



*Captain
Frederick
Marryat*

DIARY IN AMERICA

Edited with a Foreword by Jules Zanger

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Bloomington

E
165
.M36
1960

Copyright © 1960 by Indiana University Press
Manufactured in the United States of America
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 60-11742

the Americans would be, and indeed will be, in spite of their institutions. Spa, in its palmiest days, when princes had to sleep in their carriages at the doors of the hotels, was not more in vogue than are these white sulphur springs with the *elite* of the United States. And it is here, and here only, in the States, that you do meet with what may be fairly considered as select society, for at Washington there is a great mixture. Of course all the celebrated belles of the different States are to be met with here, as well as all the large fortunes, nor is there a scarcity of pretty and wealthy widows. The president, Mrs. Caton,⁹ the mother of Lady Wellesley, Lady Stafford, and Lady Caermarthen, the daughter of Carrol, of Carroltown, one of the real aristocracy of America, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and all the first old Virginian and Carolina families, many of them descendants of the old cavaliers, were at the springs when I arrived there; and certainly I must say that I never was at any watering-place in England where the company was so good and so select as at the Virginia springs in America.

I passed many pleasant days at this beautiful spot, and was almost as unwilling to leave it as I was to part with the Sioux Indians at St. Peters.¹⁰ Refinement and simplicity are equally charming. I was introduced to a very beautiful girl here, whom I should have not mentioned so particularly, had it not been that she was the first and only lady in America that I observed to *whittle*. She was sitting one fine morning on a wooden bench, surrounded by admirers, and as she carved away her seat with her pen-knife, so did she cut deep into the hearts of those who listened to her lively conversation.

There are, as may be supposed, a large number of negro servants here attending their masters and mistresses. I have often been amused, not only here, but during my residence in Kentucky, at the high-sounding Christian names which have been given to them. "Byron, tell Ada to come here directly." "Now, *Telemachus*, if you don't leave *Calypso* alone, you'll get a taste of the *cow-hide*."

Among others, attracted to the springs professionally, was a

very clever German painter, who, like all Germans, had a very correct ear for music. He had painted a kitchen-dance in Old Virginia,¹¹ and in the picture he had introduced all the well-known coloured people in the place; among the rest were the band of musicians, but I observed that one man was missing. "Why did you not put him in," inquired I. "Why, Sir, I could not put him in; it was impossible; he never *plays in tune*. Why, if I put him in, Sir, he would spoil the *harmony* of my whole picture!"

I asked this artist how he got on in America. He replied, "But so-so; the Americans in general do not estimate genius. They come to me and ask what I want for my pictures, and I tell them. Then they say, 'how long did it take you to paint it?' I answer 'so many days.' Well, then they calculate and say, 'if it took you only so many days, you ask a great deal too much; you ask so many dollars a-day for your work; you ought to be content with so much per day, and I will give you that.' So that, thought I, invention, and years of study, go for nothing with these people. There is only one way to dispose of a picture in America, and that is, to raffle it; the Americans will then run the chance of getting it. If you do not like to part with your pictures in that way, you must paint portraits; people will purchase their own faces all over the world: the worst of it is, that in this country, they will purchase nothing else."

During my stay here I was told of one of the most remarkable instances that perhaps ever occurred, of the discovery of a fact by the party from whom it was of the utmost importance to conceal it—a very pretty interesting young widow. She had married a promising young man, to whom she was tenderly attached, and who, a few months after the marriage, unfortunately fell in a duel. Aware that the knowledge of the cause of her husband's death would render the blow still more severe to her, (the ball having passed through the eye and into his brain, and there being no evident gun-shot wound), her relations informed her that he had been thrown from his horse and killed by the fall. She believed them. She was living in the country; when, about nine months after her widowhood, her brother rode down to see her, and as