

For Emigrants 1829

Notes On The Atlantic.

Three years in Canada: an account of the actual state of the country in 1826-7-8. Comprehending its resources, productions, improvements, and capabilities; and including sketches of the state of society, advice to emigrants, &c

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BEFORE entering on subjects immediately relating to Canada, I may be allowed to make a few introductory remarks connected with that expanse of waters, which Europeans have to cross ere they can visit America. They are given as taken down on shipboard, without any touching up whatever ; as to do so might efface the rust contracted by coming in contact with the salt ocean,—which it may be better to avoid, in order to show things as they are. The best place in the world for composition is not always the academic grove, where all is quietness and harmony. Only on the deep can its scenes be faithfully depicted according to nature.

When quite out of soundings, the general appearance of the ocean becomes considerably altered,—the waves are much longer, while the hollows between seem extensive valleys. When an undulation bursts, the broken water spreads in froth over an extensive portion of the surrounding surface of the deep ; and should the ship be where one of these bursts takes place, the surges and surf roar gloriously over the deck.

It is a singular thing to find dew falling on the ocean : not so plentiful indeed as on land, but still after a warm day it is found descending in the evening,—not to cool the tender herb certainly, but for some purpose, no doubt, which we have not yet discovered.

When about 600 miles west from the Land's-end of England, we were surrounded by a winged moth or butterfly in swarms, with ash-coloured-wings. They kept bobbing and dancing about in the air, sometimes alighting on the smooth face of the deep, then starting up again. The weather for some time previous had been very warm. These insects must have been engendered in the ocean.

Before we were half-seas-over, we met with many American ships, seemingly bound for Europe. The sailors knew them by their mould, method of painting, and form of sails. The name is often printed in large characters on the fore-topsail. They will not deviate from their course one yard in order to speak with any strange ship ; their pride even in this respect is great. They are particularly fond of flashing their flag with its stars and stripes, when they have no notion of an enemy being near at hand ; were such the case, the stars would be hawled down from the firmament, and something of a deceptive cast stuck up in their place.

The scenes of the sun rising and setting on a Midsummer ocean are beautiful. The nearer the face of the deep the glorious orb comes, the beams condense the more in the liquid mirror. What a blaze of radiance comes to eye, when the under-edge touches the horizon ! which, from the decks of common merchant-ships, is about five miles distant.

Much depends on the man at the helm for keeping a dry vessel. A bad steersman has her often shipping seas ; he does not know how to meet her, as the sailors say,—that is, to humour her with the helm. The sailors will sometimes *yaw* the ship for fun, when the passengers are walking the deck, and the surges will come lashing over them ; but if grog has been given them now and then, the poor fellows will never play this trick.

Persons who have never been at sea, fancy that the wooden crib for the bed is too narrow in dimension ; but when the ship begins to roll and toss amongst the billows, they soon find the error of the supposition. Were the beds not of circumscribed width, they would be tumbled about from one side to the other, and very likely hove out altogether. Many have their beds widened in harbour, but are glad to reverse matters again on the ocean.

Strangers soon become acquainted with each other ; for the natural disposition will show itself there sooner than any where else. How pleasant a voyage is, when a few good-hearted, sensible creatures meet together ; and how disagreeable, when they are otherwise, as they most commonly are. He who has had what some will term comforts ashore, finds them not aboard ;—then the poor wretch frets himself to death ; while the wanderer, who has *roughed out life* in many a dismal climate, laughs at such trifles. Females are always our best companions both on sea and land : although they may be more troubled with sickness in ships than we, still the soft-soothing remark, the resigned state, and sometimes cheerful smile, counterbalance that. The ladies often make cowards of us there ; they brave storms with fortitude, at which we tremble.

Fogs off Newfoundland Banks generally arise with a little westerly breeze. They are extremely dense ; so much so, that the bowsprit of the ship cannot be seen from the quarter-deck. While the fog continues, the weather is very cold, and the thickest woollen clothes and mits that we have, are in request. Often it will not clear away for a month or six weeks after it comes on : such duration, however, is rare about Midsummer ; in the spring and fall it is more common. Fog-horns are blown in the ships at intervals, night and day, so that they may not run foul of each other. Lights of any kind cannot be seen very far off ; the sun is quite obscured, and about the summer solstice the day is nearly as dark as the night ; in order to read, we must burn candles. The sailors argue that the fogs raise the sea—that is, create a commotion in the waters. The cause of this is not known, nor the reason why the fogs prevail more on the Banks than elsewhere. The gulf-stream being of a warmer nature than the surrounding ocean, may have some effect, while its exhalations are condensed by the cold westerly wind. The fog is not so thick immediately on the surface of the ocean, as it is about one hundred feet above it ; hence lighthouses should not be built higher than this. Like the lamp of Humphry Davy, the flame of which keeps at a little distance from the wire immersed in it ;—or, steam issuing from a tube is not resolved into smoky vapour the instant it leaves it, but at a small distance from the mouth : which may apply to the exhalations from the tepid waters of the Banks not being turned to fog by the cold wind immediately on the surface of the ocean. Those immense masses of vapour, called fog banks, often assume a singular appearance as to form and variety of colour, before they shroud the sun from the observer ; the tints are quite different from those of the common clouds ; the shades of black, blue, and red, are surprising.

To obtain the set of a current of the ocean, a pitchpot is let down by a rope probably one hundred fathoms long,—this anchors a small boat, as it were : the log is then hove, and whichever way it trends is taken by the compass, and velocity per hour by the sand-glass ; currents being always considered to increase in velocity the nearer they run to the surface. This may be well exemplified by setting, coloured fluids in motion on the same inclined

plane ; those above outrun those below. The muddy-tinged floods of rivers also represent the truth in a natural point of view.

