

Journal of a Traveller 1812

Travels
In The
United States of America,
In The years
1806, 1807, and 1809, 1810, 1811 ;
Including
An Account of Passages betwixt America and Britain,
and Travels through
Various parts of Great Britain, Ireland,
and
Upper Canada.

by

John Melish.

In Two Volumes.

Vol. I.

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1812.

THE journal of a traveller, when judiciously compiled, presents a living picture of the state of the country through which he passes ; while the interest that is excited by the narrative gratifies the fancy, and combines to render this at once an entertaining and instructive species of reading. Hence we find that books of travels have of late multiplied to a great extent, and are always in demand with the public. The field is inexhaustible, and must continue so while society is in a progressive state.

No country presents a more ample field for inquiry than the United States of America, and it is equally important whether we view it in regard to the inhabitants of America or of Britain. The former find themselves in possession of an immense territory, a great part of which is still unoccupied, or very thinly inhabited, so that there is room for the industry of thousands of generations, yet unborn ; and, as if by the special order of country, I had no intention of publishing my travels, nor did I think that my observations would have been sufficiently extensive or interesting to be laid before the public. But many circumstances have concurred to render them more important than I had originally imagined ; and a second journey to the country led to an investigation, the result of which I now consider worthy of publication. The following brief review will illustrate my motives and design, and it is with much deference submitted to a candid public.

In the year 1798 I made a voyage to the West Indies, during which I laid the foundation of a series of studies on geography, astronomy, natural philosophy, and chemistry, connected with navigation, and the theory of winds, tides, and currents, in the Atlantic Ocean. My voyage to America afforded an ample opportunity for resuming these studies, which I did not fail to take advantage of, and I accordingly kept a journal. After landing in America I continued my journal ; and circumstances having occurred which rendered it necessary to make a more extended tour, and to reside longer in the country than I originally intended, I used every diligence in my power in making observations, and committing them to writing. My tour was rapid, but my mode of procuring information was such as, I trust, will render even that part of my journal not uninteresting, particularly to those engaged in commerce.

Previous to leaving Britain, I had perused all the “ Travels in America” to which I had access ; but the plan of none of them pleased me, and I found many of them to contain such effusions of ignorance and spleen, that I came to the resolution to discard the whole, and to take for the basis of my information Arrowsmith’s map, and Morse’s Gazetteer of the United States. With these I arrived in the country, and they were my constant companions in my travels through it. When I arrived in a new state, I examined it in the map and gazetteer ; and the information derived from them I confirmed or corrected by personal observation, and information from those to whom I had access. I observed the like course with regard to every district, town, village, lake, or river, which I passed or saw ; and having committed the result to paper, in the shortest manner possible, I compiled my journal from these notes at my leisure. In this manner I travelled through part of Georgia, South Carolina, New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia and North Carolina ; so that I had occasion to see and make observations on all the Atlantic states, including the principal cities, rivers, bays, &c. on the eastern coast.

Next year I returned to Britain, where I followed up my plan of making memorandums, principally by noticing the nature of the American trade, and the manufactures in Britain calculated for America.

The commercial pursuits in which I had been engaged having been interrupted, I returned to America in the year 1809, in order to re-organize the business, or to wind it up ; and, having occasion to travel extensively through the interior of Georgia, I extended my re-marks, and found an opinion forced upon me, that should the restrictions on commerce be of long duration, America would become a manufacturing country, and consequently would be in a great measure independent of Europe. That opinion received strength and confirmation during a residence in New York in 1810, where I was fruitlessly employed in looking out for mercantile employment.

In the early part of the year 1811, having observed a regency in Britain without a change of councils, or the removal of the restrictions on commerce, I considered that the commercial relations between America and Britain would not be speedily resumed, and considered it necessary to look out for other employment. In search of this I came to the resolution of making a tour into the interior of the country, and being assisted by some kind friends, I was enabled to procure such a stock of valuable information, that I now thought it would be of importance to collect materials with a view to the publication of my whole travels, and to conduct my inquiries, in my proposed tour, accordingly.

