

# Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Preface: I Do Love Freedom So: Women and the Grand Tour	1
Chapter I: A Trip to Europe Became the Great Desire of My Heart: Imagining a Grand Tour	11
Chapter II: Prelude to the Unknown Joys of Europe: Across the Atlantic for a Grand Tour	33
Chapter III: Getting Along the Best We Could: Quotidian Demands of a Grand Tour	69
Chapter IV: My Dreams Were All of London, Paris, Rome: Itineraries of a Grand Tour	119
Chapter V: In the Land of Tell: Outdoor Adventures on a Grand Tour	179
Chapter VI: Wondering at Myself for Being Here: A Grand Tour Alone and Together	199
Chapter VII: How I Wish I Was Safely Out of This: The Titanic, the Great War and a New Grand Tour	231
Epilogue: Laying Up Stores of Knowledge and Experience: After a Grand Tour	243
Notes	245
Bibliography	293
Index	311

## Preface

# I Do Love Freedom So: Women and the Grand Tour

After his nine-month-long visit to the United States in the 1830s, Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, whose keen-eyed observations were later published as *Democracy in America*, posited that “the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes women within the narrow circle of domestic interests and duties and forbids her to step beyond it.”<sup>1</sup> The ideal of domesticity Tocqueville identified served to root American women to their homes, their narrow and proper sphere, well into the nineteenth century. Even well educated females were offered limited alternatives to adult lives centered on marriage and motherhood. To be sure, in recent decades Linda Kerber and other historians have problematized the Frenchman’s simple dichotomy, pointing out that the lives of men and women were never as static as separate-sphere ideology would have it; male and female boundaries were crossed in countless ways all along.<sup>2</sup> The innumerable challenges to gendered social restrictions included the abundance of information available to women from childhood about faraway places, knowledge that inspired their dreams of traveling well beyond the appointed sphere.

Twenty-two-year-old Clara Mitchell, who traveled with the Campbell family in the summer of 1888, was among the thousands of American women in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries who stepped far outside their domestic sphere for a Grand Tour of Europe. Clara’s emotions fluctuated from loneliness to euphoria to boredom. Initially she was plagued with homesickness and would only “sally forth” with at least the company of teenager Sally Campbell; in time, however, she grew emboldened—touring London “all alone by myself”—and came to relish her independence.

As her days in Europe neared an end, Clara questioned, "If I'll ever go to Scotland again—or to Italy[,] that center of beauty in the way of art! Or to the grand mountains of Switzerland and the dark old forests of Germany," and concluded, "Truly I hope so!" Wonder and regret were intermingled in her diary: "I can't help wishing I were a man," she anguished. "O what nice times I'd have traveling wherever I pleased[,] stopping when I chose, loitering around picturesque old ruins and wandering about those countries so full of romance, art and beauty. It's horrid to be a woman. They're not half so free as a man & I do love freedom so!"<sup>3</sup>

My book is a study of American women who, like Clara Mitchell, made a Grand Tour of Europe between 1814, when a long century of war neared its end, and 1914, the year war again engulfed the continent.<sup>4</sup> No other woman represented here recorded such an anguished plea to be free from the restraints imposed on her sex with Clara's passion, but most recorded experiences that took them far from the genteel domesticity mandated in their day.

*Grand Tour* is the iconic name inherited from the ritualized trips young British males made beginning in the mid-seventeenth century as an aristocratic rite of passage.<sup>5</sup> In the closing decades of the eighteenth century American men with the inclination and wherewithal emulated the British tour, but they redefined it as a quest for republican virtue rather than for aristocratic privilege. Most of their female counterparts had to be content with learning second hand about the places men visited until the early-nineteenth century when the image of a tourist in Europe began to switch from male to female. Harvey Levenstein, chronicler of Americans touring France, suggests that the 1840s witnessed the "feminization of American tourism" as "upper- and upper-middle-class women began challenging the purely domestic image that tied them to home and hearth."<sup>6</sup> By the twentieth century, Blanche McManus's published account of her travels abroad could state with credulity that "the American man rather regards the trip abroad, as he does religion and society, as the particular province of his womankind and is usually quite willing that she should lead the attacking force against the foreigner and his language."<sup>7</sup>

The year-by-year rise of consumer capitalism mandated that to join the middle class, men make their entry into adulthood by

pursuing economic independence as soon as possible; while freer than women to travel within their own country, they became less free to take time from responsibilities and indulge in a Grand Tour. The dawn of the nineteenth century also experienced the transformation of a hierarchical family structure with men and women working together into one that divided men and women into the separate, albeit overlapping, spheres of work and home. Women took responsibility for the private home as men increasingly worked elsewhere. Historian Richard Bushman explains that in this new order women were given a special role in assuring the gentility of their families and that the mandate of gentility in the nineteenth century “both exalted and restricted” women.<sup>8</sup> The industrializing economy mandated new domestic responsibilities but also fueled greater educational opportunities and freed women from many traditional domestic tasks. Ironically, an industrializing society that first aspired to narrow their sphere also allowed women greater freedom to travel.

An ideal of genteel domesticity prevailed throughout the nineteenth century and into the next, but it was questioned and eroded across these years. The long-nineteenth century, the years from the French Revolution to the First World War, was one of enormous change for American women as almost every aspect of their lives was negotiated and adjusted. Inspired by Englishwoman Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, published in the late-eighteenth century, American women, individually and, after the Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention in 1848, collectively, demanded that their legal and social status be brought more in accord with the rights their republic granted men.

Greater freedom to travel contributed to and also benefitted from the women’s movement as it spawned covert changes in social organization and expectation. Henry James thought of women who traveled to Europe when in the late-nineteenth century he popularized the epithet *The New Woman*; women who populate his novels expanded their world physically by going abroad and psychologically as they developed new conceptions about who they were and who they wanted to be. Their real-life counterparts struggled to follow suit.

An appealing image that emerged was that of traveler; across

time women began joining and then dominating the American Grand Tour. Thousands of Americans—approximately forty thousand every year in the last decades of the nineteenth century—visited Europe and after mid-century possibly a majority of them were women.<sup>9</sup>

By mid-century it was acceptable for women from families with adequate means to step far from their sphere for a Grand Tour of Europe. Much like ornamental subjects such as French and music, time in Europe came to be defended as a finishing gloss of gentility for the matriarch or future matriarch of the home. But for many women it was much more. Inspired by a Europe-centered education, they traveled, as one woman explained concerning her sister, “to test by actual contact with European life the conceptions of her bookish education.”<sup>10</sup>

Maria Bayard—her trip is the earliest represented here—was one of the few women who toured Europe in 1814, long before there was a perceived need to identify new women; Maria could not own property, attend college, practice a profession or vote. Alma Peterson joined thousands of women visiting Europe a century later; she knew college-educated and professional women, many of them property owners, and was just six years away from full voting equality.