Complex machinery is a bad thing anywhere, but of all places it is worse at sea ; many apparently valuable improvements on the land, when transported to the waves lose their effect. To manage any piece of mechanics well in a turbulent ocean, requires it to be made extremely simple.

Cod-fish are caught on the banks of Newfoundland by hook and line ; one man can attend to four lines, although fishing in forty fathoms water : the bait is generally a piece of white pork. Thus, as the poet says,

“ They wind them up by barreelfulls,
To feed a hungry world.”

The greatest quantities are caught in the latitude of St. John’s, Newfoundland. The fishermen change their fishing-ground with the season. The old cod-fish are lousy, and not good food, haunting deep banks. The fish are generally salted aboard the schooners, and dried on the shores of Newfoundland. This trade might be greatly improved, and better methods applied for procuring the fish ; something after the trowling mode, and not by chapsticks. The banks require the investigation of very able naturalists.

Numbers of various fish are met with in a voyage over the Atlantic. Porpoises gambol and plunge about the ships in shoals, while the sailors harpoon them beneath the bows. Sharks are often seen prowling round, with dorsal fins above the water, and sometimes will take the bait hung out for them astern : when the weather is extremely fine, the ocean unruffled and pure, they may be seen playing with the bait in the chambers of the deep—this is an interesting scene ; fain would they grasp it, yet are suspicious. Dog-fish play round it in the same manner, turning up the edges of their white bellies, while they munch at it with their singular cross-set mouths :—they are much like the shark, but not so large : they bring forth their young alive ; after they have been caught, the pregnant females deliver themselves on the deck. It is said that the shark cannot suffer the smell of tobacco-smoke : he is not singular in this respect, for there are human beings who do not relish it either,—at least they pretend so. The Indians are aware of this fact, and dare not smoke while they are crossing the bays of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or the river itself, lest they rouse the ire of the shark. They have a story of an Indian and his squaw, who were crossing, but forgot the precaution regarding the tobacco-smoke : an infuriated shark, of enormous size, came whack against their canoe, and cut it in two with his tail, when the poor wretches were devoured by the monster. There may be some truth in this statement. Beating up the St. Lawrence, while the pilot, a Canadian, was relating the above story, an immense shark approached the ship, swimming with great swiftness, and was seen distinctly by all on the deck ; the water frothed about him, and he seemed much in wrath at something, which was concluded to be the cloud of smoke issuing from the sailors’ pipes. Small fish are often found squatting on his back along the side of the fins, called pilot-fish. Where sharks, dog-fish, and other rapacious fish are met with, all else are rare ; innocence flees the domain of the savage : sharks and salmon, tigers and sheep, hawks and linnets, all feel the instinct to keep as much out of one another’s company as possible.

Whales, or what are called finners, are common about the Gulf ; they will come up and blow so near alongside sometimes, that the spray from their nostrils will fall aboard the ship. Whenthey throw their tails out of water, they take a deep dive, and are seen no more for that time. Much oil might be obtained from them, if a method was found of playing the rocket-shot on them to advantage.

A species of porpoise, very large, called bottlenoses by the sailors, is also very plentiful. This fish is of a white colour in the river St. Lawrence : when they turn up above the surface, they resemble a wreath of snow. How they become white is not known, their natural colour being black ; some think it is the water that effects this change, the same being fresh or brackish. The young ones are grey. Probably this is a fish of a different kind from either the porpoise or bottlenose ; the Canadian says, that he changes his skin by rubbing it off beneath the ice. It is to be regretted that they are rarely caught ; and when that happens, there is seldom any body present who makes any inquiry about the matter.

Salmon and herrings are extremely plentiful in the Gulf, as also mackerel and halibut. Drying-houses should be built on this coast where so much timber grows, and these valuable fish properly cured ; and, were it wished that they should be smoke-dried with scented wood, the juniper, which gives the relish to the Westphalian hams, is here in abundance.

Birds are met with in great variety. How many species of gull can there be ? more than fifty have already been discovered. Some are almost white, others have black-tipped wings ; again, black behind the head ; black upper side of wings ; black and white speckled ; black breast, &c. : others with broad green bill ; yellow narrow and black bill ; brown tufted crest ; black legs ; yellow legs, &c. The gulls and wild ducks would form, if stuffed, a very interesting museum of themselves. The gulls of the middle Atlantic are quite different in plumage and bulk from those on the coasts. Those found out at sea, are in general very light, as if they did not there find food very plentiful, which is not unlikely. They are sometimes met with asleep in large flocks, “rocked on the billows” as the poet has it. They will follow in the wake of the ships, and are easily caught with hook and bait. The large herring-gull is quite common over all the American coast : he follows the herring shoals, and ever seems to be a substantial, well-fed bird. When fully out to sea, we fall in with the stormy petrels, better known by the name of Mother Carew’s chickens : on the eve of a storm, they gather in to the wake of the ship in great numbers. Mother Carew was an old witch, it is said, good at raising the wind, These birds are about the size of the swallow, only their tails are not so long ; with brown plumage, short bills, feet not webbed ; they keep on the wing—sometimes they let their little legs droop, and trip along the water with their wings extended, but at rest. They seem to be fond of any little crumbs of food that fall from the ships. The sailors will not shoot them on any account ; they pay them great respect, that their mother’s wrath may not be roused. They gather about the ships in storms for this reason, that the ships afford them a kind of shelter from the surge and spray, and also a little food ; they get weary of buffeting storms, like every thing else, and seem not to relish the spray lashing over them. Those birds that hover ever on wing close on the surface of the ocean, when it gets agitated, have more trouble, as it were, in watching the sudden undulations—in short, have more *ups* and *downs* to make. How these birds breed, has not been known ; they are not found on any shores, but over the expanse of the widest oceans—

“ Their home is on the deep.”