This tour was performed to my entire satisfaction, and the result of my inquiries appeared so important that the publication was determined on, provided the plan met public approbation. With a view of ascertaining that point, a prospectus was issued, and a subscription list promoted, the result of which has exceeded my most sanguine expectations ; for though I was able to take the sense of but a small portion of the community comparatively, I obtained a very large and most respectable list of subscribers.

Encouraged by this honourable patronage, I have endeavoured to improve upon my original plan, and have added a great variety of matter not contemplated in the outlines, that the work might embody a complete geography of the United States. This is the first attempt that has come under my observation to incorporate a geographical description of a country in a journal of travels, and I hope it will not be without its use to the public. That it might be as complete as possible, I have noticed even those states and territories that I did not travel through, selecting those parts of the narrative for their introduction that I thought would be most appropriate. In the description of the eastern states the population is given by the census of 1800, because that of 1810 was not taken when I travelled through them ; but the statistical table and census of the United States introduced into the work, present a view of the population to the latter period, and I have occasionally added notes at some of the cities. The original design contemplated a pretty large appendix to the second volume ; but, in consequence of the plan adopted, a considerable part of the matter appropriated to it has been incorporated into different parts of the work, and the remainder has been mostly introduced into the chapter entitled “ United States.”

In short, no pains nor expence has been spared to render the work worthy of public patronage ; and, with a view of making it acceptable to the whole public, I have avoided all notice of *local* politics, except sometimes a mere casual observation, not calculated to reflect on any party. On the relations between this country and Britain I have been compelled to be more pointed. The late conduct of those who administer the affairs of England has not been of a nature merely speculative. It has involved a moral principle, and affected the best interests of the human race. The conduct adopted towards the United States influenced my own proceedings in a very considerable degree. In conducting my narrative, it was absolutely necessary to notice it ; and I have done so agreeably to what I consider the rules of truth.

Many of my readers may differ with me in opinion on this subject : to such I have merely to remark, that I have hazarded no opinion lightly, nor without due examination. My information has been drawn from the most correct sources, both in Britain and America. I have never been connected with any political party, and I am conscious of being free from any bias, but a sacred regard for truth and justice. Still, however, errors may have escaped me : I am open to conviction ; and if they are pointed out, it will give me sincere pleasure to correct them.

To my numerous and very respectable subscribers, and those gentlemen who favoured me with information, I beg leave to return my most sincere thanks for their encouragement and assistance ; and my thanks are due to the American public generally, for the kind attention with which I have been treated during my extensive travels through the country.

On the other hand, I trust this work will be found not altogether unworthy of public attention. Independent of the casual information collected while I was engaged in other pursuits, it has been the result of incessant labour, of both body and mind, for nearly two years, in which I have had every aid that books, maps, charts, and verbal information could give me. If it is found defective, I have no plea but want of capacity ; I have done my best. As the facts have

been collected with great care, so they have been communicated with a strict adherence to truth, and with a view of promoting the best interests of mankind, by a sincere friend, who has no motive for deceiving them. With these observations I consign the work to the tribunal of the public, and I shall bow with submission to their decree.

JOHN MELISH.

Philadelphia, October 12, 1812.

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I having completed my purchases, and established my connections, I resolved to go to America in person, to establish the business there, and made preparations for the voyage accordingly ; and the following remarks, grounded upon an essay of the late celebrated Dr. Franklin, and the result of a good deal of experience, may be useful to others. I have summed them up under the title of

Advice to those about to undertake a Sea Voyage.

When you intend to take a long voyage, endeavour to have your whole business transacted, so as you may have a few days to spend with your friends, and to attend to the little necessaries that may be requisite on the voyage, previous to your departure.

