

An American Day-Book 1798

*Travels of four years and a half in the United States of America during 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802*

John Davis

“Travels in Search of Independence and Settlement. Portum Inveni.”

The impulse to the keeping of a day-book may be of several sorts, the purely business, the scientifically objective, the literary—facts for profit, facts as facts, and facts somewhat as drama. This book by John Davis is for that period fairly unique as the work of a Traveller who was professedly literary, who cared little for the political aspects of what he saw and asked no place among statisticians. Crèvecoeur and Chateaubriand were sentimentalists, but Crèvecoeur is very disquisitional and Chateaubriand might have written his book in his tower. Henry Wansey, in his *Journal of a Summer*, is the Pepys of this eighteenth century group ; Parkinson and Cooper are also, in their way, entirely practical ; the others, Robin, Chastellux, Schoepf, Castiglioni, Coke, Bayard, von Bülow, and the rest, are political philosophers, topographers of more or less sprightliness, anecdotal, tabulators, or men interested in natural and applied science, all good, and none like John Davis.—A. J. Morrison

*VOYAGE from BRISTOL to NEW YORK*

HAVING formed the resolution of visiting the United States, I repaired, December 15, 1797, from *Salisbury* to *Bristol*, with a view of embarking on board a *Snow* of two hundred tons, which lay at the Quay, and was bound to *New-York*. The Captain had purposed to sail the 20th of the same month, but it was not before January 7th of the new year, that the vessel moved from the wharf, when the spring-tide enabled her to proceed down the river.

For my passage, which was in the steerage, I had paid seven guineas to the merchants who chartered the vessel, and my mess, which was with two young gentlemen of my acquaintance, cost me only three pounds more. But, with this money, besides provisions, we purchased a stove, which, during the voyage, was a treasure to us. It not only fortified us against the cold, but we cooked our victuals upon it ; and the drawer which was designed to hold the ashes, made an admirable oven.

Hence there was never any occasion for us to have recourse to the caboose ; but, on the contrary, when the frequent gales of wind which we experienced caused the sea to break over the vessel, the cabin-boy solicited leave to dress his dinner on our fire. In relating these circumstances, I must claim the indulgence of the reader not to rank me among the courtiers of *Alcinous* ; men, *fruges consumere nati*. My only motive is to suggest to the enterprising traveller at how small an expence he may be enabled to cross the *Atlantic*.

The cabin was by no means an enviable place. It offered neither accommodation nor society. Its passengers consisted of an Unitarian priest and family, and two itinerant merchants. The steerage groupe was composed of a good, jolly, *Somersetshire* farmer and his housekeeper, who were going to settle in *Pennsylvania*, of the two young gentlemen I have already mentioned, and myself. Having repeatedly crossed the Equator, and doubled the Cape of Good Hope, there is no occasion for me to say that the ocean was familiar to me ; and that, while the other passengers were sick and dejected, I was in health and good spirits. To the roll of the vessel I was fully accustomed ; but my companions not having gotten their sea legs on board, tumbled grievously about the decks.

The library which I had brought with me consisted of nearly three hundred volumes, and would have endeared me to any place. The Muses, whom I never ceased to woo, blessed me, I thought, not infrequently, with their nightly visitations ; and I soothed my mind to tranquillity with the fancied harmony of my verse.

*Ridentur mala qui componunt carmina : verum  
Gaudens scribentes, et se venerantur, et ultro  
Si taceas, laudant ; quidquid scripsere, beati.*

HOR. [1]

Being an old sailor, I had provided myself with a cot, which, by making me insensible to the roll of the vessel, would, I thought, render my sleep more tranquil and undisturbed than a cabin. But I cannot say my slumbers the first night were very soft ; for, hanging in the wake of the hatchway, the breeze from the deck made my situation very unpleasant. Foreseeing also that I was exposed to the deluge of every sea the brig should ship on the passage, I unhung my cot, and put it into a spare fore and aft cabin, which, to my satisfaction, I found, afterwards, was the only dry one in the steerage. The wind being favourable on getting under weigh, we profited from the occasion by shaking out the reefs, and shewing all our canvass to the breeze.

The old housekeeper, the very type of Dame Leonarda in Gil Bias, was the first among the passengers that began to hold up her head ; and the fourth day of our voyage she murdered an old hen to regale a poor sick gentleman, who thought he could relish some chicken broth. We had scarcely been out a week, when we experienced a gale of wind that was not less disastrous than tremendous. A sea which broke over the quarter washed a hencoop from its lashing, and drowned nearly three dozen of fowls. But it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. The sailors made the fowls into an huge sea-pye of three decks, which they called the United States Man of War, and fed on it eagerly.

There was a carter in the vessel, who came on board to work his passage ; but he did very little work. Whenever a porpoise or even a gull was visible, he considered it the presage of a storm, and became himself invisible till it was over. A report being circulated that the rats had left the vessel when in harbour, Coster Pearman concluded that they had done it by instinct ; and, as an opinion prevails among sailors that a ship, on such an event, never gets safe to her port of destination, the booby gave himself up for lost. But hearing one night a rat scratch against the vessel's side, he ran upon deck in his shirt to proclaim it to the sailors, calling out with a joyful tone of voice, " Whoa ! hoa ! hoa ! a rat ! a rat !"

