

### Chapter Three

#### America and the Southern Tour

The people that professed religion here were chiefly Quakers, and those who styled themselves Christians. Lorenzo held several meetings in the town, which were very satisfactory to many. After staying near two weeks in New Bedford, Lorenzo and nearly all the passengers that were in the ship went on board a packet for New York. They left me with the other women to come round in the ship to Virginia and meet them in Richmond.

We parted, and I had to stay nearly two weeks before the ship sailed. It took that long to take out the lading and prepare her for receiving a fresh cargo in Virginia. It was about this time that the ship Chesapeake was fired upon by the British.<sup>1</sup> We sailed from New Bedford about the first of July [1807] and had tolerable pleasant weather. We were lonely, though, not having any company but us three women. We got into Chesapeake Bay at evening and passed one of the armed vessels belonging to the British. We expected them to have stopped us, as it had been reported that they were in the habit of requiring the captains of American vessels to pull down their colors to them or else be fired upon. However, we passed by unmolested. They did hail us, but it being dark we got by. Sister Wade was very much alarmed, but I felt so much the spirit of independent America that I did not wish my country's flag disgraced in our own waters. In the morning, we came into Hampton Roads. We anchored and stayed several days, in sight of the British ships of war, while the captain took a boat and went to Norfolk to seek for a cargo.

We were in a very unpleasant situation, as we had no one on board that we could place any real confidence in. But Providence provided for us, and we met with no insults from any. The captain returned at night, and the next morning we set sail for City Point. The day was delightful, and the scenes that surrounded were truly pleasing. By the bends, the river seemed to be enclosed on every side -- and the banks were covered with all the beauties that summer could produce. It gave my mind a pleasant sensation when I reflected that it was my native country -- my beloved America. But little did I know what awaited me in my native land.

We sailed on very pleasantly through the day, and about eight or nine o'clock we arrived at City Point. The ship was in the river for her lading to be brought down from Richmond in lighters. The weather was getting very warm, and we were obliged to stay on board until we could get an opportunity to go to Richmond. By

land, Richmond was not more than twenty-five miles; by water, it was perhaps twice as far. Here time passed away very heavily. Finally, the master of the ship went up to Richmond on business and hired a hack to return. Consequently, we embraced the opportunity, when it returned, to get seats in it to Richmond. We left our trunks and other things to be brought up by the boats that were to bring down the lading for the ship.

We bid farewell to the ship where I had been confined the most of the time for near three months. It was a happy day for me, although I was in a part of the continent that I had never been in before. I felt as though I could kiss the ground. But my companion Mrs. Wade's mind was occupied in quite a different way - she was thousands of miles from her native land, while I was breathing my native air.

We arrived in Richmond about one or two o'clock and stopped at the *Bell Tavern*, strangers to all we saw. However, I had received a direction where to go and make myself known. This I did, at a brother Foster's. When they learned who I was, they received us very kindly. But it was a severe trial for me, being the first time I had been obliged to call on friends without any one to introduce me. But the Lord provided for me, and I found many friends in that place. We stayed there some days. Brother Wade and Lorenzo came and met us, and the latter held several meetings. We had good times with the brethren. It was there I saw the girl that brother Mead has since married.

Lorenzo had bought a span of mules before he went to Europe, and they were to be broke for a carriage by the time he should return. But they were taken and used for a wagon and so broke down that they were unfit for use. He had paid eighty pounds for them just before he left the continent. This was just the beginning of our troubles. We obtained the loan of a gig from one of our friends, to carry us up as far as Cumberland,<sup>2</sup> to Mr. John Hobson's. He had been a great friend to Lorenzo in days that were past and gone, and still appeared to be such. Here he traded off his mules with a man, for a horse and gig not worth half the money that he had paid for the mules. But he could do no better, as we were under the necessity of going to the north. Then we had to make ready to go to the Mississippi, where my relations had gone and where I was very anxious to go. But O the heartfelt sorrow they were afterwards the cause of to me and companion.

