'For Myself, For My Children, For Money':
Selective Biographies Of Early American Women Writers

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Hannah Adams, 1755-1831
Although almost unheard of today, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century Hannah Adams was one of the most notable writers in the United States and one of its few internationally recognised authors. Along with writers such as Judith Sargent Murray, Sarah Wentworth Apthorp Morton and Mercy Otis Warren, Adams helped to create a culture in which women could more freely place their name on their publications. Unlike them, however, Adams rejected the more traditional forms of female writing – poetry, novels and plays – and chose instead local and religious history and theology.

Hannah Adams was born in Medford, Massachusetts. Her mother died when she was young, and although ill health prevented Adams herself from regularly attending school she profited greatly from her father's love of books and at a young age could recite the works of Milton and Pope. In her *Memoir* she would later write: 'I remember that my first idea of the happiness of Heaven was, of a place where we should find our thirst for knowledge fully gratified.'

When her father's business failed in the late 1760s the family began taking in lodgers 'on rustication' (temporary expulsion) from Harvard. Adams was tutored by some of these young men, one of whom introduced her to Thomas Broughton's *An Historical Dictionary of All Religions from the Creation of the World to this Perfect Time*. This work sparked in Adams a life-long interest in comparative religion and her first work, an overview of the world's religions, *An Alphabetical Compendium of the Various Sects Which Have Appeared form the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Present Day* was published in 1784. Adams' inadequate knowledge of the book-trade meant that her publisher took almost the entire profits of the first edition. However, a second edition, published in 1791 under the title *A View of Religions*, brought Adams some semblance of financial stability.

In her *Memoir*, Adams explains: '…it was poverty, not ambition, or vanity, that first induced me to become an author, or rather a compiler.' However, the positive reception of *A View* encouraged her to begin another project and in 1799, following extensive research which caused life-long damage to her eyesight, she published *A Summary History of New England*. Two years later, the publication of an abridged version for school children plunged her into a lengthy legal dispute with the Rev. Jedediah Morse who was writing a similar work. Throughout this period, Adams received both financial and moral support from leading liberal religious families in New England, and in 1814 Morse was finally required to apologize to Adams and pay damages.

Hannah Adams did not have an original voice – indeed, she was doubtless one of the many writers Emerson had in mind when he lamented this trait in American letters. However, she possessed both a passionate desire to contribute to the new Republic and a singular and timely ability to craft coherent historical and religious narratives that her publishers and the American public – finally free from war with the British – were more than ready to embrace.
An Alphabetic Compendium of the Various Sects… Boston: Bedes & Sons, 1784. (4520.dd.4)

Anne C. Lynch Botta, 1815-1891
Anne C. Lynch Botta was born in Bennington, Vermont in 1815. Following the death in a shipwreck of her father Patrick (a native of Dublin who had been captured and imprisoned for several years for his part in the Irish Rebellion of 1798), her mother moved four year-old Anne and her older brother to Hartford, Connecticut, where they received a first-class education. When she was sixteen, Botta entered the Albany Female Academy, the first independent girls' school in the United States, and while teaching at the Academy she began writing articles for magazines and periodicals. After moving to Providence, Rhode Island, in 1838, where she established a school for 'young ladies', she compiled *The Rhode Island Book* (1841), an anthology of poetry and prose by the state's best writers whom she would invite to evening receptions at her home.

In 1845 Botta moved with her mother to New York City, where she taught at the Brooklyn Academy for Women and continued writing for publications such as the *New-York Mirror*, *Home Journal* and the *Democratic Review*. In 1848 a volume of her poetry was published by George Putnam, and her *Hand-book of Universal Literature* (1860) became a text book at many educational institutions throughout the United States.

In 1855 she married Vincenzo Botta, an Italian professor of philosophy, and at their West 37th Street home Anne established a sculpture studio as well as a study for her writing. This home soon became a major intellectual centre in New York. Unlike similar salons at this time their Saturday night gatherings truly provided a creative space for the artists, writers, editors, musicians, actors, clergymen and science professors who passed through their doors. Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley, Fanny Kemble and William Cullen Bryant all attended and Edgar Allan Poe gave his first reading of 'The Raven' here. A tribute in *Memoirs of Anne C. L. Botta* says of this salon: 'For years it seemed as if this were the one truly cosmopolitan drawing-room in the city, because it drew the best from all sources. Italy and England, France and Germany, Spain, Russia, Norway, and Hungary, Siam, China, India, and Japan, sent guests hither… The influence of such a social centre in a commercial city cannot be exaggerated.'
Poems. New York, 1849. (11686.g.19)

Anne Bradstreet, c.1612-1672
Anne Bradstreet was the first woman to be published in colonial America and the first 'American' poet of note. She was born in East Anglia where her father, Thomas Dudley, was steward to the Earl of Lincoln, and Anne had full access to the Earl's vast library. In 1628 she married fellow Puritan Simon Bradstreet and two years later, together with Anne's parents, they emigrated to the Massachusetts Bay colony where her father soon became Deputy Governor to John Winthrop and Simon became Chief-Administrator; both men later held the position of Governor.

Coming from such a background, Anne Bradstreet herself was clearly better-educated and more cultured than most of her female contemporaries; indeed, it has been estimated that in the fire that devastated her home in 1666 she lost more than 800

books. However, while being well-read was just about acceptable for a Puritan woman, writing for publication would have invited unimaginable hostility and suspicion, and Bradstreet herself only ever intended that her poems be shared with family and very close friends. When her brother-in-law Rev. John Woodbridge arranged (without her knowledge) for her early, and more imitative, work to be published in London in 1650 as *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*, the title page identified her as 'A Gentle Woman in Those Parts' – in other words, someone who had not given up any of her Puritan duties, practical or spiritual, in order to write.

The poems published after Bradstreet's death as *Several Poems Compiled With Great Variety of Wit and Learning* (1678) were more personal than those in *The Tenth Muse*. Many express her love for her husband and family, her faith in God, and an acceptance of the responsibilities that these relationships entail. More important, perhaps, they illustrate the development of a truly original voice. As someone writing in a new Puritan colony in which both the daily 'business of living' and the religious climate made the pursuit of the arts almost unthinkable, Anne Bradstreet's work would be noteworthy. But when allied with the limits on women's roles, the ill-health she endured throughout her life as a result of childhood smallpox, and the raising of eight children, it is quite remarkable.
The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America. London, 1650. (E.1365.(4))

Alice Cary, 1820-1871, and Phoebe Cary, 1824-1871
Alice and Phoebe Cary were raised on a farm in rural Ohio, ten miles north of Cincinnati. According to Alice, their childhood home had less than a dozen books, there was no library within reach, and their endless farm chores meant they could only attend the local school intermittently. However, they read what they could, and the 'Poet's Corner' in the Boston paper *The Trumpet and Universalist* was a particular source of inspiration to their early literary endeavours. In 1833, their elder sister, Rhoda, to whom Alice was particularly close, died of tuberculosis, as did their three-year old sister, Lucy. Two years later their mother also died. When their father remarried, their stepmother condemned their literary interests yet the girls kept writing and in 1838 they each had their first poem published in a newspaper.

