

Three Years in North America

BY

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“ The true state of every nation is the state of common life.”

SAMUEL JOHNSON

PREFACE.

If the following pages have any merit, it consists merely in their conveying, in plain language, a faithful and candid representation of the facts which the author observed and noted in the places where they presented themselves. He has not been accustomed to write for the press, and makes no pretensions to literary attainments. The observations which he made in America are now given to the public, solely from a conviction that they furnish a greater variety of minute details regarding the every-day habits, and the social condition of the people, in those parts of the United States which he visited, than can be found in any similar publication of recent date. The statements and documents with which the reader is here presented will also tend, it is to be hoped, to expose the mistakes of some late writers, who seem to have visited these States under the influence of strong prejudices and preconceived opinions. Though the author travelled wholly free, as he thinks, from any such biases, and with an earnest desire to inform himself aright as to the matters to which he directed his attention, he cannot but be sensible that a stranger must occasionally fall into errors, when writing of a country of such vast extent, where the customs of the people, and many of the institutions, not only differ essentially from those with which he has previously been acquainted, but are in fact very different in the United States themselves.

The author farther hopes that his Notes will be found to contain such information, geographical and historical, as travellers generally wish to possess respecting a country which they may have occasion to visit, as well as hints, which may be of mine value to emigrants from Europe to the United States,—especially to the State of Illinois, and the other parts of the great valley of the Mississippi. Perhaps, too, these pages may not be without use in directing future travellers from Europe as to the route they should follow, in order to see the objects of greatest interest in the United States, or in enabling them to make those inquiries to which their peculiar pursuits have reference.

The form of a Journal, preserving dates, and occasionally referring to individuals, where that could be done without any breach of delicacy or propriety, is adhered to, as affording the best evidence of accuracy and authenticity, as well as possessing other advantages. Several of the most popular American writers on Great Britain have followed this course. It affords in many cases data, from which the public may form an opinion of the probable correctness of the statements laid before them, and the weight to be attached to them.

The author has made great use of Mr Darby's View of the United States, and of Mr Timothy Flint's Geography and History of the Western States ; both of them valuable works, and very necessary companions for travellers in the countries described. He has also availed himself freely of the information contained in such other works as he could confide in ; particularly Count Marbois' very instructive History of Louisiana. Owing to his distance from the press, and other circumstances, he fears that some blemishes of style may have been left uncorrected ; but if he shall be thought to have succeeded in his main objects, he will not feel much disturbed by criticisms bearing only upon such defects.

LONDON, *December*, 1832.

CHAPTER I.

Voyage from Liverpool to New York—Days of sailing of Packets—Passage—Money—
Passengers—Crew—Details—Gulf-stream—Arrival at New York—Pilot-Boat.

From 16th July to 23d August 1828.

I should pass over the five weeks' voyage from Liverpool to New York with very little notice, if I knew to what publication to direct those, who may be desirous, before under-taking the same voyage, to obtain the requisite information, respecting the sort of ship in which they must spend some time, the accommodation, the style of living, and similar details. I had looked in vain for explanation of this nature into some of the recent publications of travellers in America, but I was not even able to learn from them the days on which the regular packet ships from Liverpool to New York sail. I found, on reaching Liverpool, on 15th July 1828, that, wind and weather serving, they depart regularly from Liverpool and from New York on the 1st, 8th, 16th, and 24th days of every month. The passage money from Liverpool to New York is thirty-five guineas, paid on agreeing for the passage, and includes every charge for provisions, wine, spirits, and liquor of all kinds. From New York to Liverpool the passage money is only thirty guineas ; the voyage to Europe, owing to the greater prevalence of westerly winds, and the favourable influence of the stream from the Gulf of Mexico, being made in the packet ships, on an average of voyages, in twenty-five, while the voyage to the westward generally occupies forty days.

We secured our passage, soon after our arrival at Liverpool, in the packet *William Thomson*, Captain George Maxwell,—a well known ship,—*Mathews*, the comedian, having crossed the Atlantic in her, and celebrated her, and her captain and owners, on his stage. The packet ships are of the burden of from 400 to 500 tons, generally about 500 tons. I was surprised to be told at Liverpool, that the packet ships are all American built, and that British ships are generally a fourth more time at sea, in making this voyage, than Americans. The latter are sharper in the bows, and not so stout, and of course sail quicker than the former ; but the former, be it observed, will stand a harder knock, in case of collision, or of getting ashore. The British attend more to the capacity of the vessel to carry a large cargo, and to her stability, than to the rate at which she is to sail. At least so I was told at Liverpool, and had the information confirmed on the passage.

We sailed in the forenoon of 16th July, towed out of the Mersey by a steam-boat, under the charge of a pilot, as far as the floating light at the mouth of the river. We were speedily summoned to luncheon, at which all the passengers appeared. There were fourteen of us, viz. in the ladies' cabin, a British officer on his way to Canada, his lady, and their female servant ; an unmarried English lady, on her way to visit a brother settled in the interior of the United States ; my wife, and myself ; and in the large cabin, six gentlemen resident in the United States, two of them natives of England, one South American, and one Scotch gentleman, who accompanied us. There were only two steerage passengers.

