

**A DIARY IN AMERICA,  
WITH REMARKS ON ITS  
INSTITUTIONS, VOL. II**

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A diary in America, with remarks on its institutions, Vol. II by Marryat

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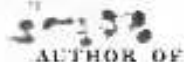
A  
DIARY IN AMERICA,

WITH

REMARKS ON ITS INSTITUTIONS.

BY

CAPT. MARRYAT, C.B.,



AUTHOR OF

"PETER SIMPLE," "JACOB FAITHFUL,"  
"FRANK MILDMAV."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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# DIARY IN AMERICA.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

There is extreme beauty in the Ohio river. As may be supposed, where the rise and fall are so great the banks are very steep; and, now that the water is low, it appears deeply embedded in the wild forest scenery through which it flows. The whole stream is alive with small fresh-water turtle, who play on the surface of its clear water; while the most beautiful varieties of the butterfly tribe cross over from one side to the other, from the slave-States to the free—their liberty, at all events, not being interfered with as, on the free side, it would be thought absurd to catch what would not produce a cent; while, on the slaves, their idleness and their indifference to them are their security.

Set off, one of nine, in a stage-coach, for the Blue Sulphur springs. The country which is very picturesque, has been already described. It is one continuation of rising ground, through mountains covered with trees and verdure. Nature is excessively fond of drapery in America: I have never yet fallen in with a naked rock. She clothes every thing; and although you may occasionally meet with a slight nudity, it is no more than the exposure of the neck or the bare feet of the mountain-nymph. This ridge of the Alleghanies is very steep; but you have no distinct view as you climb up, not even at the Hawk's Nest, where you merely peep down into the ravine below. You are jammed up in the forests through which you pass nearly the whole of the way; and it was delightful to arrive at any level, and fall

in with the houses and well-tilled fields of the Virginian farmers, exhibiting every proof of prosperity and ease. The heat was dreadful; two horses fell dead, and I thought that many others would have died, for two of the wheels were defective, and the labour of the poor animals, in dragging us constantly up hill, was most severe.

The indifference of the proprietors of public conveyances in America as to the safety of their passengers, can only be accounted for by the extreme indifference of the passengers themselves, and the independent feeling shown by every class, who, whatever may be their profession, will never acknowledge themselves to be what we term the servants of the public. Here was an instance. The coach we were put into was defective in two of its wheels, and could only be repaired at Louisburg, about a hundred miles distant. Instead of sending it on to that town empty, as would have been done by our coach proprietors, and providing another (as they had plenty,) for the passengers; instead of this, in order to save the extra trouble and expense, they risked the lives of the passengers; on a road with a precipice on one side of it for at least four-fifths of the way. One of the wheels would not hold the grease, and creaked most ominously during the whole journey; and we were obliged to stop and pour water on it continually. The box and irons of the other were loose, and before we were half way it came off, and we were obliged to stop and get out. But the Americans are never at a loss when they are in a *fix*. The passengers borrowed an axe; in a short time wedges were cut from one of the trees at the road-side, and the wheel was so well repaired that it lasted us the remainder of our journey.

Our road for some time lay through the valley of Kenawha, through which runs the river of that name—a strong, clear stream. It is hemmed in by mountains on each side of it; and here, perhaps, is presented the most curious varieties of mineral produce that ever were combined in one locality. The river runs over a bed of horizontal calcareous strata, and by perforating this strata about forty or fifty feet below the level of the river, you arrive at salt-springs, the waters of which



are pumped up by small steam-engines, and boiled down into salt in buildings erected on the river's banks. The mountains which hem in the river are one mass of coal; a gallery is opened at that part of the foot of the mountain most convenient to the buildings, and the coal is thrown down by shoots or small railways. Here you have coal for your fuel; salt water under fresh; and as soon as the salt is put into the barrels (which are also made from the mountain timber,) the river is all ready to transplant them down to the Ohio. But there is another great curiosity in this valley: these beds of coal have produced springs, as they are termed, of carburetted hydrogen gas, which run along the banks of the river close to the water's edge. The negroes take advantage of these springs when they come down at night to wash clothes; they set fire to the springs, which yield them sufficient light for their work. The one which I examined was dry, and the gas bubbled up through the sand. By kicking the sand about, so as to make communications after I had lighted the gas, I obtained a very large flame, which I left burning.

