

## New York Tour 1830

*Journal of A Tour in The State of New York, in The Year 1830 ; with Remarks on Agriculture in Those Parts most eligible for Settlers and Return to England by The Western Islands, in Consequence of Shipwreck in The Robert Fulton.*

John Fowler.

“ It occupies me to turn back regards  
On what I've seen or pondered, sad or cheery ;  
And what I write I cast upon the stream,  
To swim or sink.”

BYRON.

1831.

Lengthy prefaces, like lengthy parliaments, are now happily out of favour : if the reader is to be introduced to any thing worthy his notice, why detain him on the threshold ? if not, 'tis but needlessly adding to his labour and disappointment.

The subsequent pages—as much of them at least as I lay claim to—were originally written, on a hasty Tour, for my own satisfaction and reference, and that of a limited circle of friends who felt interested in my proceedings ; but others, whose judgment and candour I appreciate, having expressed some gratification in the perusal of them, and numerous inquiries having been addressed to me, particularly upon the subject of agriculture and the prospects for emigrants in the State of New York, as also respecting our shipwreck,—in the hope that what I relate may not be found wholly devoid of interest or utility, I have been induced, with little correction or revision, to offer it, such as it is, to the public. This only recommendation I wish to advance in its favour :—It is presented by one who, to the extent of his opportunities, has endeavoured to investigate for himself,—who has no private or party feelings to gratify,—no smiles of patronage to court, or frowns to dread,—one who, in short, as he would scorn the meanness, has no earthly interest or motive to stoop to imposition, or in representing things otherwise than as they really are.

J. F.

Journal, &c.

Voyage To New York.

*June 24th*, 1830.—Having for some time past been meditating a trip across the Atlantic, and circumstances at the present moment seeming rather to conspire to favour the project, about twelve o'clock this day I put myself on board the packet-ship YORK, Captain Thompson, bound from Liverpool to New York, with seven cabin and seven steerage passengers. Before clearing the river we were taken in tow by a steam-boat, which continued with us to the FLOATING LIGHT, (a light ship moored about fifteen miles from Liverpool,) when the wind got more easterly, and we made good progress through the night.

*25th*.—Little worthy of remark. Those never afloat before, sick in their berths, and those who have, being yet without their *sea legs*, staggering about the deck in a way that *must* be tolerated here, but would not be thought over creditable on land ; the vessel herself scarcely in proper trim, and all things bespeaking a recent departure from port, not omitting the

intolerable *bilge water*, which drives me out of the cabin altogether. Light wind from the S.E.

26th.—At three, this morning, I was awake, or rather aroused, by the sound of very heavy rain. Went on deck and found it pouring almost in torrents, accompanied with thunder. The storm lasted little more than an hour, when the sun arose in cloudless beauty, and a gentle breeze from the S. carried us along at the rate of four or five knots for the remainder of the day. A circumstance occurred which occasioned some amusement. One of the sailors, happening to descend the hatchway, was not a little surprised to observe a pair of legs obtruding from amongst the packages, and judging they must have an owner, he began to make investigation accordingly ; but it was not until some time had elapsed, and they had sustained a repetition of pretty harsh usage, that any one could be found willing to assert proprietorship over them. At length the owner erected himself, and, after *examination had*, he turned out to be an Irish ship-carpenter, who, on the morning of our leaving Liverpool, having a disposition to visit New York, and it being somewhat inconvenient to him to make the necessary disbursements, had contrived to stow himself away, as mentioned, and had thus remained about two days without food of any description, if I except the sailors' specific,—grog, a bottle of which he had provided himself with before his concealment ; had he not been discovered he says it was his intention to have kept below until he thought we were about half seas over, when we surely could not have refused to carry him through. He appears one of those stupid, half-witted fellows to whom a change of country can prove but of slight advantage, and Captain Thompson has thrown a sad damp upon his prospects by telling him that he will put him upon the first homeward-bound vessel we can speak that will take charge of him, so that it is questionabls even yet if Paddy effect his passage.

27th.—Passed three American ships, supposed bound to Liverpool, but without speaking any of them ; the wind chopping about all day, occasionally carrying us nine or ten knots, and as often not more than two.

28th.—The night has been stormy. Wind this morning N.W., making very poor way. We, however, consider ourselves clear of the Channel, and are beginning to experience the fine bold swell of the Atlantic. Few of the passengers have yet settled matters with their stomachs, and appear on deck (those who come at all) with most ghastly visages. Amongst those in the cabin we have an elderly lady, sixty-four years of age, whose only son, if not only surviving relative, has been settled in America about fourteen years, and with whom she is now going to close her days. She comes from near Nottingham, and, though she has never been at sea before, bears the voyage admirably, and out of four, is quite the best lady passenger on board. On my anticipating the pleasure she would derive from meeting her son again, the tears started into her eyes, and she replied, “ Oh, Sir, if I did not feel it beyond expression, do you think I could have been induced, at my time of life, and all alone, to have taken such a journey as this, and when we reach New York I shall then have 700 miles to travel, but there my boy will meet me, and ——” She could proceed no farther. Heaven grant her the realization of every hope which animates her aged breast.