The two Brothers was a miserably sailing tub, and her passage a most tedious one. Head winds constantly prevailed, and scarcely a week elapsed without our lying-to more than once. To scud her was impracticable, as she would not steer small, and several times the Captain thought she was going to founder. Her cargo, which consisted of mill stones and old iron, made her strain so with rolling, that incessant pumping could hardly keep her free. She seemed to be fitted out by the parish ; there was not a rope on board strong enough to hang a cat with. She had only one suit of sails, not a single spar, and her cordage was old. If a sail was split by the wind, there was no other alternative but to mend it ; and when, after being out six weeks, we had sprung our fore top mast, we were compelled to reef it. The same day, I remember, we fell in with a schooner from New York, which we spoke. It was on the 18th of February. She was bound to St Sebastian. The seamen being employed, I volunteered my services to pull an oar on board her, which were readily accepted. Her Captain received us politely, and regaled us with some cyder. She had left port only a fortnight ; but it took the ill-fated Two Brothers a month to get thither. We parted with regret. The Captain of her was of a social, friendly disposition. As to our own skipper, he was passionately fond of visiting

every vessel that he saw on the passage. If an old salt fish schooner hove in sight, he clamoured for his boarding-boots, and swore he would go to her if it were only to obtain a pint of molasses. Once, having hailed a vessel, he was justly rebuked. He told the Captain of her he would hoist out his boat and go to see him ; but the man not approving, I suppose, his physiognomy, hauled aft his sheets and bore round up before the wind. The skipper had contracted these habits during the American war, when he commanded a small privateer ; and he could not in his old age reclaim the foibles of his youth.

As we increased our longitude, the priest, in examining his barrels of white biscuit, found one of them emptied by other hands than his own. Suspicion fell on a sailor, whom he one day accused before the passengers, as he was standing at the helm. “ Did you not steal my biscuit, sirrah !” said the parson. “ I did. Sir,” answered the fellow. “ And what, pray, can you say in defence of yourself ?” “ Why, Sir, I can say—that when I crossed the Line, Neptune made me swear I would never eat brown bread when I could get white ; and *your* barrel of *white* stood next *my* barrel of *brown*.” This reply of the sailor was so happy and unexpected, that to remain grave exceeded all powers of face. The roar of the sea was lost in the combined laughter that arose from the Captain, passengers, and ship’s company. Farmer Curtis, whom the tythes exacted from him by the parson of his parish had nearly ruined, now revenged himself on the cloth by a peal of laughter that shook the ship from stem to stern ; not even the priest could refrain from a smile ; though, perhaps, it was rather a sardonic grin; a distortion of the countenance, without any gladness of heart.

On the 8th of March, we saw the Isles of Sile, and three days after weathered the breakers of Nantucket ; from whence, coasting to the southward, we made Long Island, and ran up to Sandy Hook. The wind subsiding, we let go our anchor, and the next morning, at an early hour, I accompanied the Captain and two of the cabin passengers on shore. It was Sunday, March 18th.

On the parched spot, very properly called Sandy Hook, we found only one human habitation, which was a public house. The family consisted of an old woman, wife to the landlord, two young girls of homely appearance, a negro man and boy. While breakfast was preparing, I ascended, with my companions, the light house, which stood on the point of the Hook. It was lofty, and well furnished with lamps. On viewing the land round the dwelling of our host, I could not help thinking that he might justly exclaim with Selkirk :

“ I’m monarch of all I survey,  
My right there is none to dispute,  
From the centre all round to the sea,  
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.”

The morning passed away not unpleasantly. The vivacity of the Captain enlivened our breakfast, which was prolonged nearly till noon ; nor do I think we should have then risen from table, had not the Mate, who was left in charge of the snow, like a good seaman, hove short, and loosened his sails in readiness to avail himself of the breeze which had sprung up in our favour. The Captain, therefore, clamoured for the bill, and finished his last bowl of grog with the favorite toast of *Here’s to the wind that blows, the ship that goes, and the lass that loves a sailor*.

In our progress to the town, we passed a British frigate lying at anchor. It was sunset, and the roll of the spirit-stirring drum brought to my recollection those scenes, that pomp, pride, and circumstance of glorious war, that makes ambition virtue. [2] We moored our vessel to one of the wharfs, and I rejoiced to find myself on a kindred shore.

UPON my landing at New-York, my first care was to deliver a letter of recommendation which I had been favoured with by a friend to a merchant in the city ; together with a volume of Travels from *Boston to Philadelphia*, which he had recently published. [3] But I cannot say that I was received with the urbanity I had anticipated. Neither my friend's letter, nor his book, could soften the features of the stern American ; and were the world to read the volume with as little interest as he, it would soon be consigned to the peaceful shelf.

I was now to become the architect of my own fortune. Though on a kindred shore, I had not even an acquaintance to whom I could communicate my projects ; the letter had failed me that was to decide my fortune at one blow, and I found myself solitary and sad among the crowds of a gay city.

But I was not long depressed by melancholy reflections over my condition, for I found a friend in a man, who, having himself been unfortunate, could feel for another in adversity. A concurrence of circumstances had brought me into the company of Mr. *Caritat*, a bookseller, who, being made acquainted with my situation, addressed me with that warmth, which discovers a desire to be useful, rather than a wish to gratify curiosity.

He inquired into my projects. I told him that my scheme was to get into some family as a private tutor. A private Tutor ! said he. Alas ! the labour of Sisyphus in hell is not equal to that of a private Tutor in *America* ! Why your project puts me in mind of young Mr. Primrose. And your exclamations, said I, remind me of his cousin in London. Just enough, rejoined Mr. *Caritat*, and let me examine you a little after the manner of his cousin.

