

THOMAS HALIBURTON & TRAVEL BOOKS ABOUT AMERICA

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THOMAS HALIBURTON'S OBSERVATIONS on British travel commentaries about America reward examination on several counts. First, they are valuable historically, recreating for the modern reader a phase of Anglo-American relations when these analyses of America renewed hostilities between two nations recently at war. Also, they point up Haliburton's interest in the format of travel writing itself and his adaptation of it in books as diverse as the *Account of Nova Scotia*, the *Clockmaker* and *Attaché* series, and other humorous works like *The Letter-Bag of the Great Western*, *The Old Judge*, and *The Season Ticket*. They reveal as well two general features of Haliburton's satire: the objective appraisal of all sides of a situation, and the didactic personal voice.

Studies of America written by travelling Britons never fail to excite the contempt of Haliburton's famous character, Sam Slick. In the first volume of *The Clockmaker* (1836), he bluntly states that the writers of these travelogues are no doubt "ensigns and leftenants . . . from the British marchin regiments in the Colonies, that run over five thousand miles of country in five weeks, on leave of absence, and then return, lookin as wise as the monkey that had seen the world."¹ In other words they are superficial tourists who too quickly see little and understand less:

When they get back they are so chock full of knowledge of the Yankees, that it runs over of itself, like a hogshead of molasses rolled about in hot weather — a white froth and scum bubbles out of the bung; wishy washy trash they call tours, sketches, travels, letters, and what not; vapid stuff, jist sweet enough to catch flies, cockroaches, and half fledged galls.²

In the second volume of *The Clockmaker* (1839), Sam tells his Nova Scotian Boswell, "I've read all the travels in America, and there ain't one that's worth a cent!"³ Derogatory references to this travel literature are scattered throughout both the *Clockmaker* series (1836-1840) and its sequel, *The Attaché* (1843-1846). A key passage occurs at the end of the third *Clockmaker* when Sam is given his first assignment as American attaché to the Court of St. James. An

official from the Secretary of State's office informs him that the British government has been commissioning the unflattering portraits of America and instructs him to make the Queen aware of America's displeasure:

It would be advisable, if a favorable opportunity offers, to draw the attention of the Queen to the subject of her authors and travellers, — carelessly like, as if it weren't done a purpose, for it don't comport with dignity to appear too *sensitive*, but jist merely to regret the *prac-tice* of hirein' authors to abuse us in order to damp the admiration of our glorious institutions.

We have every reason to believe that Captain Hall received five thousand pounds for this purpose, and Mrs. Trollope the same sum; that Miss Martineau is promised a royal garter, (it's a pity she warn't hanged with it,) and Captain Marryatt to be made a Knight of the Royal Baths. This conduct is onworthy a great people like the English, and unjust and insultin' to us; and you might suggest to her Royal Highness that this mean, low-lived, dirty conduct will defeat itself, and that nothin' short of kickin' out her ministry will be accepted as an apology by the American people.⁴

Sam's exposé of the deceptions practised on the reading public by British travel writers echoed actual defences voiced everywhere in America. In *America and her Commentators*, a study of the offensive commentaries published just before the end of the Civil War, H. R. Tuckerman writes that many English publications critical of America were believed to be anti-emigration propaganda for which the authors were remunerated in secret by their government.⁵ In *The American in England*, a more recent analysis of this crisis in Anglo-American relations, Robert Spiller supports Tuckerman's argument, citing the rise of the United States as a world power as a reason for these measures.⁶ The American official tells Sam to convey outrage and to feign indifference at the same time — "it don't comport with dignity to appear too sensitive" — when he brings this problem to the attention of the British Crown. But the ultimatum he is to deliver shows that, whether it comported with dignity or not, Americans were sensitive to British censure. Tuckerman notes regretfully, "The importance attached to the swarm of English Travels abusive of America, upon calm reflection, appears like a monomania; and equally preposterous was the sensitiveness of our people to foreign criticism."⁷ Americans were, in fact, so nettled by this criticism that they began to publish their own travel books about America, ostensibly by a foreigner greatly impressed with the country. Charles Jared Ingersoll wrote *Inchiquin, the Jesuit's Letters* (1810), a mock-collection of praiseworthy epistles on America by a visiting Jesuit. In *Notions of the Americans Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor* (1828), James Fenimore Cooper used a similar technique for bolstering up his country in the eyes of the world. James Kirke Paulding preferred to make standard British comments on America look ridiculous, as he did in *John Bull in America; or the New Munchausen* (1825), by having a British narrator inflate them to absurd proportions. And in *A Sketch of Old England, by a New England*

Man (1822), he reversed the tactic of the British commentaries by putting the Old World under scrutiny.