We have not averaged to-day more than five knots, and that a point or two out of our course : 'tis well we are out of the Channel, or with the wind as it is, and blowing fresh, we could make no way at all. Crept into my berth about eleven o'clock. Let not the landsman suppose this getting into a comfortable bed for a night of undisturbed repose ; 'tis quite another thing I assure him : but let him fancy a small room (though called a *State Room*) some three feet by six, and six feet high, in which are placed, one above the other, two tolerable-sized kneeding troughs, and he will then have as good an idea as is necessary of a dormitory at sea. This said berth is not boarded at the bottom, (would it were,) but made in the ordinary way with sacking, only braced down the middle instead of the sides, leaving,

when at all relaxed, a most comfortless hollow in that part, into which, of course, you roll immediately you enter, and, except when the lurching of the ship throws you for a moment upon the side, must there remain until you turn out altogether ; probably, if you happen to occupy the lower berth, with the over-workings of some uneasy stomach inconveniencing you from above. At any rate there is the incessant dashing of the waves close to your head,—the noise of the helm, trampling on deck, and many *et ceteras* to break in upon sound slumber. When you rise, if shaving be the first operation, and the motion of the vessel considerable, it may probably be about half an hour before you can accomplish it, chiefly by holding on with one hand whilst using the razor with the other, and you may consider yourself pretty fortunate if the floor of your apartment be not swimming with the contents of sundries capsized in the interim. This is perhaps rather the worst side of the picture, though most “ that go down to the sea in ships ” have to pass through it ; in fact, to a landsman, from beginning to end, ’tis no place of comfort : it may be *endured* we know, and so may a prison ; and often have I thought, with Johnson, if there be a choice of evils, the latter has it.

29th.—Very little wind from the S.W. Spoke an Irish brig bound to Belfast. Paddy escapes transfer. The ship Ganges, of Philadelphia, which left Liverpool with us, and of which we have generally kept ahead, passed us this morning : her cargo is light, whilst ours, I believe, is the heaviest ever conveyed by any packet from Liverpool to New York ; consequently, with light winds, she beats us, and, *vice versâ*, when blowing fresh, we beat her, being able to carry more sail. About noon, the wind got more in our favour, and, until the evening of the following day, we made our course at the rate of six or eight knots. It then changed right ahead, and at night increased to a gale.

July 1st,—This morning it blows tremendously, and just as unfavourably, rather increasing than diminishing throughout the day and night.

2nd.—4 a. m. The storm still rages furiously and rolls us about, as if, at times, it were ready to roll us over, to the no small discomfiture of the lady part of our cargo, who I can perceive would gladly exchange their present situation for very humble accommodation on land, and no wonder ; the sea, in a storm, and to be upon it, (herein consists all the difference,) may well excite apprehension in the female mind. I have seen some of the other sex unable to contemplate it with any great degree of composure, and the satisfaction of being on a good seaworthy vessel is sensibly felt by all. Let none ever be induced, from the consideration of a trifling saving of expense, or any other motive, to cross the Atlantic in one which has not been recommended to them by those on whose judgment, and sincerity too, (for the deceptions practised upon the ignorant by the charterers of vessels are infamous,) they can fully rely. The hazards and privations of sailors are enough, at any rate, without adding to the list of evils a crazy or even suspicious barque. At noon it began to moderate, and before night the wind nearly died away.

3rd.—Strange contrast. This morning we are becalmed, and the same ocean which yesterday was rearing its waves around us, and drenching us with its yeasty spray, is now, excepting a long swell at intervals, as quiescent as a lake, and without a ripple breaking its surface. It is also much warmer, though accompanied with an unpleasant drizzling rain. Took breakfast at the cabin table, for the first time since coming on board, the smell (stench) of the *bilge water*, now beginning to subside, having hitherto induced me greatly to prefer the deck. Fare excellent. Tea, coffee, boiled ham and eggs, anchovies, pickled shad. cold tongue and other meat, bread, of the finest American flour, baked fresh every day, biscuits, &c. &c. The hours for meals are : — Breakfast, at eight ; lunch, at twelve ; dinner, at three ; tea, coffee, or supper, just to your choice, at eight. We have a cow on board, which furnishes an abundant supply of milk ; four or five fine sheep ; half a dozen small pigs ; some geese, and ducks and

fowls unnumbered. Poultry however, soon become very poor stuff at sea. I know of no animals which do not suffer by sailing excepting pigs ; they appear to thrive quite as well as on land. Our wines and spirits are first rate, champaign especially ; ale and London porter equally good, and all supplied unsparingly. In short, whoever could find in his heart to desire more after this fashion, than is furnished in the New York packets, deserves to be treated to a bread and water diet for the remainder of his days ; though, as one not estimating these matters over highly, I still hold there are drawbacks enough to counterbalance all the good recorded, and I could partake of less sumptuous fare on land with a far keener relish. Tastes, however, vary ; and I know those, whom I verily believe, without further inducement by this admirable bill of fare, might be tempted across the Atlantic. I once saw a little Scotchman under similar circumstances, who, had the voyage continued as many months as it did weeks, would surely not long have survived it. Throughout the twenty-four hours there was scarcely a successive five minutes that he did not occupy either in eating, drinking, or sleeping, and, to do him justice, never did I see so many good things so unprofitably bestowed. John Abernethy would at once have called him a “ perfect beast.” Rain all day.

