

A Better Country 1834

*Trip to The West and Texas.*  
*Comprising A Journey of Eight Thousand Miles,*  
*Through*  
*New-York, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Louisiana and Texas ,*  
*In The Autumn and Winter of*  
*1834—5.*

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The public approbation of this work, so fully manifested by a rapid and entire sale of the first edition, has induced the publishers to issue another, much enlarged and improved edition. The broad expanse of country, stretching from the Alleghany mountains to the Pacific ocean, much of which is unsurveyed, unsettled and unexplored, is an interesting portion of the United States. It is believed, there are two hundred million acres of public lands yet unsurveyed in Wisconsin Territory—fifty millions in Michigan—and 800 millions in Missouri, Mississippi, and Arkansas. To all these, are to be added the illimitable tracts, hardly yet trodden by the foot of civilized man, which lie in the unpeopled immensity, on both sides of the rocky mountains. The value of this vast domain, at the minimum government price, defies all calculation. What a source of revenue for the present and the future !

But when the boundless resources that now lie hidden in its hills and mountains shall have become developed—when the vast plains shall have been settled—and towns, villages and farm houses arise in the lonely wilderness, and the teeming soil be cultivated—who then will be able to estimate the value of this great territory of the West ? In ten years, the West will have a majority in the United States Congress ; in a century, a large portion of it will contain a population as dense, perhaps, as that of the Atlantic States. Public attention, within a few years, has been directed to this section of our country—emigration has received a new impulse—government lands are sought for with avidity, and the whole country is rapidly settling. To the emigrant, speculator, and indeed, the whole people of the United States as joint owners of the public domain, any book giving information upon this subject, must be acceptable and of real value. The publishers, therefore, anticipate a rapid sale of the present edition.

I.

In September, 1834, I left Exeter, New-Hampshire, for the purpose of visiting the Western States and Texas. Although public attention had been for some time directed thither, by various published sketches and frequent emigration, yet so little was definitely known, that I was induced to travel through these sections of the country to learn their actual situation and condition. My object was not to visit the settled regions of the country, a full knowledge of which may be obtained from books, but to see some portion of the unknown and unsettled regions of the West and the South. My particular attention was, therefore, directed to Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Louisiana and Texas.

But so rapidly are some portions of this new country settling ; so constantly are new villages springing up in the wilderness ; and so continually are improvements making, that history must continue to lag behind the reality. To keep any thing like an even pace with population, and the public constantly informed of the actual condition of the country, would require, like an almanac, an annual revision and publication of its history.

I took passage on board the stage, through Brattleborough and Bennington, to Albany. About twelve years ago, I travelled over this route, and was gratified to find so many improvements in the villages, farms, and especially in the stage road, since I had travelled it before. In passing through Vermont, I found a new road had been made to avoid the high hills over which it formerly passed, so that now, I believe this is the easiest and safest route across the Green Mountains.

Two opposition turnpikes were almost completed from Bennington to Troy—one entering at the upper, the other at the lower part of the city. The public have been badly accommodated in this quarter. The old road is rough, hilly and circuitous. One of the turnpikes would have been abundantly sufficient ; but if Troy chooses to make two, the travelling public will not probably object. Opposition seems to be the order of the day ; and although it has caused much improvement in the ease and facility of travelling, yet it is often troublesome and annoying. As we drove up to the door of the stage house in Albany, an agent of one of the steamboats, thrust in his head and gave us a handbill of a boat—enquired if we were going down the river, and without waiting for an answer, said it was a good boat, swift, low pressure engine, start at nine in the morning, fare to New-York city only *fifty cents*. In the bar-room, we had to pass through the same ceremony with the agent of another boat ; and I had to take a third edition in the street next morning.

The Erie canal terminates in a large basin, immediately on the banks of the Hudson river, so that the freight of the canal boats can be conveniently transferred to the river boats. Western travellers can here take passage on board the canal boat, or go on the railroad to Schenectady and take a boat there. But as the canal is twice the distance of the railroad, travellers generally choose the latter. Travellers from the North, when accompanied by their families and baggage, usually stop at Troy, and take a canal boat there, for the West.

The ancient city of Albany has the appearance of much business and wealth ; and some portions of it are pleasant, especially in the region of the State House and other public buildings. From the river, the ground rapidly rises, so that the city stands upon the side of a hill, and makes a fine appearance, when viewed from the opposite shore.

The railroad commences in State street, a short distance below the State House yard ; and so steep is the ascent, that the cars are drawn for a mile by horses. Here a steam engine was hitched on, and we started off at a rapid rate. The distance from Albany to Schenectady is sixteen miles, and we travelled it over in less than an hour. Here we were assailed by the agents and captains of the canal boats, and those who could make the most noise and bustle, and obtain the most passengers, were the best fellows.

