Chapter IV

New England Novels

With the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin in book form on March 20, 1852 Mrs. Stowe felt somewhat relaxed from the pressure of her crusade against slavery and planned to resume writing on her old favourite theme: the delineation of mind and manners of people in New England. In the summer of 1852 she began writing her "Maine story" which would eventually become The Pearl of Orr's Island. But, as the luck would have it, the mounting attack on the veracity of Uncle Tom's Cabin interrupted this; it provoked her to postpone her plan and to renew her crusade against slavery. This resulted in the publication of The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1853 and Dred in 1856.

After the publication of Dred she made second trip to Europe and Britain in the summer of 1857. Thereafter, in September 1857 she visited the islands of Casco Bay which refreshed and enlivened her conception of the scenes and characters of her "Main story". In October 1857 Francis H. Underwood and James Russell Lowell visited her at Andover and requested her to write a serial for the Atlantic Magazine that they were launching. As she already had the "Main Story"
partly written, she acceded to their request despite the fact that she was passing through a period of personal anguish due to the loss, by drowning, of her son, Henry, a student at Amherst. However, after working through the fall and most of the winter, Mrs. Stowe once again discontinued writing her "Main Story" and commenced writing her first New England Novel, The Minister's Wooing for being serialized in the Atlantic Magazine from December, 1858 onwards. This novel was eventually published in book form in 1859.

1. The Minister's Wooing

The Plot

Apparently, The Minister's Wooing is a romance set in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century Puritan New England town of Newport.

The plot is conventional: The three men, Dr. Samuel Hopkins, a Calvinist minister; Colonel Aaron Burr, a sophisticated and unfaithful lover; and James Marvyn, a young man with hardly any faith in religion, love Mary Scudder, the daughter
of a staunch Calvinist widow, Mrs. Katy Scudder. Dr. Hopkins is the hero and Mary Scudder is the heroine of the novel. However, after an unexpected sequence of events it is James Marvyn who succeeds in his suit.

There are two plots in the novel. In the main plot of the novel is intricately woven the main theme; the conflict between the rigid and highly dogmatic form of Christianity, viz., Calvinism, especially its Edwardsean form expounded and practised by the minister, Dr. Hopkins and the religion of love of which Mrs. Stowe is implicitly the apostle; the conflict between the religion of doom and the religion of hope.

The Sub-Plot

The sub-plot of the novel deals with the theme that Mrs. Stowe held dear to her heart, the crusade against slavery. In the sub-plot Dr. Hopkins is portrayed as a crusader against slavery.

The story of the novel is briefly as follows. Dr. Samuel Hopkins, a Calvinist minister, is a boarder in the house of Mrs. Katy Scudder. He teaches Mrs. Scudder’s daughter,
Mary, Edwards treaties. Widow Scudder a devout Calvinist Christian, is deeply impressed by Dr. Hopkins' theology as well as by his benign personality. She cherishes the desire of her daughter marrying the minister. The minister is also impressed by Mary and has developed fascination and love for her. However, being a high-minded and unworldly pious person, he is unable to propose directly to Mary. He sounds Widow Scudder indirectly about his intention to marry her daughter, but Mary loves her distant cousin, James Marvyn, though she has high regard and respect for the minister. James also loves Mary deeply, but Mrs. Scudder discourages the suit as James is devoid of religious faith. Mary Scudder is a model of Christian girlhood. Consequently, she refuses to marry James because of his lack of faith in religion. Disappointed, James goes to the sea, Mary bids him farewell, presents him her Bible, and exhorts him to be a good Christian.

The third suitor is Aron Burr, the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, the renowned exponent and interpreter of Calvinism in New England. He too loves Mary Scudder and wants to marry her, but the latter abhors the very idea and outright rejects the proposal.
In the meantime James is reported to have drowned in a shipwreck. The news deeply disturbs Mary, and James's mother, Mrs. Marvyn. Resigning to God's will, and yielding to the desire of her mother as well as to her wish to make the life of Dr. Hopkins, who is much older than she, happy, Mary gets engaged to the minister in the Calvinist spirit of renunciation. At this stage, the story takes a melodramatic turn; James writes a letter to Mary from Canton telling her of his safety, and of his spiritual experiences and giving her an account of the misfortune that befall his ship. He tells that her Bible has been an anchor to him, or rather a pole star which has guided his course more steadily than ever before. Subsequently, he appears in person, full of love for Mary, but now a changed man, the man Mary always hoped and prayed he would be. But Mary is now confounded with a dilemma. She has promised Dr. Hopkins to marry him, but her heart is with James. Being a good Christian girl, she decides to keep her promise to the minister. But at this stage, Miss Prissy Diamond, the friendly dress-maker, and Candace, the devout negro servant of Mrs. Marvyn, play a crucial role. They encourage James's suit. Miss Prissy Diamond divulges the reality to Dr. Hopkins and tells him how deeply Mary and James love each other. Dr. Hopkins decides to make a sacrifice for the happiness of Mary and James and paves the way for their marriage.
The important characters in the novel are Dr. Hopkins, Mary Scudder, Mrs. Katy Scudder, James Marvyn, Mr. Marvyn, Brown, Mrs. Marvyn, Simon, Aaron Burr, Mme. de Frontignac and Candace.

Dr. Samuel Hopkins is a high-minded, scholarly, Calvinist minister. He is totally inept in mundane affairs. He is an embodiment of Calvinism. He translates Calvinism in his life, particularly the virtue of renunciation. He is an abolitionist. Mrs. Stowe has, through Dr. Hopkins, highlighted the virtues of Calvinism. Dr. Hopkins has also been employed by Mrs. Stowe to demonstrate that there are some ministers who sincerely believe that slavery is immoral and against the tenets of Christianity, and who boldly launch crusade against slavery.

Mary Scudder is an embodiment of Christian girlhood. She is highly accomplished in all household activities, whether it be spinning, sewing, embroidery, shaping and cutting as well as in cooking. However, there is something in Mary that distinguishes her from ordinary girls of her age. She is endowed with deep and thoughtful nature, predisposed to moral and religious exaltation. She reads and ponders over the tradition, will and listens with rapt attention as her spiritual mentor, Dr. Hopkins, explains her the theories of Edwards on the nature of true virtue.
"Womanlike, she felt the subtle poetry of these sublime abstractions which dealt with such infinite and unknown quantities, and her teacher, a grand-minded and simple-hearted man as ever lived, was often amazed at the tread with which this fair young walked through these high regions of abstract thought."

(The Minister's Wooing, 22)

Mary's mother, Katy Scudder is a practical woman, efficient in domestic matters. She has accepted Calvinism not because of her convictions but because of the fact that Mr. Scudder used to believe it, she is hardly perturbed by the complexities and dreadful challenges of Calvinism.

James Marvyn is an irreligious young man of twenty-five or so. He is a careless and frivolous person having contempt for orthodox views. He is a sailor; he has "brought home from foreign ports those new modes of speech, those other eyes for realistic opinions and established things, which so
often shocked established prejudices, - so that he was held as tittle better than an infidel and a castaway by the stricter religious circles in his native place".

(K.W, 28)

Mr. Zethadee Harvyn, father of James, is a representative man of his times in New England. He owns a large farm in the immediate vicinity of Newport which he works with his own hands and has kept it in an excellent cultivatable condition. His education is limited to common schools and academies. In his school he has learned to think and to inquire. Though he toils daily with his sons and hired men, he reads regularly and has a good collection of books to which additions are made every year. He is a well-read person and careful theologian. He has occupied almost all public offices; he has been deacon of church, a member of the school-committee, justice of peace, and has twice been the representative of the state legislature. He is a kind of adviser-general in all cases between neighbour. He has some knowledge of law, and his advice is often sought in preference to that of the regular practitioners of law. He is of obliging nature and helps his neighbours in all possible ways.
However, he is a reticent man. He has set the pattern for mutual relation among the members of his family. Although the members of his family love each other, it is hardly expressed through their actions.

Mrs. Kerwyn, mother of James, is a major character in the novel.

Mrs. Kerwyn is primarily a vehicle for expressing, concisely the negative aspects of Calvinism. In creating her, Harriet combined her own "attack of the devil" when she had doubted God's goodness, with her sister Catherine's struggle of 1322 in the meshes of Calvinistic logic. 4

Mrs. Kerwyn is a tall, sad-eyed, gentle-mannered woman, thoughtful, earnest, deep-natured though sparing in the use of words. In her household matter she has the same thrift and order that characterizes her husband; but hers is a mind of finer and higher stamp.

She is a regular reader; she never misses her reading hours. On the table in her bedroom are books on
history, biography, mathematics, poetry as well as novels and volumes of encyclopedias which reveal her intellectual bent of mind. However,

everything to her seemed shrouded in gloom and mystery; and that darkness she received as a token of unregeneracy, as a sign that she was one of those who are destined by a mysterious decree, never to receive the light of the glorious gospel of Christ.

Punctilious in every duty, exact, reverent, she still regarded herself as a child of wrath, an enemy of God, and an heir of perdition; nor could she see any hope of remedy, except in the sovereign, mysterious decree of an Infinite and Unknown Power, a mercy for which she waited with sickness of hope deferred.”

(MW, 105)

Simon Town is a slave-trader in Newport. He has gone wealthy through the evil business of slave-trade. He is a member of Dr. Hopkins Church. But he is a
religious hypocrite. He attends church as a ritual and
does to be comprehending Dr. Hopkins's theology. However,
when Dr. Hopkins tells him that slavery is against the
teaching of the Bible and Christianity and asks him to
abandon the slave trade, he threatens to stop subscription
to Dr. Hopkins's church and to join Dr. Stiles's church.

