

Hints attending emigration

(1835)

The Books printed in a cheap form for the use of Emigrants, have been hitherto chiefly written by persons who have had a direct interest in advising people to emigrate. A portion of this class consist of those who have bought a large tract of land in America on speculation, and retail it to the newly arrived settlers, at a great advance of price. These *genuine philanthropists* exclaim from the wilds of America, “ This is the land flowing with milk and honey ; come out here all you that have money, come and buy :” and they might add, and give us 100 per cent, profit on our land, and we will sell it unto you. Verily their object is gain, and the prospects they hold out a delusion.

I have been told, and I believe it, that there are land companies in America, who pay certain individuals in the mother country considerable sums of money to write flattering accounts about the country, on the same principle as Day and Martin, and other equally shining characters, keep in their employ a poet to celebrate the praise of the article in which they deal.

Another class to which I allude, are those who are connected with the transportation of emigrants—ship-brokers, ship-owners, and ship-masters ; as they make a trade of transporting their fellow-creatures, their evidence on the subject cannot be relied on. But I may be told that this cannot influence wealthy and respectable persons, as they will naturally consult Mr Stuart’s expensive work on America, which was so much lauded by a portion of the press. I reply, that Mr Stuart has written by far too favourable an account of the country. I heard many emigrants exclaim bitterly against him for deceiving them. The Americans are extremely fond of flattery, and so it has been alleged that Mr Stuart, from motives of conciliating the Americans, and pleasing the government at home, wrote a book, which many thousands have already, to their cost, regretted was ever written.

To conclude ; my sole object in giving publicity to my Journal, is to guard my countrymen against the delusive and exaggerated statements which have already appeared about America. I have no interest on one side or the other. My Tour was one solely of pleasure and curiosity, totally unconnected with business or profit.

I have written a plain and impartial account of what I saw, and what I heard, when among them. I have withheld no unwelcome truth for fear of giving offence. “ Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice,” has been my motto in the remarks I have made, and which are now most respectfully submitted to the indulgent reader.

Edinburgh, *5th March* 1835.

Journal of an Excursion to the United States and Canada

I LEFT Edinburgh on the 21st March 1834, for New York, by the way of Glasgow and Liverpool. At Glasgow I found that the John Wood Steamer sailed at 10 A.M. next morning, and accordingly I took my passage in her for Liverpool, where I arrived on Sunday evening, at 8 P.M., after a rough passage of thirty-four hours, including a stoppage of an hour at Greenock to take in goods,—the wind blowing strong from the westward, with a high sea, and most of the passengers were sea-sick.

The passage-money in the cabin from Glasgow to Liverpool is L. 1, 5s., besides 2s. to the steward ; the deck-passage is 10s., both exclusive of provisions, which are charged at the rate of 2s. for dinner, and 1s. 6d. for breakfast.

On Monday the 24th March I took lodgings at an Inn near Clarence Docks, and then went to make the necessary inquiries regarding the ships that were lying in the berth for New York. I found that five or six ships were to sail in a few days, and I ultimately agreed with Messrs Fitzhugh and Grimshaw, shipbrokers. No. 10, Goree Piazzas, for a berth in a state room, containing two beds, one above the other, in the cabin of one of the transient vessels. The ship was not to leave the dock before the 29th, and I had thus some days to spend at Liverpool, where I received some hints which may be useful to those preparing to leave the old country.

I consider it necessary to be very concise in my directions, as the emigrant has much to confuse his head when on the eve of setting out upon a long voyage. After having come to the resolution to emigrate, the two first things to be considered are, the time of sailing and the port to ship from. I recommend the first week in April as the most advisable time of the year to emigrate to America : if he sail sooner he runs a chance of being overtaken by the equinoctial gales ; and if he defer his departure much later, he loses the valuable opportunity for advancing his agricultural operations before the winter sets in. Those who sail in January, February, and March, generally meet with a boisterous and tedious voyage ; the nights are short and the icebergs dangerous, if ran foul of, all of which may be avoided by sailing in the beginning of April.

Emigrants who prefer sailing from Scotland, from motives of economy or local convenience, ought always to sail from a port in the west of Scotland, as they thereby shorten the voyage considerably, and escape what often proves to be the most disagreeable and dangerous part of it, the passage round the north of Scotland. It would be about as absurd for a person wishing to go from Edinburgh to Belfast, to ship at Leith instead of Greenock, as it is to ship from Leith for New York. Another advantage in sailing from Greenock is, that there are a greater choice of vessels than in the east coast. Still I am decidedly of opinion, that the steerage of the regular line of packets from Liverpool is the best conveyance for emigrants in middling circumstances. They may go in the steerage for L. 4 to L. 5, 10s. each, furnishing their own provisions ; and they are almost certain of making a short passage and of having a gentleman for a captain ; and as these vessels carry only a few steerage passengers, they escape mixing with the Irish emigrants, who generally go in the steerage of the transient vessels. The charge made in the steerage for a passage to New York, in the transient vessels from Greenock or Liverpool, varies from L.3, .5s. to L. 4, the ship finding water, fuel, and bed-place only.

In the cabin of transient vessels the customary charge is from L. 14 to L. 20, for which you are found in provisions and spirits, but not wines. In the regular liners or packet-ships, which sail every eight days from Liverpool, the passage in the cabin is as high as L. 35 ; but certainly the accommodations are splendid, the dinners superb, and the attendance excellent.

I would advise a sleeping place near the midships, the motion of the vessel being least there, and the situation being close to the hatchway, both the light and air are good. In entering into engagements about the passage, it is advisable to have the engagement in writing, and also a special clause, that you may be received on board, and allowed fuel and water for cooking, from the day the vessel is advertised to sail, or an allowance for every day the ship is detained after the appointed time.

On the 29th March, the day on which the ship was advertised to sail, I went on board. but learned that the vessel could not be ready before the 2d April, as she had part of her cargo to take in, besides her water-casks. However, it was some consolation, that as the wind was against us, we could not have got away, even if she had been ready for sea.