Do you write a good hand, and understand all the intricacies of calculation ? No. Then you will not do for a private Tutor. It is not your Latin and Greek, but your handwriting and cyphering, that will decide your character. Penmanship, and the figures of arithmetic, will recommend you more than logic and the figures of rhetoric. Can you passively submit to be called Schoolmaster by the children, and *Cool Mossa* by the negroes ? No. Then you will not do for a private Tutor. Can you comply with the humility of giving only one rap at the door that the family may distinguish it is the Private Tutor ; and can you wait half an hour with good humour on the steps, till the footman or housemaid condescends to open the door ? No. Then you will not do for a private Tutor. Can you maintain a profound silence in company to denote your inferiority ; and can you endure to be helped always the last at table, aye even after the clerk of the counting-house ? No. Then you will not do for a private Tutor. Can you hold your eyes with your hands, and cry Amen ! when grace is said ; and can you carry the childrens' bibles and prayer-books to church twice every Sunday ? No. Then you will not do for a private Tutor. Can you rise with the sun, and teach till breakfast ; swallow your breakfast, and teach till dinner ; devour your dinner, and teach till tea-time ; and from tea-time to bedtime sink into insignificance in the parlour ? No. Then you will not do for a private Tutor. Do you expect good wages ? Yes. Then you will never do for a private Tutor. No, sir, the place of private Tutor is the last I would recommend you ; for as Pompey, when he entered a tyrant's dominions, quoted a verse from Euripides that signified his liberty was gone, so a man of letters, when he undertakes the tuition of a family in *America*, may exclaim he has lost his independence. Though not a countryman of your's, continued Mr. *Caritat*, I am from the same division of the globe, for I was born and educated in France. I should be happy to serve you, but I have not the hypocrisy to pretend that my offers of service are disinterested : interest blends itself with all human actions, and you, sir, have it in your power to be useful to me ; I know you are skilled in French, because I have conversed with you in that language ; of your own idiom you also discover an intimate acquaintance. *Vous etes donc mon homme*. I have just imported Buonaparte's campaign in *Italy*, from *Bourdeaux*, and the people are eager

for a translation. Will you undertake the task ? Will you translate the work for two hundred dollars ? This is not the land of literature ; booksellers in this country are not the patrons of authors, and therefore the remunerations for literary labour are not munificent. But the notoriety of Buonaparte will sell the work ; and the translation make your name known beyond the mountains of the Blue Ridge. In a word. if you will translate the volume, I will pay you two hundred dollars.

Less declamation would have made me undertake the translation. I could hardly conceal my transports ; and hugging the volume to my breast I danced home to my lodgings.

I lodged with a young man, who called himself a Physician, in Ferry-street, a melancholy alley impervious to the sun. Doctor de Bow, however, in huge gilt letters, adorned the entrance of the house :

“ And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,  
An alligator stuff'd and other skins  
Of ill-shap'd fishes ; and about his shelves  
A beggarly account of empty boxes ;  
Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds.  
Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses  
Were thinly scattered to make up a shew.” [5]

Of the medical skill of the Doctor I cannot pretend to judge ; but he had little or no practice in his profession, notwithstanding he dressed in black, maintained a profound gravity, and wore green spectacles on his nose.

While the Doctor was reading the Life of Don Quixote, I was to be seen toiling at my translation like *Cruden* at his Concordance. The original was an octavo of four hundred pages, and every time I opened the volume it seemed to increase in bulk ; but the golden dream of reputation fortified my diligence, and I corrected the proof-sheets with lively sensibility.

Emolument, and an avidity of reputation, are two powerful incentives to literary industry ; and I prosecuted my translation with so much diligence, that on the fourth of June it was ushered into the literary world amidst the acclamations of the Democrats, and the revilings of the Federalists. This was to me extraordinary, for I had professed myself of neither party, but declared my intention never to meddle with the politics of a country, in which I had neither a fixed dwelling, nor an acre of land.

About this period, my friend the Doctor relinquished his house, and rented a little medicinal shop of a Major Howe, who was agreeably situated in Cherry-street. As the Major took boarders, I accompanied the Doctor to his house, determined to eat, drink, and be merry over my two hundred dollars. With some of the well-stamped coin I purchased a few dozen of Madeira, and when the noontide heat had abated, I quaffed the delicious liquor with the Major and the Doctor under a tree in the garden.

My occupations at New-York, however agreeable, did not repress my desire to explore the continent before me ; and I thought it best to travel while I had some crowns left in my purse. I felt regret at the thought of separating from the Doctor, whom I was attached to from habit ; but the Doctor soon relieved me by saying, he would accompany me whithersoever I went ; that no man loved travelling better than he, and that he would convert his medicine into money to defray his expences on the road.

But tell me, said the Doctor, are you fond of walking ? I assured him no person could be more so. Then, resumed he, let us each provide ourselves with a good cudgel, and begin our journey on foot. I will put a case of instruments into my pocket, and you can slip into your's the campaign of *Buonaparte* in *Italy*.

But whither, replied I, do you propose to go ; and what, I beseech you, is the object of your travelling ? To see the world, assuredly, said he ; to eat, drink and laugh away care on the road. How, Doctor, said I, would you approve of a walk to *Philadelphia* ? I should like it of all things, said the Doctor. In our way to it we should go through the place of my birth ; you have heard, I guess, of *Hackinsac* ; and at *Philadelphia* I could get somebody to introduce me to the great Doctor Rush. All we have to do is to send on our trunks in the coach, and trudge after them on foot

Our resolution was no sooner taken than executed. The Doctor got an apothecary, who lived opposite, to purchase what few drugs were contained in his painted drawers ; and having dispatched our trunks forward by the coach, we began our journey to *Philadelphia*.