There are three kinds of boats in general use on the canal. The Packet boats, drawn by three horses, and go at the rate of about five miles an hour. They are fitted up in good style, intended exclusively for passengers and their baggage—having elegant cabins, drawing-rooms, berths, &c. Fare, five cents a mile and found.

The Line boats—designed for freight and passengers also. These are drawn by two horses, and travel at the rate of two and a half or three miles an hour. The fare is one cent a mile for passage only ; and one and a half cents addition per mile, for board. Families travelling to the West, generally take the Line boats. They can travel much cheaper than in any other mode. They furnish their own provisions, and have the privilege of cooking on board the boat. Provisions are plenty and cheap, and can be bought at almost every stopping place, along the whole line of the canal.

And the Scows, used exclusively for grain, flour, lumber, &c., which are employed by the farmers to carry their own produce to market. These are drawn by two horses ; and many of them have two sets of horses, and stalls made on board to keep one set, while the other draw the boat ; and at regular intervals, relieve each other. By this means, they keep the boat continually going, night and day.

The Packet boats ply between the large towns on the canal, from Schenectady to Utica ; from Utica to Rochester, &c., so that a traveller, in going through the whole route, must shift his baggage and himself from one boat to another, three or four times. But the Line hosts run the whole length of the canal, from Albany or Troy to Buffalo.—These boats are furnished with horses by a company, who have them stationed at regular intervals of about twelve miles the whole distance.

All the boats, at night, carry two brilliant lights in the bow, so as to enable the helmsman to steer, and avoid other boats when they meet. I took passage on board one of the Troy and Erie line. I found good accommodations, and good company. In the forward part of the boat, were the gentlemen's and ladies' cabins ; in the stern, the dining and cook rooms ; and in the centre the place for freight. It was about seventy feet long, and twelve or fourteen feet in width. Three other passengers, besides myself, went the whole route ; a lady and her daughter from Pennsylvania, and a Dr. Warren of Rhode Island ; and way-passengers were continually coming aboard, and leaving the boat, at our several stopping places. I found travelling on the canal pleasant, and in fine weather, delightful. We were continually passing villages, farms, locks, viaducts, or boats ; and these, with the company aboard, afforded an agreeable variety. When I wished for exercise, I would jump ashore, and take a walk along the hard trod tow-path.

I was really surprised to find so many boats on the canal. We met them almost every mile, and sometimes, three or four together. The Line boats are owned by companies ; and the captain told me that forty-five boats belonged to his line. When one happens to run aground, which is sometimes the case, when deeply laden and the water low, it is of course, in the centre of the canal ; so that boats cannot pass on either side ; in such an event, twenty or thirty boats will be congregated in a few hours.

The boats pass each other on the left hand side, and without trouble or delay. The whole process of passing belongs to the outside boat ; or the one the farthest from the tow-path. All the inside boat has to do, is to steer near the tow-path, and keep on as usual. The outside boat hauls one way, and their horses the other, and lets the tow-rope slack, so that the inside horses and boat can pass over it, between them. The tow-path sometimes changes from one side to the other of the canal ; and the horses are transferred by means of a bridge. They pass underneath the bridge and turn up on to it the further side ; so as to keep the tow-rope clear of it. The riders display their horsemanship by whipping over these bridges at full speed. Accidents, however, sometimes occur. One day, the Packet boat passed us, a short distance from a tow-path bridge ; and as the horses were going at full speed across it, the forward one slipped, fell over the railing, and drew the others after him. The rider saved himself by leaping from the horse to the bridge. The two forward horses fell into the water, and came out uninjured ; but the rear one fell across the edge of the tow-path and was killed on the spot.

The Erie canal is a great and noble work ; and has gained a niche in the temple of fame, for its great founder. It has been of incalculable benefit to New-York, and the rising States in the West ; and must continue to be, in all time to come. Now it is completed, and in successful operation, men may cease to wonder ; but so improbable was it generally thought to be, to make such a long hue of canal, on a route so difficult and expensive, that an intelligent gentleman informed me, when he was asked by one of the surveyors, if he should not admire

to see boats passing before his door ; emphatically replied, if life were guaranteed till that event, he would then willingly resign it. A few years only passed, before the event did happen, but he is not yet *quite* willing to die.

