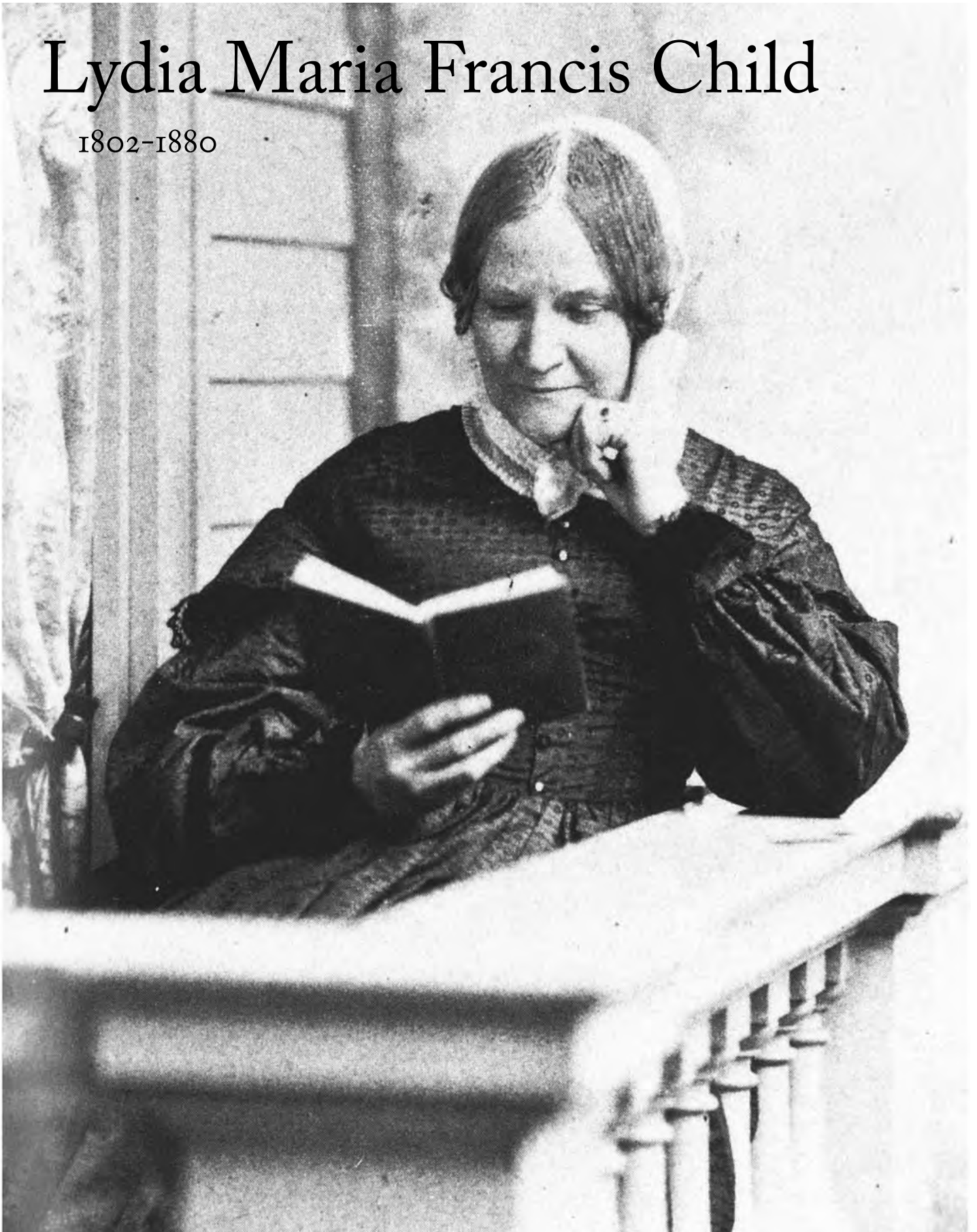


Lydia Maria Francis Child

1802-1880



“Who was Lydia Maria Child and what was she doing in Florence?”

