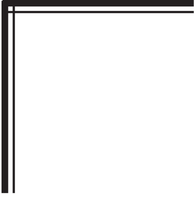

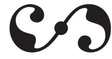

Chapter Five

Traveling Women

Anna Calhoun Clemson's reluctance to go abroad in 1844 was not typically shared by other elite women, many of whom enthusiastically embraced the cultural phenomenon of European travel. An expanding economy, improvements in transportation technology for North Atlantic steamships, navigational charts that shortened the voyage, and Europe's railway networks—all of these factors increased the popularity of travel abroad for Americans, in general, during the nineteenth century, despite the expense, time, and danger involved. In particular, comparing Anna with a select sample of three traveling women of gentility will show all of them to have welcomed the experience that she endured as a duty. Margaret Fuller, Harriet Lowndes Aiken, and Lucy Holcombe Pickens, like Anna Calhoun Clemson, were but a few among the many Americans who traveled in Europe during the 1800s. Collectively, they were part of a wave of tourists, and, although typical of travelers to Europe at that time, they were by no means ordinary women, as the following account of them indicates.[1]

Representative of accomplished, elite-class, southern womanhood, Anna, Harriet, and Lucy differed from Margaret, the New England intellectual dedicated to professional achievement and public activism. Although they all traveled as tourists when abroad, Anna, Margaret, and Lucy actually established residence in Europe for extended periods of time whereas Harriet went there on three separate vacation trips. She and Lucy lived in style, supported by their rich spouses, while Anna, the mother of two young children, struggled to make ends meet on her husband's salary as a diplomat and while Margaret depended upon her wages as a journalist to survive.

Looking at the world of Anna Calhoun Clemson in Europe from 1844 to 1851, one finds that she lived a rather cosmopolitan existence dominated by domestic concerns. The travel experiences of Margaret Fuller, Harriet Lowndes Aiken, and Lucy Holcombe Pickens, respectively, are each of interest in their own right and serve to enrich our view of Anna's story.

"...[W]ere I a few years younger or my children a few years older I should enjoy the idea of visiting Europe much but as it is I expect to have more of the fatigues & disagreeables of travel than the pleasures."

The twenty-seven-year-old Anna Clemson told her father what she thought and felt about the weighty matter of going abroad with the responsibility of her two small children at a troublesome age. At three and almost two years old, her son and daughter were not yet old enough to enjoy or even benefit much from the trip that their mother would have preferred not to make. For one thing, Anna found her husband's diplomatic appointment to the Belgian Court, with its obligatory ceremonies and etiquette, to be rather an annoyance more than anything else. Nevertheless, in support of his desire to live once again in Europe, she readied the family to leave their Canebrake plantation home, where they had been for less than a year.[2]

The Clemsons, accompanied by a black slave boy named Basil, sailed from New York in September 1844, and, after docking at Le Havre, proceeded to Paris en route to Brussels. During the short time that they were necessarily detained in the French capital, they were kindly treated by the U. S. Minister to France, William R. King, a former Senate colleague of John C. Calhoun. A traveling companion of Anna's during her northern trip with the William Prestons in 1836, King presented Clemson, as a matter of courtesy, to His Majesty Louis Philippe at the monarch's St. Cloud residence. With diplomatic credentials as Chargé d'Affaires to the Belgian Court of Louis Philippe's son-in-law, Léopold l, Clemson gladly took advantage of the opportunity for an audience with the French king. Interestingly, in his student days in Paris at the Sorbonne and the Royal School of Mines, Clemson had actively participated in the Revolution of 1830, which had toppled the rule of the Bourbon King Charles X and placed Louis Philippe, of the House of Orléans, on his country's throne as a constitutional monarch. Within two weeks of arriving in Brussels on October 4, Clemson was received privately by the Belgian ruler on October 16. Their conversation preceded Anna's own presentation to King Léopold and Queen Louise-Marie, followed by a dinner at the Belgian Court. The original portrait of Anna in her court attire hangs in the home of her great-great grandson, Lee Calhoun, Jr., and his wife Edith.[3]

Upon their arrival in Brussels, the Clemsons had entered into a country whose existence as the independent Belgian State had followed the outbreak of revolution in Europe in the summer of 1830. The overthrow of the reactionary French Bourbon monarchy in July preceded riots in Brussels that led to the assertion of Belgian independence from Dutch authority and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in 1831. At the same time that Belgian neutrality was proclaimed by the European powers, Prince Léopold of Saxe-Coburg, chosen by the National Congress, became the country's first king. In 1832, his marriage to one of the daughters of King Louis Philippe of France contracted a direct alliance with the liberal Orléans monarchy, and the later accession of Princess Victoria, Léopold's niece, to the British throne further increased his importance in Europe.[4]

While Anna's letters from Europe to her father gave astute political commentary on prevailing conditions around her in Belgium and throughout much of the continent, her world abroad, as it had been at home, centered around domesticity. Having planned to be the instructor of her children, she began at the end of the year to take French lessons to prevent them from feeling awkward and from encountering the difficulties that had beset

her since arriving in Belgium. In order to travel abroad, knowledge of at least one modern language, she found, was much more essential than knowledge of classical Greek or Latin.

A month or so after her Belgian Court presentation, Anna's main concern centered around her son's health as he became very ill as the result of an inflammation of the eye. With her child so sick and suffering in the midst of strangers, she would have given the world to have had her mother there for counsel and comfort in the crisis. Although much thinner and marred by a three weeks' ordeal, the little boy appeared to be on the mend by early December, as she wrote to her father.[5]

Although she did not at all regret that her son's sickness had prevented her from going out much, Anna saw that there was an absolute need to socialize as the wife of a diplomat. The business of society and ceremony, she thought privately, was such nonsense, yet she was determined to go out as gracefully as she could and to enjoy herself when she took the trouble to do so. However, her most serious objection to the whole situation, as she explained to her father, was the lack of money for even the plainest and cheapest dress, which Clemson's annual salary of $4,500 could not spare. Even with an additional $4,500 outfit allotment for such expenses, together with the strictest economy, she doubted that they could live off of their income abroad.[6]

But a few weeks' visit to Paris in the summer of 1845 was agreeable enough, despite some rather unpleasant noise and heat. Entertained, once again, by the popular U.S. Minister, William King, the Clemsons joined the ranks of at least 400 other Americans who, Anna heard, did no credit in any way to themselves. Indignant at the speeches some of them made, she only wished they could be punished by law for the bad taste of abusing their country. They were a pack of people who had made money "easily, or *dirtily*," and come to Paris to follow closely the fringe of society. (Might these, by any chance, have been "Yankees"?) With the sudden commencement of hot weather in Paris, Clemson and the children were all a little indisposed, and her husband, in particular, gave Anna quite a fright. On an after-dinner walk one evening, he suddenly became very weak and could hardly get into a café, where, by giving him brandy and bathing him with cologne, she kept him from fainting and contrived to get him home in a carriage. After a few days of feeling badly, Clemson had no similar spells and, once back in Brussels, was as well as usual, despite the fact that he worried greatly about money matters.[7]

Anna asked her father for advice and for kind words for her husband, who, like herself, did not think they could meet their expenses abroad. A devoted husband and father who could not bear the idea that his family should want for anything, Clemson, she said, made himself miserable thinking about what he would do when he left Europe and about the future prospects of his children.[8]

The Clemsons resided in the little village of Torveuren that fall until their house was furnished. Although Anna felt the country air benefited all of them, she thought they needed to get into town with the coming on of cold weather. Provoked by the intolerably slow Belgian working classes, whom she characterized as dishonest and mean, she knew that she must have patience in dealing with them. Aware of the hard character she gave to such people, she nevertheless felt her observation to be just and thought that her mother would consider blacks perfection after six months experience with the white "slaves" of Belgium. Indeed, she did not know what she should do without her own slave, Basil, who also seemed to hold the Belgian servants in perfect contempt.[9] As an American elite,

Anna's snobbery, when confronted with common people abroad, was apparent in her harsh characterization of the Belgian workers.