It was indeed a great undertaking. None but a man of a gigantic mind, of steady purpose and firm resolution, could have conceived, planned and executed it. It all along bears the marks of so much labor and expense, that a common mind would have been deterred from making the attempt. The canal passes over an extent of country much more rough, broken and hilly than I had supposed. Long levels of canal are found to be sure ; but they are made at great expense, by filling up deep gullies, winding round the side of hills, or deep cuts through them ; and by walling up the side of streams, or aqueducts over them.

Every few miles, the canal passes through a village. Many of these have sprung into existence, since the completion of the canal ; and others have much increased in size, wealth and beauty. They are all *ornamented* with grog-shops, containing, among other miscellaneous matter, an abundant supply of “ boat-stores.”

New-York has a great variety of romantic scenery. It has more beautiful and stupendous water-falls than any other State in the Union ; and the lover of nature’s choicest works might very pleasantly spend months in viewing them. Trenton Falls, on the West Canada Creek, a large stream that empties into the Mohawk, are situated about twenty-four miles above its mouth. They consist of several chutes for the distance of two miles, commencing near Black river road, and terminating at Conrad’s mills. The upper fall is about twenty feet ; and the descent above, for two miles, is not less than sixty feet. The water, here compressed into a narrow space, is received into a large basin, rolls down a precipitous ravine a hundred feet in depth, and presents to the eye the most romantic peculiarities.—Some of the topmost crags overhanging the stream ; and here and there, a hardy tree, having gained a foot-hold in the crevices of the rock, throws its branches athwart the abyss. There are six distinct falls. The next below, are two pitches, called the Cascades ; where the water falls eighteen feet—the Mill Dam Fall, of thirteen feet.

The High Falls, consisting of three pitches—one of forty-eight, the second of eleven, and the third, of thirty-seven feet—Sherman’s Falls, of thirty-five feet. The last fall is at Conrad’s mills, and is only six feet ; but the descent of water, from the top of the upper fall to the lower one, is three hundred and eighty-seven feet—and the whole forms as wild and romantic a scene as the enthusiastic lover of nature’s most eccentric works could desire. Organic remains have been found in the ravine in abundance, and Mr. Sherman has a cabinet of them, which are exhibited to the curious.

Ithaca Falls are situated at the head of Cayuga Lake. The high fall of Fall river is the first that strikes the eye, in going from the steamboat landing to the village, and is one hundred and sixteen feet in height. Two immense piles of rocks enclose the stream. On the right hand high up the bluff, a mill-race is seen winding around a point in the bank, suspended in mid air ; and sometimes an adventurous visiter, may be seen cautiously wending his way along the dizzy path on the verge of the abyss. The mill-race was built, by letting a man down over the giddy steep by a rope fastened to a tree above, who dug holes in the bluff, in which to fasten its principal supports. A short distance from this, up the rocky bed of the creek, is another splendid fall—not so high as the first, but more wild and beautiful. Above these, are three more falls, the upper one of which is the highest fall of water of any, and is the most grand and imposing. These four falls have a descent of four hundred and thirty-eight feet in the short distance of a mile, and present to the eye as great a variety of the romantic and beautiful in nature, as earth affords.

There are Cascadilla, Six Mile Creek, Buttermilk Creek, &c. &c. many romantic scenes and splendid falls ; but it would interfere with the design of this work to stop to describe them. I cannot, however, leave the high falls on Taghcanic Creek without a passing notice. They are eight miles from Ithaca, near a landing place called Goodwin's point ; and are two hundred and thirty-eight feet perpendicular ! Who shall attempt to describe such a magnificent exhibition as this ; or the effect it produces on the mind ! This is said to be the favorite resort of parties of pleasure and lovers of the picturesque. And who, but the real invalid, would ignobly spend his time at Saratoga, when scenes like these await him in the interior of New-York.

After passing many fine villages, we at last arrived at the city of Rochester. It is indeed, a large and flourishing city. It is situated on both sides of Genesee river, is well built, mostly of brick, and contains over thirteen thousand inhabitants. Near the upper part of the city, the canal crosses the river, by a splendid aqueduct of red free-stone, eight hundred and four feet in length, having eleven arches, and elevated fourteen feet above the common level of the water. While the boat stopped, I went down the river to see the great falls. They are about eighty rods below where the canal crosses, and are ninety-seven feet perpendicular. Here *Sam Patch* made his last leap in the autumn of 1829. In the centre of the river, and at the verge of the precipice over which the water falls, is a ledge of rocks, called Table Rock, about six or seven feet in height above the water. On this Table Rock, a scaffold was erected, about twenty-five feet high, so that from the top of the scaffold to the bottom of the falls, the perpendicular height was one hundred and twenty-five feet. From this giddy height, Sam Patch made his "last jump," in the presence of a vast multitude of people, who had assembled to witness this daring feat, and, as it proved, fatal leap. Sam never rose from the boiling flood below ; but his body was carried by the current to the mouth of the river at the lake, and was there found, the next spring. Who will be the biographer of *Sam Patch* ? What a pity it is some phrenologist had not examined his head. He must have had a tremendous *jumping bump*, for myself, I could not stand on the dizzy brink of the river, and look down into the awful chasm below, with any tolerable degree of composure. These things, however, much depend upon practice. A sailor would have thought nothing of standing on the most projecting rock ; or of walking along the highest precipice.