Lydia Maria Child

Introduction

We stand before the site of Florence’s first business, a mill that harnessed the power of the flowing river to press seeds and make vegetable oil. Lydia Maria and David Child moved to this sleepy village in 1838 – four years before the Association opened its doors. They rented use of the mill to process a new crop that had never been grown in the U.S. before. These were not typical farmers – both were dedicated abolitionists and Maria (this is what she called herself) was one of the most famous women of her time.

“Who was Lydia Maria Child?”

- Maria was born to a family without much money and things got harder when her mother died when she was twelve-years-old. Very few young women went to high school and none went to college. How did she get her education? (Doc. A)
- List some things Maria did in her twenties including her personal life. (Doc. A)
- What was *The Juvenile Miscellany* and what was Maria’s job there? (Docs. A, B)
- In 1829 she published The American Frugal Housewife, a self-help guide for women that included cleaning tips and recipes. How many years did it take to go through twelve editions? Does this mean that the book sold well? Other books like this were written by and for wealthy women. What made this book different? (Docs. A,C,J)
- At the height of her fame as a young, successful author, she met William Lloyd Garrison. Remind us who he was. What influence did he have on her? What did “Reforms” refer to? What did she have to “sacrifice”? Ask your partners in the “George Benson” group about how anti-slavery work was generally received in the North. (Docs. A,D)
- Maria went public with her strong views on slavery when she published An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans in 1833. What was bold about the title itself?
- In the book she described many different effects of slavery. We have three examples here: the “chattel principle”, the effects on enslaved women, and the Middle Passage. Briefly describe these. Do you think Americans were used to being confronted with descriptions like this? How do you think they reacted? Discuss your answers with your teachers and your classmates. (Docs. E,F)

“What was Northampton like before the Community arrived here?”

- Following the publication of the Appeal, Maria lost her job at *The Juvenile Miscellany* and people stopped buying her best-selling books. Friends and even family stopped talking to her. She and her husband David decided to leave Boston and find another way to make a living. They chose Northampton.

- Maria was disappointed by what she found here. She was particularly disappointed by the abolitionists who lived in Northampton. Why was that? Why did the Minister not speak out against slavery? (Docs. G,I)
- This is a long letter Maria wrote to another very famous abolitionist about her impressions of Northampton. It appears very detailed and complex but it made one very simple point. What was it? What did all the Northampton residents described here have in common? Why was this important? What effects do you think this had on peoples' views on the subject of abolishing slavery? Discuss your answers with others. (Doc. H)

“What were the Childs doing in Florence?”

- David and Maria moved to Florence to become farmers – to grow sugar beets. Why did they choose to grow this crop? Look up and tell us the significance of the “Free Produce” movement. Why was sugar such an important consumer item? (Docs. J,M)
- Making sugar from beets was a new process in 1838. It was developed in France and David was one of the first to bring this idea to the U.S. Describe some of the steps involved. Does this sound simple? Was David recognized for his efforts? (Docs. I,K,L)
- David gave up on his experiment after five years of hard work. Can you think of some reasons why he did not succeed? (Doc, M)

NOTES ON SOURCES

- A. Chronology of Lydia Maria Child.
- B. Title page of *The Juvenile Miscellany*, the nation’s first magazine for children.
- C. Front cover of Child’s best-selling book.
- D. Letter from Child to Anne Whitney, May 25, 1879.
- E. From An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans (1833).
- F. See E. These devices were used aboard ships during the Middle Passage. They are hand and ankle shackles used to fasten prisoners together. A thumb screw, a torture device. And a speculum used to force feed prisoners who stopped eating.
- G. Letter from Child to Lydia B. Child (David’s sister), August 7, 1838.
- H. Letter from Child to Theodore Weld for his book Slavery As It Is, December 18, 1838. From Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, 1822–1844, 1934
- I. From History of Florence, Massachusetts (1894).
- J. Prepared by the David Ruggles Center (2020)
- K. Hampshire Gazette, 1839.
- L. Copy of award.
- M. Open Letter published in *The Liberator* (1843).