4th.—During the night a breeze has sprung up just from the quarter we would not have had it, and it is again blowing fresh. Spoke an English brig bound for Liverpool. This is the anniversary of the American declaration of independence, the signing of which memorable deed took place on the 4th July, 1776, and is consequently fifty-four years ago. Liberated the cork of an extra bottle of champaign upon the occasion.

5th.—Rain all night. Wind from the same quarter (N. W.) Spoke a brig from New Orleans, bound to Hamburgh.

6th.—The finest day since leaving port, though nearly becalmed. Fell into chat with an intelligent person from the Sister Isle. Amongst other things he tells me that the quality of *flax* is much deteriorating in Ireland, in consequence of the farmers having got into the habit of using lime to their land, which they were not formerly accustomed to do ; and that now nearly all their finest flax comes from Holland. I know nothing myself of the matter, but if it be so, it is worthy of notice. A beautiful evening. Some of our party on deck ; I believe for the first time since putting to sea.

7th.—After a fine morning, about noon it came on to rain, and blow fresh ; and this evening we are going near ten knots :—great work with our weight of lading.

8th.—It has rained all night ; but the wind has been favourable, and continues easterly this morning. We hope to have made one-third of our way. Evening, quite a gale ; scudding with close-reefed sails ; most unseasonable weather ; far more like March or November than July. I pity the poor farmers in England if it be no better with them.

9th.—Wind still favourable (N. N. E. ;) but excessively cold.

10th to 13th.—Wind got more ahead, and we made but little progress. The past has been a tempestuous night ; the ship rolling and pitching so that we could scarcely keep in our berths. Capt. T. remarks that latterly his summer have been much more boisterous and unpleasant than his winter voyages. Have had our lower studding-sail-boom carried away. What little way we are making is quite out of our course.

14th.—Wind still ahead, but more moderate ; and the sea gone down considerably. So far an improvement upon yesterday, when we were pitched about, lumber-like, and to no purpose. Have discovered, partly by accident, that our mainyard has been seriously injured,

in fact, nearly broken through by the gale ; had it given way during its continuance, the loss of the mainsail would have been inevitable, with, probably, much other damage. All hands busily employed in rigging out another ; and this evening, by dint of great exertion, we have hoisted it aloft, and attached the sail to it as before. We now only wait a fair wind.

15th.—Rain all night. Wind dead ahead. Three weeks out to-day.

16th.—Wind turning a trifle in our favour, and doing something better than standing still, which is more than we have been able to say for several days past. Took a bath this morning, (a luxury I have much missed since coming on board,) by getting over the bows of the vessel, and stationing one of the men aloft, whilst another supplied him with water, *fresh from the ocean*, to shower upon me ; no finer *sea bathing* could be desired, though I seem to be the only one manifesting the least partiality for it. We have had a drizzling rain, or rather very dense fog, through the day, a kind of weather generally experienced about the banks of Newfoundland, which we are now nearly approaching, our latitude being  $43\frac{1}{2}$ , and longitude 45. This evening the wind ahead again.

17th. Morning. Wind ahead and enveloped in fog. Spoke a very fine brig, the *Mary*, from Baltimore ; could not learn distinctly where she was bound. Evening. Wind a little more to the south; going about six knots.

18th. Still a dense fog, which obliges us to keep a sharp look-out for sails, and also for icebergs, frequently met with here at this season of the year, of prodigious size, to the destruction of many vessels. The packet-ship, *Liverpool*, a few years ago, on her first voyage, or intended voyage to Liverpool from New York, struck upon one of them at mid-day, and went down in fifteen minutes ; the crew and all saved by taking to the boats, and landed at Newfoundland, from whence they returned to New York. Made several attempts to obtain soundings, but without success. Vivid and incessant lightning from eight in the evening till after midnight.

19th.—Wind S. W. by W. ; as adverse as it can blow. Fog, with occasional heavy rain. Have not had an observation for days ; but find a bottom with a line of forty-three fathoms, and consider ourselves about the middle of the banks. Twelve *p.m.* nearly a calm, and very vivid lightning again.

20th.—Wind this morning from the E.N.E. though so light as to be of little service to us. It has, however, pretty much dispelled the fog, and rendered it more agreeable in that respect. Passed a number of brigs, &c., chiefly French, engaged in fishing. The season commences in April, and ends in November, in which time the quantity taken is incredible. We have been trying to hook one, but as we are going two or three knots, of course, stand but little chance.

21st.—Just off the banks, and nearly becalmed ; otherwise a charming day. One of the finest I ever passed at sea. The sky perfectly cloudless, and the horizon singularly clear and distinct, so as we rarely—never—see it in England. It is indeed a most welcome change after the wretched *Bank weather* we have been groping through, and has not failed to produce a very sensible effect upon the animal spirits of every living thing on board, as something, however, too fair to last, towards evening, clouds and squalls succeed ; the wind ahead ; and to-night we are tossed about just after the old fashion.

22nd.—Stormy. Wind ahead. As great a contrast to yesterday as is well possible.