The steerage passengers, with their luggage and provisions, were taken on board on Saturday the 30th, after 2 p. m., and certainly such a miserable looking set of men I never saw before. They were principally from the Emerald Isle ; tall, pale, lean fellows, with ignorance strongly expressed on their vacant countenances, which betrayed no regret at leaving their native country. Indeed I suspected they were so miserable at home, that any change must be for the better.

The accommodation in that part of the vessel called the Second Cabin, which is charged about 20s. more than the steerage, is very little different from the latter. It is merely the after-part of the vessel separated from the fore-part, by boards about an inch thick. Families of four persons, going in the second cabin, may have a separate room erected, with a door to lock, for their exclusive use, by paying about L. 2 additional, or 10s. each, to defray the expense of putting it up, which is often done by those who wish to keep themselves separate from the other steerage passengers. The ship was ready for sea on Tuesday evening the 2d April. She left the dock next morning, and was towed by a steamer down the Mersey, nearly as far as the battery, when she brought up, as the wind was still against her. We had on board in all 245 souls, whereof 222 were passengers, the remainder consisted of the captain, two mates, and the crew.

After dinner on Wednesday, most of the cabin passengers joined the ship. We hired a steamer to take us on board, which, when there are several passengers going off, is by far the best way, as the

men belonging to the small boats are very apt to take advantage of passengers going off singly. They demanded from me 7s. 6d. to be taken to the ship, a distance of about two miles, whereas the steamer took us for 6d. a-head. I learned on going on board that two of the second cabin passengers, who had neglected to make a bargain with the boatmen, were forced to pay a sovereign for being taken on board. If the boatmen see passengers simple, and very anxious, and afraid of losing their passage, they are sure to take advantage, and overcharge them.

On Thursday the wind was blowing fresh from the N. N. W. On Friday I witnessed a regular Irish row. Two of the steerage passengers quarrelled and came to blows. The friends of each interfered. Shillelahs, billets of wood, and pokers were flourished in the air. Their Irish blood was fairly up. Several of them got broken heads. The quarter-deck was stained with their blood, and at one time it rather had an alarming appearance ; but the mate, with the assistance of the crew, at last succeeded in quelling them. The behaviour of the Irish on this occasion impressed me with a very unfavourable opinion of them. I saw one defenceless man knocked down by another with a heavy bludgeon, in a most cowardly and savage manner. He took three different aims before he could get the man's head into a position to get a fair blow at it. The expression of fury on their faces during the row shewed how little command they have over their passions.

The Captain having engaged a steamer to tow us out five miles beyond the floating light, which lies about sixteen miles from Liverpool, we were taken in tow at 11 a.m. on Sunday the 6th April. The wind in the morning was from the N.W., but about mid-day it fell calm. About one hundred vessels left Liverpool the same day ; they had, like ourselves, been wind-bound for some days in the Mersey. As many of the large ships as could procure steamers were dragged out by steam power, the others made sail and worked out. We soon left the latter far behind us. We passed within a mile of the wreck of a vessel, lying on her beam ends on the sands. It proved to be the brig Speedy from the coast of Africa, laden with palm-oil. Saw several casks of the palm-oil floating past. She was lost through the carelessness of the pilot, who was intoxicated : the crew were all saved.

It may be interesting to mention how the passengers pass their time on board. A ship has been compared to a prison, with the chance of being drowned ; but I do not think the comparison correct in some respects. The air of a prison is not so free as it is upon the open sea, the company not so select, the wonders of the deep, and the sublime raging of the sea, are not to be seen in a jail. Still the resemblance holds true in one particular of importance, for the sailor and the prisoner may both exclaim with the bird in the cage, " I can't get out, I can't get out."

The common amusements are, walking on deck, —standing or sitting in groups telling long stories, —shooting at sea gulls, or any other sea birds that venture within shot,—splaying at cards, draughts, or backgammon,—and, if a fine evening, dancing on the quarter deck and poop. Sometimes a strange diversity of occupations may be seen,

“ We have dancing on the main deck,
And preaching down below,
We have swearing in the fore top
As through the waves we go.”

Among the passengers in the second cabin, there is a clergyman who performs family worship every evening to all who choose to attend ; but the Irish Roman Catholics take a great pleasure in dancing Irish jigs over his head during the service, to prevent, I suppose, what they consider the growth of heretical principles. After the steamer left us on Sunday afternoon, we made very little progress, the weather being calm, with light airs from the northward, until late on Monday night a fair wind sprung up from the S.E. which carried us along about seven miles an hour. On Tuesday the 8th, at 4 p.m. we were abreast of Tuscar light, and about twenty miles distant from the rock situated on the Wexford coast in Ireland.

Wednesday the 9th April. Blowing fresh from the S. E. ; ship steering W. by S. rolling and pitching a good deal. Most of the passengers sea-sick : the ship's buckets in great request as reservoirs to the stomach-pumps, which were in full play all day. A great falling off in the consumption of provisions. A tumbler of sea-water is the best specific for sea sickness ; it acts as an emetic, and, by thoroughly

cleaning the stomach, is the means of sooner restoring the stomach to a healthy state than anything else that can be taken.

April 10—A fresh breeze from the S. E. Running nine miles an hour. At 4 a.m, the tiller rope broke ; replaced it with another ; the passengers in the steerage all below, and sea sick. The mess they are in beggars all description. About 180 men, women, and children all confined in a space not larger than a large drawing room, with no air or light but what comes down the hatchway. I popped my head down for a minute or two, but the smell was too powerful for my olfactory nerves—children crying, women screaming, and all tossing about from side to side as the vessel pitched ; butter, biscuit, treacle, herrings, beef, and potatoes all lying higgildy-piggildy, and rolling from side to side, altogether made up a scene of misery and confusion such as I never saw before.