Both sisters continued writing for local papers for many years, but in 1847 Alice began writing fiction for the *National Era* – an abolitionist paper that gave her a national audience. The following year, Rufus W. Griswold included their work in *The Female Poets of America*, and Edgar Allan Poe described Alice's poem, 'Pictures of Memory', as 'the noblest in the collection.' In 1850, Griswold facilitated the publication of *Poems of Alice and Phoebe Cary*, and later that year Alice moved to New York determined to establish herself as an independent writer. She was soon joined by Phoebe, and in 1855 she bought a house on East 20th St., which every Sunday evening for more than fifteen years acted as a meeting place for intellectuals, artists, social reformers and philanthropists.

Throughout this time Alice continued to write poems, novels and short stories as well as works for children, and her work appeared in many of the most popular periodicals

at that time. However, in recent years it is the *Clovernook* sketches, based on her childhood reminiscences, which have received most attention as early examples of regional, realist fiction. Phoebe was less prolific, but she continued to publish poetry, and the lyrics of many of her hymns were widely used. More extrovert than her elder sister, Phoebe was also engaged in the anti-slavery and woman suffrage movements which they both supported, and for a while she edited *The Revolution*, the newspaper published by Susan B. Anthony. The sisters died from tuberculosis within five months of each other in 1871.
Alice Cary. *Clovernook: or, recollections of our neighbourhood in the West*. New York: Renfield, 1852. (12707.d.5); Phoebe Cary. *Poems and Parodies*. Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1854. (11687.d.33) (NB – spelling of surname is incorrect on title page);

Lydia Maria Child, 1802-1880
Lydia Maria Child was born in Medford, Massachusetts in 1802 and was the youngest of six children. Her paternal grandfather had fought the British at Concord and according to biographer Thomas Wentworth Higginson, her father, a baker, was, 'A man of strong character and great industry. Though without much cultivation, he had uncommon love of reading; and his anti-slavery convictions were peculiarly zealous and must have influenced his children's later career…'

As a child Lydia attended local public schools and spent a year at a women's seminary, yet it was her relationship with her elder brother Convers that most powerfully directed her reading and shaped her intellectual development. After attending college, Convers (six years her senior), became a highly influential Unitarian minister (and later professor at Harvard Theological School) and his study in Watertown became a gathering place for the transcendentalists. It was while visiting him here that Lydia came upon a copy of the *North American Review* that would profoundly affect her future. In this journal, Dr J.G. Palfrey argued that great use might be made of early American history for fictitious purposes. Lydia immediately took up this challenge and soon afterwards published *Hobomok: a tale of early times. By an American* (1824). The book met with moderate success and a year later a second novel, *The Rebels: or, Boston before the Revolution*, was also published. In 1824 Child also published her first children's book *Evenings in New England* the success of which led, two years later, to her creation of the *Juvenile Miscellany*, a pioneering children's magazine fusing 'amusement' with 'instruction' and for which the contributors included Sarah Josepha Hale, Lydia Huntley Sigourney and Catharine Maria Sedgwick.

Following her marriage in 1828, Child published numerous hugely popular cookery and household manuals. Then in 1833, fully aware of the opposition she would encounter, she published *An Appeal for that Class of Americans called Africans*, one of the first abolitionist texts to appear in the United States and one of its most radical, arguing as it did for immediate emancipation with no restitution for slaveholders. Sales of her other books immediately declined and she had to resign from the *Miscellany*. Yet despite her precarious financial situation she wrote tirelessly for this cause – both tracts and works of fiction. She also edited the *National Anti-Slavery*

Standard (1841-43) and served on the American Anti-Slavery Society's executive board during the 1840s and 1850s. In 1859, following the raid on Harper's Ferry, she wrote both to John Brown and to Virginia Governor Henry A. Wise offering to tend Brown's wounds. The subsequent correspondence with Governor Wise was published (to Child's surprise) in the *New York Tribune,* and caused a stir both sides of the Mason Dixon line.

In 1855, after at least six years research and preparation, Child published *The Progress of Religious Ideas through Successive Ages*, a three-volume work which barely paid its way yet which epitomises Child's life-long commitment to religious inquiry, whatever the cost. In her latter years she attended meetings of the Free Religious Association and in 1878 she published *Aspirations of the World: a chain of opals*, a collection of quotations from the world's religions by which she hoped to help 'enlarge and strengthen the hand of human brotherhood.'

Following the Civil War, Child supported the movement for female suffrage and was a founder member of the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association. She also worked on behalf of Native Americans and in 1868, following the publication of a US government report on the Indian Peace Commission, she wrote a pamphlet entitled *An Appeal for the Indians* in which she expressed her hope that the government might now be beginning to, 'manifest something like a right spirit towards the poor Indians.'

Lydia Maria Child died at the age of seventy-eight and is buried next to her husband in the cemetery in Wayland, Massachusetts.
An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans called Africans. Boston: Allen & Ticknor, 1833. (8155.c.28)

Elizabeth F. Ellet, 1818-1877
Elizabeth F. Ellet was born in Sodus Point, western New York, in 1818. Her father, a well-respected physician, was a former pupil and friend of Benjamin Rush, one of the Founding Fathers, and her maternal grandfather had fought in the Revolutionary War. Elizabeth was educated at the Female Seminary in Aurora, New York, where she studied French, German and Italian. Her first book, *Poems, Translated and Original* (1835), published when she was sixteen, include her translations of poems from these languages, together with her own work. This same year she married William Ellet, a chemist, and moved with him when he took up a position at South Carolina College.

Throughout her life, Elizabeth Ellet was a prolific contributor to national and regional periodicals. Early in her career she was most well-known for her poetry which was highly praised by the editors of the contemporary anthologies. However, she also wrote novels, plays, travel sketches, and essays, and she translated and reviewed the works of many European writers. Indeed, Caroline May describes Ellet as 'a superior linguist', and 'a writer of great research, of equal skill and industry.'

Perhaps nowhere is this latter quality more evident than in her highly original work *Women of the American Revolution* (1848), in which she gathered together the

letters and diaries of women who had supported the struggle for independence, together with testimonies of those who knew them. In her Introduction, Ellet argues that not only did American women make 'patriotic sacrifices' of the most practical kind, but, vitally: 'During the years of the progress of British encroachment and colonial discontent…the talk of matrons, in American homes, was of the people's wrongs, and the tyranny that oppressed them… Patriotic mothers nursed the infancy of freedom. Their counsels and their prayers mingled with the deliberations that resulted in a nation's assertion of its independence.'

