

## Emigrant To America 1846

### *America, its realities and resources*

Francis Wyse

NOTWITHSTANDING the variety of works of travel, the journals of tourists, and published narratives of the numerous other parties who have visited the United States, assuming to present a correct delineation of the American character, the habits and customs of the American people—but little has transpired, amidst these various records, to convey to the discriminating and impartial reader, much less to the British emigrant, any real, solid, or useful information, or beyond the mere detail of the varied incidents in which their respective authors may have been themselves engaged, or the observations resulting from an imperfect or hurried intercourse with a people, who are ever apprehensive of a discovery of their individual and national character, with the imperfections, and many eccentricities by which they are distinguished.

To supply the void that thus exists—to present the British public with some correct data on which to ground its opinions, and to furnish the emigrant of all grades, and professions, with every useful instruction to assist and guide him in his hazardous undertaking, are the objects which the author contemplates in the present work. The real character of the Americans of the United States—their habits, and social organization, as well their political influence and power, he believes to be but imperfectly known or understood in this country ; much less the complex nature of their laws—their uncertain influence, with the slender protection that they afford to either property or human life.

The experience acquired by a considerable sojourn in the country, improved by observation and inquiry, has enabled the author to cast some additional light upon these matters, to explain more fully the peculiar working of the Government and institutions of the country, and to present the citizens of these States to the British public, not, perhaps, in the outward clothing in which they would themselves wish to be represented, but in that plain and intelligible garb, that a scrupulous adherence to truth and fact, and a regard for strict impartiality, has demanded at his hands.

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*Rathcullin, Waterford,  
March 28th, 1846.*

## AMERICA.

### I.

Facilities of communication and of transport to America—Advantages of Steam navigation—New York and Philadelphia packet ships—The several Liners leaving Liverpool, London, &c.—Transient vessels to America and British Provinces Instructions in the choice of a vessel, and other preliminary arrangements before going on board—Monotony of a life on ship board—Particulars of our voyage across the Atlantic—Clearing the river Mersey—British Channel—Western Islands—Mother Carey's Chickens—A calm, its distressing consequences—Northern and Southern passage—Great Bank of Newfoundland—Gulf stream—Strange sail—Icebergs—Entanglement amongst them—Extreme danger—Soundings—The land—Anchor at Staten Island—Arrival at New York.

THE facilities of communication with the continent of North America, are now so frequent, and afford such varied accommodation, that the emigrant, or traveller, can at all times consult his personal convenience, as well as his pecuniary means, in selecting such description of vessel, as also such port in England as he would wish to sail from. The great and extraordinary improvements in steam navigation, that have marked the last three or four eventful years, in the naval history of the world, have determined, within this period, the long doubted question of the practicability of navigating the Atlantic by this means : what was, but a short time ago, only attainable by the laborious and patient exertion of many weeks, and frequently of months, is now reduced by this extraordinary effort of man's genius, to the certainty of a comparatively few days. Nations, heretofore distant in their geographical position, have been brought into close affinity to each other, and a rapid and increased interchange of mind, as of merchandise, amongst the first of its beneficial consequences. Steam ships of the first class, with accommodations of a very superior order, now sail at stated periods, under the British flag, from the ports of Liverpool and Bristol, making the outward passage to New York in about sixteen or eighteen days ; the return voyage in about thirteen or fourteen. Besides these opportunities, the emigrant, or traveller will find at Liverpool, regularly appointed sailing packets, clearing for New York, every six or eight days in succession, throughout the year, including the winter, as the summer months ; the outward passage averaging from thirty, to thirty-five days ; with several other vessels of a large class, increasing the opportunity to almost a vessel daily. Packets also leave this port for the city of Philadelphia, on the eighth and twentieth of every month ; besides various traders, British, as well as American, to the ports of Boston, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, as also in the summer season, to Quebec, and other parts of the British American possessions. Regular, and equally efficient, and well appointed packet ships, leave the port of London at stated periods for New York, touching at Portsmouth, from whence they usually make their departure, on the third day of their appointed sailing from London. There is also a regular succession of first class vessels sailing from Bristol and Hull in England ; Greenock in Scotland ; and Belfast and Londonderry in Ireland. These latter are mostly intended for steerage passengers, while the cabin accommodation, though not equal to the steam packets, or regular New York liners, is nevertheless good.

But the competition is now between the steamers, and the old established sailing packets ; the former presenting inducements beyond all others to the merchant, or man of business, to whom the saving of time is essential above every other consideration. The line lately started by Mr. Cunard, and chartered by the British Government to convey the North American and United States mail, from Liverpool to Boston, calling at Halifax, Nova Scotia, to land and take up passengers, both going and coming, and for which this enterprising individual is paid fifty-five thousand pounds sterling per annum, are certainly very superior vessels, evidencing the superiority of British skill and workmanship in the construction of steam machinery, beyond any other nation in the world. The accommodations in both description of vessels are unquestionably of the highest order. Their cabins are fitted up with exceeding taste, and almost without reference to their original cost. The stores, and general living provided on board, is always of the best that can be had, and may be said to equal the accommodation of a first-rate English hotel. Were we, however, left to our own judgment to make choice of the description or class of vessel we should sail in, without control or limit as to time, we should unquestionably select the American liner or packet ship, above all others ; though in this we speak against British enterprise, and the interest of our countrymen, who have lately and largely embarked in steam undertaking. We should certainly feel more satisfaction on board of one of these vessels, as appearing to our judgment by far the safest, and most sea-worthy, and from their construction and peculiar build, far better calculated to contend with the severe and boisterous weather generally met with, no matter at what season of the year, in a voyage across the Atlantic. Independent of the casualties incidental to machinery, however

