

Travels in America 100 years ago : being notes and reminiscences

Thomas Twining

1894

1795. The state of my health rendering a voyage to Europe necessary, I determined to proceed by way of America. Accordingly, towards the end of November, I left Santipore, taking with me a small Bengal cow, in addition to my doombah and other curiosities brought from Dehli. The natives would not have consented to sell me a cow if I had not assured them that it would be an object of particular interest and care in the countries I was taking it to. I also had made, by an ingenious workman of Santipoce, small, but very exact, models of the principal machines and instruments used in the agriculture and manufactures of India. Among these was a model of an Indian plough, and an excellent one of an Indian loom, with the threads upon it, executed with remarkable precision and neatness. With all these objects I arrived, by the Ganges, at my old quarters in Captain Thornhill's house.

One of my first visits was to the commander of the American ship *India*, Captain John Ashmead. He was a Quaker ; a tall, thin, upright man of about sixty or perhaps sixty-five, in whose respectable and pleasing appearance the usual mildness and simplicity of his sect, with a deep tinge of characteristic peculiarity, were visible. His thin silvery locks curled round the collar of his old-fashioned single-breasted coat, with a row of large plain buttons down the front like a schoolboy's. He introduced me to the super-cargo, a Scotchman. The same evening the captain accompanied me to the ship. This I found rather smaller than I had expected. Her measurement was only about 300 tons. But everything on board was seaman-like and neat. The upper deck was flush that is, level from head to stern, without any cabin upon it, as in the *Ponsborne*. The lower deck, to which the descent was by a straight ladder from the quarter-deck, had a spacious cabin or dining-room towards the stern, comprehending the whole width of the ship and lighted by the stern windows. I agreed for the starboard half of this room, consenting to its being separated from the other half by a green baize curtain, which was to be drawn back along a brass rod at the hours of dinner and breakfast. The dining-table was fixed in the middle of the room, and half of it consequently remained in my cabin when the curtain was drawn.

As the ship was to sail in a few days, I had not much time to prepare for my voyage. The American captains having the reputation of keeping rather an indifferent table living, it was said, principally on salt beef and sour-croust Mr. Fletcher had the goodness to send me ten fat sheep from his flock at Santipore. For these and my cow and doombah, a considerable quantity of hay was necessary. I therefore ordered my servants to buy grass, or rather the roots of grass, in the bazaars, and which, being spread and exposed to the sun upon the flat roofs of Captain Thornhill's outhouses, was closely pressed into bundles.

To increase my collection of objects relating to India, I bought, at a sale by auction, some oil-paintings executed by an able European artist. One represented an elephant with a howdah upon his back, kneeling to be mounted ; another exhibited two or three zuz, a small leopard of elegant form, used in hunting the antelope. They were muzzled and had collars round their necks, and were led by their attendants like greyhounds to the chase. But the most valuable addition was that which my menagerie received, consisting of a Thibet or shawl goat, presented to me by my friend, Mr. Myers, Deputy Accountant-General. This animal was

a curiosity even in Calcutta. It was small, thin, and scraggy, and had long hair, principally black, with some white about the neck and legs. Upon dividing this long hair a short white soft wool was seen, covering the body like down, and this was the precious material from which the shawl of Cash mire is fabricated. It being much doubted and disputed whether it was a goat or a sheep which produced this substance, I considered myself fortunate in being able to exhibit in America and Europe such decisive testimony upon this point. I had, however, some uneasiness from the apparently delicate state of the goat's health, which seemed to have suffered from the damp climate of Calcutta.

In the first days of December, the *India*, having completed her lading, dropped down the river, and in two days more I followed her. I left the ghaut of the Bankshall (the name of Captain Thornhill's office) late in the evening in a pauchway, a small covered boat rowed by four men seated before the roofed part, and steered by a fifth, who stood behind it. The good captain and his son, Mr, John Thornhill, accompanied me to the water's edge. The tide running very rapidly, I was far advanced at daybreak next morning, and in the afternoon reached the ship, which was anchored not far from the point where I had disembarked from the *Ponsborne* in 1792. I spent the remainder of the day in arranging my things in my cabin, in fixing my excellent English trunks, which I had fortunately preserved, and in securing a teak-wood bedstead, with drawers under it, which I had bought in the bazaar of Calcutta. The upper part, with the bedding upon it, was made to be lifted up from the drawers, and to serve as a swinging cot in rough weather. The small white cow, Cabul sheep, Cashmire goat, and the sheep from Santipore were disposed of : some in, some under, the boats between the main and fore mast. The monkey from the North of India had a welcome reception on the fore-castle among the crew.