Understanding the transformation of women’s lives has been a central topic of American historians for decades. Scholars have told us a great deal about how the rise of consumer-based capitalism, the democratization of politics and religion, the expansion of free education and the modernization of medicine impacted the lives of women. Customs as well as laws were negotiated; changes in both the *de facto* and *de jure* restrictions women fought against went hand in hand. This study attempts to deepen our understanding of change by considering how traveling impacted women’s sense of self and society’s constructed image of ideal womanhood.

The popular version of nineteenth-century American women abroad has been too much drawn from true tales of rich women seeking titled husbands, stories of women like Consuelo Vanderbilt who became the Duchess of Marlborough and Jennie Jerome, who, once married, was Lady Churchill. Carol Berkin’s recent study of Betsy Patterson Bonaparte profiles a woman who realized a

preference for European ways at an early age, married Napoleon's younger brother and spent a lifetime trying to secure a place for her family in the Old World's aristocracy.<sup>11</sup> This image is also drawn from fictional American women abroad including Henry James's Isabel Archer and Daisy Miller and Edith Wharton's Udine Spragg; they may have been more interested in independence than titled husbands, but their stories also perpetuate the stereotype that only wealthy American women, those whose wealth exempted them from strict domesticity, ventured to Europe for the status it awarded. This impression is stubbornly persistent, but my research makes it abundantly clear that it is a distortion. Education inspired far more women to travel there than did acquiring status or the pursuit of marriages and titles. To be sure, a woman making a Grand Tour had to have considerably more than average wealth or to know someone willing to pay her way. One guidebook published in 1838 estimated it cost approximately \$800 to travel through Europe for seven months and \$300 for round-trip passage, more than most Americans made in a year. Only around the end of the nineteenth century did professional tour companies make Grand Tours considerably cheaper, allowing women of more modest means to afford a trip.<sup>12</sup>

Literary scholars, who have dominated the academic study of Americans abroad, have focused on published authors who were conscious that others would read their observations. My work is not literary analysis but social history. Most of the women I write about never intended to publish their letters and diaries, but wrote exclusively for themselves, their families and their friends. Accordingly, their work is a genre that should be analyzed as a record of a lived experience.

My composite picture of women touring Europe is based on the letters and diaries located in nearly fifty libraries and archives, of more than three hundred women who crossed the Atlantic between 1814 and 1914. I have used some books published after the fact, but have based my work primarily on the numerous unpublished accounts written first hand. I excluded the wives and daughters of the financial titans of the age; Rockefellers and Vanderbilts traveled with a retinue of servants so theirs is a different story. For much the same reason, I have not included women who were famous

or accompanied famous men. I have only used those portions of the letters and diaries of women in Europe for some purpose other than tourism when they took time off to see the sights. Most of the women represented here are largely lost to the historical record but for the letters and diaries they wrote during a Grand Tour which they and their families so valued that they were saved and eventually deposited in libraries and archives.

These women are in many ways a homogeneous group with Western European roots; few women from racial or ethnic minorities had the financial means for tourist travel.<sup>13</sup> Almost all were Protestants although a small number of Catholics and Jews are represented. Financial tycoon Jay Gould's daughter is included as is a lady's companion.<sup>14</sup> Most female travelers represented here, however, were neither as rich nor as poor as these two extremes. Almost all had a solid secondary education and in the later decades a growing number were college educated. They all lived in the century of Romanticism and its literature inspired what they wanted to see and how they responded to it.<sup>15</sup>

However, these women also form a heterogeneous group in significant ways. They came from New England, the Mid-Atlantic, the South and the Midwest and several were from the West. Some lived in cities while others were from small towns or rural areas. An age range of more than sixty years separate a twelve-year-old girl from several women in their seventies. Women traveled with their husbands, children, parents, siblings, other relatives and friends; they hired escorts, joined large tour groups and even traveled alone. Some traveled with men, but at least as many did not. Trips ranged in length from a few weeks to a year and more. A Grand Tour was a once in a lifetime experience for most, but some women crossed the Atlantic multiple times.

This is not a representative sample of all women who traveled to Europe in these years, but rather a sample of those whose descriptions of their travels were deemed worthy of saving and were eventually deposited in research archives. Clearly some more closely match the stereotype of shallow Gilded Age females going to find titled husbands, to shop or to acquire the patina of status a Grand Tour afforded. Women less interested in learning Europe's lessons were those least likely to write the kinds of letters

and diaries that they and their families would come to treasure and eventually bequeathed for the scrutiny of historians; they are accordingly represented primarily by their critics.

American men never abandoned the Grand Tour and deserve their own book. John Sears, author of a history of tourism, suggests that tourist attractions were “free of being identified as either male or female space.”<sup>16</sup> Certainly, in important ways, travel did break down separate spheres and brought men and women together in common pursuits. Most male and female Americans touring Europe were Protestants from families with at least above-average income. Their secondary educations were similar; both sexes were offered a European-based curriculum and were well educated in European art, music, history, literature and languages. Girls and boys studied Latin, French and other European languages, read European literature and history and became familiar with European countries, cities and sites through geography classes. A common background inspired similar responses to cathedrals and mountains and many other things. My exclusive focus on women’s experiences allows only a partial picture of what was distinctive about the female Grand Tour. A more thorough comparison of men and women touring Europe must await a parallel study of the many unpublished letters and diaries written by men.

At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, I discovered an anonymous diary written in 1843. In the first paragraph the writer acknowledged fear of “the dreaded hour for farewell” and of crying for half an hour as the ship pulled away. This expression of fears and tears, along with a very neat handwriting, prompted my assumption that the writer was a woman. A few lines further down, however, I read: “I am sure I am a man now or ought to be at least.” This man’s diary underscores that the spheres of men and women, emotionally as well as physically, were never entirely separate.<sup>17</sup>

Studying women exclusively, however, allowed me to explore the ways that travel was clearly a gendered experience. Until recently, most historians of Americans traveling in Europe, while recognizing some individual women, have assumed that the experience was one for men.<sup>18</sup> As a result, many authors of nineteenth-century travel missed the fundamental reality of a feminized Grand Tour.



The explosion of female travel was simply historically unprecedented. It was, explains Mary Suzanne Schriber, editor of a volume on women's travels, the moment when women began "seizing for themselves the freedom of movement that has been the historical prerogative of the male."<sup>19</sup> What was appropriate in this expansion of women's sphere had to be negotiated at every turn. Women had to be concerned with their reputations in ways that men did not. They had greater concern over safety and they had to make decisions they were unaccustomed to making at home. Questions about finances, dress and grooming, interactions with strangers, dining out, time alone—a host of matters—were answered differently by men and women because both law and custom demanded it.