Comfortably settled in their new house in Brussels by early November, the Clemsons had all been a little sick since their return to the city. Nevertheless, much to the credit of "Mr C," a commercial treaty between Belgium and the United States was almost completed. Proud of her husband's diplomatic success in the negotiations and the fact that he was "a personal favourite" at Court, she was also pleased at her children's fine growth and interesting development. Calhoun was a "saucy little fellow, & full of fun," and his sister, Floride, had become "a great bouncing miss, with a round face, & red cheeks." Though much humored by both parents, Anna, in truth, could not say that they were spoiled.[10]

News from home, in January 1846, about conditions at Canebrake, pleased the Clemsons, and Anna was especially glad at what her mother had to say about the welfare of the slaves. She often felt quite sad lest they should be neglected or mistreated by an overseer. Solicitous for their safety, she showed genuine concern for those she thought racially inferior. Two of the Canebrake slaves in particular, Daphney (Daphne) Lawrence and Susan Clemson, had been gifts to Anna from her father.

Later on, when Clemson decided to sell his Canebrake plantation, Anna would insist that Daphne, her husband, and son be allowed to select their master. However, their decision to be sold along with the other Canebrake slaves was attributed, by historian Orville Vernon Burton, to a strong sense of community and "attachment to place" that "slaves on a plantation forged for themselves."

Susan Clemson, whose mother had also been owned by Anna's father, was part African and part Native American. Her memories of life at Fort Hill and Canebrake, as told in later years, recalled that, as a young girl at Fort Hill, she slept in a small room adjoining that of Mrs. Clemson, with a string tied around her wrist that ran to Anna's bedside. Awakened by a pull of the string during the night, she could then attend to the needs of her mistress.[11]

Anna staunchly defended the South's "peculiar institution." The talk of slavery irritated her since she had never seen in all her life in the South the amount of suffering and misery that she saw all around her in one month abroad. German emigré Karl Marx, who prepared to launch his career as a revolutionist by studying and writing in Belgium, might well have agreed with Anna's perception of the plight of the poor. "Make your working classes in Europe as happy as our slaves," she said to all who mentioned the subject to her, "& then come back to me, & we *will talk* about the abolition of slavery." She again declared her preference for blacks over whites as servants and reiterated her reliance on Basil who, "tho' careless & negro like," she found to be "faithful, & honest, & really a treasure."[12]

After almost a year-and-a-half abroad, domestic demands, coupled with the assumption of secretarial duties for the American legation and the acceptance of social invitations at night, took up all of Anna's time. Needing more money to keep from going into debt as her family did not even keep a carriage during the winter, she thought the government should provide funds for anyone who did such work. Anna worked primarily to help her husband, who had taken over the consular business at Antwerp in addition to his assignment for the legation in Brussels. At that time, a small vocal fringe group of feminists in Europe and the United States felt that women should be paid for whatever job they did, but the abolitionist ideals that characterized the early feminist movement would have made it abhorrent to such a staunch defender of slavery as Anna. Raised as a Southern lady

to be submissive and domestic, she might surely have taken exception, too, to the public behavior of women activists.[13]

Watching her children grow, Anna characterized them to her father, in the spring of 1846, as being very hearty and lively, with Calhoun "as good company as many grown persons" and Floride, only three-years-old, able to make the "most appropriate & apt *quotations*" from little pieces of poetry. Although in five months she did not say that her dear little children were prodigies or great beauties, she found them then to be "quite smart enough, & quite good looking enough" to suit her as their mother. Even with their wild romps too much for one house on a rainy day and often trying for her patience during the morning lessons' hour, she was glad that they were so healthy and happy, with good hearts and dispositions. Her five-year-old son was harder to care for than his little sister, a difference, she surmised, that might be caused by a boy's more impatient and active temperament. She knew that they could master their lives if they chose to do so, and therefore she did not feel uneasy at their "very slow progress, up the ladder of learning."[14]

The commencement of fine spring weather in 1847 made Anna more homesick than ever as her thoughts turned to the fresh country air at her family's Fort Hill plantation. She had spent only a few weeks at the seaside during the past summer, and she longed for a change from the constant residence in town. However, for the sake of economy, traveling for her family was out of the question, and, without even a garden to their house, the children could not be out in the open air all day as she would have liked. She remembered too well her father's lessons and example—that one must do without what cannot be had—and she determined to content herself with things as they were.

Yet, even if Anna had found living in Europe more agreeable to her taste than previously, she was pained by the thoughts of so many "suffering fellow beings." The poorer classes, hard hit by the potato famine during the long and severe winter of 1847, caused her concern. She now understood the excesses of the indigent during the French Revolution. An unjust political system caused the "immense disproportion in the classes of society," she wrote her father, who was reassured that her children would become good Americans. She encouraged their feeling of love for their country, convinced of the virtue of patriotism.[15] Her reaction to the rule of royalty in Europe was a common one among southerners at a time when the concept of "republicanism" did not necessarily embrace the ideal of equality and its contradiction of slavery.

Anna longed for the bright blue skies of sunny Carolina while living under those of eternal grey in Brussels, but she was nevertheless thankful that her family was very well and her children everything that she could wish them to be after almost three years away from home. Their health and cheerfulness were more important than book-learning that admittedly moved slowly. "They are full of life, & hate their books, & I am inexperienced, & much interrupted by my many avocations," she wrote to her father in the fall of 1847. She supposed that with patience they would begin to read one of these days.[16]

Invited along with her husband to the country estates of two wealthy Belgians, she determined to be reasonable and remain in Brussels with too much trouble and expense involved in leaving the children at home. As one who felt that "God made the country & man the town," she would very much have liked to go, especially since she had not been anywhere in over a year. However, she assured her father that she managed to get along very well because, fortunately, her happiness did not depend on where she was.[17]

The outbreak of revolution in Paris in February 1848 left a lamentable state of anarchy, from all that Anna could learn. For her part, she thought the French too corrupt and the ideas of a republic they held too wild to have any confidence, not only in France's future but in their leadership in solving the great problems of government throughout Europe. With all Europe in agitation, she, like everyone else, felt it impossible to say where things would be in six months.

Despite this most unsettled state, Clemson applied for a leave of absence to return home to attend to business at his Canebrake plantation and to visit his ailing mother in Philadelphia; and, by August, Anna was in the midst of preparations for her family's departure for America. Remembering the pleasure of once more seeing her loved ones at home, she tried not to think of all the suffering and fear that she faced on the long voyage ahead. They decided to sail because they lacked money to pay for the preferred passage by steamer. Indeed, the family needed "every cent" in order to make ends meet for the trip. "If I can only take the children looking so well & so gay as they do now, I shall be very happy," she wrote to her father, two months before leaving. Her son, now age seven, and daughter, almost six years, "tho' very wild & full of life," were "affectionate, reasonable, & obedient, & have excellent principles."[18]

Accompanied by a Belgian nurse for the children, the Clemsons left from Antwerp on the *Roscoe,* on October 4, and arrived in New York, a month later, after a hurricane off the Newfoundland coast hindered their travel. They spent the first part of their more than six-months' stay in America in the South before traveling to Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, where portraits that they had had painted in Belgium were opened and found to have arrived safely. Much acclaimed by all who saw them as "such likenesses & such paintings," they were placed on display in the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts at the insistence of the director, who promised to send them on to South Carolina in a month. The Clemsons agreed to this arrangement, knowing that the artist was eager to come to

portrait of Calhoun Clemson

portrait of Floride Clemson

America and that if his work were to be seen, he might receive encouragement to do so.[19] The artist, Jacob Joseph Eeckhout, signed in 1848 the framed oil-on-canvas portraits of Anna Clemson and her children, Calhoun and Floride, which hang in the parlor at the Fort Hill historic house museum.