perfect its construction, or the dread contingency of fire, that on board ship will seldom admit of escape ; superadded to this, the disagreeable tremulous motion, occasioned by the monotonous and ceaseless action of the engine the offensive and nauseating smell of the steam, inducing sea-sickness in the stoutest heart, even with the fullest predetermination to resist its influence ; added to which, the generally murky and sooty condition of all on board, occasioned by the smoke, and other escape from the funnel, that with a head-wind, or without any wind, dispenses its favours on all around, precluding the enjoyment of the least satisfactory recreation on deck, or that necessary exercise, so essential to the preservation of health on shipboard. For these reasons, and notwithstanding the numerous other vessels offered to the emigrant, or traveller to select from, we would unhesitatingly recommend the New York packet ship, if suited to his means, as by far the most eligible ; and to take shipping from the port of Liverpool, rather than from any other in the United Kingdom. Here it is impossible that he can ever meet with disappointment, or the least difficulty in securing such accommodation as will answer his convenience, or that his pecuniary resources will admit of ; without the risk of being detained by frequent postponements, beyond the usual or appointed day for sailing, except that the weather should chance to be so boisterous as to make it imprudent to venture out to sea. The principal line-of-packets that leave this port for New York are :—

First, The Old, or Blackball line ; which consists of eight first-class ships, and distinguished at sea by a large black ball painted on their fore-top-sails.

Second, or the Star line ; composed of four superior vessels, and known at sea by a large star painted on their fore-top-sail.

Third, or the Swallowtail line ; also composed of four first-class vessels—distinguished by the swallow-tailed shape of the flag, which they usually carry at their mast-head.

Fourth, or Dramatic, has only been a very short while established, numbering four of the finest first-class ships that leave the port of New York,

These vessels, which are unequalled by the merchant ships of any other nation in the world, are nearly of the same class, admeasuring from five to eight, and eleven hundred tons register. They are all American build, coppered and copper fastened ; and sail under the American flag, although a large amount of British capital is said to be invested in them. They are mostly new ships, built for this express trade ; sail remarkably fast, and are commanded by able and experienced seamen. The cabin fare from Liverpool to New York, for every accommodation, including wines, &c. has lately been reduced, and is now generally set down at thirty guineas. The steamers charging thirty-eight guineas without wine, and five guineas less, on the return voyage to Liverpool ; in consequence of the less time that a vessel usually takes, from the generally prevailing winds, in crossing the Atlantic from the westward. This sum is paid at the time of agreeing for the passage. The accommodation also comprises a separate cabin, or sitting-room for ladies, with neatly furnished state-rooms attached, apart from the other passengers ; with a communication opening into the general saloon or dining-room. The entire arrangement is exceedingly convenient, neat and well fitted up, as well displaying good taste, as very superior workmanship. There is also, belonging to the cabin, a neat selected library, of modern English, and French standard works ; and which seldom fails to beguile many a tedious hour on the passage. Steerage passengers are also well provided at reasonable rates in these vessels, but are compelled to find themselves in everything of sea store, except water and fuel ; taking with them six weeks provisions before they are allowed on board. Their passage money must also be paid before they are permitted to embark.

The packets to Philadelphia, also those from London to New York, will be found fully equal in their general accommodation to those sailing from Liverpool to the latter port. The passage money to Philadelphia is generally less by five pounds than to New York. Still we should hesitate to recommend this route, even to those intending on their arrival in the United States to travel south : as in the first place, the voyage from Liverpool to Philadelphia is so much longer and tedious, than to New York. The passage up the Delaware, after rounding Cape May, a distance of about one hundred miles, is frequently a ten days' or fortnight's work, of the most disagreeable kind ; the scenery is exceedingly flat, of one continued sameness, and by no means interesting.

Independent of these several opportunities, there are frequent others of securing passage to New York and other ports of the Union, by means of transient vessels, and certainly at much less cost than by the regular liners. Many of this class were originally in the packet service, and having run out their usual time, from seven to ten years, were then withdrawn to make way for some new ship. They are usually continued in the Liverpool trade, and though their cabin accommodations are necessarily curtailed, to enable them to carry larger freights, are nevertheless exceedingly comfortable and eligible vessels, particularly for a family wishing to husband their means, and prevent a useless expenditure in this first outlay. Their charge for cabin passage, providing every accommodation and requisite on board, except wines and spirits, varies from fifteen to twenty-five pounds each. But a family, particularly where there are many children, may, by a special agreement with the captain, secure their transport for a much less sum.