It is not always in a person's power to choose a captain, although a good deal of the comfort of the passage depends upon this choice. The chief requisites are, that he be a good seaman ; attentive, careful, and active in the management of his vessel ; and of these circumstances, and indeed all others relative to the passage, you must satisfy yourself before setting out, for there is no use in making complaints at sea. It is still more difficult to make choice of sociable fellow-passengers. A ship is like a stage-coach, it must accommodate all comers ; and one surly fellow may molest a whole ship's company. But a person, by having resources of his own, may make himself, in a great measure, independent of other people, and it will be well, before going on board, to take measures to accomplish that desirable object. For this purpose, a small library of books will be found very entertaining, and if you have any turn for the study of mathematics and drawing, you will have a good opportunity to practise on board ; and a case of mathematical instruments, and a box of paints will be necessary.

The greater part of the carrying trade between Britain and America is performed in American vessels, and a *cabin passage* in one of these vessels is generally very agreeable. The expence, including every thing, is from 30 to 40 guineas. There are various modes of laying in provisions. One is for the captain to provide every thing ; another is to provide every thing, except liquors ; and a third is for the passengers to furnish every thing, at their joint expence. If the captain be a judicious man, there will generally be a good supply, in either case. But it may not be amiss, for those who can afford it, to have a private assortment of good tea and cordials ; should they not have occasion to use them themselves, they may have an opportunity of serving some poor steerage passenger.

There is generally a medicine chest on board, but it is sometimes not in very good order ; and it will be advisable to have a few simple medicines of your own, such as rhubarb, cream, of tartar, and Peruvian bark ; and a few dozens of soda water will be found a very agreeable beverage.

When a family undertake a sea voyage, they have generally their own servant ; and if they are numerous, they will find it most comfortable and most economical to engage a stateroom, and lay in their own stores. For the information of such, I shall here subjoin a list of the most essential articles.

They are entitled to the ship's provisions : biscuit, salt beef, pork, peas, &c.—In addition, they will require meal, barley, flour, potatoes, pigs, ducks, fowls, porter, wine, and spirits. Beef, mutton, and loaf bread will keep fresh eight or ten days at sea, and it should be always laid in, as it proves not only a considerable saving to the fresh stock, but is generally more grateful to the stomach at that period than any other food.

The expence of a steerage passage is about twelve guineas, and the passengers are entitled to the whole ship's provisions before enumerated ; but to make themselves comfortable, it will be proper to add a little stock of tea, sugar, liquors, barley, and oat meal. It is generally necessary, both in the cabin and steerage, for the passengers to furnish their own bedding. I may take occasion here to remark, that this practice is an improper one. Vessels which are calculated to carry passengers, should be provided with bedding, particularly in the cabin births. They are furnished at no great expence, and one set would serve many passages, so that the expence, during one passage, would be trifling : whereas, by the present practice, each passenger is subjected to a considerable expence, besides the trouble of purchasing his bedding, and of selling it again at the close of the passage.

A few general remarks, to be attended to while at sea, shall conclude this article.

A short time after setting sail, the passengers generally get sea sick. This complaint, though lightly esteemed, because not dangerous, is often very severe while it lasts, and, if treated improperly, it may cause a relaxation of the stomach, that will be very troublesome. While the sickness continues, people have an aversion to all kinds of food and drink. Many abstain from both, three or four days. This is a bad plan. The stomach should never be allowed to get entirely empty. A little chicken broth or water gruel should be freely used ; and people should go upon deck as soon as possible. Breathing the foul air of the cabin or steerage promotes the disease ; whereas exercise and free air on deck relieve it. A little soda water will at this time be very exhilarating ; and as soon as the stomach is so far cleansed as to keep free from retching, a little Peruvian bark will be very beneficial as a restorative. Care should be taken to guard against costiveness, a very troublesome complaint at sea. Attention to diet and exercise will often prevent it ; but where that fails, a little laxative medicine, such as rhubarb, cream of tartar, or castor oil, should be resorted to.

When the weather is good, people should rise early. The air of the cabin is not only affected by the respiration of the passengers, but is often contaminated by the bilge water ; while the sea air on deck is always pure and healthy. The breakfast hour at sea is 8 o'clock, dinner 1, and supper 6 or 7. It is a general rule amongst the passengers, to have themselves washed and dressed before sitting down to breakfast. Betwixt breakfast and dinner, the time may be profitably employed in walking, reading, drawing, &c. ; and such as have a taste for navigation will have a good opportunity for practical improvement, as they can have access to the log-book ; and the captain and mates are generally very obliging, in lending their navigation books and instruments to those who wish them.

