

**JOURNAL OF A TOUR
THROUGH THE UNITED STATES
AND IN CANADA, MADE
DURING THE YEARS 1837-38**

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Journal of a Tour through the United States and in Canada, Made during the Years 1837-38 by
Charles Daubeny

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CHARLES DAUBENY

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JOURNAL *by the*
author

OF

A TOUR

THROUGH

THE UNITED STATES,

AND

IN CANADA,

MADE DURING THE YEARS 1837-38

BY

CHARLES DAUBENY, M.D. F.R.S. &c.

PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY AND BOTANY IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

If a man would study human nature in and for itself, he must take a much larger tour than that of Europe. . . . The tour of Europe is like the entertainment that Plutarch speaks of, which Pompey's host of Epirus gave him. There were many dishes, and they had a seeming variety; but when he came to examine them narrowly, he found them all made up of one hog, and indeed nothing but pork variously modified.—*Warburton's Letters to Hurd.*

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M.DCCC.XLIII.

JOURNAL.

July 27, 1837.—On board the Packet Ship Mediator.

HAVING been now seven days on the Atlantic, and a little recovered from the effects of those horrors which most landmen have to encounter, when first launched upon the wide ocean, I sit down to indite my Journal, which, if it should serve no other purpose hereafter, will at least be the means during the voyage of whiling away many a heavy hour; and may serve also as an introduction to those notes which I intend during my sojourn in the New World, to continue if possible from day to day.

As yet, we have been the sport of the winds and waves, suffering grievously, without the satisfaction of making much progress—but the good ship has acquitted herself, as a vessel ought, which was built to be presented to the Sovereign of the greatest of maritime nations, himself a seaman, as a token of gratitude from the United States for his royal services in the capacity of Mediator, when General Jackson and Louis Philippe threatened to go to loggerheads. Why Jonathan, whilst he allowed the vessel to retain her name, degraded her from her high destiny to the rank of a common packet ship, to receive humble persons like ourselves, deponent sayeth not—nor does it much matter. She is, however, one of the most elegant and commodious of the noble class of vessels to which she belongs, and is provided for our comfort with a captain who looks a thorough seaman—equal to every emergency. I find myself fortunate also in my fellow passengers, whether English or American: amongst the

former are, Mr. Draper, the solicitor general, of Upper Canada, who, as I understand, has worked his way up to that high post solely by his talents and assiduity, and is evidently a superior person. Secondly, Major Bonnycastle, of the Engineers,* whom I find to be the son of the late Professor of Astronomy at Woolwich, the author of several standard works. Thirdly, his brother, a civilian, who being left a widower with one fine boy, is going to join his brothers in America, one of whom, the major, is in the Canadian service, whilst the other holds a professorship in the University founded by Jefferson, in Virginia. Both are agreeable and intellectual persons, the former having seen much of service, the latter well acquainted with modern languages and literature.

There are, likewise, two Thespians bent on trying their fortunes in the New World, the one by the name of Horncastle, a young man of a cultivated mind, and some vocal talent—the other, Mr. Williams, a comic singer, who has already made us at times forget our miseries by his fun and drollery.

Nor have I any reason to complain of the generality of the American class of passengers, amongst whom, I may mention the amiable family of the Motleys, from Boston, and a son of John Harrison Otis, the eminent Federalist, of the same city, a young man of intelligence and gentlemanlike address, but evincing the length of his absence from his native country by his Parisian air—and, above all, by the possession of a well-grown moustache, calculated, no doubt, to do execution on the continent, but which, nevertheless, the merciless decree of fashion will, I understand, consign to destruction, so soon as he reaches the confines of New England. We have, also, on board, the celebrated Commodore Rogers, of the American navy, the wreck of a fine seaman, but now debilitated in constitution and shaken in intellect; in whom, however, the ruling passion has been evinced, almost as it were in the ribs of death, by the fact of his having undertaken, in the present state of his health and infirmities, unattended, except by a black servant, a voyage of pleasure to the Old Country, from which he is now on his return, shortly, as is manifest, to deposit his bones within his native land.† But the most talented and in some respects the most agreeable person amongst them is Mr. Duer, of New York, the friend of Senior and Archbishop Whately, who, judging from the little intercourse I have yet had with him, seems a hard-headed and sagacious person, whose legal avocations have not prevented him from attaining an extensive acquaintance with general literature. Of ladies, there are but few on

* Now Sir R. Bonnycastle, author of "Canada, in 1841."