Having crossed the *Hudson*, which separates *York-Island* from the shore of the *Jerseys*, we were landed at a Tavern [5] delightfully situated on the bank of the river. The Doctor having once reduced a fractured leg for the landlord, proposed dining at the Tavern : he will certainly charge us nothing, said he, for I once reduced his leg, when the *Tibia* and *Fibula* were both badly fractured. It was a nice case, and I will put him in mind of it.

But you charged him, Doctor, did you not, said I. No matter for that, replied he. I should have been expelled from the College of Whigs had I not put in my claim.

I represented to the Doctor that no man who respected himself would become an eleemosynary guest at the table of another, when he had money to defray his wants. That to remind another of past services discovered a want of humanity ; and that a mean action, though it may not torment the mind at the moment it was done, never fails afterwards to bring compunction : for the remembrance of it will present itself like a spectre to the imagination.

The landlord of the tavern was a portly man, who in the middle of the day was dressed in a loose night-gown and mocossins ; [6] he recognised the Doctor, whom he shook heartily by the hand, and turning to a man in company, said, “ they may talk of Doctor *Rush*, Doctor *Mitchell*, or Doctor Devil, but I maintain Doctor *De Bow* is the greatest Doctor of them all.”

It was difficult to refrain from laughing aloud ; but the speech of the landlord inspired the Doctor with very different emotions ; he made an inclination of his head, adjusted his spectacles, and assumed a profound look that assented to the justness of the remark.

What, gentlemen, said the landlord, would you chuse for your dinner ? It is now the hottest part of the day, and if you are walking to *Newark*, you will find the evening more pleasant. How comes on trade. Doctor, at *New-York* ? I warrant you have got your share.

Why, Mr. *Clinch*, replied the Doctor, I cannot complain. There have been several cases of fever to which I was called. And the patients were right, said Mr. *Clinch*, for they could not have called a better Doctor had they sent over the four quarters of the globe for him. Well, it is true, God sends this country fevers, but he also sends us Doctors who are able to cure them. It is like the State I was born in : *Virginia* is infested with snakes, but it abounds with roots to cure their bite. Come, walk in, gentlemen, walk in. I will get dinner ready directly.

Our dinner was a miserable one ; but the landlord seasoned his dishes with flattery, and the Doctor found it very palatable. We went forward in the cool ; nor did my friend hesitate to pay his club towards two dollars for our repast : it was high, the Doctor whispered, but, continued he, when a man's consequence is known at a tavern it always inflames the bill.

It was our original design to have gone through *Hackinsack*, a little village that claimed the honor of my companion's nativity; but it was getting late ; the road to it was circuitous, and we wished much that night to travel to *Elizabeth Town*. The Doctor consoled himself for not visiting his family by observing that no man was a prophet at home.

We did not stop long at Newark, but prosecuted our walk, after taking shelter from a shower of rain in one of its sylvan habitations. [7] The sun, which had been obscured, again gladdened the plains ; and the birds which had ceased awhile singing, again renewed their harmony.

We reached *Elizabeth Town* a little while after the stage-coach. My companion, being somewhat fatigued, retired early to bed, but I devoted a great part of the night to the refined pleasures of reading and reflection. There is no life so unsettled but a lover of reading will find leisure for the acquisition of knowledge, an acquisition that depends not on either seasons or place. To know the value of time, we must learn to appreciate every particle of it ; and remember that moments, however trifling in appearance, form the year by accumulation.

When I went to bed there was little sleep to be obtained ; for a huge mastiff in the yard, notwithstanding the Doctor put his head out of the window and vociferated to him repeatedly, did not remit barking the whole of the night. We therefore rose without being called, and pursued our journey to *Prince-town*, a place more famous for its College than its learning.

The road from *Prince-town* to *Trenton* offers little matter for speculation. I know that in some places there were battles fought between the British and their revolted Colonists ; but the recollection of it tends to no use, and, I am sure, it cannot be pleasing.

At *Trenton*, the Doctor, who was afflicted with sore eyes, declined proceeding any further. It was to no purpose that I expostulated with him on the folly of his conduct, and urged that we had not many more miles to travel. The son of *Paracelsus* was inexorable, and it only remained for me to perform the last office of friendship, which was to tie a bandage over his eyes, and lead him blind-folded to his room ; in our way to which, happening to stumble, the Doctor comically enough observed, *When the blind leads the blind, they shall both of them fall.*

From *Trenton* I was conveyed over the *Delaware* in the ferry-boat, with an elderly man, clad in the garb of a Quaker. His looks beamed benignity, and his accents breathed kindness ; but, as the great Master of Life observes, there is no art can find the mind's construction in the face.

We had scarce landed on the opposite bank of the river, when a poor cripple in a soldier's jacket, advanced towards the Quaker, holding both his crutches in one hand, and taking half a hat from his head with the other :—Bestow your charity, cried the beggar, on a poor worn-out soldier, who fought for your liberty during a long war, and got wounded by a *Hessian* at the very place you have just left. Refuse not your charity to an old soldier in distress.

Alas ! exclaimed the Quaker, this comes of war. Shame on our nature. Beasts live in concord, men only disagree. Had thou taken the advice of scripture, thou wouldest have escaped thy wounds !

What, Master, is that ?