23rd.—Finer. And the wind so that we have made a tolerable *slant* throughout the day.

24th.—After noon we had a brisk wind from the east, carrying us eight knots, which towards evening increased to ten or eleven. About ten o'clock it began to rain very heavily, and became excessively dark. An hour afterwards, on a sudden, the wind chopped round to the west, and commenced blowing furiously from that quarter ; had but just time to get the sails in ere it turned us end for end. Rain all night.

25th.—Morning. Wind ahead. Evening more northerly, and very cold. Making pretty good way.

26th.—After two o'clock this morning a famous breeze sprung up from the N.E. : going nine or ten knots. About three days, at this rate, would land us at New York, but I am scarcely sanguine enough to anticipate such unwonted despatch. I hope, at all events, our voyaging may terminate with the month, though, considering the winds and weather we have had, so far from having any thing to complain of, the wonder is how we have got on so well. Our ponderous cargo, too, has been against us.

27th.—Had a good wind until noon to-day, when it became completely calm, so incessant and sudden are the changes at sea, the more so on approaching land, and our latitude to-day being  $41^{\circ} 5'$ , and longitude  $66^{\circ}$ , leaves us about 320 miles to run to our destined port. A shark was playing round us for an hour or two in the morning, apparently about ten feet in length. Shortly before observing him, myself and another had been talking of a bathe ; a performance we were well satisfied to dispense with afterwards. A shark, in seizing its prey, has to turn on its side, the under jaw being so much shorter than the upper one, as to prevent it taking it in the ordinary position in which it swims.—Evening. Wind from N.W. making five to seven knots.

28th.—Very foggy. In the midst of the Nantucket shoals. Soundings at thirty-three fathoms. Mates and crew busily employed in painting, scraping, and scouring the ship ; repairing and blacking the rigging, &c. ; getting all in the trimmest possible order to enter port. Passed very near one of the *Havre* packets. Should doubtless, now, discover many vessels if the atmosphere were clearer.

29th.—Still foggy. Fair wind from the E. Have been out five weeks to-day. Got an imperfect observation, by which we suppose ourselves nearly in the latitude of New York, and are, consequently, steering due west. Spoke a brig from Portland bound to the West Indies.

30th.—A gale from the S.E. all night, which has been sending us along at the rate of nine or ten knots, but, as an abatement to so much good luck, has deprived us of our foretopsail, shivering it to pieces. Surely such *summer* weather was never seen before ! Men aloft diligently on the look-out for land, but the horizon is so thick that we may be almost close upon it ere we can discover it, and unless it clear up, shall soon be obliged to *lay to*. Nine o'clock : it has become clearer, and one of the mates from aloft has just sung out, “ *Land O !* ” Thrice welcome sound ! It is, doubtless, some part of Long Island, and thus satisfied, we are crowding all the sail we can.

*Evening.*—At length riding safely at anchor within *Sandy Hook*, sixteen miles from New York, so that we may fully anticipate a termination of our voyage to-morrow. About two hours before we anchored two boats came alongside of us, the one for the letter-bag, the other for the newspapers for the different reading rooms. Their first inquiries were after the health of our *most gracious Majesty*, whom we could only report alive when we left ; more, I imagine, than the next packet will be able to do. Shortly after despatching these boats, a pilot

boarded us. It is the finest evening we have had for long, so that we have distinctly seen them sending up rockets from the Castle Gardens in New York, the scene of nightly displays of fire-works, I am told, during the summer months, and a very favourite resort for the fashionables of the city. Most of our party making merry with champaign, rejoiced at the coming prospect.

31st.—A brilliant morning, but no wind. Are beginning to feel it very warm. The pilot reports it the hottest summer they have had since the year 1822, for some days the thermometer in the shade having stood at  $93^{\circ}$  ;—appalling intelligence after the temperature we have been exposed to for the last five weeks, muffled up in top-coats and cloaks, and shivering even then, and now finding our lightest summer attire almost oppressive.—Scarcely a breath of air until four o'clock, when we had just enough to put us in motion for the city, the approach to which is very fine, heightened by the beauty of the day and the extreme clearness of the atmosphere. The shores on each side, though a good deal wooded, have, nevertheless, a rich and cultivated appearance, often ornamented with a handsome villa, and every where well guarded with fortifications. Governor's Island, nearer the city, also a military station, is a beautiful object, and soon the Battery, Castle Gardens, many of the churches and public buildings, and Brooklyn on the heights, with crowds of shipping in the Bay, arrest the attention, and cannot fail to excite deep interest in the mind of a stranger ; but I was withdrawn from the contemplation of this imposing scene to be introduced to one still more agreeable : two of my friends, having observed our approach, had come off in a boat to give me a welcome to their shores, which I was within a little of reaching before they knew any things of my intention of visiting them, the ship by which I had been advised of having only arrived on the preceding day, though it had the start of us from Liverpool nearly a week. Mutual congratulations exchanged, I accompanied them ashore, and shortly after crossed the river to the residence of a friend in Brooklyn, situated immediately opposite to New York. Upon ascending the elevation on which it is partly built, I was much struck with the fineness and extent of the view which it commanded, embracing the whole of the city, the bay, the vessels in the East River, as it is termed, (though more properly I should think a *strait* or *sound*.) Governor's and other Islands, the *Highlands* of the Hudson, as well as the shores of New Jersey. The houses in the principal streets have a particularly neat and elegant appearance : they are chiefly built of wood, and painted white, with green latticed blinds on the outside ; and most of them I observe are furnished with conductors. For the entire length of some of the streets, weeping willows are planted on each side, which, independent of being very ornamental, afford a delightful shade to the fronts of the houses, and protect the foot-paths even from a noonday sun. It was late before I returned to the city, which I had engaged to do with a friend, who had taken up his quarters at a boarding-house (seemingly more in fashion here than hotels) in V— W.-street ; but I am sorry to say it proved much too early for my comfort, having scarcely retired to bed ere I found myself assailed by those most loathsome of nocturnal annoyances, bugs, and have arisen this morning, [1st August) with one of my organs of vision nearly closed, besides divers other injuries, altogether a very pretty figure to make my *début* in a foreign city. Madame hostess, however, promises another room to-night, and strict search during the day, so I try my luck once more.—Chiefly indoors, and little to remark.