The crew, exclusive of the captain, consisted of two mates, the first mate, from the island of Nantucket, off the coast of New England,—a hardy and excellent seaman, and a good specimen of Yankee independence,—sixteen men, and a boy, of various nations, English, Irish, American, Norwegian, Prussian, and French. The three stewards and two cooks were men of colour. Our total number was thus thirty-one.

There are sleeping places for thirty passengers in the cabins of the *William Thomson*, the length of the two cabins, which are thirty-one feet broad, being about sixty feet ; but the state

rooms, as the sleeping closets are called, are too narrow, which is generally the case in packet and merchant ships. I should have given the same character to the beds, if I had not been told on board of our packet, that they are purposely contracted, to prevent accidents happening, by the inmates falling out of bed in a rolling sea. It is no less singular, than true, that, notwithstanding the obvious convenience of having regular packets across the Atlantic, no such establishment was set about for above 150 years after the discovery of America. The first packets sailed between Corunna and the Havannah in 1764, and as soon as the American revolution was accomplished, monthly packets were established between New York and Havre de Grace. Now, there are regular packets between various ports in the United States, and Liverpool, London, Hull, Belfast, Havre, &c.

No Custom-house examination of baggage or effects took place on our leaving Liverpool.

The wind blew from the south when we got out the Mersey. Captain Maxwell, therefore, at once decided on proceeding by the North of Ireland. The northern channel is in some places narrow. The first mate had never passed through it ; and I found that the captain hardly quitted the deck, even during the night till we were clear of it. Off Belfast, we hailed the ship Fabius, going into that port, after a voyage of only eighteen days from New York.

It was very fortunate that Captain Maxwell adopted the northern course, as we eventually had a far shorter passage than the ships which left Liverpool with us, and for some days previously, that went by the South of Ireland. The wind for the voyage was favourable, and a fine breeze, so that we sailed at the rate of from seven to nearly nine knots an hour for the two or three first days. The first quarter of the passage, the whole distance being computed at about 3400 miles, was passed in six, and the second in nine days. Calms and contrary winds, fogs, and changes of weather, which prevail in crossing the Newfoundland hank and Gulf-stream, detained us at sea for twenty-three days longer. We were caught in two or three squalls, none of them very severe, lost a royal top-gallant-mast when it was blowing fresh, and we were carrying perhaps too much canvas ; had our breakfast equipage tossed about one morning by a sea breaking into the cabin ; and were for four or five days annoyed by the rolling of the vessel, occasioned by a contrary wind, and which laid her so much on one side as to give some alarm to the ladies ; but I have witnessed far more unpleasant weather on a voyage between London and Leith, and been exposed to a more disagreeable swell during north-easterly gales, in the old fashioned Kinghorn ferry-boats of the Firth of Forth, than on this voyage across the great Atlantic. Many of the passengers had made the voyage again and again ; some of them in the same ship ; and they seemed all to agree in opinion, that, from April to October inclusive, it rarely happens that the weather is such as to cause much uneasiness to passengers in the packet ships, who are at all reasonable people, and not disposed to be frightened at their own shadows.

Captain Maxwell was most assiduous in his attentions to all, and made us feel quite at home from the first day of the voyage, treating us exactly as his guests, who he wished to call for, and enjoy every good thing he had provided for us. He left it to the passengers to arrange the hours of our meals ; and they decided, that we should have breakfast at half-past eight, luncheon at twelve, dinner at four, and tea at seven. The table was excellent,—quite as good, in all respects, as at well-managed hotels in London or Edinburgh. Liquors of all kinds, port, sherry, Madeira, and claret, with champagne three or four times a-week, and porter, cyder, soda water, brandy, whisky, &c. without any other charge than the passage money. There was a cow on board, which supplied us with many luxuries ; and we had plenty of live stock to the very end of the voyage.

Captain Maxwell has provided a small library in the large cabin for the use of the passengers. Reading and walking on deck occupied our forenoons. We generally spent about two hours at dinner. And in evening, after a walk on deck, there was a rubber whist for those

who liked it. Some amusement was afforded by our daily stock exchange meeting for buying and selling tickets in a lottery, the prize in which was destined to the holder of the ticket, marked with the day of the month, on which we should receive pilot, who was to conduct us through the channel to New York. We had each of us early in the voyage subscribed a small sum, and drawn two of tickets, marked with one of sixteen days and nights which our arrival on the American coast was considered to be possible. The tickets were continually varying in value, as the weather led us to expect a longer or shorter passage. In the end of the voyage, a calm, or contrary wind, occasioned a depression in value of one ticket, and the corresponding elevation of another to as great an extent as in other times, and in other funds,—Lord Rodney's victory, or the battle of Waterloo.

No occurrence of extraordinary interest befel us during the voyage ; but there were many new sights for those who had been little at sea previously.

We were, as I understand is usual, very generally followed for the sake of the garbage thrown from the ship, by many small birds, called, why I know not, Mother Carey's chickens. They are never observed to approach the shore, exchanging a homeward bound for an outward bound ship, On drawing near the land. It has never, I believe, been ascertained where they breed.