Aron Burr, grandson of famous Jonathan Edwards,
is a renegade and philanderer. He is "the sinister
sophisticate, the proverbial expression of 'the iron hand
under the velvet glove'. Burr is of course irresistibly
attractive to women, while remaining himself utterly unmoved
by any emotion whatever.

In good melodramatic form, his victim is a French
woman, Virginie de Frontignac."

Mme Virginie de Frontignac, wife of Colonel de
Frontignac is a Roman Catholic Christian. She is a victim
of Aron Burr's seduction. Eventually, she comes to a purer
way of life through her admiration for the saintly heroine,
Mary Scudder.

Scudder is a negro woman slave of Marvyns. She is
a devout Christian and has been portrayed as the preacher of
the religion of love. When Mrs. Marvyn is plagued by theological doubts on the arrival of the news of the supposed death of her son, James, Candace saves Mrs. Marvyn by preaching her the gospel of love as opposed to the religion of damnation taught by Dr. Hopkins.

Themes in The Minister's Wooing

The principal theme in The Minister's Wooing is the inner conflict in the mind of people arising from the conflict between Calvinism and the more liberal and humane form of Christianity.

Right from the Colonial days New England was deeply under the spell of Calvinism. However, slowly a revolt against the rigid and dogmatic Calvinism was brewing. A section of New England people had started drifting towards Unitarianism, but the influence of Calvinism was so strong that some New Englanders were plagued with the inner conflict in the mind which had genesis in the conflict between Calvinist, and the more liberal and benevolent form of Christianity. Mrs. Stout was one of them. To begin with, she was a staunch
Calvinist because of her father's influence. However, due to the cruelty and injustices of Calvinism, she gradually became disenchanted with it. The Minister's Mirror mirrors this inner conflict in the mind of Mrs. Stowe. Alice Crozier writes:

"One can only conclude that Mrs. Stowe is herself involved in the conflict. One of the one side, although she is awed of his intellectual power, she hates the tyrannical Edwards and his cruel theology, while on the other side, she is enthralled by his ideal of pure, intense, intuitive piety and by the power of his passionate delight in the Creator and his Creation."  

Seeds of revolt against Calvinism were sown in Mrs. Stowe's mind right in her childhood when Catherine's fiancé, Alexander Metcalf Fisher, drowned off the coast of Ireland in 1822 before undergoing the ritual of Presbyterian "conversion", i.e., before having the experience associated with the decisive adoption of religion, in this case Calvinism.
According to the Calvinist doctrine, a person who dies before "conversion" is destined to irretrievable damnation; destined to find place only in hell; he cannot be blessed by God, he cannot find place in heaven. This cruelty of Calvinism Catherine detested, and consequently she revolted against Calvinism. The seeds germinated and grew in Mrs. Stowe's mind with the passage of time.

During her visit to Hanover, two days after Henry's funeral, Mrs. Stowe had been certain that Henry was in heaven. However, after return to Andover, the theological implications of Henry's death quite naturally confronted her. By the dry logic of her Calvinism, Henry was almost certainly in hell. In her despair Mrs. Stowe apparently experienced in her mind a constant conflict between the Calvinist theories to which she had bowed her intellect and thought, and the impulses of her moral nature and common sense.

Due to her deep maternal affection, Mrs. Stowe recoiled back from the horrible conclusion that Henry was in hell, and bain, primarily emotional rather than logical, overcome the "traces of the devil" and finally accepted the verdict of common sense.
The inner conflict in Mrs. Stowe's mind arising from the conflict between Calvinism - the religion of doom - and the religion of Christian love - the religion of hope - has been delineated by her, probably unconsciously, through her character, Mrs. Arvyn who is distressed after learning about the supposed death before conversion, in a ship wreck, of her son James. Mrs. Arvyn's mind is plagued with the same inner conflict with which Mrs. Stowe's mind is.

Through her character, Dr. Hopkins, Mrs. Stowe projects the positive as well as the negative aspects of Calvinism. Through a brilliant metaphor she attacks the negative aspects of Calvinism in the following words:

* There is a ladder to heaven, whose base
  God has placed in human affections, tender
  instincts, symbolic feelings, sacraments
  of love, through which the soul rises higher
  and higher, refining as she goes, till she
  outgrows, the human, and changes, as she
  rises, into the image of the divine. At the
  very top of this ladder, at the threshold
  of eternity, blazes dazzling and crystalline
  that celestial grace where the soul knows self
no more, having learned, through a long experience of devotion, how blest it is to lose herself in that eternal love and beauty of which all earthly fairness and grandeur are but the dim type, the distant shadow. This highest step this saintly elevation which but few selectest spirits ever on earth attain to raise the soul to which the Eternal Father organized every relation to human existence—

this Ultimate Truth of virtue had been seized upon by our sage as the all of religion. He knocked out every round of the ladder but the highest, and then, pointing to its hopeless splendor, said to the world, "Go up thither and be saved!"

(MW, 87)

Thus, Dr. Hopkins, the embodiment of Calvinism, shows the ladder to heaven to common men and women and pointing to the highest rung, the penultimate goal, asks them to ascend to heaven and be saved. But the irony is that Dr. Hopkins has knocked out all the rungs of the ladder except the last
one. Consequently, for common men and women the ladder between earth and heaven is rungless. Needless to say, the ladder stands for Calvinism and Dr. Hopkins for a Calvinist minister. And, it is Jonathan Edwards who taught Dr. Hopkins to knock out the rungs of the ladder.

This is Mrs. Stowe's deadly attack on Calvinism. Probably, motivated by this, in Saints, Sinners, and Beechers, Mrs. Stowe's grandson, Lyman Beecher Stowe writes:

"The Minister's Hooing was an attack on the cruelty and injustice of Calvinism just as Uncle Tom's Cabin was an attack on the cruelty and injustice of slavery. In The Minister's Hooing she attacked Calvinists without attacking Calvinists just as in Uncle Tom's Cabin she attacked slavery without attacking slaveholders."

However, in spite of her repugnance, Mrs. Stowe could not fully rise above Calvinism. Calvinism was ingrained in her. This is evident from the fact that Dr. Hopkins emerges as the hero of the novel by self-sacrificial, that is by sacrificing his suit and cleanliness for the sake of James Marvyn and Mary Sawyer.

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Similarly, Mary Scudder emerges as the heroine of the novel by conforming to the basic tenets of Calvinism, i.e., by resigning to the will of God and by not breaking her promise to Dr. Hopkins to whom she was engaged. Renunciation, a basic tenet of Calvinism is presented as a cherishable virtue. In addition to this, Mrs. Stowe has focussed the attention of the readers of the novel on another basic tenet of Calvinism, viz., regeneration. James Marvyn gets regenerated after the shipwreck as a result of prior counsel and entreaties of Mary Scudder. Thus though the novel attacks Calvinism, its hero and his heroine are modelled after the Calvinist doctrine.

On the other hand, Aaron Burr, the renegade grandson of Edwards is depicted somewhat like a villain.

Another theme of the novel is that any good woman is a better evangelist than the greatest divine. She demonstrates this in the scene in which Aaron Burr listening to Mary Scudder's reprove on his sins, breaks down and weeps. Similarly, Mary succeeds in bringing James Marvyn to the fold of religion, Mary succeeds where Dr. Hopkins has failed.

Another example of how a good woman can be a better evangelist than the greatest theologian is furnished by Mrs. Stowe's hero character, Condict. Then Mrs. Marvyn is
deeply grief-ridden due to the supposed death of her son, James, Old Candace succeeds in consoling her by talking not of Doctrinal theology but of Jesus Christ, of Heavenly Father, of His love and compassion, of His tenderness and love for the suffering creatures. This incident also bears out Mrs. Stowe's viewpoint that one can get salvation through faith in the mercy and compassion of Jesus in contravention to what Edwardsian dogmas says.

Antislavery Echo in the Novel

In *The Minister's Wooing* Mrs. Stowe does not miss opportunity of dealing with her favourite antislavery theme. Through Dr. Hopkins, the hero of the novel, she asserts that the institution of slavery is against Christianity. She has presented Dr. Hopkins as a crusader against slavery. Though some of the Calvinists are protagonists of slavery, there are others who are vehemently against slavery. Dr. Hopkins is one of them. The following outburst of Dr. Hopkins amply demonstrates how opposed to slavery he is:

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"What a shame it is", he said,
what a scandal and disgrace
to the protestant religion, that
Christians of America shold
openly practise and countenance
this enslaving of the Africans.
I have for a long time holden
my peace; may the Lord forgive
me but I believe the time is
coming when I must utter my
voice. I cannot go down to the
wharves or among the shipping
without these poor dumb creatures
looking at me so that I am
ashamed, -- as if they asked me
what I, a Christian Minister, was
doing, that I did not come to
their help."

(MW, 144)

Dr. Hopkins laments further:

'My mind labors with this subject
of the enslaving of the Africans,'
Mr. Marvyn. We have just been
declaring to the world that all
men are born with an inalienable
right to liberty. We have fought
for it and the Lord of Hosts has
been with us; and can we stand
before him with our foot upon
our brother's neck?"

(MH, 173)

Some benevolent slave-holders are under the erroneous impres-
sion that their slaves are having no grievances against
slavery and that they do not want to be liberated. Mr. Marvyn,
the father of James, is one of them. Dr. Hopkins explodes
this myth by eliciting the opinion of the negro slave Candace
in this regard in the presence of her master, Mr. Marvyn. The
following conversation among Dr. Hopkins, Mr. Marvyn, and
Candace bears out this truth :

"I assure you, sir", said Mr. Marvyn,
"If I speak, it is not to excuse
myself. But I am quite sure my
servants do not desire liberty
and would not take it, if it were
offered."

(MH, 174)
"Call them in and try it," said the doctor. If they refuse, it is their own matter."

