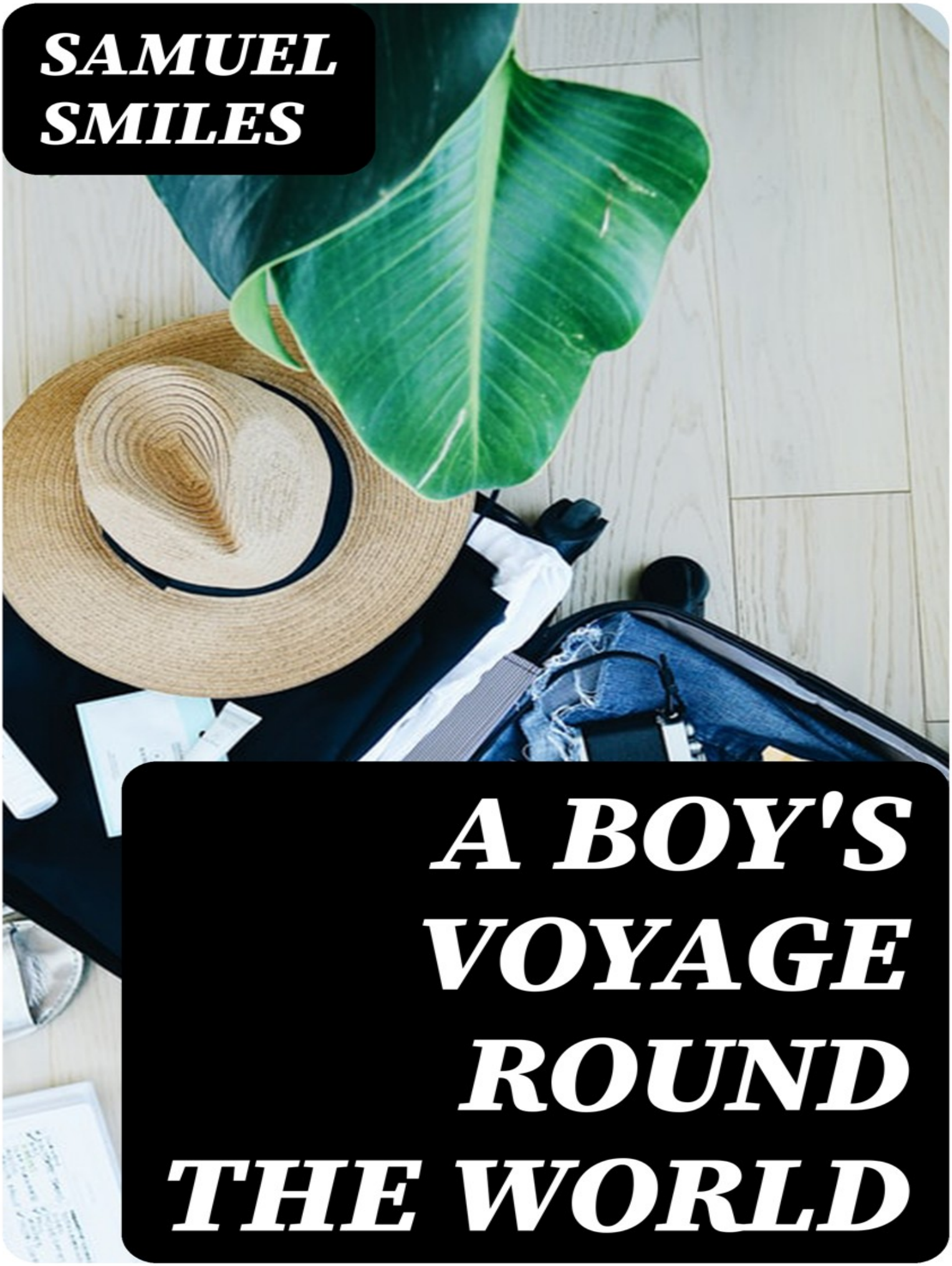
SAMUEL SMILES



A BOY'S VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD

Samuel Smiles

A Boy's Voyage Round the World

EAN 8596547240839

DigiCat, 2022
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PREFACE.

