



Principle Approach® Education

LYDIA HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY: *TEACHING & WRITING TO PLANT & NURTURE SELF-GOVERNMENT* FUELING THE TORCH OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

by Penelope Paquette

Thinking Providentially, when we remember our past—our birth, youth and progress into adult life—the hand of God becomes visible. We may begin to see a unique, singular pattern, pre-cut, laid out and the material of life then stitched together by the Master to suit His design and purpose. But His purpose and design is especially fulfilled when the creation willingly reflects its Maker. Such is the life of Lydia H. Sigourney, recorded by her own hand. As a daughter, granddaughter, pupil, teacher, mother, wife and prolific author, her life pattern radiates the golden glow of Christian character happily serving her Maker’s peculiar purpose.

We search today for models of Christian character. If we only study our contemporaries, we often miss the tempering influence of a gentler time. Women in our Christian republic were liberated long before a feminist movement usurped that crown. The Christian idea of man came to full expression in the liberty (not license) experienced by women in our American Christian republic. This liberty began quite early in our nation, and manifested itself in a kindlier, gentler way of life. The life and prolific works of Lydia Huntley Sigourney depict the free but unexposed, unchained yet protected and cherished, life of a truly pious, industrious, and fruitful woman writer. Was she ahead of her time as a “career woman?” Belief in the evident plan of an all-wise Creator leads to but one conclusion. She was for “such a time” as when she appeared, a time chosen specifically for her. Shouldn’t we be able to perceive that Providential timing when we familiarize ourselves with her life story as she herself tells it? Further, wouldn’t her writing voice reverberate with her own Christian worldview, whether the work was religious or secular? Lydia lived a life akin to the garden in the Song of Solomon, bride-like, modest, dignified, protectively enclosed by clear boundaries, but not in hiding. How did she become a public figure, a household name, held in the highest esteem by even such literary critics as Edgar Allen Poe, yet lead a private, dignified, family-centered life? What kind of home life and education nurtured this breed of womanly Christian character, so common in her day and so rare in ours? Lydia, like all others, is best perceived through her own words. Remember, a key ingredient in any Christian life can be the earliest influences of home



and family. Her autobiography, reaching back through the generations, records intimate relations on the Chain of Christianity® who blessed her “right early.”

PROVIDENCE NURTURES A NATURAL AVOCATION

President George Washington had six years yet to serve his country when Lydia Huntley Sigourney was born on September 1, 1791, in Norwich, Connecticut, in earlier times home to Thomas Hooker and his Fundamental Orders, later one of the original thirteen colonies, and known today as the Constitution State. Lydia was the only child of Ezekial Huntley, a Revolutionary War veteran, and his second wife, Sophia Wentworth. Her Huntley grandparents, although only one survived at the time of her advent, profoundly influenced her early life, as she records in her autobiography, a faith-filled account.

[My father] . . . was Ezekial Huntley, and he was born in . . . Norwich, . . . His father, a native of Scotland, emigrated to this country in early life, and married Miss Mary Walbridge, a woman of consistent domestic loveliness and piety. From the comforts of his home he went forth as a colonial soldier in the war waged by our motherland with the French and Indians. Returning from the comparatively successful campaign of 1760, he became a victim of the smallpox on the way, and never more saw the home of his affections . . . His widow, my grandmother is among the gentle, yet strong images of my infancy, seated by the fireside of her son, in quietness and honor.

Ever industrious, peaceful, and an example of all saintly virtues was she . . . At the age of seventy, not a thread of silver had woven itself with her lustrous black hair . . . My father was approaching the grave age of forty when he welcomed his only child. One of my first recollections is of hiding my face in his bosom, and of how bright were the knitting-needles of his aged mother, who sat near with a loving smile . . .

My father resembled [his mother] in his calm spirit and habitual diligence, as he did also in a cloudless longevity. The blessing of the fifth commandment came upon him who had honored the lone parent, resting on him for protection . . .¹

As a young child, Lydia was rehearsed in the making of our nation, and her own ancestry connected with colonial civil government and even the aristocracy of the mother country.

My father, like his predecessor, was also called to take part in the battles of his native land. He joined the first regiment that was raised in that portion of Connecticut, and marched with them to Boston, ere the Declaration of Independence had been promulgated. They passed their first night in the neighborhood of the lion-hearted Putnam, at Brooklyn, Connecticut, who had then but newly left his plough in the unfinished furrow, and rushed onward to stand by his country, till her struggle for existence should end in liberty and glory. I may not here command space to particularize the events that connected my blessed father with the perils and victories of the Revolution. They took place long before



my birth; but I have heard their recital, seated on his knee, and my heart now kindles at their memory as a trumpet-cry.

After peace and liberty had been vouchsafed to his beloved country, . . . he [Lydia's father] married a lovely creature, to whom he had been long affianced. Lydia Howard was his earliest love, but the unsettled state of the land had been unfavorable to 'marrying and giving in marriage' . . . Not a year of life, after her nuptials was meted to this gentle being . . . The desolated husband passed several years of lonely mourning, and then garnered up his heart in a new trust. Sophia Wentworth was beautiful and attractive, [born the same day, but] fourteen years younger than himself, and of a family which, though limited in pecuniary resources, stretched its pedigree back through the royal and Tory governors of New Hampshire, to the gifted Earl of Strafford, the hapless friend of Charles I. ²

Her lifelong piety was rooted in the earliest infancy, and consistent, disciplined religious training.

Their first gift to me was the name of the early-smitten consort, consecrated by the baptismal water from the hand of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Strong, in the church of the old town, under the gray cliffs, ere the second week of my infant pilgrimage was completed. Such was the custom of those days.³

Later, she writes:

The sanctity of the Sabbath, as I saw it observed by those whom I most loved and respected, had an efficient and salutary power upon the forming character. There was under our roof no young or light-minded person to tempt me to 'think my own thought, or speak my own words,' on that consecrated day. How quiet was everything around in that rural home, and what serene sobriety sat on every face! . . . Within [the] hallowed [church] walls every thing seemed most sacred. Words could not express the reverence with which I listened to the deep, and rather monotonously intoned voice of the pastor . . . The closing home-exercise of Sunday was the repetition of the whole of the 'Assembly of Divines' Catechism.' It was my father's province to ask me the questions, to which I replied scrupulously in the words of the book, adding the scriptural proofs.⁴

As a child, Lydia loved language, speaking and reading earlier than most. "I have been told . . . I was in haste to take hold of the faculty of speech."⁵ Wordsworth, later her acquaintance, tells us in his time-honored poetry, "The child is father of the man," and Lydia's childhood avocation to teach was evident, for her earliest pupils were her homemade dolls. Her earliest teachers, her parents and grandparents, were nurturing natural propensities in this child.