A**LYDIA MARIA CHILD CHRONOLOGY**

- 1802 Born Lydia Francis in Medford, Massachusetts.
- 1814 Her mother dies; she moves in with her sister and begins reading the Classics.
- 1822 Moves in with her brother and gets access to his large library; adds Maria to her name.
- 1824 First book is published, *Hobomuk*.
- 1826 Starts a private school for girls; edits the *Juvenile Miscellany*, America's first children's magazine.
- 1828 Marries newspaper editor David Lee Child.
- 1829 *The American Frugal Housewife* is published.
- 1832 David is a founding member of the New England Anti-Slavery Society.
- 1833 *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* is published.
- 1834 Leaves her job at the *Juvenile Miscellany* and begins anti-slavery work.
- 1838 David and Maria move to Northampton to grow sugar beets.
- 1841 Moves to New York City to be the first woman editor of a national newspaper, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*.
- 1843 Resigns as editor; Northampton sugar beet farm declares bankruptcy.
- 1850 Childs move back to the Boston area; Maria continues writing and activism.
- 1874 David Lee Child dies.
- 1880 Lydia Maria Child dies.

B

THE

JUVENILE MISCELLANY.



“The child is father of the man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety,”
WORDSWORTH.

—NEW SERIES—

VOL. III.

BOSTON :

PUBLISHED BY PUTNAM & HUNT.

.....

1829.



©

THE
AMERICAN
FRUGAL HOUSEWIFE.

DEDICATED TO THOSE
WHO ARE NOT ASHAMED OF ECONOMY.

BY MRS. CHILD,
AUTHOR OF "HOBOMOK," "THE MOTHER'S BOOK," EDITOR OF THE
"JUVENILE MISCELLANY," &c.

A fat kitchen maketh a lean will.—FRANKLIN.
"Economy is a poor man's revenue; extravagance a rich man's ruin.

TWELFTH EDITION.
ENLARGED AND CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

BOSTON:
CARTER, HENDEE, AND CO.
1833.

- D** Lydia Maria Child to Anne Whitney, May 25, 1879 on her first meeting with William Lloyd Garrison, after his death the previous day.

It is wonderful how one mortal may affect the destiny of a multitude. I remember very distinctly the first time I ever saw Garrison. I little thought then that the whole pattern of my life-web would be changed by that introduction. I was then all absorbed in poetry and painting, soaring aloft, on Psyche-wings, into the ethereal regions of mysticism. He got hold of the strings of my conscience, and pulled me into Reforms. It is of no use to imagine what might have been, if I had never met him. Old dreams vanished, old associates departed, and all things became new. But the new surroundings were all alive, and they brought a moral discipline worth ten times the sacrifice they cost. But why use the word sacrifice? I was never conscious of any sacrifice. A new stimulus seized my whole being, and carried me whithersoever it would. "I could not otherwise, so help me God"!

Anne Whitney Papers, Wellesley College

From An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans (1833)

Lydia Maria Child

E When this evil had once begun, it, of course, gathered strength rapidly; for all the bad passions of human nature were eagerly enlisted in its cause. The British formed settlements in North America, and in the West Indies; and these were stocked with slaves. From 1680 to 1786 two million, one hundred and thirty thousand negroes were imported into the British colonies!

In almost all great evils there is some redeeming feature—some good even where it is not intended: pride and vanity, utterly selfish and wrong in themselves, often throw money into the hands of the poor, and thus tend to excite industry and ingenuity, while they produce comfort. But slavery is all evil’--within and without—root and branch,—bud, blossom and fruit!

In order to show how dark it is in every aspect—how invariably injurious both to nations and individuals,—I will select a few facts from the mass of evidence now before me.