On the 9th of December, the pilot being on board and the wind quite fair, the anchor was heaved and we set sail. Leaving Sangor Island close on our left, we passed between this and the numerous shoals and sandbanks across which the *Ponsborne* had had so narrow an escape. We saw many immense buoys of different colors moored with strong chains some on the sands, others in the fairway or channel to be followed by ships. But, notwithstanding these precautions and an extensive establishment of pilots under the direction of Captain Thornhill, many vessels are annually lost in this dangerous navigation. Arrived off the sand-heads, we saw a pilot schooner cruising for inward-bound ships. Having made a signal to her she approached us and received our pilot on board, when the venerable Quaker, who till now had been a quiet spectator on board his own ship, took the command. And here I could not but observe a singular contrast between this old man and my first captain between the cool, unassuming demeanor of Captain Ashmead and the loud, authoritative manner of Captain Thomas. A difference, no less striking, was observable between the well-manned decks and simultaneous movements of the *Indiaman*, and the scanty crew and slow, consecutive operations of the *American* ship. For, the whole crew of the latter being only twenty-two men, the principal work of the three masts, instead of going on at the same time, as in the *Ponsborne*, was necessarily done in succession ; the men descending from one mast to mount another, hoisting the foretop-sail first and the maintop-sail afterwards. I observed, also, that of our numbers thus small, the greater part consisted of very young men, apparently not more than eighteen or twenty years of age. They were better dressed than the sailors I had been accustomed to see, and had altogether a more respectable, though a less robust and seaman-like appearance. The cause of this difference was, for the present, unknown to me. At first I was rather startled at this apparent inefficiency, and at the idea of undertaking the passage of the Cape of Good Hope in so small a ship so feebly manned. On the other hand, I was much pleased with the mild, inoffensive tone in which the captain gave his orders, and with the cheerful alacrity with which they were executed. There was no oath, nor threat, nor vulgar language ; no anxious exertion or fearful obedience. There was nothing to damp the

satisfaction and gladness of that joyful moment of a seaman's life, when, after a long voyage, the ship's head is again turned towards his native country.

We stood out of Balasore roads towards the middle of the bay, and having gained a good offing, beyond the variable breezes of the coast, steered to the south. The north- west monsoon now prevailing, and blowing fresh on our starboard quarter, we kept a straight course down the bay at about seven knots an hour. The weather was so mild and fine that for several nights I slept upon the after-part of the upper deck, over my cabin, stretched upon a hen-coop, and I found that I thus avoided all material inconvenience from sea-sickness. After five or six days I was able to take my place at the dinner-table. The party here consisted of Captain Ashmead, Mr. Pringle, the supercargo, Mr. Gilmore, Mr. Brisbane, the surgeon, a young man, who was chief mate, and myself. Mr. Gilmore was son of one of the owners of the ship, and had come to India in her with the view of learning the business of an India voyage under Mr. Pringle.

We had a fair wind and fine weather from the sand-heads to the latitudes bordering on the line. We here experienced some light, baffling breezes, but our progress was not interrupted by those total calms so usual near the equator. The ship's head was now turned towards the Cape of Good Hope. We spent our Christmas Day not very far from the Isle of France, or Mauritius (Maurice), as it was called by the Dutch, the original possessors. On this occasion the usual salutations of the day were exchanged among us ; we had a more ample dinner, and there was an extra distribution to the men, who were dressed as on Sundays. There was something impressive in the observance of this great day by our little society in the midst of the ocean. We approached nearer to the French Islands than would have been prudent for a vessel not under neutral colors, for they were the general rendezvous of the numerous privateers which had done so much injury to the British commerce in the Indian seas.