(MW, 174)

"Candace, the Doctor wishes to see you" said Mrs. Marvyn."

(MW, 174)

Candace, said he "do you think it right that the black race should be slaves to the white?"

(MW, 175)

If I must speak, I must, she said No, -- I neber did think 't was right. The General Washington was here, I hearn 'em read de declaration ob Independence and Bill o' rights; an' I tole Cato den, says I, Ef dat ar' true, you and I are as free as anybody'. It stands to reason why, look at me, -- I'n't a critter. I's neider huffs nor horns.
I's a reasonable bein' -- a woman
-- as much as woman as anybody".

(MW, 175-176)

"But Candise, You've always been
contented and happy with us,
have you not"? said Mr. Marvyn"

(MW, 176 )

Yes Master -- I ha'nt got nuffin
to complain ob in dat matter; I
could n' t has no better friends
in you an' Missis".

(MW, 176 )

"Would you like your liberty, if
you could get it through? " said
Mrs. Marvyn. "Answer me honestly".

"Why, to be sure I should! who
would n' t? Mind ye', she said,
earnestly raising her black heavy
hand, "it a'n't dat I want to go
off, or want to shirk work; but
I want to feel free".

(MW, 176)
"Well, Candace, from this day you are free," said Mr. Marvyn, solemnly.

(MW, 176)

"You see" said the Doctor, "what freedom is to every human creature. The blessing of the Lord will be on this deed, Mr. Marvyn. The step of a just man are ordered by the Lord, and delighteth in his way."

(MW, 177)

Not all slave-holders are like Mr. Marvyn. There are others who are typified by Simeon Brown who threatens to leave Dr. Hopkins's church on being asked to discontinue slave-trade.

Dr. Hopkins' anti-slavery outlook is exemplified again by the fact that, unmindful of the adverse consequences, the good Doctor goes to
Newport to wage a war against Newport slave-holder, who are also his wealthiest supporters.

"One might hazard a guess, indeed, that the story of Samuel Hopkins was an unconscious defense of the New England ministers against the sharp charges of the Abolitionists that the clergy were half-hearted in cause or openly hostile. With her conviction of the unselfish nobility of their lives, Mrs. Stowe must have taken a secret pleasure in revealing the good Doctor as a forerunner of the Abolitionists, and in pointing out that the crabbed logician of the Edwardean School, the theologian immersed in the abstractions of a grotesque system, was nevertheless a light set upon a hill, a primitive Christian with heart overflowing with loving-kindness, who understood the inequity of slavery and turned shepherd to the outcast to his own hurt. The figure of the unwordly minister is drawn with loving hand and his angularities made less rugged."

Delineation of Local Colour in The Novel

_The Minister's Wooing_ is essentially a regional novel fraught with the delineation of "local color".
In the United States the period of Civil War (1861 - 1865) was followed by a bitter time, filled with mistrust, hatred, and sectional conflicts left exacerbated and unresolved by end of the war. However, the war also resulted in an inquisitiveness about the other regions of the country stimulated by the stories told by returning soldiers. Maine folks gave descriptions of Spanish moss and bayous; Georgians told of snow. Funny accents, strange foods, new ways of preparing old favourite foods, quaint buildings, unusual habits were all narrated with fervour to people back at home; and spurred by this, people back at home wanted to know more. In response to this there emerged in 1860s and 1870s a new school of writing called "local colour". Although the Civil War provided a stimulus to its growth, its seeds had been shown much earlier in the rocky terrain of New England, and Mrs. Stowe had been one of its leading sowers. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Stowe was the pioneer the first cultivator of the local colour genre.

Robert Ruskell has identified seven characteristics of local colour stories; the characters are common people as opposed to tilted nobility, industrialists, heirs of wealthy families; a specific localized setting; an accurate dialectical speech organic to the story, behaviour of characters is plausible, not idealized; humour is inherent in the story and
sympathetic in tone; there are a few long expository passages but moralizing is avoided; and finally, the locale or environment is a shaping force in the story though, on the whole, the approach is realistic rather than romantic, local colour is a transitory phase, midway between romanticism and realism.

"In The Minister's Wooing (1859) she returned to the subject most suited to her capacities, the delineation of the mind and manners of New England village folk during the period when its clergymen, like Jonathan Edwards when he left his Northampton pulpit, were led to follow theological counsels of perfection without regard to the temper of the time or the vital needs of their people."  

In The Minister's Wooing Mrs. Stowe beautifully describes the mind and manners of the people of New England. The novel is replete with beautiful delineation of the local colour. The Minister's Wooing is concerned with the ethos of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century New England Society, its religion, its customs, and its everyday life. All the character in the novel belong to New England. The novel is hardly concerned with any thing that
lies outside the boundaries of New England. Its characters
are not only concerned with the household activities like
how to restore a wedding dress, or how to repair a neighbour's
farming tools, but they are equally, rather more concerned
with the state of their souls and their minister's various
interpretations of the scripture. In the late eighteenth and
early nineteenth century, in New England, philosophical and
theological debate was as much a part of New England life as
were hoeing and baking. The Minister's Wooing gives a glimpse
of this aspect of life in addition to its secular aspect. In
The Minister's Wooing, Mrs. Stowe gives a picturesque description of such homely activities as the normal preparations for
quilting, and wedding celebrations, how to protect the blankets
from moths, as well as how to put down the democratic part.
She gives a vivid picture of the hours when meals were eaten
and the proper time for retiring. The following extracts are
representative examples of such descriptions in the novel.

Meanwhile the tea table had been
silently gathering on its snowy
plateau the delicate China, the
golden butter, the loaf of
faultless cake, a plate of
crullers or wonder's, as a sort
of sweet fried cake was commonly
called, tea-rusks, light as a puff, and shining on top with a varnish of egg; — — — jellies of apple and quince quivering in amber clearness; — whitest and purest honey in the comb; — in short, everything that could go to the getting-up of a most faultless tea"

(IW, 55)

"I don't see", said Mrs. Jones, resuming the gentle pranks of the occasion, "how miss Scudders loaf-cake always comes out jest, so. It don't rise neither to one side nor 1' other, but jest even all around; and it a'n't white one side and burnt the other, but jest a good brown all over; and it don't have no heavy streak in it."

(IW, 56)

These descriptions of every day activities are reminiscent of similar descriptions in Hardy's Wessex novels,
e.g. *Tess of the D'urbervilles*. Therefore, one may rightly conclude that *The Minister's Wooing* is basically a regional novel.

**The Technique Used in the Novel**

*The Minister's Wooing* is a historical novel which delineates late eighteenth and early nineteenth century colonial New England. Some of the characters used in the novel were public figures. Dr. Hopkins was a famous eighteenth century theologian at Newport, Rhode Island. Aaron Burr was grandson of Jonathan Edwards. However, historical accuracy was not Mrs. Stowe's forte; *The Minister's Wooing* is not the history of New England, it contains several biographical inaccuracies. For example Mrs. Stowe portrayed Dr. Hopkins as a man who never married, but in fact Dr. Hopkins had married Joanne Ingersoll in 1748 and was the father of eight children. After his first wife's death, Dr. Hopkins married Elizabeth West who was an active member of Dr. Hopkins's church and an accomplished theologian. Elizabeth West had been represented by Mary Sudder in the novel in so far as her character, nature, and religious inclination are concerned. However, the story of
Hopkins's wooing Mary Scudder derives from an anecdote in William Patten's *Reminiscences of Samuel Hopkins, D.D.* (1843) which tells about the Puritan romance of Hopkins in his youth before his first marriage.

In the novel Mrs. Stowe has mixed up persons and chronology. This she did deliberately and with a purpose as is obvious from the following excerpt from her Preface to *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*:

"In fictitious writing, it is possible to find refuge from the hard and the terrible, by inventing scenes and characters of a more pleasing nature."

Mrs. Stowe has also used biographical and autobiographical elements in the novel. The drawing of Catharine's fiancé, Alexander Metcalf Fisher of the coast of Ireland and that of Mrs. Stowe's son, Henry drawing in the Connecticut River is fictionalized in the drowning of James in a shipwreck; the resulting inner conflict in the mind of Catharine and Mrs. Stowe is fictionalized in the inner conflict in the mind of Mr. Marvyn.
Wagenknecht pointed out\(^9\) that Mary Scudder supposedly suffers the loss of her fiancé as Catharine did. However, temperamentally she is more akin to Catharine's and Harriet's mother Roxana Beecher than to Catharine.

As pointed by Foster\(^{10}\), this is borne out by the fact that the following letter written by Mary to Dr. Hopkins is word for word, a large part of the letter written by Roxana Beecher to her husband Lyman Beecher,

"To love God because He is good to me you seem to think is not a right kind of love; and yet every moment of my life I have experienced His goodness – – – – I am not sensible that I ever in my life imagined anything but good could come from the hand of God. From a Being infinite in goodness everything must be good, though we do not always comprehend how it is so. Are not afflictions good? Does he not even in judgement remember mercy? Sensible that "afflictions are but blessing in disguise." I
would bless the hand that with infinite kindness wounds only to heal, and love and adore the goodness of God equally in suffering as in rejoicing.¹⁰

Not only Dr. Hopkins in real life, but also Dr. Emmons, the mentor and friend of Fisher, are fictionalized in the character, Dr. Hopkins, of the novel.

Dr. Stiles in the novel represents Dr. Ezra Stiles, Chief clerical rival of Dr. Hopkins in actual life. However, Dr. Stiles has been distorted in the novel; he has been portrayed as a supporter of slavery whereas Dr. Ezra Stiles was actually against slavery and was signatory to an anti-slavery document along with Dr. Hopkins of real life.

