

J. H. INGRAHAM

**THE SOUTH-
WEST**

VOL. 1 & 2

J. H. Ingraham

The South-West (Vol. 1&2)

Published by

MUSAICUM

Books

- Advanced Digital Solutions & High-Quality eBook
Formatting -

musaicumbooks@okpublishing.info

2021 OK Publishing

EAN 4064066380441

Table of Contents

[Volume 1](#)

[Volume 2](#)

VOLUME 1

[Table of Contents](#)

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.

I.

II.

III.

IV.

V.

VI.

VII.

VIII.

IX.

X.

XI.

XII.

XIII.

XIV.

XV.

XVI.

XVII.

XVIII.

XIX.

XX.

XXI.

XXII.

XXIII.

APPENDIX

INTRODUCTION.

[Table of Contents](#)

The succeeding pages grew out of a private correspondence, which the author, at the solicitation of his friends, has been led to throw into the present form, modifying in a great measure the epistolary vein, and excluding, so far as possible, such portions of the original papers as were of too personal a nature to be intruded upon the majesty of the public;—while he has embodied, so far as was compatible with the new arrangement, every thing likely to interest the general reader.

The author has not written exclusively as a traveller or journalist. His aim has been to present the result of his experience and observations during a residence of several years in the South-West. This extensive and important section of the United States is but little known. Perhaps there is no region between the Mississippi river and the Atlantic shores, of which so little accurate information is before the public; a flying tourist only, having occasionally added a note to his diary, as he skirted its forest-lined borders.

New-York, Sept. 1835.

I.

Table of Contents

A state of bliss—Cabin passenger—Honey-hunting—Sea-life—Its effects—Green horns—Reading—Tempicide—Monotony—Wish for excitement—Superlative misery—Log—Combustible materials—Cook and bucket—Contrary winds—All ready, good Sirs—Impatient passengers—Signal for sailing—Under weigh.

To be a "Cabin passenger" fifteen or twenty days *out*, in a Yankee merchantman, is to be in a state as nearly resembling that of a half-assoilzied soul in purgatory, as flesh and blood can well be placed in. A meridian sun—a cloudless sky—a sea of glass, like a vast burning reflector, giving back a twin-heaven inverted—a dry, hot air, as though exhaled from a Babylonian furnace, and a deck, with each plank heated to the foot like a plate of hot steel—with the "Horse latitudes," for the scene, might, perhaps, heighten the resemblance.

Zimmerman, in his excellent essay upon Solitude, has described man, in a "state of solitary indolence and inactivity, as sinking by degrees, like stagnant water, into impurity and corruption." Had he intended to describe from experience, the state of man as "Cabin passenger" after the novelty of his new situation upon the heaving bosom of the "dark blue sea," had given place to the tiresome monotony of never-varying, daily repeated scenes, he could not have illustrated it by a more striking figure. This is a state of which you are happily ignorant. Herein, ignorance is the height of bliss, although, should a Yankee propensity for peregrinating stimulate you to become wiser by experience, I will not say that your folly will be more apparent than your

wisdom. But if you continue to vegetate in the lovely valley of your nativity, one of "New-England's yeomanry," as you are wont, not a little proudly, to term yourself—burying for that distinctive honour your collegiate laurels beneath the broad-brim of the farmer—exchanging your "gown" for his frock—"Esq." for plain "squire," and the Mantuan's Georgics for those of the Maine Farmer's Almanac—I will cheerfully travel for you; though, as I shall have the benefit of the wear and tear, rubs and bruises—it will be like honey-hunting in our school-boy days, when one fought the bees while the other secured the sweet plunder.

This sea life, to one who is not a sailor, is a sad enough existence—if it may be termed such. The tomb-stone inscription "Hic jacet," becomes prematurely his own, with the consolatory adjunct *et non resurgam*. A condition intermediate between life and death, but more assimilated to the latter than the former, it is passed, almost invariably, in that proverbial inactivity, mental and corporeal, which is the well-known and unavoidable consequence of a long passage. It is a state in which existence is burthensome and almost insupportable, destroying that healthy tone of mind and body, so necessary to the preservation of the economy of the frame of man.—Nothing will so injure a good disposition, as a long voyage. Seeds of impatience and of indolence are there sown, which will be for a long period painfully manifest. The sweetest tempered woman I ever knew, after a passage of sixty days, was converted into a querulous Xantippe; and a gentleman of the most active habits, after a voyage of much longer duration, acquired such indolent ones, that his usefulness as a man of business was for a long time destroyed; and it was only by the strongest application of high, moral energy, emanating from a mind of no common order, that he was at length enabled wholly to be himself again. There is but one antidote for this disease, which should be nosologically classed as *Melancholia Oceana*, and that is employment. But on ship-

board, this remedy, like many other good ones on shore, cannot always be found. A meddling, bustling passenger, whose sphere on land has been one of action, and who pants to move in his little circumscribed orbit at sea, is always a "lubberly green horn," or "clumsy marine," in every tar's way—in whose eye the "passenger" is only fit to thin hen-coops, bask in the sun, talk to the helmsman, or, now and then, desperately venture up through the "lubber's hole" to look for *land* a hundred leagues in mid ocean, or, cry "sail ho!" as the snowy mane of a distant wave, or the silvery crest of a miniature cloud upon the horizon, flashes for an instant upon his unpractised vision.