The Isle of France is situated in 20 of south latitude, the Isle of Bourbon about one hundred and fifty miles more to the south, The former is about fifty leagues in circumference, the latter about eighteen leagues in length and thirteen in width. The climate of both is said to be delightful, and to be congenial to most of the productions of the tropical regions, such as sugar, coffee, tobacco, indigo, cotton, the breadfruit-tree, etc. The population of the Isle of France is about 70,000, principally slaves procured from Madagascar. I could not help wishing that we might put into Port Louis, the chief port of this island ; but neither a deficiency in our water, nor any other circumstance, requiring this deviation, our prudent captain continued his course towards the Cape, passing not far from the south end of the Island of Madagascar. In a few days more we approached the Cape of Good Hope, and the usual preparations for stormy weather were made accordingly. The captain ordering a reef in the main-sail, all hands that could be spared from deck, amounting to eighteen, went upon the main-yard. On board a man-of-war, or even an Indiaman, this operation would have required only a few minutes ; but our crew, as I have already observed, was very young, and individually very weak, consisting rather of boys than men, and it consequently took a long time to haul up the sail and make it fast. The old man, however, never lost his temper or patience, and the sailors, having accomplished their task, in the quiet, orderly way in which everything was conducted on board, were descending to the deck, when one of the last of them observed that the slings which suspended the main-yard were broken ; two-thirds of the twists had given way, leaving the whole weight upon one- third alone. This discovery greatly affected the captain, and caused a considerable impression through the ship, for it was evident that eighteen men who had just left the yard had been exposed to great danger. Had the yard fallen with them, all, it was probable, would have been killed or disabled. After the first impressions had subsided it became a question among us what we should have done if the threatened accident had taken

place. Here our helplessness became more evident, and rendered us more sensible of our providential escape.

Continuing our course towards the west, in a few days more we got soundings, and thought we discovered land upon the starboard beam. We were upon a deep bank called Agulas's Bank, which extends more than one hundred miles to the south of the Cape. The nature of the bottom being different in different parts, it was desirable to obtain some portion of it in order to ascertain our position with more precision. For this purpose a lead was used of about a foot long and two inches in diameter, with a small cavity at the bottom filled with putty. When the lead was drawn in, sand and broken shells were found attached to it. Comparing this result with a map of the bank, our position appeared, and, confirming the ship's reckoning, the captain had no desire to see the land more distinctly. We passed first Sebastian's Bay; afterwards False Bay, which opens towards the south; and lastly Table Bay, a little round the point on the Atlantic side, and near Cape Town. The winds were now strong against us from the west, but we got on against them by aid of a strong current which always runs down the eastern coast of Africa, and sets round the land. It is for this reason that homeward-bound ships, or rather, ships bound to the west of the Cape, keep near it, hugging the land, as the sailors say; while those bound eastward keep to the south. Although we thus passed the Cape without encountering any particular storm, we were very near meeting with a serious accident of another kind. One dark night, about ten o'clock, when the wind was fresh, a seaman of the fore-castle watch came running aft, exclaiming, with much agitation, "A ship ahead!" We had scarcely heard these words before a large ship, running before the wind, passed our star-board bow. As she went swiftly by us, our yard-arms almost touching, the captain had just time to hail her, and to hear in reply, as we thought, the words "Superb" and "Amsterdam," from which we inferred that she was from Holland, and bound for Batavia. Here again we had reason to be thankful, for a few feet nearer, half a turn of the wheel of either ship, and both vessels must have gone to the bottom. The agitation of the sailor, and the difficulty he had in expressing himself, reminded me of a story which Captain Thomas once told at the cuddy table, relating to a ship under his command at the time, either as commander or chief officer of the watch, and which afforded another instance of the never-failing presence of mind of that excellent seaman. One of the sailors came suddenly upon deck from below, but such was his terror that he was unable to articulate a word. "Sing!" said the captain, "sing!" when the poor man sang out without any difficulty, "The cabin's on fire! The cabin's on fire!" Captain Thomas, in his repetition, giving the man's song with excellent effect.