There are also other opportunities of British ships sailing for Quebec and other ports in the British provinces, the passage money varying according to the extent or limit of the vessel's accommodation, which is usually much lower than by American vessels to any port in the United States. But we should by no means advise the emigrant, intending to locate himself in any part of the Republic, to take this route, with the hope of an ultimate saving of expense. The ships employed are generally bad, and ill suited for this service ; the way is circuitous, and sometimes dangerous, particularly in the later part of the season, and in the months of April, May, and June, after the ice has broken up in the Saint Lawrence, and more northern latitudes, and which is frequently met floating to the southward, at this season of the year. The delays too, after that the emigrant has landed, the long and tedious land and water carriage, and consequent outlay to which he will have to submit, before reaching his destination, should at all times deter him from choosing this route, or mode of conveyance ; besides, the general unsoundness of many of the vessels employed in this trade from British ports, the want of skill with which they are often navigated, with the frequent and lamentable sacrifice of human life, which is the consequence, should urge him to consult his own safety, rather than attempt the experiment. By the Custom-house returns, it will appear, that the number of vessels in the British North American trade, lost or missing in the year 1836, was 74 ; in 1837 — 51 ; and in 1838 — 101 ; of the whole number that cleared out in these several years, amounting in 1836, to 1,942 ; in 1837 — 1,815 ; and in 1838 — 1,670.

Assuming, then, that the emigrant or traveller has selected Liverpool as his port of embarkation, his first duty on arrival will be to ascertain those vessels entered for such port in the United States, as he intends going to ; this he can very easily learn, either by application at the Exchange, or other public rooms—from “ Gore's list,” in which they are usually advertised, or by visiting the Saint George's Docks, where he can possess the further advantage of seeing, and examining each ship for himself. The steerage passenger will particularly require to observe caution in his conduct, and will consult his interest in carefully avoiding all intercourse, or other communication with the various agents who swarm the wharfs, and public places, and who are always ready to tender their services, professing to secure

passages at a much less rate than at what the emigrant himself may be able to provide one. A little reflection must satisfy him, that these men who may be said to act as so many crimps, to deceive and entrap the unwary, cannot live by the mere tender of gratuitous services, but must derive support from some known source. They are usually paid by their employer, some stipulated sum for every passenger whom they thus secure, and from whom they seldom fail to levy further contributions. This sum is, of course, to be added to the passage money that the emigrant will have to pay, and which he may just as well save, by doing his own work, and judging for himself.

Having ascertained what vessels are first for sea, the emigrant, or traveller, should next proceed on board, to make such selection, and determine in what ship he will take passage. In doing this, we would advise his choosing a roomy, airy vessel, as the most eligible. A close crowded cabin, independent of health, is seldom the most agreeable. He will also learn on going on board all such information as may direct his future movements, the time he should embark, &c. from the captain, who is always ready to attend to every inquiry he may make. This class of men are generally very intelligent, and though their address and manners are rather tinged with the characteristic bluntness of their profession, are nevertheless of gentlemanly deportment, and are seldom wanting in their exertions to please, and accommodate themselves, whenever consistent with their duty, to the wishes, and frequently to the whims and caprices of their passengers. There are, however, some few exceptions in the list, some “hard cases” amongst them ; and these we would earnestly advise the emigrant and traveller by every possible means to avoid. Much of the comfort or unpleasantness of his passage will depend upon the man with whom he may sail. We speak advisedly, from having had the ill fortune in our outward voyage to fall in with one of this class of illiterate, untutored “Down-easters,” [1] the very extreme of incivility and coarseness. The consequence was made apparent in the very limited number of his cabin passengers, who were restricted to five only.

Having made such choice, if a cabin passenger, we should recommend his selecting as the most eligible state room, or sleeping cabin, the one furthest removed from the general gangway, or passage, but as near midships, or the middle of the vessel as possible. So should we recommend the steerage passenger, as the motion or heaving of the ship is less felt in the centre than at the bow or stern, or indeed in any other part of the vessel : an early application on board for this purpose will be necessary, in order to prevent disappointment, particularly by the steerage passenger, if a married man, who from thus making an early choice, may secure such accommodation for his wife and family as the nature of the circumstances will admit of. Whenever many families embark in the same vessel, they will materially consult their comforts, by being as near as possible together. The necessity of such application is the more obvious from the laws of the United States of the 2nd March, 1819, in force for the better regulating the number of passengers in all such cases.

Having selected a proper vessel marked his berth, and paid his passage money, for which the emigrant or traveller should be particular in taking a receipt, the next matter he has to consider, if a steerage passenger, is, the choice of a sea stock. He may expect that for the first few days he will suffer from the influence and effects of sea-sickness, as also his wife and children, should he have any on board, rendering him unequal to much exertion. It may be well to provide against this most distressing period of the entire voyage, with a small supply of cold meat, and fresh bread, which he will find a useful auxiliary to what should be his usual sea store, of tea, coffee, biscuits, two or three small hams, with potatoes ; and should he have children on board, some oatmeal, and molasses, or treacle ; as also soap and candles. The quantity to be provided must altogether depend on the number of his family their respective ages,—as also the port to which he intends sailing ; allowing, in the usual emigrant

vessels, six weeks as the average passage to New York—seven weeks to Philadelphia, and eight weeks to Baltimore.