2nd. — Of the past night I shall only observe that it was infinitely worse than its predecessor, the vile vermin compelling me to effect a precipitate retreat from my apartment, and indeed from the domicile altogether, into the street, before one o'clock this morning ; and what, with the loss of two entire nights' rest, and being swelled and inflamed from head to foot, into the bargain, I feel now as good for nothing as, under such circumstances, I may well be supposed to do. But enough—'tis as poor a subject for others as myself.—This being the first business day since my landing, my first business upon it was to obtain a permit from

the Custom-house to bring my luggage ashore, for which article I was charged 20 cents. The officers here, since the *tariff* came so extensively into operation, are more precise and troublesome than in England, first obliging you to swear, or affirm, to the contents of your packages, and afterwards subjecting them to as scrupulous a search as if no such ceremony had been exacted.—Found the passengers, officers, and crew of our vessel, natives as well as strangers, complaining grievously of the heat of the weather, though the thermometer in the shade was scarcely standing at 80° : but the contrast between that and 58° and 60° ; which we had it for the chief part of our passage, is too considerable to accommodate one's-self to, very agreeably, at so short a notice.

Dined with my friends at Brooklyn, and, after my two nights' experience of the state of things in the city, and an assurance that I might go elsewhere and fare no better, was well satisfied to accept of their very pressing invitation to continue where I was, and preserve what remained to me of my English blood, for some worthier opportunity and assailants.

*3rd.*—Rose this morning vastly refreshed, and feeling myself again. In the course of the day made a pretty extensive perambulation of the city, of which, however, I shall not, at present, attempt any description ; as a whole I was highly pleased with it. The City-hall and the Exchange are indeed noble edifices. Many of the banks, hotels, and other public places, are very spacious and elegant ; and the Battery, Castle Gardens, Broadway, &c., are well worthy the admiration they so generally excite ; but, as a striking defect, I noticed a great want of uniformity in the building of the houses, and, in the business streets particularly, of a total inattention to neatness, if I may not add cleanliness. At a future opportunity, and upon further acquaintance, will return to the subject again, and offer a somewhat more respectful notice of this great city.—Revisited Brooklyn in the evening, of which, the more I see, the more I admire it. It is nothing less than a charming situation, interesting in itself, and so completely removed from the noise, dust, and bustle of the town, and yet through the medium of the steam-boats regularly crossing the river every five minutes during the day, seeming to possess every advantage of a residence in it. Its present population amounts to 15,000, but it is very rapidly increasing, and will, no doubt, continue to do so, many of the principal merchants, &c. now giving it a decided preference to the upper parts of the city. After a day spent there, what a luxury to ascend its beautiful heights, inhale the fresh and pure breezes from the water, and feast the eye with all the varied attractions which the scene unfolds ! I have found it so, at least, ere yet I have scarcely known it. Much of the land in the neighbourhood of Brooklyn appears to be devoted to the raising of fruits and vegetables for its own and the New York markets ; prodigious quantities of which are taken across the water daily, as, also, from other parts of the island. I have counted eleven waggons driven off one steam-boat at a time ; and a friend, who was with me, told me there were frequently more. It is besides a place of considerable trade ; contains tanneries, distilleries, cotton and linen cloth manufactories, rope-walks, market-houses, and a great number of stores, warehouses, &c. There are several places of worship, a Lancasterian school, and other very respectable seminaries.—Thermometer at noon to day 81°. A thunder-storm in the evening, which greatly relieved the air. Night temperate and pleasant.

*4th.*—Previous to setting out on my intended excursion to the western part of the state, wishing to see something of Long Island, and having given a relative, resident near Flushing, a promise of spending a few days with him, took my place this afternoon upon a steam-boat, plying daily to different parts of the Sound, to *Whitstone*, about eighteen miles distant from New York. We had a pretty numerous party on board. The day was beautiful, and the scenery along the banks of the river of a very interesting character. About midway between New York and Whitstone we passed by Horll Gatt, or Hurl Gate, (by some even less respectfully designated) a narrow, crooked, and dangerous strait, occasioned by huge project-



ing rocks, which very much contract the bed of the river, and produce tremendous whirlpools and eddies, formerly to the loss of many vessels which attempted the passage, though no accident of the kind has recently occurred, the navigation being better understood : to strangers, however, it has still rather a formidable appearance. At high water the rocks are nearly covered, and the current but little ruffled.