The book is organized topically rather than chronologically. The years from 1814 to 1914 were hardly static and I have attempted to recognize change across time throughout the narrative. Yet it is defensible to deal with Grand Tours as a common experience over this one-hundred-year period. As Foster Rhea Dulles pointed out in his history of Americans traveling in Europe, visitors there in the first half of the nineteenth century "set patterns that have remained remarkably unchanged through the years."<sup>20</sup>

Topical chapters are organized around different aspects of a Grand Tour. Ellen Walworth was typical in recalling that from a young age her studies of European history, mythology and geography created a longing to see the Old World, "that far away, enchanted region."<sup>21</sup> Chapter I explores the education that inspired Ellen and many other women to travel.

Women who dreamed of seeing an enchanted land may have experienced nightmares when contemplating the requisite ocean crossing. Late in the nineteenth century a veteran of several voyages advised her daughter, who was contemplating her own journey: "it is for you to determine whether you have become strong enough to encounter the contingencies of an ocean voyage with its not-over-delicate cuisine...."<sup>22</sup> Chapter II is about how women coped with the fatigue and discomforts as well as the novelty of an ocean voyage.

She also warned her daughter about "various annoyances and discomforts incident to travel and sojourns on the continent."

Chapter III discusses how women faced quotidian demands once they began their travels in Europe and how many became savvy travelers who were proud of coping with annoyances.<sup>23</sup>

One woman's recollection that from an early age she dreamed of seeing London, Paris and Rome held true for many others as well.<sup>24</sup> These cities dominated Grand Tour itineraries, much as they do today. Other parts of England, France and Italy as well as Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Austria, the Low Countries and Spain were also popular. Chapter IV examines how women experienced these iconic cities and other places in Western Europe and what meanings they took from them.

The Romantic Movement's embrace of the sublime inspired dreams of Switzerland and placed it squarely on the Grand Tour itinerary. Chapter V explores how women faced the physical demands necessary to see the Alps, made famous by stories of William Tell, and other popular outdoor sites.

Protocols of female chaperonage waned through the nineteenth century, but even into the twentieth century assumptions that some places were inappropriate or unsafe for women lingered. Women had to frequently negotiate and improvise travel arrangements, balancing mandates of propriety and safety with individual goals. Chapter VI looks at the relationships of travel and how women created balance and grew more independent and comfortable alone.

The last chapter focuses on the early-twentieth century when in 1912 the *Titanic* disaster left many women questioning the safety of crossing the ocean and then, two years later, the First World War brought an end to the traditional Grand Tour. When Europe suddenly erupted into war, Americans in its path found themselves transformed overnight from tourists into refugees trying to escape a war zone. Although initially overwhelmed with a profound sense of their vulnerability, many women depended on their own resourcefulness to find their way home.

The Epilogue surveys the meaning women across the decades took from their experience of Europe.

# I

## A Trip to Europe Became the Great Desire of My Heart: Imagining a Grand Tour

In 1844 North Carolina schoolgirl Bessie Lacy wrote her father from Edgeworth Academy that she was learning “the principal things of geography such as the bodies of water, the globe, the rivers, capes, mountains, islands, capitals, subdivisions and provinces.” For Bessie, geography was much more than memorizing the names of principal things; she vividly imagined herself in the faraway places her books described. Six years later, as Bessie nervously contemplated marriage, she warned a suitor “there never was a poor child born with such a wandering spirit as I have and were I not a woman I believe this moment I’d be in Africa or Japan ... in some almost inaccessible place.”<sup>1</sup> At century’s end another North Carolina woman likewise penned despair about a wandering spirit thwarted by the limits placed on her sex. A friend’s description of travels in the North Carolina mountains prompted C.W.S.’s despair that “there is nothing I could have enjoyed more than to have been amidst these grand and sublime scenes.” “I really believe,” she continued, “if I were a man I would become a tramp ... but such longing on my part is void of wisdom, of worldly wisdom[,] and I must as I have ever done cultivate that [which] I have no taste for.”<sup>2</sup>

Neither of these women became a tramp who reached inaccessible places, but rather conformed the best she could to her mandated sphere. The kind of curiosity they embraced about the world, however, was an important step that in time would propel more and more women to venture to places once inaccessible to them; even when physically at home, their minds could be far away. Improvement in female education was critical in facilitating wonder about the world. Year by year more families, even those of modest

means, were able and willing to educate their daughters. Young women could not attend college until the 1840s—and few did so until after the Civil War—but between 1790 and 1860 at least 350 schools and academies were opened for female students throughout the United States.<sup>3</sup> Historian Mary Kelley points out that in the best of these schools “the curricula were as complete, the demands as great, and the learning as substantive” as for boys.<sup>4</sup>

Boys and girls alike pursued an education centered on Europe, a place made familiar from early childhood. French, lingua franca of the western world into the twentieth century, was the language most frequently studied—one academy justified it as an “indispensable accomplishment in a well educated female”—but Latin and Greek were reputable and frequent choices for girls as well.<sup>5</sup> These classical languages, considered necessary to train the virtuous male citizens a republic required, may not have been as integral a part of many female curricula as they were in male academies and colleges, but it was not unusual for girls to study them. In the late 1820s, the Greenfield (MA) High School for Young Ladies offered Latin as necessary for “an easy and thorough acquisition of the modern languages of Europe.”<sup>6</sup> Boston’s Mount Vernon Female School required Latin and also offered Greek, Hebrew and French as electives.<sup>7</sup> Emma Willard’s Troy (NY) Female Seminary, one of the most rigorous female schools in the nineteenth century, also required Latin; girls attending this prestigious school were expected to read Caesar’s *Commentaries* as well as Virgil, Sallust and Cicero, all in their original language.<sup>8</sup> Historian Christie Anne Farnham posits that Latin classes were even more commonplace in southern female academies because men there had less anxiety about well educated women challenging their domination of the professions; accordingly, women’s knowledge of the classics could more easily be viewed as “emblematic of high social status.”<sup>9</sup> Southern father Drury Lacy, for example, concerned that Bessie’s Latin studies were not rigorous enough, advised her to spend at least two years “reading Caesar & Sallust from ‘lid to lid’.”<sup>10</sup>

Female academies offered their students a solid grounding in the history, literature, music and art of Europe as well as its geography. Kelley points out that these schools established a classical curriculum, “a classicism that was dedicated to self-culture,” and that

geography was “one of the staples in a woman’s course of study.”<sup>11</sup> Sisters Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe were two of the female educators with a keen interest in geography; Harriet published a textbook for Catherine to use in her school.<sup>12</sup> Teaching about place served the nationalistic purpose of spreading familiarity with the United States, but more time was spent studying world geography, both ancient and modern.