April 11—A strong breeze from the S.E. with cloudy weather and squalls at times. We are walking through the water in style, having gone by log 205 miles in the last twenty-four hours ; steering W. N. W. This course may seem strange, but when it is explained that the variation of the compass is $2\frac{1}{2}$ points to the westward, it will appear that the course we are steering is W. $\frac{1}{2}$ S. ; Latitude by observation at noon $49^{\circ} 5' N.$; Longitude by chronometer $20^{\circ} 10' W.$ A few of the passengers are beginning to appear on deck again. I have noticed an interesting young female among the steerage passengers often sitting upon a hen-coop on the deck and musing. I felt a curiosity to know the particulars that had caused her to leave her native land. She told me she belonged to Dalkeith, and had been in service in Edinburgh, where she got acquainted with a young man, who fell in love with her, and offered her marriage if she would accompany him to New York. She said that she would prefer coming out to him in two years if he succeeded in business. He had kept up a correspondence with her, and finally prevailed upon her to come out, and she is now on her way to join him. I observed her today writing something with a pencil on the white leaf of a book ; and, by a little coaxing, I got her to shew it to me. It ran thus : —

“ Sailing across the Atlantic
To him whom I adore,
I muse upon my lonely state,
Amid the billows roar.

I think upon the land I left.
And all my friends so dear,
Which makes my trembling heart to swell,
While I let fall a tear.

But there is one more dear to me
Than all I left at home ;
And for his sake I'll plough the waves,
And ride upon the foam.”

Poor creature ! She seemed deserving of a berth in the cabin. I gave her a couple of oranges, which she accepted ; and I offered her a glass of brandy toddy to comfort her poor sea-sick and love-sick soul ; but she declined it with many thanks.

April 12—Blowing a gale of wind; the ship rolling so much, that we were often carried on our seats from one end of the cabin to the other. At dinner one of the passengers received a plateful of pease-soup into his breast, which he intended to have gone down by his mouth into his stomach. When the ship gives a heavy lee-lurch, every thing, animate or inanimate, that is not lashed, flies away to lee-ward.

Among our cabin passengers we have a young couple, who were only married about two weeks before we sailed. They came from an inland county in England, and had never seen the sea before. I was amused with the lady : she seemed so pleased that she was soon to see the beautiful large waves. “ O,” says she, “ how I shall love to look at them : dear me, I shall be so delighted. I do so much wish we may have a storm ; you cannot conceive how I long to see all them sort of fine sights. I once saw a storm acted in the theatre in our county town : it was so fine,—but a real storm, you know, must be a great deal finer. We lost the pitching of the ship, and the roaring of the wind and waves, and the

smell of the tar. I do like the smell of tar so much." What a happy couple, they were so loving and so lovely. "They were all in all to each other," the first night they came on board the ship when she lay in the river. They were very happy indeed ; in the words of the poet,

"They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright,
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight.

They heard the waves splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other, and beholding this
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss."

Alas that so much happiness should be so soon clouded. Scarcely had we got into blue water, when the happy couple were laid prostrate before father Neptune. I saw nothing of them for some days. This afternoon, when the gale had abated, I paid a visit to the lady. I found her in bed, very pale and dejected. I asked her how she was. "O," says she, "I am so bad, you have no idea. I have done nothing but vomit these four days past, and have suffered dreadfully. That nasty rude sea, I do detest it so. You cannot imagine how it used me last night. It threw me out of the bed right over Mr D., and I fell upon the deck ; the wrist of my right arm is all sprained, and my body is all in a jelly with the vessel knocking me about so. I hope, in the name of heaven, we wont have *no more* storms ; I am sure I will die if we do."

Latitude at noon 48° 5' N.

Longitude ditto 23° 40' W.

April 13.—A moderate breeze from the S.E., with thick cloudy weather, and rain in fore part of the day. Sailing, during the night, nine miles an hour. Dr Johnson remarked, that he thought the greatest pleasure on earth was attained by rolling rapidly along in a coach. For my part, I think the pleasure is greater in sailing along with a fine spanking breeze to your desired haven. Nothing tends to raise the spirits more. As the breeze freshens, your hopes brighten : you imagine you see the long-wished for shore, and are greeted by your friends and acquaintances, in a land where every thing is new and strange to you ; and where, if you have few friends, you have no enemies. I am sensible to-day of an alteration in the weather ; it is considerably warmer. I spend much of my time on deck, either in walking, or in lolling on a hen-coop, and conversing with one or other of the passengers about their prospects in America.

This day, being Sunday, the captain proposed that we should have the parson on deck to give us a word, to keep the crew and the low Irish in order. "I am not against religion," says he, "if you keep it in its proper place ; but catch me on the banks of Newfoundland, in a calm, on a Sunday, and see if I don't catch fish, although I had a whole cargo of parsons on board." Accordingly the minister was ushered up in form ; he was placed with his back to the capstan, with a large barrel containing salt beef, before him for a cushion. The genteel passengers sat on stools in front of him, and the Irish rag-tag-and-bobtail made up the back ground of the congregation. I have seen the Hindoos on the banks of the Ganges, worshipping the golden images of their fathers ; I have looked on while the Parsee offered up his homage to the rising sun ; I have been present at the setting of the sun on the coast of Coromandel, and heard the Moor offer up his evening prayer to the Prophet Mahomet ; and I have been at Seceder meetings in my native land ; but divine service in a ship in the middle of the ocean, is calculated to impress the mind with holier thoughts, and more devout feelings, than all the others put together. There we need no monitor to tell us of the omnipotence of God. The mountain waves declare his power ; the immense abyss of waters remind us of eternity ; while the stormy winds fulfil his decrees. The subject chosen by the clergyman was appropriate, although I cannot say that his sermon was in the first style of oratory. Towards the conclusion an accident occurred, which nearly upset ray gravity ; the rolling of the ship caused the parson to lose his balance, and he fell forward, knocked over the cask of beef in his front, and both were deposited in the lee-scuppers.