The Argonauta, or Nautilus, called by the sailors the Portuguese Man-of-war, was often seen by us in fine weather. It is a sea snail, which possesses the faculty of swimming or diving. Its appearance, in sunshine, being of a light violet colour, is very beautiful. As soon as a storm commences, it draws into its shell, taking in as much water as will carry it to the bottom ; and on the approach of fine weather, reascends to the surface, putting up a small sail, and guiding its movements by its tail as a rudder.

We had very calm weather for a day or two, when passing the Newfoundland banks, and amused ourselves in fishing. Some excellent cod were caught, and a greater supply obtained in exchange for salted pork, and other articles, from a Nova Scotia fishing smack, whose crew, with unshaven beards, were most barbarous-looking persons, ignorant of their longitude and latitude, and even of the day of the month and week.

Whales, porpoises, and sharks, were frequently in sight, and bore us company for a considerable way. The first mate, with great dexterity, harpooned one of the porpoises. The sharks were sometimes prevailed on to follow us by throwing a piece of meat occasionally overboard to them.

The winds were light and variable, and the weather sometimes foggy, at the period of our crossing the Gulf-stream, so that good opportunities occurred for observing its remarkable phenomena. Our approach to it was, as usual, foretold by weeds floating about the ship ; and soon afterwards the current of this great oceanic river, as Darby very properly styles it, and the change of temperature of the water of the ocean, from cold to heat, became sufficiently apparent to all. The current issuing from the southern part of the coast of Florida runs at the rate of about five miles an hour, decreasing in velocity in its progress to the north as it extends in breadth, and proceeding at a distance twenty to thirty leagues from the American shore, it meets the Arctic currents from Davis's Straits, when its course is diverted to the east and south-east. Its breadth, of forty or fifty miles on the North American coast increases to about 160 leagues at the Azores, from which it runs by the Straits of Gibraltar, Madeira, and the coast of Africa, to about the latitude of Cape Verd, at which, mixing with the tropical current, it is carried to the west, and impelled by the trade wind, which always blows from east within the tropic, into the Gulf of Mexico, through the Caribbean sea, and thence between Cuba and Yucatan. It then rushes into the Atlantic by the channel of Florida, and the Bahama islands, and thus completes its course. . This prodigious whirlpool has a circum-

ference of about 15,000 miles. It was unknown to Columbus, and for about a century after the discovery of America, when it was first of all observed by Sir Francis Drake. But, which is singular, the warmth of its temperature, and its effect on the climate of the adjoining country, remained unnoticed, until about half a century ago. The excess of heat in the stream over the contiguous, water, varies from about eight to twenty degrees, diminishing, of course, as the stream recedes from the gulf. We found the difference from eight to ten degrees on our voyage. The water becomes colder, as its depth lessens on the banks adjoining, so that the thermometer is in fact almost as necessary an instrument as the compass for the mariner, in crossing the stream and the banks. The stream itself is unfathomable ; but the banks formed by the deposit alongside of it, require the navigator's constant care.

The light of the aurora borealis exhibited very curious and striking effects to us on the evening of the 14th of August. Land, water, islands, in all variety of form, became, as we thought, so distinctly visible, that we could hardly convince ourselves that our senses were imposed on, and that we were still in the midst of the ocean. The phosphorescence of the sea, when greatly agitated, was greater on the voyage than I had before observed it. It is hardly visible when the water is at rest. The singular appearance of ships in the air, when the weather is hazy, so that the horizon is not clearly distinguishable, often occurred. We had frequent opportunities to satisfy ourselves of the spherical shape of the earth, by noticing how invariably we lost sight of the hulls of the ships before their sails and top-masts disappeared, and got the first sight of the masts and sails of ships about to meet us. But not one of the sights that were new to us delighted us so much as the brilliancy of the sunsets and moon-shines on the ocean at this fine season of the year. None of us, who have any relish for the beauties of nature, can ever forget them.

There was less sea-sickness among the passengers than I had expected. Four of them, one of whom had never been at sea before, were entirely free of it. One of the ladies, who was well informed, and agreeable was unfortunately the only severe sufferer. We calm weather, however, near the conclusion oi passage, when she regained her health and spirits became a great addition to our society. Most found our taste, both as to what we ate and more capricious than usual ; but a good appetite, especially at dinner, was pretty universal ; and, unless for cathartics, very generally useful at sea, recourse was not had to the apothecary's shop during the voyage, except for one of the seamen, who had an aguish attack near the end of it.

The duty of the seamen was performed with as much alertness and quietness, as was possible, had we been on board of a man-of-war. There was not a high word, nor the slightest appearance of ill-humour in any quarter, nor did we ever hear an oath during the voyage. Many a chat we had relative to the prospects of the United States, and the situation of Great Britain and of Europe politically ; but our discussions were never pursued too far, although we had enough of combustible matter of all sorts on board, republicans as well as zealous whigs, radicals, and even ultra Tories, and one American young gentleman, hardly in his teens, who had every particular of the New Orleans battle, and of the American naval engagements, by heart. Yet, I believe, we all separated, pleased with each other, and in the hope that it might be our lot to meet again.

