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"The Chariot of Christ"

"I WISH, DEAR ESTHER, you would write me all the news. We get no paper, and know no more of the affairs of the world than if we were not in it," Mary Foote Hubbard reported from East Hampton, Long Island, New York, to her sister in Connecticut on an undated day in January 1806. "Here we are so still, so quiet, so dull, so inactive, that we have forgotten but that the world goes on the same way. We have forgotten that there are wars, murders, and violence abroad in the earth, that there are society, and friendship, and intercourse, and social affection, and science and pleasure, and life, and spirit, and gayety, and good-humor, alive still among the sons of earth. All here is the unvaried calm of a—frog pond, without the music of it. We neither laugh nor cry, sing nor dance, nor moan, nor lament."

Although few could have predicted it on that cold January evening, the beginning year would be the last year for a century in which anyone connected with the Beecher family could honestly pen such a letter. It is a wonder that even then Mary Hubbard, writing in a cramped corner of an overcrowded household, would complain of calm and quiet. She was turning into a permanent guest in the home of her brother-in-law, the Reverend Mr. Lyman Beecher, pastor of East Hampton's Presbyterian Church. In addition to the minister himself and Mary's older sister, Roxana, there were four Beecher children under six years of age, two black indentured servant girls who were not much older, a black housekeeper, and five female borders living under the same roof with her. The boarders were students in a school that Roxana conducted in the house during daylight hours in an effort to stretch her husband's four-hundred-dollar-a-year salary into a living for them all, and Mary's function was to assist her sister in this work.

Undoubtedly Mary Hubbard's wistful words were prompted more by thoughts of the life that she might have led than the one that she was living. She and her siblings in the Foote family had been reared with great expectations. Their home was Nutplains, their Grandfather Ward's two-hundred-acre place in North Guilford on the Connecticut coast just east of New Haven. A general in Washington's army during the Revolutionary War, Andrew Ward was the leading light of Guilford society and the town's representative in the state legislature. Although the general was a Congregationalist and patriot, his only child, Roxana, had married Eli Foote, a New Haven lawyer, and, as a dutiful wife, had adopted her husband's Tory allegiance to the crown and his Episcopalian religious preference. When Roxana was widowed by Foote's untimely death from yellow fever, her father welcomed her and her ten children back to the sheltering comfort of Nutplains and created a not unusual Connecticut household of divided loyalties. The general was open-minded enough to switch to his daughter's church so that they could attend services together, and he viewed her continuing loyalty to George III as a harmless eccentricity. Wanting his grandchildren to share his understanding and tolerance, he saw to it that they were supplied with the means to do so by loading his saddlebags with the latest books and periodicals every time he rode back from a legislative session in Hartford. In the matter of prompting enlightenment and discussion of important issues of the day, he did not discriminate between the girls and boys in the large brood he had taken under his wing. He was equally supportive when Samuel, the most adventurous of the brothers, elected to go to sea, and when Mary, the prettiest of the sisters, went off to Jamaica at age eighteen as the bride of a young man from a good Connecticut family who boasted of the prosperous plantation he owned on the island.

Within the Foote family it was tacitly agreed that Mary had made a better catch with her beauty in the person of John Hubbard than Roxana had with her virtue in the person of Lyman Beecher. Her mother's namesake, Roxana was in many respects the most accomplished of all the Footes. Tall and handsome rather than pretty, Roxana not only acquired all the feminine skills—sewing, spinning, painting, accompanying her own singing on the guitar—with ease, but she also exhibited an almost masculine grasp of mathematics and science. She eagerly devoured all the literature her grandfather brought into the house, often propping a book up where she could read while carrying out some mindless physical activity such as spinning. Despite her intellect and talents, Roxana was shy. Except with intimates and children, trying to share her thoughts with

other people would cause her to blush embarrassingly, and she was not comfortable with physical contact. Roxana was also good. As the second child of a widowed mother, she learned early to subordinate her own interests to the demands of caring for younger siblings. Having been introduced to her parents' Episcopalian version of Christianity at age five, Roxana was to say in midlife that she could never recall a day going by without resorting to prayer. It was her goodness, freely acknowledged and heavily relied on by all who knew her, that attracted a young theological student at Yale named Beecher when he came calling at Nutplains.