A well-selected library, which is a great luxury at sea, and like most luxuries very rare, does wonders toward lessening this evil; but it is still far from constituting a *panacea*. I know not how it is, unless the patient begins in reality to suspect that he is taking *reading* as a prescription against the foe, and converting his volumes into pill boxes—which by and by gets to be too painfully the truth—but the appetite soon becomes sated, the mind wearied, and the most fascinating and favourite authors "pall upon the sense" with a tiresome familiarity. Reading becomes hateful, for the very reason that it has become necessary. Amusements are exhausted, invented, changed, varied, and again exhausted. Every thing upon which the attention fixes itself, vainly wooing something novel, soon becomes insipid. Chess, backgammon, letter-writing, journalizing, smoking, eating, drinking, and sleeping, may at first contribute not a little to the discomfiture of old Time, who walks the *sea* shod with leaden sandals. The last three enumerated items, however, generally hold out to the last undisabled. But three Wellingtons could not have won Waterloo unsupported; nor, able and doughty as are these bold three—much as they prolong the combat—manfully as they fight, can they hold good their ground for ever; the obstinate, scythe-armed warrior, with his twenty-four body guards following him like

his shadow, will still maintain the broadest portion of his diurnal territory, over which, manœuvre as they may, these discomfited worthies cannot extend their front.

Few situations are less enviable, than that of the worn voyager, as day after day "drags its slow length along," presenting to his restless, listless eyes, as he stretches them wearily over the leaden waste around him—the same unbroken horizon, forming the periphery of a circle, of which his vessel seems to be the immovable and everlasting centre—the same blue, unmeaning skies above—the same blue sea beneath and around—the same gigantic tracery of ropes and spars, whose fortuitous combinations of strange geometrical figures he has demonstrated, till they are as familiar as the diagrams on a turtle's back to an alderman; and the same dull white sails, with whose patches he has become as familiar as with the excrescences and other innocent defects upon the visages of his fellow-sufferers.

On leaving port, I commenced a journal, or rather, as I am in a nautical atmosphere, a "log," the choicest chips of which shall be hewn off, basketed in fools-cap, and duly transmitted to you. Like other chips they may be useful to kindle the fire withal. "What may not warm the feelings may—the toes," is a truism of which you need not be reminded: and if you test it practically, it will not be the first time good has been elicited from evil. But the sameness of a sea-life will by no means afford me many combustible incidents. Somebody has said "the will is equal to the deed, if the deed cannot be." Now I have the will to pile a hecatomb, but if I can pile only a couple of straws, it will be, of course, the same thing in the abstract. Mine, perchance, may be the fate of that poor journalist who, in a voyage across the Atlantic, could obtain but one wretched item wherewith to fill his journal—which he should have published, by the way. What a rare sort of a book it would have been! So soon read too! In this age when type-blotted books are generative, it would immortalize the author. Tenderly handed down from

one generation to another, it would survive the "fall of empires, and the crash of worlds." "At three and a quarter P. M., ship going two and a half knots per hour, the cook lost his bucket over-board—jolly boat lowered, and Jack and Peter rowed after it."

"Half-past three, P. M.—Cook has got his bucket again—and a broken head into the bargain."

To one who has never "played with Ocean's mane," nor, borne by his white-winged coursers, scoured his pathless fields, there may be, even in the common-place descriptions of sea-scenes, something, which wears the charm of novelty. If my hasty sketches can contribute to your entertainment "o' winter nights," or, to the gratification of your curiosity, they will possess an influence which I do not promise or predict for them.

Unfavourable winds had detained our ship several days, and all who had taken passage were on the "tiptoe of expectation" for the signal for sailing. Trunks, boxes, chests, cases, carpet-bags, and all the paraphernalia of travelling equipage, had long been packed, locked, and shipped—and our eyes had hourly watched the fickle gyrations of a horizontal gilt figure, which surmounted the spire of a neighbouring church, till they ached again. Had the image been Eolus himself, it could not have commanded more devoted worshippers.

A week elapsed—and patience, which hitherto had been admirably sustained, began to flag; murmurings proceeded from the lips of more than one of the impatient passengers, as by twos and threes, they would meet by a kind of sympathetic affinity at the corners of the streets, where an unobstructed view could be obtained of some church-vane, all of which, throughout our city of churches, had taken a most unaccommodating fancy to kick their golden-shod heels at the Northern Bear.