An example of chronological inaccuracy is furnished by the fact that Mrs. Stowe has shown that Dr. Ezra Stiles was still living at Newport in the 1790's, whereas he had become President of Yale in 1778.

Thus the basic technique used by Mrs. Stowe in constructing the main-plot as well as the sub-plot of the novel is to blend historical facts with fiction.
The narrative technique used in the novel is the third person narrative; the narrator is not a character within the events narrated in the novel. The level of narrative is extradiegetic.
References


2. Crozier, Alic C. Novels of Harriet Beecher Stowe

3. Ibid. p.125.


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2. The Pearl of Orr's Island

The Pearl of Orr's Island: A Story of the Coast of Maine is Mrs. Stowe's second New England novel. She had started writing this novel in 1852 just after completing Uncle Tom's Cabin but deferred its writing to occupy herself with the writing of The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Minister’s Wooing, and Agnes of Sorrento. The Pearl of Orr's Island was written intermittently over a period of ten years, from 1852 to 1862. It was serialized in Theodore Tilton's The Independent in which the first installment appeared on January 3, 1861 and the last on April 24, 1862. In book form it was published in 1862.

The Pearl of Orr's Island is essentially a sentimental novel, and is rich in the delineation of local colour. It is a story about a fishing community on the Maine Coast in New England. The setting is the Orr's Island, on the Maine Coast, eighteen miles from Brunswick, where Mrs. Stowe spent two years, from 1850 to 1852, when her husband, professor Calvin E. Stowe was in the faculty of Bowdoin College, his alma mater.

The novel has two plots, the main plot and a sub-plot.
The Main Plot

Mara Lincoln is born on the night her father, James Lincoln, ship-master of the brig. "Flying Scud," dies in a shipwreck during a howling tempest when his home-bound ship is just entering the harbour. Her mother, Naomi, dies during her birth. Mara is reared by her grandparents — her mother's parents — Captain Zephaniah and Mary Penell who consider her a "pearl of great price." Captain abandons sea to look after his pearl of great price. Another shipwreck leaves in its wake a beautiful Spanish-looking boy found lying among the rocks in the arms of his mother Penells adopt the boy and call him Moses.

Sub-Plot

Moses is discovered to be the son of a Spanish Woman, Dolores, whose own beautiful mother died when she was young. Dolores's father, Don José Medoza, married her to a brutal Cuban planter, Senor Don Guzman de Cordone. Moses learns about his parents from a neighbour, the quiet minister Theophilus Sewell who had, in his youth been a tutor to the
children of Mendoza in St. Augustine, Florida and fallen in love with Dolores. Dolores and Theophilus tried to elope, but their attempt was foiled by Dolores's father. Sewell has recognized Dolores by a bracelet that she wore at the time of shipwreck, a bracelet with a locket that contained a lock of Dolores's mother's hair. Sewell has also found out that Moses may well be heir to a large fortune in Cuba. Sewell also knows that Dolores's husband had been so cruel to his slaves that they had revolted against him due to which the family had taken the ship for Boston which wrecked off the coast of Orr's Island from which Moses was rescued.

The story of the novel is as follows: Mara and Moses grow up together. Among the family friends of Pennels are the spinsters, the stern Miss Roxy Toothacre and her younger sister Miss Ruey Toothacre fondly known as Aunt Roxy and Aunt Ruey respectively, and the whimsical retired sea-captain Kittridge, who is the father of Mara's friend Sally Kittridge. Mara adores Moses very much, but Moses does not realize that he loves her too. When Mara is seven, she finds a torn copy of Shakespeare's The Tempest in Pennel's attic and becomes fond of the play, she enquires of Captain Kittridge, who is good at spinning fantastic stories about mermaids and oriental adventures, if the story of The Tempest is true.
Afraid of risking the hazard of the credibility of his own stories, he says that the story of *The Tempest* is probably also true.

Shortly after learning about the "enchanted island" described in *The Tempest*, Hart and Moses take a boat to Eagle's Island off Harpswell Bay. Their adventures in Eagle's Island can as well provide matter for a fantasy play. Later, when Moses pares off chips from a small ship, Hart suggests that he call it the Ariel. That evening she reads *The Tempest* aloud to Moses while he is at work, and wonders why he does not remember his own past in the line, "full fathom five thy father lies; of his bones are coral made".

After six years or so, Moses gets involved with some smugglers who are operating off Orr's Island in defiance of Jefferson's Embargo Act of 180. Moses is presented with temptation, Atkinson, a smuggler from Bath and his gang. One night Moses sneaks out to be with them, hears them swear, watches them drink, and joins them in both the activities. However, when they suggest that he help them rob Mr. Pennel, the man who has reared him, Moses hesitates. Having survived the temptation, he returns home. Hart, who has been trailing
him, reports the matter to Captain Kitteridge who resolves
the problem. He warns Atkinson to keep his hands off, and
sends Moses off on a long voyage.

Moses is in love with Mara, and Mara with him.
However, he becomes jealous of the attentions paid her by
a 'Mr. Adams of Boston', and in retaliation pretends to be
in love with Sally Kitteridge, especially to force Mara to
commit that she loves him. Unaware of the fact that Mara
loves Moses, Sally flirts with Moses. Thus Mara-Moses-
Sally love triangle is formed. The love story progresses
in the usual way; in the Calvinist tradition of renunciation,
self-sacrificing Mara tries to bring Sally and Moses together.
Though a coquette, Sally is true to her friend; she tells
Moses that his real love is Mara. After a brief period of
happy understanding with Moses, Mara dies like countless
sentimental heroines, of consumption compounded with piety.
Mara's death has desirable effect, Moses begins to get
religion and Sally becomes more serious about life. The
death has paved the way for the marriage of Moses and Sally,
and their life together will be long and happy only because
they have been molded by the softening influence of Mara,
the Pearl of Orr's Island.
After Mara's death, Moses returns to his life at sea, but four years later settles on Orr's Island and marries Sally.

Important Characters in the Novel

Mara, Moses, Sally, Captain Kittridge, Mrs Kittridge, Miss Roxy Toothacre, Miss Ruey Toothacre, and Theophilus Sewell are important characters in the novel. The most vital are Captain Kittridge and Toothacre sisters.

Mara Lincoln, the heroine of the novel is sentimental. She is a good girl like Mary Scudder in The Minister's Wooing but not affectedly good. She is certainly angelic like Mary Scudder, but she does not behave like a minister, she does not convert the unregenerate. Both Mara and Mary are otherworldly, but Mara is not as pious as Mary. Whereas Mara is a real mystic, Mary is merely sensitive. Mara's dramatic arrival in the world the mist of the tempest, and especially her mysterious dream of the little boy being sent by her mother to be her playmate, show her as spiritually lifted from the very outset. Mara is uncorrupted and incorruptible. Suffering does not drive her to melancholy, rather it exalts her to a higher plane of existence.
Rose is an average boy, devoid of sentiment. He is interested neither in religion nor in learning. He is endowed with usual human weaknesses; jealousy, temptation, and the like. He is Byronic, romantic, a Manfred, a Topsy. He is willful, sullen, rebellious, he is difficult to be controlled. He is cruel, he robs eagle's nest simply for the fun and adventure.

Sally Kittridge is an antithesis of Mara. She is flighty, fun loving, neglectful of her chores, interested in bright clothes and pursuit of pleasure; essentially she is a coquet.

Captain Kittridge is a tale-teller. He spins stories of the many lands he has visited as well as of many he has not visited. He is a mixture of the traditional story-teller and the tell tale braggart. He dispenses wisdom to the children in the guise of amusement. The adults tolerate him, but Mrs. Kittridge often reminds him that some of things were not as he remembered them. He is a wiseman, and a symbol of stability.

Mrs. Kittridge symbolizes callousness toward children prematurely towards the dark realities of life, one of the ugliest features of Calvinism. For example, she
regards the beautiful corpse washed ashore as an opportunity for children to learn what death is.

Miss Roxy Toothacre and Miss Ruey Toothacre have a different kind of wisdom compared to that of Captain Kittridge. It is true that they also tell ghost stories and tall tales, but they are also the doctors and historians of the land. They can recollect for children’s instructions the great storms, the marvelous deaths, and the amazing rescues that have occurred in the past. They have a store of folk remedies; they are the Hippocratic data bank, they pass on to the young folk their knowledge of the herbal medicines. They are also the sources of biblical quotations. They also introduce religion in every life and make it relevant, practical, and an accepted part of life. However, of the two, the elder sister Miss Roxy Toothacre is more vigorous, spicy, and decided. She speaks with authority. Many births, weddings, and deaths have come and gone under her sway. Amid weeping and rejoicing she is the master-spirit, consulted and referred to by all. Her word is law and precedent.

Miss Roxy’s younger sister, Miss Ruey, a pliant, coxey, easy-to-be-entranced personage, revolves around her as an humble satellite.
The Reverend Theophilus Sewall of Harpswell is a Harvard graduate, lawyer, and medical authority rivaled by none but Miss Roxy Toothacre. There is nothing of the harsh Calvinist about him. He has a quiet sense of humour, and is a cheerful spectator of life. He likes to play with and on his parishioners, as for example, at the tea following a funeral.

The three characters, Captain Kittridge, Miss Roxy Toothacre and Miss Ruey Toothacre are the novel; the others are insignificant.

**Themes in the Novel**

The main theme of *The Pearl of Orr's Island* is the delineation of the mind and manners of New England village folks during the early nineteenth century, i.e., the delineation of New England local colour. A ramification of this theme is the hazard involved in the life of sailors.

One of the minor themes of the novel is callousness of Calvinist towards children which is embodied in Mrs.Kittridge, a minor character in the novel.
Another minor theme is the adverse effect of slavery on the slaveholders as is exemplified through Moses's father, Senor Don Guzman de Cordona, brutal Cuban planter, who had to flee from his plantation with his family due to the revolt of his slaves against him.