The doll(s) were not at all essential to my happiness. They were of the most consequence when, marshalled in the character of pupils, I installed myself as their teacher. Then I talked much and long to them, reproofing their faults, stimulating them to excellence, and enforcing a variety of moral obligations.⁶



From the age of three I was put to sleep in a chamber by myself . . . I was always attended to my pillow by maternal love, and then left alone, sometimes even the last rays of the summer sun had entirely forsaken the landscape. I felt no fear; false stories had never been told to frighten me; there was nothing to be afraid of. Our Father in Heaven . . . seemed near . . . It might have been in some measure owing to this nightly solitude, that Thought so early became my friend. In the intervals not given to sleep, it talked with me . . . I believe the following was among its first gifts. Memory has from the earliest childhood kept it in her casket:

Oh king of kings: who dwell'st among
 Angelic heralds, hear my song.
 Inexplicable are Thy ways,
 Eternal ought to be Thy praise

A new nightly visitant came with Thought, and sat in judgment on my couplet. It was Criticism. She measured the lines and put them to her ear, like a pitch-pipe; . . . The echo of consenting and euphonious words allured me to these little exercises in composition more than any poetic impulse or original idea. Attention to style and the import of classical words were advanced habitudes of mind for such infantine years. They principally arose from the character of the authors with whom I became familiar. There were literally no children's books attainable by me; and as reading became, almost in babyhood, a necessity of existence, I was thrown upon a rather severe selection of standard authors. Young, with his sententious "Night Thoughts," initiated me into the poetry of my native language; Addison's "Spectator," and Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," were the most amusing volumes in the library . . . The largest volume in my father's possession was a heavy folio of more than eight hundred pages, containing the works of the Rev. Matthew Henry, Discourses, Essays, Tracts and Biographies. I believe it was the size of the book alone that inspired me to master its contents. Yet in patiently bending over those pages, instinct with piety and baptized by prayer, methought a secret influence sometimes stole over me, moving to lowliness and the love of God. ⁷

All these happy influences combined in young Lydia's life, together with simple and healthy employments, in the garden and home, in productive industry, in which her sweet grandmother played a large part, and these lessons were extended and applied to her own home and community later. Heritage's blessings are often most memorable in the simple, useful, charitable things we learn at the feet of our ancestors.

I early plied the needle, and at the age of six was ambitious to execute the plainer parts upon my father's shirts which were made by my gentle-hearted grandmother. More than this, the fabric itself was in part the work of her industrious hands, for she loved to draw forth and twist the fine silken threads of flax; and the quiet sound of her wheel was to my young ear a lulling melody . . . I think it was the same serene and kind relative who taught



me to ply the knitting needles. I . . . am scarcely . . . able to remember the time when I did not know their use; and as a friend of mine . . . replied to some chronological question 'She came into the world married,' so I cannot affirm from any positive recollection, that I did not come into it knitting . . . This employment has always been pleasant to me, as more friendly to meditation than the needle, and requiring less abstract attention. Through life I have found it economical and agreeable to knit stockings for myself, my family, and friends. To produce twenty pair annually, after I became a housekeeper, and had more feet to cover, was no uncommon circumstance, for it agreeably employed those fragments of time which might otherwise have been lost, and was like wise a form of charity peculiarly acceptable to the poor, in our cold and variable climate.⁸

Young Lydia loved and respected her parents and grandmother, and learned life's first character forming lessons at their knees, and from their hands. But Providentially, there was another mighty force at work in her young life, her earliest friend. This dear friend was no peer companion. Madame Lathrop, widow of the distinguished Dr. Daniel Lathrop, was almost eighty when Lydia was born. The Lathrops needed to hire help for the everyday work at their estate, and often took boys into their home, hoping to become involved in all aspects of their formative years, and so better them, rather than just pay for their services. Lydia's father had first served as a clerk in the Lathrop household as a young boy, along with the infamous Benedict Arnold.⁹ Both had grown up there, but only Ezekial Huntley remained to help Madam Lathrop. Her estate was Lydia's birthplace, Ezekial Huntley having assumed the care of the Lathrop affairs since she had been left childless and destitute of near male relatives.

. . . a lady of noble bearing, cultivated intellect, and eminent piety, the daughter of John Talcott, Governor of Connecticut, and born in Hartford, May 3, 1726. Though far advanced in years when I first beheld her, time had not impaired either her physical or mental system. Her tall, majestic form was unbowed, her step elastic, and her heart in ardent, healthful action. My early life retains no more cherished or indelible picture than her beautiful age . . .

To my eye she was the model of perfect beauty, for I beheld her through a heart that was all her own . . . Having lost in one week, and ere the age of thirty, her three beautiful and promising boys, whose places were never supplied, the yearning tenderness of a heart which had continued to flow out toward the children of others, concentrated itself on the little one born in her house. No cast of character could be predicated that would more salubriously and permanently have influenced the unfolding mind and heart. Dignified in person, with the commanding yet courteous manner of the old school, her powerful intellect was strengthened by familiarity with the best authors, and association with the most distinguished men of the country. Fulness of benevolence, and a pervading piety, melted the pride of position and wealth, and made her the loving disciple of the Savior . . .

The rich benefits derived from friendship between infant inexperience and saintly wisdom, are incalculable. The tutelary influences of holy age upon the forming mind can be fully



computed only by those who stand with folded wings before the throne. To her, who there worships among an innumerable company redeemed from the earth, I would humbly say in better words than my own;

If some faint love of goodness glow in me,
Pure spirit! I first caught that flame from thee.¹⁰

Other teachers and day schools are described by Lydia in her autobiography, given honor as due from her. She was taught to master composition, math, Greek, philosophy and other subjects normally offered only to young men. She was, of course, adequately instructed as well in subjects regularly studied by young ladies: needlework, painting, music and penmanship.

However, Mrs. Lathrop was her irreplaceable mentor, who first ennobled that young intellect with literary readings and recitals, in prose, poetry and song. Together in her gracious, well-appointed parlor, child and sage savored the beauty of the best words used in the best way. Fertile seedbed for a future author! Lydia's grateful love for this noble lady extended to nursing her through her last days on earth, which also marked the end of her own formal education. Yet, at the same time, it marked the beginning of a larger, adult life.

My fourteenth birthday had scarce added itself like a pearl to the necklace of life, when the shadow of a great grief came upon me. The aged, idolized friend, who had grown dearer to my heart every year, heard the love-call and went home . . . I could not understand why any should say that patience was tried by the mind's brokenness. To me it was a fresh delight to tell her the same thing many times, if she required it . . . The emptiness of the mansion after its presiding spirit had forsaken it, fell heavily upon us all. To me, it was a tomb . . . My sleep, heretofore unbroken as that of infancy, became a series of tossing . . . The parental eye was quick to detect the change in its idol. A physician was summoned . . . the decision was . . . that I should be encased in soft red flannel, and take a short journey to visit the relatives of my loved, lamented friend . . . to Hartford . . . to the mansion of the late Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, the favorite nephew of my deceased benefactress . . . the residence of his widow, and two of his sisters, quite advanced in years . . .¹¹

Madam Wadsworth, the head of the household, was a lady of remarkably dignified manners, high intelligence, and excellent judgment, derived both from a knowledge of books and observation of mankind. Her mind was habitually well governed, . . . she was never known to be in a hurry. These characteristics must have been of unspeakable value during the trying period of our revolutionary contest, where her husband bore so conspicuous a part . . .

