr. Oglethorpe, as coolly as if assenting to some metaphysical abstraction.

"I cannot believe it," said Regina, excitedly. Rosalie turned pale.

"In Juniper's eagerness to set out on so commendable an expedition," Mr. Oglethorpe continued, "what does he do, but propose to me to join the chase? I at once acceded, with the determination of doing a good deed,—of righting, as far as possible, a very great wrong. God do so to me, and more also, if I help not him that hath no helper, when it is in my power to do so."

Madam Regina's eyes flashed. Her profound reverence for her guest was plainly fast waning.

"Mr. Oglethorpe," outspoke Franck Cameron, "you are well bred in the usages of society; a guest in the enjoyment of our hospitalities; and yet, Sir, according to your own avowal, a —— I will not apply the epithet sir—but——"

"Allow me, Mr. Cameron, to explain myself and my conduct," replied Mr. Oglethorpe, with his wonted dignity. "My true name is not Oglethorpe, but Hartley. I am the son of the late Henry Hartley, of North Carolina."

"The son of Henry Hartley!" vehemently exclaimed Regina, half rising from her chair and gesticulating with her lame hand, "you lying imposter! my father had no other child but myself,—I tell you I am his only heir!"

"Did not your father have four slave children?" calmly asked Mr. Oglethorpe.

"What then, Sir?" exclaimed Madam Regina, with a dark frown, and an agitation that made her tremble violently.

"Your father, Mrs. Cameron," added Mr. Oglethorpe, "executed a will in favor of one of his slave sons. The attempt to destroy that will was unsuccessful; it is now in existence!"

At these words, Regina became ghastly pale, and swooned in her chair. Cousin Franck, Ruth and myself hastened to assist her. She was carried to her room, and soon revived. Franck endeavored to calm her excitement, and expressed his regret that she had allowed her feelings to betray her into rude language. "Besides," added he, "it is possible that we may be in Oglethorpe's power. I confess to some fears that that will may yet make us more trouble; for it is well known that such a will was left by the old man, and though the public voice pronounced him crazy, yet it might not be so easy to establish the fact, against a claimant of such ample resources. But can it be possible that that will is still in existence? Did you not assure yourself of its destruction?"

"Why yes, I supposed I did," replied Regina, in a tone materially depressed from its late wrathful imperiousness; "but I confess, that, beyond throwing it into the fire, I gave myself no farther concern, as I had not the least idea the matter would ever be thought of again. But what can this mean? Even supposing the will was not destroyed at the

time, what earthly possibility is there of its being in existence after this long lapse of years?"

"I will talk with Oglethorpe again on this point," replied cousin Franck. "But do you remain in your room. Your health requires rest and quiet."

Cousin Franck having returned to the diningroom, inquired of Mr. Oglethorpe if the will of which he had spoken was in his possession.

"It is not," replied that gentleman; "I have but recently learned its existence, and the place of its deposit."

"Are you quite sure you have not been hoaxed?" asked cousin Franck.

"Without more delay," replied Mr. Oglethorpe, "I will take measures to ascertain how the matter stands, for your satisfaction. I will start for North Carolina to-morrow."

"And if you wish it, I will accompany and assist you in your researches," said cousin Franck.

"I thank you, it will not be necessary," replied Mr. Oglethorpe; "if the document is in existence, I shall have no difficulty in finding it. Let me, however, assure you that I hold myself responsible for the full price of the escaped servants, at your own appraisal.

Adieu,

POCAHONTAS.

LETTER XX.

RUTH'S SACRIFICE.

WILLOW CREEK, Va., Oct. 15, 18—.

DEAR S.—Two or three days after the escape of the servants, Ferdinand T. paid a visit to Willow Creek. Ruth was delighted to welcome him; but a dark trial has overshadowed the joy of the high-souled girl. Mr. T. felt that the time had arrived when he ought to receive the answer so long deferred. If she ever consented to marry him, it was his hope she would do so now. In entering upon such a relation, she clearly saw what was before her. She must become the mistress of servants for life; and although the struggle between conscience and affection well nigh rent soul and body asunder, her convictions of duty were triumphant. With a breaking heart, she told him that they must part forever! In vain were his endeavors to change her resolution. Ruth could not yield up her sense of right, and he could not consent to sacrifice his social position, by acceding to her wishes in the premises. Kind and generous as he is in many respects, yet in depth of conviction, and readiness to suffer, he is far enough from the martyr standard.

“Henceforth, life will be a desert to me,” said he, as he

took her hand at parting; "it might have been a Paradise." Ruth ventured no reply, save,

"God bless you! farewell!" She then came up to my room, and watched him as he mounted his horse, and rode slowly away. She did not weep,—her grief was too deep for utterance.

Yesterday was Ruth's birthday; she being eighteen summers old. She has come in possession of her estate, in accordance with a proviso in her father's will. It is a time of perplexity and embarrassment, as her father-in-law, mother, and Rosalie are almost incessantly advising her to waive the purpose she has formed of freeing her slaves. Singular as it may seem, from a child such has been her determination, as soon as they were hers by law. The family interpose so many obstacles, that it is hardly possible to make a movement. She is, however, firmly resolved; only waiting a day or two, to be assured as to the most judicious course.