We left our friend's house and started for the north. As we had written to my sister in the Mississippi on our first arrival in America, but had got no answer from them, I felt desirous to hear from her. She was a mother to me in my infant days, and I loved her dearly.

We went through New London<sup>3</sup> and Lynchburg, where we met with many friends, and attended a camp-meeting in Amherst. From thence we traveled to New Glasgow, where Lorenzo preached at night. We stayed at the house of an old gentleman, who was very friendly. From thence we continued our journey to a camp-meeting near Georgetown, where we stopped and stayed until the meeting broke up. Our horse was to be kept at some person's place, and I expect he got nothing to eat. For we only went from the camp-meeting two short day's travel (to Leesburg, and from there to another little town), but before we reached there he tired. Lorenzo was obliged to trade him away for an old horse that was not worth but a little more than half as much. He answered our purpose, however, and we got on to New York. There I met with some friends that I had seen before. These were the first faces that I had met with for two years that I had ever beheld before. That gave me much satisfaction.

We stayed at New York for several weeks and then started for New England, to visit Lorenzo's father. I had never seen him, nor any of the family -- except for one sister. It was a very great cross for me. But we arrived at his father's some time in September [1807], and were joyfully received by our father. None of the family was with him, except one daughter and one grandson. There my Lorenzo could contemplate the days of youth, for that was the place of his birth<sup>4</sup> and of his rambles in childhood. It is the place where he first sought the path of righteousness -- the way to peace and true happiness in this world and that which is to come. It is the house where his honored mother had taken her flight to a happier clime -- where once he had enjoyed her company (with the rest of the family, now separated hundreds<sup>1</sup> of miles asunder).

Lorenzo held several meetings in the neighborhood and had tolerable solemn times. But the society that he once belonged to was quite gone. Some had died, others had moved away. Others had gone back into the world and lost their love to Christ and his cause -- this made Lorenzo feel very awful. His father was a worthy old man, a kind friend, an affectionate parent. He was everything that was good in his family. I thought I could have done the part of a child for him [i.e., lived with him and cared for him as a child for an aged parent], if I might have the privilege, but I felt a strong desire to see my sister in the Mississippi.

We went to Tolland, where Lorenzo had set up an appointment to preach at a Methodist meeting-house, and I did not expect to return to his father's any more. But Lorenzo's sister from Vermont came down to her father's, and we returned. We stayed two

or three days longer. Lorenzo sold his gig and horse to a preacher. He bought his brother-in-law's horses to return to New York. There he had made arrangement with a man to make him a light wagon, which was to be ready on his return for the south.

We left his father's on horseback, after bidding them farewell. But as I had not been accustomed to travel in that mode for a long time, it was very fatiguing to me. I could not endure it. When I got within about forty miles of New York, I was obliged to go by water the remainder of the way while Lorenzo rode one horse and led the other. He arrived there some time before me and had gone to the country, about ten or twelve miles from the city, to preach. He returned that night, and we stayed a week or more before our wagon was ready for us to start. Then, bidding our friends farewell, we proceeded on our journey.

Lorenzo had given out appointments all the way to Virginia, and had tolerable hard work to keep up with them. We had to travel nearly one whole night over the mountain from Fredericktown [i.e., Frederick, Maryland] to the Potomac river, which we crossed about two o'clock in the morning. Lorenzo's appointment was some distance the other side of the river. We lay down, started again as soon as it was light, and reached the courthouse just as the people had assembled. I went to a friend's house while Lorenzo preached to the people. After meeting, we went on to the next appointment, where he preached again and at night also. And so continued our journey until we arrived in Virginia. Lorenzo preached every day -- once, twice, or three times. When we arrived at Winchester, he preached twice to large congregations. From thence we went to a camp-meeting where I saw brother Grober,<sup>5</sup> a presiding elder whom I had been acquainted with a number of years ago. ¶ This was very satisfactory to me.