The sea parrot and pied diver, are met with on the margin of the banks of Newfoundland ; seldom any where else :—this diver is much like the puffin, only rather blacker in plumage. There is also another sear-bird found with these, called the bank pigeon. Specimens of all are difficult to be obtained.

The white birds of the tropics, and sea eagles, hover about the ships; and when in soundings, either on one side of the Atlantic or the other, soland geese are met with. Sailors say, when a string of them are seen flying together, “ that they are going out to the mackerel fishery.” Sometimes they are met with near the middle of the ocean ; it is not always the fact,

as argued, that they are never found “ out of soundings :” they are a shy bird, and keep well out of the reach of fire-arms.

Icebergs are met with aground on the Banks at Midsummer : I saw one at rest in seventy fathoms water, and taking its altitude, found one of the peaks one hundred and fifty feet above water : which nearly corresponds with the reports of Arctic voyagers, that two-thirds of them are below, while one-third is above. Had this iceberg been afloat, the truth of the proposition could not have been so easily obtained ; but sounding gave the depth below, while the angle of altitude and distance gave the height above. It caused the atmosphere around to be very cold. The appearance was not unlike the chalk cliffs of the south of England at a distance ; when the sun shone on it, the scene was beautiful ; the regions above were illuminated at night to a certain extent. Various fish kept swarming about. Ships are not allowed to run near them, as the attractive power is considered to be great by the sailors. They go ashore on them frequently with the boats and bring off fresh water, streams of which are found flowing down their sides : they have often relieved, ships in distress for this article. There are currents setting from the north, else how would icebergs drift into southern latitudes ?—perhaps eddies of the Gulf stream. A bird was flying about it of the diver species, called willock by the sailors.

The depth of the ocean has amused spectators ; it is likely as deep in some places as the mountains are high above. Fish are not suspected to be found on the bottom everywhere, no more than birds in the higher regions of the atmosphere ; beyond a certain depth darkness reigns, and life is considered extinct. Many laden ships which founder at sea, do not sink to the bottom ; but so far towards it as specific gravity will let, and no farther. “ How deep will a cast-iron box sink in the ocean, twenty tons in weight, and inclosing a cubic yard of air ?”

The ocean may be considered the best place for burial ; that is, a sufficient weight may be hung to a dead body to sink it beyond the reach of all voracious fish, where no shark can follow,—this is a consolation to the friends of the deceased,—and also where no resurrectionists of earth can disturb him ; from thence he cannot be served to the dissection-table. Admirals, and other great men who die at sea, are seldom thrown overboard, but brought home preserved in casks of spirits, the which are not unfrequently tapped by the sailors :—all this is wrong, for no family-vault can equal the sepulchre of the deep ; there, no monument can be raised, no false epitaph engraved. What would be said in an obituary, might run thus : “ Buried in such a latitude and longitude, having a sinking weight attached of ten miles deep.” Common sailors, with a shot at their feet, never sink above half a mile.

Sailors are ever taking *observations* of something or other : about meridian time, or a little before it, they try for the altitude of the sun with Hadley’s quadrant. The captains have generally sextants, mates inferior instruments. So long as the sun keeps rising, the index is advanced on the rhomb ; when his reflected form lingers on the horizon, he is said to dip. There is much art required to use the sextant properly. When there are clear skies and moon-light nights, lunars are taken. This is the art of measuring the degrees between sun and moon, or between known stars and the moon ; which being obtained, and referred to the tables of the nautical almanack, give (as well known to many) the longitude. Latitude they find, too, by taking double altitudes of the sun or stars ; that is to say, when clouds clear away, the latitude may always be had either by night or day. Not so the longitude, if the moon is changing, unless a good Harrison be aboard, which is a chronometer, and its rates of going be properly ascertained. On the Banks, the soundings tell where the ship is by the chart ; and when in the Gulf stream, the green bunchy weed, called the gulf weed.

Common merchant-ships are sailing well at seven knots or miles an hour ; few of them with the strongest wind will go ten. In storms, they dare not run before the wind, for fear of the sea dashing in the dead-lights—which are the shutters of the cabin windows—and broaching too, as the term goes,—that is, sinking stem foremost. Feathery clouds and brassy skies betoken storms. There is something terrific in sailing under bare poles ; man then feels his insignificancy strongly.

If the breeze blows fresh off the Canadian continent, the smell of fir forests prevails for fifty miles and more out at sea. Small birds that live by insects, such as the brown fly-catcher, about the size of a sparrow, hover about the ships ; and large dragon-flies, with eyes composed of many minute sparkling stars. These may be easily caught and examined.

The nautilus, or Portuguese man-of-war, a little sea-snail with a sail up, is common ; it can veer this sail according to the course it means to steer. The sea-marygold, a species of sting ray, is met with between the Gulf and the Banks ; it is of many colours, but yellow prevails, —whence it takes the name.

Passengers, generally, are anxious to see land ; some of them boast of having good watches, equal to the best chronometers for regularity of movement. They keep reckonings by their account, which, according to their hopes, are far ahead of the ship ; and it not unfrequently happens, that the vessel is found to be beating about on the Banks of Newfoundland, instead of being, according to them, snug at anchor in the harbour of Quebec.