One reason then that British travel books and the American response to them figure prominently in Haliburton's writings was their topicality. Haliburton's interest in them may also have owed something to his own attempt to write a commentary about America, or at least that corner of it that he knew well. A decade earlier than *The Clockmaker*, he was at work on a project which eventually came to be called *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*. After seven years of painstaking research, it appeared in 1829. Given the success of the English commentaries, Haliburton expected an enthusiastic reception for his *Account* on both sides of the ocean, but especially in England. On January 7, 1824, he wrote excitedly to his friend and advisor, Judge Peleg Wiswall: "Every thing . . . which has America for its Subject (how dull or absurd soever it may be) is read in England with avidity, and I am not altogether without hopes of being able to dispose of my labours in some way or other. . . ." ⁸ Moreover, the *Account* provided a corrective to misconceptions Englishmen had been given of Nova Scotia. Years later at a banquet given in his honour the celebrated author of *The Clockmaker* recalled the misrepresentations of Nova Scotia that were current in England during his youth:

You have been so good, Sir, as to refer in terms of approbation to an humble effort of mine — the History of Nova Scotia. On that subject permit me to say, that in early life I twice visited Great Britain, and was strongly, and I may say painfully, impressed with a conviction that has forced itself upon the mind of every man who has gone to Europe from this country — namely, that this valuable and important Colony was not merely wholly unknown, but misunderstood and misrepresented. Every book of Geography, every Gazetteer and elementary work that mentioned it, spoke of it in terms of contempt or condemnation. It was said to possess good harbours, if you could see them for the fog, and fisheries that would be valuable, if you had only sun enough to cure the fish, — while the interior was described as a land of rock and barren, and doomed to unrelenting sterility. Where facts were wanting, recourse was had to imagination. . . . ⁹

Sam attributes errors such as these to the breakneck speed with which British commentators travelled through the country, perceiving accidental rather than essential features. He insists to the squire that only the native writer — a title for which Haliburton's *Account of Nova Scotia*, not to mention his chronicles of both Yankee and colonist, would have qualified him — can provide an accurate picture of the New World:

if you *want to understand us, you must live among us, too*; your Halls, Hamiltons, and DeRouses, and such critters, what *can* they know of us? Can a chap catch a likeness flying along a rail road? Can he even see the features? . . . if you want to know the inns and the outs of the Yankees — I've wintered them and summered them; I know all their points, shape, make and breed; I've tried 'em alongside of

other folks, and I know where they fall short, where they mate 'em, and where they have the advantage, about as well as some who think they know a plagy sight more. It tante them that stare the most, that see the best always, I guess. Our folks have their faults, and I know them, (I warnt born blind, I reckon,) but . . . the tour writers, are a little grain too hard on us.¹⁰

HALIBURTON'S *Account of Nova Scotia* won him plaudits at home and in the United States, including an honorific membership in the distinguished Massachusetts Historical Society, but in England it did not sell as well as either the author or the publisher had hoped. Joseph Howe, who had confidently printed 3,000 copies of the work, took the brunt of the financial loss. He noted in his business memoranda, "None sold abroad. . . . I was left with about 1,000 copies, scattered about, unsaleable on my hands. As late as 1837, these 1,000 copies of the history remained unsold, though offered at half price."¹¹

The *Account of Nova Scotia* failed to spark the interest of English readers in 1829, but a few years later the author's sketches of Sam Slick, designed initially for the readers of Joseph Howe's *Novascotian*, were pirated by British publisher Richard Bentley and became, to the author's astonishment, immediately successful. His visit to England shortly after the first volume of *The Clockmaker* had appeared there generated great excitement in literary circles. We read in the 1838 journal of Charles R. Fairbanks, Haliburton's fellow traveller at the time: "Haliburton [is] now the greatest Lion in London. Mrs. Trollope and Theo. Hook desire to be acquainted with him."¹² The name of Sam Slick fast became ubiquitous. Justin McCarthy commented in his *Portrait of the Sixties* that for a time Sam Slick rivalled Sam Weller of Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* in popularity, "his sayings and doings . . . the subject of frequent allusions and quotations in English books and newspapers, and in the conversation of all who had a genuine relish for fiction of the comic order."¹³ Allusions to Haliburton's famous Yankee even appeared in such famous commentaries about the New World as Captain Marryatt's *Diary in America*¹⁴ and the revised 5th edition of Mrs. Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans*.¹⁵ A reviewer writing in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* urged the author of the first *Clockmaker* to turn his attention to the Mother Country in subsequent works: "Let him leave Nova Scotia and come to England. Caricature of the most cauterizing kind never had ampler opportunities."¹⁶