April 14—The wind veered round in the night to W.S.W., and blew fresh, with squalls. About four in the morning, the jib-boom was carried away in a hard squall, the ship heeled over nearly on her

beam-ends, and presented an alarming appearance. The ship has been rolling to-day to such an extent, that it is impossible to stand or sit. One woman was knocked over, and nearly got her arm broke. An elderly gentleman, in ascending the poop-ladder, fell, and the ladder falling upon him, bruised his arm severely. This arose from the ladder not being lashed to the poop, which it ought to have been. In the fore-noon we shipped a heavy sea, part of which poured down into the steerage, and made the poor wretches there believe that the ship was going down. Some were praying, others cursing, and all wishing themselves anywhere but in their present situation. To add to the whole, the master had ordered the after and main hatches to be battened down ; so that they were shut up in total darkness, where they were left in a state not to be envied. The clergyman is very unwell, and confined to bed ; he thinks if there is such a place as purgatory, it must be the passage from Liverpool to New York. As a close to the catastrophes of this eventful day, the heaving and straining of the ship brought premature labour on one of the females in the steerage. By the assistance of the doctor, she was safely delivered of an ocean child, before as large a company as ever was present at a ceremony of the kind.

April 15—Blowing fresh all night ; ship rolling very much. At half-past 6 a.m., in a hard squall, the ship was twice struck with lightning, which carried away her fore and main top-masts. The scene during the squall was awfully sublime ; the wind blew very hard, the rain descended in bucketfuls, the thunderbolts could be seen in all directions darting through the air, and then plunging into the sea. When the first bolt struck the ship, it knocked down the master *and one of the pigs.*, but what part of the ship it struck, was not ascertained,—most likely one of the anchors. After about two minutes the master recovered his legs, and was again giving orders to the men, when a most tremendous thunderbolt struck the main top-mast, and shivered it and also the fore top-mast into splinters. The bolt then flew down the fore-mast into the steerage among the passengers, and took a direction at right-angles with the mast for the ship's side, and escaped into the sea, by staving a large hole in the side of the vessel. After the second bolt struck the ship, there was a death-like silence for the space of a minute. The deck appeared a sheet of fire. The master and crew were all struck down, apparently dead, on the deck. As soon as the crew recovered, some six or seven ran into the cabin, and threw themselves on their faces, declared they could do no more,—that the fore-mast was gone,—that the bolt had gone through the ship's bottom, and set her on fire. They lay in the cabin for some minutes, till the master had recovered from the effects of the last thunderbolt, and got upon his legs again, when he came to the cabin-door and called out to his men, “ Are ye men, or are ye children ! Come along with me, and help to stop up the hole in the ship's side, and extinguish the fire in the steerage !” At the well-known voice of their commander, whom they supposed dead, they went forward to their duty, and succeeded in extinguishing the fire, and in stopping up the leak. At the time when the ship was last struck, there were no less than two water-spouts on our starboard beam. One of them came so near, that it threatened to break over us, and send us to the bottom. Indeed, it appeared as if we were doomed to destruction. It takes danger of no ordinary description to appal British seamen, but the combined terrors of the winds and waves, thunderbolts, lightning, water-spouts, and fire, had caused them to despair.

The passengers were dreadfully alarmed ; delicate females were seen, half frantic, staggering about in their chemises ; all delicacy was at an end for the time. As soon as the extent of our misfortune was ascertained,—for the sailors, in their terror, had overestimated the danger,—there was a general feeling of gratitude to God, that we had escaped with such a trifling loss, compared with the apparent magnitude of the danger. Notwithstanding that the bolt had gone into the steerage among the passengers, no person had been killed, and only one slightly wounded or burned by the bolt, as he lay in his bed below the place where the lightning had escaped into the sea. It is but justice to mention, that the captain, under such trying circumstances, stood to his post, and did his duty to the satisfaction of all on board. The escape of a part of the crew was most providential. They had been ordered up to close-reef the fore top-sail, and when half-way up the fore shrouds, they were called down again by the captain, to defer reefing until the severity of the squall had passed over. Had they been on the top-sail yard at the time the lightning struck the fore top-mast, and carried the mast and yard away, they must all have been precipitated into the sea. After the accident occurred, we bore away before the wind ; the men were served out a glass of brandy ; they were employed the rest of the day in clearing away the wreck, getting down the masts, yards, rigging, and sails, and saving as much as they could from falling into the sea. The captain proposed running for the nearest port to refit the ship ; but as the accident occurred in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, about 1300 miles from land, we had but a gloomy prospect before us. The nearest port we could make, with our present wind, was St John's, Newfoundland, which, in our present crippled situation, would take several weeks to accomplish. The

next nearest port was Halifax, in Nova Scotia, which, as it afforded superior advantages to St John's, we resolved, in the event of not falling in with vessels to assist us, to steer for.

April 16—The wind having moderated during the night, we steered our course again W.N.W.; wind at S.S.W. Saw at daylight, much to our satisfaction, three vessels in sight ; hoisted a signal of distress. The first vessel that came up with us, bore down and came under our stern. She proved to be the brig Promise, of and from Liverpool, bound for Quebec for timber. We informed her of our situation, and craved her to give us a spar to make a top-mast of ; but the master replied, he was sorry that he had none to spare. The next vessel that saw our signal, and bore down to our assistance, was the bark Admiral Benbow, from Liverpool for Quebec. The captain hailed us, and told us to send a boat on board, and he would give us a top-mast ; which we did, and were thus relieved in some degree from our helpless state. We observed, a long way to windward, a bark in great distress ; she had lost her fore top-mast, and seemingly sprung her main-mast. She was bearing down upon us, but it fell calm in the afternoon, and prevented us giving her any assistance, or hearing the extent of her calamity ; very likely she had been struck with a thunderbolt in the same squall that dismasted us.

April 17—A breeze sprung up early this morning from the N.E., and being a fair wind, we made all the sail we could, and steered our course for New York. As the wind had changed at the second quarter of the moon, we hoped it might last for a few days, and waft us to the banks of Newfoundland.

I understand that, at this season of the year, it is usual to find the wind in the Atlantic from the N.E. The months of April and May are the most favourable for making a short passage to North America, the wind being then chiefly from the N.E. ; and October is the month that the shortest and pleasantest voyages are made to England from America.

Latitude at noon, by observation, $49^{\circ} 1' 4''$ N.
Longitude, by chronometer, $34^{\circ} 10'$ W.