Why, Friend, if a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other.  
And were you to take the advice of scripture, you would not refuse me your alms.  
What, Friend, is that ?  
Why, when a man wants to borrow of thee, turn not thou away.  
I remember no such passage, replied the Quaker.  
It is in the New Testament, said the beggar.  
The text has been corrupted, cried the Quaker, hastening away through a field.  
Won't you give me a copper ? bawled the beggar, limping after the Quaker.  
Charity begins at home, said the Quaker, accelerating his pace.  
The Lord help thee, exclaimed the beggar, halting almost breathless on his crutch. But here perhaps is a gentleman who has more of the milk of human kindness.

To become acquainted with human life, the traveller must not mingle only with the sons of opulence and ease ; these know no greater fatigue than the hurry of preparation for a ball, and experience no higher mortification than the disappointment of pride. Such beings who pass their days in solemn pomp and plenty, can display no examples of fortitude, of serenity, or patience ; their wishes are anticipated, and their mandates obeyed. It is among the children of adversity that we must look for resignation under misfortune ; it is from the indigent only we can be instructed to bear calamities without repining.

Impressed with this conviction, I entered into discourse with the cripple, whom I found to be a man not without reflection. He had seen better days, and hoped for their return. Though my present appearance, said he, shews I am in the most wretched state of poverty, there was a time when I knew the comforts of a home and fireside. These are past, but there is a pleasure in the recollection of them ; for no man who has enjoyed the comforts of life is ever without the hope that he shall enjoy them again.

I had walked about a mile along the bank of the *Delaware* when the coach to *Philadelphia* overtook me, and finding the road dusty I complied with the invitation of the driver to get into the vehicle. At *Bristol* we took up two young women, clad in the habit of the Quakers, whom I soon, however, discovered to be girls of the town ; and who, under pretence of shewing me a letter, discovered their address.

A spacious road conducted us to *Philadelphia*, which we entered at Front-street. I had expected to be charmed with the animation of the American metropolis ; [8] but a melancholy silence prevailed in the streets, the principal houses were abandoned, and none but *French* people were to be found seeking pleasure in society.

The coach stopped at the sign of the Sorrel-Horse, in Second-street, where I heard only lamentations over the Yellow Fever, which had displayed itself in Water-street, and was spreading its contagion.

It costs no more to go to a good tavern than a bad one ; and I removed my trunks, which I found at the Stage-office, to the French Hotel in the same street. Mr. *Pecquet* received me with a bowing mien, and called *Jeannette* for the *passpartout* to shew me his apartments. He exercised all his eloquence to make me lodge in his hotel. He observed that his house was not like an American house ; that he did not in summer put twelve beds in one room ; but that every lodger had a room to himself, and Monsieur, added he very solemnly, “ *Ici il ne sera pas necessaire de sortir de votre lit, comme chez les Americains, pour aller a la fenetre, car Jeannette n'oublie jamais de mettre un pot de chambre sous le lit.* ”



Monsieur *Pecquet* assured me his dinners were of a superior kind, and finding I was an Englishman, observed with a bow, that he could furnish me with the best porter brewed in the city of *Philadelphia*.

Such professions as these, what unhoused traveller could resist ? I commended Monsieur *Pecquet* on his mode of living, reciprocated compliments with him, chose the chamber I thought the coolest, and the same night found myself at supper with a dozen *French* ladies and gentlemen, who could not utter a word of *English*, [9] and with whom I drank copious libations of that porter which my host had enlarged upon with such elegance of declamation.

My first visit was to the library. A bust of Doctor *Franklin* stands over the door, whose head it is to be lamented the librarian cannot place on his own shoulders. Of the two rooms the *Franklinian* Library is confined to books in the English language, but the *Loganian* Library comprehends every classical work in the ancient and modern languages. I contemplated with reverence the portrait of *James Logan*, [10] which graces the room.

—*magnum et venerabile nomen.*

I could not repress my exclamations. As I am only a stranger, said I, in this country, I affect no enthusiasm on beholding the statues of her Generals and Statesmen. I have left a church filled with them on the shore of Albion that have a prior claim to such feeling. But I here behold the portrait of a man whom I consider so great a benefactor to Literature, that he is scarcely less illustrious than its munificent patrons of *Italy* ; his soul has certainly been admitted to the company of the congenial spirits of a *Cosmo* and *Lorenzo of Medicis*. The Greek and Roman authors forgotten on their native banks of the *Ilyssus* and *Tiber*, delight by the kindness of *Logan* the votaries to learning on those of the *Delaware*.

It has been observed, I believe, by *Horace*, that there have lived many heroes not inferior in prowess to those of the *Iliad*, but that for want of a bard to sing their feats, they might as well have not achieved them. But how many characters are now unknown, who susceptible only of the social energies, deserve to be remembered more than an *Agamemnon*, or an *Achilles*. What man ever rose from the *Iliad* with an accession of benevolence? but who would not be better for reading the life of a *Kyrle*, [11] of whom nothing can be now known but what is furnished by an episode in a poem.

It was at this library that during three successive afternoons I enjoyed that calm and pure delight which books afford. But on the fourth I found access denied, and that the librarian had fled from the yellow fever, which spread consternation through the city.

Of the fever I may say that it momentarily became more destructive. Sorrow sat on every brow, and nothing was to be seen but coffins carried through the streets unattended by mourners. Indeed it was not a time to practise modes of sorrow, or adjust the funeral rites ; but the multitude thought only of escaping from the pestilence that wasted at noon-day, and walked in darkness.