Passing the Cape so near the land we saw but few of the great albatrosses and other birds which had appeared on my way to India, these flying more to the south, for the sake, it was supposed, of the small fish or other food thrown up on the surface of the sea, in the storms which prevail there. Our course was now northwest, with variable winds, but principally from the south.

The first great division of the voyage being passed, the usual speculations took place as to the probable duration of the remainder. If not detained by calms at the line it was probable we should reach America in less than two months. About a fortnight after clearing the Cape the increasing unsteadiness of the wind denoted that we were upon the edge of the "Trade," and in a few days more a fresh, steady breeze from the southeast assured us of our having gained that much-desired wind.

Our course was now in the direction of St. Helena. The ship remained under nearly the same sail for many days and nights together, going at the rate of seven or eight knots an hour, rolling from one side to the other, the wind being directly astern. This is called "rolling down

to St. Helena” by the captains of Indiamen. On the 10th February, lat. 25 S., long. 5 E., we discovered, in the afternoon, a sail on our starboard beam. Though a great way off, as we were evidently steering the same way, there seemed a chance of our speaking, and it being supposed that she was bound to Europe, and probably to England, I began a letter to my father. The night, however, closed upon us without our approaching. The next morning the sail was still in sight, and nearly at the same distance from us. We therefore bore up a point, and soon perceived that she accepted our invitation to speak, by making a similar variation in her course towards us. In the afternoon we were within hail, when we found that the stranger was the American ship *Atlantic*, from China, and bound, like ourselves, to Philadelphia. We kept company during the night, but separated next day. As we had the advantage in sailing, we expected to reach America some days before her.

After repassing the tropic of Capricorn, we continued our rolling course towards the north-west, and in ten days more passed the island of St. Helena, about, as we supposed, one hundred miles to the west of it. The climate was now very agreeable. The south-east trade, which still blew fresh, tempered the heat of the sun, and kept the atmosphere at a pleasant temperature.

I now passed much of my time upon deck, reading, or walking, or playing at backgammon with the captain, who was extremely fond of this game, and played it very well. In accordance with the serenity of the climate, and the evenness of our course at this part of the voyage, was the orderly and cheerful character of the ship, everything between the captain and officers and crew being conducted in the most good-tempered and amicable manner. The latter enjoyed a degree of comfort which I had never seen on board a ship. Most of the men had a few private stores, and many of them took their tea in little parties about the fore-castle. I was not surprised at these indulgences, for I had learned, soon after sailing, that the young men whose genteel appearance I had noticed were the sons of respectable families of Philadelphia and Baltimore, who had come to sea under Captain Ashmead for the purpose of being instructed in navigation by this experienced seaman, preparatory to their being officers and captains themselves. While this system of harmony and decency was extremely agreeable, I could not perceive that it was less efficient, as regarded the duties of the ship, than the usual vulgar system of oppressive severity called discipline. I had now been three months on board the *India*, and had not heard a threat used nor an oath uttered.

As we approached the equator I again saw, with pleasure, the swift dolphin, the flying-fish, the gelatinous substance called a Portuguese man-of-war, and the elegant tropic bird. We one day enjoyed a more unusual sight, a party of large whales making their appearance at a short distance from the ship. They rolled about on the surface of the sea, amusing themselves, apparently, as well as us. I had once considered the spouting of whales as a fabulous exaggeration, but I distinctly saw and heard these fish spout up the sea to the height of several feet, with a considerable noise or blowing. As they tumbled about for some time, not far from our larboard bow, the captain was uneasy lest we should strike against them.

But after keeping at the same distance from us for about an hour, they plunged and disappeared.