The Concord (MA) Greenfield Academy’s smorgasbord of geography instruction is one example of what girls studied. In 1881 thirteen-year-old Margaret Harding launched her first term as a day student by writing all she knew about Switzerland and Italy in her copybook. Lessons on Turkey and parts of Asia followed. When school was dismissed early one winter day, she was assigned the orators and philosophers of Athens to read about at home. Margaret spent another cold day at home working on a geography assignment, but “did not accomplish much.” Africa was introduced later in the year. It seems Margaret preferred history; she received 95 percent on her spring exam in that subject, but only 59 percent for geography. In the summer she read about martyrs of Spain and the liberation of Holland. Back at school for the fall term, she enrolled in Latin and French classes, but after two months gave up French for music lessons. Margaret took no formal courses in geography in her second year, but during one six-week period attended an Italian scholar’s lectures on St. Peter’s, Vesuvius, pagan Rome, triumphal arches, the Coliseum and a concluding one on Roman chariots and gladiators.<sup>13</sup>

Margaret lived in an area especially rich in educational opportunity, but female academies were available almost any place commanding a sufficient population to support them. The curriculum of the Charleston (SC) Female Seminary, founded in 1870, serves as an example of a Europe-oriented education in the South and is typical of what many American girls were offered in the last half of the nineteenth century. The school was organized into kindergarten—taught entirely in French—primary, preparatory and academic departments. In the primary department basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic were emphasized for two years. In the third year, geography was added and the next year students read *A Child’s History of Rome*. French was continued all four years. First year in the

preparatory department required *A Child's History of England* and Englishman Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard*, his poem of death and remembrance. In the second year a two-year study of United States history and literature commenced. Second-year girls also read Sir Walter Scott's poem *Marmion*, set in England in the time of Henry VIII, and the next year took up his *Lady of the Lake*, a poem about King James V. In the fourth year they studied the history of Greece and read Scott's *Lay of Last Minstrel*, a poem chronicling a sixteenth century border feud between England and Scotland; the students also read seven British classics. Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* represented American literature. The preparatory pupils studied French all four years and began German their last year. The academic department offered first year students ancient history. They also read works by English poet and essayist Joseph Addison for their study of diction and in poetry class read Lord Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon*, the story of a monk imprisoned in the Swiss Chateau de Chillon in the sixteenth century. French and German were continued and Latin grammar added. Second-year preparatory students studied Francis Bacon's essays in their diction class along with a variety of poems; they read about the medieval history of England in English and about France's history in French. The academic pupils continued Latin grammar and also worked with a Latin reader. In the third year, modern European history and the history of English literature were offered. Latin studies focused on Julius Caesar; French class required reading French literature and writing compositions. Fourth year students read Virgil and Cicero in Latin and Corneille, La Fontaine, Racine and Moliere in French; they also had a class in German literature. In their last year, as they neared the end of their formal education, the girls undertook a critical study of classical authors and were introduced to the history of art. They also studied the United States Constitution; study of American history, literature and politics was woven throughout the curriculum, but received considerably less attention than European studies. Students attending the Charleston Seminary paid approximately \$300 each year for room and board and tuition with an extra fee charged for Latin, music and painting. Instrumental music was offered "according to the German method" and singing "by the Italian method." Both were "taught by experienced New York and European teachers."<sup>14</sup>

This school was only one in Charleston that offered French; despite its decidedly British bent, the city was rich in opportunities for girls to expand their language skills beyond English. Caroline Pettigru (Carson), born in 1820, was especially close to her father who guided her early education. She studied French at the Misses Robertsons' school followed by a year in a New York City academy where all classes except English were taught in French. After returning to her hometown, Caroline studied Latin with a Catholic priest and mastered Italian well enough to produce skilled translations of Dante's sonnets.<sup>15</sup> Mary Boykin (Chesnut), famous for her Civil War diary, was twelve years old when she entered Madame Talvande's French School for Young Ladies in Charleston where she mastered fluency in French and studied German.<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth White (Nims Rankin), born in Fort Mill, South Carolina, in 1835, spent a year studying in Charleston which sparked a life-long interest in European literature. In the 1850s she moved to Mount Holly, North Carolina, a more friendly climate for her Massachusetts-native husband, but far removed from centers of learning; to compensate she accumulated a sizable library that included Burns, Byron, Carlyle, Coleridge, Goethe, Schiller and Scott, among others.<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Sinkler (Coxe), born in South Carolina a decade later, spent her childhood moving from her family's plantations to Charleston and Philadelphia; largely taught by her mother, she mastered fluency in French and Italian and read German so well that according to a descendant she could read "with ease and pleasure most of Schiller's and Goethe's works."<sup>18</sup>

Academy students paid extra for music and painting, considered ornamentals. The sentiment "Why should girls be learn'd and wise? Books only serve to spoil their eyes," put to rhyme by John Trumbull in the late-eighteenth century, hardly survived into the nineteenth, but the debate as to whether female schools should emphasize these subjects or academic ones played on with proponents of the academic side increasingly more influential. Reformers determine to improve female academic education were especially successful in northern states because educated females were needed to teach in its pioneering public schools, but, as the Charleston Seminary curriculum makes clear, a rigorous education was available to many southern girls as well. By mid-century, academ-



ics were paramount in most schools although art and music were also popular. Farnham suggests that in southern female academies music, drawing and painting were the most popular ornamental subjects offered.<sup>19</sup> Most of the pictures produced were copies of European artists and most of the music performed was by European composers.

Female literacy in New England was close to universal by mid-century and in all parts of the country the literacy gap between white males and females had sharply declined.<sup>20</sup> Educated girls offered a feast of European studies in school were also likely to choose European topics to read about on their own. Historian Barbara Sicherman explains that many women “found in reading a way of apprehending the world that enabled them to overcome some of the confines of gender and class,” that “the freedom of imagination women found in books encouraged new self-definition.”<sup>21</sup> One of the new self-definitions encouraged was that of traveler, even if possible only through imagination. Hannah Adams, distant cousin of namesake presidents and one of the first American women to make her living by writing, never left her home country, but at the dawn of the nineteenth century, as she approached old age, she enthused, “I travel every day through the world of books ... an inexhaustible fund to feast my mind.”<sup>22</sup> Decades later, Emily Dickinson, who rarely ventured beyond her Amherst home, echoed Adams with poetry: “There is no frigate like a book. To take us lands away.”<sup>23</sup> At the turn of the century, twenty-one-year-old Agnes Hamilton, from a Fort Wayne, Indiana, family Sicherman describes as “self-consciously literary,” recorded that “I live in the world of novels all the time[.] Half the time I am in Europe[.] half in different parts of America.”<sup>24</sup>