At precisely twenty minutes before three of the clock, on the afternoon of the first of November instant, the

phlegmatic personage in the gilt robe, very obligingly, after he had worn our patience to shreds by his obstinacy, let his head and heels exchange places. At the same moment, ere he had ceased vibrating and settled himself steadily in his new position, the welcome signal was made, and in less than half an hour afterward, we were all, with bag and baggage, on board the ship, which rode at her anchor two hundred fathoms from the shore.

The top-sails, already loosed, were bellying and wildly collapsing with a loud noise, in the wind; but bounding to their posts at the command of their superior officer, the active seamen soon extended them upon the spars—immense fields of swelling canvass; and our vessel gracefully moved from her moorings, and glided through the water with the lightness of a swan.

As we moved rapidly down the noble harbour, which, half a century since, bore upon its bosom the hostile fleet of the proud island of the north, the swelling ocean was sending in its evening tribute to the continent, in vast scrolls, which rolled silently, but irresistibly onward, and majestically unfolded upon the beach—or, with a hoarse roar, resounded along the cliffs, and surged among the rocky throats of the promontory, impressing the mind with emotions of sublimity and awe.

II.

Table of Contents

A tar's headway on land—A gentleman's at sea—
An agreeable trio—Musical sounds—Helmsman—
Supper—Steward—A truism—Helmsman's cry—
Effect—Cases for bipeds—Lullaby—Sleep.

The motion was just sufficiently lively to inspire one—making the blood frolic through the veins, and the heart beat more proudly. The old tars, as they cruised about the decks, walked as steadily as on land. This proves nothing, you may say, if you have witnessed Jack's pendulating, uncertain—"right and left oblique" advance on a shore cruise.

Our tyros of the sea, in their venturesome projections of their persons from one given point in their eye to another, in the hope of accomplishing a straight line, after vacillating most appallingly, would finally succeed "*haud passibus æquis*" in reaching the position aimed for, fortunate if a lee-lurch did not accommodate them with a dry bed in the "lee scuppers."

Of all laughter-exciting locomotives which most create sensations of the ludicrously serious, commend me to an old land-crab teaching its young one to "*go ahead*"—a drunkard, reeling homeward through a broad street on a Saturday night—and a "gentleman passenger" three days at sea in his strange evolutions over the deck.

Stretched before me upon the weather hen-coop, enveloped in his cloak, lay one of our "goodlie companie." If his sensations were such as I imagined them to be, he must have felt that the simplest chicken under him wore the stoutest heart.

On the lee hen-coop reposed another passenger in sympathy with his fellow, to whose feelings I felt a disposition to do equal justice. Aft the wheel, coiled up in the rigging, an agreeable substitute for a bed of down, lay half obscured within the shadow of the lofty stern, another overdone toper—a victim of Neptune, not of the "jolly god"—but whose sensations have been experienced by many of the latter's pupils, who have never tasted other salt water than their own tears.

It has been said or sung by some one, that the "ear is the road to the heart." That it was so to the stomach, I already began to feel, could not be disputed; and as certain "guttural sounds" began to multiply from various quarters, with startling emphasis, lest I should be induced to sympathize with the fallen novitiates around me, by some *overt* act, I hastily glided by the helmsman, who stood alone like the sole survivor of a battle-field—his weather-beaten visage illuminated at the moment with a strange glare from the "binnacle-lamp" which, concealed within a case like a single-windowed pigeon house, and open in front of him, burned nightly at his feet. The next moment I was in the cabin, now lighted up by a single lamp suspended from the centre of the ceiling, casting rather shade than light upon a small table—studiously arranged for supper by the steward—that non-descript *locum tenens* for valet—waiter—chambermaid—shoe-black—cook's-mate, and swearing-post for irascible captains to vent stray oaths upon, when the wind is ahead—with a flying commission for here, there, and nowhere! when most wanted.

But the supper! ay, the supper. Those for whom the inviting display was made, were, I am sorry to say it, most unhesitatingly "floored" and quite *hors du combat*. What a deal of melancholy truth there is in that aphorism, which teaches us that the "brave must yield to the braver!"

As I stood beside the helmsman, I could feel the gallant vessel springing away from under me, quivering through

every oaken nerve, like a high-mettled racer with his goal but a bound before him. As she encountered some more formidable wave, there would be a tremendous outlay of animal-like energy, a momentary struggle, a half recoil, a plunging, trembling—*onward* rush—then a triumphant riding over the conquered foe, scattering the gems from its shivered crest in glittering showers over her bows. Then gliding with velocity over the glassy concave beyond, swaying to its up-lifting impulse with a graceful inclination of her lofty masts, and almost sweeping the sea with her yards, she would majestically recover herself in time to gather power for a fresh victory.