Ellet followed this work with *Pioneer Women of the West* (1852), 'the story of the wives and mothers who ventured into the western wilds, and bore their part in the struggles and labors of the early pioneers.' She also wrote a history of prominent women in the United States as well as numerous biographies. As well as being a passionate advocate in print of women's contributions to society, Ellet was engaged in many charities that supported women and children. She also enjoyed close friendships with many literary women including Margaret Fuller, Sarah Josepha Hale and Anne Lynch Botta. With Edgar Allan Poe and Rufus Griswold, however, things were far less harmonious, and although even today the truth behind these relationships remains somewhat murky, it is surely not too far-fetched to surmise that both men found Ellet, if not a threat, then certainly somewhat unnerving.
Pioneer Women of the West. New York, 1852. (10880.b.6)

Emma C. Embury, 1806-1863
Emma C. Embury was born in New York in 1806 and spent her entire life in this city. Her father was a highly-respected physician and Emma and her two siblings received an excellent education. As a teenager Emma began contributing poetry, children's stories and essays to numerous leading periodicals under the pseudonym 'Ianthe', and her first book of poetry, *Guido* (1828), was published under this name. Following her marriage to banker Daniel Embury, she established one of the city's leading literary salons at their home in Brooklyn, and her work began appearing under the name 'Emma C. Embury'. During the 1830s and 1840s Embury's work, in particular her stories, frequently appeared in *Godey's Lady's Book*, *Graham's Magazine*, *The Knickerbocker Magazine* and other highly regarded publications. Many of these contributions subsequently appeared in collections such as *Constance Latimer* (1838), and *Glimpses of Home Life* (1848). Discussing Embury's ability as a prose writer in his '*Literati of New York, IV*', Edgar Allan Poe explains that when compared with women such as Eliza Leslie, Ann Stephens, Catharine Sedgwick and Frances Osgood, Embury is found to be: 'deficient in none of the qualities for which these ladies are noted, and in certain particulars surpasses them all… I make a point of reading all tales to which I see the name of Mrs Embury appended.' (*Godey's Lady's Book*, August 1846, p.77).
Tales for the Young. London: Thomas Nelson, 1848. (RB.23.a.18532)

Caroline Howard Gilman, 1794-1888
Caroline Howard Gilman was born into a wealthy Boston family Boston in 1794. Her father, a shipbuilder, died when she was two years old and her mother died in 1804. For the remainder of her childhood she lived with a succession of relatives in

Massachusetts and her sporadic education reflects this irregular upbringing. In spite of this, however, she displayed a strong interest in both poetry and religion from an early age and one of her poems was published without her knowledge when she was sixteen years old. Her second Biblical poem, 'Jairus's Daughter', was published in 1817 in the well-respected *North American Review*.

In 1819 she married Reverend Samuel Gilman and the couple moved immediately to Charleston, South Carolina, where Samuel became minister of the Archdale Street Unitarian Church. They soon became leading figures in the city's literary and social circles and Caroline bore seven children, four of which survived beyond infancy. In 1832 she founded the *Rose-bud*, a weekly publication for children which over time and under the title *The Southern Rose* became a bi-monthly magazine with a nationwide readership. The magazine included moral stories intended to lead children towards industry and piety, translations of European works, book reviews, poetry, religious commentary and observations of current affairs in the form of a Platonic dialogue. The magazine was of a consistently high quality, and consequently Gilman secured contributions by writers such as Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth F. Ellet and Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Gilman's first novel, *Recollections of a Housekeeper* (1834) was also first serialised in *The Southern Rose* under the pseudonym Mrs Clarissa Packard and a companion volume, *Recollections of a Southern Matron* was published in 1838. Foreshadowing the support Gilman would later give to the Southern cause during the Civil War, this novel depicted plantation life in a wholly positive manner and reflected her view that the slaves, always referred to as 'servants', were better off than workers in the North.

In 1839, Gilman edited the last issue of *The Southern Rose* telling her readers that: 'Should she continue in the career of literature, towards which the public have in various ways extended such indulgent encouragement, she would prefer some mode of publication less exacting that the rigorous punctuality of a periodical work.' Gilman published ten more works before the outbreak of the Civil War; mainly poetry and stories for children. When her home was shelled during the War (resulting in the almost total loss of her papers and possessions) she went to live with her daughter in Greenville, South Carolina, where she actively supported the Confederate war effort. Following the War she published four more books, although she never regained her former popularity. She died in Washington, DC at the age of ninety-three and is buried next to her husband in the Unitarian cemetery in Charleston.
Oracles for Youth: a home pastime. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1852. (8610.b.44)

Grace Greenwood (Sara Jane Clarke Lippincott), 1823-1904
Sara Jane Clarke Lippincott was born in 1823 and spent most of her childhood in Rochester, NY where her teenage poetry and children's stories were published in local newspapers. In 1843 she joined her family in New Brighton, Pennsylvania, and the following year began submitting letters to the *New York Mirror* and the *Home Journal* under the name Grace Greenwood. By the late 1840s she was firmly established in the literary circles of New York and her work frequently appeared in the nation's most influential periodicals, including *Godey's Lady's Book* and the

Saturday Evening Post. In 1849 Greenwood became an assistant editor at *Godey's* but she was fired the following year for the antislavery article she wrote for the abolitionist weekly the *National Era* (the paper which first published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*). Gamaliel Bailey, editor of the *Era*, immediately asked her to accept a position at his paper and she willingly moved to Washington to do so. While there she also became the Washington correspondent for the *Saturday Evening Post*, and as such she became one of the first women to work in the Congressional press galleries. She continued working for the *Post* until the 1890s.