Lyman Beecher was no stranger to the Foote family. He had grown up in Guilford, a community small enough that everything was known about everybody. Like the first Andrew Ward to come to the New World, the first Beecher—a widow named Hannah with a son named John—had settled in Connecticut in the 1630s. But their descendants had followed very different paths. Early on, Andrew Ward became a member of the state's High Court, or legislature, and succeeding generations of Andrew Wards were military officers and political leaders. John Beecher's descendants were sturdy blacksmiths, admired in New Haven for their sagacity as well as their strength. It was said that the first person whom Roger Sherman, Connecticut's great statesman of the Revolutionary era, consulted to get the temper of the people when coming home from some important national gathering such as the Constitutional Convention was his blacksmith, David Beecher, Lyman's father. Lyman's birth in 1775 was a traumatic event for all concerned. His mother delivered at seven months a creature so scrawny that the women attending her laid him aside as lifeless. When the baby stirred on his own and caught their attention, the woman who washed and dressed him said, "It's a pity he didn't die with his mother like this." After his mother died of consumption two days later, his bereaved and overburdened father arranged for Lyman to be reared on the North Guilford farm of the boy's uncle, Lot Benton. The hard labor of helping on the farm turned an unpromising infant into a young man as hard-muscled as his father, but in the process his active mind developed a distaste for farming. Sensitive to what appeared to be their charge's unusual mental capacity, his Uncle Lot and Aunt Benton made an arrangement with his father for Lyman to enter Yale and become the first Beecher to acquire a college education. Even so, in the eyes of the long-established Footes, Lyman was a problematic suitor for what he himself would call "the Queen of all those girls."

In eighteenth-century Connecticut, Congregational ministers reigned supreme. Theirs was the tax-supported religion of the state, and in many,

if not most, communities the Congregational ministers decided who should occupy the seats of temporal power as well as who should go to heaven. Becoming one of these highly respected, even revered, power brokers was the ambition of most young men fortunate enough to attend the state's institution of higher learning at New Haven. But the challenges and rewards involved in the new and democratic nation arising from the Revolution were attracting more young men to the study of law by the time Lyman entered Yale. In fact, sixteen of Lyman's thirty classmates were headed for the bar instead of the pulpit, and he was midway through his undergraduate years before he fell under the spell of the charismatic divine who headed Yale, Dr. Timothy Dwight. During a revival conducted by Dr. Dwight, Lyman experienced what was called a "conversion" in the Calvinist theology prevailing in Congregational and Presbyterian denominations. It was an experience so charged with powerful and confusing emotions that few could find words to describe it. Beecher gave up on attempting to subject conversion to "the test of close metaphysical analysis," but more than half a century later he was eloquent in asserting what it did for him: "I soon found myself harnessed to the Chariot of Christ, whose wheels of fire have rolled onward, high and dreadful to his foes, and glorious to his friends. I could not stop." To do his part in hauling that chariot, Lyman decided to become a minister and enrolled for an extra year in theological school after his graduation in 1797.

