

**FROM PONKAPOG
TO PESTH.
[BOSTON-1884]**

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From Ponkapog to Pesth. [Boston-1884] by Thomas Bailey Aldrich

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THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

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As for these Obseruations which I now exhibite vnto
thy gentle cenſure, take them I pray thee in good part
till I preſent better vnto thee after my next trauels.

CORVAT'S CROQUITES. 1611.

I.
PROLOGUE.

FROM PONKAPOG TO PESTH.

I.

PROLOGUE.

THE reader will probably not find Ponkapog set down in any but the very latest gazetteer. It is the Indian name of a little New England village, from which the writer sallied forth, a while ago, on a pilgrimage beyond the sea. Ponkapog scarcely merits a description, and Pesth—the farthest point east to which his wanderings led him—has been too often described. He is thus happily relieved of the onus of making strictly good the title of these papers, whose chief merit, indeed, is that they treat of neither Pesth nor Ponkapog.

It was a roundabout road the writer took to reach the Hungarian capital—a road

that carried him as far north as Inverness, as far south as Naples, and left him free to saunter leisurely through Spain and spend a day in Africa. But the ground he passed over had been worn smooth by the feet of millions of tourists and paved three deep with books of travel. He was too wise to let anything creep into his note-book beyond a strip of landscape here and there, a street scene in sepia, or an outline sketch of some custom or peculiarity that chanced to strike his fancy — and these he offers modestly to the reader.

What is newest to one in foreign countries is not always the people, but their surroundings, and those same little details of life and circumstance which make no impression on a man in his own land until he returns to it after a prolonged absence, and then they stand out very sharply for a while. Neither an Italian, nor a Frenchman, nor a Saxon is worth travelling three thousand miles by sea to look upon. It is