Temperance at table is necessary every where, and especially at sea, where the exercise is necessarily limited. Where wine is used, three or four glasses will generally be found more beneficial than a larger quantity ; and people ought, on no account, to indulge themselves at

the table a whole afternoon, though it is frequently done. It is much better to take exercise in the open air on deck.

In the evening, the company frequently amuse themselves at cards, backgammon, &c. ; these, when resorted to for amusement only, are rational and innocent enough ; but when the play is for money, they ought to be avoided. I may add, that, generally speaking, people's happiness is very much in their own power. A suavity of manners, and an obligingly civil deportment, is calculated to secure the esteem of mankind ; and when things are not exactly as we would wish them to be, it will add to our own comfort to take them as we find them.

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GREENOCK is an irregularly built town, containing about 18,000 inhabitants, and enjoys a very large portion of the commerce of the west of Scotland, which employs an extensive mercantile capital. Besides the coasting and Irish trade, of which it has a large share, it employs numerous shipping to Canada, to the West Indies, and to the continent of Europe ; and it is the seat of nearly the whole of the American trade with Scotland. There are three or four vessels in the New York, and as many in the Charleston trade ; besides occasional vessels for Boston, Savannah, Norfolk, &c. This trade is wholly carried on in American vessels ; and they generally perform two voyages in the year. The country round Greenock has a singular and even romantic appearance. The Clyde is here seven miles broad ; but a few miles below, it makes a sudden bend to the southward, and contracts to the breadth of two miles. On the opposite side is Hellensburg, and two miles below, on this side, is Gourock, which are celebrated watering-places, and much frequented by the citizens of Glasgow in the summer season ; and on the west is situated Roseneath, a seat of the duke of Argyle. It was lately burnt down, but is now rebuilt in an elegant style, and commands a fine view of the Firth and its shipping. The whole country round rises into high lands, and the view is terminated to the north and west by lofty mountains.

From this configuration of the country, connected with the winds which blow across the Atlantic Ocean, we may account for the frequent rains with which this place, and indeed the greater part of the west coast of Scotland, is inundated. The wind blows from the south-west for eight or nine months in the year, and is particularly prevalent in the winter season. In its course from the warm latitudes, over the vast expanse of water in the Atlantic Ocean, it is highly impregnated with vapour ; and, arriving on the high lands on the west of Scotland, it is suddenly condensed, and falls down in torrents of rain. From these circumstances, the winters are mild and rainy. There is comparatively little snow, and it never lies long ; but it has been frequently observed to rain for forty-two days successively. I cannot better illustrate this, than by relating an anecdote of an English traveller, and a waiter at one of the public inns. The traveller had arrived there for the first time. On the morrow, he intended to transact his business, but was prevented by the rain ; and so successively, for four or five days. At last, accosting the waiter, " What, my lad," says he, " does it *always* rain here?" " O na," says the waiter, " it *sometimes* snaws."

No material occurrence happened during my stay in Greenock, and I went on board the Warrington, on Wednesday, the 12th of March. A Mr. Ballard, of Boston, was my fellow-passenger in the cabin ; and a Mr. Miller and a Mr. M'Kenzie were passengers in the steerage.

We set sail at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, accompanied by the Factor, Caldwell, of New York ; but the wind was light, and we made little progress. Both these vessels were very fast sailers, and had excited considerable interest which would sail best. Among others, I had a small bet depending on the success of our vessel. By dint of towing, we had got a little ahead of the Factor, and were brought to and boarded by the crew of the tender, which was at the Tail of the Bank, who made a search for British seamen, and conducted themselves with all the insolence of arbitrary power ; but all was found correct, and we were suffered to depart.