The Clemsons sailed back to Europe from New York on the *Northumberland,* on May 24, 1849. They encountered a stormy thirty-six days' crossing, made even more anxious when the children came down with measles. After the long and tedious journey, which included a stop in London, they arrived, early in July, in Brussels, where Anna was much occupied with settling her family in a smaller but more comfortable house with a garden, where Calhoun and Floride could play. Anna and her husband decided to buy their own furniture since rented pieces were so miserable and uncomfortable. "It is very easy to furnish very cheaply" or "very extravagantly," she wrote her father, but to employ "economy & good taste" in the acquisition of what would be worth carrying home when they left she thought to be a problem almost as difficult to solve satisfactorily as one in math or politics.

Uneasy with the spread of cholera in Brussels, Anna and Clemson decided that they would be careful and remain quietly at home in the city as the disease was everywhere throughout the country. Pleased at her children's rapid growth, she had made arrangements for them to take lessons in gymnastics and dancing, which she thought to be very necessary for their health and carriage. With slow but steady progress in the learning of their daily lessons, they were, she felt, still a little backwards in books but more advanced than others of their age in education.[20]

After almost four years abroad, Anna felt gratified to have been treated with the greatest kindness by everyone, from the king down. She believed, she told her father, that an American in Europe, though asserting an independent spirit, could be respected and well received if he avoided hurting the feelings of those with whom he sincerely differed. Unfortunately, she regarded her countrymen abroad, generally, in one of two extremes; and she was critical of those Americans she termed disagreeable and contemptible, either in their exhibition of dislike for Europe or in their affectation of disgust for their own country.[21]

The puzzling state of affairs in Europe, she confided to her father, appeared to be one of corruption in which the silly policies of all parties displayed ignorance so that she had no patience any more to read about politics. By the end of the year, she seemed to sense "a *pause*, in the current of events" that signaled she knew not what.

The Clemsons had enjoyed the previous winter in South Carolina, where the weather was warm, and, back in Brussels, Anna dreaded the coming on of a "miserable, wet, dark, & dismal" season. She also feared her father's declining health with the onset of winter cold in Washington. She wished that he could see his portrait painted from a daguerreotype by photographer Matthew Brady, anticipating that he would be pleased with both it and the magnificent frame that she and her husband had made for it. Not only was the painting a fine portrait, she said, but a work of art, as well. Today, this oil-on-canvas portrait of John C. Calhoun, painted by Eugene DeBlock, hangs in the State Dining Room at the Fort Hill historic house museum.[22]

She mentioned to her father a very complimentary notice that she and her husband had been given in a newspaper description of a beaux-arts ball. In the midst of the winter

merriment of balls and parties that she found to be "as tedious as a twice told tale," she was invited, she wrote to her brother Patrick, to "*walk a quadrille*" with the Crown Prince Léopold. (*Twice-told Tales* was actually the title of writer Nathaniel Hawthrone's first book published in 1837.) Although she had never danced in Brussels until then, the request was one that she could not refuse.[23]

Anna's last letters to her father written before his death on March 31, 1850, pictured her children as healthy and strong, the development of their bodies greatly affected by a regular course of gymnastics. Much distressed to hear of their grandfather's illness, they sent him "a thousand kisses," at the same time that Anna bade him "Adieu" and, joined by Clemson, sent him love.[24]

A little over two months after the death of his father-in-law, Clemson proposed privately to Secretary of State John Clayton the possibility that he be granted personal leave of absence in the United States. In actuality, Clemson's position in Brussels had been in doubt ever since the Whigs had come to power in Washington in March 1849. As a result of the sad loss of John C. Calhoun, Clemson felt that his own presence at home might be necessary, for a short time, although he thought that the likelihood of a leave was doubtful. The death of President Zachary Taylor, in July, and the change of the cabinet in the administration of his successor, Millard Fillmore, brought about the appointment of Daniel Webster as the new Secretary of State. Clemson, who felt that his letter to Clayton had not arrived before the president's death and the secretary's subsequent retirement, contacted Webster in August about visiting South Carolina. He received an official denial to his request in September and was notified of the appointment of a new Chargé d'Affaires for Brussels in December. Having already made arrangements to spend the winter in Europe, the Clemsons did not leave for home until spring 1851.[25]

Although reluctant to go abroad, Anna had proven herself capable of coping with the challenges of her European experience during her Belgian years. Dutifully following her husband, she had cared for her family in a foreign land while detailing for her father the intricacies of politics in Belgium and throughout much of the continent. Supportive of Clemson's diplomatic endeavor and devoted to her children's development, she was proud of his success and pleased at their growth. Despite her disinterest in the pomp and circumstance of the Belgian Court, she was presented there in style, accepted with good grace the obligatory social invitations, and danced with the Crown Prince at a beaux-arts ball in Brussels. However, homesick for her family in America and "dear old Fort Hill," she longed to return to her own glorious country as all the "luxuries & splendours of Europe" were no compensation for what she had left behind.[26]

Anna Calhoun Clemson would have been greatly offended by the abolitionist ideals of Margaret Fuller, a leading figure in the early feminist movement. A New England intellectual and writer, Fuller had, as a young girl, dreamed of going abroad. The daughter of a fourth generation Puritan, Timothy Fuller, a Harvard educated lawyer who served in the U. S. House of Representatives from 1817 to 1825, Margaret Fuller had rigorously studied history, politics, classical and modern languages, English literature, mathematics, and the Bible under her father's direction. For a few years after his death in 1835, she

taught school to support her mother and six siblings. In 1840, she became editor of *The Dial: A Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion,* and, in 1844, she was hired as a book reviewer by New York *Tribune* editor Horace Greeley. She became one of the first women to join the ranks of the working press and, in her mid-thirties, in 1846, was sent to Europe as a foreign correspondent. Her interpretive letters from abroad, sent to New York as dispatches to the *Tribune*, were, in the words of historian William W. Stowe, a "marketable literary product" that enabled her to travel and personally convey the true meaning of her experiences. According to Stowe, Fuller's ideal traveler was "a poetic interpreter," "a visionary with the power to see into the life of things." Her vision, according to biographer Charles Capper, was shaped by the idealistic notions of Thomas Jefferson, "the intellectual republican" rather than "the radical democrat." Interestingly, Fuller's thoughts shared something with the thinking of the virtuously patriotic Anna Clemson, who faulted an undemocratic political system for the distress caused by European society's disproportionately unequal class structure.[27]

Unlike Anna, whose presence in Europe was recognized in relation to the political reputation of her father and the diplomatic credentials of her husband, Margaret Fuller, whose literary renown had preceded her trip abroad, was acknowledged there as an author in her own right. Her treatise *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, a work posing "revolutionary perspectives on the relationship between men and women," as claimed by Bernard Rosenthal in the introduction to its 1971 edition, was the first book in the United States to address women's subordinate place in society and to offer an alternative to their situation. Whereas Anna, like other elite southern women, whose place in a patriarchal society was defined by gender, race, and class, generally conformed to the conventional feminine attributes articulated by historian Barbara Welter as "piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity," Margaret did not conform as a rather atypical northern woman. She saw employment, in the eyes of Charles Capper, mainly as a means to reconcile her central concern with "women's intellectual and spiritual character," and, during her sojourn in Europe as a newspaper reporter, she broke all the rules by which Anna lived. Deeply engaged in southern culture that shaped her sense of self as a woman, Anna lived by different standards than Margaret did. For Margaret, Jefferson's role model as an active American intellectual connected her with her country's culture and gave her a realistic sense of herself. For Anna, as a wife and mother in Brussels, the European experience was primarily domestic while, for Margaret, as a professional journalist passionately committed to republican principles, traveling from England, Scotland, France to the Italian peninsula, Europe's most meaningful scene was in Rome during a tumultuous time of political upheaval in which she actively participated.[28]