This was a period to reflect on the vanity of human life, and the mutability of human affairs. *Philadelphia*, which in the spring was a scene of mirth and riot, was in the summer converted to a sepulchre for the inhabitants. The courts of law were shut, and no subtle lawyer could obtain a client ; the door of the tavern was closed, and the drunkard was without strength to lift the bowl to his lips : no theatre invited the idle to behold the mimic monarch strut his hour upon the stage ; the dice lay neglected on the gaming-table, nor did the dancing-room re-echo with the steps of the dancer : man was now humbled ! Death was whetting his arrows, and the graves were open. All jollity was fled. The hospital-cart moved

slowly on where the chariot before had rolled its rapid wheels ; and the coffin-makers were either nailing up the coffins of the dead, or giving dreadful note of preparation by framing others for the dying, where lately the mind at ease had poured forth its tranquility in songs ; where the loud laugh had reverberated, and where the animating sound of music had stolen on the ear.—In this scene of consternation, the negroes were the only people who could be prevailed on to assist the dying, and inter those who were no more. Their motive was obvious ; they plundered the dead of their effects, and adorned themselves in the spoils of the camp of the King of Terrors. It was remarked to me by a lady of *Philadelphia*, that the negroes were never so well clad as after the yellow fever.

I had been a week at *Philadelphia*, without hearing any tidings of my friend the Doctor, when walking one evening past the Franklin's-Head, I recognised him conversing with a stranger in the front room. The physician had arrived only that evening. He had staid six days at *Trenton*, leading a pleasant, convalescent life ; from whence he had written me a letter, which I found afterwards at the post office. We were rejoiced to meet each other, and the better to exchange minds, I accompanied the Doctor into Arch-street, where taking possession of the porch of an abandoned dwelling, we sat conversing till a late hour. The most gloomy imagination cannot conceive a scene more dismal than the street before us : every house was deserted by those who had strength to seek a less baneful atmosphere ; unless-where parental fondness prevailed over self-love. Nothing was heard but either the groans of the dying, the lamentations of the survivors, the hammers of the coffin-makers, or the howling of the domestic animals, which those who fled from the pestilence had left behind, in the precipitancy of their flight. A poor cat came to the porch where I was sitting with the Doctor, and demonstrated her joy by the caresses of fondness. An old negro-woman was passing at the same moment with some pepper-pot [12] on her head. With this we fed the cat that was nearly reduced to a skeleton ; and prompted by a desire to know the sentiments of the old negro-woman, we asked her the news. God help us, cried the poor creature, very bad news. Buckra die in heaps. By and bye nobody live to buy pepper-pot, and old black woman die too.

I would adduce this as a proof, that calamities usually move us as they regard our interest. The negro-woman lamented the ravages of the fever, because it prevented the sale of her pepper-pot.

Finding all business suspended at *Philadelphia*, and the atmosphere becoming hourly more noisome, we judged it prudent to leave the city without delay ; and finding a vessel at the wharfs ready to sail for *Charleston*, in *South Carolina*, we agreed for the passage, and put our luggage on board.

Having taken leave of Monsieur *Pecquet*, whose excellent dinners had enhanced him in the opinion of the Doctor, we on the 22nd of September, 1798, went on board, and bade adieu to *Philadelphia*, which was become a *Golgotha*.

The vessel having hauled out into the stream, we weighed with a fair wind, and shaped our course down the serpentine, but beautiful river of the *Delaware*. Our cabin was elegant, and the fare delicious. I observed the Doctor's eyes brighten at the first dinner we made on board, who expressed to me a hope that we might be a month on the passage, as he wished to eat out the money the captain had charged him.

The first night the man at the helm fell asleep, and the tide hove the vessel into a comfield, opposite *Wilmington* ; so that when we went upon deck in the morning, we found our situation quite pastoral. We floated again with the flood-tide, and at noon let go our anchor before *Newcastle*.

It took us two days to clear the Capes. The banks of the *Delaware* had been extolled to me as the most beautiful in the world ; but I thought them inferior to those of the *Thames*.

We were now at sea, bounding on the waves of the *Atlantic*. Of our passengers the most agreeable was an old French gentleman from *St. Domingo*. Monsieur *Lartigue*, to the most perfect good breeding joined great knowledge of mankind, and at the age of sixty had lost none of his natural gaiety. It was impossible to be dejected in the company of such a man. If any person sung on board, he would immediately begin capering ; and when the rest were silent, he never failed to sing himself.

Nothing very remarkable happened in our passage, unless it be worthy of record that one morning the captain suffered his fears to get the better of his reason and mistook a *Virginian* sloop for a French privateer ; and another day the mate having caught a dolphin, Mr. *Lartigue* exclaimed, *Il faut qu'il soit ragouti*.

After a passage of five days we came to an anchor in *Rebellion Roads*, from which we could plainly discern the spires and houses of *Charleston* ; and the following day we stood towards *Fort Johnson*, which no vessels are suffered to pass without being examined.

Here the Port Physician came on board, with orders for us to perform quarantine a fortnight, to the great joy of the Doctor, who had not yet eaten half of what he wished to eat on board. Monsieur *Lartigue* had abundantly stocked himself with confitures and wine ; and I doubt not but the Doctor still remembers the poignancy of his preserved cherries, and the zest of his claret.

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I LANDED at *Charleston* with Doctor *De Bow* who had clad himself in his black suit, and though a young man, wore a monstrous pair of spectacles on his nose. Adieu jollity ! adieu laughter ! the Doctor was without an acquaintance on a strange shore, and he had no other friend but his Solemnity to recommend him. It was to no purpose that I endeavoured to provoke him to laughter by my remarks ; the Physician would not even relax his risible muscles into a smile.

The Doctor was right. In a few days he contrived to hire part of a house in Union-street ; obtained credit for a considerable quantity of drugs ; and only wanted a chariot to equal the best Physician in *Charleston*.