April 18—Wind and weather much the same as yesterday, but in the afternoon the breeze declined. Sailors are said to be very superstitious ; our late calamity gave me an opportunity of observing this point in their character. The cook attributed it to the ship having some Irish murderers on board. The ship was searched for such characters before we sailed ; and he concluded they must be on board still.

If they were, I should have liked to have examined their faces by the glare of the lightning ; their feelings at that moment, when they saw the judgments of God coming down upon them, must have given them such a look of horror as the damned may be supposed to have amid the tortures of eternal punishment. I am surprised that the ship had no conductors for the lightning at her mast-heads. No ships on foreign voyages ought to sail without them. Had we been provided with this safeguard, the calamity in all likelihood would have been averted. I think it would be good policy if Lloyd's refused insuring all ships, the masters of which did not provide themselves with conductors ; the expense of them is a mere trifle, and I believe their efficacy is undoubted. Nobody can tell how many fine ships lie buried in the ocean, having been sunk by a thunderbolt, and not a soul left to tell the sad tale.

April 19.—The fickle wind has changed to S.S.W., a stiff breeze ship-steering W. by N., and going at noon eight miles an hour. A strange sail in sight, about two miles on the weather-beam. Saw for the first time a Mother Carey's bird, skimming along the waves, not unlike a large martin.

In sailing along the dreary waste of waters, there is little to attract attention. Man is nowhere taught his insignificance more than on the ocean. The meanest peasant and the greatest monarch are there upon a level ; the sea pays no respect to persons. His Atlantic majesty in a rage is above all crowned heads. King William the Fourth may reign on shore and command, but on the sea, at the command of his oceanic majesty, he must stoop his royal head, and give up his dinner to the fishes.

Sunday, April 20.—Wind the same as yesterday, with hazy weather and rain ; running six miles an hour. We are now half-way across the Atlantic. The rain prevented the performance of divine worship. The barometer is now between change and rain ; the barometer, which, in a town, is only useful to indicate to the citizens whether or not it is necessary to carry an umbrella, is at sea of the greatest importance. When the barometer falls suddenly, the mariner is forewarned of a gale ; he immediately prepares for it, by taking in sail, and making his vessel snug, before it overtakes him. Sometimes a

tempest comes on suddenly, the sky gives no signs of its approach, and without that useful instrument—the barometer—many more ships would be lost or dismasted than now are.

April 21.—When I went on deck this morning, I found we had an Irishman’s hurricane—the wind right up and down ; that is, a dead calm ; but a gentle breeze soon sprung up from the E.S.E. At 11 a.m., a large fish was observed, about twelve yards astern, swimming after the ship : the top fin alone was seen : it came nearer, and raised its head a little out of the water, as if it were smelling at the ship : it was a large blue shark, and seemed very hungry. We got a shark hook, and baited it with about six lb. of pork, and threw it over the stern, taking care to make fast the other end to a bolt in the ship. The bait had not been in the water over two minutes, when the shark got his eye upon it ; he came swimming slowly up, turned half over on his back, and, making a grab at it, he fairly swallowed hook and all. As soon as he found himself in limbo, he became furious, lashed the water with his tail, and struggled so, that I expected the rope every moment to give way. We run out all the rope we could ; gradually his struggles became less. We succeeded in hauling it on board, but even then what a row it kicked up on the quarter-deck : it lashed the deck with its tail so, that it was dangerous to go near it. The captain called for the carpenter’s axe, and cut off the tail, and then the head, which somewhat quieted him ; still, although decapitated, had the head of any unfortunate wight come in its way, it would most certainly have shared the same fate, for a shark can bite even after its head has been severed from the body ; indeed, so tenacious are they of life, that I am told that the heart of a shark, which was cut out and laid upon the deck, actually contracted and dilated for two hours and twenty minutes afterwards.

The shark we caught measured twelve feet three inches long. It had three rows of teeth ; each tooth was in the form of, and as sharp as a lancet. Its jaws, when extended, could easily have taken in any man on board.

On cutting it up, we found five young sharks in her inside, about a foot long ; and we took out of the stomach a shoe and a hairy cap, that had been lost overboard the night before.

April 22.—The wind changed during the night to N.W., which forces us to steer three points more to the southward than our course lies. We are now on the outer edge of the banks of Newfoundland : we are surrounded by fog, and the weather feels very chilly and disagreeable : the fog is more piercing than a Scotch mist. The temperature of the sea was tried, and found to be 37° of Fahrenheit’s thermometer. Passengers ought to be cautious not to expose themselves unnecessarily to the fog in this latitude, as severe colds are often the consequence, which are difficult to be got rid off. That the banks of Newfoundland are almost always covered with fogs, appears strange : the natural causes which produce this effect, I believe, consist in the vapours from the deep sea being condensed on the banks of Newfoundland.

April 23.—Blowing a gale of wind right in our teeth, and so cold, that we suspect there must be icebergs in the neighbourhood ; ship pitching and rolling so much, that it is dangerous to get out of bed. I ventured up to the breakfast-table, and was hardly sat down, when the ship commenced a fit of rolling. In two rolls, there was hardly any thing upon the table ; every article had vanished. I sat upon a stool, which happened not to be lashed to the deck,—I went slap-bang, stool and all, to the star-board side. My head came against the state-room door ; and if it had not, by good luck, been a thick one, I should have given ocular demonstration to all on board that I was possessed of brains.

It is of importance to the comfort of passengers going to America, (but too seldom thought of till too late to be remedied,) that they make themselves acquainted with the kind of goods the vessel is laden with. If a ship has in her bottom much iron, lead, block tin, or other heavy goods, she is sure to roll very much in the sea, as the iron acts upon the same principle as the weight attached to the pendulum of a clock. Our vessel has a great deal of pig-iron in her hold, and, in consequence, she rolls so, that many a night I get no sleep, but lie tossing about in my bed, sometimes expecting her to roll the masts over her side. A great part of our loading consists of salt, which is a very unsafe cargo, as, in the case of springing a leak, the salt will melt, and the ship, for want of ballast, turn bottom-up. The best cargo is what is called a lively one, such as spirits, molasses, flour, bale-goods, and such like ; they move with the ship, strain her less, and assist her sailing.

