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The Reformers

Social reform in the Antebellum Period (1820–1860) was almost a hobby among middle and upper-class Americans. The era of Antebellum was phase where everything was seen from the lens of imagination and idealism. There were a number of factors that lead to the initiation of Civil War, which also included a number of event in the Antebellum time frame. Not all the events of the Antebellum era lead directly to the civil war or became the cause of the Civil war, but the looming period and the circumstances clearly became an issue and created crucial situations (Sherraden). This era can undoubtedly be considered as the defining periods in the history of the United States of America (Krueckeberg). If American history is closely observed, there’s kind of a gap between the American Revolution and the Civil War.

Since the dawn of the 19th century, the residents of North America were in the efforts to prove the country of America as an ideal nation (Goldfield). The North consisted of well-educated and elite class citizens who were holding prominent positions in the government of the country, and had a lot of say in the decision matters. The wanted to live “The American Dream” in the true sense and demanded unpretentiousness, openness and ease of ascent.

In the midst of any small knot of potential voters was to be found the so-called stump orator haranguing the company with one hand sawing the air and the other often clutching a plan for the utopian society of the future — if only the government or the electorate would get behind it. In the Antebellum Period, it was said that there was rarely found “an educated man who did not have his own plan for a utopian community in his waistcoat pocket.” They often contented themselves with enlarging on the importance of their suggestions and wondered, often in print, that they were not instantly adopted (Bremner). Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in 1840, “We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform”.

Some of the important steps or changes that came into being in the revolution period of the Social reforms of nineteenth century, are mentioned as under.

* **Prison Reformations**

In the early 19th century, mentally ill patients and prisoners were kept in the same jail. With this reformation, mentally ill patients were kept safer.

* **Education improvements**

In the 1830s, tax started to benefit new public schools. The plan was to make schools in most districts so that everyone had a fair right to learn. Horace Mann, the first secretary of education, established training programs for teachers, reformed curriculums, and doubled the money that was spent on schools.

* **Women's Rights**

Even though women didn't earn the right to vote until 1920, many women suffragists were fighting for their rights well into the 1800s. Until the suffrage moment women:

* Worked at home
* Earned half of what men did for the same job
* Could not vote
* Could not hold a seat in any political area
* Had no guardianship rights to their children

Women suffragists started calling on all women to overthrow the oppressive society and make a change. They also started writing mass letters to Congress, raising money to help other women learn, and created petitions to earn women more rights. This important movement inspired more women throughout history to fight for change and a better world for them.

Hence, it can be seen that the social reforms of the nineteenth century proved to be extremely beneficial for the poor class of the United States of America. They completely changed the way poor people were seen in the country and proved to be greatly beneficial for the women and prisoners especially.

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