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I have had pleasure in editing this little book, not only because it is the work of my youngest son, but also because it contains the results of a good deal of experience of life under novel aspects, as seen by young, fresh, and observant eyes.

How the book came to be written is as follows: The boy, whose two years' narrative forms the subject of these pages, was at the age of sixteen seized with inflammation of the lungs, from which he was recovering so slowly and unsatisfactorily, that I was advised by London physicians to take him from the business he was then learning in Yorkshire, and send him on a long sea voyage. Australia was recommended, because of the considerable time occupied in making the voyage by sailing ship, and also because of the comparatively genial and uniform temperature while at sea.

He was accordingly sent out to Melbourne by one of Money Wigram's ships in the winter of 1868–9, with directions either to return by the same ship or, if the opportunity presented itself, to remain for a time in the colony. It will be found, from his own narrative that, having obtained some suitable employment, he decided to adopt the latter course; and for a period of about eighteen months he resided at Majorca, an up-country township situated in the gold-mining district of Victoria.

When his health had become re-established, he was directed to return home, about the beginning of the present year; and he resolved to make the return voyage by the Pacific route, *viâ* Honolulu and San Francisco, and to

proceed from thence by railway across the Rocky Mountains to New York.

While at sea, the boy kept a full log, intended for the perusal of his relatives at home; and while on land, he corresponded with them regularly and fully, never missing a mail. He had not the remotest idea that anything which he saw and described during his absence would ever appear in a book. But since his return, it has occurred to the Editor of these pages that the information they contain will probably be found interesting to a wider circle of readers than that to which the letters were originally addressed; and in that belief, the substance of them is here reproduced, the Editor's work having consisted mainly in arranging the materials, leaving the writer to tell his own story as much as possible in his own way, and in his own words.

S. S.

London, *November*, 1871.

ROUND THE WORLD.

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CHAPTER I.

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DOWN CHANNEL.

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At Gravesend—Taking in Stores—First Night on Board—"The Anchor's Up"—Off Brighton—Change of Wind—Gale in the Channel—The Abandoned Ship—The Eddystone—Plymouth Harbour—Departure from England.

20th February: At Gravesend.—My last farewells are over, my last adieus are waved to friends on shore, and I am alone on board the ship 'Yorkshire,' bound for Melbourne. Everything is in confusion on board. The decks are littered with stores, vegetables, hen-coops, sheep-pens, and coils of rope. There is quite a little crowd of sailors round the capstan in front of the cabin door. Two officers, with lists before them, are calling over the names of men engaged to make up our complement of hands, and appointing them to their different watches.

Though the ship is advertised to sail this evening, the stores are by no means complete. The steward is getting in lots of cases; and what a quantity of pickles! Hens are coming up to fill the hen-coops. More sheep are being brought; there are many on board already; and here comes our milk-cow over the ship's side, gently hoisted up by a rope. The animal seems amazed; but she is in skilful hands. "Let go!" calls out the boatswain, as the cow swings in mid-air; away rattles the chain round the wheel of the donkey-engine, and the break is put on just in time to land Molly gently on the deck.

In a minute she is snug in her stall "for'ard," just by the cook's galley.

Passengers are coming on board. Here is one mounting the ship's side, who has had a wet passage from the shore. A seaman lends him a hand, and he reaches the sloppy, slippery deck with difficulty.

It is a dismal day. The sleet and rain come driving down. Everything is raw and cold; everybody wet or damp. The passengers in wet mackintoshes, and the seamen in wet tarpaulins; Gravesend, with its dirty side to the river, and its dreary mud-bank exposed to sight; the alternate drizzle and down-pour; the muddle and confusion of the deck;—all this presented anything but an agreeable picture to look at. So I speedily leave the deck, in order to make a better acquaintance with what is to be my home for the next three months.

First, there is the saloon—long and narrow—surrounded by the cabins. It is our dining-room, drawing-room, and parlour, all in one. A long table occupies the centre, fitted all round with fixed seats and reversible backs. At one end of the table is the captain's chair, over which hangs a clock and a barometer. Near the after end of the saloon is the mizen-mast, which passes through into the hole below, and rests on the keelson.