It was during that year that he came courting Roxana. Instead of being overawed by the erudite and comparatively sophisticated Footes and their impressive surroundings, the farm boy who had once admired them from afar was concerned as to whether they could meet the standards of his converted self. They were, after all, Episcopalians and therefore outside the pale of the Calvinist elect. According to the stern doctrine that the Puritans brought with them to the New World, all human beings were subject to damnation as sinners because of Adam's fall. Although Jesus had atoned for man's sin on the cross, the salvation that he promised would come only to the elect who were privileged to go through that rather mysterious process of conversion. As implied by the word *elect,* people could not reason or will themselves into a conversion experience or earn it by good works. It had to be a gift from God, who predestined the course of all human lives. The role of the church and its ministry was to awaken those fortunate elect to the gift they could have by admitting and repenting of their sinful natures and surrendering themselves completely to the will of God. Only when this happened could

they count themselves among the saved and entertain the hope of going to heaven. The necessary view of oneself as a hopeless sinner could be depressing and painful, and Lyman endured a year of anguish before he hooked onto that fiery chariot. Ironically, Lyman's new conviction led him to worry that the personality traits that made Roxana lovable in human terms constituted a heresy in the form of a "natural goodness" that would blind her to the need for a supernatural conversion.

The doubts about the state of her soul that Lyman raised in his letters to her would have brought an end to the affair for almost any other woman than Roxana Foote. Her own deep religious beliefs, however inspired, allowed her to appreciate Lyman's sincerity and view his concern for her salvation as an expression of love. When he was present in person, she was aware that she had an instinctive need for a man whose nature was a complement to her own. He was as voluble as she was silent, as nervous as she was calm, as ardent as she was cool. Although he could not be called handsome because his nose was too long and his ears too large, his face was alive with expressions of his ever-changing emotions. He had the saving grace of humor and fun to lighten his piety. Still, there was a brief time when the questions he raised made her think so hard about the nature of her own faith in God that she was upset and depressed to the point of causing her family to worry about her sanity. All this came to an end during one of Lyman's visits when he gave her the final test of Calvinism: Would she rejoice if God were to damn her for his own glory? Her reply was instinctive. "Wouldn't being damned mean being horribly wicked? To believe that my being horribly wicked would contribute to the glory of my Heavenly Father is unthinkable," she said. Startled by her honesty and logic, Lyman said, "Oh, Roxana, what a fool I've been!" Even though Roxana never surrendered her belief in a compassionate and reasonable God, Lyman accepted her wrestling with his questions to the point of acknowledging a sinful nature as a conversion experience, and they were married in harmony in the same year that Lyman was called to a Presbyterian pastorate at East Hampton, Long Island.

In 1800 the Beechers welcomed a new year and a new century by bringing into the world a new life in the form of a girl whom they christened Catharine. Roxana's mother and young sister Mary sailed over from Connecticut to help her through the first months with the baby. Being in that household gave Mary, who had grown up in a fatherless family, an idea of what marriage might be like when, and if, she accepted a serious suitor. Roxana seemed to be content, and she was the same serene and somewhat distant sister she had been at Nutplains. She kept peace in the

house by agreeing with everything Lyman said and by trying to anticipate his every whim. Through his sermons and the several prayer sessions that he held at home every day, Lyman stayed in close touch with God and tried to discern and pass on the Almighty's will for everyone in every aspect of life. As a convicted agent of the Lord, he cut a commanding figure in the eyes of his congregation and his family. He was so earnest about being good and doing good for others that it was hard to argue with him. But Mary rather hoped that the man to whom she gave her hand would not be as bossy as Lyman could be and—to be honest—would be better looking and have better prospects. She did not want to scrimp and slave and save and talk about taking in boarders just to make ends meet, as Roxana was doing. When Roxana complained mildly to Lyman about their finances, he would just shrug and say, "The Lord will provide."