In 1811, the site of Rochester was a wilderness ; now it is a large city. Its great staple of trade is flour. It contains eleven flouring mills with fifty-three run of stones ; and can grind twelve thousand bushels of wheat in twenty-four hours.

After travelling from this place sixty-three miles, we found ourselves at Lockport, on the *mountain ridge*. At this place, the canal has a double row of locks adjacent to each other ; five for ascending, and five for descending ; each twelve feet deep, making the ascent sixty feet. This is the most admirable work of the whole canal. Between the two rows of locks, are stone steps, guarded on each side by iron railings. In 1821, there were here but two houses ; now, it contains four hundred, and is a pleasant village.

Passengers for Niagara Falls, leave the canal here, as they are as near them, at this place, as they would be at Buffalo. After travelling nineteen miles, the first three of which, was through a deep cut of limestone, from twenty to thirty feet in depth, we came in full view of the majestic Niagara river. On the margin of this stream, the canal passes by the village of Black Rock, to its termination at the city of Buffalo.

## II.

The city of Buffalo is beautifully situated on lake Erie, near its outlet ; and possesses the advantages of a lake and canal navigation. It is built chiefly of brick, containing many elegant

buildings, and has ten or twelve thousand inhabitants. In the harbor lay many vessels, steam-boats and canal boats, and it exhibited all the show, stir and bustle of a maritime city. From this place, you have a fine view of the lake, Canada shore, and the surrounding country. I was, at this time, only twenty-three miles from the celebrated Falls of Niagara, and I could not pass so near without going to view them.

After spending a day in Buffalo, I took a steamboat down Niagara river, to visit the falls. On the Canada side, you have a view of the small village of Waterloo, near which, are the ruins of fort Erie, the theatre of several severe battles during the late war.

On the American side, three miles below Buffalo, is Black Rock, a pleasant village, having much romantic scenery around it. Niagara river, above the falls, is of various breadths, from a mile and a half, to three or four miles. After passing Grand island, I beheld the spray arising like a cloud, from the falls ; and could hear the roaring of the water. I landed from the boat, about two miles above them on the American side, and took a stage. Immediately on alighting at the hotel, I walked down to the river, and beheld for the first time, the celebrated Falls of Niagara. Such a vast body of water, falling into so deep a chasm, with a noise like thunder, and with such power that it shakes the ground on which you stand, strikes one with wonder and awe ! One is inclined to stand still, and gaze in silence. Other falls and deep chasms I had seen ; but this presented itself on such a gigantic scale, and so much out of proportion to other objects of the kind, that it appeared to my unpractised eye incomprehensible. Other and abler pens have given the world many minute descriptions of these falls ; and were it otherwise, I have not the vanity to suppose any description I could give would enable any one to form a full and just conception of them.

Nature has here laid out her work upon a large scale, and with a master hand. A mighty river, the outpourings of the great lakes above, tumbling rapidly along for a mile over its rocky bed, here leaps quietly down one hundred and sixty feet into the awful chasm below. Above the falls, the banks slope gently down to the water's edge ; so that you can stand on the brink of the precipice, and put your foot into the water where it rolls over it—below, the bank immediately rises, and forms a chasm three hundred feet in depth. Eight or ten rods below the falls, is the passage down to the ferry ; composed, most of the way, of enclosed wooden steps ; and the remainder, of steps made in the rocky cliff. I went down these steps, crossed over in the boat, tossed to and fro by the boiling, raging flood ; and liberally sprinkled with the spray of the falls. On the Canada side, the bank is not perpendicular, so that a zigzag road has been made for passengers to travel up and down it. On this side, is the Table Rock, near the falls ; and here you have the best view of them. At this spot a flight of steps lead to the bottom ; and from this point a person can go one hundred and fifty-three feet under the sheet of water. Dresses and a guide are furnished to those who have the curiosity to enter.