Margaret Fuller's involvement in the struggle for Italy's unity put her in the middle of a movement that had become heatedly active in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The long-standing partition of the Italian peninsula into several separate authoritarian states had been challenged during the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era. The French ruler's empire both negated nationality and fostered national aspirations in the early policy towards the Italians. Their partial administrative unity under Napoleon's domination, together with legal and military matters, contributed to an increasingly popular desire for unification in what historians R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton have called a "liberal national state." Following Napoleon's defeat in 1814, the reorgani-

zation of Europe by the Congress of Vienna ensured a predominant Austrian presence throughout the Italian peninsula and recognized the restoration of papal power from the Holy See in Rome. Among Italians, there was a sentiment to resurrect what Palmer and Colton described as the "Italian grandeur of ancient times and of the Renaissance." By 1848, the dream of an Italian unification, or rebirth, had been invested with almost a spiritual sense by the writings of well-known nationalist philosopher, Giuseppe Mazzini, whose friendship with Margaret Fuller dated back to the time of her arrival in Europe, two years earlier.[29]

Margaret's address in London in the fall of 1846 greatly pleased Mazzini, who wrote his mother about the impressive speech of an American lady who called for an international exchange among countries to share their best traditions. Her praise of Italian arts as an inspiration to beauty and honesty did not ignore political struggle in a country seeking freedom. Margaret's newspaper contract kept her from fulfilling Mazzini's request to write for a journal that he hoped might unofficially speak for a "People's International League" to represent the plight of oppressed nationalities. Although for the next few years both of them were too busy to maintain the contact they wanted, the relationship that had developed between the European revolutionary idealist and the American literary intellectual became increasingly important to each of them. Under Mazzini's influence, Margaret the writer became even more a crusader for the cause of Italy's unification.[30]

Beginning her Italian stay early in 1847, she soon began to send from Rome dispatches to New York that, from the nature of their political tone, made apparent her interest in the emerging revolutionary climate. At the end of the summer, she spoke of a potential conspiracy and consequent disturbances that seemed to indicate some type of inevitable change. In October, she wrote of the people's joy over meaningful reform measures enacted by Pope Pius IX but stated her view that "Rome, to resume her glory, must cease to be an ecclesiastical Capital; must renounce all this gorgeous mummery." Her *Tribune* dispatches criticized the attitude of expatriate Americans who, after years abroad, showed little sympathy for the Italian people in their struggle against government corruption. She called for financial contributions from individuals at home to aid the cause she saw as "OURS" and expressed disgust for her countrymen abroad, who reasoned that because the Italians were degraded by bad institutions, they, like the American slaves, were not fit for better. For Margaret, the cause of oppression and injustice was the same everywhere. Referring to slavery as "a terrible blot" and "a threatening plague," she now thought favorably about the abolitionists at home who had once seemed to her so tedious and so rabid.[31]

The events of 1848, the year of revolution in the Italian states and elsewhere throughout Europe, were duly reported by Margaret, who, in September, sustained a personal peril of grave proportions. Amid the Apennine mountains outside of Rome, in the village of Rieti, she gave birth to an illegitimate child. Ready to return in December to her professional assignment in the city she described as "so beautiful, so great," she was forced to leave behind "what was most precious" in the care of two young servant women, who were retained by the baby boy's father. Twenty-seven-year-old Marchese Giovanni Angelo Ossoli, the radical son of an aristocratic family, had met Margaret by chance, not long after her arrival in Rome; and their shared commitment to the cause of Italian unification intensified the passionate mutual attraction between the young nobleman and the com-

pletely captivated Margaret, who felt so energetic and excited in his presence.[32]

She found some compensation for leaving her son by returning to Rome and a house adjacent to the Piazza Barberini, on the street of the Four Fountains, on one side, and the Pope's Quirinal Palace, on the other. The temper of life in the classical city appeared to her as one of composure despite the summer furor precipitated by the dethronement of the French king Louis Philippe early in 1848. Margaret wrote movingly in her year's end *Tribune* dispatch: "The great Past enfolds us, and the emotions of the moment cannot here importantly disturb that impression."[33]

Ever loyal to Mazzini, she wrote to him on March 3, 1849, as he prepared to return to Rome as one of the Triumvirs in the Republic recently proclaimed after Pius lX fled from the city. Her touching, loving tribute offered political encouragement, a prayer, and a blessing for him and those who might follow his lead. Soon after Mazzini's arrival in Rome, he sought out Margaret, who believed him to be the only one capable of defending the new government from its enemies. By this time, revolution had already been defeated throughout the Italian peninsula, except in Rome, Venice, and Florence; and the future of the Roman Republic, faced with treachery within and without, dominated the tenor of Margaret's dispatches as she continued to solicit sympathy for the Italians from her countrymen in America.[34]

Writing in May from Rome, which was barricaded against French troops bent on restoring the temporal power of the Pope, Margaret predicted a valiant but vain attempt to preserve a people's government. Ironically, the Second French Republic, exemplary no longer for representative rule, with Napoleon's nephew, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, as its president, intervened against Mazzini's Roman Republic. Margaret, like Anna Clemson, lacked confidence in France's future as a republic and its political leadership in Europe, as the French military fought, in the summer of 1849, on behalf of the papacy against the people.[35]

When the French attacked Rome in June, Margaret was an eyewitness to the events that would eventually topple the government and dash the dreams of Mazzini and his followers. From her residence, she viewed "a smoking, smoldering" city, as the "flower of the Italian youth," she said, fought and fell gloriously for a cause that was lost. Throughout the siege, her own beloved Ossoli battled bravely while she worked tirelessly with the wounded and was appointed director of the Trinity of the Pilgrims hospital. According to the United States' Chargé d'Affaires, Lewis Cass, Jr., Margaret did her duty with complete compassion and devotion, surrounded by the pain and horror of the dead and dying and was spoken of in Rome in endearing terms seldom applied to a foreigner, especially a Protestant. Aware of the desperate danger that surrounded her and Ossoli, she entrusted to Cass important personal papers, such as the certificates of their marriage and those of the birth and baptism of their child.[36] Undoubtedly, Margaret Fuller's participation in the defense of the Roman Republic had proved her support for its ideals to be more than mere rhetoric and, rightfully, earned her the respect of its citizens.