Arrived at the place of destination, the condition of the slave is scarcely less deplorable. They are advertised with cattle; chained in droves, and driven to market with a whip; and sold at auction, with the beasts of the field. They are treated like brutes, and all the influences around them conspire to make them brutes.

“Some are employed as domestic slaves, when and how the owner pleases; by day or by night, on Sunday or other days, in any measure or degree, with any remuneration or with none, with what kind or quantity of food the owner of the human beast may choose. Male or female, young or old, weak or strong, may be punished with or without reason, as caprice or passion may prompt. When the drudge does not suit, he may be sold for some inferior purpose, like a horse that has seen his best days, till like a worn-out beast he dies, unpitied and forgotten! Kept in ignorance of the holy precepts and divine consolations of Christianity, he remains a Pagan in a Christian land, without even an object of idolatrous worship—‘having no hope, and without God in the world.’

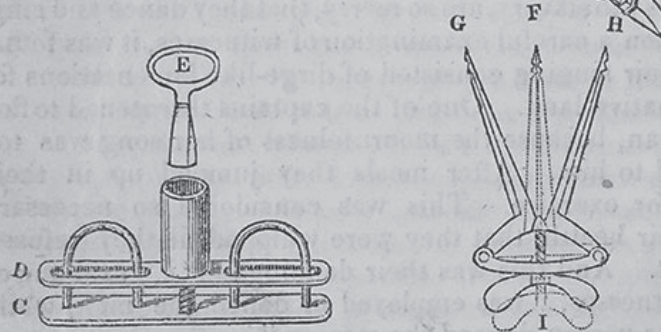
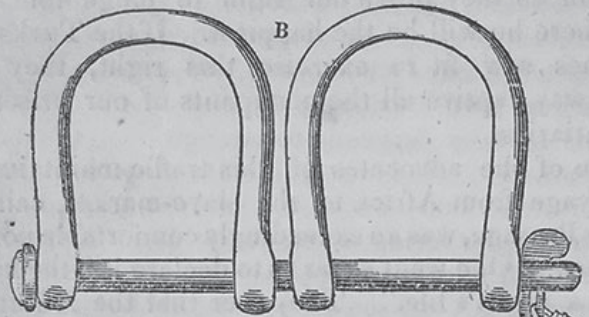
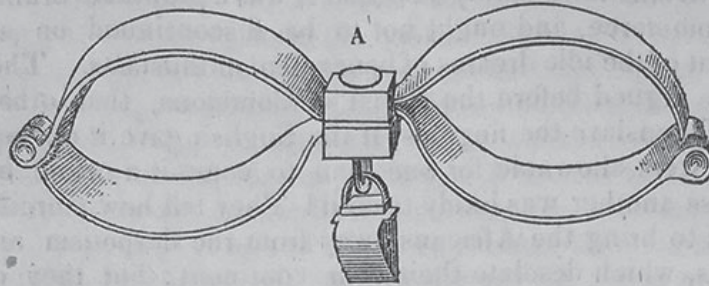
There is another view of this system, which I cannot unveil so completely as it ought to be. I shall be called bold for saying so much; but the facts are so important, that it is a matter of conscience not to be fastidious.

The negro woman is unprotected either by law or public opinion. She is the property of her master, and her daughters are his property. They are allowed to ‘have no conscientious scruples,’ no sense of shame, no regard for the feelings of husband, or parent; they must be entirely subservient to the will of their owner, on pain of being whipped as near unto death as will comport with his interest, or quite to death, if it suit his pleasure.

Those who know human nature would be able to conjecture the unavoidable result, even if it were not betrayed by the amount of mixed population. Think for a moment, what a degrading effect must be produced on the morals of both blacks and whites by customs like these!

Considering we live in the nineteenth century, it is indeed a strange state of society where the father sells his child, and the brother puts his sister up at auction! Yet these things are often practised in our republic.