The morning of the 23d of August was rather unfavourable for our course ; but a breeze from the east-ward having sprung up in the forenoon, Captain Maxwell announced to us about eleven o'clock, that he expected that we should very soon see land. About half an hour afterwards, the hills of Neversink, on the Jersey coast, which rise 300 or 400 feet above the sea, the nearest high grounds to the fortified cape, called Sandyhook, the point of entry to New York bay on the south, were descried. Nowhere is the triumph of science more remarkable than on such an occasion as this, when, after a voyage of 3000 or 4000 miles, out of

sight of land for about a month, we regain the first glimpse of it at the very spot the nearest to our destined port.

Sir Humphrey Davy justly remarks, that the results of intellectual labour, or of scientific genius, are permanent, and incapable of being lost. Monarchs change their plans, governments their objects, a fleet or an army effect their purpose, and then pass away ; but a piece of steel touched by the magnet preserves its character for ever, and secures to man the dominion of the trackless ocean. The dominion of the Britons in Asia may share the fate of that of Tamerlane ; but the steamboat which ascends the Delaware, and the Mississippi, and St Lawrence, will continue to be used, and will carry the civilization of an improved people into the deserts of North America, and into the wilds of Canada.

The breeze increased, and all was bustle, the passengers busying themselves in selecting such parts of their baggage as they required to take ashore with them ; the next day, the 24th, being Sunday, so that clearances for landing their effects could not be got at the Custom-house till Monday.

Before we passed the floating buoy without Sandyhook, a pilot boat came alongside, and our pilot ascended the ship's side. He immediately issued his orders as commander of the ship. From him we learned that the Manchester packet ship, which left Liverpool on 1st July, had not yet reached New York. The William Byrne packet ship, which left Liverpool on 8th July, eight days before us, had been in our sight for two or three days, and was now a few leagues astern of us.

The pilot-boat was a schooner-rigged and decked vessel, neatly painted. Some of us could not help contrasting her appearance and that of the pilot, with what we had been accustomed to see in the Firth of Forth ;—the contrast, we are obliged to admit, is not a little in favour of the western side of the Atlantic. The pilot is an intelligent well-dressed person ; in short, a gentleman in appearance and manners, as we should say.

There could not be a more charming afternoon, nor a more cloudless sky, than when we passed Sandyhook, and got the first peep of the delightful scene within it.

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The Bay, Harbour, and City of New York—City Hotel— Climate—Facilities of intercourse with the interior—River Hudson—Erie Canal—Long Island Sound, &c.—Population and Trade of New York—Steam Navigation—Situation of New York on Manhattan Island—Broadway—City Hall—Frequent fires—The Battery—Merchants* Exchange—Post-Office—Churches—Theatres—Hackney Coaches Manners—Dress—Custom-House—Accommodation at Hotel—Provisions—Breakfast—Supply of Water—Language—Newspapers-Advertising—Lotteries—Republican Customs.

From 23d August to 28th August.

SANDYHOOK is about eighteen miles from New York. We had hardly got within it, when a light-looking small boat, belonging to some of the newspaper offices, came along side, and exchanged some New York papers, just published, for the latest English papers in our possession.

I had heard much of the beauty of the approach to New York from the sea ; but the reality altogether exceeded my expectation. It is undoubtedly one of the most magnificent scenes in the world. I know of no more happy disposition of land and water, nor such variety of marked and pleasing features anywhere on the shores or rivers of the British islands. Neither the Bay of Dublin, nor the Isle of Wight, nor the Firths of Forth or Clyde, present the works of nature

on a grander scale, or in more varied and interesting aspects. That boldness of character which lofty hills and mountains produce is alone wanting. The hills which bound the prospect in three or four directions are nowhere above four or five hundred feet in height.

Within Sandyhook, the channel passes through the outer harbour of New York, called Rariton Bay, from one of the great rivers, which discharges itself into it. The bay is skirted by Long Island, and by the shores of New Jersey and Staten Island. About five miles from New York, Long Island and Staten Island approach each other within less than a mile, forming a strait called the Narrows, from the northern part of which the sea view is splendid,—commanding the harbour, or inner bay of New York, above twenty miles in circumference, with its islands and indented shores ; and above all, in the centre of the bay, the Island of Manhattan, on the nearest, the southern part of which is placed the city of New York, surrounded by its shipping. Half a dozen of rivers, which in other countries we should call arms of the sea, viz. the Hudson, navigable for above 180 miles, the Rariton, Long Island Sound, the Passaic, the Hackensack, pour their waters into those bays, the shores of which, and of the islands, are covered with ornamented villas and with orchards. The sun was setting as we darted through the inner bay, decorated with the lightest and most graceful description of sailing boats we had ever seen ; it had just set when our voyage was completed. The feelings of all the passengers, even of those to whom it was not new, were highly excited by such an exhibition of the beauties of nature, in such an evening, and at the most favourable moment for enjoying it. Words cannot express the delight with which a picture like this is seen by those who understand it. “ Who can paint like Nature ?”