† He died the winter following, at Washington.

board, and these chiefly from the United States, but the roughness of the weather has hitherto chiefly confined them to their cabin.

August 2nd.—As sickness wears off, I begin to find, more and more, that the great problem on board ship is, how to *kill time*. There is, fortunately, amongst our cabin passengers no propensity for gambling, such as might serve to give a zest to the otherwise tedious monotony of games of chance—chess requires too much thought to become a frequent and popular occupation—and shuffle-board, the only out-door amusement, if I may so term it, at the best not a very attractive one, is practicable only when the deck happens to be pretty steady.

I contrive to keep the *enemy at bay* during one portion of the day by a course of observations, on the temperature both of the air and water—on the intensity of the sun's radiation, as determined by Herschel's actinometer—and, on the dryness of the atmosphere, by comparison between the indications afforded by the dry and wet bulb thermometers.*

Perhaps, fortunate for the undisturbed prosecution of these experiments, that there should be on board a kind of rival philosopher, in the person of a Mr. Swaim, of the United States, who, having purchased in London a grand electro-magnetic apparatus, and being likewise addicted to flying electrical kites, acts himself as a sort of conductor, to draw off attention from my meteorological experiments, to his own more attractive exhibitions.†

I fear, however, I have given him mortal offence to day by delivering a verdict against him, when appealed to by the passengers, as to the harmlessness of his drawing down electricity from the clouds. I confess, I do not feel sufficient confidence in *his* science, to be willing to trust him with so dangerous a *play-thing* as his electrical kite might prove in unskillful hands.

In addition to these observations, I also make my servant draw up for me every day a bucket full of the sea water, with which a quart bottle is regularly filled, and this, after being corked, sealed, and ticketed with the date, latitude, and longitude in which it was brought up, is set aside in a box for future examination. I shall also occasionally obtain samples of the water from a considerable depth, by means of the instrument of my invention which is described and figured in the Transactions of the Society of Arts.‡

* For a summary of these observations, see appended.

† He is the person alluded to in Mr. Horncastle's lines, "On board the Mediator," as the "Learned Pundit," and is the son of the inventor of a patent medicine, which enjoys as great a celebrity in the New World, as Morrison's Pills do in the Old.

‡ I was thus enabled, on my return to England, in 1838, to obtain

Such are my expedients for wiling away time—in behalf of the other passengers, however, who have no such means of the following results, indicating a pretty uniform rate of increase in the saltness of the sea, as we recede from either coast:—

THE QUANTITY OF SALT IN SEA WATER.

Locality.	Latitude.	Longitude.	Sp. gravity of the water.	Proportion of solid matter in 100 grains obtained by evaporation in a water bath
Off Southmptn.	50.54	1.24	1027.00	19.40
	49.38	2 0 abo t	10267.26	20. 4
	49.10	4. 8	10269.08	....
	49.28	6.36	10269.99	....
	50. 5	9.19	10269.99	20.95
	50. 0	12. 8	10269.99	....
	49.34	12. 7	10270.90	....
	47.27	13.35	10271.81	....
	48.50	15.30	10271.81	20. 9
	48.40	17.40	10271.81	....
	46.45	17.34	10272.72	....
	44.40	20.15	10272.72	20.85
	43.41	21.42	10272.72	....
	43.43	24.18	10275.45	....
	43.18	26.38	10275.45	21.00
	43.30	32. 9	10274.54	....
	44.45	33.22	10272.72	....
	45.12	34.52	10273.63	....
	45.36	37. 3	10271.81	....
	45.40	40.14	10269.08	....
	42.49	45.45	10272.72	....
	41.10	48.23	10254.52	....
	41.30	50.48	10249.06	....
	42.30	52.10	10249.06	18. 9
	44. 0	53.51	10249.97	....
	42 52	57.18	10248.15	....
	42.52	57.58	10249.06	....
	42.35	62.80	10254.28	....
	41. 0	65.43	10254.28	18. 7
	40.40	67.24	10256.34	....
	39.50	69.27	10249.06	....
	39.27	71.13	10265.44	19. 2
Off Sandy Hook	....	....	10229.04	....
Drawn from a depth of 80 fathoms.....	41.10	48.23	10265.44	....
Do. of 100 fths. Surface-water nearest to above	39.54	67.34	10273.63	21. 8
	....	....	10254.28	18. 7
				2. 3 grs. difference.