Haliburton did not hesitate to make capital of his popularity in England. As the writer in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* suggested, he directed much of the subject matter of the second *Clockmaker* to the English reading public. In discussing this book with a former colleague living in New Brunswick, he wrote: "I have another volume ready for the press, which is not so local as the other,

and I think better suited for English readers."¹⁷ In the second *Clockmaker* as in the first, Sam Slick continues to attack British books about America. In this same book he also makes his readers aware of Haliburton's *Account of Nova Scotia*. Some references are oblique, as when Sam enthusiastically recommends a historical study written by his brother Josiah Slick, like Haliburton both a lawyer and a writer:

he is a considerable of a literary character. He's well known in the great world as the author of the Historical, Statistical, and Topographical Account of Cuttyhunk, in five volumes; a work that has raised the reputation of American genius among foreign nations amazin', I can assure you. He's quite a self-taught author too.¹⁸

The "Historical, Statistical, and Topographical Account of Cuttyhunk" is very close to the title which Haliburton had once projected for his own book at an early stage of its redaction: *An Historical, Geographical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*.¹⁹ The bid to associate his own commentary with that of Josiah Slick is made explicit when the narrator jocularly declares that, next to Josiah Slick's History of Cuttyhunk, "Haliburton's History of Nova Scotia . . . is the most important account of unimportant things I have ever seen."²⁰

As this coy reference to himself would suggest, Haliburton had taken the measure of publicity achieved by *The Clockmaker* and resolved to exploit it.²¹ Evidently he still considered his history of Nova Scotia marketable. His jest at this study as an "important account of unimportant things" combined self-promotion with humour, demonstrating a shrewd understanding on Haliburton's part of how to make a product appealing to a consumer. In a letter written on December 19, 1839, shortly after the second *Clockmaker* was issued, Haliburton tried to persuade his publisher Richard Bentley to republish the work if only for the colonial sales:

I believe you are aware that ten years ago I published a history of Nova Scotia in 2 vols. Somebody, I don't know who, has reprinted it in London, which I am sorry for as it is now an old work. I am loudly called upon here for a new Edition that shall bring the Statistics down to the present day, and I should like to do it, if it would cover expenses. If you can find it worth while to give 250 pounds for this service, the book itself I will say nothing about, as my object is utility to the country, and not money. Let me know immediately and I will go to work at it. It is said to be the best Colonial History, by every review of it, that has appeared, and was as perfect at the time as I could make it, but our civil divisions are all altered since, and so have our statistics materially changed. It cannot have a great circulation in England nor would it be worth your while to pay for the work, but if revised in the way I have spoken of might suit your views and mine. All I require is the expense of revision and correction.²²

Another letter to Bentley written on September 1, 1840, reveals, however, that the publisher declined the offer:

I find that there was no English Edition of the history of Nova Scotia published, that it was a trick of a bookseller here to dispose of the remaining copies by giving them a new title page. I am sorry you declined it, because I do not wish to publish with Colburn, but as the work must either be republished or superseded by someone else I shall have to do it.²³

Determined not to have to call his first literary attempt a failure, Haliburton continued to submit it to publishers. Finally, sometime after 1844, another edition was issued.