On my return to the American side, I walked over the bridge to Bath island, and from that to Goat island. This last island contains perhaps twelve acres, is covered with a fine growth of wood, has a walk near the water, all around it, and benches and summer house to rest the weary traveller. It divides the falls, and is probably twenty rods wide on the cliff, over which the water pitches. At the foot of this island, a circular enclosed stairway has been built by N. Biddle, Esq. President of the U.S. Bank, by which a person can descend down the cliff, between the two sheets of water. And here it was that Sam Patch leaped one hundred and eighteen feet from a platform, made by ladders. The trees on the island are covered with names ; and the register at the hotel not only contains names, but sentiments also. I spent an evening very pleasantly in conning them over.

On the Canada side there are one large hotel and some few dwelling houses ; on the American side, are two large hotels, and a fine village, called Manchester. After spending two days at the falls, I took a seat in the stage for Buffalo.

New-York, I believe, possesses more of the sublime and beautiful, than all the remainder of the United States. It has its mountains, lakes, springs, rivers, water-falls, canals, railroads and edifices.—Other States can shew some of these, in a greater or less degree ; but as a whole, New-York must bear the palm. Its resources are vast—it is a nation of itself. But notwithstanding its attractive scenery and rich lands, the “ western fever” rages here as violent as on the sterile hills of New-Hampshire. I found more families from New-York at the West and moving thither, than from all the New-England States. They, too, seek a better country ; and some would undoubtedly be discontented if they lived in paradise.

At Detroit, I saw a man who said he had just made a purchase of a tract of land near Pontiac, about thirty miles distant in a northwest direction. He lived near Rochester, had a fine farm, raised from five hundred to one thousand bushels of wheat a year ; a ready market and the average price one dollar a bushel ; clear of debt, and growing rich ; but the lands were cheap at the West, so he sold his farm, and was moving into the wilderness ! The man was about sixty years of age : so if he has good luck, by the time he gets a farm well cleared, a good house and improvements, he will be too old to enjoy earthly possessions. But just the same feeling is manifested in Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana. And even in Illinois itself, some I found, seeking a better country farther west !

Persons travelling to Illinois, or farther west, can take passage in a vessel or steamboat from Buffalo to Chicago. The distance by water is one thousand miles ; for they must go through lake Erie, St. Clair, Huron and lake Michigan. The distance by land is not so far by one half ; but the water passage is the cheapest, attended with less hardship, and much the best way to convey goods. There are two other routes to Chicago. Take a steamboat at Buffalo for Monroe, in Michigan Territory ; and from thence, there is a good stage route, through Tecumseh, Niles, Michigan city, and along the south end of the lake Michigan to Chicago—or take a steamboat to Detroit ; from thence the stage to the mouth of St. Joseph, and cross the lake in a schooner to Chicago. My object was to see something of Michigan ; so I took passage in a steamboat for Detroit.

On board this boat, there were probably two hundred passengers ; besides a number of horses and oxen, wagons, household furniture and baggage.—Most of them were emigrants, chiefly destined to some part of Michigan. The cabin passage is eight dollars—deck three dollars. Of the whole number not more than ten took the cabin passage. We stopped at Portland, Erie, Ashtabula, Fairport, Cleaveland and Sandusky, and arrived at Detroit in two days—distance three hundred and five miles.

Cleaveland is the most important place on the south shore of lake Erie. The Ohio canal here enters the lake, so that a person can go down this canal into the Ohio river ; and from thence take steamboat conveyance to the western States. It is quite a large town ; containing five thousand inhabitants, and has three spacious houses for public worship, a seamen’s chapel, and two banks. There are three newspapers published here, and it shows all the stir and bustle of business and trade. This place has rapidly increased within a few years : and if it continues to improve in the same ratio, it will soon take its station alongside of Buffalo and Cincinnati. Its inhabitants are very spirited and enterprising. They have contributed, as I am informed, fifteen thousand dollars for the purpose of levelling down some of the high bluffs between the village and harbor, and grading the streets.

The flood of emigration, constantly pouring onward, to the far West, is immense. In the year 1833, about sixty thousand emigrants left Buffalo, to go to the West by water ; and in 1834, not less than eighty thousand there embarked, besides those who took passage from

other ports. No calculation can be made, of the number that have passed along the south shore of the lake by land ; but, I was informed, a gentleman counted two hundred and fifty wagons in one day !