How refreshing it is to see one wholly intent on doing right! Ruth never seemed so fascinating and lovely as now. Her Heavenly Father is choosing her in the furnace of affliction. She has now relinquished one dearer to her than life itself; the approbation of her friends has long lain a sacrifice upon the altar.

"It seems," said she, thoughtfully and tearfully, "as if I now knew the meaning of the passage, 'sorrowful yet rejoicing.' With all my saddened emotions, I have great peace—a sweet consciousness of having done right. I shall free those poor people whom the law falsely calls *mine*. It should not be

deferred one day even ; for should I die, they must wear their chains for life. Free papers must be made out at once ;" and she left the room to see her resolution put in force.

Rosalie is in a very excited state,—the image of Mr. Oglethorpe is continually before her, and she loves to think of him as he stood in her esteem, before assisting the servants in their audacious escape. She insists he is temporarily insane, fancying himself the son of Henry Hartley. As for the will, that is only a fabrication of his diseased brain !

Cousin Franck has seemed to grow more and more dispirited daily. He often walks the room for hours together in moody silence. It is evident he does not care so much for the loss of his property, but every new trouble has seemed to render Regina more testy and overbearing, until the poor man is compelled to feel that he is only a convenient appendage to her slave establishment. His thoughts more frequently revert to the home of his childhood, to his excellent mother, whose feelings were so deeply wounded by his connection with slavery. I verily believe the old homestead farm, now looks to him like an Eden, and that it would constitute his highest happiness to spend the remainder of his days on its free soil, and amid its peaceful scenes.

Indeed, shall I proclaim my enthusiastic folly? Well, don't laugh at me,—but I have already written a letter to aunt Clara, suggesting the possibility that her misguided, but still loved and only son, might be induced to return to the North. How would it relieve me, if I could see Philip Augustus, Washington and little Clara, delivered from the de-

moralizing influences of slavery, and subjected to the plastic force of aunt Clara's firm but gentle hand!

We often hear from Isabel T.,—she is soon to be married to a wealthy planter. Her friends are generally delighted, and congratulate her on her brilliant prospects. I would rather a thousand times be in the condition of our dear Ruth

Adieu,

POCAHONTAS

LETTER XXI.

THE ADJUSTMENT—ITS RESULT.

WILLOW CREEK, Oct. 24, 18—.

DEAR S.—Mr. Oglethorpe returned three days ago. You may be sure the interest in our household was most intense. Even the servants participated in it. They had heard now and then a word dropped which set their combustible hearts on fire. Almost any change in the fortunes of the family is sure to affect their condition either favorably or adversely; and these poor creatures, like the unfortunate always, are too apt to feel as if a change necessarily involved a good. In the present case, however, their most sanguine anticipations bid fair to be more than realized.

For the first two days after Mr. Oglethorpe's return, he was shut up most of the time—the first day indeed until after midnight,—in close privacy with cousin Franck and Regina. Of course, I am not able to furnish the particulars of what transpired, excepting that the singed and crumpled will was produced, and a large pile of attested documents bearing on the case. During the first day, Regina, whenever she appeared, exhibited evidence of most intense excitement. Yesterday, though the excitement had not disappeared, yet she

seemed like another woman. In truth, my sympathies were strongly enlisted for her, her pride and passion which had towered so loftily of late, appearing so broken and subdued. I really think that her conscience has for some time been violently disturbed, and that her internal struggles have been the source of much of her overbearing and passionate demeanor. Her feelings have plainly been in a moral crisis. Of course, I cannot say how radical or permanent the change may be, but I hope for the best, for she now confesses to a deep sense of wrong, and has assented to cousin Franck's making such arrangement in relation to the estate, as he and Mr. Oglethorpe can agree upon.

In fact, matters have been definitely and amicably settled this afternoon, and in such a way as I know will give you as much joy as it has Ruth and myself.

Cousin Franck relinquishes the estate to Mr. Oglethorpe, with its debts and incumbrances, and receives in return a sum sufficient for the purchase of a first-rate New-England farm, — in fact, a full equivalent. Mr. Oglethorpe was anxious to bring about this result, as it would enable him not only to free the slaves, but to draw his sister Regina with her family from the pestiferous atmosphere of the South.

Adieu,

POCAHONTAS.

P. S. Oct. 26. I have detained this letter a few days, until I could communicate something definite as to our removal. Yesterday we received two letters from the North, —

one from Selma, giving an account of her safe arrival in Amherstburg, Canada, the house of Fayette. Our hearts, I assure you, have been made glad. Even cousin Franck and Regina sympathize with us in our joy. Do you wonder that I often find myself saying to Ruth, "Is it not all a delicious dream, cousin?" But the dear girl, so deeply religious in all her feelings and views, is calm in her highest joy, and loves to dwell on the words,

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

The other letter was from aunt Clara, inviting the family to visit the old homestead, and expressing the wish that they might be willing to make it their permanent home. It is already decided to leave for the North one week from tomorrow. Mr. Oglethorpe, however, will remain until he has settled up affairs here, and will then, without further delay, rejoin us around aunt Clara's hearth stone. The arrangements subsequent to that, you will of course know, without any further Virginia letters. I will just add, however, that wherever Mr. Oglethorpe fixes his beautiful New-England home, Selma will constitute one of its noblest attractions, and Hannibal, it is intended, shall be intimately associated with it.

Until I have the pleasure of introducing to you our peerless Ruth,

Adieu.
Adieu when came to bidding

P.

FINIS.