Banks and Island of Newfoundland

THESE famous shoals seem to be formed, as all minor sand-banks are, by the depositions which take place wherever contending tides, eddies, and currents prevail. The great discharge from the fresh-water rivers of Canada by the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Hudson's Bay, uniting with the Gulf stream and western setting tides of the Atlantic, creates that singular commotion in the waters, distinctly felt at a considerable distance from the shores of North America, while their various sediments incline to the bottom. That these Banks continue to shift is almost obvious from the soundings taken upon them at various periods. In some instances, they have risen so high as to become flats of dry land : Sable Island and others are instances of this. These islands continue to enlarge, and the waters round their shores to shallow : they may therefore become, in course of a few years, very fertile lands. And what seems singular, when these banks have emerged above the ocean any considerable time, they get covered with forest trees. Whether the seeds of such trees are naturally in the soil, or floated to it from the distant wilderness, is a question. Thus, it seems, we have reason to suppose that, in the course of time, the present Banks of Newfoundland will expand above the waves to the extent they do below, and be then as eagerly prized by the agriculturist, as they are now by the fisherman. The continent of America will then have advanced on that of Europe by several hundred miles ; whilst other banks, with their myriads of fish, may be encircling the islands of the Azores. And would we push the speculation farther, who can tell but that Great Britain and America be united, or Europe swallowed up by the great western continent ? The Banks at present are macadamized with crabs, cockles, and shell-fish of various kinds, to many of which we are yet strangers. On these, cod, turbot, halibut, and such fish feed ; while other larger fish come hither and devour them : so the Banks absolutely seem to live and grow from the numerous aquatic animals that resort to them. The Island of Newfoundland appears to have been produced after the same manner as those we have been considering ; and it is a lamentable thing that only the coasts of it should have been explored, and those but imperfectly. The interior is doubtless full of various excellencies in natural history, some of which might be ultimately turned to our benefit ; but no one has yet dared to

penetrate its wilderness and minutely examine its contents. As a fisherman's island, it is certainly unequalled in the world ; but the dreary fogs and long cold winters that beset it, render it gloomy and cheerless. Fishermen should try the effects of the lobster-trap on the Banks. The seal-trade, too, ought to be better attended to now, as gas-lighting has become so general in the luxurious world. The small rivers which fall into the Bay of Chaleur swarm with the finest salmon fish, which are also very much neglected in this and all the other bays opening into the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The tides generally rise in Chaleur to three feet, in spring tides to six. Trap-nets might, therefore, be fixed to some advantage in the shallows. Snow and ice are both very plentiful in their season, and proper houses might be constructed to preserve them in the summer ; a small steam-boat would then carry the fish while sweet to Quebec, where a ready sale could at once be obtained ; or to Montreal, where they would be always very graciously received. Such things require a little cash at the outset ; but, as the thing is now represented, fishermen will soon be seen there.

The Isle of Bic.

THIS is a large uninhabited island in the river St. Lawrence, about three miles from the south shore, and one hundred and fifty from Quebec. The following account is from my Journal, kept during the voyage.

“ Brought the ship to anchor in seven fathoms water, about two miles from the shore, between the island and the main land, thinking that by giving her a *rest*, she would be more *refreshed* to pursue her journey against a head wind. The jolly-boat was prepared to go ashore on the island to get spars, and some grass for the live stock. The Captain asked the passengers if any of them would accompany him ; but as it was just at dinner-time, none of them would go but myself, who certainly needed no entreaty, nor would the best dinner in the world have kept me from the excursion. The Captain, took with him the second mate, and the carpenter, with a Canadian, one of the crew of the name of Harry ; *Ringy*, another of the crew, nicknamed so from his wearing earrings ;. and the boy, Carroty Pole, who pulled the bow-oar, and I pulled one ashore for *fun* myself. We took with us in the boat a hatchet, an adze, a bag and cords, a compass, spy-glass, a jar of rum, another of water, with some biscuit. On nearing the island, the fires on the main land, which had been burning all the week, the weather being extremely dry, now assumed an awful appearance, and gave the waters of the great river a deep orange tinge, while the sun glimmering through the smoke, seemed sooty and bloated, between the isle and a lot of high cliffy rocks on the main land, where I had seen a couple of bald-headed eagles the day before ; there was ingulfed a dark blue mass of smoke, having a different appearance from any thing I had ever seen. There is variety in the hues of smoke as well as in its smell ; that from a forest of spruce-fir in flame is quite different from that emanating from the houses of London. We landed in a sweet little bay, and having all got out of the boat, we clambered up to the summit of a bunch of rocks, doffed our hats, and gave three cheers. This was my first landing in America. Round the rocky beach we observed plenty of gooseberries growing on their bushes—the sleek *green grozart* ; and, as this berry was found of this colour in its wild state, we may conclude it to be the origin of all the varieties. A gentleman in Scotland, whom I knew, relished this kind : he must have had a natural taste. We also found abundance of cranberries, and others we knew nothing about ; but I pulled some of all kinds, and have them preserved in spirits. There was a species of red-coloured currant, with a rough rind, that had a very singular taste. We rooted out bushes and all, and *bundled* various lots to the boat ; (we also procured an immense quantity of curious grasses and flowers, few of which I had ever seen any thing like before, and regretted that my botanical knowledge was small. We found growing profusely a large kind of goose-grass, the