The trade wind, which had favored us some weeks, gradually declined as we drew near the equator. It did not, however, subside entirely, but took us a few degrees into the northern hemisphere, when the winds again became variable. We continued our north-western course through the northern tropic, leaving on our left the West India Islands and the Gulf of Mexico. We again saw a sail, a two-masted vessel. She was rather ahead, but lay-to for us to come up, when we perceived that her boat was out, rowing towards us. Our captain lay-to for

it to reach us, but observed that the brig might be a pirate, and that it would be prudent to be on our guard while her boat was alongside and her people on board. Looking at the boat through his telescope, he said he saw only five hands, but that there might be more concealed under a tarpaulin at the bottom. Upon this he went down to his cabin, at the bottom of the ladder, and returned upon deck with a brace of pistols, which he put into his coat pockets. For the old man was not a Quaker in any sense but one, and was resolved to be ready to repulse any hostile attack. I did not put my pistols into my pockets, for these were far from being so deep as those of the captain ; but they were ready, and in case of necessity the father of the ship, as he was considered, would certainly have been well supported by every one of his family. When, however, the boat came alongside, it was obvious that it contained no more than the persons before visible. The steersman was therefore permitted to come on board. He was the captain himself of the brig, which we now found was from Boston, but last from the Canary Islands, and bound to one of the southern parts of the United States. The captain said he had had very stormy weather in crossing the Atlantic. When, at his request, we gave him our longitude, he was much surprised, as we were when he communicated his, for there was a difference of many degrees between us. This extraordinary error was doubtless on his side, for Captain Ashmead was an excellent mathematician, possessed much nautical knowledge, and kept the ship's reckoning with great accuracy. Although, therefore, we had not had any point of departure since our soundings off the Cape, and the captain of the brig had been much less time at sea, the mistake was ascribable to the dark weather he had experienced, and in some degree, it was probable, to the imperfection of his science or of his instruments. He was fully satisfied of his having greatly misconceived the situation of his ship, and allowed it was a fortunate circumstance that he had fallen in with us. Finding that we came from Bengal, he requested a few bags of rice, which were readily given him. In return we applied to him for one or two articles, and I expressed a wish to buy a bag of sago, for my breakfast, and a few figs. As the boat was to return to our ship with these things, I went in her to the other vessel. The most remarkable circumstance I found on board was an extraordinary number of canary birds. The cabin was crowded with cages containing them. I afterwards understood that a considerable profit was obtained on the sale of these birds in the southern parts of the Union. I again recollected my mother's fancy, and should have procured a few of them, but for the probability of their perishing from want of proper care. I returned to the India with a small supply of sago and figs, when the vessels separated, and we continued our course towards the coast of America.

The only interesting occurrence in the remainder of our voyage was our crossing the Gulf Stream. I was surprised at seeing one day large quantities of sea-weed round the ship, and the water changed from its usual appearance to a yellow color. The waves also had a different form, exhibiting a peculiarity something like the rippling of a current. These signs denoted our arrival in the great current called by navigators the " Gulf Stream," from its proceeding from the Gulf of Mexico. The common opinion is that this current is occasioned by the constant flow of the Mississippi River into the Mexican Gulf. This explanation, however, appears by no means satisfactory, since the volume of the stream, sixteen leagues in width, greatly exceeds that of the Mississippi. Another hypothesis considers it as the continuation of the current which sets round the Cape of Good Hope from the Indian seas, and, traversing the Atlantic Ocean, nearly in the line followed by our ship, enters the Gulf of Mexico, whence it re-enters the ocean with the waters of the Mississippi, and follows the American coast till finally dissipated in the Northern seas. As we advanced towards the middle of the stream the quantity of weed was prodigious, covering the surface of the water as far as we could see. This phenomenon was not interesting alone, but was useful, as verifying our position in respect to the American coast.