Margaret and Ossoli survived the fall of Rome in July 1849, were reunited with their son, and spent their last days on the Italian peninsula in Florence, where she wrote a history of the revolution that she had witnessed. Hoping to begin life anew in America, she wrote back home to family and friends of her concern about where to live and what to do after, in her own words, "these bygone rich, if troubled years" abroad. In a tragic end to

the life of one of America's most talented and highly cultivated daughters, Margaret, along with her husband and child, perished on July 19, 1850, in a shipwreck on the rocks of Fire Island Beach, Long Island. Conflicting reports as to the recovery of their bodies say, on the one hand, that only the son Angelo was found and, on the other, that they were "lost to the sea and scavengers" and that there was no trace of any of them.[37]

Ironically, contained in the cargo of the ship *Elizabeth*, which carried Margaret, Ossoli, and their little boy to their deaths, was American sculptor Hiram Powers's statue of Anna Clemson's beloved father, who had died at the end of March. Although Margaret and her family drowned, the *Calhoun* marble mass was eventually exhumed, sent first to Charleston and, later, during the Civil War, to Columbia, South Carolina, where it was destroyed in the burning of the state capital in 1865.[38]

Unlike Anna Calhoun Clemson, who went abroad for six years to do her domestic duty as a wife, and mother and Margaret Fuller, who was sent for four years to work as a foreign correspondent, Harriet Lowndes Aiken, one of Charleston's grandest hostesses, traveled to Europe three separate times. Primarily for pleasure, intellectual and cultural enrichment and to purchase items for her house at 48 Elizabeth Street, Harriet traveled under circumstances quite different from those experienced by Anna and Margaret. The well-educated matron spoke three foreign languages, played several musical instruments, and as a member of the planter society, traveled to Europe with her husband, William Aiken, Jr., taking, in the words of essayist Wendell Garrett, "the intellectual Grand Tour and making the cultural pilgrimage," along with a number of other Charlestonians. Until very late in the nineteenth century, the popular perception prevailed in the United States and probably in Europe, as well, that Americans lacked the sophistication and culture found abroad. Charlestonian elites such as the Aikens traveled to Europe, not only to vacation as rich people, but to pursue the desirable elements of gracious and refined living. The daughter of wealthy Lowcountry plantation owner Thomas Lowndes and Sarah Bond l'On, Harriet was the niece of Congressman William Lowndes, with whom the Calhouns had lived for a short while in Washington and for whom Anna's father had named his youngest son.[39]

Harriet's townhouse, at 48 Elizabeth Street, inherited by her husband from his prosperous Irish immigrant father in 1833, had been rental property in the Wraggborough district of the city before becoming the couple's home. Almost immediately upon acquiring it, they began to remodel the roughly fifteen-year-old structure by enlarging it in the Greek Revival style then fashionable. But, only two years after their marriage in 1831, the twenty-one-year-old Harriet and twenty-seven-year-old William left the renovations behind to travel to Paris, where they bought household furnishings and especially crystal and bronze chandeliers.[40]

Upon their return visits to Europe in 1848 and, again, in 1857, the Aikens were mainly interested in the fine arts and acquired one of Charleston's noteworthy collections of sculpture and paintings. Considered to be connoisseurs as collectors, they were among those who supported the new Carolina Art Association, which was developed, according to art historian Maurie D. McInnis, in the belief of its founders that a "'picture gallery

[w]as an important feature of modern city life.'" During their trip to Europe in the 1850s, an art gallery in the ornate popular Rococo Revival style was added to their home and floor plans were mailed to them abroad so that purchases could be made with specific measurements in mind. By this time, William Aiken, who had been politically active as governor from 1844-1846 and as a member of the U. S. House of Representatives from 1851-1857, had become one of the state's wealthiest planters, listing 878 slaves in the 1850 slave schedules. In addition to his investment in cotton and rice, he also had money in railroads and other business concerns.[41]

Well able to afford the European paintings emblematic of the culture and refinement expected of Charleston's aristocracy, the Aikens made notable buys on their trips abroad from the works of Salvator Rosa, David Teniers, Carlo Marratti and Michelangelo. *Romeo and Juliet*, a work they commissioned by the contemporary painter Luther Terry, was on exhibition in Rome for a year-and-a-half before being sent to them in Charleston. Their most significant acquisitions, works of sculpture, bought mostly in Florence and Rome, included such surviving pieces as *Mary Magdalene* by D. Menconi, an unsigned *First Grief*, busts of *Proserpine* and *Shepherd Boy* from sculptors Hiram Powers and Edward Sheffield Bartholomew, respectively. Along with these contemporary works, they also purchased a smaller scale copy in marble of Antonio Canova's *Venus Italica* for one of the statuary niches in their newly built art gallery. The American artists abroad whom the Aikens and others on the Grand Tour patronized were, like journalist Margaret Fuller, among those professional people who traveled to Europe during the 1800s to either establish or enhance their own identities away from home and get needed training not available in the United States.[42]

A small travel notebook kept by Harriet Aiken during her trip to Europe in the 1850s gives at least a glimpse of some of the places where she stayed, the sights that she saw and the people whom she met. Of special interest are the sometimes rapid travel pace, the frequent changes of venue, and the demanding social schedule of her European tour. Accompanied by her husband, twenty-one-year-old daughter Etta, and, in all likelihood, some personal slaves, Harriet left from New York on August 19, 1857, on the English Steamer *Persia* bound for Liverpool. Harriet's ten-day crossing by steamship, though more costly, was far shorter than those lengthy sailing voyages made back and forth across the Atlantic by Anna Clemson in the 1840s, and, undoubtedly, this was the preferred passage for those who could afford it. Traveling by train to London after a few days at the so-called Queen's Hotel in Manchester, where she attended an Art Exhibition, Harriet Aiken stayed for only one day before going on to the Isle of Wight. There she was visited by U.S. Minister Dallas's wife before departing, once again by steamer, for the continent, where she took the train to Paris. With an admittedly absurd number of trunks packed in three carriages, she arrived at the very magnificent Hôtel du Louvre on the second week in September and spent ten days. Although disappointed not to get a French maid, she saw many acquaintances, as well as U.S. Minister Mason, prior to her departure for Cologne, on September 19, en route to Berlin.[43]

Visiting palaces and public buildings for seven days in the Prussian capital, Harriet Aiken also met with U. S. Minister Wright and was honored to be introduced to Count Datzfeldt, a member of the German nobility before leaving for Leipzig at the end of the month. After one night at the Hôtel de Pologue, where a band of musicians serenaded the

guests of the restaurant in the evening, she proceeded to Dresden and arrived at the Hotel Bellevue. There in the gallery of paintings, she met friends from home—notably, members of the Izard family along with John and Caroline Preston, accompanied by their widowed sister-in-law, Ann Fitzsimons Hampton. John Preston, one of the founders of the Carolina Art Association, supported by the Aikens, had brought his family to live in Europe for a few years following the sale (for over a million dollars) of his wife's portion of her Hampton family's "Houmas" sugar plantation in Louisiana. Following a ten-day visit in Dresden, the Aikens left by rail for Prague, the capital of Bohemia in the Austrian Empire. Unfortunately, the satisfaction of a pleasant day spent there was marred by the misfortune to lose Murray (presumably a pet dog), possibly stolen by one of the waiters.[44]

After a day's train trip from Prague to Vienna, Harriet Aiken began her stay on October 10 at the Hôtel de L'Impératrice Elisabethe. Upon arriving there at night, she was astonished and amused at the effusive greeting given to her and her family by all on the staff, who affectionately kissed everyone's hands. She was invited to dine by U.S. Minister Jackson, later attended the ballet and opera, and spent ten days touring churches and galleries in the Austrian capital before leaving by train for Gratz and Trieste on the way to Venice. On traversing the Adriatic Sea at night, she had a very bad, stormy passage before arriving in the middle of the afternoon on October 23. Harriet spent a week sightseeing from a gondola. She admired the beautiful churches and their paintings. She then left Venice by rail for Verona and a visit to Mantua before continuing on to Milan.[45]

After a week in the capital of the Italian state of Lombardy, Harriet traveled to Tuscany and the city of Florence for about a six-weeks' stay at the Hôtel d'Italie. Settled in Rome just before Christmas, she found Lewis Cass still to be the U.S. Minister there and attended what she described as a "very stupid" reception given by his wife. The Aikens had vacationed in Europe in 1848, the same time that Margaret Fuller had lived in Rome and its environs.