But not all educated American women were satisfied traveling to Europe through books and their imagination. Women’s rights activist Margaret Fuller is the most famous example of antebellum females well educated in all manner of things European who resolved to actually see the places they studied. Timothy Fuller overcame any disappointment that his first child, born in 1810, was a girl and devoted himself to her education. By age seven Margaret could read Virgil, Horace and Ovid in Latin with ease, next tackled Greek and learned French, Italian and German sufficiently to read Euro-



pean authors in their original language. Her biography of Goethe was thoroughly researched although never finished. At the age of thirteen Margaret met an English woman who inspired her vow to see Europe for herself, a goal delayed by family responsibilities. For years she joined other young women who looked on with envy as their male counterparts set off to emulate the British Grand Tour. As an adult Margaret realized with regret that so much of her childhood had been devoted to books, but a biographer explains she "never ceased to cling to the dream that in Europe her life would flower."<sup>25</sup> In 1846 the generosity of friends finally allowed Margaret to realize her dream; her life did flower in Europe in unimagined ways. After months together, she parted company with her benefactors and remained in Italy four more years, a time of revolutionary turmoil throughout the peninsula. In the summer of 1850 Margaret was returning home with her Italian husband, an impoverished aristocrat she met in a chance encounter while visiting St. Peter's Basilica, along with their young son, when they all perished in a shipwreck off the coast of New York; her history of the Italian Revolution of 1848 was lost as well. When months later friends gathered to mourn the woman they now knew as Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Bronson Alcott (as paraphrased by Caroline Dall) said of her: "she was no New England woman—she might as well have been born in Greece or Rome. Greece & Rome were wherever she was."<sup>26</sup> The cenotaph her family erected to her memory in Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery reads: "Born a child of New England, By adoption a citizen of Rome, By genius belonging to the world."<sup>27</sup>

Through the years that Europe was her elusive goal, Margaret Fuller brought together intellectually inclined young women to read about its art, literature and history. The three Peabody sisters, all older than Margaret, joined one of her groups. Elizabeth, Mary and Sophia Peabody were not typical schoolgirls, but their interests approximated those of other well-educated females in the early-nineteenth century. Elizabeth, born in 1804, first studied in her mother's small school for local girls. For a geography lesson, Eliza Peabody's pupils chose a country, studied it by reading gazetteers and guidebooks, and then penned letters as if they were in this faraway place. Mrs. Peabody also read to Elizabeth and her classmates from European literature including her favorite authors,

the English trio of Spenser, Milton and Shakespeare. The essays of Madame de Stael, French writer and founder of a salon that included women's rights in its pantheon of liberal ideas, inspired Elizabeth's life-long conviction that women were the intellectual equals of men. Her father agreed at least that girls could learn Latin and taught it to his oldest daughter; his mandate that Mary was not strong enough to join the lessons may have emboldened her secret study in the family's garret. In time, Elizabeth persuaded Sophia to learn Latin as well as Greek on the grounds that "if it is best for the minds of boys—it is best also for the minds of girls." In the summer they were eleven and fourteen, the two youngest Peabody girls put chairs in a river near their home and studied their Latin *Liber Primus* while enjoying the cool water. In her late teens Elizabeth joined her mother teaching school and used Greek and Roman tales to enliven her classes. For Greek lessons she engaged Ralph Waldo Emerson, at nineteen only a year her senior, for what her biographer describes as "a series of awkward lessons." Two years later Elizabeth launched a study of German in order to read the German Romantics, introduced to her in French by the writings of Madame de Stael, in their original language. Liberal clergyman William Ellery Channing, especially important in Elizabeth's intellectual development, shared works by British Romantic poets he had met on a tour of Europe. In 1826 Mary reported that her sister "has been living this winter upon Coleridge, Wordsworth and Dr. Channing." Elizabeth was emboldened to write Wordsworth, but when he replied with an invitation to visit, she sadly responded, "I fear I shall never see Europe." Her fear was at long last put to rest when, at the age of sixty-three, she was invited to make a tour of kindergartens there. In contrast to her sisters, who traveled with their husbands, she joined the growing ranks of women who traveled exclusively with other women or entirely alone.<sup>28</sup>

Mary defied her father's skepticism by mastering languages more easily than her older sister yet she preferred reading fiction. She read Sir Walter Scott's popular novels as soon as she could acquire a copy, but her favorites were by his Scottish countrywomen, Mary Brunton and Susan Ferrier. In 1843 Mary became the first of the sisters to tour Europe, a trip with her husband, educator Horace Mann, cut short by her first pregnancy.<sup>29</sup>

Sophia joined her sisters in language study and was well read in European literature, but distinguished herself as the most artistic of the three. Many of her paintings were copies of European masters and scenes; she used travel books and her own imagination to paint places including Scott's Abbotsford Castle, famous buildings from ancient Rome and Italy's Lake Como and adorned her marital bed with scenes from Guido Reni's famous fresco *Aurora*.<sup>30</sup> Like Mary, Sophia traveled to Europe shortly after her marriage; she lived several years abroad with her husband, author Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Caroline Healey (Dall) was one of many Boston women influenced by Margaret Fuller and the Peabody sisters. Although forced to end her formal education when only fifteen, her city's intellectual vibrancy enabled her to continue informal study. Diary entries for March 1838 reveal that a year after leaving school she was reading Italian, Spanish and French authors; she recorded growing tired of Scottish poet James Macpherson, once a favorite, and taking up his fellow Scott, historian Alexander Fraser Tyler, whose *Elements of General History, Ancient and Modern* she was carefully studying. When she was eighteen Caroline met Elizabeth Peabody who, according to the editor of Caroline's diary, was "a godsend" for giving her "serious attention." Elizabeth introduced the younger woman to the writings of Coleridge and Goethe and Sophia's paintings introduced her to European art and mythology.<sup>31</sup> Caroline was among the majority of American women with a Europe-centered education who never traveled abroad, but expanded their domestic circle through the European books, art and music they consumed.