Cleanliness, so very essential to health, is above all things recommended. But this is always insisted on by the captain, especially on board of American vessels. A responsible part of the first mate's duty is to see that all " 'tween decks," is kept in a wholesome and healthy state, and properly fumigated, at least once in each week, particularly in the warm and summer season. Windsails are always provided, which create a free circulation of air " fore and aft," and materially add to the health and comfort on board.

We should be unwilling to advise the emigrant, embarking for the United States, encumbering himself with any quantity of household furniture. This, he will find on arrival, can not only be purchased much cheaper, but of equally good materials and workmanship ; and if particular in such matters, of the latest London and Parisian fashions : besides, should he take any with him, he will run considerable risk in its being damaged on ship-board, which is sometimes difficult to prevent, even with the greatest care and attention to packing, and stowing away. But this recommendation does not extend to wearing apparel, particularly woollens, and the finer cotton fabrics, as well as various articles of household economy, that may be purchased cheaper in England, than in America ; and with which the emigrant would do well to provide himself before going on board. We shall endeavour in its proper place to give such a detail of prices of most articles of general use, as will enable him to determine on such as it will be his interest to bring with him.

In taking out money to the States, the emigrant, or traveller, will find it his interest, instead of encumbering himself with specie, on which it were probable he would sustain a loss on arrival, to retain such sum only as he might require for his immediate necessary expenses, either in Spanish dollars or sovereigns, and invest his remaining funds with some respectable house or mercantile firm in Liverpool, with connections, or a branch establishment in New York, on which he will receive duplicate orders for whatever sum he may so lodge, to be paid to him on presenting such order, with a premium, according to the then rate of exchange, without charge for brokerage or otherwise. Here there is no risk, provided that but common precaution is used in the selection of the house ; no difficulty, or inconvenience, whilst every accident is carefully guarded against, by leaving the duplicate bill in the hands of some friend in England, who will be enabled to recover the amount thereof, in the event of shipwreck, capture, or other casualty.

Bills of exchange on America, bearing interest, may also be had both in London, and Liverpool. But we should feel some reluctance in recommending to the emigrant, for the trifling consideration of a few days interest, somewhat lessened by the deduction of brokerage fees from the amount, to appropriate his money after this mode ; we should rather caution him against the allurements offered to him by the assurance of foreign money brokers, mostly Jews, who are always ready to represent the great advantages he will derive by adopting this course, or taking out specie with him, instead of investing his money in the manner we have pointed out.

With these remarks and general instructions, the emigrant, or traveller, may now very safely proceed on board, and peaceably reconcile himself to the many little inconveniences that a life on ship board generally brings with it. If never before at sea, he will very possibly find sufficient in the voyage both to gratify and instruct, and will have ample opportunity, before reaching the shores of the New World, to consider and lay down such plans as may be necessary to regulate and guide his future proceedings.

It is a true, as well as an oft repeated observation, “ that there is room for every one in America.” Yet the emigrant, who supposes from this that he has only to reach its shores to cease from all labour, and future exertion, and that he will grow rich without industry and attentive management upon his part to secure a livelihood, will find himself woefully disappointed. The avenues to wealth, are no doubt numerous ; but riches, or independence, are not to be arrived at without a steady and patient effort to attain them. “ America is the best country in the world,” observes the eminent Franklin, “ for those who will labour ; they can earn more than any where else. The Government is frugal ; they demand few taxes, so that the labour of the poor man enriches himself, and is not expended on kings and courtiers. The husbandman and mechanic are in honour here, because their employments are useful. The only encouragements held out to strangers, are a good climate, a good soil, and wholesome air and water ; plenty of provisions, good pay for labour, kind neighbours, a free Government, and a hearty welcome ; the rest depends on their own industry and economy.” As we mean to give these subjects a separate consideration, and shall revert to them in their proper place, we will content ourselves, for the present, in accompanying the emigrant on board his vessel, to superintend his movements, and to direct him in the best course for his future adoption.

There is at all times a sameness and monotony in a seaman’s life on ship board, divesting it of any peculiar interest, that under ordinary circumstances would induce us to pass over the incidents likely to occur on the outward voyage to New York, and to at once land the emigrant, or traveller, free from bile, ill-humour, and sea-sickness, upon the shores of the Western world. But as he is now about to commit himself to an element to which he is probably a stranger, and in seeking to arrive at the same destination, yield himself to the same inconvenience, to which we have already some five or six times submitted, that we are reluctant to abandon him in this, it may be his first journey across the Atlantic, and leave him to mere surmise, as to the difficulties and troubles he is about to encounter. For this reason we submit a short account of our last voyage, and any remarkable incident by which it was distinguished.

