

Appendix 6: Adventure Narratives and *Our Cousins in Ohio*

The adventure story was, at this time, emerging as an important sub-genre of children's literature. Although *Our Cousins in Ohio* is more a work of domestic fiction, a narrative of settlement more than of exploration, it participates in important ways in the adventure genre. In *The Children's Year*, the older brother reads aloud from Captain Marryat's *Settlers in Canada* (1844) and *Masterman Ready: or the Wreck of the Pacific* (1841) and fantasizes about emigrating to America, "to have all kinds of difficulties and hard work to do, and to be in danger from Indians" (12). As this book's sequel, *Our Cousins* offered the promise of just such an adventure. Vicariously, if not in practice, the children of *Our Cousins* are entirely wrapped in the ethos of adventure. Their fireside reading includes John Charles Frémont's *Narrative of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842*; Charles Waterton's *Wanderings in South America*; John McClung's *Sketches of Western Adventure, Containing an Account of the Most Interesting Incidents Connected with the Settlement of the West, from 1755 to 1794*. Cousin Israel Hopper tells of his journey down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, where he sees alligators and feasts on exotic fruits. From their comfortably settled perspective near Cincinnati, the family are surrounded by movement and adventure: formerly enslaved people moving north, westward migrants in their wagons, displaced Native Americans moving west to new homelands or east to Washington with petitions for redress, soldiers on their way to war in Mexico. It is indeed an "interesting contrast" that Gillian Avery notes between "the first [book] showing the sheltered, cosseted lives led by her own children, and the second...describing the sturdy independence expected of young Americans" (263).