We left the camp-ground in the morning for Staunton, where Lorenzo had an appointment at night. It was threatening to rain when we started in the morning, and the rain began about twelve o'clock. It rained almost as fast as I ever saw it, and it continued to rain excessively all the afternoon. As we were in an open wagon, I was wet through and through. When we arrived at Staunton it was almost dark, and the people had assembled for meeting. Lorenzo had not time to take any refreshment, but went and preached in his wet clothes. We were received with coolness by the family that we stayed with, although Lorenzo was acquainted with them before -- *but that is nothing uncommon. Man is so changeable in his nature that we may find him at one time all friendship and, perhaps, the next day he is as cold as need be. Hence I have found it necessary to strive to take it as it comes -*

*- to be thankful for friends when I find them, and to be satisfied when I have them not.*

It was on Saturday night that we got to Staunton, and Lorenzo intended to stay until Monday morning. On Sunday morning, brother Wade came from New London to meet us and to carry me home with him. Lorenzo had calculated on leaving me at Hobson's, in Cumberland, while he went to the Mississippi territory. Consequently he thought it best for me to go to New London with brother Wade. He was anxious for me to go and stay with his wife a few months, as she was a stranger in this country, and my coming to America in company with her made us like sisters indeed. It was a trial to my mind to part with my companion for nine or ten months. I did not expect to be with him but a few more days, even if I went on to Cumberland with him, as he then must leave me and start for the country where my sister lived. Accordingly, we parted and I went home with brother Wade. This was on Sunday, and he was to leave Staunton the next morning. My spirits were very much depressed, but I did not know what laid before me.

I arrived in New London in safety and was kindly received by sister Wade. I had got tolerably composed when I received a letter from Lorenzo which gave me an account of the imprudence of my sister that lived in the Mississippi. It was in so dark a style that I did not comprehend it fully, as I could not believe that she would be guilty of such enormities. I thought some one had charged her without grounds, and that was some consolation to me, as I hoped it was not true. I was in hopes that Lorenzo would come through New London and give me a more full account of the circumstance, but he could not do so consistently with his arrangements. I was in great distress of mind on her account, as she had been a great professor of religion. The cause must suffer by her falling so foully, and the disgrace attending it was almost unbearable. Brother Mead and his wife came through New London on their way to Georgia and brought the news that Lorenzo would not be coming through. This made my heart almost sink within me. I felt as though the trial was more than I could bear -- but this was but the beginning of sorrow.

I stayed at brother Wade's for more than two months and was kindly treated by him and his wife and many others. I had many good times in meeting with the children of God to worship Him. The letter that I had received from Lorenzo, from Cumberland, had stated that my sister had been guilty of very improper conduct, but that she was penitent. But when Lorenzo got to Georgia, he received a letter from brother Blackman stating that she had escaped from her husband with a young man and had gone over the line into the Spanish country<sup>6</sup> to elude the displeasure of their

connections. It was an undeniable fact that she was really guilty -- and Lorenzo wrote to me from Georgia a full account of the circumstance. This gave me the severest wound that I have ever felt. To have heard of her death, O how much more preferable. But I had no other way but to submit that my dear sister, that lay so near my heart, had strayed so widely from the path of rectitude. It was such a heart-rending affliction, I thought it was almost more than I could bear.

It appeared impossible that she could be so far lost to her own honor and the love that she had manifested to the cause of God, and the prosperity of Zion, as to be guilty of such an atrocious crime. But so it is, that some who make the greatest show of religion wound it the deepest. So it was in this case. She had professed to have experienced the blessing of religion for many years. She was as much opposed to any thing that had the appearance of imprudence in her own sex as any person that ever I knew.

She was married, when young, to a man that was inferior to her in point of talents and was not calculated to get the world, as the saying is, as much as many others. She possessed a very proud spirit together with a very quick temper, and he did not have as mild a disposition as might be. Thus they were unhappy in their union, which was attended with many disagreements. He was subject to intoxication, and that was frequently the cause of much misery between them. I was witness, many times, to such conduct on both sides that gave me the greatest pain of any thing that could have befallen me. I often would beg my sister to say nothing, but her turbulent disposition was such that I thought she would almost suffer death rather than submit to any one.