On arriving at Whitestone, a mere landing, I was met by a conveyance, which my friend had kindly despatched for me, and soon set down at his abode. — W—— left England about ten years ago, married into one of the most respectable families on the island, purchased a nice farm, and is now settled in the midst of his wife's relations, and surrounded by as fine a little group of his own as I have often seen ; doubtless as happy as such a pleasing combination of circumstances can render him, and assuring me, that, if an estate in England were left to him, he would not cross the Atlantic again to take possession of it. I know not, indeed, wherein would consist the inducement.

In the morning, the 5<sup>th</sup>, I accompanied him over his farm, which comprises near two hundred acres of land, with an excellent house, outbuildings, &c. The quality of the soil, like most in the island, is rather light, but, with the aid of manure, produces excellent crops of all descriptions of grain and various kinds of fruit. He has a beautiful young peach orchard, containing one thousand trees, now loaded with fruit, sellings in New York market, at from a dollar to a dollar and a half per bushel ; twenty or thirty acres occupied with apples, which thrive remarkably well, and are worth two dollars per barrel, of two bushels and a half. There are nearly fifty acres of woodland upon the farm, in which I observed a good deal of fine timber of different sorts, viz. the common, the white, and the red oaks, cedar, hickory, sassafras, birch, chesnut, and locust ; the latter a wood much in request, and sells from sixty cents to a dollar per foot. W—— has taken considerable pains with his stock, and has a fine breed of cows, sheep, and pigs, with some very handsome and valuable young horses :— quite entered into the spirit of farming.

The morning was very sultry, and whilst walking we remarked an unusual heat in the ground, so much so as when off the turf to be quite unpleasant to the feet. About midday it began to cloud over, became exceedingly dark, and a thunder-storm succeeded, which, whilst it lasted, was a complete *tornado*, more violent, W—— tells me, than he has known for years. It has done great damage amongst the fruit and other trees in the neighbourhood, torn some large ones up by the roots, and broken almost every branch off others. In half an hour after it was over the sun broke out again as bright as ever, and, though it rained very heavily during the storm, upon going out the only remaining moisture I could perceive was upon the leaves of a few Swedish turnips which were growing in the garden. So essential to vegetation are frequent showers in this island in the hot months. In a dry summer they suffer much.—As a thing which has attracted my attention since coming into the country, I may notice the endless variety of the insect tribe with which the creation every where teems, many of them unknown in England, and generally too insignificant to occasion inconvenience. Omitting bugs, to be met with in most countries and horrible every where, the most troublesome on the list is the musqueto, much resembling our gnat, only larger, but the bite of which is venomous in the extreme ; and even if you can manage to keep them off by day, their perpetual buzzing around you is very annoying ; and at night, unless you envelop yourself or the entire of your bed in a net, and exclude all light from the apartment, you are tormented with them beyond measure ; and what with locusts, crickets, tree-toads, kater-dids, grasshoppers, &c. &c., the din and bustle of the country, though of a very different kind, seems scarcely less than that of the town, and strikes by no means agreeably, as contrasted with the melody of the feathered choir in England, scarcely one of which has any note in America. 'Tis true, the winter effectually suppresses the nuisance, a remedy, you will say, as bad as the disease; and a stranger

might deem it unworthy of notice at any time, but let him make his first landing here in the month of July or August, and I will venture to say, unless he be both deaf and invulnerable, he does not pronounce it so afterwards.

*6th.*—Much of this and the succeeding day were occupied in visiting farms in the neighbourhood, and in making such memorandums on agricultural subjects, as appeared to me most interesting ; briefly as follows :—First stating that Long Island (called also Nassau Island) belongs to the state of New York ; that it is about 115 miles long from east to west, and 20 broad ; that is, at its greatest breadth, not averaging more than ten. It is bounded on the south by the Atlantic, and on the north by Long Island Sound, which separates it from the continent. Its eastern extremity terminates in a point, and westward it extends into the *Narrows*, about eight miles below New York. It is divided into three counties. King's County, (the longest settled, I believe, in the state,) Queen's County, and Suffolk County, the latter extending over two-thirds of the island.—The character of the land in Long Island is very various ; but the north side of it, for twenty or thirty miles up, comprises the best. Farms in this part are to be purchased at from forty to one hundred dollars per acre, according to build-ings and improvements upon them, &c. To the south the soil is very sandy, and, in some parts, not worth cultivation. The east is very much overgrown with pine forests.—Indian corn appears to be considered the staple article of produce, yielding from 25 to 50 bushels (of 60 lbs) per acre, and worth from 50 to 60 cents per bushel. Wheat may average 20 bushels (of 61 lbs.) per acre, and the price 1 dollar. Oats, 30 bushels, (of 30 lbs.) price 37½ cents. Barley, 25 bushels, (of 52 lbs.) price 62½ cents. Rye, 20 bushels, price 62½ cents. Clover seed not gathered. Hay, from 30 to 40 cwt, per acre, price 8 to 10 dollars per ton. Potatoes and turnips, much as in England, the price of the former 37½ cents per bushel ; the latter not much grown for cattle. Horses, for farming purposes, are worth from 60 to 75 dollars ; fancy-horses, from 130 to 400 dollars. Milch cows, from 15 to 40 dollars. Sheep, (fat) 2 dollars ; store sheep, 1 dollar. Pigs, (fed) 5 dollars per 100 lbs. weight. Beef, by the carcass, from 6 to 8 dollars per 100 lbs. hide and tallow given in. Butter usually sells for about 18 cents the lb. ; no cheese made. Turkeys are worth 1 dollar. Geese, 50 to 75 cents. Ducks, the couple, 75 cents. Fowls, 62½ cents. Eggs, 12 cents per dozen; apples and peaches, already noticed, with melons, strawberries, cherries, and currants, are produced in abundance, and sold at remunerating prices.