Within an hour after clearing the last head-land, whose lights, level with the plain of the sea, gleamed afar off, twinkling and lessened like stars, with which they were almost undistinguishably mingled on the horizon—we had exchanged the abrupt, irregular "seas" of the bay, for the regular, majestically rolling billows of the ocean.

I had been for some time pacing the deck, with the "officer of the watch" to recover my sea-legs, when the helmsman suddenly shouted in a wild startling cry, heard, mingling with the wind high above the booming of the sea, the passing hour of the night watch.—"Four bells."—"Four bells," repeated the only one awake on the fore-castle, and the next moment the ship's bell rung out loud and clear—wildly swelling upon the gale, then mournfully dying away in the distance as the toll ceased, like the far-off strains of unearthly music—

"—— Died the solemn knell
As a trumpet music dies,
By the night wind borne away
Through the wild and stormy skies."

There is something so awful in the loud voice of a man mingling with the deep tones of a bell, heard at night upon

the sea, that familiar as my ear was with the sounds—the blood chilled at my heart as this "lonely watchman's cry" broke suddenly upon the night.

When he again told the hour I was safely stowed away in a comfortable berth, not so large as that of Goliath of Gath by some cubits, yet admirably adapted to the sea, which serves most discourteously the children of Somnus, unless they fit their berths like a modern M. D. his sulkey, lulled to sleep by the rattling of cordage, the measured tread of the watch directly over me, the moanings, *et cætera*, of sleepless neighbours, the roaring of the sea, the howling of the wind, and the gurgling and surging of the water, as the ship rushed through it, shaking the waves from her sides, as the lion scatters the dew from his mane, and the musical rippling of the eddies—like a glassichord, rapidly run over by light fingers—curling and singing under the keel.

III.

Table of Contents

Shakspeare—Suicide or a 'fowl' deed—A conscientious fable—Fishing smacks—A pretty boy—Old Skipper, Skipper junior, and little Skipper—A young Caliban—An alliterate Man—Fishermen—Nurseries—Navy—The Way to train up a Child—Gulf Stream—Humboldt—Crossing the Gulf—Ice-ships—Yellow fields—Flying fish—A game at bowls—Bermuda—A post of observation—Men, dwellings, and women of Bermuda—St. George—English society—Washing decks—Mornings at sea—Evenings at sea—A Moonlight scene—The ocean on fire—Its phosphorescence—Hypotheses.

"Let's whip these stragglers o'er the seas again," was the gentle oratory of the aspiring Richard, in allusion to the invading Bretagnes.—

"Lash hence these overweening rags of France."

The interpreter of the heart's natural language—Shakspeare, above all men, was endowed with human inspiration. His words come ripe to our lips like the fruit of our own thoughts. We speak them naturally and unconsciously. They drop from us like the unpremeditated language of children—spring forth unbidden—the richest melody of the mind. Strong passion, whether of grief or joy while seeking in the wild excitement of the moment her own words for utterance, unconsciously enunciates *his*, with a natural and irresistible energy. There is scarcely a human thought, great or simple, which Shakspeare has not spoken for his fellow-men, as never man, uninspired, spake; which

he has not embodied and clothed with a drapery of language, unsurpassable. So—

"Let's whip *this* straggler o'er the seas again,"

I have very good reason to fear, will flow all unconsciously from your lips, as most applicable to my barren letter; in penning which I shall be driven to extremity for any thing of an interesting character. If it must be so, I am, of all epistlers, the most innocent.

Ship, air, and ocean equally refuse to furnish me with a solitary incident. My wretched "log" now and then records an event: such as for instance, how one of "the Doctor's" plumpest and most deliriously *embonpoint* pullets, very rashly and unadvisedly perpetrated a summerset overboard, after she had been decapitated by that sable gentleman, in certainly the most approved and scientific style. None but a very silly chicken could have been dissatisfied with the unexceptionable manner in which the operation was performed. But, both feathered and plucked bipeds, it seems, it is equally hard to please.

For the last fourteen days we have been foot-balls for the winds and waves. Their game may last as many more; therefore, as we have as little free agency in our movements as foot-balls themselves, we have made up our minds to yield our fretted bodies as philosophically as may be, to their farther pastime. The sick have recovered, and bask the hours away on deck in the beams of the warm south sun, like so many luxurious crocodiles.

To their good appetites let our table bear witness. Should it be blessed with a conscience, it is doubly blessed by having it cleared thrice daily by the most rapacious father-confessors that ever shrived penitent; of which "gentlemen of the *cloth*" it boasts no less than eight.

The first day we passed through a widely dispersed fleet of those short, stump-masted *non-descripts*, with swallow-

tailed sterns, snubbed bows, and black hulls, sometimes denominated fishing smacks, but oftener and more euphoniously, "Chebacco boats," which, from May to October, are scattered over our northern seas.

While we dashed by them, one after another, in our lofty vessel, as, close-hauled on the wind, or "wing and wing," they flew over the foaming sea, I could not help smiling at the ludicrous scenes which some of their decks exhibited.