The western world is all alive. The lakes, the streams, the prairies, and forests, are all teeming with life, and exhibit all the noise and bustle of human industry and enterprise. In 1825 there were but one steamboat and a few small schooners on lake Erie ; now there are thirty steamboats, and one hundred and fifty schooners and two large brigs ! And the birds and beasts of the forest are continually alarmed at the sight of human habitations and villages, so suddenly arising, within their own exclusive haunts and pleasure grounds ! Monroe, in Michigan, is pleasantly situated on the river Raisin, opposite to Frenchtown, and is six miles from its mouth. It is forty miles, by water, south of Detroit, and is the county seat for Monroe county, has a court house, jail, land office, three hotels, twenty-six stores, and probably two thousand inhabitants. It is situated in a fertile district, and has a number of mills and distilleries in its vicinity. A beautiful large steamboat, called the Monroe, was built here, the past season, and made its first trip down the lake while I was at Buffalo. As this town is nearer on a direct line from Buffalo to the West than Detroit, it will shortly become the great thoroughfare of travel to the western country.

A new town has recently been laid out, on the north bank of the Maumee river. It takes the name of the river ; and is situated on a plat of table land elevated forty feet above the stream, at the foot of the falls, and ten miles from lake Erie. The river is deep and navigable for all vessels sailing on the lake. The falls are about thirty feet, and afford an immense water power—equal to that of Lowell. It has now fifty dwelling houses, three stores, one tavern, a saw and grist mill ; and preparations are making to erect a large number of buildings the ensuing season, among which are four taverns. Two doctors are already settled here ; and a limb of the law was on the track to join them. A glance at the map will at once show its favorable location, for a large and flourishing town. The Wabash and Erie canal, and the Cincinnati, Dayton and Erie canal, will both terminate at this place. It is situated in the disputed territory, claimed by both Ohio and Michigan ; but if it should prove to be healthy, it will soon take rank with Cleaveland and Detroit. It is thirty miles south of Monroe : and about the same distance west of Lower Sandusky. A large steamboat is now building here, to run on the lake.

On the opposite side of the river, and about a mile above, is the village of Perrysburg, of a hundred houses and twelve stores ; but as its site is low, and on the shoal side of the river, its location is not therefore so favorable as that of Maumee. There are large tracts of flat land, both to the east and west of this place, covered with a heavy growth of timber.

Detroit is on the river, twenty-five miles above lake Erie, and seven below lake St. Clair. The river is about a mile wide, and the current sets down at the rate of from two to three miles an hour. It contains about three thousand inhabitants ; many of whom are French and some negroes and Indians. Much business is done here ; and it will probably be one of the most important frontier towns ; as it possesses a safe harbor and steamboat navigation to Buffalo, Michilimackinac, Green Bay, Chicago, &c. It is well laid out, and has some fine streets and buildings. Its public buildings are a court house, jail, academy, council house, two banks ; a Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist and Catholic churches ; arsenal, magazine and commissary store house.

The streets near the water are dirty, generally having mean buildings, rather too many grog shops among them, and a good deal too much noise and dissipation. The taverns are not generally under the best regulations, although they were crowded to overflowing. I stopped at the steamboat hotel, and I thought enough grog was sold at that bar to satisfy any reasonable

demand for the whole village.—When the bell rang for dinner, I hardly knew what it meant. All in and about the house jumped and run as if the house had been on fire ; and I thought that to have been the case. I followed the multitude, and found they were only going into the hall to dinner. It was a rough and tumble game at knife and fork—and whoever got seated first, and obtained the best portion of dinner, was the best fellow. Those who came after, must take care of themselves the best way they could ; and were not always able to obtain a very abundant supply.

At night, I was obliged to sleep in a small room, having three beds in it, take a companion and a dirty bed. In travelling, I am always disposed to make the best of every thing, and complain of nothing if it can be avoided. And in starting on this journey, I was aware that I might suffer some hardships and inconveniences ; and I had determined to bear with patience every thing that was bearable ; but I had not expected to be put to the test in the old settled town of Detroit. The house is large enough, and servants enough, but there was a plentiful lack of decent accommodations, in and about it.

The upper streets make a fine appearance, and are pleasant and ornamented with some fine buildings.

Two steam ferry boats ply constantly between this, and a small village called Sandwich, on the Canada side of the river. On a pleasant afternoon, I crossed the river, and walked three or four miles on the pleasant Canada shore. From this position, Detroit shows to advantage.

Detroit has suffered much by disease. Fevers, ague and cholera, swept off its hundreds. But it is difficult to discover any other cause for the great number of deaths, than the filthiness of the place, and the dissipation and exposure of many of its inhabitants. It needs reform ; and I was informed that the subject had arrested the attention of its best citizens, and they had commenced the work in good earnest.