corn of which, then ripening, was saturated with a thick glutinous matter of a clear colour. There was a flower, very common, of a pink hue, having its cups laden with a sweet juice ; the pea called the Indian vetch ; the hemlock, dock, and marygold, were to be met with frequently. Having procured our quantity of herbage, we proceeded into the *bush* in quest of spars, where we found fine larches, and spruce enough for our wants ; while a stick of rowan-tree was cut to frighten the witches out of the ship, it being fancied, from the many foul winds we had been blessed with, that there were such characters aboard. Having returned out of the woods to the beach, the Captain and I took a ramble round the shore, until the sailors had their raft of spars prepared. We coasted the west headland, and found many sea-eggs, the shells of a species of fish, some rough, others smooth : we also met with many nests in which sea-fowl had been hatched and dun-coloured shells remained. We started out of the rocky creeks various cormorants, and other birds of the willock tribe. We often stood amazed at the immense quantities of driftwood which had at various times been rolled in on the desert shore, and flung up high and dry by the tides and storms : some of it was in a very decayed state, with gooseberry-bushes growing on it. Amongst this timber, the Captain found the last of a lady's slipper, which he carefully preserved, as a token of respect to the fair sex. There was also seen amongst it bamboo cane of various thicknesses, which must have been brought from some distant country by the eddies of the southern Atlantic. Having coasted a couple , of miles, we entered a singular valley that stretched up from the shore into the heart of the island as I far as we could see ; on either side beautiful spruce-trees were growing. This vale was about five hundred yards wide, having a small stream of fresh water rippling down its middle. We followed up the stream and came to a lagoon, where a number of birds of the heron tribe—called *quack*, by the Canadians—were fishing. They were either so tame, or so much afraid, that if the grass of the valley had not been long and *tangly*, we should have succeeded in obtaining some of them even without a gun : they are almost as large as geese, of a dark-brown colour, and dirty-white head. This place would be a good situation for a settler to take up his abode, there being plenty of food for live stock ; and from the peas and wild-rye found growing wild, good crops of any kind of grain might be raised : from these circumstances, we called it the Vale of Food. The smoke from the south-shore wilds getting thicker, we hurried back to the boat ; and on returning, I fell in with, for the first time, the *arctic boulder stones*, described elsewhere. The native rock of the isle was a compact clay slate, dipping in strata towards the south-west.

As the tide ebbed out, we found enormous quantities of shell-fish, particularly mussels, and we might have shovelled them into the boat ; there were also clams and cockles, with the large periwinkle, well known in Scotland by the name of Roaring Bucky ; and we obtained specimens of flint and coral quite new to me. The raft being fixed, we got into the boat, and had a hard pull to get free of a surf that was beating in on the island : we steered for the ship by compass, as the smoke had quite obscured her. After an hour's hard work with the oar, we came into the lee of her wake, and got aboard well-pleased with the trip. These Islands in the St. Lawrence are well worthy the attention of farmers, fishermen, and naturalists ; they are very rarely visited by man, and contain many things to which he is a stranger.

Notes on The St. Lawrence, beneath Quebec.

SHIPS coming up the St. Lawrence, generally meet with pilots off Cape Chat, which is about three hundred miles below Quebec ; but these persons take no charge of them until they are past the Isle of Bic. They are French farmers, and but poorly informed. Their knowledge of the seaman's art is, indeed, very small, and few of them can speak English so as to be understood by those who know no other language. They are obliged to undergo a kind of apprenticeship to the pilotage business ; and during that time must make at least one voyage across the Atlantic. They are generally very snug-looking, are warmly clad, smoke their pipes, and

swallow their grog, extremely comfortably. They make, at an average, about 250*l.* per annum, conducting about twelve ships up and down. They live to a good old age, and are considered *rich* by their countrymen. The daughter of a pilot is fancied to have more charms than any girl else on the coast—the reason is obvious.

The pilots inform the sailors, that there is a personage who lives in the Bush, called St. Antonio, who has a method of bagging up the wind ; and that, if grog goes freely round to the glory of this Saint, the winds will be set free, and the ships allowed to proceed on their voyage.

There are no soundings in the middle of the St. Lawrence, until we are about a hundred and fifty miles up it. The snow on the banks in winter is about five feet deep. Sometimes the soil on the breasts of the hills will *shove* down with all its trees to the plains below. The spots where these shoves have taken place, are plainly seen from the river, and have a singular appearance. Milton's simile of the downfall of the rebel angels might have been derived from this scene.

The Mother Carey's chickens forsake the ships in going up the river, and follow the outward-bound. This singular bird seems to dislike the very appearance of land.

Numbers of little trading-vessels toil about in the river, and these have always a full complement of crew ; but none of them, like the Manx boats, have any masters : they are cooks, captains, and sailors, turn about, and live very merrily together.

There are three islands of rock, called the Brandy Pots, from their being round, high, and extremely like one another : ships are often cast away upon them. Also a very dangerous place in the river, called the Traverse, where the waters have a strong tendency to whirl the ships ashore, unless aided by favourable winds, or tiding it at the proper times.

There is a singular high conical mountain seen away in the country, about ten miles off, called by the French Mount Carmel : I have met with nothing like it of the kind in Canada : it seems to be about 1500 feet high.

Ships going up the stream have to anchor at the turn of the flood-tide, unless aided by a very strong fair wind.

Numbers of shipwrecks occur yearly in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence ; this proceeds from many causes. The pilots are none of the most skilful ; the navigation of itself is intricate and difficult ; the shoals of Manicogan are horrible. Then there are many ships sent out for timber, which are old, crazed, and unfit for any other trade. These are often laden beyond what they can bear ; too much deck wood is heaped on them, so that the sailors cannot get to the ropes ; and there are many ships so poorly found, that the captains cannot afford to give fifteen pounds to a pilot to take them up, and so endeavour to perform the task themselves. In spring and fall, they are troubled with cold weather and floating ice. One winter a ship was wrecked, and lifted by contending ice into a flaw : there she sat, high and dry, as the sailors say, and moved out of and in the Gulf, by way of the Gut of Causo, with the tides and winds, during the inclement season ; at last it melted, and she sank.