We soon had a great change of climate, the weather becoming more cold than I had felt it since leaving England. I could hardly keep myself warm day or night. But this inconvenience was welcome as another sign that the end of our voyage was nigh. On the 1st of April the lead was heaved, but no bottom found. The captain, however, ordered the ship to be kept under easy sail during the night, her head alternately to the north and south. The lead also was frequently heaved. These precautions were not premature, for the next morning, Saturday, the 2d April, the leadsman proclaimed bottom. We lay-to that night, but the following day we again stood towards land, and I had the gratification of seeing the light-house at the entrance of Delaware Bay, after a prosperous voyage of less than four months from the mouth of the Ganges. Unfortunately no pilot appeared, although our signal for one was kept flying. Our disappointment was the greater as the weather had a threatening appearance. Some dangerous shoals, called the Nantucket Shoals, seemed to give the captain some uneasiness and to increase his desire to get into port. He said that he had been more than sixty voyages from the Delaware, and was as capable as a pilot to take the ship into the bay, but that in case of accident, from whatever cause, the insurances would be void. In the evening, therefore, no pilot appearing, the ship's head was put off shore and we stood out to sea. Mortifying as this course was, its prudence was soon manifest, for in the night the threatening aspect of the weather ended in a gale of wind. We saw nothing around us next day, but kept the lead going lest the current should set us towards the land. In the afternoon the gale increased, and there was much bustle on board. The scantiness of the crew made it necessary for every one to lend a hand on such an occasion. In consequence of an order given by the captain to let go some rope near the stern, I ran aft and did what was necessary. At this moment the rope which held the great spanker-boom to windward gave way, and this spar, with the sail upon it, immediately fell down to leeward with prodigious force. The captain said that when he saw me between the falling boom and the ship's side he thought my destruction inevitable. When, however, the boom had arrived within three or four feet of the side against which I was leaning, it was stopped by a thick block projecting from the stern rail. I never perhaps had a more providential escape.

A heavy fall of rain the second night having abated the violence of the wind, the next morning Tuesday, the 5th April at day-break, we were again able to set sail on the ship and stand towards the coast. We were this time more fortunate. A sail was perceived, and the captain soon pronounced her to be a pilot making towards us. When sufficiently near he came on board in a small skiff belonging to his diminutive vessel. For this was not a schooner, as in the Bengal River, but merely a stout-decked boat, resembling a large fishing-boat. The pilot having taken charge of us, we proceeded directly towards the mouth of the Delaware River. In the afternoon we again saw the light-house, and, passing it early in the evening, entered Delaware Bay, having on our left Cape Henlopen, on which the light-house stood, and on our right Cape May. The distance between the two capes was said to be fifteen miles, though appearing much less. Within them the bay gradually widened to about twenty-four miles. We passed near many shoals, particularly "Big Shoal," on which the depth of water varied from six to ten feet. On our right we had the State of New Jersey, on our left that of Delaware. Both shores appeared low and flat, but on arriving in the New World I felt an interest in everything I beheld that supplied the want of picturesque attractions. I spent the whole day upon deck asking questions and looking about me. A little before dark we came to anchor near a large buoy, called the Buoy of the Brown.

6th April. I was early on deck, expecting the ship to get under way to mount the river, but the pilot said the tide would not be favorable for some hours. While we were at anchor several vessels and fishing-boats from Philadelphia passed us on their way to sea. We weighed soon after twelve o'clock. For some time we were near a vessel from England, also bound to Philadelphia. The captains hailed each other, and afterwards exchanged newspapers

by throwing a line, having a small piece of lead at the end, on board the other ship, and then drawing it backward and forward with the papers attached to it. We steered generally in six or eight fathoms, and nearly in the middle of the bay, which gradually contracted into the Delaware River, so called after the Earl of Delaware, who settled in this part of the American continent early in the seventeenth century. A river of such magnitude and importance, and which bore the metropolis of a great nation upon its banks, seemed to claim a more dignified name than the title of an adventurous nobleman. In this respect India had been more fortunate. There, the British conquerors and settlers, not having had the pretension and bad taste to change the ancient names of the country for their own, Plassey was not called "Clive," nor Buxar "Munro," while the Ganges, the Burrampooter, and the Saone retained, with no material corruption, the sacred orthography of the remotest ages.

We continued to mount the river, passing between Brown's and Brandy wine Shoal. On our left we passed the town of Dover, one of the principal towns of the Delaware State. Though capes May and Henlopen, on the shore of the Atlantic, seemed to mark the commencement of the Delaware the space, called the bay being merely an expanded reach of the river itself this nevertheless was not considered as beginning till we had passed Bombay Hook, twenty miles above the capes. Here the width was about three miles. On the Jersey side we passed Stony Point and the small town of Salem. Twenty miles above Bombay Point we came to Reedy Island, and anchored for the night at Port Penn. This seemed to be the Gravesend of the Delaware, being the usual rendezvous of ships before entering the Atlantic. The direction of our course to-day had been about north-west.