The Doctor was in possession of a voluble tongue ; and I furnished him with a few Latin phrases, which he dealt out to his hearers with an air of profound learning. He generally concluded his speeches with *Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri !* [13]

Wishing for some daily pursuit, I advertised in one of the papers for the place of Tutor in a respectable family; not omitting to observe that the advertiser was the translator of *Buonaparte's Campaign in Italy*. The editor of the Gazette assured me of an hundred applications ; and that early the next morning I should not be without some. His predictions were verified ; for the following day, on calling at the office, I found a note left from a Planter who lived a mile from the town, desiring me to visit him that afternoon at his house. I went thither accordingly. Every thing indicated opulence and ease. Mr. H—— received me with the insolence of prosperity. You are, said he, the person who advertised for the place of Tutor in a respectable family? I answered with a bow.

*Planter*. What, Sir, are your qualifications ?

*Tutor.* I am competently skilled, Sir, in the Latin and French languages, not unacquainted with Greek, conversant with Geography, and accustomed to composition in my vernacular idiom.

*Planter.* But if you possess all that there learning, how comes it you could not get into some College, or School.

*Tutor.* Why, Sir, it is found even in Colleges that dunces triumph, and men of letters are disregarded by a general combination in favour of dulness.

*Planter.* Can you *drive* well, Sir ? [14]

*Tutor.* Drive, Sir, did you say ? I really do not comprehend you.

*Planter.* I mean, Sir, can you keep your scholars in order ?

*Tutor.* Yes, Sir, if they are left entirely to my direction.

*Planter.* Ah ! that would not be. Mrs. H——, who is a woman of extensive learning, (she lost a fine opportunity once of learning *French*, and only a few years ago could write the best hand of any lady in *Charleston*,) Mrs. H—— would superintend your management of the school.

*Tutor.* Mrs. H——, Sir, would do me honour.

*Planter.* Mrs. H——, Sir, is in the real sense of the word, a woman of literature ; and her eldest daughter is a prodigy for her age. She could tell at nine years old whether a pudding was boiled enough ; and, now, though only eleven, can repeat *Pope's Ode on Solitude* by heart. Ah ! *Pope* was a *pretty* poet ; my wife is very fond of *Pope*. You have read him, I make no doubt, Sir. What is your opinion of his works ?

*Tutor.* In his *Rape of the Lock*, Sir, he exhibits most of the *vis imaginandi* that constitutes the poet ; his *Essay on Criticism* is scarcely inferior to *Horace's Epistle to the Pisoes* ; his *Satires*

*Planter.* But I am surprised, Sir, you bestow no praise on his *Ode on Solitude*. Mrs. H——, who is quite a critic in those matters, allows the *Ode on Solitude* to be his best, his noblest, his sublimest production.

*Tutor.* Persuaded, Sir, of the critical acuteness of Mrs. H——, it is not safe to depart from her in opinion ; — and if Mrs. H—— affirms the *Ode on Solitude* to be the sublimest of Mr. *Pope's* productions, it would be rather painful than pleasant to undeceive her in opinion.

*Planter.* That is right. Sir, I like to see young men modest. What spelling-book do you use ?

*Tutor.* What spelling-book. Sir ? Indeed—really—upon my word. Sir,—any—oh ! *Noah Webster's*, Sir.

*Planter.* Ah ! I perceive you are a New England man, by giving the preference to *Noah Webster*.

*Tutor.* Sir, I beg your pardon ; I am from Old England.

*Planter.* Well, no matter for that,—but Mrs. H——, who is an excellent speller, never makes use of any other but *Matthew Carey's* spelling-book. It is a valuable work, the copy-right is secured. But here comes Mrs. H—— herself.

*Mrs. H——* now entered, followed by a negro girl, who held a peacock's feather in her hand. Mrs. H—— received my bow with a mutilated curtesey, and throwing herself on a sofa, called peremptorily to *Prudence* to brush the flies from her face. There was a striking contrast between the dress of the lady and her maid ; the one was tricked out in all the finery of fashion ; while the black skin of the other peeped through her garments.

Well, my dear, said Mr. H——, this young man is the person who advertised for the place of tutor in a respectable family. A little conversation with him will enable you to judge, whether he is qualified to instruct our children in the branches of a liberal education.

*Mrs. H——.* Why independent of his literary attainments, it will be necessary for him to produce certificates of his conduct. I am not easily satisfied in my choice of a tutor ; *a body* should be very cautious in admitting a stranger to her family. This gentleman is young, and young men are very frequently addicted to bad habits. Some are prone to late hours ; some to hard drinking ; and some to *Negur* girls : the last propensity I could never forgive.

*Mr. H.* Yes, my dear, you discharged Mr. *Spondee*, our last tutor, for his intimacy with the *Negur* girls :—*Prudence* had a little one by him. *Prudence* looked reproachfully at her master ; the child was in reality the off-spring of Mr. H——, who fearing the inquiries of the world on the subject, fathered it upon the last tutor. But they must have been blind who could not discover that the child was sprung from Mr. H—— ; for it had the same vulgar forehead, the same vacant eye, and the same idiot laugh.

*Mr. H.* Do, my dear, examine the young man a little on literary matters. He seems to have read *Pope*.

*Mrs. H.* What, Sir, is your opinion of Mr. *Pope's* Ode on Solitude?

*Tutor.* It is a tolerable production, madam, for a child.