### III.

After spending two days at Detroit, I took the stage for the mouth of St. Joseph river, on lake Michigan—fare \$9,50. The old road leads down the river, five or six miles, and then inclines to the right into the interior. The first forty miles is a level, heavily timbered country ; a deep, clayey soil, and a most execrable road. Sometimes the coach became fast stuck in the deep sloughs ; and we had to get out the best way we could, and help dig it out. At others, we found logs laid across the road for some distance, and the coach jolted so violently over them, that it was impossible to keep our seat. We started early in the morning from Detroit, and at ten miles stopped at a decent hotel to breakfast. It was a framed house, and of sufficient size for a common country tavern.

In this day's travel, we found some good dwellings, and one brick hotel. Late at night, “wearied and worn,” we arrived at Ann Arbor, a flourishing little village on Huron river, which empties into the head of lake Erie, and is a large clear mill stream. The tavern house is a large, three story building, finished and painted. A long block of buildings for stores, a number of mills on the stream, and a few other buildings, complete the village.

In the morning we crossed the river, on a very good bridge, and half a mile further, entered the upper village of Ann Arbor, much larger than the lower one ; having two taverns, a number of stores, dwelling houses, and a court house. It is the seat of justice for Washtenaw county. Ten miles below this, on the Huron river, is situated Upsilon, a pleasant village. The turnpike road from Detroit to Chicago passes through it ; on which a stage runs, carrying the U. S. mail.

Soon after leaving this village, we came to the “ oak openings.” There are three kinds of land in the western country—prairie land, entirely destitute of timber, and covered with grass ; oak openings, land thinly covered with timber, like a northern apple orchard ; and the timber land, having a dense forest of trees. All these diversities of appearance, we found from Detroit to the mouth of the St. Joseph ; although the bur and white oak openings seemed to predominate.

Michigan is a level country ; there are no mountains in it. It is gently undulating, for the most part ; sometimes, too level and wet. It is abundantly watered and timbered, and a great deal of excellent timber. I wish I could say as much of the quality of the water. The rivers, little lakes, (and there are many of them,) streams, springs, and wells, contain clear, pellucid, transparent water. It is indeed, too clear to be agreeable to the eye ; but it is all impregnated with lime, or iron, or copperas, or something disagreeable to the taste ; and is in many places, very unhealthy. I do believe there is not a drop of pure, soft water, in all Michigan. I saw none and could hear of none ; and I made much inquiry, examined every river, lake, or spring, that I passed, and the result was, I found no pure water that would wash with soap, or was pleasant to the palate.

It contains much good land, many pleasant villages, fine situations, and is settling fast ; but I cannot say that it is, generally, healthy.

It is probable, earth does not afford more rich and beautiful prairies than are found on the route from Monroe to Michigan city. And there are fine cultivated farms, mills and villages, and scattered settlements, all along the southern part of the territory. But I did not find the ruddy face and vigorous step of the East. The meagre and pale visage, and shaking frame, spoke a language not to be mistaken.

We passed Jackson, the seat of justice for Jackson county, near Grand river, and Marshall, the seat of justice for Calhoun county, on the bank of the Kalamazoo river, both flourishing villages. In this section of the country, mill seats are plenty, and there is an abundant supply of timber.

At the outlet of Gull lake, I saw a well built mill, on as fine a privilege as any one could desire. At the lake, there was a dam, which raised the water four or five feet, and made an abundant supply in the driest season—and fifty rods below where the mill was erected, there was a good fall of water.

Soon after leaving this mill, we came to Gull prairie. This was the first prairie of much extent that I had seen ; and its elegant appearance afforded me not a little pleasure. On this prairie there is a small village, and a beautiful prospect around it.

The roads had become so bad, that we left the stage coach, after two day’s ride, and took a wagon, without any spring seats ; and I found it so fatiguing to ride, that I often preferred walking. When we arrived at this little village, it was late in the evening, but we had still twelve miles to go that night.

It was past midnight when we crossed the Kalamazoo river, at the rope ferry, and entered the town of Bronson. This is the seat of justice, or as the term is here, county seat, for Kalamazoo county. The land office, for the southern part of the territory, is also kept here. We found a large tavern house and good accommodations, a pleasant village, and pleasant people.

Our route now lay through an undulating, open country for twenty miles, when we came to a house and mill on Pawpaw river where we “ ate our breakfast for our dinner.” We now

crossed the stream, and travelled a new road, generally through timbered land, passed seven or eight small lakes, for twenty-eight miles before we came to a house.