The cabins, which surround the saloon, are separated from it by open woodwork, for purposes of ventilation. The entrances to them from the saloon are by sliding doors. They are separated from each other by folding-doors, kept bolted on either side when one cabin only is occupied; but these can be opened when the neighbours on both sides are agreeable.

My own little cabin is by no means dreary or uninviting. A window, with six small panes, lets in light and air; and outside is a strong board, or "dead-light," for use in rough weather, to protect the glass. My bunk, next to the saloon, is covered with a clean white counterpane. A little wash-stand occupies the corner; a shelf of favourite books is over my bed-head; and a swing-lamp by its side. Then there is my little mirror, my swing-tray for bottles, and a series of little bags suspended from nails, containing all sorts of odds and ends. In short, my little chamber, so fitted up, looks quite cheerful and even jolly.

It grows dusk, and there is still the same bustle and turmoil on deck. All are busy; everybody is in a hurry. At about nine the noise seems to subside; and the deck seems getting into something like order. As we are not to weigh anchor until five in the morning, some of the passengers land for a stroll on shore. I decide to go to bed.

And now begins my first difficulty. I cannot find room to extend myself, or even to turn. I am literally "cribbed, cabined, and confined." Then there are the unfamiliar noises outside—the cackling of the ducks, the baa-ing of the sheep, the grunting of the pigs—possibly discussing the novelty of their position. And, nearly all through the night, just outside my cabin, two or three of the seamen sit talking together in gruff undertones.

I don't think I slept much during my first night on board. I was lying semi-conscious, when a loud voice outside woke me up in an instant—"The anchor's up! she's away!" I jumped up, and, looking out of my little cabin window, peered out into the grey dawn. The shores seemed moving, and we were off! I dressed at once, and went on deck. But how raw and chill it felt as I went up the companion-ladder. A little steam-tug ahead of us was under weigh, with the 'Yorkshire' in tow. The deck was now pretty well cleared, but

white with frost; while the river banks were covered with snow.

Other ships were passing down stream, each with its tug; but we soon distanced them all, especially when the men flung the sails to the wind, now blowing fresh. At length, in about three-quarters of an hour, the steamer took on board her tow-rope, and left us to proceed on our voyage with a fair light breeze in our favour, and all our canvas set.

When off the Nore, we hailed the 'Norfolk,' homeward bound —a fast clipper ship belonging to the same firm (Money Wigram's line)—and a truly grand sight she was under full sail. There were great cheerings and wavings of hats—she passing up the river and we out to sea.

I need not detain you with a description of my voyage down Channel. We passed in succession Margate, Ramsgate, and Deal. The wind kept favourable until we sighted Beachy Head, about half-past five in the evening, and then it nearly died away. We were off Brighton when the moon rose. The long stretch of lights along shore, the clear star-lit sky, the bright moon, the ship gently rocking in the almost calm sea, the sails idly flapping against the mast—formed a picture of quiet during my first night at sea, which I shall not soon forget.

But all this, I was told, was but "weather-breeding;" and it was predicted that we were to have a change. The glass was falling and we were to look out for squalls. Nor were the squalls long in coming. Early next morning I was roused by the noise on deck and the rolling of things about my cabin floor. I had some difficulty in dressing, not having yet found my sea legs; but I succeeded in gaining the companion-ladder and reaching the poop.

I found the wind had gone quite round in the night, and was now blowing hard in our teeth, from the south-west. It was to be a case of tacking down Channel—a slow and, for landsmen, a very trying process. In the midst of my first *mal de mer*, I was amused by the appearance on board of one of my fellow-passengers. He was a small, a very small individual, but possessed of a large stock of clothes, which he was evidently glad to have an opportunity of exhibiting. He first came up with a souwester on his head, the wrong end foremost, and a pair of canvas shoes on his feet—a sort of miniature Micawber, or first-class cockney "salt," about to breast the briny. This small person's long nose, large ears, and open mouth added to the ludicrousness of his appearance. As the decks were wet and the morning cold, he found the garb somewhat unsuitable, and dived below, to come up again in strong boots and a straw hat. But after further consideration, he retired again, and again he appeared in fresh headgear—a huge seal-skin cap with lappets coming down over his ears. This important and dressy little individual was a source of considerable amusement to us; and there was scarcely an article in his wardrobe that had not its turn during the day.