The scenery about Cape Chat is composed of high curving hills, closely planted to the top by nature with all kinds of trees, particularly firs. Where the soil is scanty, the trees are small in stature ; yet they contrive to grow in the most barren situations possible, on the bare rocks, to the water's edge, and sometimes in the water, to a certain extent. The country seems inter-

sected with deep gullies and glens ; and the shades the sun casts upon them, while passing over, are strange, and not to be seen in a country cleared of trees.

Kamaraska is the sea-bathing place of the Canadians ; there they obtain salt water. Afar in the woods the smell of freshness becomes disagreeable to those who have been used to the sea, and they feel the sensation very strongly. I think this absence of salt, which prevails on the American continent, operates against health ; as in summer the decomposition of animal and vegetable matters is much more rapid than in Britain, which may lie partly ascribed to this freshness. How happily we quaff the sea-breeze after being immured for a time in the wilderness !

To be aboard a ship in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in an extremely stormy, dark night, when the weather is bitter cold, is perhaps as dismal a situation as human beings can be placed in. Sometimes a blaze of lightning between the squalls will illuminate for a moment the awful scene ; then over the bulwarks comes the icy surge, cutting to the bone ; while the ropes snap, and the yards, topmasts, &c. come thundering upon the deck. We crawl about on the obvious brink of eternity—no one speaks to his neighbour—the soul which has not fortitude must sink—there is no vain cheering—the poor human voice is hushed, and anxiety begins to give way to resignation. We do not long for the morning, for it may be little better than the evening, and probably worse. Religion is then the stronghold of the Christian, and the hope after death becomes stronger than the wish to survive. After a time the feelings become torpid, and misery loses its influence ; nor do we recover with the first warm sun and fair wind ; there is an impression left which years will scarcely obliterate. The anguish of dismay is not suddenly forgotten, neither can the smiles of Fortune ever fairly uplift the heart that has actually known distress.

QUEBEC, the capital of Canada, is built on a very high promontory that juts out from the north side of the river St. Lawrence ; it may be said to be about 350 miles up this noble stream. There is an Upper and Lower Town, with extensive suburbs. The Upper Town is surrounded by a strong stone wall and fortifications ; the Lower is nearly on a level with the river. The great fortification is on the highest situation,—of course, commanding the whole town. As the saying goes, the houses are chiefly built of stone, but there seem to be no good quarries near the place. Good material of this kind has to be brought from Montreal. The streets are well paved ; and the public buildings look not so much amiss, but these have all been often described. The Chateau, or house where the Governor resides, is placed in a very fine and lofty situation.

The Parliament-house is much farther down the hill, at that place where flights of steps or stairs lead from the one town to the other. The top of the hill, or Cape Diamond, is about 360 feet above the river. An inclined plane is constructed between, that stone may be dragged to the extensive works termed the New Fortifications, which have been building there for several years past : the old were built by the French when the city was in their possession. Behind this Cape the land falls away gently, forming the Plains of Abram. The greystone, where General Wolfe fell, is yet pointed out. A monumental obelisk has been raised to his memory, which looks very well from the river. Wolfe's Cove is about three miles farther up the stream than Quebec ; it was here the brave officer landed his troops during the night, and crawled up a steep ravine to the heights, dragging the cannon after. The foe marched out of their fort in the morning somewhat astonished, and so began the desperate conflict. It seems to me, that if they had not come out of their fort, an act much reprobated by military men, the fort would have been very easily taken ; and that the best thing they could do was to come out and be honourably beaten, rather than remain within and allow themselves meanly to be

smothered ; and I am farther inclined to think that, if a hostile Yankee army should appear on the plains, we should hurry out too, and meet it with the bayonet.

There is a reading-room here, as at Montreal, well filled with periodicals. The population is also considered to be as great, if not greater than there,—perhaps about 38,000 ; the French Canadians form the body of the people. The heat and cold here run to the utmost extreme ; mercury often freezes, and the sentinels, at their posts on the Cape, often perish by the cold. A brilliant kind of spar is found on the hill ; hence the name Cape Diamond : breast-pins and broaches are made of them. The improvements of this city must extend by way of the river Charles ; there is no room in any other direction. The tide rises here about eighteen feet at a medium. Ships have no harbour, as it were ; they anchor in the open channel of the river, where the water is deep, and holding-ground good. There are drowned here every year a great number of persons, the shore eddies being very strong, whirling amongst the wharfs with dangerous fury, where the waters of the river and precipice of the Cape seem to meet. The place is called by the French Cul de Sac, or Bottom of the Bag, as here the contending currents deposit their stores :—hither run the friends of the drowned to look for their bodies.

Quebec is one of those rare places that I love ; the beautiful scenery, from the Cape, of the wild and strange country, the Falls of Montmorency, an Indian village in the distance called Laurette, the woody mountains. Point Levi, the British ships in the river, the rafts coming down from the remote wilderness, and various nameless things, refresh me much. There is less vanity and conceit here, too, than is to be met with in the country : here the Canadians will have their own way, and that way seems extremely interesting : here too we find some intercourse with the world, which is almost denied us elsewhere, and we can hold regular converse with friends at home, which is ever reviving.