The idea of vicarious travel continued to dominate many works that Haliburton wrote after his *Account of Nova Scotia. The Letter-Bag of the Great Western; or, Life in a Steamer* (1840) consists of letters written by Haliburton on the steamship voyage from Bristol to New York, ostensibly by various passengers on board. One of these is entitled "Letter from a Traveller Before He Had Travelled," an ironic portrait of a British commentator who is going to tour America in eight weeks in order that he might interlard his already completed book on America — essentially a "hash" of the "cold collations" of previous commentators²⁴ — with colourful tid-bits. Travel books are in the main badly done, Haliburton insists here as elsewhere, but he nonetheless adopts their successful format. The journey is the main organizational principle of almost all his fictional works, a thread upon which is hung a miscellany of facts, impressions, sketches, and anecdotes. The "sayings and doings" of Sam Slick in both *The Clockmaker* and *The Attaché* are occasioned by sights seen and people met by the famous Yankee, his friend Squire Poker, and other characters in their travels throughout Nova Scotia, the United States, and England. *The Old Judge* (1849) is narrated by a British traveller who begins his American tour by a stay in the colonies where he is introduced to the people and their traditions by his lawyer host and the wise, experienced "old judge" of the title. In *The Season Ticket* (1860) Squire Shegog and his fellow-passengers on the London-Southampton express discuss people they have met while travelling through life. In this, the last of Haliburton's works, the speaker asks, "Who shall write a book of travels now?"²⁵ The subject of world touring has been exhausted in literature, he states. "We must, at last, turn," he argues, "to what we ought to have studied first — ourselves. 'The proper study of mankind is man.'"²⁶

FROM THE FIRST *Clockmaker* on, Haliburton had demonstrated a lively interest in the study of mankind. As one might expect in a satirist, he paid special attention to human foibles and shortcomings. The British commentators were censured by him chiefly for publishing impressions of America that were grossly, perhaps intentionally, distorted. His criticism of these writers was not one-sided, however, but often balanced by telling thrusts at the unde-

sirable traits of persons from other countries as well, as in the following exchange between Sam and the squire. When his Nova Scotian friend tries to declare himself free of prejudice, Sam mockingly compares him to travel writer Basil Hall:

Captain Aul, (Hall,) as he called himself, for I never seed an Englishman yet that spoke good English, said he hadn't one mite or morsel of prejudice, and yet in all his three volumes of travels through the U-nited States, (the greatest nation it's generally allowed atween the Poles,) only found two things to praise, the kindness of our folks to him, and the state prisons. None are so blind, I guess, as them that won't see; but you folks can't bear it, that's a fact. Bear what? said I. The superiority of Americans, he replied. . . .²⁷

First, Sam ridicules the squire's contention that, as a North American colonist, he is somehow free of bias. Secondly he makes the point that British commentaries like Captain Hall's are niggardly in their praise. And thirdly he indicts himself as an uncultured and boorish American in a speech replete with bad grammar and vulgar boasting. Robert L. McDougall describes this type of triple-edged satire as "controlled orientation," an aspect of technique which he defines as a "process by means of which Haliburton gains the detachment necessary to move freely and in the best sense critically between the three points of the North Atlantic triangle."²⁸ This technique also reflects a strategy of adjustment to the American and the British spheres of influence and justifies McDougall's claim that, in this area of his achievement at least, Haliburton is solidly in the Canadian stream of writing, "ours or nobody's, part of our living tradition or no living tradition."²⁹

But at times Haliburton seems too overcome by intense political convictions to remain detached in his analysis of the British travel writers. This is suggested by certain puzzling shifts of attitude on the part of his main character. For example, when Sam discusses controversial features of the United States outlined in the commentaries — such as republicanism and the absence of an established religion — his views strangely become more Tory and Anglican than American. In short, for brief stretches of *The Clockmaker* and *The Attaché*, he becomes a fictional incarnation of his creator. Nowhere is this clearer than in Sam's attacks on the political economist and reformer Harriet Martineau whose liberal theories were anathema to Haliburton. The correspondences which exist between her writings and Haliburton's parody of them in the second *Clockmaker* are especially enlightening in this connection.

Of all the British commentators mentioned by Haliburton, Harriet Martineau is the only one who is attacked at length. No study of Haliburton's work has undertaken to explain why he singles her out in this way. Brief unflattering references are made to her in several of the Sam Slick books, but in the second *Clockmaker* the offensive is an extended one. Here a number of conversations take place between a famous author and Sam Slick, whom Haliburton uses to

lampoon her in what at least one contemporary thought a tasteless way.³⁰ Although he does not name Harriet Martineau directly in these episodes, Sam's allusions to her French ancestry and to her celebrated *Illustrations of Political Economy* (1834) would have made her identity immediately obvious:

Year afore last, I met an English gall atravellin' in a steamboat; she had a French name that I can't recollect, tho' I got it on the tip o' my tongue too; you know who I mean — she wrote books on enonomy, — not domestic economy, as galls ought, but on political economy, as galls oughtn't, for they don't know nothin' about it.³¹

But it is the arguments in Harriet Martineau's more recently published *Society in America* (1837), and not those in her *Illustrations of Political Economy*, which Sam ridicules. No direct reference is made to the title *Society in America*, but thinly disguised excerpts from this book of travels appear in the second *Clockmaker*, establishing that Haliburton knew it well. To begin, Sam tries to discredit the book by drawing the reader's attention to the author's deafness:

She had a trumpet in her hand, — thinks I, who on airth is she agoin' to hail, or is she agoin' to try echoes on the river? I watched her for some time, and I found it was an ear-trumpet.

Well, well, says I, that's onlike most English travellers any way, for in a general way they wear magnifyin' glasses, and do enlarge things so, a body don't know 'em ag'in when he sees 'em. Now, this gall won't hear one-half that's said, and will get that half wrong, and so it turned out.³²

Harriet Martineau herself had called attention to her impaired hearing in the preface to *Society in America*, advising the reader to consider it a handicap if he saw fit, but pointing out as well that this disadvantage proved an asset in drawing confidences out of otherwise reticent people. Sam attributes the distortion in her views to her failure to hear perfectly, aligning it with the exaggeration found in British commentaries generally. He then examines several observations made in *Society in America*, striving to make each look as ridiculous as possible.

Given Sam's patriotism, his attempts to dismiss Harriet Martineau's criticisms of the United States are, if at times discomfiting, at least understandable. Her condemnation of the disparity between egalitarian principles and slavery is a case in point. It was incredible to her, she wrote in *Society in America*, that even religious slaveholders could be blind to "the fact that the negro is a man and a brother."³³ The English "gall" with the French name speaks along the same lines in *The Clockmaker* when she asks Sam, ". . . do you not think these unfortunate fellow-critters, our sable brothers, if emancipated, educated, and civilised, are capable of as much refinement and as high a degree of polish as the whites?"³⁴ Sam responds by way of anecdote. His brother Josiah Slick, he says, once bet a man a thousand dollars that he could find ten black men who would prove more polished than the same number of whites. He then proceeded to polish up ten

blacks with Day and Martin's blacking until they shone so brightly in the sun that they blinded the judges assembled to decide the bet.³⁵ Sam's handling of Harriet Martineau's objections to slavery is deliberately flippant, an attempt by him to impugn observations on slavery made by those who had no first-hand knowledge of it. He says elsewhere in this connection, "...nothin' raises my dander more, than to hear English folks and our Eastern citizens atalkin' about this subject that they don't onderstand, and have nothin' to do with."³⁶ And he returns to the problem in the second volume of *The Attaché*, where he scorns "the absurd accounts that travellers give of the United States in general, and the gross exaggerations they publish of the state of slavery in particular."³⁷

TO FEND OFF ATTACKS on American institutions by Harriet Martineau and other commentators is for Sam a patriotic activity that is consonant with his belief in "the superiority of Americans." He repeatedly boasts to acquaintances from England and the British North American colonies that "the U-nited States [is] the greatest nation it's generally allowed atween the Poles."³⁸ Thus for Sam to attack those parts of *Society in America* which praise aspects of the country he considers superior to all others is out of character. His occasional concession that America is not faultless never quite rings true because it departs too radically from the boasting for which we know him best. For instance, Harriet Martineau's accolades for the voluntary system of religion in the United States and the accompanying attack on the evils of the Established Church of England displease Sam, causing him to remark uncharacteristically to the squire:

I don't like to hear English people come out here and abuse their church; they've got a church, and throve under it, and a national character under it, for honour and upright dealin', such as no other people in Europe have: indeed, I could tell you of some folks who have to call their goods English, to get them off in a foreign land at all. *The name sells 'em.* You may boast of this tree or that tree, and call 'em this dictionary name and that new-fangled name, but *give me the tree that bears the best fruit, I say.*³⁹

Sam's contention that England is the tree that bears the best fruit is at odds with his belief that the United States is the greatest nation "atween the Poles." Also perplexing is his complaint that no one church or form of worship is established in the United States over any other:

... we don't prefer one and establish it, and don't render its support compulsory. Better, perhaps, if we did, for it burns pretty near out sometimes here, and has to be brought to by revivals and camp-meetin's, and all sorts of excitements; and when it does come to, it don't give a steady clear light for some time, but spits and sputters and cracks like a candle that's got a drop o' water on the wick. It don't seem kinder rational, neither, that screamin' and screechin', and hoopin' and

hollerin', like possess, and tumblin' into faintin's, and fits, and swoons, and what not.⁴⁰

In his partiality for the English Church and his view that certain democratic manifestations are suspect, Sam Slick is close in spirit to Thomas Haliburton himself. Notice the double thrust of his attack on Harriet Martineau's analysis of what she called the "spirit of religion" in America. In the chapter of her book bearing this title, Martineau commended those congregations "where the people of colour are welcome to worship with the whites, — actually intermingled with them, instead of being set apart in a gallery appropriated to them."⁴¹ These situations, she argued, illustrated perfectly the ideal of Christian brotherhood summed up in the quotation from Novalis used as the chapter's epigraph: "The Christian Religion is the root of all democracy: the highest fact in the Rights of Man."⁴² Sam's mockery of this view, which he is able to render almost verbatim, demonstrates that Haliburton had read this section of *Society in America* closely:

If you was to revarse that maxim o' yourn, said I, and say democracy is too often found at the root of religion, you'd be nearer the mark, I reckon. I knew a case once exactly in point. Do tell it to me, said she; it will illustrate "the spirit of religion." Yes, said I, and illustrate your book too, if you are awritin' one, as most English travellers do. Our congregation, said I, to Slickville, contained most of the wealthy and respectable folk there, and a most powerful and united body it was. Well, there came a split once on the election of an Elder, and a body of the upper-crust folks separated and went off in a huff. Like most folks that separate in temper, they laid it all to conscience; found out all at once they had been adrift afore all their lives, and joined another church as different from ourn as chalk is from cheese; and to shew their humility, hooked on to the poorest congregation in the place. Well, the minister was quite lifted up in the stirrups when he saw these folks jine him; and to shew his zeal for them the next Sunday, he looked up at the gallery to the niggers, and, said he, my brether'n, said he, I beg you won't spit down any more on the aisle seats, for there be gentlemen there now. Jist turn your heads, my sable friends, and let go over your shoulders. Manners, my brothers, manners before backey. Well, the niggers seceded; they said it was an infringement on their rights, on their privilege of spittin', as freemen, where they liked, how they liked, and when they liked, and they quit in a body. "Democracy," said they, "is the root of religion."⁴³

One suspects that Harriet Martineau's reputation as a radical reformer helped to draw her the lion's share of abuse heaped upon the British commentators by Sam Slick. The low opinion of the extension of democratic rights reflected in Sam's story calls to mind Haliburton's own political views. In Nova Scotia he fought vigorously against responsible government, seeing in it a creeping republicanism. Not surprisingly he was also opposed to the additional voting privileges granted by the Reform Bill of 1832. Thomas Poker, the Nova Scotian narrator who more often than any other character in the Sam Slick books articulates Haliburton's own opinions, comments sorrowfully upon arriving in England that

the once sterling conduct of the English has been despoiled by "dissent, reform, and agitation."⁴⁴ Martineau's affiliations with the reformer, Francis Place, and the main author of the 1832 Reform Bill, Lord Durham, would in themselves have discredited her in Haliburton's eyes.⁴⁵