The heat, as we ascended, was excessive, and the passengers availed themselves of every spring, with the exception of those just described, that they fell in with on the route. We drank of every variety of water excepting pure water—sometimes iron, sometimes sulphur; and, indeed, every kind of chalybeate, for every rill was impregnated in some way or another. At last, it occurred to me that there were such things as chemical affinities, and that there was no saying what changes might take place by the admixture of such a variety of metals and gases, so I drank no more. I did not like, however, to interfere with the happiness of others, so I did not communicate my ideas to my fellow-passengers, who continued drinking during the whole day; and as I afterwards found out, did not sleep very well that night; they were, moreover, very sparing in the use of them the next day.

There are a great variety of springs already discovered on these mountains, and probably there will be a great

many more. Already they have the blue, the white, and the red sulphur springs; the sweet and the salt; the warm and the hot, all of which have their several virtues; but the greatest virtue of all these mineral springs is, as in England and every where else, that they occasion people to live regularly, to be moderate in the use of wine, and to dwell in a pure and wholesome air. They always remind me of the eastern story of the Dervise, who, being sent for by a king who had injured his health by continual indulgence, gave him a racket-ball, which he informed the king possessed wonderful medicinal virtues; with this ball his majesty was to play at racket two or three hours every day with his courtiers. The exercise it induced, which was the only medicinal virtue the ball possessed, restored the king to health. So it is with all watering places: it is not so much the use of the water, as the abstinence from what is pernicious, together with exercise and early hours, which effect the majority of cures.

We arrived first at the blue sulphur springs, and I remained there for one day to get rid of the dust of travelling. They have a very excellent hotel there, with a ball-room, which is open till eleven o'clock every night; the scenery is very pretty, and the company was good—as indeed is the company at all these springs, for they are too distant, and the travelling too expensive for every body to get there. But the blue sulphur are not fashionable, and the consequence was, we were not crowded, and were very comfortable. People who cannot get accommodated at the white sulphur, remain here until they can, the distance between them being only twenty-two miles.

The only springs which are fashionable are the white sulphur, and as these springs are a feature in American society, I shall describe them more particularly.

They are situated in a small valley, many hundred feet above the level of the sea, and are about fifteen or twenty acres in area, surrounded by small hills covered with foliage to their summits: at one end of the valley is the hotel, with the large dining-room for all the vi-

sitors. Close to the hotel, but in another building, is the ball-room, and a little below the hotel on the other side, is the spring itself; but beautiful as is the whole scenery, the great charm of this watering place is, the way in which those live who visit it. The rises of the hills which surround the valley are covered with little cottages, log-houses, and other picturesque buildings, sometimes in rows, and ornamented with verandahs, without a second story above, or kitchen below. Some are very elegant and more commodious than the rest, having been built by gentlemen who have the right given to them by the company to whom the springs belong, of occupying them themselves when there, but not of preventing others from taking possession of them in their absence. The dinners and other meals are, generally speaking, bad; not that there is not a plentiful supply, but that it is so difficult to supply seven hundred people sitting down in one room. In the morning, they all turn out from their little burrows, meet in the public walks, and go down to the spring before breakfast; during the forenoon, when it is too warm, they remain at home; after dinner they ride out or pay visits, and then end the day, either at the ball-room, or in little societies among one another. There is no want of handsome equipages, many four in hand (Virginny long tails) and every accommodation for these equipages. The crowd is very great, and it is astonishing what inconvenience people will submit to, rather than not be accommodated somehow or another. Every cabin is like a rabbit burrow. In the one next to where I was lodged, in a room about fourteen feet square, and partitioned off as well as it could be, there slept a gentleman and his wife, his sister and brother, and a female servant. I am not sure that the nigger was not under the bed—at all events, the young sister told me that it was not at all pleasant.

There is a sort of major-domo here, who regulates every department: his word is law, and his fiat immovable, and he presumes not a little upon his power; a circumstance not to be surprised at, as he is as