Montreal is nearly as large as Quebec, and is supposed to have about 35,000 inhabitants. It is built on a swelling ridge of land, on an island of the same name, at the head of the natural navigation of the St. Lawrence, about 180 miles above Quebec. The streets are well paved ; the houses about three stories high, chiefly built of stone : in the suburbs there are many very inferior wooden buildings, deserving the character of huts more than houses. There are in Montreal several French churches, well filled on Sundays by the Canadians ; and there is one now finishing, a very large Canadian cathedral : which, had it been placed in a good situation, would have been a noble piece of architecture. The architect is a Mr. O'Connel, very skilful and attentive to his business. It is built on a slanting confined piece of ground ; the French apparently have no idea of elegance in this respect. It is constructed of red limestone, well cut and polished ; the order, I believe, is Gothic ; the windows are to have stained glass ; and the walls are to be plastered with fresco paintings. There are also English and Scottish places of divine worship ; while the Methodists and Americans have also the same. The Theatre is tolerably neat, and the Masonic Hall hotel is the most splendid building of the kind on the new continent. There are four or five newspapers published weekly—the Herald twice a week ; sometimes they contain articles of no mean talent. The majority of the inhabitants are French ; but the Scotch and Irish, taken by themselves, are more numerous than the English. Some of the unthinking Scotch ape the manners of the latter, and are termed *Canadianized Scotch-men*. A good deal of the Yankee mannerism runs through the whole ; nevertheless it is a tolerably comfortable place. In winter, the markets are thronged with people and provisions. Strangers are apt to dislike this city, from the wonderful importance that many of the leading merchants imagine to belong to their character. The following letter to a friend in London, gives an idea of the manners of the people.

“ You are quite a townsman, my dear fellow ; so it is needless for me to bore you about lakes, snows, serpents, &c. I have been through all the Canadian cities, towns, and villages,

worth speaking about—Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, York, &c. The inhabitants are tolerably civil. In a common tavern, your food and bed will ease your pocket of a dollar a-day ; if in an hotel, half as much more, exclusive of wines, which are so so—no great shakes, a dollar a bottle—and grogs in proportion. The fashionable young fellows follow a good deal the manners of the Americans—drink gin sling, sangaree, and lemonade, smoke segars, and in the morning take bitters, cocktail, and soda-water. The theatres are not open very often, unless some of your stars get erratic, and come over the water. I have seen Kean at his old Richard here : he is ruffed much, and I dare say deserves it ;—as for me, I never ruff any body, but keep quiet. They have their parties and their scandal through all the towns, the same as at home. You are well off, who are not bothered with these things in London ; it is the only place in Britain where pride and presumption dare never show themselves, and where scandal can never thrive. The ladies dress very well, and seem to have a considerable quantity of conceit ; their dresses here are not so plain and so elegant as with you ; they have too great a profusion of flounces, feathers, and ruffles : few of them are to be met with very good-looking ; the climate robs their complexions of all the beautiful colours, leaving behind the sallow, dun, and yellow ; no pure red and white in Canada, and dimples and smiles are rare. I endeavoured to fall in love once or twice, and flung my old heart quite open to the little archer ; but the frost, or something or other, would not allow the arrows to penetrate. I have met with girls from my own Old Scotland, that I liked to spend the day with very much, but they had no pretensions to beauty ; we could talk of witches, and quote Burns together. But this love proceeds from many causes, which have but small connexion with beauty of person ; it is to be traced to the affinity of mind—Humph !

“ Your gentry, with their swords, buttons. &c. figure about here, and the people like to look at them : it is all very fine ; they flash round the streets, and are to be met with at every turning. It would be a good thing, we often think, if friend Jonathan would give them something to do : they are much more thought of here than at home ; here nobody may become somebody ; an insipid trifler, a delightful gentleman : what you would not look at in England, is stared at here with admiration ; and what you love or admire at home, is not to be found. If you would show off and become of some consequence, you had better come over as soon as you can find it convenient ; but if you love respect and no nonsense, as you do, stay at home. Those who have wives here seem to kill them with kindness. You would fancy that the ladies in Britain receive more attention from the lords of creation than in any other country ; but let me tell you and them, that there is an error in the ballad. What must not be said before ladies here on any account whatever, may be said before them with you without any notice at all ; and I am sure you are as great judges of delicacy as they are. They have frequently hushed me to silence when going on swimmingly with some of my favourite anecdotes and tales, that I had told a hundred times before much more respectable people, to my judgment, than they are or ever will be. I have seen a counter-jumper, *alias* a shopman, assume the office of reforming the manners of the age ; nay I am certain, that even if the celebrated Beau Brummel had been with me,—he who caught cold from a damp man entering a room in which he was,—he would have met with many who would have beggared him at the affectation of delicacy.

“ Do not let yourself be any longer deceived with the tale that there are no unmarried ladies here, for there are in the greatest abundance ; and also more bachelors than I like to live among, having boarded in a house for a few days where there were above thirty bachelors, between twenty and forty years of age, every day at dinner. What do you think of this ? Canada is not a place for people to get married in. What is the cause, it is not easy to assign : methinks it proceeds from the bachelors being chiefly foreigners—people badgered up and down this world, who forget that there is such a state as matrimony. Those who are long without a home get careless. about finding one. The natives, however, and settled

residents wed as becomes them ; and at their weddings they have what are called Shireverees, a parading kind of a show, with sleighs if in winter, or a two-wheeled kind of gig, if in summer. Round the towns they fly—what a set out !— fiddles playing, pistols firing,— altogether composing lots of fun : a true Canadian *spree* is worth the looking at. In Montreal, the snow accumulates to a great depth in the streets during winter, rendering the walking very precarious : people wear a kind of crampon on their feet, called creepers, and the ladies move about with stockings drawn over their boots. The Scotch brogue here is not only conceived vulgar, but highly offensive. How they turn up their noses when they hear me speak ! To please them, I have set to work to study the English lisp, and I dare say time will make a beau of my grannie. How polite I find myself getting ! soon I shall not know where to look for Scotland on a map of the world ; and as to Sir Walter’s writings, his Scotch characters do indeed—(O yes !)—disgust me.