April 24—Wind right a-head, making no progress to the west. The weather is clear. At 4 p.m. a very large shoal of porpoises were seen sporting all around the vessel : we fired some balls at them, and shot two or three ; nevertheless, they continued their gambols till after 6 o'clock. They seem to be very full of blood, as those wounded dyed the water red in their track for a good while after they were shot. At half-past 6 o'clock, we hove to and put out a line, in hopes of catching cod ; but got none, as we were in too deep water.

Latitude by observation, 43° 12' N.

Longitude by chronometer, 49° 49' W.

April 25—Nearly calm in the morning, and fine clear weather, which is very uncommon on the banks of Newfoundland. At half-past 10 A. M., a breeze sprung up due north. The ship can barely lie to her course (W.N.W.) ; it is still very cold ; ship running about four miles an hour. We have engaged an Irishman to assist the cook, as he had more than enough to do. I suppose his abilities only extend to boiling a murphy, as, from his appearance, he cannot have been caught above three months ; yet, by the assistance of the new married lady, who is now seasoned to the hardships of the sea, we managed to have a plum-pudding to dinner to-day, which would have done honour to a restaurateur in Paris, and a comfortable glass of hot brandy-toddy after it. The wind headed us again in the afternoon, and it became piercing cold. At 5 p.m. we saw two icebergs to leeward ; they were at a great distance, and appeared very like the engravings I have seen of them in Scotland. I have no doubt, from the intensity of the cold, that we have plenty more of them to windward. At half-past 6 we spoke the *Donn*, a bark from Hull for Quebec, out thirty-one days. The master stated that he had seen a deal of ice. I hope it will keep at a distance from our ship, as I would be sorry to see her locked in the embraces of such a cold-hearted paramour.

April 26—Wind right in our teeth, and cold weather. Spoke a bark from London for Quebec, twenty-one days out. In the afternoon we hove the ship too, and set up our main and mizen-rigging. Two lines were put over the side to catch cod ; but we had no success.

At 6 p.m., the wind shifted to the S.S.E., which raised our spirits much. We set all sail, and were dashing merrily along, when, about 8 o'clock, the wind chopped round to the old point, W.N.W., and blew a hard gale of wind. We furled our sails, and hove the ship too under a close-reefed main top-sail. The captain was upon deck a great part of the night, and was most attentive to his duty.

Sunday, April 27—Still blowing a gale, sea running very high ; but the ship is very easy under it.

April 28.—At 3 a.m. a breeze sprung up from the S.E. Dull hazy weather, with rain at times. At noon the wind died nearly away ; and at 4 p.m. it changed to the S.S.E., with clear weather and sunshine. Three vessels in sight. Between 8 and 10 p.m. we had a great deal of lightning to wind-ward. I took my cigar and walked the deck for about an hour, admiring the electric fluid darting among the clouds. At 10 p.m. the wind shifted again to the W.N.W, and blew a gale. The wind has been rather coquettish for two days past ; it comes fair for two or three hours and woos our out-stretched sails, then turns round upon us, and roars and rages for the rest of the twenty-four hours.

April 29.—Wind dead against us ; ship pitching very much.

April 30.—Wind still against us. The moon went into her last quarter at 4 a.m. We looked for this event with anxiety, anticipating that a change would thereby be produced in the wind, but it passed away without any alteration.

This day has been one of the most monotonous in my existence. I have lain the best part of it in bed, reading. The spirits of all the passengers are much depressed, owing to the continuance of adverse winds. One of the children in the second cabin is very ill : by the advice of the doctor, he was removed into our cabin, and placed on a matress in front of the fire. I heard the poor child moaning all night.

At 7 P. M. a breeze sprung up from E.S.E., and we made all sail, going during the night about five miles an hour.

May 1.—I rose early this morning, and walked the deck. I gathered no May-dew, but my cap was thickly covered with bank fog. The breeze continued favourable till 10 a.m., when it fell nearly calm, and continued so till about 5 p.m., when it blew again from the old point (right against us). At 9 a.m. the poor child departed this life, just as we were sitting down to breakfast. At 6 p.m. we committed the body of the little innocent to the rude waves of the Atlantic. We all assembled on deck, and the clergyman gave us a suitable prayer on the occasion. It was a peculiarly affecting ceremony. There were no outward symbols of woe,—no crape, no weepers,—but the hearts of all were affected. The bustle of the busy world, with all its thoughts and cares, were effectually excluded, and every thing we saw around, reminded us of our own nothingness, and of the omnipotence of the great Ruler of the Universe.

He died far, far from home and friends,
Upon the Atlantic wave ;
The shark swims by, the wild sea-gull
Is hovering o'er his grave.

May 2.—At 1 a.m. we were favoured with a wind from N.by E., which was worth a Jew's eye. We made all sail, and, as it blew fresh, we went rattling along until 11 a.m., when it headed us again. Patience is a useful virtue to possess any where, but it becomes of double value at sea. If a person cheerfully submits to the hardships and privations of a sea life, he hardly feels them ; but if he gives way to a spirit of discontent, fretfulness, and impatience, he makes himself miserable. I have found the truth of this observation during my sojourn aboard of ship. That I have met with many hardships and annoyances, cannot be denied, but I laugh at them all ; I have even made them a source of amusement. It has been remarked, that God sends meat, and the devil sends cooks ; and my experience verifies the proverb. It is no uncommon occurrence to have the tea made with half salt water.

Many a night the rolling of the ship excludes all hope of sleep, and as the body rolls with the vessel, the cheek on which I lie is sometimes chafed with the friction of the pillow during the night, and I am in danger of a concussion of the brain against the bed-post, from a sudden pitch of the vessel. But still these petty miseries, when borne in a spirit of cheerfulness are as nothing. I have been accustomed at home to all the comforts of life, yet I have laughed more, and been as happy, under my present circumstances, as ever I was in my life.