They lived in that way for many years. She was very industrious and strove hard to live, but he was negligent and often spent more than he made. They removed, when they first were married, into the state of New York, about ninety miles from the place of their nativity, and lived there five or six years. She had religion at that time, having joined the Baptist church before they left New England, and he opposed her very much. But after leaving her Christian friends and having so much opposition, she had lost her religion almost entirely and became like the rest of the world. At that time the Methodists came into the neighborhood, and she became acquainted with them. She would have joined their society, but her husband would not permit it -- but she attended their meetings and was much engaged at that time.

My brother-in-law then took it into his head to remove to Fort Stanwix, on the Mohawk river, within seventy or eighty miles of the line of Canada. Not having any to converse with but those

that were unacquainted with God or themselves, she backslid again. *O how prone we are to forget the obligations we are under to our Saviour, notwithstanding it is on his bounty we live. We are indebted to him for every mercy that we enjoy.*

She continued to live in that careless way for several years, until I was perhaps eighteen years of age, and the Methodists found her out again. I got under distress for my soul, and she was stirred up again -- and I believe she had religion. My brother-in-law opposed us with all his might. They had got in a tolerable good way before this, and there was a prospect that they might live comfortably as to the things of this life. But he possessed such an uneasy disposition that he could never be satisfied unless he was trading, and he had but a poor talent for business. He sold his plantation, that he could have made a comfortable living upon, to a man that was a sharper. My brother-in-law sold the land on trust and took no security. The man then sold the property and cleared himself, without making any compensation for the land. This was a very great affliction to my sister, as she had made every exertion for a living that a woman could do. She strove in every way she could to prevent his selling his place -- but all to no purpose.

He carried on a great stroke at drinking and spending his time for nought. She was harassed and troubled on every side, not enjoying that satisfaction in religion she had formerly done -- it made her truly wretched. I strove to comfort her in every way I could. We supported the family by our labor, weaving, spinning, sewing and any other kind of work that we could do. This continued for more than twelve months, and then he took a little farm of about fifty acres of land. It had a comfortable house, for a small family, that suited us very well. With the rent being small, he could have lived as well as need be if he would have been industrious. He was of a turn that was rather indolent and careless, but my sister and myself kept the family in tolerably comfortable circumstances.

It was at that time that the Methodist preachers came into the neighborhood and preached the gospel to poor lost sinners. My heart was wrought upon, and I set to seek the salvation of my soul. My sister heard the pleasing sound with gladness, but my brother-in-law was violently opposed to them and strove in every way that he could to prevent us from going to meeting. But I felt determined to seek the Lord with all my heart, come what would, and to strive to save my soul. It was near twelve months before I or my sister joined society, but at last we broke through and joined the people called Methodists. I have never seen the time that I was sorry that I cast my lot with them, but I have often

lamented that I did not live nearer to the gospel rules that they teach.

After we had joined society, my brother-in-law became somewhat more softened. He let us have more peace and would sometimes go to meeting. Though he still continued to go in the same evil practice of spending his time in the most unprofitable way, the preachers and people that feared God ceased not to pray for him. And last he was brought to see his situation, and the danger of living in sin, and he set about the work of his own salvation. I doubt not but that he experienced the pardon of his sins. O the joy that was felt on this occasion. We had, as it were, a heaven begun below. He became a new man, and Providence seemed to bless us on every side. We continued to enjoy the consolations of religion for several years, and the Lord prospered us in all our undertakings until after I was married. Then they started for the Mississippi, and my husband and I parted with them. We were coming to New York, and from thence to sail to Europe.

They went to that country, and it appeared they left all the prudence that they ever possessed behind them. For when they arrived, he thought he could launch into building mills without counting the cost that he must be at. He ran into debt for land that had a mill-seat upon it, and he began to erect a mill. It appeared he calculated that Lorenzo, when he returned from his tour in Europe, would pay all expenses.