From 1852-53 Greenwood toured Europe from where she filed 'Letters' to both the *Post* and the *Era*. Several books also grew out of this trip including *Haps and Mishaps of a Tour in Europe* (1854), and *Merrie England* (1855). Upon her return from Europe, she married Leander K. Lippincott with whom she founded the well-regarded children's magazine *The Little Pilgrim* (1853-1868). In 1876 Leander was indicted for fraud while working in the General Land Office. He not only fled prosecution but also his family and Greenwood subsequently brought up their daughter on her own. As a journalist, Greenwood continued working for numerous leading newspapers including the *New York Tribune* and the *New York Times*. She also continued to travel extensively – both abroad and throughout the American West – and her accounts of these trips were well-received. As well as being a popular writer and journalist, Greenwood was a well-known lecturer. Before the Civil War she frequently spoke out against slavery, and afterwards she lectured on prison reform, women's rights, and the abolition of capital punishment. She died at her daughter's home in New Rochelle, New York, in 1904.
Poems. Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields, 1851. (11686.e.22)

Sarah Josepha Hale, 1788-1879
As a child of the early Republic, Sarah Josepha Hale was educated at home in Newport, New Hampshire, and at an early age she read Milton, Shakespeare and Johnson alongside her brothers. She wrote her first book of poetry, *The Genius of Oblivion* (1823), to supplement her family's income following the death of her husband in 1822, and her first novel, *Northwood*, was published to enthusiastic reviews in 1827. That same year she became editor of the *Ladies' Magazine* (1827-36), and in 1837 Louis Godey persuaded her to move from Boston to Philadelphia to become 'editress' (a term she always preferred) of *Godey's Lady's Book*, a position she held for the next forty years.

Under Hale's editorship, *Godey's* became the most popular women's magazine in the United States, with a circulation of 150,000 on the eve of the Civil War. Hale accepted the Victorian notion of a 'separate sphere' for women and regarded women's moral and spiritual superiority as a vital force in the domestic realm. To this end, she was fiercely committed to providing quality materials that would benefit and educate her female readers. The magazine was not wholly opposed to women involving themselves in the wider world, however, and in the public sphere that she herself inhabited, Hale's influence was considerable. Her editorials vigorously supported the education of girls (one of her close friends was Emma Willard), she

called for women to be trained as doctors, nurses and teachers, and she was one of the first public figures to support married women's property rights.

Hale made a major contribution to American literature by deciding to copyright *Godey's* and to include only original American work – a decision that was initially hugely unpopular with other editors who habitually lifted material from other publications to fill their pages. She published work by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lydia Sigourney and Catharine Beecher and she published at least three special issues that exclusively featured the work of female writers. In addition to her own literary contributions to the magazine, Hale continued to write novels, poetry, cookery books, children's books, etiquette manuals and the monumental biographical collection *Woman's Record*. She also edited more than twenty works, including poetry anthologies and collections of letters.

For much of the twentieth century, if Hale was remembered at all, it was for helping to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday, contributing to the creation Vassar College, and for penning the children's nursery rhyme 'Mary Had a Little Lamb'. However, it is as a serious author and in particular as an influential, effective and tireless editor that she truly deserves recognition.
The Genius of Oblivion. Concord: Jacob B. Moore, 1823. (1466.c.18)

Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz, 1800-1856
Caroline Lee Whiting Hentz was born Lancaster, Massachusetts in 1800 to parents whose families had lived in New England for generations. Her father was a bookseller, and doubtless this influenced Caroline's literary precocity. In 1824 she married Nicholas Hentz, a French-born schoolmaster and political refugee, and the couple initially settled in Northampton, Massachusetts. Two years later they moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where Nicholas became professor at the state university and in the years that followed they and their children moved many times, seemingly always at Nicholas's instigation – either because of a new position or project he wished to embark on, or because of problems (real or imagined) with their acquaintances which had been brought about by his jealousy. Most of their married life was spent in the Deep South, however, and it was here that Caroline produced the majority of the novels, short stories, essays and poems for which she would become famous.

Her first major success came in 1831 when *De Lara; or, the Moorish Bride, a Tragedy in Five Acts* won first prize in a competition. This play was quickly followed by two others, *Constance of Werdenberg*, and *Lamorah*, and all three were performed in numerous locations. Following their move to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in 1842, Caroline began to contribute to newspapers and literary magazines and in 1846 the first collection of her stories and essays was published as *Aunt Patty's Scrapbook*. In 1849, Nicholas's health deteriorated considerably and Caroline assumed the financial responsibility for their family. The following year she published *Linda: or, the young pilot of the belle Creole*, which went through thirteen editions in two years, and in the next six years she published eight novels and six collections of short stories, all of which sold extremely well.

Undoubtedly Hentz's most famous work, then and now, was *The Planter's Northern Bride* (1854) which, along with more than twenty other novels of the time, was written as a pro-South response to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). As a fellow New Englander, but one who had lived for many years in the Deep South, Hentz claimed to know far better than Stowe the realities of the 'peculiar institution'. Her novel depicts slavery not only as essentially benign but also economically advantageous for the entire nation, and it ends with a stark warning about the bloodshed that would follow if ignorant northern abolitionists continued meddling in southern affairs.

Caroline Hentz's final novel, *Ernest Linwood,* published in 1856, deals with the difficulties faced by a woman living with a mentally unstable husband. Records would suggest that it was a work for which Hentz drew deeply on her own experience. She died later the same year in Marianna, Florida, and in the next few years her children published several more collections of her short stories.
The Lost Daughter. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson, 1857. (RB.23.a.3935)

Caroline M. Kirkland, 1801-1864
Caroline M. Kirkland was born into a well-educated middle-class family in New York City in 1801. Her mother was a writer, and Kirkland attended several of the highly-regarded Quaker girls' schools run by her aunt, Lydia Mott. Following her father's death, she became a teacher at one of these schools and financially supported her mother and ten younger siblings.

In 1828 she married a fellow-teacher, and together they opened a school in Geneva, New York. In 1835 they moved with their children to Detroit, where they ran the Detroit Female Academy, and two years later, having purchased a large plot of land on the Michigan frontier, they founded the village of Pinckney. The stark contrast between life out West and life in New York City provided Caroline with the material for *A New Home – Who'll Follow?* (1839). The novel evolved from letters she wrote to friends and relatives back East in which she explained how utterly inadequate existing publications had been in preparing her for this new life. Keen that others (particularly women) should have a better understanding of the difficulties awaiting them out West, she equips her central character, Mrs Mary Clavers, with sharp eyes and an even sharper wit. The novel, and its sequel *A Forest Life* (1842), were immediate hits back East; indeed, Edgar Allan Poe called it an 'undoubted sensation'. However, Mrs Clavers' blunt assessment of the somewhat parochial concerns of her neighbours gained Kirkland few friends in Pinckney, and soon afterwards she and her family returned to New York.

Back home, her husband started work as a newspaper editor and Caroline continued writing, although her work never quite recaptured the gritty realism of her earlier publications. Following her husband's sudden death in 1846, she became the sole provider for their four children. In the years that followed she opened a girls' school, worked as a teacher in several other schools, and became editor of the *Union Magazine of Literature and Art*. As a critic, Caroline Kirkland reviewed the work of

many leading authors, including Herman Melville whose early novels she enthusiastically praised. Like several other literary women in New York, her home served as a salon for other writers and artists, and she used these literary connections to support the Union cause during the Civil War.
A Book for the Home Circle. New York, 1853. (12354.g.18)

Eliza Leslie, 1787-1858
Eliza Leslie was born in Philadelphia, the eldest of five children. Her father was a skilled watchmaker whose clients – and later, friends – included Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Commenting on this, Eliza remarked: 'There is a free-masonry in men of genius which makes them find out each other immediately.' Jefferson recommended that her father be elected a member of the American Philosophical Society, and to Franklin, her father recommended an improvement in the design of lightning rods, which was immediately and universally adopted.