Women who lived far from urban areas without their abundance of intellectual opportunity followed suit the best they could. Augusta, Maine, native Charlotte Farnham could already read Latin, French and Italian when she agreed to a competition with visiting teacher Elizabeth Peabody as to who could learn German the fastest.<sup>32</sup> In a survey of female literary interests, prominent Unitarian minister Thomas Wentworth Higginson profiled a young New Hampshire woman who spent summers in the woods and fields, but in winter "dwells in Greece and Rome with Plutarch." Love of European classics also traveled west. Higginson discovered that in faraway places such as Wyoming and Oregon many small towns

had "a Shakespeare Club, Dante Club, and a Browning Club" which were maintained through "inexhaustible feminine energy."<sup>33</sup>

Charleston, with a long-standing affinity for all things European, led in offering southern women many of the post-academy opportunities offered to those living in major northern cities. A study of Charlestonians traveling abroad in the years after the Revolution suggests, "Europe remained Charleston's cultural fountainhead, perhaps more than it did for any other American city."<sup>34</sup> In the 1820s Fanny Kemble, the English actress famed for chronicling her two years spent on a Georgia plantation, praised Charleston as the most aristocratic city in American where "in one street you seem to be in an old English town, and in another in some continental city of France or Italy."<sup>35</sup>

Libraries all over the country made books by Europeans and about Europe widely available outside academies. In urban areas women could borrow books from small free or subscription (social) libraries; traveling libraries made books accessible in more remote areas. In the late-nineteenth century philanthropists financed large public ones, notably those in New York City and Boston; Andrew Carnegie's largess allowed the proliferation of free libraries in smaller communities as well. Numerous bookshops also facilitated reading. Female literary societies, first established before the Revolution and maintained in small towns and major cities alike, offered women an opportunity to discuss what they read. Mary Kelley argues they are evidence that even eighteenth-century women were not strictly confined to household, that these societies "reinforced the formal instruction provided in the classrooms of female academies and seminaries" thus enriching the domestic sphere and connecting it to the larger world.<sup>36</sup>

Parents, preachers and teachers all tried to keep novels out of the hands of young women, although newspaper and magazine serials constantly undermined their efforts. A Massachusetts librarian condemned German and French translations as "per se of the evil one."<sup>37</sup> Female academies typically banned fiction deemed evil, especially the ubiquitous stories of innocent virgins tricked into sexual relations with devastating consequences; Farnham explains, "the sentimental novel was thought to arouse sexual feelings in young women."<sup>38</sup> St. Mary's Academy in North Carolina forbade

its students to read novels "except on Saturday after the duties of the day are over, and then only those that are approved."<sup>39</sup> The admonitions of their elders, however, hardly dented the popularity of novels, especially with young females on the cusp of adulthood. Farnham points out that "students saw in these love stories lessons to be learned from the little-known world of men and pitfalls to be avoided in their own lives."<sup>40</sup> According to her biographers, during her years at boarding school Mary Boykin relished "novel-reading as a treasured secret diversion."<sup>41</sup> Further north, Massachusetts teenagers Rhoda and Lucy Stone locked themselves in a room to read a forbidden European romance; when their mother discovered her girls' secret, she admonished them for giving in to reading what she thought a silly book, yet allowed them to finish it.<sup>42</sup>

Many popular nineteenth-century novels, as well as shorter pieces published in magazines such as *Godey's Lady's Book*, were about Europe. Madame de Stael's *Corinne*, published in 1807, introduced readers to the landscapes and art of Venice, Naples and Rome while entertaining them with the tragic story of love between a brilliant Italian woman and a Scottish aristocrat. The editor of a twentieth-century edition finds it "almost startling to see how much influence Stael and her novel exercised in the United States."<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Peabody dismissed *Corinne* as a "high wrought romance," but also defended it as the "best account of Italy extant."<sup>44</sup> Sixteen-year-old Margaret Fuller and her friend Lydia Maria Child, another future abolitionist and women's rights activist, on the other hand, read the novel together and both adopted the title character as a role model.<sup>45</sup> Englishwoman Anna Jameson's anonymously published *Diary of an Ennuyee*, available in the United States in 1833, was set in Italy's museums and churches where a young woman, scorned by her lover, sought solace; it complemented *Corinne* in preparing women for a trip to Italy.<sup>46</sup>

The most popular novel-cum-guide for Italy, however, was Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, published in 1860 during his sojourn abroad with Sophia and their young children. This gothic tale of the evil threatening innocent American women in decadent Europe also contrasted young and practical America with older and more romantic Europe. One woman, who read the novel while traveling a decade after its publication, questioned "who can have

anything more to say of Rome after Hawthorne[?]"<sup>47</sup> After its publication in 1878, Henry James's popular novella, *Daisy Miller*, the story of an American girl sojourning in Rome who paid with her life for innocent but inappropriate flirting with an Italian man, established an indelible and distorted impression of young American women abroad.

Some novels set in the United States also introduced readers to the merits of a Europe-centered education. The main character in Augusta Evans's *St. Elmo*, described by historian Frances Cogan as "frighteningly erudite," turns down three suitors while immersing herself in the European classics. Susan Warner's popular 1851 novel, *The Wide, Wide World*, centers on Little Ellen's rigorous education in Latin, French and other academic subjects which made her more attractive than "several vapid and poorly educated cousins."<sup>48</sup>

Travel narratives, less controversial than novels, were another popular means for young women to explore the world beyond their narrow circle. In the late 1840s close to fifteen percent of the books women borrowed from the New York Society Library were this genre.<sup>49</sup> Mary Kelley suggests that "in taking readers to distant lands, in introducing them to the dangers and delights of unknown peoples, and in transforming movement through space into an emotion-laden introduction to the sublime," travel narratives had an affect similar to novels.<sup>50</sup>

New Yorker Katherine Johnson, perhaps an unusually voracious reader, kept lists of the books she read for several years. Over a three-year period she recorded over one hundred books, most of them by Europeans and about Europe including approximately thirty in French and at least five in Italian. Katherine wrote of Alessandro Manzoni's *The Betrothed*: "the style of this novel and the description are certainly admirable and fully warrant its high reputation." She thought Hippolyte Taine's *Italy: Rome and Naples* "decidedly the best book on Italy that I ever have read," but offered no opinion about his *Italy: Florence and Venice*. Katherine was not as charitable toward Bayard Taylor, concluding of his *Byways of Europe* that "even the dullness of this author could not prevent one's [*sic*] being interested in the accounts of short visits to faraway and little visited places which fill this volume." She was more positive about a "delightfully interesting" two-volume guide to Paris.<sup>51</sup>



American women were exposed to European painting and music in a variety of venues outside of school and their appreciation of what they experienced motivated many Grand Tours. Women interested in art were especially drawn to Italy and France while those who favored music were most likely to dream of visiting Germany and Austria. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, exhibitions and small collections offered Americans opportunities to see original European paintings. In 1838 Caroline Healey sought a ticket to “the Exhibition of Italian paintings, which I am very desirous to see;” she may have assumed all art was Italian since these paintings, later bought by the Boston Athenaeum, were primarily by Dutch masters, including Rembrandt and Van Dyke.<sup>52</sup> The Athenaeum was one of several collections that merged to form the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1870, the same year the Metropolitan Museum was founded in New York City; they were two of the most outstanding of the many art museums that graced major cities during the Gilded Age. Middle- and upper-class families frequently decorated their homes with copies of the European masterpieces they saw in these museums or in books. Guido Reni’s *Aurora*, a classical depiction of dawn which so pleased Sophia Peabody Hawthorne that she copied it on her marital bed, as well as his portrait of Beatrice Cenci, legendary symbol of resistance to aristocratic privilege, were two of the paintings most frequently reproduced. Seeing the original *Aurora* delighted Constance Harrison for igniting her memory that as newlyweds she and her husband bought a copy they could not afford to create “a little art centre [*sic*] in our lives.”<sup>53</sup> Elizabeth White Nims Rankin, along with her daughters, Nell and Bess, decorated their Mount Holly, North Carolina, home with copies of both of these Guido paintings as well as one of Rome’s Castle St. Angelo.<sup>54</sup>