F





Miss Lydia B. Child, West Boylston, Mass. Northampton Aug. 7 1838

Dear Sister

Concerning our worldly prospects, we can say nothing as yet, for the beets must first be grown before they can be manufactured, but the season has been highly favorable to us. David hired about an acre, which he planted with sugar beets. He has worked in it like a dog. I have been down a great many times and helped him weed, three or four hours at a time. I must boast a little. I have cut out and made a thin woolen frock-coat for him. I can't say it looks as if done by a tailor; but it is really quite passable. The prices of tailoring, and indeed of all kinds of labor, are very high here. I think steady and industrious laboring people could hardly fail to get ahead fast here. We have been treated with much politeness, especially by some among those called the upper classes. But the kind of welcome we expected, viz. from abolitionists, has been very scanty. I was told that two thirds of the town were abolitionists. It may be so, but they keep it wonderfully to themselves. As a general rule, they evidently consider abolition as secondary to the advance of sectarian doctrines, and the respect due to the clergy. I have seen but two who seemed to me real abolitionists.

Directly under our windows is the handsome mansion of Mr. Napier from S. C. He made his fortune by selling slaves at auction & still continues in partners at the South. He is fiery irascible on the subject of Anti-slavery; and I am afraid the citizens here are generally too much afraid of offending him. He is deemed a very pious man, for he pays two hundred dollars a year to support a pro-slavery, Calvinist minister, always goes to Monthly Concerts of Missions, prays loud enough to be heard all round the neighborhood, and is diligent in Sunday school, when he teaches that the Africans are descendents of Ham, and that God has expressly ordained them to perpetual slavery.



To Theodore Dwight Weld

Northampton. Dec. 18th 1838

Dear Friend & Brother,

Though almost a stranger here, I have been deputed to answer the interrogatories in your letter to Mr. Williston. The result of my inquiries is as follows.

Miss Margaret Dwight, Prinbipal of the Gothic Seminary for young ladies, has resided considerable at the South. She generally has 5 or 6 Southerners among her pupils; and she is engaged to educate a constant supply of teachers for a similar school, established under her auspices, in Georgia. She is very fond of the Southern institution, and strongly prejudiced against abolitionists. Her situation entitles her to influence the young a good deal.

Sarah Brackett, Lucy Dewey, and Harriet Clark have gone from here to teach in Georgia. Roxana Hunt went to teach in Alabama. Thankful Wright went as teacher to Virginia, and married a slave-holder there.

Mr. Sheldon went from here for his health, and now teaches in S. Carolina. Says he acts on the strictly non-committal system. He was however rejected in one school, because he would not go quite so far as to say he should be willing to *buy* slaves.

Mr. H. A. Dwight is a teacher in Georgia.

Elizabeth Long married Stebbins Lathrop, a N. England man, who now keeps store in Savannah, Georgia. Her half-brother Joseph Stebbins is in the same store.

Frances Dickenson married Mr. James Lyman, both of Northampton. He now keeps store (at Fort Gibson, Mississippi.) in St. Louis, Missouri. Her brother is in the same store. His partner is a slave-holder: whether he is or not. is unknown. He is quite furious on the subject. Told Mr. Williston "he was glad Lovejoy was shot—he deserved death."

Deacon Luther Clark's daughter married Wm Wells, both of Northampton. He now keeps store at Fort Gibson, Mississippi. Her brother is in the store with him. He began by buying a woman from compassionate motives, as he said, to prevent her from being separated from her husband. Has since increased his stock of slaves, and speculated in Texas lands. Hates abolitionists, and has mightily influenced his own and his wife's relations against them.

David Jewett is in business in Vicksburg, Mississippi. His father here is perfectly furious against abolitionists.

Dr. Legur of this place has a son in Vicksburg. According to his own story, he was active in the mob there—boasted of having shot the first gambler that was filled.

King Hunt, son of the late Doctor Hunt, a drinking, bad-tempered young man? More than suspected of setting fire to his uncle's barn, and breaking open his store. He ran off, and became a slave-overseer somewhere South.