Having arrived at Liverpool, we determined to embark in the first regular packet leaving that port for New York. We lost no time in hurrying through the necessary preliminaries of securing a passage—selecting a berth—providing letters of introduction—exchanging the surplus English money in our possession ; and on the —— day of —— went on board the —— advertised to sail on the following morning. The day was propitious, and unusually fine. We quitted our anchorage at 10 o’clock, and left the Mersey amidst all the happy confusion of a vessel preparing for a long voyage, and were towed beyond the floating light in the entrance of the river, by one of the steamers usually employed for this purpose. A breeze soon after springing up from the north-west, enabled us before dusk to reach “ abreast of the Head,”—and on the following day, to pass the Tuscar and Hook lighthouses, the first off the Wexford coast, the other at the entrance of the Waterford harbour. On the following morning we had run far out of sight of all land, and had cleared the dangerous and uncertain navigation of the Irish Channel.

For the next three days we had to contend with light and variable winds, with frequent calms, which prevented our making during, this time any very considerable progress ; we had, however, run down the English Channel, and succeeded in opening a way into the broad Atlantic. The weather was beautifully serene and exhilarating, whilst the many vessels in the offing, chequered and diversified the scene, and gave buoyancy to our spirits. ’Tis true that many amongst us were turning their backs on all former friends, and early associations—severing those ties which heretofore bound them to country and to home, and seeking, with

that inherent restlessness of our common nature, to escape from those ills that lay in their way, to “ fly to others they knew not of.”

Our party consisted of five only in the cabin, and but few in the steerage ; we soon became acquainted with each other, and from the exertion that each in the outset made to please, gave an early assurance, as far as other circumstances would admit, of a pleasant and agreeable passage.

The ship in which we sailed measured about six hundred tons—was American built—considered a good sailor, and excellent “ sea-boat,” with a crew composed of all nations, amounting to eighteen hands, independent of the captain, two mates, the cook, who is a most important personage in these vessels, and two stewards, to attend the cabin, both men of colour : she was only four years off the stocks, was well found in all respects, and admirably fitted for the packet service.

Our captain was a very young man, only two years in charge of a ship, and though an excellent navigator, and probably a good seaman, was most unsuited, as our fate would have it, to the command of a vessel of this kind. He was sullen, and uncouth, morose, and remarkably taciturn ; and certainly afforded no very pleasing specimen of the American character : we knew him but at meals, whilst even then, no exertion could seduce him into good humour, or beguile him into conversation : he lived to himself, and for himself—smoking and consuming his hours away, with a cigar for ever in his mouth ; and as, we verily believe, forming an exception to the general character of men usually placed in his situation.

We made a third of our voyage, the entire distance being about 3500 miles, within the first week or eight days, though the weather was exceedingly moderate, and winds variable. The time, after a while, began to hang heavily and wearisome on our hands, as we had neither the usual resources of a cabin library to resort to, or the other opportunities of dispelling *ennui* by an occasional game of chess, backgammon, &c.—for the cabin books, from the most culpable neglect, were either lost or mislaid ; the chess men had shared the same fate ; as also the backgammon board, that at one time had constituted a necessary part of the cabin furniture. All this might be considered of little importance if on shore ; but the dearth of occupation, or rational employment on board ship, (for anticipating we should receive the usual accommodations in all such vessels, we had neglected to have had near at hand any books or other sources of amusement) is always severely felt. As we advanced on our voyage, our stock of anecdote became somewhat exhausted, most of our stories had been twice and oft repeated ; every contrary wind added to our weariness and discontent, each day seeming an interminable length in our existence. But such our fate, was attributable to the want of care, or consideration of our captain ; for all these *et ceteras*, so necessary to our comfort on ship board, had been carefully provided in the first instance, by the owners, who only require them to be subsequently looked after, and taken care of; and who usually allocate to the captain for this purpose, and the providing the cabin sea store, one half of each passenger’s passage money. The emigrant, or traveller, will learn from this, how very much of his comforts on the voyage, will depend upon the man he may chance to sail with, which should cause him to make inquiry before engaging his passage in any vessel.

We had now reached the latitude of the Western Islands, and heretofore escaped meeting with any very severe or blowing weather ; nothing, as yet, to test the capabilities of our gallant ship, or excite the apprehensions of the most timid landsman on board ; but of this we had not long to congratulate ourselves. The *Procellaria pelagica*, the Stormy Petrel, or as they are more familiarly called, the “ Mother Carey Chicken,” yet why so named, no one could inform us, were unusually numerous and active, skimming to and fro in the ship’s



wake, for the purpose of picking up any garbage that might perchance fall overboard. The appearance of these birds is considered by seamen most portentous, denoting to the mariner, the near approach of some coming storm, and are generally regarded by them with a kind of superstitious awe, or reverence, as embodying, in their belief, the soul, or spirit of some shipwrecked friend, or departed messmate. They are almost always on the wing, have never been observed to near the land, generally exchanging to an outward from an homeward bound vessel ; whilst the place in which they breed, or bring forth their young, has never, we believe, been satisfactorily ascertained. [2] Their appearance in such unusual and continued numbers on this occasion, was certainly followed by a severe and heavy gale of wind, which shortly after set in with considerable force from the south-west, and continued with unabated violence for near twenty-four hours in succession. Our only casualty on board was a fore-topsail, in an attempt to close reef it to the yard ; and beside the severe rolling, and other heavy motion of the vessel, with an occasional sea that washed our decks, suffered no other inconvenience. The gale, as is sometimes usual, was succeeded by a calm, and variable weather, which, much to our annoyance, and general discomfort, continued for several successive days. We were, however, sometimes amused by the numerous whales, sharks, and merry porpoises, in their wanton tricks playing around, frequently so near, as almost to touch the vessel's side. We had also frequent opportunities of seeing, and indeed of examining the *nautilus* (argonauta), or as seamen usually term them, " Portuguese Men of War," with a variety of other submarine inhabitants, that occasionally sported round the vessel, as she lay becalmed on her wide expansive bed, with her sails indolently flapping to and fro against the mast.