In the mean time, a small breeze having sprung up, the Factor, feeling it first, came up with us very fast, took the wind out of our sails, and fairly passed us, to the great joy of the one ship's company, and the mortification of the other. We felt the breeze in our turn, and kept right astern of the Factor fifteen miles, to the Cumbraes, where she hove to, to discharge the pilot, and we passed her ; and she again passed us, while we were discharging ours.

Five miles below Greenock is the Clough light-house, where the river contracts, and makes the sudden bend to the south ; a little beyond which it spreads out into a spacious firth, and embosoms several islands, the chief of which are Arran, Bute, and the Cumbraes. It is bounded with high lands on both sides, and the islands are generally rugged and lofty. Arran, in particular, rises into very high mountains. The channel is very safe, and is navigable, at all seasons, for vessels of any burden.

It was dark when we discharged the pilot, and I retired to rest. When I rose in the morning, I found we had passed the island of Arran, and were abreast of that singularly insulated rock, in the middle of the channel, celebrated in song by the favourite Scottish bard, Burns—

“ Meg was deaf as *Ailsa Craig*.”

Here we had a very extensive view of the Scottish and Irish coasts. The Factor was a few miles ahead.

The wind continued light and variable, so that we did not get out of the channel until the afternoon, when we passed the Mull of Cantyre, soon after which we passed Stora Island ; and on the morning of the 14th, we found ourselves in the Atlantic Ocean, and had a most extensive view of the north-west coast of Ireland, and the Western Islands of Scotland. In the afternoon, we were abreast of Tory Island, from whence we took our departure, and, bestowing my benediction on the British islands, I committed myself to the waters of the Atlantic, hoping for a speedy and pleasant passage, and a safe arrival on Columbia's shore.

The wind continued very variable, accompanied with cold, stormy weather, with rain, hail, and snow, occasionally, until the 16th, when it got more settled. During all this time, we had kept sight of the Factor, but she was generally ahead. We now took a fair, strong breeze from the eastward, at the commencement of which the Factor was ahead fully twelve miles, and the ships had now a good opportunity for trying their full speed. We soon found that we gained upon the Factor very fast, and finally passed her on the morning of the 17th, to the great mortification of her captain, who tried her on all tacks, but without success ; and he finally shaped his course more to the northward, and we lost sight of the vessel during the day.

This breeze continued, wafting us along at the rate of nine or ten miles an hour, until the afternoon of the 20th, when we were to the westward of the Western Islands, and congratulating ourselves on the prospect of a speedy passage.—But, lo! a sudden reverse took place. The wind, which was blowing from the south-east, increased into a most furious gale, and the ship was brought from top-gallant and studding sails, to foresail and close-reefed main top-

sail. The gale increased, the ship laboured hard, and shipped a great many heavy seas ; but at 1 o'clock, on the morning of the 21st, it lulled into a perfect calm. It was now that we felt the most disagreeable effects of the gale ; for the sea had risen mountains high, and the ship, having no sail to steady her, partook of the motion of every wave, and rolled so sharp, that she threatened to toss her masts overboard. This state of things was, however, of short duration. At 2 o'clock, the wind shifted to the north-west, blowing most furiously, till about sunrise, when it became a little more moderate, and we made sail ; although the cross tumbling sea, occasioned by the contrary gales, made our sailing intolerably uneasy.

We had now a series of head winds, and disagreeable weather, which will be best described by giving an extract from my sea journal.

March 22. First part, strong gales and clear weather. Middle and latter part, strong gales, with rain and hail, a very heavy sea, and the ship labouring hard.

23. Strong gales and thick weather all these twenty-four hours, a very heavy sea, and the ship labouring hard. At 9 o'clock in the evening, the ship was struck with a very heavy sea, which carried away the bulwarks, and split the starboard plank sheer nearly the whole length of the main deck, washed the cambouse-house out of its place, and nearly carried the cabin-boy overboard. At 12 o'clock at night, shipped another very heavy sea.

24. Commences with strong gales and a heavy sea. Middle part more moderate, but a heavy sea, and the ship labouring hard. Latter part moderate, and all hands employed in repairing the damages of the gale.