The position of Colonel Wadsworth made his house the center of hospitality for both the French and American officers of high rank when in this part of the country. Whether La Fayette or De Grasse, Rochambeau or the godlike Washington, was the guest, she



was always equally self-possessed and in elegant preparation. So I have been told by contemporaries, for of her own efforts or honors she never spoke. Yet I listened with delighted attention, as in precise and well-chosen language, she sometimes gratified my request for descriptions of the illustrious personages who varied the drama of earlier days.¹²

There in Hartford, recovering from the shock of young grief, Lydia's world widened into an acquaintance with the culture and inhabitants of Hartford. The Wadsworths' son, Daniel, and his wife lived nearby and in their home, Lydia made her first studies of fine pictures, and availed herself of both Wadsworth libraries. Taken about Hartford, she visited the museum, the State House, and even Wyllys Hill and the Charter Oak, the object of her highest enthusiasm. She returned home after a fortnight, unaware that Hartford, the birthplace of her illustrious contemporary and fellow pedant, Noah Webster, would one day be her permanent home.

AN EARLY CALLING TO TEACH

For the next few years, Lydia lived at home, assistant to her mother in household duties, in their new house, which was just a short distance from the Lathrop estate. She continued her studies there on her own. She devoted much time to writing prose, poetry and prose meditations which she modeled after Scripture and authors who did the same. All things considered, it seems to have been a continuance of Providential training for her teaching and writing future, successful because of her own industry and diligence.

A work on the subject of Prayer bears date among my early compositions. Its plan was threefold; first, all the instances recorded in Scripture of the efficacy of prayer; secondly, examples from history of answered prayer; thirdly, the written testimony to its solace and power by Christians, in all ages of the world.¹³

Occasionally I indulged myself in imitating the style of the historical parts of the Old Testament. This I was first induced to do by admiring a parable of Dr. Franklin, which exhibits a remarkably successful similarity.¹⁴

Among my solitary satisfactions was a journal. It was commenced of my own accord when a schoolgirl of eleven. Its sole object then was a record of my studies . . . Feeling that the habit might be conducive to improvement, I recommenced it after leaving school . . . As I showed it the respect of always writing in it with neatness, and reserving for it my best reflections, instead of smothering it with the froth and ephemera of trifling events, it seemed to yield me a sort of reciprocity, and minister to mental elevation . . . It was intended for no eye but my own.¹⁵

Lydia's early calling to teach, felt deeply in her heart from childhood and recorded in her journal, made its debut at home, when her father offered to fit out a room for her chosen purpose. Promptly accepting the offer, she composed a course outline and set out to find prospective pupils. But her youthful enthusiasm sobered by experience when only two pupils joined her school. Undaunted and unpaid, she devoted



six hours of five days a week and three on Saturday for a quarter term to these children. Her love for teaching stood the test, for she continued to look for more opportunities to teach. When her closest friend needed to find employment to help her family, they took residence at two of the best boarding schools in Hartford, devoting themselves to their own education, for the sake of improved credentials in their chosen field. When they returned, announcing that they would open a joint school, they were thronged with applicants. Tuition was moderate, three dollars a quarter, and the school was far enough from home to necessitate staying at a boarding house. But when winter arrived, both sets of parents deemed it advisable to dismiss until spring. Their response was immediate acquiescence.

It was our duty to consult first their happiness . . . The enjoyment of the parents in the restitution of their broken trio, was now entire. Still, with me the habit of teaching seemed to have become an essential element of happiness. There I procured a large room at a neighboring house and opened a gratuitous school twice a week for poor children. My principal object was to impart religious instruction, Sunday-schools not having then commenced in our country.¹⁶

In the meantime that kind Providence, which always surpasses our deserts and often our imaginings, was invisibly preparing for me the fruition of my desires—a school where I might carry out my own ideas of discipline, and pursue not solely the culture of intellect, but the education of the heart and life. I was invited to pass the festivities of Election in Hartford, by the relatives of my dear, departed benefactress, Madam Lathrop. At the close of the visit, which had been prolonged beyond my original intention, it was proposed by Daniel Wadsworth, Esq., a name synonymous with every form of goodness, that I should take charge of a select number of young ladies, the children of his friends, and continue under the roof of his venerated mother, where I had been for more two months a cherished guest.¹⁷

The dream of teaching seemed to Lydia to be filled to overflowing. Mr. Wadsworth organized the school, selected the candidates, limited them to fifteen the first year, and chose them from among his circle of friends. Later as the school proved successful, it grew to twenty-five students, and continued so for five years. Lydia pursued with avid diligence courses far exceeding the “ornamental branches” normally reserved for female education of the time. Six hours five days a week and three on Saturday began with Bible reading, continued on to Reading, Orthography with Definition, Penmanship, Arithmetic, Grammar, Rhetoric, Ancient and Modern Geography with Natural and Moral Philosophy, and of course, History. Lydia rejoiced over her students, glorying in their progress, sending earnest petitions Heavenward that they would lead all their lives according to this beginning, and those prayers did seem answered in the affirmative as she communicated with them through the years.

RECEIVING A HERITAGE FROM THE LORD



LYDIA HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY
"Sweet Singer of Hartford"



This school closed with Lydia's engagement and marriage, in 1819, at age twenty-eight to Charles Sigourney, an intelligent, industrious merchant widower. No one was more surprised at this turn of affairs than Lydia herself, because ". . . secretly deeming myself a thing set apart, I conscientiously avoided all trifling with the feelings of others. Detesting every form of flirtation, when I foresaw by woman's intuition that aught serious was meditated, I withdrew myself as far as possible until the impression passed by."¹⁸ She had decided to stay unmarried for a reason most astonishing by today's standards—

. . . I had (ever) been exceedingly sensitive to aught that bore the appearance of forwardness in my own sex. It seemed to be treason against their native refinement and their allotted sphere. . . . and can never respect any woman who boldly seeks the attentions, or invades their province whose part it is to make advances, to legislate, and to bear rule. . . . I had still a deeper reason for avoiding serious advances. My mind was made up to never leave my parents. I felt that their absorbing love could never be repaid by the longest life-service, and the responsibility of an only child, their sole prop and solace would be strictly regarded by Him who readeth the heart. I had seen aged people surrounded by indifferent persons, who considered their care a burden, and could not endure the thought that my tender parents, who without near relatives, should be thrown upon the fluctuating kindness of hirelings and strangers . . . my resolution was taken solemnly, and, as I supposed, irrevocably. The loved objects . . . knew nothing of it. They would not have required such a pledge, nor perhaps, accepted it.¹⁹

Lydia's resolve reflecting such a deep sense of love and responsibility was inspired in her as a reciprocal of her parents loving care toward herself, a mirror image from older to younger generation. It extended through her toward her husband and children, and she received it again to herself in later age. What greater gift can one generation give the next than this heritage of loving-kindness? Still, this resolve was taken captive when

. . . as I plodded my way to and from my school-house, a pair of deep set and most expressive black eyes sometimes encountered mine . . . They were the property of a man of striking physiognomy and the elegant manners of the olden school. Their dialect might not have made a lasting impression on one whose every thought and faculty were bespoken by her daily occupation; but ere long a letter came—a letter of touching eloquence and the fairest chirography. From this there was no escape . . . I determined to consult my dear Mr. and Mrs. Wadsworth. Readily and affectionately they gave me their opinion, adding earnest urgency that I should accept the proposal.²⁰

Today young women commonly consult only with their peers on the momentous choice of a life mate. Perhaps that is why Lydia's uncompromising priorities and methods are somewhat astonishing to us. Again, we are confronted by her serious self-denial for the greater good of those who had done the same for her. But, however willing she was, her parents had no intention of denying her future happiness for their sake.