Some people were much pleased with them, as they appeared to be engaged in religion. My sister was very much respected by the people, both religious and irreligious -- but O the danger we are exposed to while in this world. She was possessed of good natural abilities and considerable acquired knowledge, and she was the last person I should have thought would have conducted in the way she did. But we have need to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. She had lived with her husband for twenty years at least, and I never heard or knew any thing laid to her charge of that nature -- before or after her marriage. She had been a guide to me in my youth and, I suppose, possessed as great a sense of honor as any person I ever knew, but -- how it was I cannot tell -- she fell into a snare of the enemy and became a prey to the most unaccountable of all vices.

There was a young man, that was of a most abandoned character and principle, that was taken into the family. She was fond of him by some means, and there was a criminal intercourse between them for several months before it was discovered. She was in society, and thought to be very pious, but at last it was suspected by some. A plan was laid to detect them, and it was

accomplished. When it was proved upon her, she gave some marks of penitence and her husband would have made friends with her. But when the devil gets the advantage of poor infatuated mortals, he makes the best improvement of it in his power. So it was in this case.

I expect her sorrow was but slight, if she was in the least affected with sorrow, for as soon as she found that Lorenzo and myself had returned to America, she made every plan to make her escape with that wretched young man into the Spanish country. This she effected, and left her husband in a state of mind almost frantic. He had more affection for her than I once thought him capable of. He went after her and strove to get her to return, but she would not. I do not think there was ever a permanent union between them as was necessary for happiness. O the misery of many that are joined in the holy bands of matrimony: for the want of due consideration, they rush into that state and are wretched for life.

When she completed her wicked plan, information was communicated to us -- my Lorenzo had already left me and started for that country. No one can paint the heart-felt sorrow that I experienced on receiving the information. I felt as though I was deprived of almost all my earthly comfort. I felt I could not believe it possible that she could have acted in that miserable, disgraceful manner. But it was even so. Many have been the nights that I have wet my pillow with tears upon her account, but all to no purpose. *O that it might be a warning to me to watch and pray, lest I enter into temptation.*

Lorenzo went on and found my poor brother-in-law in a wretched state of mind, and every thing that he had was in a ruinous condition. Furthermore, they had run themselves so deeply in debt that it was impossible for my brother-in-law to extricate himself from it. He had made a contract with a couple of girls for a tract of land that had a mill-seat upon it, and began to build a mill, without a title to the land. When Lorenzo came, he wished Lorenzo to assist him to procure the land, that he might not be in danger of losing his labor. Lorenzo felt a very great reluctance to engage in any thing of the kind, but by the persuasion of friends he was prevailed upon to make a contract with the girls for the land. Likewise he paid my brother-in-law, who desired to return to the State of New York, for his investment of labor. Although there was considerably less than one hundred acres with a log cabin upon it, he paid a very enormous price -- which was a great disadvantage.

As Lorenzo was not a man that felt a freedom to have much to do with the world, except when he could not well avoid it, he

scarcely knew what to do with the place after he had got it. The mill was not finished. There was a dam and mill-frame, but the dam had broke. As the banks of the stream that the dam was erected on were so subject to wash in times of high water, it was uncertain whether the dam could be made to stand. There was a man who thought he could make it stand, and Lorenzo made an offer to him of the place: if he would take it and make a mill upon it, he should have one half of the mill. Accordingly the man undertook and repaired the dam, so that the mill sawed some lumber that winter. He intended to tear up the old foundation and build entirely on another plan, but he was to have use of the old mill until he should get the other finished.