John Stoddard, nephew of Arthur Tappan, married a Georgian lady, rich in slaves. He carries on a large plantation near Savannah. His influence on this subject is very pernicious. He brought on two slaves, (not his own, but hired) and was parading the streets, with them walking behind him, all last summer. One, of these slaves was a pert, wanton woman, evidently trained to go about in the shops and taverns, preaching up the exalted merits of slavery, telling how she pitied and despised free negroes, how easily she could make her \$12 a week &c. The other slave appeared sad and unhappy, and was very vigilantly guarded. John Stoddard told his sister-in-law that they had serious scruples about bringing her to the North, because she looked so discontented. His lordship was in a high state of excitement after visiting the High School here. He could not become reconciled to the monstrous fact that the children of *poor people* were allowed to learn chemistry, botany, &c.

Lyman Hinkley, grandson of Judge Hinkley, married a South Carolinian, rich in slaves. They reside here. All the family connexions have a bitter hostility to abolitionists.

The son of Judge Lyman edits the Brunswick Advocate in Georgia.

Edward Lyman, merchant in Natchez

Mr. Whitney, merchant in Alabama.

James Greenwood, merchant, Alabama. He was a poor orphan helped along by William Stoddard, by whom he was treated like a very brother. I lately heard a most insolent letter from him to Mr. Stoddard, forbidding him to write or send anything to him about emancipation 1⁴

Lyman Clapp, in a Bank at Natchez.
Mr. Parsons, dentist in Natchez.
Edward Storrs clerk in Georgia.
Eli Lovel & wife, cabinet maker, Georgia.
Franklin Parsons, d'o do

Mr. Thomas Napier, formerly a slave-auctioneer in Charleston S.C. Owns a large establishment here; and having the name of being a good, pious man, dons the more mischief on this subject. Very irritable on the subject of slavery. Rose and answered Arnold Buffum with a good deal of warmth when he first lectured here. Being about to go South on business, he published a letter assuring his friends that he was uncontaminated by Northern abolition. Said to have sold all his slaves, when he came here. Holds landed property at the South, and was concerned in a Rice business between Northampton & Charleston; but that failed. Has a great deal of Southern company at his house. Deacon of Mr. Mitchell's church, and Sunday School teacher. He teaches his class that the negroes are descendants of Ham, (fore)ordained by God to be forever "servants of servants." There are many abolitionists in the same church and Sunday school; but they keep as whist as a mouse, when a cat is about the premises. Deacon Napier admired and patronized Gurley greatly, during his late visit here.

Mr. Hibbins, son-in law of Mr. Napier, resides here. Was formerly a slave-holder in S.C. Said to have sold his slaves when he came away. Said to have come North because he did not like to educate his children in a Southern state of society. Less irritable upon the subject than Napier, but contrives to slip smoothly over it. Deacon at Mr. Mitchell's, and Sunday School teacher.

Mr. Mitchell has a salary of \$800; of which \$250 was formerly paid by Messrs Napier & Hibbin. In consequence of pecuniary losses, they now pay him but \$100. Mr. Mitchell opposed to all reforms; but seldom comes out in any form that can be met by open discussion. Refuses to sign petitions; makes inuendoes in his sermons; thinks slavery wrong in the abstract, but finds something very lovely in slave-holding Christians— (refuses to sign petitions,) and diligently circulates Dr. Wayland's Limitation. When Moses Breck, one of his parishioners, tried to get leave for Mr. Colver to lecture in his pulpit, after starting various objections, he at last said, "Why Mr. Breck, if such things are done, it will drive Mr. Napier and Mr. Hibben out of town." He was not even willing that Mr. Colver should preach for him on Sunday, though he promised to say nothing about abolition. Mr. Mitchell replied he was afraid his people would not like his exchanging so often; but a very few weeks after, Dr. Leland of S. Carolina, who was staying at Deacon Napier's, preached for him all day.

Mr. Church, who resides on Round Hill, was formerly a slave-holder in Kentucky. Said to have sold his slaves when he came North. Has a son now a slave-holder, and owns landed property at the South. Attached to the Southern institution; but a timid, quiet man, who says little.