Mary thought that she had found a man more to her liking when she had boarded at New Haven a ship bound for Jamaica as the wife of John Hubbard. Family and friends agreed that she had made a good catch and could look forward to a life of luxury and plenty in what Hubbard insisted was a heaven on earth. On the voyage, Hubbard turned out to be pleasantly tender and attentive, and the island was as beautiful as her husband had pictured it to be—and as hot. Within days, the beauty would cruelly taunt her like a dream of imagined bliss. Only the heat remained real, for she found herself in a hell instead of a heaven on earth. Trying to get to know the kitchen help so that she could better manage the manor house on the plantation, she was informed, as if she should already have known it, that the lovely, milk-chocolate children who seemed to enjoy free run of the house had been sired by the master. Grinning and laughing, one of the cooks proudly claimed motherhood. When confronted with this news, Hubbard grinned, too, and said, "Think nothing of it. It's the custom here, but now that you are with me, my love, there will be no more need for that sort of thing." Worse than the fact of it was her husband's casual acknowledgment of what was a dreadful sin in the light of all that she had ever been taught. Because he was aware of her grandfather's high standing back in Connecticut, Hubbard felt obliged to assent to his bride's desire to go home as soon as possible. Awaiting passage, she had to linger on in a place she loathed long enough to learn that, bad as it was, her husband's sin was as nothing compared to the general mistreatment of the slaves who labored in the island or were traded in the markets in transit to America.

Although she was still only nineteen when she finally returned to Nutplains, Mary Foote Hubbard was aged beyond her years by her dis-

illusioning experience. She would bear a lifelong load of bitterness over betrayal by a person she had trusted and thought she loved and of hatred for slavery and everybody associated with it. Staying long at Nutplains was out of the question. Leaving a husband under almost any circumstances would be viewed as a disgrace and failure by their solid, churchgoing friends and neighbors. She would be too embarrassed, too ashamed, to explain her actions in detail. So she had welcomed Roxana's invitation to come over to East Hampton and help her with the school. Except for moments of homesickness like those that prompted her letter to Esther on that cold January evening, she was grateful for the opportunity to be of service among people who loved and respected and understood her.

Busy though she was bearing children and teaching, Roxana had worked wonders in making her household an example of civilized living in a rustic wilderness. She had made and laid the first rugs on floors and hung the first curtains in windows that were ever seen in the district, painted colorful designs on crudely wrought furniture, and even put her scientific bent to practical use by designing and having built a Russian stove that she had read about. As for Lyman, children were mellowing him. He turned half child himself when he took a break from work to tease and frolic with them, but then he turned half God again when he disciplined them for their transgressions. The children seemed to absorb energy from his warmth like flowers opening to the sun as they seemed to seek rest in the cool, calm, moonlike radiance from their mother. Mary was especially appreciative of the fact that the young black girls, Zillah and Rachel, were treated like members of the family who would be free to make lives of their own when their indenture ran out. The contrast between their treatment and fate and that of even children begotten by the master in Jamaica gave her hope that the evil of slavery could one day be eradicated. On the whole, as the oldest Beecher sibling, Catharine, would remember about the times in East Hampton, "there was a free and easy way of living, more congenial to liberty and society than to conventional rules."

Certainly, Lyman's relationship with Catharine was anything but conventional. He displayed no disappointment that his first offspring was not a son. From the first he called her "Thou little immortal" (a gift from God), and he cherished her as such. His reward was to discover very early that she had a quick, bright mind and a physical structure like his own. She took after him in looks and in a nervous craving for the outlet of physical activity. He began taking her with him at a very early age on his pastoral rounds to the Montauk Indian villages in the area or on more pleasurable fishing and hunting outings. The most exciting events for the

whole community were whale sightings. When the cry went up, nearly everybody, including Pastor Beecher with daughter Catharine in tow, would rush to the beaches and boats. Lyman would leave Catharine on the beach with the other children and women to watch the fun while he would take an oar in one of the boats. Like her father, Catharine was neither squeamish nor fearful. When a whale was beached, she liked to watch men carve it up. As to her fearlessness, she passed the unexpected, playful tests her father gave her with high marks. She would recall with pride all of her life that she had not screamed in panic or begged for mercy when he dangled her out of the highest window of the house on one occasion or when he ducked her head under in a washtub full of water on another. Her marks in her mother's schoolroom were nothing to boast about or remember. It was too tempting to stare out the window across half a mile of sand and scrub growth to the sea and dream of far-off places.