If there is any situation, save actual shipwreck, in which a vessel may be placed at sea, more truly distressing, and ungrateful to the feelings of those on board, than another, it is surely the calm, that immediately succeeds heavy blowing weather. The swell, that still rolls undisturbed, mocks each effort of man to subdue its influence, and in despite of his authority, continues to disturb the peaceful serenity of all else around, by the violent, and incessant rolling of the unfortunate bark, until every plank and timber in her frame, groans under the infliction. It is frequently the case, especially in the Bay of Biscay, that vessels in the most settled calm, but under the influence of a heavy Atlantic swell, are nearly thrown upon their " beam ends," and otherwise suffer far greater injury, particularly in their spars and rigging, than could result from the severest storm.

There are two understood routes from the British Channel to the northern ports of the United States ; one or other of which is selected by the vessels making for this destination, according to the season or time of the year, they may have to cross the Atlantic. These are distinguished amongst seamen as the northern, and southern passage ; the first continuing to the northward of the Gulf stream, in 40° to 45° degrees northern latitude, until it crosses the great bank of Newfoundland, as also Saint George's bank on the American coast, which it usually meets in 64 degrees west longitude.

The Gulf stream, which escapes from the gulf of Mexico, from which it derives its name, by the Floridas, through the old Bahama channel, runs nearly parallel with the east coast of North America, decreasing its velocity in its progress, from three knots per hour ; at the same time extending its width, as it proceeds to the northward, and verging to the southward of the great bank of Newfoundland, is joined by the arctic current from Bhering and Davis Straits, which diverts its course to a south-easterly direction. Its breadth is supposed fifty miles on the American coast ; off Charleston it is probably sixty miles ; off Cape Hatteras, near ninety ; and off the Capes of Virginia, from one hundred to one hundred and twenty ; and extends to about one hundred and sixty leagues at the Azores. After passing Gibraltar,

Madeira, &c. it unites with the tropical current, passes through the Caribbean sea, and again falls into the gulf of Mexico, after running a circuit of near fifteen thousand miles.

It was formerly supposed that this current was principally occasioned by the Mississippi, and other giant rivers of western America, that flow into the Mexican gulf. But this opinion is now exploded, and has given way to the received notion, that it is altogether produced by the trade winds, that, blowing continually from the eastward, in the latitude of the tropics, propel a vast body of the water of the Atlantic, to the north-eastern coast of South America, and passing the West India islands, is forced along the shores of Caraccas, Carthagen, &c, into the Bay of Honduras, and subsequently escaping through the narrow pass between Cape Cartouche on the continent, and Cape Saint Antonio on the island of Cuba, enters the gulf of Mexico, and unites itself in its further progress with the waters of the Mississippi.

The other, or southern passage to the United States, crosses this stream, or great “oceanic river,” as it is sometimes called, first in its progress to the south-east, and running for a considerable distance almost parallel to its southern boundary, again crosses it within about eighty leagues of the coast of America.

Vessels sailing by the northern passage, though exposed to much blowing weather, generally make the quickest run. The distance, too, is somewhat shorter. Our captain selected this route, regardless of its difficulties, and particularly of the ice, that at this time had broken up to the northward, and was known to have drifted in very considerable quantities by the arctic current across the bank of Newfoundland. He affected to despise all notion of attendant danger ; though it had become a matter of notoriety before our leaving Liverpool, that an unusual number of icebergs had already been met with by homeward-bound vessels, deterring many others, proceeding on the outward voyage, from selecting this route.

Several days had now passed by, without any remarkable incident taking place to divert the scene from its usual monotony. We had sometimes a fair wind to cheer the prospect of a speedy release, and termination of our voyage, but in general had to contend with strong westerly winds, against which it was difficult to make much head way. A vessel was now and again descried from the mast head ; sometimes visible from the deck. Those astern were soon lost sight of, whilst our superior sailing generally enabled us to come up with any that might be discovered a-head. The coming-up-with and hailing a vessel at sea is always a joyous occurrence, and exhilarating to all on board. It in a manner brings us back to the world,—to a communion with our species, and dissipates for a while the feeling of solitude and utter loneliness, that frequently seizes upon the mind when at sea ; independent of the curiosity to which it gives rise, in the minds of all, to discover the name and character of the stranger — the nation under the protection of whose flag she is proceeding on her way. But our captain seldom felt any anxiety on this head ; and, if that a half quarter of a mile might bring us within hailing distance of a strange sail, would rather avoid, than encourage such approach.