. . . But the parents—the parents, already looking with hope to the next vacation, when the sole idol of their thoughts and prayers should come with her lamp of love to enlighten their lonely dwelling—shall they be told that she is making to herself a new home? . . . It was decided that the case should be simply and circumstantially stated to them, with the assurance that I had not committed myself in any form, but awaited their decision, by which I would be implicitly guided, . . . I wrote the letter, then led a life of supplication to Him who alone giveth wisdom . . . And then came the letter from my blessed father and mother, cordially consenting to the proposed change of condition, and adding . . . that their minds felt relief at the thought that, when death should take them from me, my brotherless and sisterless heart might rest on such a protector as he was represented to be by our most faithful friends and benefactors.²¹

Then marriage preparations could begin, with genuine happiness and great enthusiasm. Lydia says, “I was as one wrapped in the tissue drapery of a pleasant dream. What came the nearest to awakening me as a stern reality, was the necessary dissolution of my cherished school.”²² Her school was closed at a time when it was quite successful—ending on a good note. Her teaching career, however, did not end, but exponentially expanded through the next years, as she taught her three step-children, an eight-year-old boy and two younger girls, at home, and as she turned her love of teaching and learning toward authorship. Even before she married, the idea of obtaining an income by writing had been simmering in her thoughts.

Among the disturbing forces that conflicted with this somewhat dreamy period . . . was the thought that I could no longer, by my own earnings, add to the comfort of my parents. It had been the purest, most unmixed pleasure, that I had ever tasted. How could I possibly resign it? Imagination was active in searching if there were not some form of productive employment consistent with my new position. The liberality of my future husband was unquestioned. But I desired to retain the privilege of working for my parents . . . Might I not write some small work for children—some school-book, and get money?²³

The domestic life of the Sigourney family was characterized by happy industry. Charles Sigourney, a Boston native, of French Huguenot and Scottish ancestry, had attended private school in England. Returning to America at age thirteen, he entered his father’s store as a clerk. Later, he opened his own hardware business in Hartford, which he pursued with “unremitting diligence and ability to the close of life.”²⁴ Charles was himself a scholar, with a taste for literature and the fine arts, and the two of them improved their minds together pursuing a variety of literary and scientific studies. He took a personal interest in Lydia’s efforts with the needle and knitting needles, and in her educational efforts for their ready-made family.

It was particularly pleasant to me to keep up in some measure the habitudes of teaching with our very bright and attractive children. I simplified for them portions of geography,



history, and Scripture, illustrated by stories, and by degrees formed sets of written question, by whose aid they might review and rivet their little gatherings in memory. Highly gratified were they when father chanced to be an auditor.²⁵

A year after their wedding, they moved into the mansion by the river, designed and built by Charles, where they lived for eighteen years. The domicile was a veritable farm, home to horses, cows, poultry, and filled with productive gardens all overseen by the family and various hired helpers. Lydia practiced economy as a virtue, and her business acumen, which later served her so well as a best-selling author, was evidenced in her home matters. Her parents had blessed her also here in the excellent attention given to “forming her and fitting her for her future station in life.”²⁶

For the household accounts, which were entrusted to me, an early training had given fitness and facility. Having acquired a fair handwriting, and some knowledge of arithmetical computation, at the age of eight my father accepted my assistance in keeping his books . . . As he held for some time the office of Town Surveyor, I was initiated into the mysteries of debt and credit, and gratified by being installed as a species of deputy book-keeper. He required a very clear chirography, and tolerated no blots or erasures; and the attention to accuracy thus inculcated in childhood, has been an advantage throughout life. By him I was also induced to commence, at eleven, in a manuscript book for that purpose, a statement of all my own expenditure, however small, a habit which I have continued without interruption to the present day . . . there is more pleasure in a just economy, even when not compelled by pecuniary need, than in the most lavish expenditure; the conscience of one who realizes a Christian stewardship, being better satisfied.²⁷

A fascinating glimpse of the old-fashioned form of “welfare” practiced by example from an earlier generation is recorded in Lydia’s autobiography. Charitable works were the natural province of ladies in that time, and they took a personal interest and responsibility for the poor or unfortunate quite seriously, teaching one generation to carry on the work in the next. Lydia strictly practiced habits of church tithing and philanthropy.

Among the pleasures of our mode of life I was permitted to put in practice what had been my ambition for years, ever since a short visit to the Hon. Governor John Jay, that venerable patriot, scholar, and saint. His daughter Miss Ann Jay . . . who had charge of his establishment, gave employment to the poor women of that vicinity and neighboring villages, in spinning and weaving, providing the materials, and paying them for their labor. The fabrics thus produced were sometimes retained, but generally disposed of at very low prices to those who made them, being of such a substantial nature as to be useful in their households. Thus she encouraged their industry, and also gained such an acquaintance with the structure of their families, as enabled her to send acceptable gifts to the sick and aged, or useful books to the young . . . she appointed one day in each month for the transaction of this business, when groups of earnest hard-working



women might be seen, wending their way on side-saddle and pillion, bringing the fruits of their diligence, and flattered to be received at the great house as coadjutors and friends. Thus, this estimable lady, who, like her father, was the personification of benevolence, illustrated, in her own ingenious way, the principle that the best mode of helping the working-classes is to sustain their self-respect by prompting them to help themselves . . . My plan of operations was . . . on a more limited scale, but kept its original steadily in view . . . ripened into action by information from my husband that . . . dry goods . . . articles . . . belonging to him which remained unsold would be brought to the house, and I might have liberty to dispose of them in payment for the work of spinning-women . . . Forthwith I opened negotiations with the flax merchants, and busied myself in searching . . . for those who were skilled to transmute the raw material into yarn, thread, etc., receiving remuneration in whatever they might select from my store, at marvellously reduced prices . . . Here was a commercial intercourse and a barter-trade opened . . . and proved a source of mutual satisfaction.²⁸

Before many years passed, the Sigourney family experienced a number of additions and subtractions to their family circle.