The Hotels here full of Southern travellers, attracted by the beauty of the scenery. Landlords have no love for abolitionists. Partridge, of the Mansion House, was quite angry with Mr. Child for asking a colored man there if he were free. "I dislike slavery as much as you do," said Mr. Partridge; "but then I get my living by slave-holders."

Since the Rice-Hulling manufactory failed, I know of no establishment here connected with the South. Mr. Whitmarsh of the Silk Factory, has a good many Southern customers in the way of eggs and mulberries; but I never heard of anything like partnership."

Of the numbers who have gone from here to the South, I have *heard* of but two, who do not apologize for slavery, and dislike abolitionists. Two of the female teachers write to their friends that they think worse of slavery than ever; but what they say there I know not.

If any individuals here know cases of cruelty by their own observation, they are not those who choose to tell.

So endeth my testimony. Disgusting as the picture is, we are probably freer from the pollution than most large towns in N. England, because little business is done here, and manufactories are small and few.

Very Respectfully,
L M Child

Before closing this chapter mention should be made of two families afterwards noted in the literary world, who at this time were residents of Florence. While the mulberry fever was raging, another enterprise was also being discussed, namely, the making of sugar from beets. Mr. Child had been in France, where the culture of the beet for this purpose was quite extensive, and, on returning in the spring of 1838, he came to Northampton, determined to make sugar from beet roots. The first year he cultivated a few acres, and in 1840 he invented a "beet cutter" and an improved process for



CHILD PLACE ON EASTHAMPTON ROAD.

obtaining the sugar. Soon after he bought a farm on the road to Easthampton, near the peat swamps, and here Mrs. Child wrote some of her works. Mr. Child had twenty acres of sugar beets planted at the "Silk Factory Farm," and some machinery was put in the oil mill. Another of his schemes was to press peat that it might be used for fuel. Although he spent considerable money on both these enterprises, neither proved successful, and about 1847 Mr. Child moved from town.

Mrs. Child was not pleased with this region. In her "Letters" she says: "I have never been so discouraged about abolition as since we came into this iron bound valley of the Connecticut." And again: "If I were to choose my home, I certainly would not place it in the valley of the Connecticut. It is true, the river is broad and clear, the hills majestic, and the whole aspect of outward nature most lordly. But, oh! the narrowness, the bigotry of man!" At this time the influence of Jonathan Edwards was still felt, and the old time theological spirit had not been supplanted by the broader religious toleration of to-day.

1

Sugar went from being an expensive luxury item reserved for rich people to being common and affordable by the early 1800s. Sugar cane plantations in the Caribbean and the Southern U.S. used slave labor to produce molasses in large quantities that was offered at low prices. This was difficult, grueling and dangerous work for enslaved persons that resulted in high mortality rates. Molasses could be refined to make crystallized sugar that was added to coffee, tea and cocoa, all newly available to the majority of Americans. People quickly became accustomed to sweetened drinks and foods and the demand for sugar skyrocketed.

The American Frugal Housewife was the right book that came along at the right time – hence its success. Married men at that time were increasingly leaving their work on the farm to work in factories and shops. Women were expected to raise families and manage the household alone with limited means and little hired help. Married men and women now operated in separate spheres for the first time – each with important jobs to do. Child's book was a “how-to” manual for middle-class women who were “not ashamed of economy”. It included practical tips for cleaning and cooking on a budget. It encouraged American housewives to embrace their new roles and create welcoming homes using “good sense” and hard work.

Sources:

Jack Larkin, The Reshaping of Everyday Life (New York: Harper and Row, 1988)

Daniel Walker Howe, What Hath God Wrought (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2007)

K

BET. SUGAR.—MR. HAWLEY.—Since the mulberry fever has subsided and political aspirants are, for a while, reclining upon their oars, allow me to call your attention to the labors of our indefatigable citizen, David L. Child.