Leaving by coach for Naples on February 25, 1858, Harriet found the trip's postillions, or mounted guides, to be very annoying and beggars in the town of Gaeta a serious nuisance as she made her way to one of the favorite destinations with travelers on the Grand Tour. Once safely lodged in Naples, she took excursions to Pompeii and Mt. Vesuvius, where continuing small eruptions fascinated her and other tourists. Other outings made during her month-long stay in the Neapolitan city were to Sorrento, where, though most beautiful, the wind at night was fearfully disturbing; Salerno, where sunset over the Bay of Naples was breathtaking; and Pestum, where she did not find the ruins worth seeing after what she had endured to get there.[46]

The Aikens spent Holy Week back in Rome, attending Palm Sunday services at Saint Peter's, where the ceremony seemed to Harriet much the same as at Christmas. Easter Sunday at Saint Peter's she found to be very grand and the illumination of the building in the evening very beautiful. Leaving the "Eternal City" four days later, on April 8, the Aiken party went by carriage to Siena, where they took the train to Pisa and then, by coach, resumed their travels along the Mediterranean to Genoa. After a side trip to Turin, they returned to Genoa for a day before departing for Nice. Harriet Aiken's travel notebook ends here but notations made inside the back cover indicate that, from May to August, she wrote letters from Paris and London to friends and family back home.[47]

Some time after her return from Europe in 1858, Harriet posed for artist George

portrait, Harriet Aiken

Whiting Flagg in what may be, according to Angela D. Mack (Curator, Gibbes Museum of Art) and decorative arts authority J. Thomas Savage, "the last of Charleston's antebellum portraits conceived in the Grand Tour mode." This imposing portrait, obviously influenced by the full-length genre introduced to Charlestonians by George Romney's *Mrs. Mary Rutledge Smith,* painted in London in 1786, is remarkably similar to the one of Anna Clemson in her court presentation attire in Brussels. Although the name of the artist in Anna's case cannot be discerned, her portrait, though not nearly as large as Harriet Aiken's, appears to be of like quality (see frontispiece). Whereas Anna's portrait is at present in the private possession of her great-great grandson, Lee Calhoun, at his residence in Pittsboro, North Carolina, Harriet's hangs in her family's former home, now owned by the Historic Charleston Foundation. The house at 48 Elizabeth Street, furnished in part by acquisitions the Aikens made in Europe, is open daily to the public and interpreted, in one aspect, as "a testament to the wealth and fashions of antebellum Charleston."[48]

While Harriet Lowndes Aiken was ending her "Grand Tour" of Europe in the summer of 1858, Lucy Holcombe Pickens, the third wife of Anna Calhoun Clemson's cousin Francis, arrived in Liverpool with her husband, the new U.S. Minister to Russia. The steamship *Persia,* which had brought Harriet abroad a year earlier, was the same one that carried Lucy, Francis, two of his daughters, two slaves, and an official secretary across the Atlantic. Traveling as a bride, the twenty-five-year-old Lucy suffered misgivings at the last minute about going so far away from her beloved family in Texas. Persuaded to go by assurances from Cunard Captain Charles Judkins that he and the ship would bring her home if she wanted to come back after they landed, she was actually invigorated by the seven-day passage that made the rest of her party seasick. Enjoying the attention and companionship of her fellow passengers on board, Lucy arrived in Europe hoping to dazzle the most magnificent court on the continent.[49]

Known for her beauty and charm from New York to New Orleans, where her family frequently visited, Lucy Holcombe had met former U.S. Congressman Francis Pickens while husband-hunting, in 1857, with her mother at the fashionable White Sulphur Springs resort in Virginia. There, the fifty-year-old Francis, a widower with five daughters, proposed marriage to the lovely young woman he described as a "sweet and lovely girl" with "joy in her eye and peace upon her *radiant brow*." She was, he wrote, "Soft and bright as the morning dew-drop glistening on the bosom of the mountain flower. Pure as the spark on ocean's foam from whence Venus rose." (Pickens's passion for Lucy was reminiscent of the sentiments attributed by Anna to her forty-year-old uncle James Calhoun when quite smitten with her best friend "Maria's perfections.")[50]

The fact that the "average-looking bewigged" Pickens, described as such by his biogra-

pher, John B. Edmunds, Jr., owned hundreds of acres of land in Alabama and Mississippi, as well as 2,250 acres of land in his native South Carolina, undoubtedly made his marriage offer more attractive to Lucy. Besides his money, Pickens's likely selection by President James Buchanan for a diplomatic position could well have appealed to her expressed interest in travel and dream of going abroad. In any case, ambition and wealth influenced this southern belle, who had been engaged to another, to marry Pickens.

Betrothed at nineteen, according to Holcombe family history, to Colonel William Crittenden of Kentucky, who was killed in a filibustering invasion of Cuba in 1851, Lucy later wrote about the failed liberating expedition in a novel entitled, *The Free Flag Of Cuba*. (The final attempt led by revolutionary soldier Narcisco López to overthrow Spanish rule in Cuba was the focus of Lucy's novel, which glorifies a "cause célèbre" that, in reality, had been a fiasco.) Unlike Margaret Fuller's treatise *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, written to propose an alternative to women's definable place in society, Lucy Holcombe's novel, penned under the pseudonym, H. M. Hardimann, not only celebrates filibustering but, in addressing the clearly determined gender roles of southern women, finds acceptable the perception that married women were mature and patient and unmarried women were beautiful and charming.[51] However, even after her own marriage to Francis Pickens, Lucy, herself, undeniably, retained the attributes of a belle.

The Holcombe family, originally from Virginia and Tennessee, where Lucy was born, had recovered as planters of wheat and cotton in Texas the financial prosperity they had previously lost. However, Pickens's wealth was probably not an insignificant factor in her parents' reluctant acquiescence to their daughter's determination to marry a man older than her own father. With a letter from President Buchanan appointing him U.S. Minister to Russia and orders to leave for the St. Petersburg post by mid-May, Francis Pickens arrived in the east Texas town of Marshall on April 24, 1858. After Lucy's almost two-month silence to his declarations of love, he had come in response to her summons after she had received his own curt note, quoted as follows in Elizabeth Wittenmyer Lewis's biography of this beguiling woman: "'I'll be walking amid marble palaces under gilded domes.... Farewell, farewell.'" Two days after his arrival in Texas, the couple was married at the Holcombe family's "Wyalusing" plantation (named after an Indian word meaning "friend to the friendless"), on April 26. After additional festivities, they left three days later for South Carolina accompanied by the slave girl Lucinda, a wedding gift to Lucy from her parents.[52]

Spending only a week at Pickens's Edgewood plantation, the newlyweds took the train for Washington on the way to New York and their scheduled departure for Europe on May 28, 1858. Included in their party were Francis's two unmarried daughters, twenty-four-year-old Rebecca, the youngest by his first wife, Eliza Simkins, and twelve-year-old Jeannie (sometimes spelled "Jennie"), the only child of his second wife, Marion Antoinette Dearing. In attendance were Lucy's slave girl, Lucinda, and Pickens's man-servant, Tom. Anna Clemson, who had been a close friend of Eliza (her dearest friend Maria's sister), whose death in 1842 had left her cousin Francis with four daughters in his care, barely knew Marion. She described her as "a very pleasant person," whose rich father was the first president of the Georgia Railroad and Banking Company. William Dearing, who had moved his family from Athens to Charleston, had raised his daughter well so that she had the shy gentleness expected by Pickens. The child Jeannie, who had lost her mother as

a young girl, when Marion died in 1853, became devoted to Lucy, who in turn loved her dearly. The Pickens entourage that arrived in England en route to Russia in early June also included Francis's friend John Bacon, who was to act as his business secretary.[53]

Beginning with her passage to Europe on the steamer *Persia*, Lucy started to send to the Memphis *Eagle and Enquirer* unofficial letters that gave their readers curious detail about her activities abroad. (Lucy's hometown of LaGrange, Tennessee, was about fifty miles from Memphis.) As the primarily descriptive personal accounts of a diplomat's wife, Lucy's letters, testifying to her own privileged experience, represent the most simple form of the nineteenth-century travel chronicle. Whereas correspondent Margaret Fuller wrote interpretive letters as dispatches to the *Tribune* that paid her a salary, Lucy's letters to the *Eagle and Enquirer* exemplify what William Stowe's work on European travel in nineteenth-century American culture cites as "the only respectable public channel for the voice of the supposedly private and domestic female." [54] Southern ladies would have looked askance at the marketing of Margaret Fuller's literary skills whereas Lucy's letters were written within the realm of genteel respectability.