Much of the city itself is not visible from the water,—the island on which it is built consisting of undulating, but not in any part of it of elevated, ground. Still the spires of the churches make a brilliant appearance ; gilded by the setting sun, and towering among the trees which shade the streets, and amongst the masts of the ships, surrounding the city on all sides, but the north. The situation of the city projected into the bay, on the southern part of the island, is a very remarkable one. The island, which is twelve or thirteen miles long, by one and a-half broad, has all the appearance of a narrow promontory, open to the sea on all sides but the north, on which it is separated from the adjoining country by the Haerlem river, over which there are long wooden bridges.

As soon as we reached the wharf on the east side of the city, several gentlemen from the Custom-house stepped on board to seal up the doors of the cabins, until the baggage be examined, and to see that the necessary articles to be taken on shore immediately, contain nothing for which any duty is chargeable.

Hackney coaches, here called hacks, were in waiting, and conveyed us, *i.e.* the party in the ladies' cabin, who had agreed to remain together for a few days, and our friend who accompanied us, to the city hotel, situated in Broadway, the principal street of New York. There are two entrances to this great hotel ; the one for the American, and the other for the European side of the house. We are accommodated in the latter, which we find well attended to by an English waiter, formerly at Brookes's Club-House, London.

We had hardly got out of the ship, when we were sensible of a prodigious change of temperature. In the ship, the thermometer had seldom been higher than 70 of Fahrenheit. Here it had been for some days at 90,—a degree of heat which is uncommon at any time in this part of the United States, and more especially so late in the season. We were anxious, in so fine an evening, to see something of New York, and sallied forth. But our enjoyment was not of long duration, for the heat was so overpowering, that we were soon forced to return. Nothing could be more gay than the appearance of the streets, especially Broadway, the favourite promenade, which is what Queen Street formerly was in Edinburgh in summer evenings, and what Bond Street or Regent Street now is in London ; and the shops, here

called stores, many of them very handsome, and lighted with gas, crowded with the population, whom the excessive warmth had kept in the house during the day, also arrested our attention.

We have now spent four days in the city, endeavouring to see those objects that are pointed out as best worthy of a traveller's attention ; but the weather continues so exceedingly sultry, that we have resolved to discontinue the necessary exertion, and to set out, without delay, on a tour to the northern part of the State of New York, and to the Falls of Niagara. I must content myself, therefore, at present, with noticing what struck us as most remarkable, or as differing much from what we had been accustomed to see, in our peregrinations through the metropolis of the New World. Its situation has been most happily chosen ; in nearly the most central position of the shores of this great continent, with a harbour safe and deep, and of unlimited capacity, comprehending, as it does, the mouth of the Hudson itself,—unrivalled in its facilities of intercourse with the interior parts of the country, not merely by means of its sounds and rivers, but of its recently constructed canals, which, by the exertions of the late governor of this state, De Witt Clinton, were completed and brought into full operation three years ago. The Erie Canal, which will immortalize the name of Clinton, begins at that point in the River Hudson, about 160 miles to the northward of New York, where the river becomes no longer navigable for vessels of great size. The canal is above 360 miles long, affording communication to Lake Erie, which is elevated 568 feet above the Hudson at low water, and of course to Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior, the most extensive repository of fresh water on the globe. The successful execution, of this great work has led to splendid continuations of the system of water communication, especially to the canal, now far advanced, from Lake Erie to the Ohio, which continues the internal navigation from New York to the Ohio, Missouri, and Mississippi, and of course to Pittsburg, Cincinnati, St Louis, New Orleans, and the Gulf of Mexico,—a line of internal water communication unparalleled in length in the world.

The Champlain Canal connects New York by Lake Champlain with Canada.

Independent of canals, New York enjoys prodigious advantages from her internal seas and rivers. Long Island Sound affords a second channel to the Atlantic, and a safe course to the steam-boats and shipping to the whole of Long Island, and to the states of Connecticut, and Rhode Island, to Newhaven, Hartford, and Providence. New York Sound, and the contiguous rivers, open the way to the coasts of New Jersey and Staten Island, and, by means of steam navigation, bring Philadelphia within a short day's journey of New York. It is not then to be wondered at, that with such a situation, the population and trade of New York should have increased in a degree unexampled, since all restrictions were removed at the peace of 1783. The population was then 22,000, and what is worthy of notice, had been pretty stationary for a dozen of years preceding. In 1790, seven years after the peace, it had increased to 33,000 ; in 1800 to 60,000 ; in 1820 to 123,000 ; in 1825 to 166,000 ; and is now about 200,000, besides the population of 10,000 or 12,000 in the village of Brooklyn, on Long Island, at the distance of a quarter of a mile. No other city in the United states has increased in a corresponding proportion.

The value of merchandise annually imported and exported is now calculated to exceed one hundred millions of dollars. The post-office revenue has doubled since 1810, being then sixty, and now 121,000 dollars,—the same duty on goods sold by public auction, which in 1816 yielded 72,000, in 1826 amounted to 298,000 dollars.