“ I take great delight in walking through the market-places and examining every thing that comes to be disposed of, and I really meet sometimes with singular articles : amongst other things is Indian grass, that smells like the tonquin bean ; the butter seems good, but there is no cheese ; vegetables they have in great abundance, and fruit,—beautiful apples called pomgrees. The Indians produce their handy-work in the shape of baskets and mocasons. There is a pleasure in getting into the midst of a club of country Canadians ; how they do gabble and laugh, and how fond they are of dollars and half-crowns ! They lodge none of their cash in the banks, but keep it in the corner of a chest at home ; and I have been told, that there are marketing madams who have no inconsiderable hoards by them. During winter, there are at times assembly balls, got up by some lady patroness or other ; but I never made any attempt to go to any of them : perhaps, if I had, my absence would have been cordial. Had you been here in your buffs and bang-ups, there is no saying how you would have figured off. Strange world this we live in !—True, O king ! You on one side of it, and I on the other ; nevertheless we are ever on the same as regards esteem and affection.”

Rummaging.

THIS is the art of exploring whatever lies in a state of nature, or in one that may be considered similar ; it may also be explained as a method whereby curiosities are discovered, and singular information obtained. It forms no uninteresting study, and some, I have heard, prefer it to phrenology ; examples, however, will throw more light on the subject. Having been told of mountains of iron ore, by my famous and worthy friend Philemon Wright, Esq. of Hull, we took our way on horseback through the forest to inspect the said ore-bed, that had begun to make some noise, and had hindered the magnetic needle of many a surveyor’s compass from traversing properly. Four of us mounted, with a guide, at the celebrated Columbian hotel, and away we went ; our conductor having provisions, axes, hammers, &c. in a bag on the saddle with him. Having cantered away a couple of miles through cleared land, we began to enter the wilderness ; and as I am no great horseman, let the animal or the road be ever so good, I soon found my eyes and nose beginning to be scratched to death from the brushwood lashing and rubbing against them,—and soon, alas ! I found myself comfortably landed on my back on the trunk of an old tree that had fallen by age many years before. On looking round me, I saw my quiet old pony, thinking for a wonder what was become of me, one of his fore feet having trod out the crown of a good new thirty-shilling hat I had bought in London. My companions gathered round, but could not prevail on me to mount again ; the guide led the horse, and I trudged along on foot. Getting weary, however, and seeing the comparatively easy manner in which my friends the Americans got along, in spite of the thick brush-wood and old trees that lay stretching over one another at all angles, I got upon the back of the quiet little animal again, but soon found it almost impossible to follow my companions, without getting myself bruised in all quarters, and perhaps some of my bones broken. They had

got about an hundred yards before, and hallooed out to me to follow ; I exerted myself to the utmost, but one of my legs getting into the cleft of a small tree, I was torn off the horse's back, and left amongst the briers again. Bawling out, they waited until I came up : none of than but Mr. Mackay, as good a Scotsman as lives, laughed, and I was almost inclined to curse him ; the fellow being a good horseman, and used to the rough roads of Canada, could keep his seat as the saddle in a way, but the skin of his legs was partly peeled like my own, and his clothes torn in various places. After travelling a great deal, riding but little, and being pulled down frequently as described, we got to a stream which the guide said had its origin in the iron-mountain. Proceeding up the stream to its source, we at last came upon the famous ore-bed ; but through excessive fatigue, after having taken a little refreshment, I fell asleep, as did all my companions but one, the enterprising Lord of the Manor of Hull : he kindly let us take a nap for about an hour, when he roused us, much recovered. Traversing these wild mountains in all directions, we were much pleased with immense specimens of iron ore that everywhere appeared ; and said to ourselves, that this place might be a muirkirk at no very distant date. Mr. Mackay wielded the hammer with masonic skill, and laid the rich rocks open to inspection. These mountains seem to range over an extent of more than four miles square ; at one place they are not more than two miles from the first Falls of the Gattineau, where a road might easily be constructed, and where machinery and engines could be erected at a very moderate rate, as water-power may be had to any extent from the Falls. The country all round is growing thickly with hard wood, particularly maple, which makes the best charcoal of any. From all I can think, this is the best place for an iron-manufactory in Canada. While examining these mountains, we filled the bag with various specimens of minerals, such as iron felspar, hornblende, native iron ore, granite of various colours, white, grey, and red, and a kind of stone very common in Canada, which we called Limestone granite ; it being limestone that caldnates to powder, yet to all appearance by fracture granite. We also found marble blocks of great variety, white, green, and variegated.

The stream before-mentioned discharges itself into the Gattineau near to the Falls, and has washed down, through a series of ages, great quantities of the finest particles of plumbago ; the banks of the river in that neighbourhood being covered with it to a great extent. I tried its effect in furbishing metals, and found it surprising, making my rusty bush-knife gleam with brightness. We at length thought of returning to the inn. Night came on, and in the forenoon of the next day I found myself alive at the Falls of Chaudiere : the troubles I had undergone were amply repaid, my bruises recovered, the skin came over my arms and legs, but I will never try to explore the wilds of Canada on horseback again.

Three years in Canada : an account of the actual state of the country in 1826-7-8. Comprehending its resources, productions, improvements, and capabilities; and including sketches of the state of society, advice to emigrants, &c (1829)

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