. . . My first infant, who came to us just before leaving our former habitation, fainted at the gate of life . . . then followed the premature birth of two sons, and I gradually resigned the hope of ever becoming the mother of a living babe . . . But somewhat more than eight years after our marriage, one of the smallest representatives of the human race was laid in my bosom by the All Bountiful. Scarcely four pounds in weight was this miniature of humanity . . . Like a vision was the little Mary, and a blessing has she since been to all who have known her . . . Scarcely two years after . . . , a brother, of larger proportions, and vigorous frame, gladdened her nursery . . . His father honored him with the name of Andrew, which was borne by the Huguenot ancestor who first emigrated to this land for “freedom to worship God.”²⁹

Now was the time, when her increased family responsibilities reduced the opportunity to visit them, Lydia’s parents were prevailed upon to sell their real estate and become a permanent part of the Sigourney home. Her father survived to move with them from their mansion to a smaller home, many years later. Beginning four years before that removal, and continuing on for the duration, Lydia suffered the loss within the space of only a few years, of her mother, next her father, then her only son at age nineteen, followed by her husband, and that by her stepson’s death. Yet, her daughter survived to marry an Episcopal clergyman, and begin a family of her own. Circumstances left her living alone with a faithful servant in her later years. Such is often the ebb and flow of life, as Lydia expresses, “Rapidly have I sketched for you, . . . some of the bereavements that have cost my heart so much. It is not my purpose to murmur, but rather to thank Him who so long indulged me in the use of His loans, and had a full right to resume them.”³⁰

FROM TEACHER TO AUTHOR: A TEACHER WHOSE PUPILS WERE HER READERS



Lydia, over the course of several years, became a prolific, internationally acclaimed author. She wrote sixty-seven books, over a thousand magazine articles, edited her own annual, *The Religious Souvenir*, and turned out annual gift books and collections of inspirational prose and poetry at the rate of approximately one every eight months for almost fifty years.³¹ Her name, in mid-nineteenth century, was more prestigious than James Russell Lowell, Herman Melville, John Greenleaf Whittier, or Edgar Allen Poe. Evert A. Duyckinck, a contemporary literary critic, in his *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, published in New York, in 1856, by Charles Scribner Co., says of her: “a sympathy with patriotic and national topics characterize her entire literary career . . . her most successful efforts . . . poems . . . exhibit in graver moods a pathos combined with hopeful resignation characteristic of the mind trained by exercise in self knowledge and self-control.”³²

Her books were in great favor with the women of her day, widely read and often referenced. Their discussion of her topics, memorization of her poetry, and pursuit of her literary efforts served to colonize American Christian ideals across the nation and world. She was revered for her personal strict adherence to the highest morality.

In Lydia’s century, an author’s work was frequently evaluated on the basis of that individual’s life. To Lydia’s credit, contemporary reviews of her work and biographical sketches, which accompanied publication of her prose and poetry repeatedly remarked that “she was not only a pleasing, but also a morally impeccable writer.” Even Edgar Allen Poe, noted for his brutally frank reviews, hesitated to find irredeemable fault with poetry written by “such an exemplary lady.”³³

During her 1840 European tour, Lydia was received by Wordsworth, had tea with Carlyle and was received at the court of Louis Philippe.³⁴

We found very much to interest us in those ancient regions, with whose history we had been long familiar. Yet more than ruinous castle, where romance lingered, or royal palace, where pomp abode, or tower, obelisk, or cathedral, or galleries where congregated the world’s artistic power, were the sight of the face and sound of those whose writings had instructed or charmed me. . . . Too late was I, alas, for Miss Hannah More, and Sir Walter Scott, and Mrs. Hemans, and Coleridge. . . . Yet I was indulged in the privilege of the society of Wordsworth . . . [and many others].³⁵

Louis Godey edited the premier ladies’ magazine of the day, *Godey’s Ladies Book*. He was willing to pay Lydia simply for the privilege of including her name on his magazine’s list of editors. Many of the articles printed in the magazine did not name the author. However, Lydia commonly devoted her writing to themes pre-occupied with teaching and learning, and subjects that expanded knowledge of history that glorified exalted character. One can read many of the unattributed pieces published in the magazine and deduce her authorship.³⁶ So often concerned with improving the mind and morals, these pieces stand out among the more mundane topics dealing with home arts and crafts, and current fashions. Lydia was so well esteemed that she was “selected by an Iowa doctor as the name sake for a tiny community located



in the center of Keokuk County, Iowa.”³⁷ She was known as the “Sweet Singer of Hartford” and the city honored her by naming a street after her. Her “decline in popularity began in the 1850s, not from any deterioration in the quality of her verse, but from the changing taste of the public.”³⁸

She was a writer who viewed her readers as her pupils; the home, the local community, and the family, especially the children, received her direct attention. Commonly her themes included a reverence for age, a resignation to adversity, moral piety, and sympathy for missionary and philanthropic efforts, as Dorothy Ann Egan writes in her piece published by Colby Sawyer College, “Lydia Huntley Sigourney, An American Icon,” “her writing had a distinctly moral and religious tone. Each poem was intended to affect the moral character of her readers . . . sought to offer instruction and spiritual guidance in a simple, readily understandable and emotionally charged manner . . . writing that punished sin and rewarded virtue . . .”³⁹ Today, her writings are not gone, only forgotten, omitted, or set aside and obscured by modernism.

WRITING TO BLESS THE GENERATIONS

Turning to *The Christian History of the Constitution of the United States of America*, Vol. I: *Christian Self-Government*, one of our cherished “red books” by Verna Hall, on page 407 of the Appendix, we find a singularly powerful essay written on education. It was written by Lydia Sigourney in her *Letters to Young Ladies*, 1852, and is taken from the Introduction. Passionately asserting that the “natural vocation of females is to teach,” Lydia charges her reader in every age to choose wisdom and utility, not folly and self-indulgence, because “Might she not, even upon her sons, engrave what they shall take unchanged, through all the temptations of time, to the bar of the last judgment?” Imagine the impact upon society if, in all generations, young ladies were so soberly exhorted to think how their every life habit, character trait, and choice carries a consequence for their future child and grandchild, indeed for generations yet to come. Her advice illustrates the practical application of the principle of “How the Seed of Local Self-Government is Planted”⁴⁰ at the most primary level: home training by the mother, whose hand rocks the cradle, whose smile encourages the baby to new steps, whose example in the smallest, simplest things waymarks the child’s life course.

TWO PRINCIPLES GUIDED HER WRITING

Parents, teachers and those who mentored the young in Lydia’s time commonly wrote “advice to the young.” We have many examples in history of great men who consciously and deliberately invested their time and talents into the next generation, that their own properties of intellect and wisdom tempered with experience could become instruments of good to posterity. Noah Webster, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and others can be counted among these who thought their responsibility extended past their own days. What we call a *worldview* was extensively addressed in these letters of advice. They wrote about the value and use of time, boldly promoted their Christian views on their own and other religions, imparted their knowledge in health, dress, industry, domestic employments, reading and other



intellectual pursuits, politics, virtues, benevolence, manners, accomplishments, choice of companions and more. Some of these are simple letters; others would fill a volume or more.