All night it blew a gale; the wind still from the same quarter. We kept tacking between the coast of England and the opposite coast of France, making but small way as regards mileage—the wind being right in our teeth. During the night, each time that the ship was brought round on the other tack, there was usually a tremendous lurch; and sometimes an avalanche of books descended upon me from the shelf overhead. Yet I slept pretty soundly. Once I was awakened by a tremendous noise outside—something like a gun going off. I afterwards found it had been occasioned by the mainsail being blown away to sea, right out of the bolt-ropes, the fastenings of which were immediately outside my cabin window.

When I went on deck the wind was still blowing hard, and one had to hold on to ropes or cleats to be able to stand. The whole sea was alive, waves chasing waves and bounding over each other, crested with foam. Now and then the ship would pitch her prow into a wave, even to the bulwarks, dash the billow aside, and buoyantly rise again, bowling along, though under moderate sail, because of the force of the gale.

The sea has some sad sights, of which one shortly presented itself. About midday the captain sighted a vessel at some distance off on our weather bow, flying a flag of distress—an ensign upside down. Our ship was put about, and as we neared the vessel we found she had been abandoned, and was settling fast in the water. Two or three of her sails were still set, torn to shreds by the storm. The bulwarks were pretty much gone, and here and there the bare stanchions, or posts, were left standing, splitting in two the waves which broke clear over her deck, lying almost even with the sea. She turned out to be the 'Rosa,' of Guernsey, a fine barque of 700 tons, and she had been caught and disabled by the storm we had ourselves encountered. As there did not seem to be a living thing on board, and we could be of no use, we sailed away; and she must have gone down shortly after we left her. Not far from the sinking ship we came across a boat bottom upwards, most probably belonging to the abandoned ship. What of the poor seamen? Have they been saved by other boats, or been taken off by some passing vessel? If not, alas for their wives and children at home! Indeed it was a sad sight.

But such things are soon forgotten at sea. We are too much occupied by our own experiences to think much of others. For two more weary days we went tacking about, the wind somewhat abating. Sometimes we caught sight of the French coast through the mist; and then we tacked back

again. At length Eddystone light came in view, and we knew we were not far from the entrance to Plymouth Sound. Once inside the Breakwater, we felt ourselves in smooth water again.

Going upon deck in the morning, I found our ship anchored in the harbour nearly opposite Mount Edgcumbe. Nothing could be more lovely than the sight that presented itself. The noble bay, surrounded by rocks, cliffs, cottages—Drake's Island, bristling with cannon, leaving open a glimpse into the Hamoaze studded with great hulks of old war-ships—the projecting points of Mount Edgcumbe Park, carpeted with green turf down to the water and fringed behind by noble woods, looking like masses of emerald cut into fret-work—then, in the distance, the hills of Dartmoor, variegated with many hues, and swept with alternations of light and shade—all these presented a picture, the like of which I had never before seen and feel myself quite incompetent to describe.

As we had to wait here for a fair wind, and the gale was still blowing right into the harbour's mouth, there seemed no probability of our setting sail very soon. We had, moreover, to make up our complement of passengers, and provisions. Those who had a mind accordingly went on shore, strolled through the town, and visited the Hoe, from which a magnificent view of the harbour is obtained, or varied their bill of fare by dining at an hotel.

We were, however, cautioned not to sleep on shore, but to return to the ship for the night, and even during the day to keep a sharp look-out for the wind; for, immediately on a change to the nor'ard, no time would be lost in putting out to sea. We were further informed that, in the case of nearly every ship, passengers, through their own carelessness and dilly-dallying on shore, had been left behind. I determined, therefore, to stick to the ship.

After three days' weary waiting, the wind at last went round; the anchor was weighed with a willing "Yo! heave ho!" and in a few hours, favoured by a fine light breeze, we were well out to sea, and the brown cliffs of Old England gradually faded away in the distance.

CHAPTER II.

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FLYING SOUTH.