There was never a question of Lyman's turning Catharine into a surrogate son. Her mother and Aunt Mary made sure of that. Roxana drilled her in the practical, housekeeping aspects of becoming a woman. What with managing the household and delivering William in 1802 and Edward in 1803 and baby Mary in 1805, Roxana had little time or inclination for the kind of play that Catharine enjoyed with her father or for the kind of bonding that Catharine had with Aunt Mary. Mary fed the girl's imagination by reading Scott and Burns and Byron with her. Mary also schooled Catharine in the feminine graces. When a practical Roxana wanted to crop Catharine's hair, for instance, Mary insisted that it be left long. Then she dressed Catharine's hair in different ways to demonstrate to Catharine herself and to her parents how attractive the girl could be. If her father could discard his ministerial duty to play like a child, Aunt Mary could go even further. She could be a child in her understanding and sympathy "with all the little half-fledged wants and ambitions of childhood," as Catharine put it later in describing her relationship with her aunt. She was fond of referring to her Aunt Mary as "the poetry" of her childhood and candidly admitted that she felt closer to her than to Roxana. She would grudgingly learn the skills and perform the tasks that her mother demanded, but she would willingly perform any service for Aunt Mary.

For Lyman, spurts of play with his children were like hissing jets from the safety valves on the steam engines that were being used on a tramway in Boston and from what he had heard on a boat in Scotland. The steam driving Lyman was heated by the fire of his faith. He was a serious man

engaged in the most serious business of all—the saving of souls. Unlike his sister-in-law, Lyman never had the feeling of being out of touch with the world, perhaps because he regarded it as his duty to attend meetings of the Presbytery, the Synod, and even the General Assembly, the higher bodies of the Presbyterian Church. They would take him all over Long Island, down to New York, and on into New Jersey and Pennsylvania. There he would meet fellow clergymen and get a feeling for what was happening all over the country, and he didn't like most of what he was hearing.

As a staunch Federalist, a member of the party that was once headed by a conservative and reverential man like George Washington, he feared that the country was literally falling apart under a chief magistrate like this godless Democratic-Republican Jefferson. Thomas Jefferson had come back from his time as minister to France with an undue admiration for the bloodthirsty French revolutionists, who showed as little respect for the church as for the crown. Lyman had become an admirer of Emperor Napoleon, who was not only restoring law and order to France but also had demonstrated his belief in a higher than human power by having the pope come all the way from Rome to crown him in Paris. The latest news, that the emperor's armies had defeated the Austrians at Austerlitz, was welcome to Lyman, who felt that all the old courts of Europe were in need of cleansing.

Ironically, Jefferson might never have become president in 1801 if General Alexander Hamilton, who had inherited leadership of the Federalists, had not worked so hard in the House of Representatives to be sure that it would break the tie between Jefferson and Aaron Burr, another Democratic-Republican, in Jefferson's favor after thirty-five ballots. Again, in 1804, Jefferson might not have been reelected if there had not been dissension within the Federalist Party, and again both Burr and Hamilton were deeply involved. When it became obvious that Jefferson wanted to replace him on the ticket with Governor George Clinton of New York, a more moderate Republican, Burr decided to run for Clinton's office. Fearing that Jefferson's purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France would mean a permanent shift in power to the slaveholding South and West, a group of New England Federalists proposed that the northeastern states, including New York, secede and form a new nation. They met secretly with Burr and offered him their immediate support in the New York election and held out the possibility of making him president of that new nation if their plans worked out. Alexander Hamilton, appointed general and then secretary of the treasury by Washington,

believed firmly in the union of all the states they had led to victory in the Revolution. He feared and mistrusted Burr, also a war hero and charismatic politician who had established a strong power base among the working classes through an organization in New York called Tammany Hall. If the New England secessionists supported Burr, the Federalist vote would be split, and Burr would certainly be elected to a position from which he could seriously threaten the union. In the process of trying to head off this movement, Hamilton wrote a private letter to a fellow Federalist in which he said that "Burr is a dangerous man and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government." When these words became public in the summer of 1804, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel and killed him.