Letters to Young Ladies is a classic of this genre, which, if restored, read, and studied by young women in our day, might prove invaluable in shedding light upon an earlier Christian idea of womanliness. Many books of advice on household management written for young women from the nineteenth century exist. Some have been reprinted. However, the God-given natural avocation of women to teach that occupied women's minds in our early American Christian republic is often missed. This primary responsibility and its accompanying issues define their worldview, here preserved and passed along for us to marvel over, a rediscovered revelation of the highest and best calling of the Lord to women of all generations.

All of Lydia's past and the knowledge she acquired from her parents and mentors were carefully recorded in her writing. The methods of teaching and training, as well as the content of her life lessons, all shine forth from the pages of her prodigious productions. The tenderest sentiments were passed to her "pupils"; hearts and minds were zealously guarded from any enticement. She governed her writing by the same Golden Rule as Noah Webster, of whom it was said; "He taught millions to read and not one to sin." She describes her writing thus,

My literary course has been a happy one. It commenced in impulse, and was continued from habit. Two principles it has ever kept in view—not to interfere with the discharge of womanly duty, and to aim at being an instrument of good.⁴¹

A PURPOSEFUL MENTOR TO POSTERITY

Gems of admonition and illuminating anecdotes abound in the thoughts she passes on in her *Letters to Young Ladies*! ⁴² Consider these samples:

From the chapter "Knowledge" (pp. 55–56):

In your earliest discipline of memory, be careful not to afford it too many aids . . . Make it athletic by exercise . . . Bring home the substance of sermons, or lectures on the sciences, without the aid of pencil and paper. If you wish to preserve it . . . abridge it after you return, but never take notes while you listen. It too much excuses memory from its trust . . . In perusing books, never use marks, to denote . . . your progress . . . charge memory with the number of the chapter, or the page where you discontinued to read . . . Hold no rule in slight estimation, that will enable you to invigorate the retentive power. Persevere . . . then you may be assured that the most formidable stage in the discipline of memory is surmounted; for as it regards the action of the mind, knowledge and remembrance are indivisible.

From the chapter "Industry" (p. 76):

Acquaint yourselves . . . with all the details of a well-ordered family, and make this



department of knowledge, both a duty and a pleasure. For beset as our country may be, with external dangers, or disordered by internal commotions—if from every dwelling there flows forth a healthful and healing influence, what disease can be fatal?

From the chapter “Domestick Employments,” while describing the domestic habits of Miss Elizabeth Carter, given in an earlier chapter as an example of a self-educated scholarly woman, adept in nine languages, admired by the renowned Dr. Johnson, who never neglected her domestic duties (pp. 83–85):

It should be remembered that while this distinguished woman . . . could make the house which she superintended, agreeable to her father and others, she laid aside none of her literary or scientific pursuits . . . Her daily system was to read before breakfast, two chapters in the Bible, a sermon, and some Hebrew, Greek and Latin. After breakfast she read a portion in each of the nine languages with which she was acquainted, so as not to allow herself to lose what she had once gained, while, in her department of housekeeping, nothing was deficient or omitted.

Order and punctuality are indispensable to those who would well govern a family. . . . Punctuality, in particular, propagates itself. If the mistress of a house is punctual, the inmates under her roof become so. It is the very soul of system. The spirit of order also diffuses itself from the head to the members of a household. One argument for having every surrounding object neatly arranged, is that the operations of the mind are thus influenced. The late President Dwight used to enjoin it upon his students, never to seat themselves for intellectual labor, especially for composition, until their rooms were in perfect order.

From the chapter “Accomplishments” (p. 119):

True politeness requires humility, good sense and benevolence. To think more “highly of ourselves than we ought to think” destroys its quickening principle. Its first effort is to subdue and extirpate selfishness; its next to acquire that knowledge of human nature, which will enable it wisely to regulate itself by the sympathies of those around. Its last feature reveals alliance with a higher family than the graces. Forming a bright link between the accomplishments and virtues, it claims affinity with that heaven-born spirit which on the plains of Bethlehem, breathed in melody from the harps of angels, “Peace on earth and good will to men.”

From the same chapter (pp. 107–109):

The mother of Washington was pronounced the model of true dignity in woman. She possessed the lofty characteristics of a Roman matron, with a heart of deep and purified affections, and a majesty that commanded the reverence of all. At the head of a large household, whose charge, by the death of her husband, devolved solely upon her, the energy and dignity of her character preserved subordination and harmony. To the inquiry



what was the course pursued in the early education of her illustrious son, she replied, “*The lesson to obey.*” When the war of the Revolution terminated . . . when after an absence of nearly seven years, he hastened to pay his filial respects to this venerated parent, the officers of the French and American armies were anxious to see the mother of their chief. A splendid festival, given at Fredericksburg, . . . furnished the opportunity. The foreign officers had heard indistinct rumors of her remarkable life and character, and forming their judgments from European examples, were prepared to expect that glare and show, which would have been attached to the parents of the great, in the countries of the Old World. How were they surprised, when the matron, leaning on the arm of her son, entered the room dressed in the very plain, yet becoming garb, worn by the Virginian lady of the old time of day. Her address, always dignified and imposing, was courteous although reserved. She received the complimentary attentions that were paid her, without evincing the slightest elevation, and at an early hour . . . retired as she had entered, resting upon the arm of her son. Such an effect had her simplicity of garb and dignity of bearing, upon the officers accustomed to the heartless pomp of European courts, that they affirmed it was no wonder the “America produced the *greatest men*, since she could boast of such *mothers.*”

From the chapter, “Sisterly Virtues” (pp. 124–125):

Every well-regulated family might be as a perpetual school. The younger members . . . will be led by the principle of imitation more effectually than by the whole force of foreign precept . . . The custom of the older daughters to assist in the education of their less advanced sisters . . . cannot be too highly applauded . . . Here then is the opportunity (to teach) . . . Here are your scholars, bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, gathered under the same shelter, seated around the same board. Whatever you have to teach them, impart it kindly, and diligently, in the fear of the Lord . . . Shaking the super flux to them, you increase your own mental wealth. If you cannot assume the whole charge of their education, take but a part. Labour in a single department. Hold yourself responsible for their proficiency, in the branch that you undertake to teach . . . Consider your own education as quite incomplete until self-education is added; and there is no better mode of facilitating this, than the instruction of others.

From the chapter, “Books” (pp. 146–147, 156–157):

A taste for reading is important to all intellectual beings . . . It is important to all because it is the way in which aliment is conveyed to the mind; and to our sex peculiarly necessary, because dwelling much on the contemplation of little things, they are in danger of losing the intellectual appetite . . . A taste for reading is . . . an armour of defense . . . establish a systematic course of reading (all of which) should be with a fixed purpose to remember and to profit . . . Read . . . what you desire to remember with concentrated and undivided attention. Close the book and reflect.

From the chapter, “Cheerfulness” (pp. 182–183):



Cheerfulness is promoted by a consciousness of being usefully employed . . . The more instructors of youth cultivate a dignified cheerfulness, the more they will extend and deepen their influence. It might seem that *to teach* is the natural province of our sex. And if every young lady, . . . should make it her object to impart to all those younger or less favored than herself, who come in contact with her, some portion of the accomplishments, the knowledge, or the piety, that she possesses, the sweet consciousness of not living in vain, would cheer her meditations, and irradiate her countenance and manners with the charm of benevolence.