25. First part, fresh breezes and clear. Middle, tremendous squalls. Latter part, light airs, inclining to a calm.

26. First part, light winds. Middle and latter part, fresh breezes, and cloudy.

27. First part, fresh breezes, and thick hazy weather. Middle part, the breeze increased to a most tremendous gale, and at 11 o'clock at night, the ship was struck with such a sea, as made her quiver to her centre. My fellow-passenger was thrown out of his berth with the violence of the shock, and the cabin was nearly filled with water. There was no making sail in this weather, and the ship was hove to. Latter part, very strong gales, with furious squalls, a very heavy sea running, and the ship leaking much in her upper works.

This, and those of the 21st and 23d, were the only severe gales we encountered, but we had a series of head winds, gales, and squalls, with occasional showers of rain, hail, and snow, till the 22d of April, when I find the following remarks in my Journal : " Being now out forty-one days, and little more than two-thirds of the passage, the " wind right against us, and no appearance of shifting, we apprehend a long passage, and the ship's company are put on short allowance of water. I am much afraid our goods will be too late for the Savannah market."

The head winds continued, but we had more moderate weather, though occasional gales, till the 26th, when we spoke a sloop out two days from Bermuda. Being now near these little islands, I may step out of my course to describe them, though I did not see them.

They are four in number, and were discovered by John Bermudas, a Spaniard, in 1527 ; but the Spaniards neglecting them, they were again discovered by Sir George Sommers, who

was shipwrecked on them in 1609. Of these islands, the chief is St. George, having a capital of the same name, consisting of about 500 houses, built of soft free-stone, St George contains about 3000 inhabitants, and the whole islands perhaps about 9000, of whom nearly two-thirds are slaves. The people are chiefly occupied in building small craft, with which they trade to Canada and the West Indies ; and they are said to be very expert at the business of privateering. The civil government is vested in a governor, council, and general assembly. The religion is that of the church of England, and a native of Perth, in Scotland, is minister.

The head winds still continued, but the weather was moderate ; and after crossing the gulph stream, we made the land on the 7th of May, supposed to be cape Lookout, on the coast of North Carolina. But the head winds still continued, and we were (to use a sea phrase) jammed in betwixt the gulph stream and the coast, so that we could make no progress whatever till the 10th, when, to our great joy, we got a fair wind, which wafted us briskly along, and we made Tybee Light-house early on the morning of the 12th of May, after a turbulent, disagreeable passage of 61 days.

The breeze continuing favourable, we soon approached the bar, where, having got a pilot, we waited half an hour for the tide, and then made sail up Savannah river ; which I found a perfect contrast to the Clyde, the banks being low and muddy, and the country round a perfect level. In our passage up we saw a good many fishes and alligators ; which last are frightful-looking animals, but they are by no means so dangerous as generally represented. At 2 o'clock we passed a bend in the river called Four Mile Point, and at 3 came to anchor at Five Fathom Hole ; where having dined on board, for the last time, we set out in the small boat for Savannah, which we reached at 5 o'clock.

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General Remarks.

THE most material circumstances which happened on board, are recorded in the foregoing chapter ; but the passage may admit of the following general remarks.

The Warrington was a good stout vessel, of 318 tons burden, remarkably handsome and well found, and a very fast sailer : but her cargo was light, and all at the bottom, so that she was not well trimmed for sea ; and her motion was sharp, and intolerably uneasy.

Captain Hinkley, the commander, was bred a sailor on board of this same vessel, and raised himself by his own merit to the rank he now holds. His scientific knowledge did not seem to be great, but he was an excellent seaman, and very careful in the management of the vessel.

He was provided with an excellent mate, in Mr. Arnold ; who to a thorough knowledge as a seaman, joined a correct knowledge of the theory and practice of navigation, and sciences connected with it ; he was moreover a very agreeable, intelligent man, and I received much information from his remarks.

Mr. Ballard, my fellow passenger, was an intelligent, good-natured young man. With the steerage passengers I had of course less connection, but they were agreeable ; and the sailors behaved themselves with propriety during the passage.