After experiencing two or three severe gales, which are somewhat usual in crossing by the northern passage, we now approached, with a fine easterly breeze, the outward, or eastern skirt of the Newfoundland bank. The weather, for two or three previous days, continued unusually fine ; the temperature, however, subject to frequent variation ; the thermometer having fallen, within the short space of twenty-four hours, from 64° to 40° degrees, the water to the temperature of 38° of Fahrenheit. The evenings set in with unusual chill, accompanied by heavy dense fogs, which prevented the possibility of distinguishing the ship’s length from the deck. It was very evident that this sudden transition both in weather and temperature of the sea, must have proceeded from some unusual, though defined agency acting on both,

which might with great propriety be attributed to the icebergs supposed to be in our immediate vicinage. The wind, as observed, was fair from the eastward, which proved a far too powerful incentive to our captain to “push a-head,” rather than adopt the advised course, of shortening sail at nightfall ; or the more prudential one of heaving the vessel to. But the character of his ship, and his own, in a great measure, depended upon the quickness and despatch with which he might make the passage. He was, in consequence, deaf to all remonstrance, and callous to every approach of danger that did not appear imminent. The advantages resulting from a few hours fair wind, outweighed every other consideration, and set at nought the perils that hovered near. Every other eye was strained on the look out, until at length about four o’clock P.M. of the second day of our watching, all surmises were set at rest by the man at the mast-head calling out, as he hailed the quarter-deck— “Icebergs a-head.” A very natural curiosity soon rallied our entire party on deck, and for a while put an end to every other association in our minds. A short run of about two hours brought us near to this northern visitant, in order to avoid which, we were compelled to alter our course two and a half points to the northward. A second—and soon a third, hove in sight ; while, before sunset, we could plainly distinguish eleven large islands, besides several smaller ones, from the quarter-deck.

The appearance of these moving mountains, reflecting each shade of the evening’s sun, as we passed them in succession, was exceedingly beautiful. We supposed them to have been from one hundred and twenty, to one hundred and sixty feet above the sea level, while two-thirds of their actual size lay buried beneath the water ; stretching out to an unusual width at every side, and forming reefs over which the sea dashed with very considerable force. Their shape or form, as well as size, is subject to continued change, which is the more rapid, as they advance to the southward. Our providentially falling in with them, at the hour they first hove in sight, was of fortunate occurrence ; for if they had escaped observation till after dark, no human foresight could have saved the vessel from destruction ; as when discovered, we were, what seamen term, “running free,” with a fine nine knot breeze, stem on to the first descried, while the second, and third, lay a little further on, the one on our larboard, and the other on our starboard-bow. Though the wind still continued fair, our captain, who at length appeared somewhat conscious of his position, adopted on this night the precaution of shortening sail, which was the more necessary, as the evening had set in with an unusually dense fog, intercepting all look-out from the vessel. Beset as we now were on all sides, without knowing which way to turn, our situation seemed too precarious to induce a very peaceful night’s rest. The ship continued to roll on at the lazy rate of four knots, under single-reefed top-sails ; the stillness being occasionally interrupted, by the bounding and splashing of the porpoises, on either side, as well as the grampus which sometimes neared the vessel, disgorging water almost upon our deck. As the morning approached, the wind fearfully increased ; but as the day appeared it dispelled all apprehension. The light however had scarcely beamed, when our attention was aroused by an unusual noise, and a clatter on deck, the vessel leaning heavily to the breeze, and which strange uproar we found some difficulty in reconciling as being caused by the usual morning’s work, of adjusting and trimming the sails, washing decks, &c. We in part hastily dressed and rushed on deck, where all was in the most alarming, and seemingly inextricable state of confusion. The top-sail-haulyards, preparatory to close-reefing the sails, were already let go ; the sails flapping with a boisterous fury to and fro ; while the numerous ropes, disengaged from their usual fastenings, kept swinging through the air at each motion of the vessel, as if discharged from all further office. The seamen, apparently under no control, kept running fore and aft in the wildest alarm, uncertain where to lend their aid, or where such could avail ; whilst the captain, whose presence of mind had nearly forsaken him, seemed immoveable, and riveted to the deck on which he stood. “What’s the matter,” we eagerly inquired—“what’s the matter ?”—“Look !—Look !” replied the captain, with a tremulous anxiety, as he pointed to the ship’s lee bow, where amidst the haze we now clearly

distinguished a large island of ice, towering almost perpendicular above our reckless vessel, from which there appeared no hope or prospect of escape, with several small icebergs to windward and around. There was certainly no time for deliberation ; our first object was to apprise our unconscious fellow-travellers of the extreme danger of their situation : having done so, and secured whatever papers were of any value, we again immediately reached the deck, to assist wherever our services could avail, or to await whatever other fate might now betide us.