After a few nights in Liverpool, at the Queen's Hotel, where Lucy described the accommodations as very nice but the eating miserable, the Pickens party left for London, where they eventually exchanged their small rooms at Fenton's, on St. James Street, for ones more agreeable at Morley's, on Trafalgar Square. During a several days' stay in England, Lucy enumerated and embellished with details the events that she attended, including the Royal Exhibition of paintings, a performance of *Macbeth*, a reading by Charles Dickens of his "Story of Little Dombey," and a very imposing service at Westminster Abbey. However, she was not presented to Queen Victoria, because the court assembly attended by her husband, she said, was only a levée for gentlemen. While enjoying London's beautiful sights, Lucy was nevertheless not sorry to leave, having found that there was nothing charming about the comfort of an English hotel.[55] In Paris, a city Lucy portrayed as the lovely capital of fairy land and pleasure, she went to the Louvre, dined at American Minister Mason's house, saw the Tomb of Napoleon, and met a great many Americans whom she found to be all kindly and hospitable. Received by the Emperor Louis Napoleon lll, Lucy regaled the readers of the *Eagle and Enquirer* back home with the following description of her court dress: "A blue silk lace with three point lace flounces, over which a long train of lace is worn, looped with diamond sprigs, jewels of the same, breastpin, earrings and bracelet." The gold jewelry adorned with diamonds had been a surprise gift from Francis on her twenty-sixth birthday celebrated in London. Complaining, however, in a letter from Berlin to her mother, that the stay in Paris was nothing but dresses and balls, Lucy vowed that her love for the simplicity and affections of home would not be changed by European society and pretensions.[56]

Coincidentally, the marriage of the French Emperor Louis Napoleon lll and his wife Eugénie had come about in much the same way as that of Lucy and Francis Pickens. Eugénie's mother, the Countess of Montijo, "the most famous matchmaker of the century," as cited in Nancy Nichols Barker's diplomatic history of the Second French Empire, took her daughter to Paris in pursuit of a husband—in particular, the French Republic's bachelor president, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. Like Lucy, who was in her mid-twenties when she met Francis at the Virginia resort, Eugénie, at the same age when she met Louis Napoleon, needed to wed. Like Francis, the French president fell in love at first sight with

a young, beautiful, charming, and vital woman. Their marriage in 1853 gave his newly declared Empire "a style and an individuality" that it needed, according to Barker's *Distaff Diplomacy.*[57]

Boarding a ship at Stettin on the Baltic, after spending a day in Berlin, the Pickens party sailed to Russia. Upon their arrival, on the morning of July 6, at the port of Kronstadt, which is but a short distance from St. Petersburg, Lucy reported a strange sensation that came over her as she stood for the first time on Russian ground. Although relations between the United States and Russia were, in diplomatic terms, of "the most friendly character," the sight of the long beard and singular dress coupled, with the confused sounds of such unfamiliar speech, made her feel truly isolated. Once settled in St. Petersburg, in rooms at the Hotel de Russia, she indulged in a good cry, declaring: "Who that has a heart susceptible of kindly feelings, ever abandoned his native land and home,…without a pang of regret"! She enjoyed sightseeing along the city's wide streets, surrounded by the nobility's palaces. In the midst of gaily dressed soldiers, she said, poignantly, "my heart sank within me with that sad longing for home" known only to those "whose feet press a foreign shore."[58]

Lucy did not meet the Romanov ruler, Czar Alexander ll, and his wife, the Czarina Marie, until an imperial dinner and ball held in mid-July at their Peterhof Palace. Within an hour's ride by rail from the city, their summer residence was the setting for her court presentation as "Madame the Ambassadress." The herald announced Lucy's arrival together with her husband and stepdaughter Rebecca. Led by the aide-de-camp of ceremonies and accompanied by the courtiers, they were conducted to their rooms to rest until four o'clock, at which time they returned to the grand salon to join the whole diplomatic corps for a dinner that was, according to Lucy, "beyond imagination in richness and beauty." To an undoubtedly impressionable audience at home, she described both her dinner and ball gowns of silk and lace, the magnificence of six palace drawing rooms leading into a large ballroom, and the grand entrance of the Emperor preceded by a blast from a silver trumpet. His Majesty, Czar Alexander, she said, "has a noble person, with fine blue eyes, and the most benevolent of faces."[59]

Easily enamored by feminine charm, the middle-aged monarch, though not a flirt, unlike Lucy, who was one by nature, became fascinated with her uncommon beauty. At his insistence that she converse with him in French, although he spoke English, she took language lessons and also hired a voice teacher to train her clear natural soprano. Actually, Lucy was already well-versed in French, having studied the subject during her three years as a student at the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Often invited to sit in the Imperial Box at the Opera and ride in the royal carriage to the theater or ballet, she enjoyed the czar's hospitality that first summer of new experiences in Russia, and she even developed a friendship with his wife the Empress. At their command, the entire Pickens entourage eventually moved into diplomatic quarters on the Quai de la Cour, between the Winter Palace and the residence of the czar's brother, the Grand Duke Constantin. Feeling quite comfortable at first in the company of the Russian aristocracy, Lucy grew to love her villa in the midst of royalty.[60]

Francis Pickens, apparently quite proud of the attention shown to his wife by the Russian ruler, wrote to her mother, early in 1859, that at a large ball the Emperor had singled Lucy out to converse with him on a special stand reserved for the imperial family.

Honored in such a way seldom seen by a foreigner, Lucy was, he said, soon paid special attention by all in attendance at court. News of her pregnancy, by mid-February, prompted the czar and his wife to provide the Pickens family, during the confinement period, with living quarters in the Winter Palace. There Lucy could rest comfortably and view for amusement the ice skaters on the frozen Neva River.[61]

With an American physician and her own Lucinda in attendance, Lucy gave birth to her child in the privacy of her palace rooms on March 14. Although she had earlier written to her sister Anna Eliza that "no human being could imagine my sore disappointment in a girl," she undoubtedly thanked God for a healthy baby daughter. The fact that Lucy wanted a son for her first-born reflected that patriarchal view prevalent everywhere in the world. Ironically, Margaret Fuller, the New England feminist, had given birth in a mountain village outside of Rome to such a son that Lucy had set her heart on having. The palace guns sounded, and the Imperial band performed in celebration of the little Pickens girl's birth, and, with all the fanfare befitting a royal child, she was later christened Eugenia, for Lucy's mother. Diamonds given to Lucy and her daughter by Czar Alexander, along with unprecedented royal attention given to the baby's birth, aroused speculation by some that the monarch himself might be the father. However, assuming that Lucy's pregnancy was full-term, as it appeared to be, the child born in March could not have been conceived after mid-July, when she first met the czar at Peterhof Palace.[62]

Even though Lucy planned to nurse her baby, she employed a Russian girl, "Mumka," as a wet-nurse, and it was "Mumka" who affectionately gave the child her lifelong name of "Douschka," meaning "Little Darling." A month after the baby's birth, word from home about Lucy's mother's health made Lucy determined to take her daughter and Mumka and leave immediately for America, but Francis, whose word as her husband was final, refused to grant her request to go.