Haliburton's intense antagonism to Lord Durham became public just before Durham, after a brief period of office as Canada's Governor-General, published his famous *Report on the Affairs of British North America* on January 31, 1839. In a work entitled *Bubbles of Canada* which Tories attempting to forestall the *Report* had commissioned him to do, Haliburton denounced Durham as "a radical dictator and a democratic despot."⁴⁶ The *Report* itself when it appeared alienated Haliburton further. To support his contention that Nova Scotians were not fully developing the resources of their province, Durham made a veiled reference to the first series of *The Clockmaker*, "a highly popular work," he wrote, "which is known to be from the pen of one of Your Majesty's chief functionaries [an allusion to Haliburton's appointment to the judiciary] in Nova Scotia."⁴⁷ Haliburton immediately dispatched an angry series of letters in rebuttal to the *London Times* which was later reprinted as *A Reply to the Report of the Earl of Durham*. Durham's biographer, Chester New, remarks that Haliburton expended bitter sarcasm on portions of the *Report* that he had, either deliberately or otherwise, misunderstood.⁴⁸ And Haliburton's own biographer, V. L. O. Chittick, dismisses the letters as ineffective "products of ill-temper."⁴⁹ Exactly when in the turbulent 1830's Haliburton's passionate dislike of Durham began and to what extent it influenced his caricature of Harriet Martineau and her views it is difficult to say. Certainly his rude treatment of both Durham and Martineau reveals an intense dislike for what he saw as perniciously liberal tendencies on both sides of the Atlantic. Why he attributed his own anti-republican sentiments to Sam Slick is another vexed question. It is possible that he hoped to weight his argument more heavily by enlisting the support of an otherwise patriotic Yankee in pointing out the weak spots in the American system; or perhaps, all unconsciously, he mistrusted the indirection of art in his eagerness to make these deficiencies perfectly clear.

Thomas Haliburton's recreation of the battle of New World commentaries waged by citizens from all points of the North Atlantic triangle is nourishing to the historical imagination. It is also relevant, for although the books themselves are no longer controversial, Canada's relation to Britain and to the United States is. To see where we as a nation have been is the first step to seeing both where we are and where we are likely to go. This is not to suggest that Haliburton was writing for posterity. On the contrary, his repeated allusions to British travel books indicate a concern that was immediate and, in places, highly personal. Not surprisingly we find him using this popular genre himself. Elastic in form, it was able to accommodate the pronouncements on every imaginable subject that con-

stitute his best-known works. His remarks on the British authors themselves, moreover, demonstrate two features of his general satiric approach: the revolving, dispassionate criticism that Robert L. McDougall calls "controlled orientation," and the biased comment. Finally, the passages on the travel books, barring a few intemperate lapses, have genuine literary merit. As Northrop Frye has observed, invective is more readable than panegyric.⁵⁰ And the invective in this case is distinguished by the wit, sharp caricatures, and vivid tropes that mark Haliburton's better writing.

NOTES

- ¹ *The Clockmaker; or the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick, of Slickville*, I (Halifax: Joseph Howe, 1836), p. 58.
- ² *Clockmaker*, I, p. 58.
- ³ *The Clockmaker; or the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick, of Slickville*, II, 4th ed. (London: Richard Bentley, 1839), p. 319.
- ⁴ *The Clockmaker; or the Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick, of Slickville*, III (London: Richard Bentley, 1840), pp. 299-300.
- ⁵ *America and her Commentators with a Critical Sketch of Travel in the United States* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1864), p. 252.
- ⁶ *The American in England During the First Half Century of Independence* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1926), pp. 300-01.
- ⁷ *America and her Commentators*, p. 256.
- ⁸ As quoted by V. L. O. Chittick, *Thomas Chandler Haliburton ("Sam Slick"): A Study in Provincial Toryism* (1924; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 200.
- ⁹ As quoted by Chittick, p. 123.
- ¹⁰ *Clockmaker*, I, pp. 60-61.
- ¹¹ As quoted by Chittick, p. 144.
- ¹² As quoted by Chittick, p. 222.
- ¹³ (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), p. 170.
- ¹⁴ Frederick Marryatt, *A Diary in America with Remarks on Its Institutions* (1839), ed. Sydney Jackman (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 301, 306.
- ¹⁵ Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), ed. Donald Smalley (New York: Random House, 1949), p. 209.
- ¹⁶ "The World We Live In," *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, XII (November 1837), 677.
- ¹⁷ As quoted by Chittick, pp. 202-03.
- ¹⁸ *Clockmaker*, II, p. 87.
- ¹⁹ As cited in a letter from Haliburton to Judge Peleg Wiswall. See Chittick, p. 130.
- ²⁰ *Clockmaker*, II, p. 116.
- ²¹ On more than one occasion in his fiction, Haliburton appealed to highly placed readers for preferment. At the end of the second *Clockmaker*, for example, Sam recommends that the Nova Scotian squire request of the Minister of the Colonies substantial rewards for his literary efforts in such words as these:

if you want to make an impartial deal, to tie the Nova Scotians to you for ever, you'll jist sarve him [the creator of Sam Slick] as you sarved Earl Mulgrave (though his writin's ain't to be compared to the Clockmaker, no more than chalk is to cheese); you gave him the governorship of Jamaica, and arterwards of Ireland. John Russell's writin's got him the berth of the leader in the House of Commons. Well, Francis Head, for his writin's you made him Governor of Canada, and Walter Scott you made a baronet of, and Bulwer you did for too, and a great many others you have got the other side of the water you sarved the same way. Now, minister, fair play is a jewel, says you; if you can reward your writers to home with governorships and baronetcies, and all sorts o' snug things, let's have a taste o' the good things this side o' the water too. . . . The Yankee made Washington Irvin' a minister plenipo', to honour him; and Blackwood, last November, in his magazine, says that are Yankee's books ain't fit to be named in the same day with the Clockmaker — that they're nothin' but Jeremiads (319-20).

Another instance of self-promotion can be found in the "Dedication to the Right Hon. Lord John Russell" which prefaces *The Letter-Bag of the Great Western; or Life in a Steamer* (1840; rpt. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973). "Like a good shepherd, my Lord, open the gates," Haliburton pleads, "and let down the bars, and permit us to crop some of our own pastures, that good food may thicken our fleeces, and cover our ribs." He points out further that, although it is not fitting to say what he expects for himself, ". . . if the office of distributor of honours and promotions among colonists is vacant, as there are no duties to perform, and the place is a sinecure, it would suit [him] uncommonly well, and afford [him] leisure to cultivate talents that are extremely rare among the race of officials" (xiii). The main thrust of this remark is, of course, satiric in its criticism of governmental neglect of deserving colonists, but Haliburton's willingness to be officially recognized and rewarded is also underlined.

²² "The Correspondence of Thomas Chandler Haliburton and Richard Bentley," ed. W. H. Bond, in *The Canadian Collection at Harvard University*, ed. W. I. Morse, Bulletin IV (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Printing Office, 1947), pp. 61-62.

²³ *Canadian Collection at Harvard*, p. 63.

²⁴ *The Letter-Bag*, p. 130.

²⁵ *The Season-Ticket* (1860; rpt. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 1.

²⁶ *The Season-Ticket*, p. 3.

²⁷ *Clockmaker*, II, p. 58.

²⁸ "Thomas Chandler Haliburton," in *Our Living Tradition*, Second Series, ed. Robert L. McDougall (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1959), p. 29.

²⁹ *Our Living Tradition*, p. 29.

³⁰ Lt.-Col. C. R. Fox, an officer of His Majesty's forces stationed at Halifax in 1836 to whom Haliburton dedicated the second series of *The Clockmaker* sight unseen, is said to have deplored its allusions to Harriet Martineau. This is mentioned by Chittick, p. 232.

³¹ *Clockmaker*, II, p. 58.

³² *Clockmaker*, II, pp. 58-59.

³³ *Society in America* (1837; rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1966), I, x.

³⁴ *Clockmaker*, II, p. 86.

- ³⁵ *Clockmaker*, II, pp. 88-89.
- ³⁶ *Clockmaker*, II, p. 89.
- ³⁷ *The Attaché; or, Sam Slick in England*, II, 2nd ed. (London: Richard Bentley, 1843), p. 67.
- ³⁸ *Clockmaker*, II, p. 3.
- ³⁹ *Clockmaker*, II, pp. 61-62.
- ⁴⁰ *Clockmaker*, II, pp. 63-64.
- ⁴¹ *Society in America*, III, p. 258.
- ⁴² *Society in America*, III, p. 258.
- ⁴³ *Clockmaker*, II, pp. 65-66.
- ⁴⁴ *The Attaché; or, Sam Slick in England*, I, 2nd ed. (London: Richard Bentley, 1843), p. 117.
- ⁴⁵ In 1834 Harriet Martineau collaborated with Lord Durham in the composition of a tract on the improvement of labour relations. As her posthumous *Autobiography* (1877) reveals, she held him in high esteem, an opinion she may well have expressed publicly during the period of their association.
- ⁴⁶ As quoted by Chittick, p. 238.
- ⁴⁷ *Lord Durham's Report on the Affairs of British North America*, ed. Sir C. P. Lucas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), II, p. 214.
- ⁴⁸ *Lord Durham: A Biography of John George Lambton First Earl of Durham* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), p. 517.
- ⁴⁹ Chittick, p. 263.
- ⁵⁰ *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), p. 224.

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