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FELLOW-PASSENGERS—LIFE ON BOARD SHIP—PROGRESS OF THE SHIP—HER HANDLING—A FINE RUN DOWN TO THE LINE—SHIP'S AMUSEMENTS—CLIMBING THE MIZEN—THE CAPE DE VERD ISLANDS—SAN ANTONIO.

3rd March.—Like all passengers, I suppose, who come together on board ship for a long voyage, we had scarcely passed the Eddystone Lighthouse before we began to take stock of each other. Who is this? What is he? Why is he going out? Such were the questions we inwardly put to ourselves and sought to answer.

I found several, like myself, were making the voyage for their health. A long voyage by sailing ship seems to have become a favourite prescription for lung complaints; and it is doubtless an honest one, as the doctor who gives it at the same time parts with his patient and his fees. But the advice is sound; as the long rest of the voyage, the comparatively equable temperature of the sea air, and probably the improved quality of the atmosphere inhaled, are all favourable to the healthy condition of the lungs as well as of the general system.

Of those going out in search of health, some were young and others middle-aged. Amongst the latter was a patient, gentle sufferer, racked by a hacking cough when he came on board. Another, a young passenger, had been afflicted by

abscess in his throat and incipient lung-disease. A third had been worried by business and afflicted in his brain, and needed a long rest. A fourth had been crossed in love, and sought for change of scene and occupation.

But there were others full of life and health among the passengers, going out in search of fortune or of pleasure. Two stalwart, outspoken, manly fellows, who came on board at Plymouth, were on their way to New Zealand to farm a large tract of land. They seemed to me to be models of what colonial farmers should be. Another was on his way to take up a run in Victoria, some 250 miles north of Melbourne. He had three fine Scotch colley dogs with him, which were the subject of general admiration.

We had also a young volunteer on board, who had figured at Brighton reviews, and was now on his way to join his father in New Zealand, where he proposed to join the colonial army. We had also a Yankee gentleman, about to enter on his governorship of the Guano Island of Maldon, in the Pacific, situated almost due north of the Society Islands, said to have been purchased by an English company.

Some were going out on "spec." If they could find an opening to fortune, they would settle; if not, they would return. One gentleman was taking with him a fine portable photographic apparatus, intending to visit New Zealand and Tasmania, as well as Australia.

Others were going out for indefinite purposes. The small gentleman, for instance, who came on board at Gravesend with the extensive wardrobe, was said to be going out to Australia to grow—the atmosphere and climate of the country being reported as having a wonderful effect on growth. Another entertained me with a long account of how he was leaving England because of his wife; but, as he was

of a somewhat priggish nature, I suspect the fault may have been his own as much as hers.

And then there was the Major, a military and distinguished-looking gentleman, who came on board, accompanied by a couple of shiny new trunks, at Plymouth. He himself threw out the suggestion that the raising of a colonial volunteer army was the grand object of his mission. Anyhow, he had the manners of a gentleman. And he had seen service, having lost his right arm in the Crimea and gone all through the Indian Mutiny war with his left. He was full of fun, always in spirits, and a very jolly fellow, though rather given to saying things that would have been better left unsaid.

Altogether, we have seventeen saloon passengers on board, including the captain's wife, the only lady at the poop end. There were also probably about eighty second and third-class passengers in the forward parts of the ship.

Although the wind was fair, and the weather fine, most of the passengers suffered more or less from seasickness; but at length, becoming accustomed to the motion of the ship, they gradually emerged from their cabins, came on deck, and took part in the daily life on board. Let me try and give a slight idea of what this is.

At about six every morning we are roused by the sailors holystoning the decks, under the superintendence of the officer of the watch. A couple of middies pump up water from the sea, by means of a pump placed just behind the wheel. It fills the tub until it overflows, running along the scuppers of the poop, and out on to the main-deck through a pipe. Here the seamen fill their buckets, and proceed with the scouring of the main-deck. Such a scrubbing and mopping!

I need scarcely explain that holystone is a large soft stone, used with water, for scrubbing the dirt off the ship's decks. It rubs down with sand; the sand is washed off by buckets of water thrown down, all is well mopped, and the deck is then finished off with India-rubber squilgees.