7th April. It was late again to-day before the tide would allow us to move. Our course to-day was extremely pleasant, the river becoming more picturesque as it became more contracted. We passed several small islands; the principal of which was Delaware Island, and the considerable town of Newcastle, on the western shore, formerly called Stockholm, having been founded by the Swedes, and later New Amsterdam, upon its passing into the possession of the Dutch. It is considered the oldest European settlement on the Delaware. Its situation, about half-way between Philadelphia and the sea, is evidently very advantageous, and must insure it a large share of the commercial prosperity of the capital. It may be safely predicted that its population will increase more during the next twenty years than in the one hundred and fifty which have elapsed since its establishment.

A few miles higher we saw, also on our left, the large town of Wilmington, pleasantly situated on an eminence, at some distance from the river, but commanding apparently a view of every sail passing upon it. I understood that it was the largest town of the Delaware State. We next came to Marcus Hook (also on the western shore); to a succession of low islands; to the mouth of the Schuylkyl, with Fort Miffin opposite to it, on the Jersey side, and soon after discovered Philadelphia itself, situated on the right or western bank of the Delaware. Though not presenting the splendor, nor majesty, nor venerable antiquity of some cities I had seen, not exhibiting the palaces of Calcutta, nor the temples of Benares, nor the marble domes and minarets of Agra and Delhi, its appearance was most gratifying to me as the city founded by Penn, as the seat of the American Government, and the termination of my voyage. Having passed several ships, the India entered the line and took her station along one of the wharves, which extended nearly the whole length of the city, and in a few minutes I stepped ashore without even the aid of a plank, the ship's side touching the wharf.

It being evening, when many people were about, the quay was crowded with persons curious to witness an arrival from Bengal. Having first gratified my own curiosity by looking at the lookers-on, and made a few turns up and down the wharf, enjoying the great pleasure of treading once more on firm ground after a long confinement to a ship, I was setting off

with my trunk to a tavern when Mr. Pringle, the purser, stopped me with a pressing invitation to accompany him to the house of Mr. Lewis, one of the owners of the India.

This worthy citizen received me very kindly, saying, “ How dost thou do, friend ? I am glad to see thee ;” for he was, in the phraseology of Philadelphia, one of the Society of Friends, that is to say, a Quaker. He introduced me to Mrs. Lewis and his daughters, who received me with the same salutation, “ I am glad to see thee, friend ; I hope thou art well.” I drank tea with these good people, in whom I found a kindness which the simplicity of their manners seemed to make the more cordial. The safe arrival of their ship at a favorable market put all the family in good spirits. After tea I went to the house of Mr. Bingham, intending to go afterwards to the London Tavern, but Mrs. Lewis insisted upon my returning to sleep at her house : “ Thou wilt sleep here, friend ; thy bed shall be ready for thee.” Mr. Bingham, to whom Mr. Pringle introduced me, was the principal person in Philadelphia, and the wealthiest, probably, in the Union. His house stood alone, and occupied, with the gardens attached to it, a spacious piece of ground. It was by far the handsomest residence in the city. I found here a large party. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Bingham and their two daughters, were Count de Noailles, Count Tilley, Mr. Alexander Baring, and others. After supper I returned to the house of Mr. Lewis, and was conducted to a handsome chamber, the centre of which was occupied by a square bed, with curtains all round it, in the English manner. There could not be a fairer promise of a good night’s rest. After, however, I had slept an hour, I heard a person undressing behind the curtains, although there was no other bed in the room than that which I had supposed to belong exclusively to me. But this opinion was soon changed, for the stranger, having put out the light, drew back the curtains, and placed himself at my side. Sleeping in with another person even in the same room, I would much rather have had Mrs. Lewis’s bed, ample as it was, to myself ; but I inferred that the arrangement which had taken place was one of the peculiar customs of the country, and that in America, when a stranger was invited to pass the night with his host, it was never meant to give him the whole of a bed. When the light of the morning shone upon the features of my companion, whose face should I see but Mr. Pringle’s. Though surprised to find that the purser had slept so near me, I felt that I could not reasonably complain, for as his attentions had procured me this bed, no one certainly had so fair a claim to half of it as himself.

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