But Lydia in her “Introduction” (pp. 11–15) waxes most eloquent in her claims that the earliest and most important teacher of the young child is his mother,

. . . the mind in its most plastic state is yielded to her tutelage . . . This influence is most visible and operative in a republic. The intelligence and virtue of its every citizen have a heightened relative value . . . Guardians of Education, whether parents, preceptors, or legislators—you who have so generously lavished on woman the means of knowledge— . . . Demand of her as a debt the highest excellence which she is capable of attaining . . . Make her accountable for the character of the next generation.

From the chapter “Industry” (p. 75):

For the strength of a nation, especially of a republican nation, is in the intelligent and well-ordered homes of the people. And in proportion as the discipline of families is relaxed will the happy organization of communities be affected, and national character become vagrant, turbulent, or ripe for revolution.⁴³

These prophetic words ring sublime truth, urging us to redouble our own efforts as guardians of education.

STILL AT OUR LESSONS

Returning to her 1866 autobiography, *Letters of Life*, which she composed from the vantage point of age, recall the span and scope of her life which began in the earliest days of the Christian Constitutional Federal Republic and continued just two months past the resolution of the War Between the States, and President Lincoln’s death. Pause to reflect that she left a complete life record for the benefit of posterity. It is a pattern for teaching and learning for all generations. Mature, matronly, it is Biblically bride-like in her perception and teaching of womanly conduct, holiness, discernment and scholarship. She tempers all her observation of her present age with wisdom from the past, and from Scripture. Her thoroughness extends to a full chapter cataloging of all her writings, complete with commentary. She completes her life-story with a “Good-bye,” describing her home and surroundings. She describes herself, at past threescore years and ten, as Michelangelo did, “Still at my lessons!”; “still a beginner—a backward pupil at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth.” Like the great scene of the Creation in the Sistine Chapel, by Michelangelo—where the Creator’s finger reaches to touch His creation—Lydia, in her life record, consciously reaches out to



touch the generations yet unborn.

She left this earth on a lovely summer day, June 10, 1865. Hartford city bells tolled an hour at sunset on that day, and multitudes thronged the house, to once more view that beloved face, their own sweet singer of Hartford, a nationally famed author and a locally revered benefactress of multiple charities. Her daughter, Mary, writing the last chapter as “The Valedictory,” describes her calm, peaceful graduation to Heaven, “For a time we could not mourn. We had gone with her so near the gates of Paradise that we seemed to have entered into her joy . . .”⁴⁴ and records these lines by Lydia:

I never wrote for fame—
 The payment seemed not to be worth the toil;
 But wheresoe'er the kind affections
 sought to mix themselves by music with the mind,
 That was my inspiration and delight.⁴⁵

Providentially speaking, it cannot be accidental that Lydia, the first European Christian convert, a woman, a symbol of Christian liberty and hospitality, a businesswoman who sold purple, the color of royalty, should be this Lydia’s Biblical namesake. Lydia Huntley Sigourney, one of the earliest beneficiaries of the liberty bestowed upon women in our new republic, is a patriot and a pioneering mother, grandmother, teacher, and author we must include in our lexicon of American royalty, our Christian heroes and heroines. She embodies and imparts the higher, nobler life principles which gave us the endangered liberty we enjoy. An example of the type of womanly virtue whose kind is not yet extinct, she strengthens in us a besieged worldview that will yet endure. She is a teacher, author, mother and grandmother whose seeds are not hybrid, bearing no fruit after their own flowering, but the great-great-grandmother, who, by her unselfish labors to leave a written record, passes on good fruit to all generations. “I believe there is no earthly pilgrimage, if faithfully portrayed in its true lights and shadows, but might impart some instruction to the future traveller and set forth His praise whose mercies are ‘new every morning.’”⁴⁶ Let her example inspire us to our best efforts, for our own lifelong learning is a two sided coin—the other side of which is “Go ye therefore and teach” (Matthew 28:19)—fueling the torch of Christian liberty by teaching principles of faith and character that are the rightful legacy of blessing to our posterity.



LYDIA SIGOURNEY MODEL LESSON

Biblical Reference:

The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself: . . . if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. (Deuteronomy 28:9)

Leading Idea:

Lydia Sigourney's life and works exemplify noble Christian womanhood.

Constitutional government in the early republic allowed the flowering and expression of Christian liberty.

Principle:

How the Seed of Local Self-Government Is Planted:—Teaching the next generation to fuel the torch of Christian liberty.

Contents:

Research, reason

1. Introduce biographical information on Lydia Sigourney.
2. Think on these things: What facts are known of her life? What kind of Christian influence helped to form her character? How would you describe her Christian character in terms of traits, habits, and deeds? What is her Christian legacy—her lasting contributions?

Relate, and record:

3. Request students to write a summary essay

Continuing research, reasoning, and relating:

4. Read selections of poetry, biography, or other works by Lydia Sigourney; discuss content.
5. "It is the natural vocation of females to teach." Use excerpts from the *Christian History*, Vol. I, page 407. Read aloud portions, explaining terms and expressions and discussing the theme of the earliest and most important influence upon a child. Who bears the greatest responsibility for the character of the next generation—parents, churches or civil institutions?

Reason, relate, and record:

6. What is the Christian responsibility of each individual toward the next generation? What will be our legacy of Christian liberty?



TEACHING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM—Suggested Class Projects on Lydia Sigourney: Any of the following suggestions could be prefaced by or integrated into the model lesson.

Geography:

Indian Names of American towns, cities and geographical features. Study and discuss the following portion of a poem by Lydia Sigourney. Identify other Indian names of geographical features in your locale.

Indian Names—“How can the red men be forgotten, while so many of our states and territories, bays, lakes, and rivers, are indelibly stamped by names of their giving?”

History:

Read biographical sketches of historical characters written by Lydia Sigourney. Consider reading poetry selections, such as “Jamestown Church” for enrichment.

Arts and Crafts:

Knitting and needlework were the useful daily employments of American women who never sat with idle hands, but always were producing items to clothe their loved ones and to beautify their homes. Often as they knitted, embroidered or sewed, a family member would read aloud, that their minds would be improved while they worked.

Composition Lessons:

Study how Lydia practiced her writing skills; devise a similar lesson using the same methods for the same purposes.

Study the purposes of writing—how writing can be used to teach many others something you have learned. Have student write a sentence, paragraph or essay for this purpose.

Penmanship—Leading Idea:

Ezekial Huntley, Lydia’s father, required exact and careful writing as a basic training for keeping books. At the age of eight, she became his assistant record keeper in his work as Town Surveyor. Use this example to inspire student.

American Literature—Leading Ideas:

“First Fruits of a Republic,” an American woman author who wrote to teach and nurture Christian self-government

Reading and analyzing for literary elements various selections of prose and poetry.



Economics—Leading Ideas:

The habits of diligence, thrift and frugality as practiced by Lydia.

