

**AMERICAN LIFE: A NARRATIVE
OF TWO YEARS' CITY AND
COUNTRY RESIDENCE IN THE
UNITED STATES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649544042

American Life: A Narrative of Two Years' City and Country Residence in the United States by
Mrs. Felton

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MRS. FELTON

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A NARRATIVE

OF

TWO YEARS' CITY AND COUNTRY RESIDENCE

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

By Mrs. FELTON.

Third Thousand.

HOLTON PERCY:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHORESS.

1843.

LEEDS:
PRINTED BY D. I. MORRICE, GRACE STREET.



P R E F A C E.

IN submitting these few sheets to the public, the authoress wishes to be considered as presenting a faithful record of her observations, and of events as they occurred within the limits of her experience, during her continuance in the United States.

Whenever she has felt herself called upon to give an opinion, she has endeavoured impartially to comply; and when, in delineating characters, she has been compelled to draw upon fiction for names, in order to avoid inflicting an injury by an unnecessary exposure; it may be concluded with certainty that the *names alone are fictitious*, and that the individuals represented are correctly depicted in their proper colours.

While employed in preparing this small volume for the press, that opinion, so frequently expressed by the Americans, has often occurred to her: viz. "That should a book be written on their country,

containing truth in its unalloyed simplicity, it would for ever lie on the shelves of the bookseller, as no encouragement would be given in England to any publication on *such a subject*, unless it were rendered palatable by libels and falsehoods." Although sufficiently convinced herself, of the fallacy of this notion, still it has had some influence in inducing as much caution, as if these pages were about to be submitted as a test to decide the fate of some such experiment.

In the present edition the reader is presented with an additional chapter, devoted, almost exclusively, to the subject of Emigration. Indeed the authoress has endeavoured throughout, so to unite amusement with useful information, as to make her work desirable both as a book of utility to the emigrant, and as a volume of entertainment, to those who prefer viewing the other side the Atlantic through the safer medium of the press. How far she has succeeded, must be left to the judgement of a discerning public to determine.

Railway Cottage, Bolton Percy.

AMERICAN LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE.

THE day on which we sailed was clear and serene, and we gently drifted with the tide down Belfast Lough into the Channel. Assured that I should not be able to see land on the following morning, I kept my eyes fixed upon the hills in the distance till darkness rendered them no longer visible. I never undertake a voyage or a journey without experiencing a vague feeling of melancholy—there is something so strangely depressing in the preliminaries of departure; the packing of boxes—the arrangement of books, clothes, and papers. Indeed the whole valedictory ceremony is throughout a series of preparations, every way calculated to excite sensations of sadness. I seldom visit a place,

even for a few weeks, without meeting with some agreeable associates, whose company I feel loath to relinquish. But these ephemeral disquietudes form but a shadowy representation of the emotions that agitated my frame, when I was leaving the shores of Europe, with the prospect of a long, and perhaps, a final separation. These unpleasant sensations, however, were greatly alleviated, by considering that the presence of those whom I hold dearer than all other earthly treasures, was with me in the vessel ; I mean my husband and my children.

The next morning, we found ourselves going at a rapid rate under the influence of a gale, far too brisk for personal comfort. Our vessel was rather small, but she was, what is termed by sailors " a good sea-boat ;" and for that reason alone, on account of her pitching and rolling, was very unpleasant for passengers. The whole of the company in the cabin were distressingly affected with nausea, and so long as the gale lasted, we were quite in a passive and suffering condition.

This distressing concomitant of a long voyage affects individuals variously, according to their ages, constitutions, and previous habits of life. My

personal sufferings which were very severe, were augmented by the care of an infant of six months. I had a servant on board, but she required as much attention from the steward as myself: and I now discovered to my great inconvenience, what I had frequently heard others affirm,—that very few female servants, whatever be their representations, are capable of performing their duties during the first week of a voyage.

The next day the gale increased to something like a storm, and for safety, I was recommended to retire to my berth. While lying there, helpless and almost in an inanimate state, a box which had escaped my notice containing a compass, fell from a small shelf just above my head, and struck me a violent blow with its sharp corner, upon my temples. From the weight of the box, it was supposed that, had my head reclined only one-fourth of an inch in another direction, the consequences must have been fatal: my infant also had a narrow escape, having been removed from my side only a few minutes before. I suffered much however, as it was; but I ought eternally to acknowledge, with lively feelings of gratitude, this merciful