When Eliza was five years old the family moved to England for six years, where her father established an export business. While there she 'got nearly all my education at home. I had a French master and a music master (both coming to give lessons at the house); my father taught me to write and overlooked my drawing… and my mother was fully competent to instruct me in every sort of useful sewing...My chief delight was in reading and drawing.' She read widely and wrote poems from an early age.

Following her father's death in 1803, Leslie and her mother were forced to open their house to boarders and Leslie 'abandoned the dream of my childhood, that of seeing my name in print.' However, in the early 1820s Leslie attended the first culinary school in the United States and in 1827, possibly prompted by her brother, she published many of recipes she has learned there in her first book *Seventy-five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats*. The book was an immediate success and her publishers asked her to write some stories for children which were also very well received.

At the same time, one of Leslie's stories 'for grown-people' – 'Mrs Washington Potts' – won a prize from Louis A. Godey, of *Godey's Lady's Book*, and three successive stories won prizes from other magazines. She then had stories published regularly both in the *Lady's Book* and *Graham's Magazine*, edited numerous annual publications, published an etiquette manual *The Behaviour Book: a manual for ladies* (1853), and wrote several novels including, *Amelia: or, a young lady's vicissitudes* (1848), after which she admitted: 'Could I begin anew my literary career, I would always write novels instead of short stories.' It was always her cookery books that were the most successful financially, however. Her best-known work *Directions for Cookery* (1837) was the most popular cookbook of the nineteenth century and went through fifty printings, with the *Ladies National Magazine* claiming that 'no woman ought to be without.' Leslie spent the last decade of her life living as a celebrity at the United States Hotel in Philadelphia. She died in 1858 in Gloucester, New Jersey.
The Behaviour Book: a manual for ladies. Philadelphia: Willis B. Hazard, 1853. (8415.f.34)

Maria Jane McIntosh, 1803-1878
Maria Jane McIntosh was born on a plantation in Sunbury, Georgia, about forty miles south of Savannah. Her father, a soldier and lawyer, died when she was three years old and McIntosh was educated by her mother and at two local schools. In 1823 her mother also died, and McIntosh managed the family estate for twelve years before selling it and moving to New York City. Two years later she lost nearly all of her savings in the Panic of 1837 and as a consequence she began writing children's stories under the name "Aunt Kitty". The first of these highly moralistic and popular tales, *Blind Alice*, was published in 1841 and was swiftly followed by four others, as well as several stories aimed solely at young boys.

In the early 1840s McIntosh also began publishing novels for women, and in 1846 they began to appear under her own name. Like her children's stories, many of the novels relied on the juxtaposition of contrasting pairs of characters, with each heroine meeting an appropriate fate. Like her children's novels, they were hugely popular and many of them were not only reprinted in London but also translated into French and German.

McIntosh's non-fiction writing was also widely read and addressed the role of women, and the morality of slavery. Like many of her contemporaries McIntosh believed in a separate sphere for women and extolled the virtuous influence they could have upon their family and society. In 1850 she published *Woman in America: Her Work and Her Reward*, and in the very first chapter states: 'There is a political inequality, ordained in Paradise, when God said to the woman, "He shall rule over Thee"…Let those who would destroy this inequality, pause ere they attempt to abrogate a law which emanated from the all-perfect Mind. And let not Woman murmur at the seeming lowliness of her lot...'

Turning to slavery, McIntosh wrote a letter to the *New York Observer* in 1852 (published a year later in pamphlet form), refuting the claims made by Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In particular, McIntosh argued that the care received by the slaves ensured their spiritual and physical well-being. These sentiments were echoed soon after in her novel *The Lofty and the Lowly: or, Good in All and None All-Good* (1853), which contrasts the lives of slaves on a Christian, family-run plantation with the exploitative factory system endured by workers in the North.

Discussing McIntosh's fiction in *Woman's Record*, Sarah Josepha Hale remarks: 'In all Miss McIntosh's writings, there are evidences of originality and freshness of mind, as well as of good judgement and sound religious principle…' Regarding McIntosh's work on women, Hale adds, '...there have been few books on that much-canvassed topic which show so much sound common sense, as well as thought and earnestness…' Compared to the work of many of her contemporaries, McIntosh's has not been equally revisited by modern readers – possibly because of her stance as an apologist for slavery.
Annie Donaldson: or, evenings at the old manor house. London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1853. (RB.23.a.22667)

Sarah Wentworth Apthorp Morton, 1759-1846

Sarah Wentworth Apthorp Morton was the third of ten children born into one of Boston's elite mercantile families and she spent her early childhood in this city. In the late 1760s her family moved to Braintree, Massachusetts, where the Adamses, Quincys and Hancocks had already established homes. Although the Apthorps and Wentworths were to a large extent Loyalists, Sarah herself appears to have been deeply affected by the patriotic fervour of her neighbours and she strongly supported the Revolution. She began writing poetry at an early age and her work indicates an extensive education.

In 1781 she married a brilliant young lawyer, Perez Morton (who was later elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives and became the state's attorney general) and the couple moved into the Apthorp mansion on State Street, Boston. Their home soon became an important gathering place for the city's literati and Sarah frequently used these occasions to share her work. In 1788 their family came under intense public scrutiny when Sarah's younger sister committed suicide following an affair (and the subsequent birth of a child) with Sarah's husband.

Sarah was deeply affected by these events. However, in the following year the first poem known to have been published by her, 'Invocation to Hope', was published under the pseudonym 'Constantia' (later 'Philenia') in the *Massachusetts Magazine*. During the next few years she became a frequent contributor both to this magazine and the *Boston Columbian Centinel*. Many of her poems had a patriotic theme and celebrated the nation's leaders and ideals; yet in 'Tears of Humanity' and 'The African Chief' she raised uncomfortable truths about the slave-trade and the position of slaves in the new Republic.