"*strenua inertia*" to exercise themselves upon, a suggestion has been thrown out for their relief, which seems to promise well. It is proposed that a Journal shall be brought out twice a week, filled with contributions, in verse and prose, from the various cabin passengers; and it is to go by the imposing title of the Atlantic Gazette, or Mediatorial Galaxy—Mr. Motley, senior, a quondam senator of the State of Massachusetts, and therefore yeleft an honourable, having condescended to confer the dignity of his name and title on the functions of its editor.

August 3rd.—The first number of this *important* publication has to-day made its appearance, and has been voted by acclamation to possess merit of a very superlative order.

To be sure, we are most of us contributors in one shape or other to its columns, and may therefore be excused for feeling a parent's fondness for our progeny.

The Editor, however, wisely considering the *motley* character of the expected contributors to his Journal, collected as they are

To this I will take the opportunity of appending the results of my examination of certain specimens of sea water, which were collected from other localities, viz. :—

Locality.	Latitude.	Longitude.	Sp. gravity of the water.	Proportion of solid matter in 100 grains, obtained by evaporation in a water bath
Between Charleston and Havana.....	28.16	80. 8	10258.16	.....
	27.30	—	10277.27	.....
	24.40	—	10273.63	20.90
	23.28	—	10273.63	
	23.15	—	10276.36	.....
Gulph of Mexico between Havana & N. Orleans	24.23	84.30	10276.36	.....
	26.33	86.47	10275.45	.....
	28.20	89.00	10278.18	21. 1
Indian Ocean.....	Equator.	84. 0 East	1026.00	19.00
Ditto	Ditto	8.16	1025.90	19.23
Ditto	Ditto	Do depth 625 ft.	1027.47	20.88
Atlantic Ocean	Ditto	19.30 West	1026.70	19.10
Bay of Naples	40.50	14 15	1030.00	22.30
Marseilles	43.17	5.22	1031.00	23.10

And of subjoining those obtained some years ago, by Dr. Marcet, as reported in the Philosophical Transactions, viz. :—

Atlantic Ocean	Equator	23. 0 West	1027 65	19. 6
South Atlantic	21° 0'	0. 0	1028.19	20. 6
North Atlantic	26.30	32 30	1028.86	21. 3

from both sides of the Atlantic, deserves credit for the tact he has displayed in selecting a topic for discussion, which seems not calculated to engender or to call forth any latent party or national animosities—

“ An onion will do well for such a shift.”

But his drift is best explained in the following introductory address which he has put forth :—

“ THE EDITOR TO HIS READERS.

“ It may reasonably be expected upon the first appearance of a periodical, such as now claims the attention and patronage of an indulgent public, that the editor should avow in summary terms his political views, and his notions on matters and things in general.

“ On these subjects he forbears at this time to make any avowals or professions, reserving to himself the right, in common with his fellow-subjects and fellow-citizens, to express his sentiments from time to time as circumstances may to him seem meet and proper.

“ But upon one topic vastly more interesting and absorbing than perhaps all others, he feels that he cannot be too explicit or too energetic.

“ He owes it to his ancestors—he owes it to his coadjutors—he owes it to the past, the present, and the coming generations of men, and of freemen—to take unequivocal, and he would fain hope, impregnable ground. The great question to which the editor alludes, and which doubtless is anticipated by his readers, is, ‘ Ingyons or no Ingyons ?’ that is emphatically the question.

“ The editor on this point, avoiding all circumlocution, comes to the scratch at once. He avows himself distinctly, undisguisedly, unequivocally, and unalterably, an Ingyonist of the deepest dye and richest flavour. Ingyons in all their shapes, in all their phases, in all their essences, he will advocate at all hazards.

“ Perish the Atlantic in dust and ashes, perish the Mediatorial Galaxy, with all its present and hoped for brilliancy and glory—but live, long live, and for ever live,—Ingyons and Liberty !”

There is also some humour in Mr. Horncastle’s song, “ On board the Mediator,” which appeared in the same number.—

“ SONG.—ON BOARD THE MEDIATOR.

“ When first I thought I’d like to be
A young United Stater,
Thinks I, I’d better go to sea,
On board the Mediator.

“ For I’d been down to Kitty’s Dock,
Just to investigate her,
And found all things uncommon snug
On board the Mediator.