Here, we found two log houses adjoining each other. It had now become night, and at this place we were to stay till the next day. I went in, and asked the woman, if she could get us something to eat. She said, if we would accept of such fare as she had, she would try. When we went in to supper, I never was more agreeably surprised in my life. We found a table neatly set ; and upon it, venison steaks, good warm wheat bread, good butter, wild honey in the white comb, and a good cup of tea—better fare than we had found in Michigan, and as good as could be obtained anywhere. Our accommodations at this log house in the woods, show what people may do if they choose. And I wish some tavern keepers of our large towns, might happen to call there, and learn a lesson which they seem too much disinclined to learn at home. Our bill was so moderate, we added a dollar to it, and hardly thought we had fully paid our hostess then.

Twelve miles further, brought us to the river St. Joseph, about a mile above where it empties into the lake. The river here is thirty rods wide. We crossed it in a ferry boat, and after ascending a high bluff, we came in full view of lake Michigan and the St. Joseph village.

This village is pleasantly situated on a high bluff, on the south side of the river, and facing the lake ; and contains sixty or seventy houses, two taverns, some half dozen stores, two large warehouses, and a light house. One tavern, the stores, and a few dwelling houses, are built underneath the bluff, on the bank of the river. A steamboat plies between this place and Niles, fifty miles up the river, as it runs, but only twenty-five miles by land. Just above the village, is a steam saw mill, which does a good deal of business. This place carries on considerable trade with the interior ; the staple of which is wheat.

St. Joseph is very unhealthy. At the tavern, I found three persons sick, and one dangerously so. I called upon the doctor, and he was sick abed ; I called upon the baker, and he was sick abed—and I passed by another house, where the whole family, consisting of a man, his wife, and five children, were all sick abed, and so completely helpless, that the neighbors had to take care of them ! This is no fiction. The man's name is Emerson ; from the State of New-York. Last spring he came on to this part of the country with his family and goods in a wagon. And when he came to Pawpaw river, where we breakfasted, he found no road direct to St. Joseph. He accordingly cut out the road that we had travelled to this place, and was the first who came through with a wagon, a distance of about fifty miles. Soon after his arrival, his eldest son, a promising youth of fifteen, accidentally was drowned in the river. The family, one by one, were taken sick ; and now, all were sick and helpless. The man possessed great vigor of mind and body ; had bought him a farm at some distance from the village on the road he had made, and commenced some improvements, and made great efforts to persevere and clear it up. But who can withstand the iron grasp of disease, or the “ bold demands of death !” He beheld his family wasting away and to all appearance, hastening to the grave ; and himself, as sick and helpless as they. A sad catastrophe this, in his prospect of wealth and bliss in the new world ! A schooner, called the Philip, plies regularly between this, and Chicago across the lake ; but I had to wait here three days before its return. I spent the time in traversing the woods and the lake shore. This lake is a clear, beautiful sheet of water, having a soft sandy shore, and surrounded by high sandy hills. The river makes a good harbor, but there is a sand bar at its mouth, on which there is not more than five or six feet of water. The average width of the lake is sixty miles.

The distance from Detroit to St. Joseph is two hundred miles, and we had been five days and a half in travelling it. The road was as good as could be expected in a country so new, and

so thinly inhabited. The land generally is good, and will support a dense population. The southern part of the territory is thought to contain the best land, and there are indeed some beautiful prairies. Prairie Round is among the most beautiful. It contains a number of thousand acres of high, level, and smooth land ; and in the centre there are a hundred acres of higher land, covered with a beautiful growth of trees.

The best part of Indiana is on the border of Michigan, and extending south, on the Wabash river. The southern part of the State contains a good deal of hilly, rocky and sandy land, unfit for cultivation.

A territorial road has been laid out from Detroit to St. Joseph ; and a survey of a railroad has been made, nearly on the line of the road, between the two places ; but sometime will elapse, before either are completed.

Wild game is plenty ; deer, ducks, bears, wolves and squirrels are in sufficient quantity to keep the hunter awake.

Upon the whole, if good water and good health could be found, Michigan would be a very desirable country in which to reside.

As soon as the vessel was ready to depart, I took passage in her. We sailed round the south end of the lake, and stopped at Michigan city, a village of twenty or thirty houses, and twelve stores, situated on the corner of Indiana, among the sand hills of the lake. A small stream here empties into the lake but affords no harbor for vessels. Some enterprising citizens have determined to make it a large town ; but nature does not seem much to have seconded their efforts. It is forty miles from St. Joseph, and just the same distance from Chicago. The stage road, from Michigan city to Chicago, is, most of the way, on the sandy beach.

Trip to the West and Texas. Comprising a journey of eight thousand miles, through New-York, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Louisiana and Texas, in the autumn and winter of 1834-5. With a brief sketch of the Texian war (1836)

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