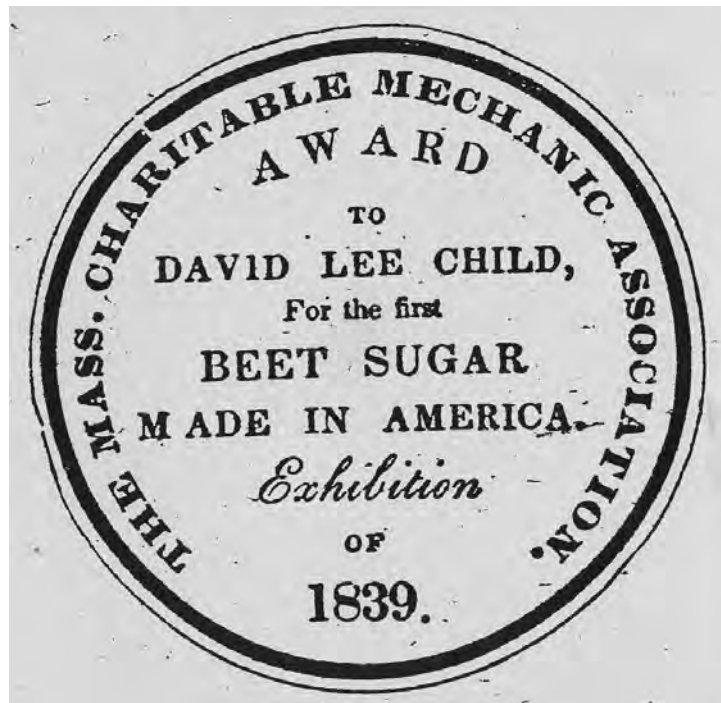
I have watched the the progress of his experiments with no small degree of interest, while the remark has come from almost every quarter, 'The beet sugar humbug has exploded.' In view of the result of these experiments, I am thoroughly convinced of the practicability of manufacturing Sugar from the beet, in New England; and doubt not, that the time is near at hand, when beet sugar will be put down as an important item among the productions of the United States.

Mr. Child has made some valuable improvements in the process of manufacturing, such as will doubtless diminish very much the labor and expense. A machine for cutting the beets, invented by him, I think is vastly superior to any now in use.

After being cut, the beet is dried so thoroughly that it may be converted by grinding, into an impalpable powder. For this purpose, an article has also been invented by Mr. Child, which, by using steam, will save expense and give to the sugar a far better color. (This powder may be kept for any length of time, without injury.) The next step in the process is to dissolve the soluble parts of this powder, and cause the liquid to filtrate through animal carbon. Lime is also used, to neutralize the acidity of the beet.

Mr. Child of this town exhibited two samples of Beet Sugar of his own manufacture. The sample of refined is supposed to be the first specimen of refined native Beet Sugar, of considerable size, ever presented to the American public.

L



M

To the Liberator

NORTHAMPTON, July 14, 1843.

My Dear Friend,

Our able and vigorous anti-slavery coadjutor, D. L. CHILD, is still here, but expects to leave for New York (via Boston) in all next week, to assume the editorial management of the Standard. Success has not crowned his efforts in the sugar-beet cultivation, but he has probably done all that any one could have done, in his circumstances, and deserved something more than success. He has toiled early and late, in season and out of season, not 'like a slave,' but like a freeman and 'with a will,' and far more severely than a human being ought to toil. He has exhibited immense energy and resolution, and, especially for one 'bred to the law,' and fond of literary pursuits, astonishing industry. The location of the land which he has tilled is very pleasant, and he has made some substantial improvements on it. I regret, for the sake of humanity, as well as for his own sake, that his experiment has failed; for an additional blow would be given to slavery, if free sugar could supplant that which is raised by slave labor—as it will, unquestionably, at a day not far distant. The Standard, under his care, cannot fail to be an ably conducted journal. He has great qualities of mind, and has been identified with the anti-slavery cause from an early period.

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.