One of them ran so close to us, that we could have tossed a potato into the "skipper's" dinner-pot, which was boiling on a rude hearth of bricks placed upon the open deck, under the *surveillance* of, I think, the veriest mop-headed, snub-nosed bit of an urchin that I ever saw.

"Keep away a little, or you'll run that fellow down," suddenly shouted the captain to the helmsman; and the next moment the little fishing vessel shot swiftly under our stern, just barely clearing the spanker boom, whirling and bouncing about in the wild swirl of the ship's wake like a "Massallah boat" in the surf of Madras.

There were on board of her four persons, including the steersman—a tall, gaunt old man, whose uncovered gray locks streamed in the wind as he stooped to his little rudder to luff up across our wake. The lower extremities of a loose pair of tar-coated duck trowsers, which he wore, were incased, including the best part of his legs, in a pair of fisherman's boots, made of leather which would flatten a rifle ball. His red flannel shirt left his hairy breast exposed to the icy winds, and a huge pea-jacket, thrown, Spanish fashion, over his shoulders, was fastened at the throat by a single button. His tarpaulin—a little narrow-brimmed hat of the pot-lid tribe, secured by a ropeyarn—had probably been thrown off in the moment of danger, and now hung swinging by a lanyard from the lower button-hole of his jacket.

As his little vessel struggled like a drowning man in the yawning concave made by the ship, he stood with one hand firmly grasping his low, crooked rudder, and with the other

held the main sheet, which alone he tended. A short pipe protruded from his mouth, at which he puffed away incessantly; one eye was tightly closed, and the other was so contracted within a network of wrinkles, that I could just discern the twinkle of a gray pupil, as he cocked it up at our quarter-deck, and took in with it the noble size, bearing, and apparel of our fine ship.

A duplicate of the old helmsman, though less battered by storms and time, wearing upon his chalky locks a red, woollen, conical cap, was "easing off" the foresheet as the little boat passed; and a third was stretching his neck up the companion ladder, to stare at the "big ship," while the little carrot-headed imp, who was just the old skipper *razeed*, was performing the culinary operations of his little kitchen under cover of the heavens.

Our long pale faces tickled the young fellow's fancy extremely.

"Dad," squalled the youthful reprobate, in the softest, hinge-squeaking soprano—"Dad, I guess as how them ar' chaps up thar, ha'nt lived on salt grub long."—The rascal—we could have minced him with his own fish and potatoes.

"Hold your yaup, you youngster you," roared the old man in reply.—The rest of the beautiful alliteration was lost in the distance, as his smack bounded from us, carrying the young *sans-culotte* out of reach of the consequences of his temerity. To mention *salt grub* to men of our stomachs' capacity, at that moment! He merited impaling upon one of his own cod-hooks. In ten minutes after, we could just discern the glimmer of the little vessel's white sails on the verge of the distant horizon, in whose hazy hue the whole fleet soon disappeared.

These vessels were on a tardy return from their Newfoundland harvests, which, amid fogs and squalls, are gathered with great toil and privation between the months of May and October. The fishermen constitute a distinct and peculiar class—not of society, but of men. To you I need not

describe them. They are to be seen at any time, and in great numbers, about the wharves of New-England sea-ports in the winter season—weather-browned, long-haired, coarsely garbed men, with honesty and good nature stamped upon their furrowed and strongly marked features. They are neither "seamen" nor "countrymen," in the usual signification of these words, but a compound of both; combining the careless, free-and-easy air of the one, with the awkwardness and simplicity of the other. Free from the grosser vices which characterize the foreign-voyaged *sailor*, they seldom possess, however, that religious tone of feeling which distinguishes the ruder *countryman*.

Marblehead and Cape Cod are the parent nurseries of these hardy men. Portland has, however, begun to foster them, thereby adding a new and vigorous sinew to her commercial strength. In conjunction with the whale fisheries, to which the cod are a sort of introductory school, these fisheries are the principal nurseries of American seamen. I have met with many American ships' crews, one-half or two-thirds of which were composed of men who had served their apprenticeship in the "fisheries." The youth and men whom they send forth are the bone and muscle of our navy. They have an instinctive love for salt water. Every one who is a parent, takes his sons, one after another, as they doff their petticoats, if the freedom of their limbs was ever restrained by such unnecessary appendages, and places them on the deck of his fishing smack; teaches them to call the ropes by their names, bait, fling, and patiently watch the deceptive hook, and dart the harpoon, or plunge the grains—just as the Indian is accustomed to lead his warrior-boys forth to the hunting grounds, and teach them to track the light-footed game, or heavier-heeled foe—wing, with unerring aim, the fatal arrow, or launch the deadly spear.

The three succeeding days we were delayed by calms, or contending with gales and head winds. On the morning of

the seventh day "out," there was a general exclamation of surprise from the passengers as they came on deck.