Although promising that she could spend the fall and winter in Rome, Pickens sent Lucy instead, in October, to enroll her thirteen-year-old stepdaughter, Jeannie, in a German boarding school. By this time the twenty-five-year-old Rebecca Pickens had married the legation secretary, John Bacon, under difficult circumstances that pained and mortified her father and disturbed Lucy, who feared the marriage would be an unhappy one. Lucy found Rebecca, a young woman of her own age, to be as uncongenial a companion as she had ever had. She had done everything for her and bore her demands with patience, Lucy wrote to her sister in Texas. Escorted by Rebecca's husband, who had resigned his official position with Francis Pickens, Lucy left her six-and-a half-month-old baby behind in Russia to take Jeannie—whom she described as a friendly, unselfish, loving child— to Frankfurt.[63]

Upon her return to St. Petersburg, Lucy moved to a different part of the city. She lamented leaving her quarters on the Quai de la Cour, which she had come to love even though her new house, as she told her sister, was much nicer. Homesick for the companionship of her family in America, Lucy had come to feel the "miserable emptiness of European society" in Russia much as Anna Clemson had felt social ceremonies to be such nonsense in Belgium.

"One who has had the happiness of living always in God's favored land, America," as Lucy wrote, "can form no idea of the pettyness [*sic*] of men and women abroad, covered as they are with titles and diamonds." Although both Anna and Lucy had been received with

great kindness at court, neither woman, though having lived abroad under quite different conditions, lost her republican perspective in the midst of pomp and circumstance.[64]

Not only was Lucy ready to return to America, but Francis, eager to take part in the political events that would decide the future of the United States, wanted also to go home. From correspondence with his political friends, he knew of the steadily increasing strife between the abolitionists in the North and secessionists in the South, and, during the winter of 1859-60, he got letters of support for his presidential candidacy. Although both Francis and Lucy were appalled by the absolute poverty and ignorant state of the Russian masses, the majority of whom were serfs, neither one compared them to the slaves in the South. Francis resigned his post in St. Petersburg in April 1860, but, since he could not leave until the appointment of a successor, Lucy took fourteen-month-old Douschka, fussy with a cold and teething, to a German Spa at Schawlbach outside of Wiesbaden.[65]

Attended by Lucinda and a German nursemaid, they crossed a rough Baltic Sea in mid-July to pick up Jeannie from school in Frankfurt, where they boarded the train for Wiesbaden. After a three-hour trip by carriage and on foot up the mountain to Schawlbach, they settled comfortably, as Lucy wrote her mother, into a suite of rooms at the hotel Au Duke de Nassau. "If there be any virtue in the waters, regular hours and exercise," she said, she hoped to flourish as Douschka had done by her exposure to a more moderate climate.[66]

While Francis made final arrangements for the trip home, Lucy spent time traveling on the Continent, visiting with friends and shopping. Although she dreaded crossing the Atlantic, having just been seasick on the Baltic, she was pleased and thankful to be going home to her "dearest best friend," her own "precious Mother." Leaving from Southampton aboard the Collins fleet's steamship, the *Adriatic*, on October 23, the Pickens entourage arrived home on November 5. The country they had left in peace, almost two-and-a-half years earlier, was now, as they returned, on the eve of war. Their arrival in New York was noted in the Charleston *Mercury* of November 8, 1860, the same issue that announced the election of Abraham Lincoln as President. Lincoln's inauguration on March 4, 1861, would coincide with Czar Alexander II's Act of Emancipation, on March 3, that abolished serfdom and freed the peasants.[67]

Lucy Pickens became the First Lady of South Carolina with her husband's election as governor in December 1860. During his tenure in office, she was a great asset to him at the time of secession and in the early years of the Civil War. Contributing to the outfitting of Confederate troops with the sale of jewels given to her by the czar, she had a regiment named in her honor as the "Holcombe Legion." Her picture, in different poses, graced Confederate one- and one-hundred-dollar bills. Although famed Civil War diarist, Mary Boykin Chesnut, when irreverently describing Governor Pickens's appearance at a reception, could write, according to her biographer, Elisabeth Muhlenfeld, that "'old Pick was there with a better wig—& his silly & affected wife,'" Chesnut would, in public, flatter the woman who was Pickens's "sweet and lovely girl."[68]

Pickens and his family went from Columbia to their Edgewood plantation when his term as governor ended in December 1862; and, with Lucy's efforts, the home that had been without a mistress for many years was transformed into an elegant one. Lucy lived there for the rest of her life and, after her death in 1899, thirty years after that of Francis, Edgewood remained in the family until being sold in the 1920s.[69]

As travelers to Europe in the nineteenth century, Anna Calhoun Clemson, Margaret Fuller, Harriet Lowndes Aiken and Lucy Holcombe Pickens were representative of the elite in society and each, in her own way, made an impact abroad. Anna's loyal support of her husband and loving devotion to her children must have been obvious to all who knew her in Belgium. Margaret, who found personal fulfillment in Rome in her passionate love for an Italian nobleman entwined with their dedicated participation in the defense of the Roman Republic, received public recognition in the midst of grave danger. What an impression she must have made on those whom she nursed during the siege of Rome in the summer of 1849! Harriet's purchases of paintings and sculpture, acquired with her husband while touring Europe, resulted in one of the most acclaimed fine arts collections in Charleston and undoubtedly earned her the respect, both at home and abroad, due a genuine connoisseur. Though homesick for family back in America, like Anna, Lucy captivated Czar Alexander and the opulent Russian court because of her beauty and charm at the age of twenty-six.

Certainly, each of these women graced the European stage, and, surely, they enhanced the general impression of American women abroad. With the exception of Margaret Fuller, who lost her life in a tragic accident, the others returned home safely. Lucy Pickens came back from her relatively short stay in Russia to a divided country on the brink of Civil War whereas Anna Clemson and Harriet Aiken resumed their lives in America temporarily at peace. Before the catastrophe of conflict came to pass in 1861, Anna gave birth to and buried a child, having lost four of her siblings, as well. Harriet, back home by the fall of 1858, presumably resumed the refurbishment of her Charleston townhouse, which would ultimately withstand the heavy Union bombardment of the city in 1863. She would continue to live there until her death in 1892, five years after that of her husband, William.

Lucy resumed her life at home on a high note, despite the outbreak of war soon after her return from Europe. Having dazzled the Russian court during her husband's diplomatic service, she was well-suited to her role as South Carolina's First Lady, which put her, once again, in the spotlight. Anna Calhoun Clemson, on the other hand, though glad to settle her family on a farm in Maryland after several years in Belgium, was forced to face the reality of her husband's depressive disorder, which worsened with his inability to secure another foreign appointment. Unlike Anna's cousin Francis Pickens, successful in his desire for political prominence, Clemson was stymied in his pursuit of government service. The frustration of this failure, with its irate effect on his behavior, created an emotional distance between husband and wife that would never have seemed possible with Clemson's protestations of love following their engagement in 1838. Although Anna had longed to return to life in her own glorious country while abroad, Clemson wanted to be there, and she might well have looked back on the Belgian years as some of the best in her marriage.