Steam navigation, which was first of all introduced on the Hudson in 1807, has no doubt of late years contributed much to the growing population and commerce of the city. There are now between sixty and seventy steam vessels, many of them of great size, daily plying in the harbour and bay. Steam-boats of admirable construction convey passengers to New Jersey, to

which the distance across the Hudson is about a mile and a half, and to Brooklyn on Long Island, across Long Island Sound, or the East River, as it is most frequently called, so quickly, frequently, and cheaply, that the want of bridges, which, if practicable, would impede navigation, is not much felt. We had planned excursions to Staten Island, to the other islands in the bay, and to Hell Gate, a narrow passage in Long Island Sound, famous for its whirlpools and the rapidity of its currents,—but the state of the weather induced us to postpone our intention till our return. On our projected expedition to the north, we can avail ourselves, if the extreme heat continues, of the facility for travelling in such weather which the Erie Canal affords. We could not, however, depart without crossing the ferry to Brooklyn to have a view from the terrace overlooking this city of the harbour, and the striking objects around it. The crowded part of the harbour is opposite to Brooklyn. In the bay, it was impossible not to admire particularly the elegant forms of the numerous sailing boats and small schooners, and the shape and colour of their sails, as white as snow.

The whole of Manhattan Island has been by the legislature subjected to statutory restrictions, with a view to its being built on as the city extends. There is little inequality of ground in any part of the island, and as the buildings proceed, the ground is levelled, so that only such a declivity is allowed to remain as is requisite for the necessary conduits. The city, therefore, does not possess any romantic or strongly marked feature, and can thus only be seen to advantage from the bay, or the high grounds of New Jersey, or of Long Island, or Staten Island. The present circuit of the city is somewhat more than eight miles. Broadway, the chief street, is between three and four miles long. It will be eight miles long when the plan of the city is completed. It is eighty feet broad—contains the best shops—several of the handsomest churches and dwelling-houses—and on one side of it, for a considerable way, has a fine open space called the Park, on which stands the City Hall. This hall, in which the courts are held, is the only very striking building. It is advantageously situated in the heart of the city, with a large open area around it, laid out in gravel walks, with trees on each side of them, and well enclosed with a massive railing of iron manufacture. The building is 216 feet long, and 105 feet wide, of white marble in front, and would be noticed anywhere as handsome, though not without architectural faults. The churches, at least many of them, are large, but there is nothing in their architecture, or that of the steeples, particularly requiring notice. There is no building here to bear any thing like a comparison with many of the public buildings in the European capitals, such as St Martin's Church in London—the front of the Register Office in Edinburgh—or that of the Chamber of Deputies at Paris ; but there are churches and public buildings in all those cities, of recent erection, quite as deficient in good taste as any of those which I observed here. In short, my notion is, that, though there is no very fine building in this city, there is not much to hurt the eye of the fastidious ; and the city is generally composed of clean-looking buildings and streets, and is regularly built. There are still many buildings of wood, and frequent fires. We had not been long asleep on the night of our arrival, when we were alarmed by loud and repeated cries of fire ; but we afterwards found that this is so common an occurrence, that none but the firemen, who are very expert, are disturbed by the cry. Strangers, however, should be warned of the frequency of the alarm. One of our party got up in a fright, thinking that the fire was in the hotel, and ran into the street.

Besides the area surrounding the city hall, the extent of which is only ten or twelve acres, there is not any large vacant space in the city, excepting a piece of ground of about the same size laid out as pleasure-ground, called the battery, at the southern extremity of Broadway, and adjoining the bay. Its situation, and the views from it, are delightful, but its extent far too limited. Hudson Square is the only square hitherto finished, but the area is, as with us, private property. The dwelling-houses in it, and in the central parts of the city, are, as I was told, as high priced as in the best squares in Edinburgh.

The pavement all over the city is generally good, and the side pavements broader than in British cities. The police, in respect to cleanliness, is far better than I had been taught to expect, yet inferior, though not very much so, to British cities of the second class in point of size. In one respect, New York has greatly the advantage of any city in England that chiefly consists of brick houses. The outside of the brick buildings is almost always kept painted of the colour, of the red brick, with white lime in the seams, which gives a clean, fresh, and cheerful appearance to the buildings, and to the city in general.

The buildings for public institutions and the churches seem quite as numerous as in British cities, when the difference of population is taken into account. On the day after our arrival, we attended divine service in the forenoon in Grace Church, an episcopal church, and in the presbyterian church in Cedar Street in the afternoon. The service was conducted in the same way as in churches of the same description with us, excepting that we observed the precentor's seat in the presbyterian church, in the centre of the front gallery, opposite to the preacher, and not in the body of the church, in front of the pulpit, as with us. These churches were well filled, and the streets crowded at the time of going to church ; no shops, so far as we observed, open. There are about 100 churches in New York, with a population which is supposed to amount nearly to 200,000. In London, there are 500 churches, with 1,500,000 inhabitants. The clergymen have from 1500 to 3000 dollars per annum. The president of the United States was prayed for in the churches which we attended.

There are two large, and two smaller theatres. I looked into one of the former, the Bowery, which was just opened on its being rebuilt after being destroyed by fire ; but I was glad to get out of it, though a very handsome house, as fast as possible. It was filled to suffocation in one of the hottest evenings I ever felt.

The neatness, lightness, and cleanness of the hackney-coaches, which are numerous, and the rapidity with which they, and all carriages, whether for the conveyance of passengers or effects, are driven, were new to us. We saw no heavy horses for waggons or carts ; all are driven at a trot.