"How warm!" "What a suffocating air!" "We must have sailed well last night to be so far south!" They might well have been surprised if this change in the temperature had been gained by regular "southing." But, alas, we had barely lessened our latitude twenty miles during the night. We had entered the Gulf Stream! that extraordinary natural phenomenon of the Atlantic Ocean. This immense circle of tepid water which revolves in the Atlantic, enclosing within its periphery, the West India and Western Islands, is supposed by Humboldt to be occasioned "by the current of rotation (trade winds) which strikes against the coasts of Veraguas and Honduras, and ascending toward the Gulf of Mexico, between Cape Caloche and Cape St. Antoine, issues between the Bahamas and Florida." From this point of projection, where it is but a few miles wide, it spreads away to the northeast in the shape of an elongated slightly curved fan, passing at the distance of about eighty miles from the coast of the southern states, with a velocity, opposite Havana, of about four miles an hour, which decreases in proportion to its distance from this point. Opposite Nantucket, where it takes a broad, sweeping curve toward Newfoundland, it moves generally only about two miles an hour. Bending from Newfoundland through the Western Islands, it loses much of its velocity at this distance from its radiating point, and in the eastern Atlantic its motion is scarcely perceptible, except by a slight ripple upon the surface.

This body of water is easily distinguishable from that of the surrounding blue ocean by its leaden hue—the vast quantity of pale-yellow gulf-weed, immense fields of which it wafts from clime to clime upon its ever-rolling bosom, and by the absence of that phosphorescence, which is peculiar to the waters of the ocean. The water of this singular stream is many degrees warmer than the sea through which it

flows. Near Cuba the heat has been ascertained to be as great as 81° , and in its course northward from Cuba, it loses 2° of temperature for every 3° of latitude. Its warmth is easily accounted for as the production of very simple causes. It receives its original impulse in the warm tropical seas, which, pressed toward the South American shore by the wind, meet with resistance and are deflected along the coast northward, as stated above by Humboldt, and injected into the Northern Atlantic Ocean—the vast column of water having parted with very little of its original caloric in its rapid progress.

We crossed the north-western verge of "The Gulf" near the latitude of Baltimore, where its breadth is about eighty miles. The atmosphere was sensibly warmer here than that of the ocean proper, and the water which we drew up in the ship's bucket raised the mercury a little more than 8° . Not knowing how the mercury stood before entering the Gulf, I could not determine accurately the change in the atmosphere; but it must have been very nearly as great as that in the denser fluid. Veins of cool air circled through its atmosphere every few minutes, as welcome and refreshing to our bared foreheads as the sprinkling of the coolest water.

When vessels in their winter voyages along our frigid coasts become coated with ice, so as to resemble almost precisely, though of a gigantic size, those miniature glass ships so often seen preserved in transparent cases, they seek the genial warmth of this region to "thaw out," as this dissolving process is termed by the sailors. We were nearly three days in crossing the Gulf, at a very acute angle with its current, which period of time we passed very pleasantly, for voyagers; as we had no cold weather to complain of, and a variety of objects to entertain us. Sea, or Gulf-weed, constantly passed us in acres, resembling immense meadows of harvest wheat, waving and undulating with the breeze, tempting us to walk upon it. But for the ceaseless

roll and pitching of our ship, reminding us of our whereabouts, we might, without much trouble, have been cheated into the conviction that it was real *terra firma*.

Flocks of flying fish suddenly breaking from a smooth, swelling billow, to escape the jaws of some voracious pursuer, whose dorsal fin would be seen protruding for an instant afterward from the surface, flitted swiftly, with a skimming motion, over the sea, glittering in the sun like a flight of silver-winged birds; and then as suddenly, with dried wings, dropped into the sea again. One morning we found the decks sprinkled with these finned aerial adventurers, which had flown on board during the night.

Spars, covered with barnacles—an empty barrel marked on the head N. E. Rum, which we slightly altered our course *to speak*—a hotly contested *affaire d'honneur*, between two bantam-cocks in the weather-coop—a few lessons in splicing and braiding sennet, taken from a good-natured old sailor—a few more in the art of manufacturing "Turks' Heads," not, however, *à la Grec*—and other matters and things equally important, also afforded subjects of speculation and chit-chat, and means of passing away the time with a tolerable degree of comfort, and, during the intervals of eating and sleeping, to keep us from the blues.

A gallant ship—a limitless sea rolled out like a vast sheet of mottled silver—"goodlie companie"—a warm, reviving sun—a flowing sheet, and a courteous breeze, so gently breathing upon our sails, that surly Boreas, in a gentler than his wonted mood, must have sent a bevy of Zephyrs to waft us along—are combinations which both nautical amateurs and ignoramus know duly how to appreciate.