The Technique Used in the Novel

Mrs. Stowe has used a real place, Orr's Island for the setting of the novel. However, the characters are not drawn after real personages, though they are prototypes of New England folks. The characters in the novel belong to common folks, not to nobility or higher echelons of the society; a specific localized setting, viz., Orr's Island is used; characters use local dialect; they have plausible, not idealized behaviour; humour is a frequent feature of the novel; though there are a few long expository passages in the novel, moralizing has been avoided; and finally, the locale, Orr's Island, is the shaping force for the novel. Thus, the technique used is eminently suited for the delineation of local colour.
Indeed the first part of the novel ending in Mark reading "The Tempest to Moses, contains excellent delineation of the local colour; it demonstrates something approaching genius in the achievement of tone and atmosphere, so much so that John Greenleaf Whittier wrote:

"When I am in the mood of thinking deeply I read The Minister's Wooing," but The Pearl of Orr's Island is my favourite. It is the most charming idyl ever written."

Sarah Orne Jewett wrote that she read the novel when she was thirteen or fourteen years old and could never forget the exquisite flavour and reality of delight which the beginning gave her; she described it as "classical-historical—any thing you like to say, if you can give it high praise enough".

There are interesting parallels between Shakespeare's The Tempest and Mrs. Stowe's The Pearl of Orr's Island. The genesis of this lies in the fact that as girl, in Litchfield, Connecticut, young Harriet Beecher found a battered set of tales torn loose from a collection of Shakespeare's plays. Her portion contains The Tempest which she read with great

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delight. In *The Pearl of Orr's Island*, Mara finds a torn copy of *The Tempest* in her grandparents' attic and is very much delighted to read it.

The scenes of magic, rescue from the sea, innocence, true love between young lovers, all watched over by a wise, miracle working old man, - described in *The Tempest* have their parallels in *The Pearl of Orr's Island*. Shakespeare's Miranda and Ferdinand, have their parallels in Stowe's Mara and Moses who are cast up on the shore and are motherless. Like innocent Miranda, who has never seen other humans, Mara has never been off her island, but for trips to Brunswick. Like Shakespeare's Prosper's Stowe's Captain Kittridge, Mr. Sewell and Mr. Pennel prize their books, their libraries are "dukedom large enough". Shakespeare's Caliban has also his parallel in Atkinson, the smuggler. In both stories the wicked are either punished or reformed.

Through the magic of prosper, Alonso, the intriguing brother in *The Tempest* undergoes a change of heart at the end. Mara's death occasions a similar transformation in Moses. As in *The Tempest*, so in *The Pearl* the emphasis is on Adamic innocence; these are children of nature tutored by Calvin but untouched by sin.
In addition to all these, one of the chapters in *The Pearl of Orr's Island* is captioned *The Enchanted Island* mentioned in *The Tempest*.

The narrative technique used in *The Pearl of Orr's Island* is again the third-person narrative, the level of the narrative is extradiegetic; the narrator is not any of the characters in the novel.
References


3. Ibid.:p. 146.
3. Oldtown Folks

Chronologically, Oldtown Folks is Mrs. Stowe's third New England novel. But,

"By far the most comprehensive of her New England novels, her own favourite among them, and indeed the best book she ever wrote is Oldtown Folks, in which she combined her husband's memories of his youth with her own dreams."

Departing from her earlier practice, Mrs. Stowe wrote Oldtown Folks in the first person, her narrator is Horace Holyoke. Mrs. Stowe spells out her purpose of writing Oldtown Folks through her narrator, Holyoke, in the preface to the novel, in the following words:

"My object is to interpret to the world the New England life and character in that particular time of history which may be
called the seminal period. I would endeavor to show you New England in its see-bed, before the hot suns of modern progress had developed its sprouting germs into the great trees of today".

(Oldtown Folks, P.47)

The setting of the novel is a fictitious place Oldtown in Massachusetts, New England in late eighteenth century. It is generally believed that Oldtown is fictitious name for the town of Natick in Massachusetts, New England where Calvin E. Stowe was born and spent his childhood.

The Plot

Horace Holyoke has grown up in Oldtown, Massachusetts during the Post-Revolutionary period. He describes Oldtown's typical institution; its preoccupations with theological discussions and wrestlings; its scholarly, Arminian minister,
Parson Lothrop and his aristocratic, Episcopalian wife, Lady Lothrop; the orthodox Calvinist minister, Moses Stern, who teaches grim old Calvinist dogmas in the tradition of Edwards; and the less orthodox Calvinist minister, Rev. Mr. Avery, who is somewhere between Lothrop and Stern.

Harry and Tina Percival, the two waifs, are taken into the family of Old 'Crab' Smith and Miss Asphyxia Smith. Harshness and miserliness of 'Old Crab' Smith and his sister Miss Asphyxia cause the children to run away. However, they are brought back by Horace's Uncle Fly and Sam Lawson, a comic idler and oracle. Tina is adopted by Miss Mehitable Rossiter, daughter of the former Parson Rossiter, and Harry lives with Lady Lothrop. On her annual Easter trip to Boston, Lady Lothrop takes Harry, Tina and Horace along with her. The children attend Church of England services and meet prominent persons of Boston society, including Ellery Davenport, an aristocratic Revolutionary officer who resembles Aaron Burr of The Minister's Wooing. Later, it is found that the orphans Harry and Tina are members of a wealthy British family. Consequently, Harry attends academy at Cloudland, and thereafter goes to Harvard with Horace. Horace falls in love with Tina. But Tina marries Ellery Davenport. However, her happiness is
short-lived. Miss Mehitable Rossi ter's sister Emily appears and accuses Davenport of seducing her and of being the father of her daughter. Tina adopts the child and goes with her husband, Ellery Davenport, to Europe. Harry goes to England and becomes an Anglican clergymen. Later, Davenport return to Massachusetts. Ellery becomes a political leader and is killed in a duel. After two years Horace and Tina are married.

Important Characters in the Novel

The important characters in the novel are Horace Holyoke, Parson Lothrop, Mrs. Lothrop, Old Crab Smith, Miss Asphyxia, Sam Lawson, grandmother Mrs. Bader, Aunt Leis, Tina, Harry, Miss Mehitable Rossi ter, Polly, Mr. Jonathan Rossi ter, Dr. Moses Stern, Emily Rossi ter, Ellery Davenport, Mr. Avery and Esther Avery.

Horace Holyoke is a young visionary lad who was born in Oldtown in Massachusetts. He has spent his early life in Oldtown, originally a pretty Indian village on the banks of a tranquil river. He describes, with nostalgia, the life and character of Oldtown folks during an era before the advent of
rail-roads in New England, the era when the "hard, rocky, sterile New England was a sort of half Hebrew theocracy, half ultra-democratic republic of little villages, separated by a pathless ocean from all the civilization and refinement of the Old World, forgotten and unnoticed, and yet burning like live coals under this obscurity with all the fervid activity of an intense, newly kindled, peculiar, and individual life".

(Oldtown Folks, P.49)

Horace Holyoke is the narrator of the narrative, Oldtown Folks. He sorrowfully notes that the impress of the image and body of a period in New England most peculiar and most interesting is now rapidly fading away.

Horace Holyoke is a vivid and adept narrator, his delineations of the life and character of Oldtown folks, who form the microcosm of New England folks as a whole, before the advent of rail-roads, come alive. As a matter of fact, Horace Holyoke is Mrs. Stowe's husband, Mr. Calvin E. Stowe himself in disguise.
The Arminian minister, Parson Lothrop is an interesting character in the novel. He has "some of good ministerial blood for generations back".

(OF, P. 52)

He "was one of the cleanest, most gentlemanly, most well bred of men, -- never appearing without all the decerums of silk stockings, shining knee and shoe buckles, well brushed shoes, immaculately powdered wig, out of which shone his clear, calm, serious face, like the moon out of a fleecing cloud". He has clam, quiet, sedate nature. He is the minister in an Indian missionary church established from a fund invested in England for the conversion of the American Indians. Unlike his great Calvinist predecessors, he does not lecture the wandering remnants of Indian tribes on the original depravity of the heart, the need of a radical and thorough regeneration by the Holy spirit of God, or the power of Jesus as a Saviour from sin. Instead, he talks to them of the evil of drunkenness, of lying, of idleness, and exhorts them to be temperate and industrious; and when they, notwithstanding his exhortations, continue to lead an unthrifty, wandering life, he calmly expresses his conviction that they are children of the forest, a race destined to extinction with the progress of civilization, but continues his labour for them with automatic precision.
His Sunday sermons are "well-written specimens of the purest and most elegant Addisonian English, and no mortal could find fault with a word that was in them, as they were sensible, rational and religious, as far as they went. Indeed, Mr. Lothrop was quite an elegant scholar and student in literature, - - - - "

(OF, P.53, 54)

Mrs. Stowe has, obviously characterized Parson Lothrop quite sarcastically betraying her aversion for Arminianism through poor Mr. Lothrop.

Formerly, Mrs. Lothrop was Mrs. Dorothea Lucretia Dixwell, wife of a wealthy Tory merchant in Boston. After the death of Mr. Dixwell she receives the property as a legacy from her husband. "Mrs. Dixwell was in heart and soul an English woman, an adorer of church and king, a worshipper of aristocracy and all the powers that be. She owned a pew in King's Chapel in Boston, and clung more punctiliously than ever to her prayer-book, - - - - "

(OF, P.54)

After Mr. Dixwell's death, in spite of her aristocratic and snobbish temperament, she marries Parson Lothrop.
because he is a stately, handsome, well-proportioned man; because he has the formal and ceremonious politeness of a gentleman of the old school; he has excellent antecedent; and as there are no more nobleman to be had in America, marrying a minister is the next best thing to it. It is stipulated and agreed between Mr. and Mrs. Lothrop that Mrs. Lothrop should have full liberty to observe in her own proper person all the festivals and fasts of the Church of England, should be excused from all company and allowed to keep the seclusion of her own apartment on Good Friday, and should proceed immediately thereafter in her own coach to Boston, to be present at the Easter services in Kings Chapel.