The motion of the vessel was too great to permit us to amuse ourselves at any game ; and I devoted my time pretty closely to the study of navigation, geography, astronomy, and chart drawing ; in which I flattered myself that I made tolerable proficiency. The study of chemistry took up part of my time, and so also did general literature and music. To the principles of merchandize in general, and the trade between Glasgow and Savannah in particular, I paid much attention, and drew up an essay on the shipping trade between the two places, and the best method of prosecuting it ; but circumstances have since occurred which render it of little importance to the general reader, and I omit it, and substitute in its place the following reflections on the prevailing winds and currents, with other phenomena, in the Atlantic ; and an inquiry as to the best courses across that ocean at different seasons of the year.

Of The Winds on The Atlantic

The trade wind prevails between the tropics, that is, from $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ S. to $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N. latitude, being 47 degrees in breadth ; and is a constant motion of the air from east to west, having a little variation near the extremes, that is, towards the southern tropic it inclines to the south-east, and towards the northern tropic it inclines to the north-east. The cause of this current of air is supposed to be the action of the sun, which is always vertical at one point or another between the tropics ; combined with the diurnal motion of the earth, which has a greater velocity here than at any other point. The action of a vertical sun rarefies and expands the air, in consequence of which it rises ; and the motion of the earth sweeping from under it at the rate of more than 1000 miles an hour to the eastward, causes a constant current of air to the westward. The velocity of this current is various ; but when I sailed in it, in my voyage to the West Indies, it was very strong, and regular, carrying a heavy sailing vessel at the rate of 8 miles an hour, and it never shifted a point from due east.

A little attention to the nature of this wind may be useful, as it illustrates the theory of the variable winds, and bears with considerable force upon the theory of the climate of the United States.

From the tropic of Cancer, in $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, to about 28° north latitude, the wind generally blows from the north-east, and is a branch of the trade wind, partaking of its nature. Between the latitudes of 28° and 32° north, the winds are very irregular ; and that being the region between the trade and variable winds, it is subject to frequent calms. Between the latitudes of 28° and 50° north, westerly winds are by far the most prevalent, particularly in the winter and spring, during which they frequently rise to furious gales and squalls. Beyond 50° north, I had not occasion to remark, but I believe they are most prevalent from the north-west.

Of The Gulph Stream.

This stream is a consequence arising from the trade winds. By an inspection of the chart of the Atlantic Ocean, it will be seen, that the vast quantity of water of which that ocean is made up, must be affected by a constant current of air sweeping along it in one direction.

This must necessarily give a small degree of motion to the water, which being slanted off by the direction of the coast of South America, has, towards the southern extremity, a north-west motion, and proceeding through the West India islands, raises the waters in the gulph of Mexico beyond the level of the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans. The current being stopt by the

isthmus of Darien, winds along the northern coast of the gulph of Mexico, in search of a level, and finds an outlet through the gulph of Florida, between the island of Cuba and the south point of East Florida. From thence it proceeds in a north-east direction, sweeping the American coast, at the distance of 60 or 70 miles from the land, until it reaches cape Hatteras, where it approaches within 20 or 30 miles of the coast ; here it tends more to the eastward, until it reaches the coast of Nova Scotia, when it takes a course nearly due east. It continues this course until it reaches the Great Bank of Newfoundland, where it seems to be materially affected, and diverging to a greater breadth, is finally lost towards the Azores and Madeira islands.

The breadth of this stream, in the gulph of Florida, is about 30 or 40 miles. It increases as it proceeds to the north-east : opposite cape Hatteras it is about 150 miles ; off the coast of Nova Scotia it is about 4 degrees ; and at the Bank of Newfoundland it is about 5 degrees; from thence diverging to 6 or 7.

The velocity of the current is, in the gulph of Florida, about five or six miles an hour, but it decreases as it proceeds to the north-east. Opposite cape Hatteras it is about two miles ; off the coast of Nova Scotia it is about one and a half ; and at the banks of Newfoundland it is about one mile.

The probability is, that its course is directed to the east-ward by the influence of the rivers issuing from the coast of America, particularly the great river St. Lawrence, opposite to which it seems to make the greatest bend ; and it is also probable that the confluence of these waters and another stream proceeding from Davis' Straits, has contributed to raise the Banks of Newfoundland.