From the frequency of "squalls" and "blows" off Hatteras, it were easy to imagine a telegraphic communication existing between that head-land and Bermuda, carried on by flashes of lightning and tornadoes; or a game at bowls between Neptune and Boreas, stationed one on either spot, and hurling thunderbolts over the sea. This region, and that

included between 25° and 23° north latitude termed by sailors the "horse latitudes," are two of the most unpleasant localities a voyager has to encounter on his passage from a New-England sea-port to New-Orleans or Havana. In one he is wearied by frequent calms, in the other, exposed to sea sickness, and terrified by almost continual storms.

On the eighth day out, we passed Bermuda—that island-sentinel and spy of Britain upon our shores. The position of this post with regard to America, forcibly reminds me—I speak it with all due reverence for the "Lion" of England—of a lap-dog sitting at a secure distance and keeping guard over an eagle *volant*. How like proud England thus to come and set herself down before America, and like a still beautiful mother, watch with a jealous eye the unfolding loveliness of her rival daughter—build up a battery d'espionage against her shores, and seek to hold the very key of her seas.

The Bermudas or "Summer islands" so called from Sir George Summer, who was wrecked here two centuries since—are a cluster of small coral reefs lying nearly in the form of a crescent, and walled round and defended from the sea by craggy rocks, which rear their fronts on every side like battlements:—They are situated about two hundred and twenty leagues from the coast of South Carolina, and nearly in the latitude of the city of Charleston.

The houses are constructed of porous limestone, not unlike lava in appearance. This material was probably ejected by some unseen and unhistoric volcanic eruption, by which the islands themselves were in all probability heaved up from the depths of the ocean. White-washed to resist the rain, their houses contrast beautifully with the green-mantled cedars and emerald carpets of the islands. The native Bermudians follow the sea for a livelihood. They make good sailors while at sea; but are dissipated and indolent when they return to their native islands, indulging in drinking, gaming, and every species of extravagance.

The females are rather pretty than otherwise; with good features and uncommonly fine eyes. Like all their sex, they are addicted to dress, in which they display more finery than taste. Dancing is the pastime of which they are most passionately fond. In affection and obedience to their "lords," and in tenderness to their children, it is said that they are patterns to all fair ones who may have taken those, seldom *audibly-spoken*, vows, "to love, honour, and obey"—oft times unuttered, I verily believe, from pure intention.

St. George, the principal town in the islands, has become a fashionable military residence. The society, which is English and extremely agreeable, is varied by the constant arrival and departure of ships of war, whose officers, with those of the army, a sprinkling of distinguished civilians, and clusters of fair beings who have winged it over the sea, compose the most spirited and pleasant society in the world. Enjoying a remarkably pure air, and climate similar to that of South Carolina, with handsomely reformed clergymen of the Church of England, and rich in various tropical luxuries, it is a desirable foreign residence and a convenient and pleasant haven for British vessels sailing in these seas.

This morning we were all in a state of feverish excitement, impatient to place our eyes once more upon land. Visions of green fields and swelling hills, pleasantly waving trees and cool fountains—groves, meadows, and rural cottages, had floated through our waking thoughts and mingled with our dreams.

"Is the land in sight, Captain?" was the only question heard from the lips of one and another of the expectant passengers as they rubbed their sleepy eyes, poked their heads from their half-opened state-room doors, or peeped from their curtained berths. Ascending to the deck, we beheld the sun just rising from the sea in the splendor of his oriental pomp, flinging his beams far along the sky and over the waters, enriching the ocean with his radiance till it

resembled a sea of molten gold, gilding the dew-hung spars, and spreading a delicate blush of crimson over the white sails. It was a morning of unrivalled beauty. But thanks to nautical housewifery, its richness could not be enjoyed from the decks.

At sea, the moment the sun rises, and when one feels in the humor of quitting his hot state-room and going on deck, the officer of the watch sings out in a voice that goes directly to the heart—"Forard there—wash decks!" Then commences an elemental war rivalling Noah's deluge. *That* was caused by the pouring down of rain in drops—*thié* by the out-pouring of full buckets. From the moment this flood commences one may draw back into his narrow shell, like an affrighted snail, and take a morning's nap:—the deck, for an hour to come, is no place for animals that are not web-footed.

Fore and aft the unhappy passenger finds no way of escaping the infliction of this purifying ceremony. Should he be driven aloft, there "to banquet on the morning," he were better reposing on a gridiron or sitting astride a handsaw. If below, there the steward has possession, sweeping, laying the breakfast table and making-up berths, and the air, a hundred times breathed over, rushes from the opening state-rooms threatening to suffocate him—he were better engulfed in the bosom of a stew-pan.

To stand, cold, wet, and uncomfortable upon the damp decks till the sun has dried both them and him is the only alternative. If after all the "holy stone" should come in play, he may then quietly jump over-board.