In brief, Mrs. Lothrop, or Lady Lothrop is highly pompous and stickler to Episcopalianism.

Old Crab Smith is an ill-tempered man who lives in isolation because of his disagreeable nature. After Harry's mother's death the parish of Needmore takes charge of Harry and Tina. Harry falls to the lot of Old 'Crab' Smith and Tina to that of Miss Asphyxia Smith. Harry works in Old Crab Smith's farm. Old 'Crab' Smith ruthlessly extracts work from Harry and does not allow him to meet his sister Tina.
Miss Asphyxia Smith is hardworking, she works like a machine. She has an established reputation of being "a staver", "a pealer", "a rearer to work". She puts Tina to hard work and imparts her religious instructions. To discipline Tina Miss Asphyxia whips her ruthlessly.

Eventually because of Miss Asphyxia's harsh and tyrannical behaviour, Tina, with the help of Solomon Peters, Miss Asphyxia's servant, runs away with her brother Harry.

"--- Old "Crab" Smith and his sister Miss Asphyxia, a grizzly couple devoted to whipping and austerity in the name of pious duty, and of whom Mrs. Stove can only say that they are "as ignorant of the bind agony of mingled shame, wrath, sense of degradation, and burning for revenge, which had been excited by their measures, as the icy east wind of Boston flats is of the stinging and shivering it causes in its course. Is it the wind's fault if your nose is frozen?" "Glacial" Calvinism again."

"It is Sam Lawson, however, who most vividly brings Oldtown alive in our imaginations."

Sam Lawson is an amusing character in the novel. He
is of a respectable family, and not destitute in education. He is an expert in atleast five or six different kinds of handicraft, in all of which he is acknowledged to be a capable workman by knowledgeable persons, but he does not stick to any of these.

He is "do-nothing" of Oldtown, a man who won't be hurried, and won't work and will take his ease in his own way, in spite of the whole protest of his neighbourhood to the contrary. He is soft and idle; he has general inaptitude to labour, and everlasting universal shiftlessness.

"The fact is, that Sam's softly easy temper and habits of miscellaneous handiness caused him to have a warm corner in most of the households. No mothers ever are very hard on a man who always pleases the children; and everyone knows the welcome of a universal gossip, who carries round a district a wallet of choice bits of neighbourhood information".

(OF, P.78)

He knows everything about everybody. He never has anything more pressing to do than croon and gossip with children. His nature and activities have endeared him to children.
Horace Holyoke's grandmother, Mrs. Badger is an earnest Puritan Calvinist. She is full of contradictions and inconsistences; yet a brave, generous, energetic, large-hearted, and impulsive lady. She is of scholarly temperament and fond of reading books on different subjects. She has been nourished in the sayings and traditions of the Mathers and the Eliots, and all the first generation of saints who had possessed Massachusetts. She has studied the writings of Edwards and Bellamy. Theoretically, she is an ardent follower of the sharpest and severest form of Calvinism and repeats Michael Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom* to her children and grandchildren with a reverent acquiescence in all its hard sayings, while practically she is the most pitiful easy-to-be-entreated old mortal an earth, and is ever falling a prey to any lazy vagabond who chooses to make an appeal to her abounding charity -

"She could not refuse a beggar that asked in a piteous tone; she could not send a child to bed that wanted to sit up; she could not eat a meal in peace when there were hungry eyes watching her; she could not, in cool, deliberate moments,
even inflict transient and necessary pain for the greater good of a child, and resolutely shut her eyes to the necessity of such infliction. But there lay at the bottom of all this apparent inconsistency a deep cause that made it consistent, all that cause was the theological stratum in which her mind, and the mind of all New England was embedded."

(OP, P.391)

Thus, through her character, Mrs. Badger, Mrs. Stowe demonstrates that in spite of adherence to the sharpest and severest form of Calvinism, the New Englanders are not ruthless, they are brave, large-hearted, generous and energetic. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Badger presents an antithesis of Mrs. Marvyn in The Minister's Wooing.

Horace Holyoke's aunt Lois wears a wrapping of sharp austerity in conformity to Calvinism, yet the best, the kindest, the most desirable traits are embedded in her
character. No person renders more deed of kindness in the Badger family and their neighbourhood than Aunt Lois. She indeed bears the cares of the whole family in her heart; she has invested herself in others and it is vital to her happiness, not only that they should be happy, but they should be happy on her pattern and in her way.

Tina has received from nature and womanhood that inspiration in dress and toilet attraction which led her always and instinctively to some little form of personal adoration. In the academy in Cloudland, Mr. Rossiter considers her as a spoiled child of fortune, whom the world has conspired to injure by over-much petting. Tina is "one of those happily organized human beings in whom an intellectual proposition, fully assented, might lie all her life dormant as the wheat-seed which remained thousands of years ungerminate in the wrappings of a mummy". She thought only of what she liked to think of; and a disagreeable or painful truth in her mind dropped at once out of sight, it sank into the ground and roses grew over it."

Actually, Tina is modeled after Mrs. Stowe's liveliest daughter, Georgiana.
By native descent Harry is a gentleman of the peculiarly English stock. He has the shy reserve, the silent self-respecting pride and delicacy, which leads him to keep his own soul as a castle. He is one of those quiet human beings of great force in native individuality, who silently draw from all scenes and things just those elements which their own being craves, and resolutely and calmly think their own thoughts, and live their own life, amid the most discordant influences. His conclusions are all intuitions. His religion is an emanation from heart, a child of personal experience, and not a formula of the head. In him is seen the beginning of that great reaction which takes place largely in the young mind of New England against the tyranny of mere logical methods as applied to the ascertaining of moral truth.

Miss Mehitable is an intelligent, sensitive spinster. Miss Mehitable Rossiter is an antithesis of Miss Asphyxia Smith. She adopts Tina and loves her. She has a strong mind; she is an omnivorous reader; and is apt and lively in conversation. Her tastes are in the world of books and ideas, rather than that of physical matters; she lives under the watch and charge of an old female household servant, Polly Shubel; she has resigned herself to Polly's sway with as good a grace as possible,
though sometimes she feels that it rather curtails her freedom of action.

Her house is full of delightful images, a great, calm, cool, shady, old fashioned house, full of books and of quaint old furniture, with a garden on one side where are no ends of lillies, hollyhocks, pinks and peonies, to say nothing of currants, raspberries, apples, pears and other carnal delights, all of which good Miss Mehitable is free to dispense to her children visitors.

Her mind is afflicted with Calvinism; she manages to move from Calvinism through doubt to religion of love.

Polly is a driving, thrifty, doctrinal, and practical woman who believes most patently in early rising, soap and sand, and the Assembly's catechism. She considers Miss Mehitable as a sort of child under her wardship and conducts the whole business of life for her with a sovereign and unanswerable authority. She believes in Hopkin's theology and is averse to Parson Lothrop's theology.

Mr. Rossiter pursues all the natural sciences with an industry and enthusiasm only possible to a man who
lives in so lonely and retired place as Cloudland.

He dearly loves to talk and teach, and out of school hours it is his delight to sit surrounded by his disciples, to answer their questions, and to show them his herbarium and his mineralogical cabinet. He scorns all conventional rules in teaching, and does not tolerate a mechanical lesson, and takes delight in puzzling his pupils and breaking up all routine business by starting unexpected questions and assertions. He compels every one to think and think for himself.

To tell the truth, he uses his teaching somewhat as a mental gratification to himself.

Mr. Rossiter is sparing of praise, but his praise bears a value in proposition to its scarcity. It is like diamonds and rubies; a few can have it, but the whole of his little commonwealth is working for it. He never canes his boys, yet never is a man more feared and is held in more awful regard than Mr. Rossiter.

In short, Mr. Rossiter's system resembles that of those gardeners who, instead of bending all their energies
toward making a handsome head to a young tree, encourage it to burst out in suckers clear down to the root, bringing every part of it into vigorous life and circulation.

Dr. Moses Stern is the most remarkable clergyman. An austere, inflexible, grand indifference to all things earthly seems to give him the prestige and dignity of a supernatural being. His Calvinism is of so severe and ultra a type, and his statements are so little qualified either by pity of human infirmity or fear of human censure, or desire of human approbation, that he reminds one of some ancient prophet, freighted with a mission of woe and wrath, which he must always speak, whether people would hear or whether they would forbear.

Dr. Stern's theological system is, like a skilful engine of torture, calculated to produce all the mental anguish of the most perfect sense of helplessness with the most torturing sense of responsibility.

Individually, Dr. Stern, like many other teachers of severe, uncompromising theories, is an artless, simple-hearted, gentle-mannered man. He refuses to have the smallest thing to do with any temporal affair of this life.
Dr. Stern is in his position irresistible, simply because he cares nothing at all for the things men ordinarily care for. He cares nothing for the worldly prosperity; he is totally indifferent to money; he utterly despises fame and reputation, and therefore from none of these sources can be in the slightest degree be influenced. Such a man is generally the King of his neighbourhood, the one whom all look up to, and all fear, and whose word in time comes law.

A sermon on reprobation from Dr. Stern sits up the whole community. Dr. Stern shakes and sways his audience like a field of grain under a high wind.

Dr. Stern always professes to be an antislavery man.