In 1790 Morton published her first long poem, *Ouâbi; or, the virtues of nature. An Indian tale*. Based on a story that had appeared in the *American Museum*, it depicts an inter-racial love story within the conventions of the 'noble savage' theme then popular in literature and was well-received on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1791 composer Hans Gram based an orchestral score upon it and four years later it inspired a three-act play by James Bacon which was published and performed in London. Morton's next major work was *Beacon Hill, a Local Poem, Historic and Descriptive* (1797) which was intended as the first of a five-part epic about the Revolution. Dedicated to the 'Citizen-Soldiers' who fought for 'Washington and Freedom' this poem was less well-received and consequently one part was re-worked into a separate piece *The Virtues of Society* (1799), while the other three were never printed. Interestingly, in the Introduction to *Beacon Hill* Morton takes pains to assure her readers that her (proper) female responsibilities always took precedence over her writing and that only 'those hours, which might otherwise be lost in dissipation, or sunk in languor, are alone resigned to the unoffending charms of Poetry and Science.'

Although discouraged by the poor reception of *Beacon Hill*, Morton continued writing and had many shorter poems published during the following two decades. In 1823 she published *My Mind and its Thoughts, in Sketches, Fragments, and Essays*, her final work and the only one to bear her name. This volume included revised versions of earlier poems as well as new poems, some of which were highly personal,

reflecting her grief at the death of her only son and youngest daughter. Also included were essays on marriage, civility, age, and reflections on nature, religion and morality.

In addition to her own writing, Sarah Wentworth Morton was one of the founders of the Boston Library Society. She and her husband were active participants in the city's elite social and literary circles and they both worked towards the repeal of the 1750 colonial law preventing 'Stage Plays, and other Theatrical Entertainments' being shown in Massachusetts. Perez Morton later became a trustee and shareholder of Boston's first playhouse, the Federal Street Theatre, which opened in 1794. Following Perez's death in 1837, Morton returned to her childhood home in Braintree (then part of Quincy), where she remained until her death in 1846. Despite being regarded at the time of *Beacon Hill* as 'America's Sappho', the obituaries of Sarah Wentworth Morton make no mention of her literary career, noting only her status as the widow of 'the late Honorable Perez Morton'.
Beacon Hill, a Local Poem, Historic and Descriptive. Boston, 1797. (T.12.(3))

Anna Cora Ogden Mowatt, 1819-1870
Born in Bordeaux to American parents, Anna Cora Mowatt was the tenth of fourteen children. Her father was a New York merchant and her mother was the grand-daughter of Francis Lewis, one of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence. In 1826 her family returned to the United States, where she and her siblings were educated at home and in various private schools in New York. From an early age Mowatt delighted in the plays they put on for their parents. In *Autobiography of an Actress* (1853) she explains: 'my reading was not guided – I was allowed to take any book that I chose, French or English, from my father's library… Of poetry I was never tired, and at ten years old I had read the whole of Shakespeare's plays many times over.'

In 1834, aged only fifteen, Mowatt eloped with her tutor, a lawyer who was fourteen years her senior and who had originally come to the Ogden household as a potential suitor for her elder sister. Two years later, he published Mowatt's first book, *Pelayo, or the Cavern of Covadonga* (1836), an historical romance in verse, under the pseudonym 'Isabel'. In 1837, in an attempt to improve Mowatt's recurring respiratory problems, the couple moved to Europe where they stayed until 1840. During this time Mowatt had articles published in American magazines such as *The Ladies' Companion* and she also wrote her first play, *Gulzara, or the Persian Slave* (1841), which she and her sisters performed upon her return to United States. This play was subsequently printed in the *New World* and was the first of her works to be published under her own name.

In 1841, partly as a result of her husband's ill-health and the couple's subsequent financial problems, Mowatt gave a series of literary readings in Boston and New York. Her choice of authors included Sir Walter Scott, Byron and Coleridge and the events were highly successful. However, a long period of poor health followed soon after, during which she received mesmeric treatments and converted, with her husband, to the 'New Church' and the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. It was during this time

that she wrote *Fashion: or, life in New York* (1845) a five-act comedy that would become her most famous work.

Several months after the first performance of *Fashion*, Mowatt made her debut on the New York stage to highly favourable reviews. Two years later, her play *Arnand, the Child of the People* (1847), also received good reviews and in the same year she moved with her husband to London where she continued acting to widespread acclaim. In February 1851, however, her husband died and in July she returned to the United States. After a brief break from acting, she resumed touring in the United States until recurrent health problems brought her stage career to an end in 1854.

In 1853 Mowatt published *Autobiography of an Actress* and in the same year married William Foushee Ritchie at a wedding where the guests included President Franklin Pierce. She continued writing after their marriage and both *Mimic Life* (1855) and *Twin Roses* (1857), novels based on her life in the theatre, were highly popular. In 1863 she moved to Italy and, following the end of the Civil War in 1865, she chose to move to London rather than return to Ritchie. Mowatt died in London in 1870, and is buried next to her first husband in Kensall Green Cemetery.
Autobiography of an Actress: or, eight years on the stage. Boston, 1854. (10881.a.16)

Judith Sargent Murray, 1751-1820
Judith Sargent Murray was the eldest child of an elite merchant family in the thriving seaport of Gloucester, Massachusetts. When her parents hired a tutor to prepare her younger brother Winthrop for Harvard College she was included in the lessons and she later used the family's extensive library to further her education. In 1769, aged eighteen, she married sea captain John Stevens and together with Judith's extensive family the couple supported the Revolution and were among the earliest converts to Universalism (which would become the Unitarian church).

Although she had been a keen writer since childhood it was not until 1784 that Judith's first work, 'Desultory Thoughts upon the Utility of Encouraging a Degree of Self-Complacency, Especially in Female Bosoms', was published. Two years later her husband died in the West Indies, having fled there to escape creditors, and in 1788, after a correspondence that had begun years before, Judith married the Reverent John Murray – the man who had first brought Universalism to the United States. Their marriage not only benefited both partners intellectually but also resulted in a longed-for child – a daughter Julia Maria, who was born when Judith was forty years old and who, thanks to Judith's ardent belief that girls were as capable intellectually as boys, received as good an education as was possible at this time.

In 1790 an essay Judith had written in 1779 entitled 'On the Equality of the Sexes', was published, with her husband's full support, in the *Massachusetts Magazine* under the pen name 'Constantia'. The magazine's circulation comprised the entire Eastern seaboard as well as England, and the essay predates by two years Mary Wollstonecraft's better-known work 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' (1792). Like 'A Vindication', Murray's essay is steeped in Enlightenment thinking and asks its

readers: '…is it reasonable, that a candidate for immortality, for the joys of heaven, an intelligent being, who is to spend an eternity in contemplating the works of Deity, should at present be so degraded, as to be allowed no other ideas, than those which are suggested by the mechanism of a pudding, or the sewing [of] the seams of a garment? Pity that all such censurers of female improvement do not go one step further, and deny their future existence; to be consistent they surely ought.'