But the squall, which was unusually severe, and accompanied by a shower of cold sleety rain, had now in part blown over ; and in its progress had given a sudden and very unexpected change to the wind, by means of which alone, under Divine Providence, we fortunately escaped the most imminent danger, and very probably a fate, that has overtaken many as gay and well trimmed a vessel, as the one in which it was our fortune on this occasion to cross the Atlantic. Having thus altered our course, and miraculously escaped this large iceberg, with numerous others in its vicinity, all hands were employed in setting the ship to rights ; while, favoured by a further slant of wind, we had nearly cleared the several islands by sunset, and on the following day found ourselves considerably to the westward of the Newfoundland bank, with its usually disagreeable and murky fog.

The storms we had passed, were as usual succeeded by a calm, with occasional light breezes from the north-west. We had now been one month together on board ; sufficient time, in all good reason, to become acquainted with each other— our good and amiable qualities— for of foibles, or imperfections, we, of course, had none : yet were we weary of each other, and almost of ourselves. In proportion as we lessened our distance, and neared the American shore, our anxiety, and I might almost add our discontent increased. In truth we were heartily tired of our confinement, and sighed for a release. At length, about noon, on the thirty-fourth day of our departure from Liverpool, we made soundings, for the first time, in thirty-six fathoms, on the south-east point of Saint George's bank,  $41^{\circ} 19'$  north latitude,  $67^{\circ} 45'$  west longitude ; and on the third day succeeding, descried the land, Long Island, bearing by compass N. W. by N. sixteen miles. On the following morning the high lands of Nave-Sink, or as they are more commonly called "*Never-Sink*" greeted our arrival and bid us welcome. The wind was fair, blowing dead upon the land ; the ship going near ten knots through the water : but yet no pilot boat to point the way, or to assist us to our long expected and eagerly looked-for port. We passed in quick succession, two or three other homeward-bound vessels, lying-to afraid to venture in without assistance, and very soon after opened the entrance of the harbour, the navigable part of which is exceedingly narrow. Still no pilot at hand, or within view, to help or guide us to our anchorage, which made it a matter of some uncertainty with the captain, whether to run the chance of being again driven out to sea, or upon the coast, or attempt upon his own responsibility the dangerous passage across the bar ; the risk, it appears, was great the occasion no doubt imminent. It was blowing hard upon the shore, and threatening every moment to increase to a gale of wind from the south-east. We at length approached the barrier ; still no pilot, or hope of meeting one ! There was now but little time for deliberation, and our captain, having calmly surveyed the different land marks, and attentively examined his charts, determined, *coûte qui coûte*, to risk his own, and the vessel's fate, and try the passage. He deserved better ; for we had scarcely run on for twenty minutes longer, when the vessel struck with very considerable force upon the north bank, where she continued until one of the news-boats, connected with one or two establishments of the New York daily press, and who are generally in the offing to meet foreign vessels, or from foreign ports, on arrival, came to our assistance, and through whose timely aid we fortunately soon after succeeded in getting off, without sustaining any very great apparent injury. We anchored on the same day at the quarantine ground, Staten Island, having thus completed the passage from Liverpool in thirty-eight days.

The scenery in nearing the inner bay and harbour of New York, particularly after a long and wearisome voyage, is truly beautiful, and of the most grateful and fascinating kind ; the bright and vivid colouring of all around, at this particular season, imparted a vigour and freshness to the scene, that gave new buoyancy and life to all on board. The approach to the inner harbour is strongly fortified and well protected, by several formidable and newly erected works.

We had now let go our anchor, furl'd sails, and were setting all to rights, when a boat from the shore brought on board the officer of customs, with the medical officer of the station. Being fortunate in escaping all kinds of epidemic sickness since our departure from the Mersey, our cabin passengers were permitted to land, with dressing apparatus and change of linen only ; the general luggage not being allowed to go on shore without undergoing a very particular search, and written permit from the Custom House, for which a sum of fifty cents, or about two shillings and twopence is demanded. This first exaction, though of trifling amount, did not serve to give us any favourable impress of the American system of remunerating their public officers, which makes any part of their salary depend upon the chance fees, they are thus able to secure from the casual traveller, or more needy emigrant landing upon their shores. As we were naturally anxious to see New York, we secured an early passage in the steamer from Staten Island, from which it is distant about seven miles across the inner bay and harbour, and reached this first and most important of all American cities, about four o'clock.

All our cabin passengers being strangers, proposed keeping together, and were soon well accommodated at an excellent hotel, the "Mansion House," out of the noise and tumult of business, though in the immediate vicinage of Wall Street, the Bowling Green, and Battery.

[1] The familiar designation by which the vessels, or captains of ships belonging to, or trading from the North-eastern ports in the United States are always known, who are generally more homespun and made up of harder materials, than from other parts of the Union.

America, its realities and resources : comprising important details connected with the present social, political, agricultural, commercial, and financial state of the country, its laws and customs, together with a review of the policy of the United States that led to the war of 1812, and peace of 1814--the "right of search," the Texas and Oregon questions, etc. etc. (1846)

Author : Wyse, Francis

Volume : 1

Subject : United States — Description and travel ; United States — Politics and government  
19th century

Publisher : London : T. C. Newby

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : MSN

Book contributor : University of California Libraries

Collection : cdl; americana

Source : Internet Archive

<http://archive.org/details/americaitrealit01wyseiala>

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

March 5 2013