Emily Rossiter is younger sister of Miss Mehitable Rossiter. She is exquisitely beautiful, highly nervous and wildly excitable. Her genius is extraordinary; her strength and vigour of character quite as much so. Altogether, she is a perilously constituted human being. Her brother Jonathan and sister Miss Mehitable put her with Uncle and Aunt Fansworth. The glacial, gloomy, Calvinist religious
training in Uncle Fansworth's family is peculiarly unfortunate for her; she sits from Sunday to Sunday under Dr. Stern's preaching. With a high-keyed mind, she cannot help listening and thinking; and such thinking is unfortunate. Dr. Stern teaches that a secret enemy of God lies latent in every soul which can be expelled by being brought to the surface. Emily's nature is such that the enmity thus aroused in her can never be subdued except by love.

Under these circumstances she falls prey to Ellery Davenport's seduction; elopes with him, but later Ellery deserts her, and eventually she becomes an out-cast.

Ellery Davenport is grandson of Jonathan Edwards. He is tall, graceful young man whose air and movements give a singular impression of both light and strength. He is ambitious, intriguing and unscrupulous. His feeling toward Church and religion has all the bitterness of the dissenient son, who likes nothing but better to point out the faults in those favoured children who enjoy the privileges of which he is deprived. He has not been able entirely to rid himself of a belief in what he hates.
He is at war with himself, at war with the traditions of his ancestry and has a feeling that he is regarded in the Puritan community as an apostate; but he takes a perverse pleasure in making his position good by a brilliancy of wit and grace of manner which few can resist; and his success, even with the more rigid, justifies his self-confidence.

In the meantime, with that easy facility which enabled him to please everybody, he becomes, during the course of somewhat extended visit, rather a hero in Oldtown. What Colonel Davenport said, and what Colonel Davenport did are spoken of from mouth to mouth.

The principles such as they are, are used by him as he uses all principles, simply as convenient machinery for carrying out his own purpose. As far as religion is concerned, his is the religion of love between man and woman.

True to his character, he seduces Emily Rossiter, elopes with her to France, from there moves to Switzerland with her and ultimately deserts her.
Actually, Mrs. Stowe has recreated Aaron Burr in Ellery Davenport.

Mr. Avery is a cheerful, busy, manly man, who poses himself among men as a companion and fellow-citizen, whose word on any subject is to go only so far as its own weight and momentum should carry it. His preaching is a striking contrast to the elegant, Addisonian essays of Parson Lothrop. It is a vehement address to our intelligent and reasoning powers, an address made telling by a black force of burning enthusiasm. Mr. Avery preaches a vigorous system of mental philosophy in theology.

The keynote of Mr. Avery's mind is "the free agency of man". Free agency is with him the universal solvent, the philosopher's stone in theology; every line of his sermons says to every human being. "You are free, and you are able." And the great object is to intensity to its highest point, in every human being, the sense of individual, personal responsibility.

The Calvinism of Mr. Avery, though sharp and well defined, is not dull, as abstractions often are, nor gloomy and piteful like that of Dr. Stern. It is permeated through and through by cheerfulness and hope.
Mr. Avery is one of the kind of men who have a passion for saving souls. He is a firm believer in hell, but he believes also that nobody need go there, and he is determined so far as he is concerned, that nobody should go there if he can help it.

Generous and ardent in his social sympathies, Mr. Avery never would be brought to believe that any particular person has finally perished. At every funeral he attends he contrives to see a ground for hope that the departed has found mercy.

Mr. Avery is a man who always corrects theory by common sense.

Esther is one of those intense, silent, repressed woman that have been a frequent outgrowth of New England society. Moral traits, like physical ones, often intensify themselves in course of descent, so that the child of a long line of pious ancestry may sometimes suffer from too fine a moral fibre, and become a victim to a species of morbid spiritual ideality.

Esther looks, less like a warm, breathing, impulsive woman, less like ordinary flesh and blood, than
some half-spiritual organization every particle of which is a thought.

Themes in the Novel

*Oldtown Folks* is essentially New England's looking glass. The main theme of the novel is delineation of New England life and character in the "seminal period", before the advent of railroads, which is essentially the late eighteenth century.

During the seminal period, religions and religious controversies preoccupied the minds of people of New England. Mrs. Stowe takes Oldtown as the microcosm of New England and through Oldtown she deals with the religions and religious controversies in the whole of New England.

Arminianism is delineated through Parson Lothrop, Parson Lothrop embodies in him Arminianism. Severest form of Calvinism is described through Dr. Moses Stern, Dr. Stern is the embodiment of this form of Calvinism. A milder form of Calvinism is depicted through Mr. Avery. Mr. Avery is
the exemplar of this form of Calvinism.

Episcopalianism is delineated through Madame Kittery and her daughter Miss Debby whom Harry, Tina, and Horace visit during Easter. Pompous Lady Lothrop also represents Episcopalianism. Miss Mehitable Rossiter represents skeptics.

Mrs. Stowe, through the narrator Horace Holyoke, claims objectivity and non-partisan delineations of different religious denominations.

Though Calvinist, Arminian, High-Church Episcopalian, Sceptic, and Simple believer all speak in their turn, I merely listen, and endeavour to understand and faithfully represent the inner life of each. I myself am but the observer and reporter, seeing much, doubting much questioning much, and believing with all my heart in only a few things."

(OF, 48)
However, her claim is believed by her characterization, it is obvious that Mr. Avery and hence his form of Calvinism is to her taste. Dr. Stern's form of Calvinism is detestable to her as is borne out by Emily's revolt and her going astray consequent upon her listening to Dr. Stern's sermons. It is further corroborated by Horace Holyoke's thesis that Jonathan Edwards was a dangerous innovator in New England theology ecclesiastical practice. She is also against Arminianism as is evinced from unfriendly and somewhat mocking portrayal of Parson Lothrop; the narrator points out that inspite of Parson Lothrop's scholarship and his well prepared, impeccable sermons, his parishnores sleep during his sermons. However, Mrs. Stowe does not take unequivocal view about different religious denominations. She seems to be somewhat confused in this regard.

A miner theme is the miserable plight of women in New England in the seminal period. The wife of Old 'Crab' Smith is almost his bonded slave, or even worse. Inspite of her complete surrender to him, the miserly Old 'Crab' treats her very badly. Then there is a proliferation of spinsters in the novel; Miss Asphyxia, Aunt Lois, Miss Rossiter, the maid Polly, and the Anglican Miss Deborah,
and none of them is completely normal.

Another theme is the change wrought by industrialization and by the advent of rail roads, i.e., the comparison of New England then (before the advent of rail-roads) and now (after the advent of rail-roads). New England of pre rail-road days is reminisced with nostalgia; the days when people were purer.

The Technique Used in the Novel

Basically Oldtown Folks is a historical novel written in realist tradition. Most of the characters are drawn from actual life. For example, Horace Holyoke is Calvin E. Stowe; Dr. Moses Stern is Dr. Nathaniel Emmons; Mr. Avery is Lyman Beecher, Ellery Davenport is Aaron Burr, Tina is Mrs. Stowe's daughter Georgiana; Sam Lawson is a real village character Sam Lawton, Grandmother Badger is Grandmother Foote, Parson Lothrop is Stephen Badger, an Arminian; Horace Holyoke's jovial Harvard uncle is William Beglow, a real "Uncle Bill" of Calvin Stowe. Jonathan Rossiter is Mrs. Stowe's remarkable teacher John Pierce
Brace. Similarly, Oldtown is Natick where Calvin E. Stowe was born, Needmore is Needham a short distance from Natick; Cloudland is Litchfield.

**Oldtown Folks** is rich in the delineation of local colour. It is partly epistolary novel; letters are exchanged between Miss Mehitable Rossiter and her brother Jonathan Rossiter. Harry's father, Sir Harry Percival, writes a letter to Harry; Tina writes letter to Miss Mehitable Rossiter. Harry's father also writes letter to Harry from England before his death.

The narrative technique used is the first person narrative; the narrator Horace Holyoke narrates the story in the first person. The level of narrative is diegetic.

It can be said that,

"- - - - Oldtown Folks is a good deal more than Harriet's charming expression of an ideal self slowly forming through a lifetime. Her novel is large, comprehensive, various. In its perspective reading of New England
intellectual history, in its expression through symbolic action of a major change in American religious alliance, in its marvellous rendering of the bold phrasing and varying rhythms of Yankee talk, in its huge gallery of vividly realized personalities from all levels of the New England village world, Oldtown Folks is a central New England and American book."

One may conclude that

"Oldtown Folks is not a great novel or a great work of art; it may not be a novel at all. Whatever it be called - a series of sketches, a historical essay with interpolated plot - it is an uneven performance. With all its faults it is an interesting and important book. In it a woman of keen intelligence and sharp perception has drawn on a lifetime of outward observation and inner experience. As a New England writer
should, and as few writers of any kind manage to do successfully, Mrs. Stowe gives us a look beneath the surface of a Society; at the live coals glowing. 5
References


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4. **Poganuc People**

*Poganuc People: Their Loves and Lives* is Mrs. Stowe's fourth and the last New-England novel. It is a fictional memoir of Mrs. Stowe's childhood years in Litchfield and differs from the other three New England novels in being more autobiographical. Apart from being an enjoyable novel based on Harriet Beecher Stowe's childhood in Litchfield, Connecticut, it is a vehicle for expression of her mature social, political, and religious philosophy. It is replete with local colour; and contains vivid portrayal of characters and rich descriptive passages. Scene after scene has the authentic delineation of the local aura witnessed and experienced by the author in her childhood. The novel contains vivid delineation of the Town meetings; heated political discussions at the local store, over tea in an aristocratic parlour; Fourth of July celebration with attendant oratory; chestnutting excursions; Christmas celebrations in Episcopal Church, the apple-bee, and daily life in the parsonage of the village minister.