The evenings, however, amply compensate for the loss of the fine mornings. The air, free from the dust, floating particles and exhalations of the land, is perfectly transparent, and the sky of a richer blue. The stars seem nearer to you there; and the round moon pours her unclouded flood of light, down upon the sea, with an opulence and mellowness, of which those who have only

seen moonlight, sleeping upon green hills, cities and forests, know nothing. On such nights, there cannot be a nobler, or prouder spectacle, as one stands upon the bows, than the lofty, shining pyramid of snow-white canvass which, rising majestically from the deck, lessens away, sail after sail, far into the sky—each sheet distended like a drum-head, yet finely rounded, and its towering summit, as the ship rises and falls upon the billows, waving like a tall poplar, swaying in the wind. In these hours of moonlit enchantment, while reclining at full length upon the deck, and gazing at the diminished point of the flag-staff, tracing devious labyrinths among the stars, the blood has danced quicker through my veins as I could feel the ship springing away beneath me like a fleet courser, and leaping from wave to wave over the sea. At such moments the mind cannot divest itself of the idea that the bounding ship is instinct with life—an animated creature, careering forward by its own volition. To this are united the musical sighing of the winds through the sails and rigging—the dashing of the sea and the sound of the rushing vessel through the water, which sparkles with phosphorescent light, as though sprinkled with silver dust.

A dark night also affords a scene to gratify curiosity and charm the eye. A few nights since, an exclamation of surprise from one of the passengers called me from my writing to the deck. As, on emerging from the cabin, I mechanically cast my eyes over the sea, I observed that at first it had the appearance of reflecting the stars from its bosom in the most dazzling splendour, but on looking upward to gaze upon the original founts of this apparently reflected light, my eyes met only a gloomy vault of clouds unilluminated by a solitary star. The "scud" flew wildly over its face and the heavens were growing black with a gathering tempest. Yet beneath, the sea glittered like a "lake of fire." The crests of the vast billows as they burst high in the air, descended in showers of scintillations. The ship scattered broken light from her bows, as though a pavement of

mirrors had been shivered in her pathway. Her track was marked by a long luminous train, not unlike the tail of a comet, while gleams of light like lighted lamps floating upon the water, whirled and flashed here and there in the wild eddies of her wake. The spray which was flung over the bows glittered like a sprinkling of diamonds as it fell upon the decks, where, as it flowed around the feet, it sparkled for some seconds with innumerable shining specks. And so intense was the light shining from the sea that I was enabled to read with ease the fine print of a newspaper. A bucket plunged into the sea, which whitened like shivered ice, on its striking it, was drawn up full of glittering seawater that sparkled for more than a minute, after being poured over the deck, and then gradually losing its lustre, finally disappeared in total darkness.

Many hypotheses have been suggested by scientific men to account for this natural phenomenon. "Some have regarded it," says Dr. Coates, "as the effect of electricity, produced by the friction of the waves; others as the product of a species of fermentation in the water, occurring accidentally in certain places. Many have attributed it to the well-known phosphorescence of putrid fish, or to the decomposition of their slime and exuviae, and a few only to the real cause, the voluntary illumination of many distinct species of marine animals.

"The purpose for which this phosphorescence is designed is lost in conjecture; but when we recollect that fish are attracted to the net by the lights of the fisherman, and that many of the marine shellfish are said to leave their native element to crawl around a fire built upon the beach, are we not warranted in supposing that the animals of which we have been speaking, are provided with these luminous properties, in order to entice their prey within their grasp?"

IV.

Table of Contents

Land—Abaco—Fleet—Hole in the Wall—A wrecker's hut—Bahama vampyres—Light houses—Conspiracy—Wall of Abaco—Natural Bridge—Cause—Night scene—Speak a packet ship—A floating city—Wrecker's lugger—Signal of distress—A Yankee lumber brig—Portuguese Man-of-War.

"Land ho!" shouted a voice both loud and long, apparently from the clouds, just as we had comfortably laid ourselves out yesterday afternoon for our customary *siesta*.

"Where away?" shouted the captain, springing to the deck, but not so fast as to prevent our tumbling over him, in the head-and-heels projection of our bodies up the companion-way, in our eagerness to catch a glimpse, once more, of the grassy earth; of something at least stationary.

"Three points off the weather bow," replied the man aloft.

"Where is it?"—"which way?" "I see it"—"Is that it captain—the little hump?" were the eager exclamations and inquiries of the enraptured passengers, who, half beside themselves, were peering, straining, and querying, to little purpose.

It was Abaco—the land first made by vessels bound to New Orleans or Cuba, from the north. With the naked eye, we could scarcely distinguish it from the small blue clouds, which, resting, apparently, on the sea, floated near the verge of the southern horizon. But with the spy glass, we could discern it more distinctly, and less obscured by that vail of blue haze, which always envelopes distant objects when seen from a great distance at sea, or on land.

As we approached, its azure vail gradually faded away, and it appeared to our eyes in its autumnal gray coat, with