The temperature of this stream is different from that of the surrounding ocean, and partakes of that of the waters in the gulph of Mexico, being generally 10 or 12 degrees warmer than the other parts of the ocean. Hence it affects the temperature of the air above it, which is frequently subject, particularly in the spring, to calms, fogs, whirl-winds, water spouts, and storms of thunder and lightning.

The heavy fogs which hover over the Banks of Newfoundland, seem to arise from this warm fluid, mixing with the cold atmosphere generated by the stream from Davis' Straits.

The next phenomena which I shall notice, as bearing on this subject, is, that islands of ice, sometimes numerous and of great extent, are carried by the stream from Davis' Straits, in the spring season ; and before they are dissolved by the warmth of the Atlantic, they sometimes extend as far south as the latitude of 45° or 40° , and as far east as the longitude of 48° or 50° . Vessels sailing to and from America have been frequently entangled amongst them, and some have been totally lost.

A correct knowledge of these circumstances is of considerable importance to our inquiry, and the following practical deductions may be of service to those interested in the result.

1st. Ships bound from Britain to the West Indies should shape their course from the channel to St. Mary's, one of the Azores ; from thence to where the longitude of 40° intersects the latitude of $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$; and from thence run down the trades for the intended port. Ships bound from Europe to the gulph .of Mexico, should keep the same course. The return from the West Indies and Mexico to Europe is different according to situation, as a few degrees of longitude make an important variation. Generally speaking, it is best for vessels to bear to the

north-ward until they get into the variable winds, and then keep along with them in the nearest way to their intended port.

2d. Vessels bound to the southward of the capes of Virginia in the United States, should, in the spring, shape their course for St. Mary's as aforesaid ; from thence to about where the longitude of 35° intersects the latitude of 28° , where they will, at that season, most likely meet with an easterly wind, failing which they are sure to fall in with it a few degrees farther south ; run down with it due west till they arrive on the confines of the gulph stream ; and then bear away for the intended port. By taking this southern course, at this season, they will avoid several difficulties. 1st. The danger of falling in with islands of ice. 2dly. The necessity of passing the gulph stream where it is four or five degrees broad, and at that season subject to much bad weather. And 3dly. The chance of meeting with a series of head winds. In the autumn there is no ice to be dreaded, the weather is more mild, and the westerly winds less prevalent, while the latitudes between 28° and 32° are much subjected to calms, so that it is best ; upon the whole, to run for the intended port.

3d. Ships bound to the northward of the capes of Virginia should shape their course direct for the intended port. They have no occasion to cross the gulph stream, and as to the ice, it may be prudent to keep a little to the south-ward, as they approach the Banks of Newfoundland.

4th. Vessels bound to Europe from any port of America, cannot do better than run direct for the intended port.

Savannah.

THE first objects that attracted my attention on my arrival in Savannah, was the sallow appearance of the inhabitants, and the extreme warmth of the weather ; the thermometer being at 91° . I naturally concluded, that as the season advanced, the heat would increase, and would soon be almost intolerable. This opinion was strengthened by some of the inhabitants, who are in the habit of alarming strangers concerning the climate ; but I was afterwards informed, by a judicious medical gentleman, that there would be few days warmer than this, and that the weather would be, upon the whole, much cooler. This opinion I found to be correct, for in a few days the thermometer fell below 70° , and it seldom rose above 85° while I continued in Savannah.

The next circumstance that made a forcible impression upon me was the great difference between this place, and any other I had ever seen before. There was no distant view no external object to amuse the fancy the whole country round, north, south, east, and west, was one dull scene, which excited no interest ; and the music of the birds of heaven was exchanged for the dull croaking of the bull-frog, and the shrill treble pipe of the musquetoe. Nevertheless, I soon got familiarized to the place, and even fond of it. My business, which was well organized, was succeeding to my wish, and the inhabitants, whom I found very obliging, became every day more amiable in my eyes.

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