*Poganuc People* opens on the eve of 1818, that fateful
year which marked the legal separation of Church and State in Connecticut. This timing provides a reference and a theme to which Mrs. Stowe addresses.

The central event in *Poganuc People* is the separation of Church and State in 1818 resulting in an end to theocracy in Connecticut. Mrs. Stowe has fictionalized this event in *Poganuc People*. Mrs. Stowe's father Lyman Beecher, being a Puritan clergyman, was opposed to this separation as well as to religious toleration and widening of the suffrage. The reason for this opposition was his apprehension that once the orthodoxy was denied official support, the plain people, who are not always wise to safeguard their own interests, would be led astray by irresponsible demagogues. However, after the separation of the Church and State, Lyman Beecher reconciled with the situation, he even felt that it was a boon in disguise as now clergymen could concentrate more on their divine duty, they would not have to bother for politics. Mrs. Stowe has delineated this predicament of Lyman Beecher through her character Dr. Cushing, the Parson of Poganuc, in the novel.

The novel also deals with the problem of drifting of Puritans to Episcopalianism, i.e., the problem of abandoning
the Presbyterian Church and "signing off" to the Episcopal Church due to inter alia, discontent with the established order. Before 1818, the Presbyterian Church was the State Church, it levied its tax on every householder, and demanded by stringent law and custom attendance at two Sunday services. Difference of religious opinion was not allowed, sabbath-keeping was strictly enforced; eligibility to public offices was limited to church members only. These unendurable constraints led people to drift away from the Presbyterian Church. However, not being a member of any church adversely affected one's respectability in the society. Consequently, driven by the tyranny of the Presbyterian Church people started "signing off" to the Episcopal Church. The novel describes Dr. Cushing's role in checking the tendency of people of "signing off" to the Episcopal Church.

However, Poganuc People does not occupy itself with extensive theological controversy, Mrs. Stowe does not reopen the debate with Jonathan Edwards, nor does she instruct her readers directly on theological issues. The novel owes its success to its serenity, to its poetic recreation of the life at Litchfield, rather than to heated polemics.
Dr. Cushing is engaged in the defence of the standing order against the encroachments of the Episcopalians whom he curses as corrupt tools of the Jeffersonian democrats. As soon as the standing order has gone down to defeat due to the separation of Church and State, Dr. Cushing declares that it is the best thing that has ever happened to old Connecticut, for now the clergy may forget politics and concentrate on the preaching of gospel and the saving of the souls. Consequently, when the theocracy had passed away they spent no time lamenting it. They let the cocked hat, gold-headed cane, gown and bands go down the stream; they let all laws protecting their order go by; and addressed themselves simply to the work of leading their people, as men with men, only by seeking to be stronger, wiser, and better men. To know more, to have more
faith in the Invisible and Eternal, to be able to argue more logically to convince and to persuade -- these were now their ambition. Dr. Cushing was foremost in this new crusade. He determined to preach more and preach better than ever he had done before, and consequently in his wide parish, which covered a square of about ten miles, he was every day preaching, visiting, attending prayer - meetings."

(Poganuc People, P. 179-180).

In the novel Zeph Higgins is a peculiar character. He is suspended from the Presbyte Church due to a controversy between him and the Deacon of the church. As a result of this, he "signs off" to the Episcopal Church. He has the habit of opposing everything but he is very hard-working and successful planter. There is an issue of relocating a Schoolhouse at public expense. Zeph's fellow citizens are of a mind to approve the moving of schoolhouse in the next town meeting.
But Zeph is so quarrelsome in his support of the proposal that he drives people to the opposite side of the issue. The Friday before the crucial town-meeting, however, Zeph decides to move the schoolhouse on his own. He takes the family Bible and, in a high pitched and determined voice, reads the account of Sampson carrying off the gates of Gaza, and the next morning, with the help of his sons, moves the schoolhouse to a sensible location.

Zeph Higgins's wife, Mary, develops tuberculosis. She is a silent, prayerful, devout woman. She succumbs to the disease. While dying, Mary Higgins implores Zeph to reconcile himself to the church; but the hardened sinner, though he attends the church, becomes increasingly certain that he is doomed to damnation. Efforts of his fellow citizens and of Dr. Cushing failed to regenerate him.

One evening during the course of a prayer meeting, Zeph publicly confesses,

"I'm a stumbling-block. I've allers ben one. I hain't never ben a Christian - that's jest
the truth on't. I never had
oughter 'a' ben in the Church.
I've ben all wrong - wrong -
wrong! I knew I was wrong, but
I wouldn't give up. It's ben
jist my awful will. I've set
up my will agin God Almighty.
I've set it agin my neighbours-
agin the minister and agin the
church. And now the Lord's
come out agin me; he's struck
me down. I know he's got a
right -- he can do what he
pleases -- but ain't resigned -
not a grain. I submit 'cause
I can't help myself; but my
heart's hard and wicked. I
expect my day of grace is over.
I ain't a Christian, and I can't
be, and I shall go to hell at
last, and serve me right "

( Poganuc People,
P. 305-306)
After the service is over people slowly disperse, Zeph remains in his place, rigid and still. Dr. Cushing's daughter, Dolly, also stays behind in the empty room with her father and mother. Suddenly, Dolly steps up to the forlorn Zeph, lays her pretty little timid hand upon Zeph's shoulder, crying, in a voice tremulous at once with fear and with intensity,

"O, why do you say that you cannot be a Christian? Don't you know that Christ loves You? Christ loves you!"

The words thrill his soul with a strange new power. He opens his eyes and looks astonished into the little earnest pleading face.

"Christ loves you" she repeated
"Oh, do believe it!"
"Loves me!" he said slowly.
"Why should he?"

"But he does; he loves us all. He died for us. He dies for you. Oh, believe it. He'll
help you; he will make you feel right. Only trust him. Please say you will."

(ZP, P.308)

Zephs looks at the little face earnestly, in a softened, wondering way. A tear slowly rolls down his hard check.

"Thank' ez, dear child," he says

"You will believe it?"

"I'll try"

"You will trust Him?"

(ZP, P.308)

Zeph pauses a moment, then rises up with a new and different expression in his face, and says in a subdued and earnest voice,

"I will."

(ZP, P.308)

"Amen" says the doctor who stood listening; and silently grasps the old man's hand.
Important Characters in the Novel

Rev. Dr. Cushing is the minister in the Presbyterian Church in Poganuc. He is father of ten children of whom Dolly is the youngest. He is liberal minded and does not mind Dolly attending Christmas celebrations at the Episcopal Church.

Dolly Cushing is an angelic girl. She loves to attend Christmas celebrations in the Episcopal Church. She succeeds where her father fails.

Like Eva in Uncle Tom's Cabin, Mary in The Minister's Wooing and Mara in The Pearl of Orr's Island - she is the better evangelist than the seasoned ministers.

Zeph Higgins is a man born to oppose everything. He is very obstinate and quarrelsome. He has alienated everyone, his friends, neighbours, the minister and the Deacon of the church. He is very much distressed by the death of his wife. However, Dolly's loving touch and entreaties completely transforms him into a good man.

Hiel Jones, a stage driver, is portrayed as a true Yankee. He is as popular as Sam Lawson. He is a jovial person.
Themes in the Novel

The main theme of the novel is delineation of New England life and character in the early nineteenth century.

Another theme is the effect of the oppressive form of Calvinism and theocracy on the people of New England as well as the separation of church and state.

As in other novels of Mrs. Stowe, Poganuc People also has the recurrent theme that religion of love is more powerful than the religion of law. Mrs. Stowe has demonstrated this again through Dolly Cushing in Poganuc People. It is demonstrated through the conversion of Zeph Higgins, into a good and respectable man.

Technique Used in the Novel

Poganuc People is also an historical novel and is rich in verisimilitude. The setting of the novel is early nineteenth century Litchfield. It is highly autobiographical; Dr. Cushing is none else than Dr. Lyman Beecher and Dolly is essentially Mrs. Harriet Beecher.
The Yeoman and independent farmer classes are represented by Nabby Higgins, Hiel Jones and Zeph Higgins; the aristocratic class is represented by Colonel Davenport, Judge Belcher and Judge Gridley.

The novel is rich in delineation of local colour. Local scenery plays an important role in the novel. Mrs. Stowe has portrayed the gamut of Poganuc society skillfully. Mrs. Stowe unfolds to the reader scenes of every day life, be they preparations of high-tea, or the process of candle-making which are remarkable for their details and offer a host of information about early nineteenth century New England - Mrs. Stowe uses humour skillfully.

"Hiel's courtship of spirited Nabby Higgins is vastly humorous and entertaining - and it shows the skill of Mrs. Stowe in delineation of humour.

The narrative technique used in the third-person narrative. The level of narrative is extradiagnostic, the narrator is not a character in the novel;

"But the final claim of Harriet Beecher Stowe must rest on her
ability to give us a balanced and immediate sense of the vital and complex Puritan past. It was here that she made a permanently significant contribution to American culture, for it is only as Puritan New England comes to life in our imaginations and our emotions as well as in our understandings that we can discover how "usable" a past we actually possess. A study such as I have written is no substitute for the Minister's Wooing, The Pearl of Orr's Island, Oldtown Folks, Oldtown Fireside Stories and Poganuc People. Harriet Beecher Stowe gives us something far better than an interpretation; she gives us at a single remove in the world of imagination a deep and moving and often beautiful experience. Reading her novels we are likely to discover that we have
surprising sympathies with the intellectuality, the moral boldness, the intense soul-searching, the warm and vital humour and humanity of New England Puritanism. We are likely to discover a new source of refreshment in a return to our intellectual and spiritual roots in the New England village."
References