The parental training in keeping written accounts carried on throughout her lifetime. Lydia began keeping her own personal account of expenditures in a special journal at age eleven.

The early Republic's form of "welfare" and of charity

The Constitutional protection of an author's property encourages labor. Lydia helped support her family with income from her writing.

Rudiments of America's Christian History and Government:

Elements of Lydia Sigourney's life and works could be used to illustrate God's Principle of Individuality, the Christian Principle of Self-Government, Our Heritage of American Christian Character, Conscience is Our Most Sacred Property, and How the Seed of Local Self-Government is Planted. Additionally, when studying the Chain of Christianity® Moving Westward, Mrs. Sigourney provides an illuminating view of life in our early

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LYDIA HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY

In her own words from her autobiography this modest listing is intended to generally represent her topics.

Moral Pieces in Prose and Verse, 1815, "was the modest title of my first volume."

Female Biography, 1829, "I . . . attach increasing importance to biographical sketches of the good and distinguished as examples of conduct. A large number of these had accumulated in manuscript, which I had been in the habit of reading and commenting upon to the pupils of my school. This was a selection from them of the lives of twelve American women remarkable for their piety."

Biography of Pious Persons, 1832, "In two volumes, comprising 338 pages, the remainder of the delineations mentioned in the preceding article."

Evening Readings in History, 1833, "A love of Ancient History, and the habit of teaching it, had frequently suggested the desire of rendering . . . portions of Assyria, Egypt, Tyre, Syria, and Palestine . . . within the compass of brief readings, or lessons."

How To Be Happy, 1833, "Still keeping in view the nurture of children, I prepared a small work . . . pointing out a variety of ways in which they might find satisfaction by being good and obedient."

Tales and Essays for Children, 1834, "I have an idea that my zeal to come in contact with the mind in its earliest stages, outruns my ability . . . the power of indwelling with childish thought and so harmonizing with its simplicity as to cheer and elevate it . . . is a rare and not readily attainable excellence."



Zinzendorff, and other Poems, 1835, “A visit to the Moravian establishments at Bethlehem and Nazareth, during a tour in Pennsylvania, so impressed me with their moderated desires, systematic industry, and quiet, consistent piety, as to turn my attention to the life of the founder, and prompt me to cull its poetical elements.”

Letters to Mothers, 1838, “This a communication on matters that seemed to me of high import with those to whom Heaven has committed the molding of the whole mass of mind in its first formation.”

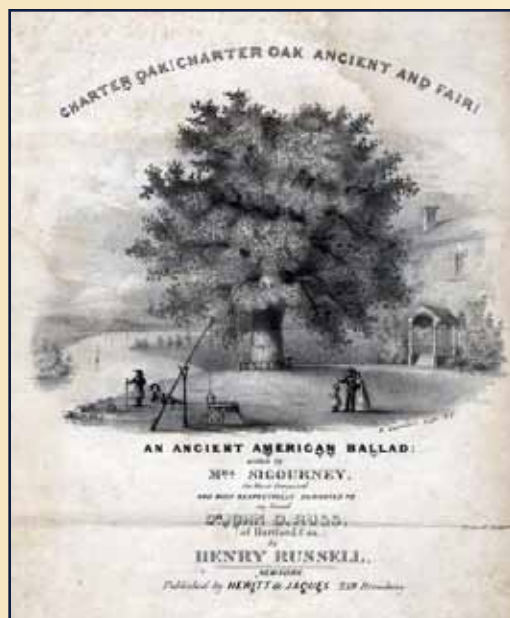
The Boy’s Reading Book, 1839, “A counterpart to its feminine companion, . . . It was written with care, aiming to enforce such principles as seemed to me vitally important to the young sons of a republic.”

Pocahontas, and Other Poems, 1841, “I had great pleasure in searching out materials for the principal poems . . . It was heightened from having once visited the ruins of the church at Jamestown, where the Princess Pocahontas, the first convert from the heathen tribes, received the rite of baptism in the first temple consecrated to God in the Western wilderness.”

Pleasant Memories of Pleasant Lands, 1842, “Descriptions, in prose and verse, of scenery and characters that most interested me during nearly a year in foreign lands.”

Western Home, and other Poems, 1854, “Admiration of our ‘great, green, growing West’, called into existence the poem which gave name to this . . . volume.”

NOTE: To the best of my knowledge, all the above titles are out of print. Search libraries, used bookstores, or internet sites such as www.bookfinder.com.



Lydia Sigourney applied her talents to writing lyrics for this musical composition paying homage to Hartford’s legendary Charter Oak.



- ¹ Mrs. Lydia Huntley Sigourney, *Letters of Life*. New York, NY: Arno Press, 1980, 11–12.
- ² *Ibid.*, 15–20.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 20.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 40–41.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 27.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 38–39.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 32–33.
- ⁹ *Ibid.* Note: Lydia devotes several pages to describe the character and habits of Arnold as a boy, in the Lathrop household, and the general disappointment, and scorn of Connecticut people evoked by Arnold. When traitorously employed by the British he went far out of his way to burn New London, in his own native state, and adding to that injury, expressed a wish that it were possible to reach Norwich, that he might there burn at least the abode in which he was born.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11, 43, 47–48.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 74–83.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 84–85.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 179–180.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 199.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 200–201.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 242.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 240–241.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 244.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 245–246.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 247.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 258.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 252.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 268.
- ²⁶ Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828 Facsimile. San Francisco, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1967.
- ²⁷ Sigourney, *Letters of Life*, 276.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 277–279.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 280–282.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 322.
- ³¹ www.Britannica.com/women/articles/Sigourney_Lydia_Howard_Huntley.html.
- ³² *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, Evert A. Duyckinck, New York, NY: C. Scribner, 1856, as quoted in Internet file www.etext.lib.virginia.edu/eaf/authors/cal/lhsCal.htm.
- ³³ Sandy Nieuwsma, “Lydia Huntley Sigourney, Another Look,” with material from “Lydia Huntley Sigourney, American Icon” by Dorothy Ann Egan, as quoted in Internet file www.sigourney.com/lhs.html, 5/15/2002.
- ³⁴ Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame, “Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791–1865),” as quoted in Internet file www.cwhf.org/browse/sigourney.ht, 5/15/2002.
- ³⁵ Sigourney, *Letters of Life*, 319–320.
- ³⁶ Note: One may still find a year of *Godey’s Ladies Book* in bound volumes at used bookstores, or libraries. Many articles are credited only with the author’s initials, or not at all, and seem reminiscent of Mrs. Sigourney’s themes and style.
- ³⁷ Nieuwsma, “Lydia Huntley Sigourney, Another Look.”
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ Rosalie J. Slater, *Teaching and Learning America’s Christian History: The Principle Approach*®. San Francisco, CA: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1965, 83–84, 250–261.
- ⁴¹ Sigourney, *Letters of Life*, 324.
- ⁴² Lydia Huntley Sigourney, *Letters to Young Ladies*. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1936.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 11–15, 75.
- ⁴⁴ Sigourney, *Letters of Life*, 413.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 403.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.