By the dawn of the nineteenth century, Americans from urban areas could enjoy European operas and classical music. Germanic and Italian impresarios and immigrants brought the music of their homelands across the Atlantic and vied to popularize it in America. Germanic composers dominated the symphonic repertory. The New York Philharmonic, founded in 1843 as the country’s first symphony orchestra, was unusual in first hiring an American-born conductor, but subsequently conformed to the practice of appoint-

ing Europeans, most of them German. Italian operas, works by Verdi, Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini, were favored until the late-nineteenth century when Richard Wagner challenged their ascendancy. In his study of Wagner in America, Joseph Horowitz suggests, “the cult of Wagner came to dominate America’s musical high culture, and helped shape its intellectual life.”<sup>55</sup>

Until the last decades of the nineteenth century, women had only limited opportunity to formally pursue their interest in European culture after their academy education was complete. Linda Kerber explains that until colleges admitted them, “most ‘higher’ education was necessarily self-education,” that “women shaped their intellectual lives out of their own reading, their diary keeping and their letter writing.”<sup>56</sup> Those not satisfied with self-education longed for the chance to attend college. Elizabeth Cady Stanton recalled years later “my vexation and mortification knew no bounds” when her father expressed only horror that she begged to follow her brother to Union College.<sup>57</sup> Caroline Healey, who poured much of her intellectual energy into her diary, spoke for other educated young women who deeply regretted their exclusion from colleges and universities, writing of her wish “that women might enjoy—the advantages—of college education, of the severe and studious training, which is lavished upon our young men.... At fifteen—a woman’s education—in common parlance—is finished—at twenty-five—a man’s just begun!—Heigho!”<sup>58</sup> Less than a decade after Caroline vented her frustration, Ohio’s Oberlin College opened its doors to female as well as African-American students. However, Oberlin was unique until after the Civil War when the advantages of higher education were lavished on a growing number of women as female private and public colleges mushroomed and some institutions long exclusively for men redefined themselves as co-educational as well.<sup>59</sup>

M. Carey Thomas was only sixteen when she could brag of passing the entrance exams for admission into Cornell University’s classical course, but she had to appendage her regret that “Father was terribly opposed.” Parental opposition failed to dissuade Carey from enrolling although it possibly undermined her confidence. As she approached graduation, Carey worried that her mastery of Latin and Greek was wanting, yet also consoled herself that “I do



see light somewhat." After graduating from Cornell she earned a Ph.D. from the University of Zurich, qualifying her to become the first president of Bryn Mawr College.<sup>60</sup> By 1920 women made up more than forty percent of the college population. Female college students often traveled in the summer months when school was not in session and swelled the ranks of the Grand Tour.

As the number of women considering a trip abroad rose, travel clubs to help them prepare for a journey proliferated in tandem. These clubs entertained armchair travelers, but also offering practical advice for those resolved to see for themselves. The Hyde Park Travel Club was founded in Chicago in 1891 to facilitate women's "study of the art, literature, architecture and history of various countries." Members agreed that France would be the focus for several years as "every one is interested in France, every one goes to France or expects to." In the nineteenth century's final year, club members paid a professor \$400 for twenty classes because they wanted "to study, to be entertained and to be educated—to become cosmopolitan." A few years later Miss Ingersole was hired to give a variety of lectures; after one talk, the club secretary reported "we thoroughly enjoyed a trip among the high Alps without any of the harrowing inconveniences so vividly depicted by our lecturer." In a subsequent talk about Italy "we approached Rome from the Naples side. The magnificence of the road along which we passed leading from Naples cannot be surpassed."<sup>61</sup>

The Women's England Rest Tour Association (England was soon dropped from the title), also founded in 1891, was a different kind of travel club. The four original members concluded from their experiences abroad that women traveling without men needed special advice. Their exclusive club was restricted to members "of the best social and intellectual understanding." First president Julia Ward Howe, author of *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, stressed "the necessity for strictly supervising the membership and constantly weeding out undesirable applicants." Julia's candor offers insight into the stubbornly entrenched view that for a Grand Tour to endure as a mark of status, the masses should be excluded. In 1892 the club began publishing *Pilgrim Script* offering travel advice to women deemed desirable. The leadership recognized that not all of its privileged elite was well off so awarded "travelships" to

young women unable to travel entirely on their own resources. The group so closely guarded its list of accredited accommodations in Europe that members pledged to share it with no one, not even their husbands, and to make arrangements for it to be returned to the association after their deaths.<sup>62</sup>

Most members of the Rest Tour Association traveled to learn although the group's exclusivity reveals that status was sometimes a motivation as well. Learning about Europe's civilization was intrinsically valuable; seeing it first hand also enhanced social status. Historian Frederic Jaher posits that acquiring culture "purified the privileged, fitting them to rule."<sup>63</sup> Surely many of the association's women felt privileged by their opportunity to travel to Europe, but most relished the experience more than the status it afforded. For a minority, a Grand Tour was a fashionable exercise in conspicuous consumption, even the consumption of European titles; their trip was an opportunity to display their father or husband's success or even to find a titled husband.<sup>64</sup> They crowd popular images of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American women in Europe, but in reality they played a minor role in the feminized Grand Tour.