People in that country appeared anxious that Lorenzo should come to that part of the world and get a residence. They talked that they would assist us in any thing we needed. As Lorenzo thought that it might be best to prepare for sickness,<sup>7</sup> and for whatever might befall us, he concluded to come for me and bring me with him to that country. I had felt a great desire to go to the Mississippi before my friends had conducted themselves in that wretched way, but now I felt a reluctance to going. It appeared to me that I could not hold up my head in the place where my own sister had disgraced herself and me. My heart recoiled at the thought of being a mark, as I knew I must, for people to look at and say that I was a sister to such a woman that had been guilty of an odious crime.

But as my Lorenzo thought it would be best for me to go, I made no objection. He returned in June [1808] to Cumberland, in Virginia, and we started for the North. We went on to New York, where we stayed for a few days, and from thence to Albany. Lorenzo left me in Albany and continued to journey to his father's in Connecticut, being gone six or seven weeks.

I stayed in Albany part of the time, and I spent some time in Troy. I also went to see my brother that lived near Schenectady. He did not profess religion, but was friendly to it. I stayed there a few days. There was a camp-meeting within eight or ten miles, where I expected to meet Lorenzo. My brother and his wife went with me to the place on the commencement of it. There, to my great joy, I met my companion and many others that I had been acquainted with many years before. The meeting was attended with good to many. We stayed until the close, and then we went with some very fine friends to Troy. They gave Lorenzo a good suit of clothes and were as affectionate to us as people could be.

My brother-in-law, who came from the Mississippi, had been to the place that he left when he removed to the South. He was at the camp-meeting and came down to Troy after us. Lorenzo was to

let him have some books, on the account of his labor in the Mississippi. He did so -- but this was not the end of his trouble to us. It gave me inexpressible pain to see the man that I thought had been the cause, in one sense, of the destruction of my poor sister. He had been an unkind husband in the days that were past. Although I could not excuse her, yet I believe that if he had done as he ought, she never would have become what she did. But they were not equally yoked together. He had some good traits in his character, but he was indolent and a bad economist -- which kept them behindhand [i.e., in arrears].

She was industrious and would have managed well if she had been united to a man that would have stood in his place so that she could have kept in her place -- for she possessed a turbulent disposition. But he was neither a good husband nor a good manager -- that made her fret at him, and he would not take it from her. Thus it was they were living a considerable part of their time in discontent. But after they both experienced religion, they lived more agreeably -- until they removed to the Mississippi and she fell in with that young man who proved her ruin. From a train of circumstances, which correspond and hang together like a chain of truth, it appears there was a working together of Deists, one of which was a physician. They sought the overthrow of the family through the object of temporal gain (they being a family connection of those who owned the mill-seat), and they sought to bring a stigma upon the cause of religion. My sister was considerably over forty at this time of her life.

### Notes on Chapter 3

1. British captains were then routinely stopping US merchant vessels to search for deserters and to seize for service to Britain whomever they wished, regardless of their citizenship. Finally, in the summer of 1807, the British ship *Leopard* stopped the US navy's *Chesapeake* (a warship, not a merchant vessel), killed or wounded twenty-one men, and took four sailors. This incident stayed in American minds for years and significantly fueled the drift into the War of 1812.
2. Cumberland is mentioned several times in the journal. It is a small town about midway between Richmond and Lynchburg and not to be confused with the Cumberland in Maryland or the Cumberland Gap region in the extreme southwest corner of Virginia.
3. The New London mentioned several times in the journal is a small town just south of Lynchburg.

4. The Lorenzo Dow birthplace still stands on the outskirts of Coventry, Connecticut. The small New England cottage is a private residence, maintained in approximately the same style and furnishings that Lorenzo's family probably enjoyed. The two front rooms are graced by portraits of Lorenzo and Peggy Dow.
5. This is likely Jacob Gruber (1778-1850), a colorful and witty Methodist Episcopal itinerant of denominational fame and importance who labored mostly in central Pennsylvania.
6. This is Western Florida, an extension of the Florida panhandle that reached to the Mississippi River. During the War of 1812, it was annexed by the United States and added to the Mississippi Territory. 7. Neither Lorenzo nor Peggy enjoyed robust health, and both of them seemed to fare better away from the cold and damp of New England.