*Mrs. H.* A tolerable production for a child ! Mercy on us ! It is the *most sublimest* of his productions. But tastes differ. Have you read the works of Dr. *Johnson* ? Which do you approve the most.

*Tutor.* Why, Madam, if you allude to his poems, I should, in conformity with your judgment, give a decided preference to his Epitaph on a Duck, written, if I mistake not, when he was four years old. It need scarcely fear competition with *Pope's* Ode on Solitude.

At this moment the eldest daughter of this learned lady, of this unsexed female, tripped into the room on light, fantastic toe. Come, my daughter, said the lady, let this gentle- man hear you repeat the Ode on Solitude.

Excuse me. Madam, cried I, taking up my hat and bowing.

Do you hear the child, bawled Mr. H——.

I pray you, sir, to excuse me, rejoined I.

*Mrs. H.* It will not take the child ten minutes.

*Tutor.* Ten minutes. Madam, are the sixth part of an hour that will never return !

*Mr. H.* Politeness dictates it.

*Tutor.* Excuse me, I entreat you. Sir.

*Mr. H.* I cannot excuse you, I shall hire you as tutor, and I have a right to expect from you submission. I may perhaps give you the sum of fifty pounds a year.

Don't mention it. Sir, said I. There again you will have the goodness to excuse me. Madam, your most obedient. Miss, your very obsequious. Sir, your humble servant. [15]

My walk back to *Charleston* was along the shore of the *Atlantic*, whose waves naturally associated the idea of a home I despaired ever again to behold.

[1] *Epist.*, II, 2, 106.

[2] Shakespeare.

[3] *Journal of an Excursion to the United States of North America in the Summer of 1794.* By Henry Wansey, F. A. S. Salisbury, 1796.

[4] *Romeo and Juliet*, V, i, 42-48.

[5] Every public-house in the United States, however contemptible, is dignified by the name of Tavern.

In Virginia, at this time, taverns were often called Ordinaries. Cf. La Rochefoucauld, *Travels in North America, 1795, 1796, and 1797*, London. 1799. Vol. II, p. 68—“ After having spent nearly the whole day at M. de Rieux's we went ten miles farther on to *Bird-ordinary*.”

[6] Mocossins are Indian shoes, made of deer-skin.

[7] The houses at *Newark* are generally shaded by clusters of trees. One of our modern tourists would devote probably a dozen pages to the description of *Newark*, which is famed for the richest cider, and the largest cobbler's stall in the United States of *America*. It supplies also an old house on a hill, which, unworthy of repair, is moulding to dust ; but which has enough of the walls remaining to furnish an English tourist with an admirable plate. To

such *Tourists* I consign *Newark*, and other places on the road, which the *Traveller* beholds and dismisses from his mind with frigid indifference.

[8] *Philadelphia* in 1798 was the Capital of the United States.

[9] Cf. La Rochefoucauld, *Travels in North America &c.* London. 1799. Vol. II, pp. 17-18.

“ To the port of Norfolk, above any other in the United States, came the greatest number of colonists escaped from Saint-Domingo at the commencement of their troubles. They have dispersed through the other parts of America, where there is hardly a town that does not reckon some of their number among its inhabitants.”

[10] The following extract from Mr. Logan’s will cannot fail to interest the curious in literature :

“ In my library, which I have left to the city, of *Philadelphia*, for the advancement and facilitating of classical learning, are above 100 volumes of authors in folio, all in *Greek*, with mostly their versions. *All the Roman Classics without exception.* All the whole Greek Mathematicians, viz. *Archimedes, Euclid, Ptolemy*, both his Geography and *Almagest*, which I had in *Greek* (with Theon’s Commentary in folio, above 700 pages) from my learned friend *Fabricius*, who published 14 volumes of his *Bibliothèque Grecque* in quarto, in which, after he had finished his account of *Ptolemy*, on my inquiring of him at *Hamburg* in 1772, how I should find it, having long sought for it in vain in *England* ; he sent it me out of his own library, telling me it was so scarce, that neither prayers nor price could purchase it. Besides, there are many of the most valuable Latin authors, and a great number of modern mathematicians, with all the three editions of *Newton, Dr. Wallis, Halley, &c.*”

“ JAMES LOGAN.”

[11] The Man of *Ross*, [Philanthropist “ Owes his fame largely to the eulogy of him which Pope introduced into his third Moral Epistle (1732) on information supplied by Jacob Tonson.”]

[12] Tripe seasoned with pepper.

[13] Horace, Epist , I, i, 14.

[14] The term *drive*, requires some little note explanatory to the English reader. No man forgets his original trade. An Overseer on a Plantation, who preserves subordination among the negroes, is said to *drive well* ; and Mr. H—— *having once been an Overseer himself*, the phrase very naturally predominated in his mind.

[15] It has been my object in this scene to soften the condition of private tutors in America, by putting up Mr. H—— *in signum terroris et memoriæ* to other purse-proud planters. I write not from personal pique, but a desire to benefit society. Happy shall I think myself should this page hold the mirror up to the inflation of pride, and the insolence of prosperity.

Travels of four years and a half in the United States of America during 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802 (1909)

Author : Davis, John, 1774-1854 ; Morrison, Alfred J. (Alfred James), 1876-1923, ed

Subject : Smith, John, 1580-1631; Pocahontas, d. 1617

Publisher : New York, H. Holt and company

Year : 1909

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : Google

Book from the collections of : unknown library

Collection : americana

Source : Internet Archive

<http://archive.org/details/travelsfouryear00morrgoog>

Edited and uploaded to [www.aughty.org](http://www.aughty.org)

January 7 2013