Adventure joined self-improvement and status in inspiring travel. The exploits of Nellie Bly, who, her biographer claims, had no passion for learning, popularized the idea of female adventure travelers. In 1888 the *New York World* sent her around the globe to break the fictitious Phileas Fogg's record of eighty days. The story grew in popularity after the editor of *Cosmopolitan Magazine* sent Elizabeth Bisland in the opposite direction, making it a two-woman race as well as a race against time. The editor trumpeted increased sales of the *World* as proof that Nellie's adventure was invigorating interest in geography and that "everybody will be, to some extent, improved by the Nellie Bly tour." The paper even published a namesake game to help readers follow her itinerary. After beating the record and winning the race (which she never acknowledged) she was celebrated as a national heroine. When asked how she had achieved such a feat, Nellie replied, "It's not so much for a woman to do who has the pluck, energy and independence which characterize many women in this day of push and get-there."<sup>65</sup>

Emelie's trip was inspired not by pluck and energy but by despair. In December 1865 she posted a message to her erstwhile

lover: "Sarcasm and indifference have driven me from you. I sail in the next steamer for Europe. Shall I purchase tickets for two, or do you prefer to remain to wound some other loving heart? Answer quick, or all is lost."<sup>66</sup> Emelie self prescribed a trip to Europe for her emotional distress. From the eighteenth century, American men had frequently justified their travels as beneficial for physical health; nineteenth-century doctors inherited the custom and sometimes ordered a trip abroad for their female patients as a palliative for a variety of ailments, both perceived and real, that in the late-nineteenth century were typically diagnosed as hysteria.<sup>67</sup> Emma Cordozzo's doctor suggested a trip to Europe, but he forbade long walks and visits to cold galleries and churches.<sup>68</sup> Elizabeth Nichols also traveled for her health even though it meant leaving her three young children behind; she was more fortunate in traveling with doctor's orders to walk and sightsee as she wished.<sup>69</sup> When Elizabeth Cabot was advised a trip to Europe would be beneficial, she wrestled with ambivalence for days since it would mean a long separation from her baby daughter; her parents' doubts compounded her anxiety and left her feeling "an hour one way, another the opposite way, and selfish & cruel both ways." Only after her mother finally sanctioned the trip did Elizabeth resolve to go.<sup>70</sup>

A spirit of adventure, Gilded-Age materialism, doctor's orders, thwarted romances and dreams of new ones were all inspiration for a Grand Tour; most inspiring, however, was a thirst for learning about the civilization they embraced as theirs. Most women, of course, could only dream about the places they discovered in books. In the 1830s a New Englander confided to relatives about to depart for the Old World: "What would I not give to be with you in your rambles, to see what you will see, to go where you will go, but as this cannot be, I am content to rest satisfied to hear, but you must let me hear all about every thing that interests you."<sup>71</sup> Another New England woman bid farewell to a friend going abroad with the bittersweet sendoff: "Oh but you are going to that land here my soul is vested."<sup>72</sup>

Those with means and resolve could follow their soul's longing. One who finally achieved her goal of a Grand Tour queried a cousin at home if she remembered, "when we were children together how we chatted about the European trip we intended to take when



Laura Libbey in 1898, six years after her trip to Europe.  
*Library of Congress*

we were eighteen."<sup>73</sup> Educator Fanny Hall likewise recalled that "almost from the earliest period of my recollection, at least from the time when the tales of the nursery began to be superseded by the graver studies of history and geography, and my mind opened to the perception of the wonderful fact that beyond the broad seas there existed other lands not less fair and goodly than my own, I have felt the most ardent desire to visit those lands."<sup>74</sup> On one of several trips she made around the turn of the century, Henrietta Greenbaum Frank mused that "all our lives are preparation for what we see & hear ... I am glad that I have devoted so much time in the past to the history of the past; it was a preparation for this journey."<sup>75</sup> Once in Europe, Laura Libbey realized that "when one has longed for something from earliest childhood to middle age which was seemingly utterly out of reach, has thought of it, dreamed of it, built air castles about it, and then when suddenly the way seems opened for a realization of all these hopes it is hard to feel sure that it is actually ones self that is really doing in the flesh what up to this time has only been dreams and imaginings."<sup>76</sup>

Of course some women never longed for Europe at all, but went only reluctantly. Eliza Gardner, who traveled with her husband for fear of being left alone, despaired on departing "how desolate" she was, how "my heart died within me."<sup>77</sup> Conversely, Madge Preston decided once in Europe that it was "folly" to have left her husband and begged him to never let her do so again.<sup>78</sup> Susan Marsh Emerson, who traveled as a lady's companion, realized as her ship pulled away, "I do not enjoy the idea of leaving home & friends for foreign lands and consequently am much depressed in spirit." She tried rationalizing that "beggars can't be choosers," so "succumbed to fate." In her case, at least, initial reluctance proved ill founded as a few days in Paris convinced her "I was never so happy in my life."<sup>79</sup> Chicagoan Julia Newberry (possibly the model for Henry James's Daisy Miller, who did not want to go either) was never happy traveling with her parents in Europe. As one of several trips she made commenced she despaired "it nearly breaks my heart to think of leaving it all & going to Europe again." Chicago, she rejoined, was "worth all London & Paris & New York put together."<sup>80</sup>

Julia's sentiment would have gladdened the heart of American nationalists (except, perhaps, those from New York) who from their

revolutionary rejection of European governance had promoted an ideal of American exceptionalism. George Washington's *Farewell Address* questioned if Americans should "entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor and caprice?" The next two presidents echoed his concern; although both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson spent considerable time in Europe, and Jefferson was an avowed Francophile, both warned that European travel could be detrimental, that, in the words of Adams, Americans should stay home "to cultivate the manners of your own country, not those of Europe."<sup>81</sup> Noah Webster, in the forefront of a post-revolutionary American nationalism, strove to thwart mimicking British English by publishing his famous dictionary of the American language. Charles Bulfinch, Webster's architectural counterpart, ordered images of corn, cotton and tobacco, three major indigenous American plants, carved on the new Capitol's Corinthian columns to Americanize the neo-classical building.<sup>82</sup> Daniel Rodgers suggests that when American nationalists like Webster and Bulfinch referred to the Old World they meant "the continent of decadence and decay;" their New World was "the continent of rebirth, site of a new dispensation." Indeed, American nationalism fed off negative impressions of Europe. According to Rodgers, "the republican understanding of America depended utterly on its contract with an imaged Europe."<sup>83</sup>

However, even as some Americans strove to shun a Europe imagined only in negative ways and to embrace their frontier as the core of national identity, the education they offered their children and much of the culture they embraced themselves remained decidedly European. Despite a few distinct words and varied spellings, their language remained solidly English; corncobs hardly camouflaged the fact that most important buildings followed European models, both ancient and modern. Scotsman Sir Walter Scott's medieval tragedies consistently bested James Fenimore Cooper's tales of the American frontier in popularity.

American children learned about Europe's vices, but they were also taught, even bombarded, with its virtues. The haphazard nature of nineteenth-century American education was made more cohesive by the centrality of Europe's history, geography, languages, literature, music and art; libraries, travel clubs, reading groups,

theatres and museums reinforced lessons learned at school. An imagined Europe and contemporary Europe could be rejected, but the enormous richness of European civilization, something many Americans knew quite a lot about, could not. Embracing European civilization at home was the reality for most, but for some it was not enough. First mostly men and then men and women, those who could afford to bring their European-centered education to life, embarked on a Grand Tour to discover their civilization at its fountainhead.

Women resolute about going abroad had to first endure an experience few hearts desired. A long journey on a sailing ship or a steam ship, an extraordinary step from the narrow circle, was a prerequisite for an American Grand Tour.