Latitude, by observation, at noon, 43° 35' N.
Longitude, by chronometer, 55° 38' W.

May 3.—They say no wind at all is half a fair wind. We were in this situation until noon, when a gentle breeze sprung up from N.N.E., and wooed the swelling sails.

Early this morning another of the children in the steerage departed this life. I did not ascertain the name of the child. At 4 p.m. we committed the body of the deceased to the deep, having previously sewed it up in canvas, with about thirty pounds of iron attached to it, to sink it. The boisterous weather we have had lately, has been very severe upon the children. Their tender frames are ill fitted to endure the sudden changes of temperature we have met with since we left Liverpool.

May 4. (Sunday.)—The breeze continues steady from the N.N.E. ; ship going five miles an hour. About 2 a.m. I was awakened by a great noise. It proceeded from the second cabin, and seemed to me as if the people there were fighting and quarrelling. At breakfast-time I learned that it proceeded from a drunken frolic. Several of the passengers in that part of the ship had been drinking together till a late hour. One of them, a Scotsman, had been asked to furnish a bottle of brandy to the others. He said he had none. As they knew to the contrary, however, having seen two bottles of liquor in his chest, they said nothing more at the time, but procured more liquor from another quarter ; and, when the debauch was at an end, they planned an attack upon the Scotsman, who had retired to his bed. They extinguished the light, put on the hatches, to prevent the cries ascending, and alarming those on deck ; seized the poor wretch by the head and foot, and dragged him out of bed. He roared like a stuck pig. They clapped his own hands upon his mouth to silence him, and he, being the worse of liquor, and in total darkness, mistook his own hand for that of his antagonist, and actually bit his own thumb half off before he found out his error. They then took the key from him, opened his chest, took out a bottle of

hollands and a bottle of brandy, and shared both among all who chose to partake. While this was going forward, the man, who thought he was to be robbed and murdered, roared long and loud ; and the noise of so many tipsy people speaking all together, formed no unapt resemblance to what we conceive of pandemonium.

A bark in sight to windward, about ten miles distance, standing on the same course with ourselves.

Latitude observed, 42° 20' W.

Longitude, by chronometer, 57° 40' N.

May 5—A steady breeze from the N.N.E., and fine clear weather. At daylight saw three small vessels steering to the eastward. At 9 a.m. we spoke them : they had left Boston five days ago, and were bound for the banks of Newfoundland for fish. We learned from one of them, that sixteen vessels from Britain had arrived at Boston this spring.

The new married lady has been complaining for two days past, and to-day is very unwell. She was quite delirious last night. She raved about drowning, storms, sharks, and lightning, all night. I gave her some cooling powders, and she is rather easier this afternoon.

May 6.—The wind shifted at midnight to E.S.E., and is now quite fair. We have our studding-sails set on both sides, which look like wings, and make us skim through the water like an eagle winging its way through the sky. If the breeze holds, we will be at New York by Saturday.

I was hardly risen from breakfast this morning, when I heard the alarm given of a man overboard. The deck was covered in a minute, all exclaiming, where is he, who is it ! The helm was put hard a-starboard, which brought the ship's head up to the wind, and stopped her way through the water. The boat was about to be lowered down, when we discovered the unfortunate man about twelve yards astern, holding on like grim death to a rope. The men were hauling him on board half-drowned, when, to my utter astonishment, whom should I see emerging from the waves, but our assistant-cook and valet de chambre. The poor devil had been drawing a bucketful of salt-water, to wash the potatoes for dinner : he had leaned too far over the ship's side, and lost his balance, and fell headlong into the sea : luckily the rope he had in his hand was attached to one of the sails, which, when the slack ran out, brought him up. Had he let go the rope, his fate would have been sealed. I shall never forget his appearance when he got on board, " Och ! your honour" says he, " I was after cleaning the taters, but sure, and I have cleaned myself instead." I took him into the cabin, and gave him a stiff glass of Hollands to warm him after his cold bath.

We have seen a great deal of gulf weed to-day. We are now on the edge of the gulf stream ; it flows from Florida, and it takes a kind of circular course, first to the northward and eastward, and then to the southward and westward, round by the Azores and Madeira to the coast of South America, then up the Carribean Sea to Florida. The current near this part, runs about two miles an hour to the east-ward, so we are keeping to the north to avoid it. The high temperature of the water in the gulf stream, ranging from 65° to 75° Fahrenheit, is very remarkable ; and from this fact mariners are enabled to know when they are in the gulf stream.

May 7.—The breeze died away at 2 a.m., and remained calm until 5 p.m., when it blew fresh for about three hours from S. by E., with some heavy showers, and foggy weather.

It is difficult for any but those who have spent several weeks pent up in a ship, to imagine what interest we take in any change of the winds, which acts as a kind of spirit barometer upon all of us. I could almost tell if the wind is fair by looking at their countenances. They say " hope deferred maketh the soul sick." We expected to be in New York on Saturday the 10th current ; but now we have lost all confidence in the fickle wind, and in proportion as our spirits were elated, so is now the depression.

May 10.—When I awoke this morning, I learned that the new married lady was dangerously ill. She had been in a burning fever for some days before ; and had tasted no food for forty-eight hours. She raved wildly about her dear mother ; talked of taking a walk in the front of the house ; and begged her husband, by the love he bore her, to bring her a drink of new milk. The poor man looked quite bewildered, and no wonder. " O, Sarah," says he, " you know, my dear, you are on board the —— "

These words immediately gave birth to a train of the most painful ideas in the poor lady's mind. "O take me out of this horrible ship !" she cried ; " and put me upon any shore you please. O take away that monstrous shark ! I see it follows the ship ! I know it is waiting for me ! I am so afraid ! O do, for God's sake, captain, turn back the ship, and take me home to my mother !" After raving for some time, she at length fell back in a faint in her husband's arms.

The weather is very gloomy to day. We are surrounded with dark clouds, which, as they pass over us, inundate our decks with rain. It is very warm and close ; and the air appears loaded with electric fluid. The spirit barometer is uncommonly low ; and the wind seems to be seeking a point to blow from, and is changing every ten minutes. I hope, when it makes up its mind on the subject, it will blow in our favour.