The hackney coaches are only constructed for four persons, very nice-looking without and within, generally driven by Irishmen, or men of colour, who are, we found, as apt to over-charge strangers as in other places. The carriages have heads, or tops, supported on light iron frames ; attached to the tops are curtains of silk, as well as of leather, which may be rolled up and buttoned, or let down at pleasure, so that the passengers may either have the space from the top of the carriage down to its middle altogether open, or inclosed with curtains of silk or leather. The fares vary according to the number of persons in the carriage, and the weight of baggage to be conveyed in it.

We have, seen little of the manners of the people, the great heat of the weather having forced us at present to decline invitations, which were very hospitably given us by some of our fellow-passengers, whose good offices towards us on our arrival we can never recollect without grateful feelings. The dress of the people differs little from our own. Ladies seem to dress more smartly, when shopping or walking out in the forenoon, than in British cities ; and their bonnets and head-dress are probably more according to the Parisian, than the London fashion. Shopkeepers, or rather storekeepers,—for a shop is uniformly called a store here,—are less obsequious in their manners than in Britain ; but I have observed no want of civility any where.

The number of foreigners from all countries is great. One hears the French and Spanish languages almost in every street. Smoking of cigars seems universal now during the warm weather in the open air, the inhabitants being seated on the street, near the doors of their houses, or in their porticos or verandas. The noise of a grasshopper called the *Catydid*, from

the trees in the evening, is quite overpowering. It is a beautiful insect, of a bright green colour, constantly chirping *catydid, catydid*, or something very like it.

At the Custom-house, (where, by the way, it was a novelty to us to see the clerks in a great public office obliged, by the oppressive nature of the heat, to attend to their duty disrobed of their coats, and without neck-cloths,) the depute-collector showed something like official hauteur in the manner in which he detained us before we got our clearances for landing our baggage, for which a very trifling fee is paid ; but we had no reason to find any fault with the subsequent arrangement, which is exactly as it ought to be in all countries. A revenue-officer, a very respectable-looking person, attended us on board of the packet. He very properly had every trunk and package opened, and made such examination as was sufficient to satisfy him that they contained no goods for traders, or for sale, and that no improper evasion of the law could take place, under the general exception from duty of travelling baggage. Considerable discretion must always rest with the officer in judging whether the quantity of articles of any description, such as books, &c. is greater than ought to be comprehended under this exception ; and the government of this country, therefore, judge wisely in giving the officers such a salary,—about eight hundred dollars, we were told,—as will induce people of education and intelligence to accept the situation, and render the offer of a bribe, and its being accepted, equally improbable.

The accommodation at the hotel was very good. The general system at the American hotels is for the whole inmates to eat together at fixed hours : in this hotel at eight to breakfast, three to dinner, six to tea and coffee, and nine to supper, the charge being at a fixed rate,—here a dollar and a half, or 6s. 4½d. sterling, per day for board and lodging. The charge is less when the accommodation is required for a longer period than a few days, but is payable whether the inmate has his meals at home or abroad, and is exclusive of liquor.

Separate apartments may, however, be had in the great towns in the United States, and without any extra charge, when the party consists of five persons or more ; but the payment is, even in this case, at the usual rate per day. Our party was anxious to remain together in private apartments while at New York, and we occupied a large and most comfortable dining-room, furnished in the same way, and as handsomely, as at the best hotels in Edinburgh or London. The table was excellent. A bill of fare was brought us every morning ; but the maitre d'hotel was not satisfied with sending in those dishes alone which we marked, but, besides those, furnished every thing which he himself thought best. Turtle soup twice without extra charge ; beef good ; poultry excellent ; fish different from what we had been accustomed to, and, as we thought, softer, and not so good ; melons of very superior quality ; peaches abundant, but not higher flavoured than our own ; tea and coffee good ; tea made by the person superintending the establishment, and not produced in the tea chest or canister.

The breakfasts were most abundant, consisting of fish, beef-steaks, broiled chicken, and eggs in large quantities, all produced without special directions. From what we have seen and heard, we entertain great doubts of the soundness of Dr Johnson's opinion, that an epicure would always desire to breakfast in Scotland. Wine-glasses are placed on the breakfast table in lieu of egg-cups. On inquiry, we learned from the waiter, that this is the universal custom, and that the Americans never eat an egg at once from the shell, but pour the contents into a wine-glass, in which they mix it up with salt before tasting it.

The bed-chambers do not correspond with the eating-rooms, either in appearance or accommodation,—the whole fitting up and furnishing looking meagre : Beds without curtains,—not a bit of carpet in the bedrooms,—even water not so plentiful as is requisite, most of all in a warm climate,—neither hot nor cold baths in this, one of the two greatest hotels in New York,—nor proper accommodation of a different, but still more necessary description. The waiter shrugged his shoulders on pointing out a court behind one of the

piazzas at the back of the house, where I found a row of temples alternately for males or females. I am told the British complain every where of the privations to which they are subjected, from the want of proper accommodation of this kind. The natives not being much accustomed to find it, are not aware of its value. Sure I am, if they once had it in perfection, they would take the necessary means to possess it. An abundant supply of water is no doubt necessary before it is attainable ; but the wealth and population of this great city increase so rapidly, that that object will be effected in a few years. Water is both deficient in quantity and quality here. Much of it is brought in carts from a considerable distance, and sold at a high price. Mosquitos have plagued us much less than we were taught to expect,—not more than wood-flies sometimes do in Britain. The common fly is in great numbers, and very troublesome.