In the eyes of Lyman Beecher, this was a tragedy with dreadful consequences. The story, at least in Federalist circles, was that Burr had practiced with a pistol assiduously to improve his marksmanship before the duel, while Hamilton, whose son had been killed in a political duel three years before, told his seconds that he would deliberately fire over the head of his opponent. In the event, Hamilton did miss, and Burr's aim was deadly. Quite apart from the personal sorrow that Hamilton's death had brought to his family, the wound to the nation was still festering. Although there were no laws against dueling per se and it had been an accepted practice among gentlemen sensitive about their honor since the first settlers arrived in America, Burr thought it wise to leave his New York mansion under cover of darkness on the night of Hamilton's death. But he brazenly turned up in Washington to complete his term as vice president by presiding over the Senate during the impeachment trial of U.S. Supreme Court associate justice Samuel Chase in early 1805. Lyman did not know whether to believe the talk that Jefferson entertained Burr at dinner in the White House and thanked him for getting rid of his political enemy. But there was a great deal of substance to the talk that Jefferson, who wanted to see Chase impeached, turned against Burr for running a trial that let Chase off the hook. By 1806 a footloose Burr was said to be leading an expedition into the Southwest to detach those territories from the union, annex Mexico by force, and make himself emperor of a new nation.

That Burr would be involved in such a traitorous scheme was nearly incredible to Lyman in view of the man's background. His father was Aaron Burr, Sr., the second president of the College of New Jersey, which became Princeton University; his maternal grandfather was Jonathan Edwards, a great Calvinist theologian whose work and words were an

example and inspiration for Lyman. When his son-in-law died, Edwards took over the presidency of Princeton for a few months before his own death. An orphaned Burr attended Princeton, where he made a record as one of its most brilliant students and where he had a friend and collegemate named James Madison, who was now Jefferson's secretary of state. Burr's sister Sally married a Princeton graduate, Tapping Reeve, who founded one of the nation's first and best law schools at Litchfield, Connecticut, and Burr studied there until he joined Washington's army. Rising through the ranks to become a lieutenant colonel, Burr distinguished himself in a number of campaigns, including the march on Québec and the Battle of Monmouth. He was credited with saving a whole brigade from capture during the retreat from Long Island. How could a man like this stray so far from living by the faith of his fathers? This was one of the most troublesome aspects of the duel for Lyman, who simply could not let it go without doing something about it.

There was no way of erasing that particular blot from history, but Lyman believed there should be a way of preventing such a tragedy in the future. Lyman decided that it should be the task of Calvinist Christians to see that dueling, which was obviously a sin in God's eyes since it led to murder, was made a crime in the eyes of men. But what could he do about it? He was only thirty-one and pastor of a church so small in a community so far off any beaten path that he had to ride fourteen miles round-trip on horseback to get his mail. For him, it would be a very far reach to any of the levers of power that could eliminate a social evil that for centuries had not only been tolerated but also too frequently used by the very men who controlled those levers. Nevertheless, Beecher decided that he would use the only means at hand and denounce dueling from his own pulpit to a handful of fishermen and farmers and Indian basket weavers. Like Martin Luther before him, he could do no other. When asked many years later by his biographers for whom the Hamilton-Burr duel was ancient history why he had made what seemed a futile gesture, he said, "[T]here never was such a sensation as that produced through the whole country. When I read about it in the paper, a feeling of indignation was roused within me. I kept thinking and thinking, and my indignation did not go to sleep. It kept working and working, and finally I began to write. No human being knew what I was thinking and feeling, nor had any agency in setting me at work. It was the duel, and myself, and God, that produced that sermon."