In the early 1790s Murray wrote the prologue and epilogue for several plays that were performed in Gloucester. In 1795 her play *The Medium; or Virtue Triumphant* became the first American-authored play to be performed in Boston and in the next decade she wrote two more: *The Traveller Returned* (1796) and *The African* (1804). From 1792-94 she also wrote two columns for the *Massachusetts Magazine*: 'The Gleaner', a fictional column about an orphan named Margaretta, which enabled Murray to discuss her ideas on female equality, education and ambition; and 'The Repository', which focused on social and religious topics. In 1798, with her husband in poor health, Murray combined old 'Gleaner' articles with new writing to create 'The Gleaner: A Miscellany'. At this time the cost of paper and printing meant that authors had to collect sufficient promises of purchase before a printer would commit the work to press. Together Murray and her husband collected hundreds of orders, including ones from George Washington and John Adams (to whom it was dedicated), and the profits they secured enabled them to pay off their mortgage and achieve some degree of financial security.

Throughout their marriage Murray accompanied her husband as he preached in New York, Washington and Philadelphia and they were frequently the guests of nation's elite. As John's health continued to decline Judith finished his three-volume *Letters and Sketches of Sermons* (1812; 1813), and following his death in 1815 she completed his autobiography for publication. In 1818 she moved to Natchez, Mississippi, to live with Julia Maria's family, and she died at their mansion in 1820.

In 1984 twenty volumes of Judith Sargent Murray's 'letter books', consisting of copies of every letter she had written from 1773/74-1818, were found at a different mansion in Natchez. This archive of approximately 2,500 letters (now held at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and also available on microfilm) offers an unparalleled insight into the life of one of the most remarkable women of the early Republic.
The Gleaner: A Miscellaneous Production. 3 vols. Boston: I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews, 1798. (12704.b.26)

Frances Sargent Locke Osgood, 1811-1850
Frances Sargent Locke Osgood was born in Boston in 1811. Her father was a prosperous merchant, and she and her siblings received a good education; indeed, her elder half-sister, Anna Maria Wells, also became a published poet. As a teenager, many of Frances's poems appeared in Lydia Maria Child's pioneering children's annual *Juvenile Miscellany*. In 1834, while composing poems in the Boston Athenaeum, Frances met the society portrait artist Samuel Osgood. They married soon afterwards and immediately moved to England where Samuel's professional

reputation afforded them entrance into London's social and intellectual elites. Here, Frances's own career also gained momentum and *A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New England* (1838) and *The Casket of Fate (*1839) were published during this time.

In 1839, the death of Frances's father prompted their return to the United States and the couple settled in New York with their two young daughters. Frances soon became an editor at the *Ladies' Companion* and her attendance was highly valued at the city's literary salons. During the next decade four more volumes of her work were published and both her poetry and prose frequently appeared in magazines such as *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Graham's Magazine*. In 1845 Osgood met Edgar Allan Poe who highly praised her work and published it in his magazine, *Broadway Journal.* The true nature of Osgood's relationship with Poe is still a source of some controversy. The flirtatious exchange they conducted in print led many to speculate that their relationship was more than platonic, yet this has never been proven. It is certainly true that although Osgood's work easily fits the category 'sentimental', given its subjects of children, family, friendship, flowers, love and death, some of her poems are sharply witty and unusually frank for a woman of her time.
Poems. Philadelphia, 1850. (11686.g.24)

Catharine Maria Sedgwick, 1789-1867
Catharine Maria Sedgwick was born in 1789 in Stockbridge, Massachusetts and was the sixth of seven siblings. Her father, Theodore Sedgwick, was a delegate to the convention that ratified the Constitution and he later became Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and chief justice in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. Her mother, who suffered from periods of depression throughout her life, came from one of western Massachusetts' oldest families. Recollecting her childhood, Sedgwick explained: 'I was reared in an atmosphere of high intelligence. My father had uncommon mental vigor. So had my brothers. Their daily habits, and pursuits, and pleasures were intellectual, and I naturally imbibed from them a kindred taste.' During her father's visits home from Washington she would listen to him reading Hume, Shakespeare and Cervantes and she: 'caught from his magnetic sympathy some elevation of feeling, and that love of reading which has been to me "education".'

Although she was raised as a Calvinist, Sedgwick and two of her brothers joined the Unitarian Church in 1821. This move had a profound impact on her literary career. In 1822, prompted by her brother Theodore, she agreed to write a tract condemning religious bigotry (particularly that of New England Calvinists). This pamphlet evolved into her first novel, *A New-England Tale*, which became a best-seller in both the United States and Great Britain. Her next works were equally successful both at home and abroad. The settings, characters and themes explored in these novels undisputedly established Sedgwick as an 'American' writer, on a par with James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving and William Jennings Bryant, and she became the nation's most popular female novelist at this time.

Sedgwick created enduring friendships with many noted figures of this era, including Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville and Fanny Kemble.

Unusually for an American woman at this time she never married, choosing instead to spend part of each year with the families of her siblings. In addition to her literary work, Sedgwick devoted much time and effort to supporting poor and imprisoned women – she founded the Society for the Aid and Relief of Poor Women and was the president of the Women's Prison Association of New York for fifteen years.

Although Sedgwick's writings all but disappeared between the late nineteenth century and the 1970s, she is once more regarded as an influential voice in American literature. One of Catharine Sedgwick's descendants was Edie Sedgwick, muse of Andy Warhol.
The Poor Rich Man, and the Rich Poor Man. London: Thomas Tegg, 1839. (RB.23.a.13855)

Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney, 1791-1865
Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney was born in Norwich, Connecticut, where, reflecting a practice that was common at the time, she was named after the deceased first wife of her father. Reflecting on her status as an only child she later recalled: 'I was favorably situated to be accounted marvellous, having no little competitor, and falling principally into the company of those somewhat advanced in life, who welcomed me as a curiosity and had full leisure to note all my doings.' Her father, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, was gardener to a wealthy widow, Jerusha Lathrop, who took a keen interest in Lydia's development. As well as having full access to this lady's library, Lydia attended several schools, and in her early twenties she opened a school of her own in her parents' home. Soon afterwards she co-founded a school with a friend, and when this closed for the winter she established free classes for poor children, including African Americans. In 1814 Daniel Wadsworth, the great-nephew of Mrs Lathrop, helped her to establish a school in Hartford with the daughters of his friends as her first pupils. This highly successful venture lasted until 1819, when she married Charles Sigourney a widowed merchant with three children.

Lydia Sigourney had begun writing poetry and prose at an early age, and in 1815 Daniel Wadsworth helped to publish her first book, *Moral Pieces in Prose and Verse*. It seems that Sigourney greatly valued the financial rewards that writing brought with it – not for her own sake, but for the support she could give to her parents. However, her husband's apparent misgivings about his bride's public life meant that Sigourney stopped teaching after their marriage and what little writing she did was published anonymously. The inability to earn her own money at this time clearly irked Sigourney who could no longer '…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?'