Iced soda water from the fountain is the liquid in universal use by all descriptions of persons, and is admirably prepared,— the pleasantest beverage, as it appeared to me, that I had ever tasted in warm weather. It is frequently mixed with a small portion of lemon syrup ; the price threepence sterling for a tumbler. It is prepared and sold in almost every street. The demand at the fountains is so great, that very large sums of money have been made by the manufacturers.

In point of language, we could not observe any very perceptible difference between that in general use at New York and in many parts of England, certainly not so great as between that spoken in the west end of the town, and in parts of the *city* of London. The people are not so ruddy complexioned, nor so stout, as in Britain ; but we thought them, especially those of the fair sex, very good-looking. The immense number of people of colour,—many of them as well dressed as the whites,—was one of the greatest novelties to us. Perhaps nothing struck us more than the style of the commencement of their legal writings, which we observed in the last page of the first newspaper put into our hands. Instead of the British form of “ George the Fourth, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King,” it runs, “ The People of the state of New York, by the Grace of God, free and independent.” Newspapers innumerable are seen everywhere. In going out early in the morning you find them lying at the doors of almost every house before the inmates are out of bed. They contain a great deal of statistical information,—of intelligence and remarks respecting their local elections, and their public works in progress,—but little attention seems to be paid for the collecting of domestic news or occurrences, reports from their police courts, or courts of law. Advertising is so cheap, that the newspapers are much more generally, than with us, used as advertising vehicles. Puffing seems well understood. Take the following as examples :— John Dillon, an undertaker for funerals, closes a long advertisement thus : “ J. D. has provided two hearses of different styles to suit the taste of different people, one being on the American, and the other on the European plan. Attached to the latter are two full sets of rich massy mourning plumes in the London-style, which may be used or not, at the pleasure of the employer. One set is intended for single, and the other for married, persons. The former are all white, to denote the purity and innocence of youth ; while the latter are jet-black, to represent the gloom of that heart from which its conjugal counterpart has been torn by the hand of death.” I suspect none of our undertakers have shown equal regard to the feelings of the Americans, in providing, in any of our cities, a hearse on their plan. A clothier, who changes his advertisement almost every month, has the following notice :—“ *Quid pro Quo.* — Not a year since, in traversing the lower end of William Street, any one may have noticed a tall and rather genteel-looking man, with a melancholy countenance, hanging over his shop-board in a sort of hopeless expectation. Poverty is amazingly apt to produce your long faces. To make a bad matter still worse, fire eventually untenanted him. Notwithstanding this, Charles Cox, of 44, William Street, has now a jolly-looking phiz, most marvellously shortened. The discernment—or more properly, perhaps, the kindness—of the public, enables him to boast (and he does it with grateful feelings,) of an unprecedented patronage since his return to his former stand. From the extreme pressure of business, he is very sorry he has

been under the necessity of disappointing some customers ; but this, by new arrangements, will hereafter be completely obviated. These changes of circumstances, however, have not changed his plan a whit. His garments are manufactured with the same elegance, excellence, and cheapness, (for cash only,) as formerly ; and he is the same good-natured fellow that all men should be who are well patronized, and receive the '*quid pro quo*.'

Lotteries are very common, but the legislature has fixed the period at which they are to be discontinued, or has declared that they are to be discontinued after those already sanctioned are drawn.

We were puzzled with a sign at No. 321, Broadway. " Intelligence Office. Male and female help can be obtained, by applying at this office." Servants do not like the name, and are frequently called Helps, so that the meaning of the notice is, that servants, can be obtained there.

Signs are universally more neatly painted than with us. Goods in large quantities are exhibited at the doors of the stores. The pavement of the streets is generally covered with awnings, so that passengers are well protected from the effects of the bright sunshine.

One cry in the streets at this season surprised us " Corn piping hot." This is the Indian corn boiled, and very good it is, often produced at table ; one sort of it particularly so. A more musical cry, to our ears, in this hot weather, was " ice," by carters driving carts of ice for sale, in small quantities, all over the city.

Republican customs are observable in the plainness of the address on the door-plates, on which *Mr.*, before the name, is always omitted. The governor of the state—the merchant worth a million—and the mechanic,—have their names engraved on the door-plates in the very same style.

We have only yet had an opportunity of seeing one instance of the greater courtesy paid to females in this country, of which we have heard much. In passing across the ferry to Brooklyn in a steam-boat, my wife, and three gentlemen who accompanied her, were seated, when some females came into the boat, and all the seats were occupied. Their male attendant at once addressed those gentlemen, " Ladies, gentlemen ;" and they of course relinquished their seats. It behoved them to have done so, whoever the females might be, mechanics' wives, or even in what we should call the lower orders of society.

We have not been accosted by a beggar in New York. The street's seem to be well watered.

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