Beecher thought that the sermon was received well enough by his own congregation that he preached it again when the Presbytery met at

Aquebogue on April 16, 1806. Although astonished by the subject matter, some of his ministerial colleagues thought that he should try to have it published. Thus encouraged, Beecher went to work on polishing it. He read draft after draft to a captive audience at home—Roxana, Mary Hubbard, and his own sister Esther, who was then visiting. Although he accepted some of their suggestions for minor changes, he was well aware that they did not represent an unbiased public and that they were unlikely to challenge his good sense in publishing at all. When he and the rest of the family were satisfied with the script, he sent it over to Gardiner's Island for a critique by the island's hereditary owner, John Lyon Gardiner, the only person in the neighborhood who had the education and sophistication to be of such help in Lyman's opinion. After two weeks of awaiting Gardiner's reaction, he went to the island himself. Gardiner was not there, but his wife knew about the sermon. "Have you found it yet?" she asked. Found it? Beecher did not know that it was lost, and the story she told him nearly took the heart out of him. Gardiner had given the handwritten manuscript, the only copy in existence, to another man returning to the mainland for delivery to Beecher. The man put it in the pocket of his jacket. While rowing he got so warm that he threw off his jacket. When he picked up the jacket to get out of the boat, he found the sermon missing. He did recall hearing something like a splash and assumed that the manuscript had fallen into the water.

For Beecher this bad news came as if God had decreed that he desist. He still had his notes and early drafts, but he dreaded the task of putting it all together again. Then came more news that called for some action by somebody. Down in a place called Nashville, Tennessee, an admired former judge named Andrew Jackson shot and killed a lawyer. Beecher could not help noting that these were two more men trained in the law as those members of the New York bar, Hamilton and Burr, had been. Yet they also felt free to stage a duel. Obviously there was pressing need for laws that would make this form of murder a crime. Although still reluctant to reconstruct his manuscript, Beecher thought that the least he could do would be to make certain that the messenger had not dropped it before boarding his boat. Gardiner had some forty laborers on his five-hundred-acre island farm, and Beecher went over to contact as many of these men as possible and offer a five-dollar reward for finding the lost manuscript.

When a month went by with no word, Beecher nearly gave up hope. Then one day, as he was cutting wood for the home fires, he saw a man running toward him waving something in the air. It was his manuscript,

and it was in good condition. Gardiner had wrapped it in paper and wound it tightly around with yarn. This created enough protection to keep the manuscript dry during the short time it spent at sea. There had been a storm on the evening of the day that the package was lost overboard. High winds and a higher-than-usual tide deposited it above the normal tide line not far from the island's boat landing "as Providence had ordered it," in Beecher's words.

This divine encouragement caused Beecher to have it put in print by a local publisher, who could not afford to distribute it beyond the villages on that far tip of Long Island. There was very little reaction from a population that was largely Democratic-Republican and did not wish to dwell on a subject that might put their leadership in a bad light. Once more Beecher thought that his work was destined for oblivion, but once more Providence decreed otherwise. A copy found its way into the hands of a prominent New York City minister, John M. Mason, who reviewed it favorably in his periodical *The Christian's Magazine*. After that the subject was brought up at a meeting of the Presbyterian Synod in Newark, New Jersey, where Beecher himself was on hand to explain his proposal for the formation of societies against dueling. The young man from a rural pastorate was surprised to meet strong opposition to his point of view from a doctor of divinity whose metropolitan pastorate contained wealthy and prominent men who considered dueling a proper, if not precisely Christian, way of settling affairs of honor. Beecher offered an eloquent defense of his position and lit a fire that would not be extinguished. As a supportive doctor of divinity at the meeting said, "The light in the golden candlestick of East Hampton began to be seen afar."

These happenings ordered by Providence made of Beecher a name to reckon with throughout the Congregational and Presbyterian communities of the Northeast. Mary Foote Hubbard, who would spend the rest of her life helping with a growing Beecher family, would never again have to complain of being mired in a soundless frog pond.