May 12— About half-an-hour after mid-night, I was aroused from sleep by a thunder storm, accompanied by very vivid flashes. The master came into the cabin to tell the doctor that a fire-ball had settled on the cross-jack-yard. I arose, went out upon deck, and saw a fire-ball on the yard ; it was stationary, and had a very unearthly and supernatural appearance. One of the sailors called it a blue devil. While I was on deck, a dreadfully vivid flash of lightning illuminated the whole sky, and made the sea appear like an ocean of liquid fire. I had hardly returned to bed, ere I was called up again to see another fire-ball on the fore-yard-arm. I suppose these balls are neither more nor less than *ignis fatuus*, whatever the sailors may say to the contrary. Had it not been raining so hard, I would have gone up to the yard-arm and taken a nearer inspection of them. It blew very hard while the lightning lasted, but moderated towards daylight.

May 13.—Blowing a gale of wind due west ; making no progress. It is with difficulty we can hold our own.

Many of the steerage passengers are out of provisions, which is a great misfortune at sea, where they cannot get a fresh supply.

The water is so bad that it is a punishment to drink it ; and the stench so great, that I am obliged to hold my nose with one hand whilst I bolt it. I would give a handsome price for good pure water, if it was to be had.

" When men at sea have had a six weeks' spell,
They wish they were where truth is, in a well."

May 14.—Nearly calm all day. About 5 p.m. a fair wind sprung up from the S.S.W., which increased after the sun set. The passengers were all in the best spirits. At 9 p. m. we had a dancing party on the deck, which was kept up until half-past 10 o'clock, when they were desired by the captain to give up, which led to refusal on the part of a gentleman from Dublin, of high and respectable connections ; but who, being unused to be treated in such a tyrannical manner, and not acquainted with the power delegated to a captain at sea, foolishly refused to obey the master. The consequence was, that the master went into his cabin for the irons, which he brought out to put upon him. The gentleman's wife, who had just gone to bed, rushed up in her night-gown to save him ; clasped him round the neck, and cried herself into hysterics. The Irish, when they heard the row, came on deck in crowds, with their shillelahs under their coats, and, as the gentleman was a great favourite among them, having been very generous and kind to many of them when sick, and in want of provisions, I am afraid, had the master followed up his intentions, the consequences might have been very serious.

May 17—The wind is still against us ; and what makes this the more to be lamented, is that several of the steerage passengers are entirely out of provisions ; two of them have had no food for the last 24 hours. If we are many more days at sea, not one of them will have a morsel to eat. At noon, I saw two whales on the larboard bow, about two miles off, spouting water to a great height.

Sunday, May 18.—A dead calm in the fore part of the day, Weather very agreeably warm. About 10 a.m. while I was in my cabin dressing, I heard those on deck running hurriedly about, speaking all at once. I went out half-dressed to see what was the matter, when I found one of the cabin passengers was overboard, and fast drowning. Tempted by the fine day, he resolved to have a bath in the open sea ; and, having undressed himself. he laid hold of a rope ; he slipped down the side of the vessel by

it into the Atlantic. It never struck him that it was not so easy to get up again, and that the strain upon his arms, when the vessel rolled, would in a few minutes tire his arms out, and make him unable to hold on, and he soon found his situation a critical one. Luckily he was observed by some one on board, and the alarm given. An attempt was made to haul him up by the rope, to which he held on ; but, when he was half way up, his strength failed, and he was precipitated into the sea. The ship had a very little headway, so it was leaving him astern. However, he swam for his life, and reached the rope again. By this time a ladder had been lowered down to the water's edge, upon which he got, and was delivered from his dangerous situation.

The minister proposed preaching as usual this afternoon ; but the ignorant Irish and the superstitious sailors were so opposed to it, that they declared they would stop him if he attempted. He wisely gave way to the tide which had set in against him. No sooner was his resolution known, than the sailors assured us we should have a fair wind ; and certainly, about 5 p.m. a fair wind sprung up, and never left us till we anchored in New York bay.

Monday, May 19—A steady breeze carrying us gently along. Saw a great many vessels all steering for one point. Passed a number of fishing sloops at anchor, fishing for mackerel. At 10 a.m. I went out to the jib boom-end, and sat there watching for the first glimpse of the land, which we expected to make about 12 or 1 o'clock. I had just gone on deck, and was conversing with a lady, when I saw the land about two points on the weather bow ; but as fog-banks are sometimes mistaken for land, I resolved to wait till my opinion was confirmed by others. In about three minutes the cook, who had likewise seen it, gave out the joyful tidings, and “ land, land, land,” resounded from every tongue, and joy was diffused over every face. I ran forward again to my station at the jib boom-end, and sat feasting my eyes on the land as it gradually became more and more distinct. At length I could distinguish the trees and the houses.

The wind from the land was very warm. I was sensible of it whenever we got fairly under the lee of the land. A pilot came on board about 4 p.m. and took charge of the ship. We passed the light-house at Sandy Hook about half-past 6 p.m., and, in other two hours, got through the Narrows formed by Staten Island and Long Island, and anchored abreast of the city of New York between 9 and 10 p.m.

The view in sailing up between the light-house and the city, a distance of 18 miles, is very grand. Any attempt at description would utterly fail. I will only say that I have sailed into many harbours in all quarters of the globe, and I never saw any thing finer than the entrance into New York harbour.

Tuesday, May 20. 1834.—At 2 p. m. I landed at New York, after spending forty-nine days on board the ship, and found the heat most oppressive. I went in search of a boarding house, and, after calling at one or two, I resolved to take up my lodgings at one kept by a widow lady in Pearl Street, the terms, four dollars a-week. As this concludes my sea narrative, I shall discontinue the form of a journal during my residence here.

Journal of an excursion to the United States and Canada in the year 1834 : with hints to emigrants ; and a fair and impartial exposition of the advantages and disadvantages attending emigration (1835)

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