The natural grasses of the island seldom grow stout enough to mow, but the artificial ones thrive well, and will average from 25 to 30 cwt. for four years, though, of course, this is much dependant upon the dryness or wetness of the season. Manure, or ashes, are every where requisite, and much used : a plentiful supply obtained from New York : the ultimate cost on the land about twenty dollars per acre. The salt marshes also, and frequent inlets from the sound, afford great quantities of marine vegetable manure, the salt grass being of little value for other purposes. Fallowing is not much practised. The land tilled about equally by horses and oxen.

The price given to farming men through the summer season (say for eight months) is from eight to twelve dollars per month ; in the winter from four to six dollars per month, always boarding them,—the invariable practice throughout the country. Women, five dollars per month, the year round, and board. The usual hours of labour are from sun-rise to sun-set.

The most general kind of fencing is stone walls, the erection of which cost about 125 cents the rod ; some have a stone foot, with post and rails above, raised at rather less expense.

The roads in the island, though a little too sandy, may, upon the whole, be considered good. The cost of repairing them to the farmer about five or six dollars to every hundred acres of land he occupies.

There are very ready conveyances to New York both by land and water, [1] principally by steam-boats : passage for a person 25 cents ; freight for fruit, grain, &c. 3 cents per bushel. The expense of carting by land, (a load of hay, &c.) when a team and man are hired for the purpose, is one dollar and a half.

One great advantage attaching to Long Island, or the west end of it, as a situation for farming, is its contiguity to New York, in consequence of which it is always furnished with a superior market for its various productions, particularly butter, fruit, and vegetables ; and oftentimes, in the blockade of winter, articles of bulk and weight may be conveyed to the city, when, from the difficulty and expense of carriage, they are prohibited from places more remote ; wood, potatoes, hay, and straw, upon these occasions, will frequently return the farmer a profit of fifty or even a hundred per cent

There is a considerable quantity of game, &c. on the island, (though decreasing,) consisting of quail, some partridge, woodcocks, snipe, and rabbits, and, at seasons, wild ducks innumerable ; in the forests to the east, deer are also found. The bays, with which the island is much indented, abound with varieties of excellent fish.

Upon the whole I should be inclined to say that Long Island is rather a situation for an opulent farmer than for one of limited means. The land, in the first place, is much dearer than in other parts of the state, and in addition, it is cultivated at a greater expense. Retired, or half-retired merchants are, therefore, commonly to be found amongst the proprietors, a class of persons farming about as much for amusement as profit, and, as “ the old coachman loves the smack of the whip,” whenever they feel a taste for business, or the city, they are, at any moment, ready to step into it.

The island, for the most part, is considered healthy, though the fever and ague is, by no means, unknown.

The day of my last date (*7th August*) has been the hottest since my landing. Thermometer 85° in the shade.

Took a boat for an hour or two's fishing in one of the bays, though without any success as far as regarded our own efforts, but boarding a smack we hooked out of her well a number of fine *black fish*, and, at the expense of a dollar or so, returned well laden to the gentleman's from whose house we started, and to his no small surprise, until we discovered the manoeuvre we had been practising ; though the fishing here is often very good. The master of the smack told us that he had about 1800 then in his well, weighing from half a pound to five and six pounds apiece. Lobsters are caught in great plenty, and have been taken of the extraordinary weight of twenty-five pounds each ! I myself saw the *claw* of one which, when fresh, I am satisfied would have weighed from seven to nine pounds.

Upon returning to W——'s in the evening I was presented with a New York paper in which I was not surprised to read as follows :—“ The packet-ship Manchester, Captain Sketchley, from Liverpool, arrived in town yesterday morning, bringing advices of that long-anticipated event, the decease of his Majesty George the Fourth. The bulletin issued on the occasion was as follows :—‘ Windsor Castle, 26th June, 1830. It has pleased Almighty God to take from this world the King's most excellent Majesty. His Majesty expired at a quarter-

past three o'clock this morning without pain. (Signed) H. Halford,—Matthew John Tierney.' His Majesty was born 12th August, 1762, and was consequently in the 68th year of his age ; ascended the throne 29th January, 1820, crowned 19th July, 1821, and died 26th June, 1830. The Duke of Clarence immediately took the oaths of office as William the Fourth. He was born 23d August, 1765."——So for the present ends the career of the Georges !