In 1833, however, possibly due to the financial difficulties faced by her husband, Sigourney once more began publishing under her own name and from then on she wrote prodigiously. Her work included novels, poetry, educational books, advice manuals, and histories and it appeared as independent volumes and in a wide variety of anthologies, annuals, newspapers and magazines. In her memoirs, *Letters of Life* (1866), Sigourney says of her literary endeavours that she always kept two principles

in mind: 'Not to interfere with the discharge of womanly duty, and to aim at being an instrument of good.' With its emphasis upon piety and moral improvement her work clearly resonated with the public and she became the most popular female poet in antebellum America. As such, she wryly recalls in her *Letters*, she received thousands of requests for verses, including one from a father desiring 'elegiac lines' for a young child 'supplying, as the only suggestion for the tuneful Muse, the fact that he was unfortunately drowned in a barrel of swine's food'; another for a poem 'to accompany a piece of worsted embroidery, intended as a present to a friend at the North'; and one for 'a monody for the loss of a second wife, fortified by the argument that I had composed one at the death of the first.'
Olive Leaves. New York, 1852. (12354.f.28)

Ann Sophia Winterbotham Stephens, 1810-1886
Ann Sophia Winterbotham Stephens was born in Humphreysville, Connecticut, the third of ten children who, following the death of their mother, were raised by their mother's sister. As a child she was educated in the local 'dame school'.

In 1831 she married Edward Stephens, a printer from Massachusetts, and together they moved to Portland, Maine, where three years later they founded the *Portland Magazine*, a journal for women, with Ann as the editor and frequent contributor and Edward as the publisher. In 1836 Ann edited the *Portland Sketch Book*, an anthology of work by local writers, and the following year the couple moved to New York City where her husband became a customs officer and Ann became active in the city's literary circles. Over time, Ann worked as an editor on *Graham's Lady's and Gentleman's Magazine*, *Ladies National Magazine*, *Ladies' Companion*, *Peterson's Magazine*, and *Frank Leslie's Lady's Gazette of Fashion and Fancy Needlework*. In 1856 she became founding editor of *Mrs Stephens' Illustrated New Monthly* which merged with *Peterson's* two years later.

Throughout this period, Stephens continued to write poetry, short stories, essays and literary reviews and much of her work was carried in the periodicals that she edited, including the serialization of more than twenty of her novels. In the *Woman's Record* (1853), Sarah Josepha Hale described Stephens as 'one of the most successful Magazine writers of the day,' and reminded readers that the publisher Charles J. Peterson said of Stephens: 'Like a painter, she throws her whole force of the objects in the front, finishing the background with a few bold masses of light and shade. No writer since Sir Walter Scott has excelled her in this.'

In 1850, Stephenson left her two children (aged nine and five) with her husband while she went on an extended trip to Europe with family friends. The trip lasted for two years, during which time she met writers such as Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray and also gathered material for later works such as *Zana* (1854) and *Lord Hope's Choice* (1873).

In 1860, Stephenson's novel *Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter*, which had originally appeared in serialised form in the *Ladies' Companion* in 1839, was re-issued by Beadle & Adams as the very first of their *Beadle's Dime Novels* series. Six

more of her novels were later re-issued in this series and the income they afforded, together with her editorial work, enabled Stephenson to comfortably support herself and her children following the death of her husband.

Along with many literary women living in New York during the Civil War, Stephenson actively involved herself in the Union cause. She compiled *A Pictorial History of the War for the Union* to raise funds, and chaired a women's committee that advocated rationing and modest living to help support the troops. She died in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1886 at the home of her friend and publisher Charles J. Peterson. Like the Cary sisters and Elizabeth F. Ellet she is buried in Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn. *Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter*. London; New York: Beadle, 1861. (12706.a.27)

Mercy Otis Warren, 1728-1814

Mercy Otis Warren was born in Barnstable, Massachusetts, to an educated and well-connected family. Her father was a Colonel and held numerous political positions during his life, and her eldest brother, James Otis, Jr., was a lawyer and a member of the Massachusetts legislature who, together with Samuel Adams, played a key role in the colonies' move towards independence; indeed, the phrase 'Taxation without Representation is Tyranny' is usually attributed to Otis.

Like most girls in New England at this time, Mercy learned to read at a young age. Unlike them, however, her father also allowed her to learn to write and to be tutored alongside her two elder brothers in the classics, history and literature. Being regarded as an intellectual equal by her brothers (it was James who recognised his sister's precocity and encouraged her to write poetry), and being treated so fairly by her father surely influenced Mercy's self-esteem and her sense of what she could achieve. In 1743, at James' graduation from Harvard, Mercy met James Warren, her future-husband and a man who like Mercy's father and brother before him, would unhesitatingly support Mercy's unconventional interest in writing and politics. During the first decade or so of their marriage much of Mercy's time and energy was focused upon raising their five sons. However, as the colonists' relationship with Britain began to be questioned, the Warrens' Plymouth home became a focal point for political discussion. As well as James Otis, Jr., frequent visitors included John and Samuel Adams, and it was at this time that James Warren himself entered the political realm. It is inconceivable that Mercy, with her upbringing and intellect, would not have been privy to these discussions.

In 1772, with the encouragement of her husband and friends, Mercy had her first work, *The Adulateur*, published anonymously in the Boston newspaper the *Massachusetts Spy*. Steeped in the politics of the day, this dramatic sketch portrays the Otis/Warren family's archenemy, Governor Hutchinson (as Rapatio), as hell-bent on destroying the colony, whilst Brutus, (modelled on James Otis, Jr.), urges the people to stand up for their rights. Her next two major works, *The Defeat* (1773), and *The Group* (1775), were social satires highlighting the corruption of the Crown's officials and the cowardice and delusions of the loyalist community. She also

published numerous poems at this time including one about the Boston Tea Party, 'The Squabble of the Sea Nymphs', based upon an idea put to her by John Adams.

In 1790, Mercy published *Poems, Dramatic and Miscellaneous*, the first work to appear under her own name. The two dramatic pieces included in this volume testify to the doubts she held about the new Republic, doubts which did soften over time. In 1805, she published her three-volume *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*. Her portrayal of John Adams led to a bitter feud between the two former friends, although they were eventually reconciled. The *History* illuminates Mercy's belief in the necessity of a 'virtuous' citizenship in any republic, and her misgivings about what could be achieved simply by changing the institutions through which they operated. Of all the 'first-generation' histories of the Revolution it remains one of the most valued.
Poems, Dramatic and Miscellaneous. Boston: I. Thomas and E.T. Andrews, 1790. (1344.c.40)