8th,— Have felt the night oppressive ; but which I attribute, in part, to sleeping with closed windows, (a thing, summer or winter, I scarce ever practise,) to exclude my musqueto enemies.

In the morning rode with —— to Flushing *village* ; in our way to which we called at ——, the finest establishment I have seen in the island, and conveying every idea of comfort and independence. The house is built of wood, and, after the fashion here, has a spacious entrance hall, with the door at the side, which admits of windows along that part, and besides the outer door, mostly open, there are also latticed doors at each end. The floor is very neatly matted, and the hall, throughout, furnished pretty much as a parlour, with sofas, settees, &c. It is, beyond any comparison, the pleasantest summer room in the house. I know not why this style of building should not be more frequently adopted in England ; it will by me, however, whenever I turn house builder. Here the effects of the *tornado*, mentioned on the 5th, were but too sadly apparent, and besides other damage we found the family much regretting, as well they might, the loss of a most beautiful weeping willow, which grew near the house, every branch of which had been stripped, and the bare stump only left standing.

Flushing is a neat, lively village, at the head of the bay, containing a number of good houses, stores, some excellent hotels, and several places of worship. Dr. Spafford, in his *Gazeteer of the State of New York* thus refers to it :—" Within a few years the fashionables of the metropolis have made Flushing, which, indeed, has many attractions, quite a place of resort for the butterflies of fashion, at least for a part of the year, and it has, of course, genteel accommodations, and receives, for its day, many high encomiums on the pleasure of a trip to Flushing, the town, the bay and harbour, so like ' Venice and its bay.' But ' the fashions of this world pass away ;' and I hope this resort may not make Flushing *too much like Venice*, before it take some other direction."

Under the same head is also the following notice :—" In this town (township) are still remaining two white oaks, which, with others long since destroyed, formed a shade, under which George Fox held a religious meeting in the year 1672. It is well known that George Fox was the founder of the sect of Friends, or Quakers, and that they erect no monuments to perpetuate remembrance. The Quakers, therefore, regard these trees with lively interest, and see in them all that monuments could teach, however splendid or costly."

Returned to W——'s to dine ; soon after which, with many obliging regrets at the shortness of my stay, I again took my departure to Flushing, to meet the New York steam-boat. Varying the morning's route a little, we passed by what is considered, I believe, the most complete farm upon the island. It consists of two hundred acres of land, a very superior house, a good farm-house, and excellent out-buildings, being also well fenced, and in a high state of cultivation. It cost the original proprietor 75,000 dollars, and has lately been sold for 30,000 dollars. It is, however, wanting of wood, which greatly detracts from its value.

On arriving at New York, I crossed the ferry to Brooklyn, where I was politely welcomed by the friends whose hospitable roof I had so recently quitted. The temperature of to-day much as yesterday.

9th.—The night very fine and pleasant, as the morning continues. Making up letters for England, by the ship *Adeline*, leaving to-morrow, when I also hope to be off on my western journey.

10th.—A day of dissatisfaction, having passed it in the disappointed expectation of the arrival of a gentleman from Philadelphia, who had engaged to accompany me into Orange county : come or not I start in the morning.

My worthy friends at Brooklyn are much troubled this evening on account of the serious indisposition of their infant, from an attack of *cholera morbus*, a disease which carries off a great number of children here at this season of the year. Two doctors [2] have been called in, who quite disagree as to the mode of treatment, and between them and the disease the little sufferer has, I fear, but a poor chance. During the late hot weather the number of deaths in the city alone amounted, in one week, to 204 ; (the usual number about 80,) more than 70 of these were under one year old, and 80 under five years of age. Many of the churchyards bear melancholy testimony to the mortality which at times has prevailed here ; though no bodies are now permitted to be interred, except in vaults, in the populous parts of the city. The general habits of the people, as regards the matter of health, as far as I have observed them in public, I consider decidedly bad,—chewing quantities of tobacco, drinking spirits, eating much, and upon the same occasion, of meat, pastry, fruit, and vegetables, and rising almost ere the repast be swallowed, with other customs they may not thank me to particularize, but the dispensing with which I have no doubt would, at least, render *dyspepsia*, one of their most fashionable maladies, and of the very name of which I begin to weary, much less frequent than it is.

[1] When I say by land, I mean, of course, to Brooklyn, at which place the sound, or river, is only three-quarters of a mile in width, and where, by means of floating slips, horses and carriages are driven without any difficulty upon the steam-boats, and conveyed across, in a few minutes, with as much facility as if upon a bridge. How is it that we do not adopt a similar plan at many of our ferries, where it could be used with so much advantage ? At Runcorn, above Liverpool, for instance.

[2] In this land of freedom doctor appears to be a title given and assumed nearly indiscriminately by all of the profession.

Journal of a tour in the state of New York, in the year 1830; with remarks on agriculture in those parts most eligible for settlers : and return to England by the Western islands, in consequence of shipwreck in the Robert Fulton (1831)

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