The poop is always kept most bright and clean. Soon after we left port it assumed a greatly-improved appearance. The boards began to whiten with the holystoning. Not a grease-mark or spot of dirt was to be seen. All was polished off with hand-scrapers. On Sundays the ropes on the poop were all neatly coiled, man-of-war fashion—not a bight out of place. The brasswork was kept as bright as a gilt button.

By the time the passengers dressed and went on deck the cleaning process was over, and the decks were dry. After half an hour's pacing the poop the bell would ring for breakfast, the appetite for which would depend very much upon the state of the weather and the lurching of the ship. Between breakfast and lunch, more promenading on the poop; the passengers sometimes, if the weather was fine, forming themselves in groups on deck, cultivating each other's acquaintance.

During our first days at sea we had some difficulty in finding our sea legs. The march of some up and down the poop was often very irregular, and occasionally ended in disaster. Yet the passengers were not the only learners; for, one day, we saw one of the cabin-boys, carrying a heavy ham down the steps from a meat-safe on board, miss his footing in a lurch of the ship, and away went our fine ham into the lee-scuppers, spoilt and lost.

We lunched at twelve. From thence, until dinner at five, we mooned about on deck as before, or visited sick passengers, or read in our respective cabins, or passed the time in conversation; and thus the day wore on. After dinner the

passengers drew together in parties and became social. In the pleasantly-lit saloon some of the elder subsided into whist, while the juniors sought the middies in their cabin on the main-deck, next door to the sheep-pen; there they entertained themselves and each other with songs, accompanied by the concertina and clouds of tobacco-smoke.

The progress of the ship was a subject of constant interest. It was the first thing in the morning and the last at night; and all through the day, the direction of the wind, the state of the sky and the weather, and the rate we were going at, were the uppermost topics of conversation.

When we left port the wind was blowing fresh on our larboard quarter from the north-east, and we made good progress across the Bay of Biscay; but, like many of our passengers, I was too much occupied by private affairs to attend to the nautical business going on upon deck. All I know was, that the wind was fair, and that we were going at a good rate. On the fourth day, I found we were in the latitude of Cape Finisterre, and that we had run 168 miles in the preceding 24 hours. From this time forward, having got accustomed to the motion of the ship, I felt sufficiently well to be on deck early and late, watching the handling of the ship.

It was a fine sight to look up at the cloud of canvas above, bellied out by the wind, like the wings of a gigantic bird, while the ship bounded through the water, dashing it in foam from her bows, and sometimes dipping her prow into the waves, and sending aloft a shower of spray.

There was always something new to admire in the ship, and the way in which she was handled: as, for instance, to see the topgallant sails hauled down when the wind freshened, or a staysail set as the wind went round to the east. The

taking in of the mainsail on a stormy night was a thing to be remembered for life: twenty-four men on the great yard at a time, clewing it in to the music of the wind whistling through the rigging. The men sing out cheerily at their work, the one who mounts the highest, or stands the foremost on the deck; usually taking the lead—

Hawl on the bowlin,
  The jolly ship's a-rollin—
Hawl on the bowlin,
  And we'll all drink rum.

In comes the rope with a "Yo! heave ho!" and a jerk, until the "belay" sung out by the mate signifies that the work is done. Then, there is the scrambling on the deck when the wind changes quarter, and the yards want squaring as the wind blows more aft. Such are among the interesting sights to be seen on deck when the wind is in her tantrums at sea.

On the fifth day the wind was blowing quite aft. Our run during the twenty-four hours was 172 miles. Thermometer 58°. The captain is in hopes of a most favourable run to the Cape. It is our first Sunday on board, and at 10.30 the bell rings for service, when the passengers of all classes assemble in the saloon. The alternate standing and kneeling during the service is rather uncomfortable, the fixed seats jamming the legs, and the body leaning over at an unpleasant angle when the ship rolls, which she frequently does, and rather savagely.

Going upon deck next morning, I found the wind blowing strong from the north, and the ship going through the water at a splendid pace. As much sail was on as she could carry, and she dashed along, leaving a broad track of foam in her wake. The captain is in high glee at the speed at which we are going. "A fine run down to the Line!" he says, as he walks the poop, smiling and rubbing his hands; while the

middies are enthusiastic in praises of the good ship, "walking the waters like a thing of life." The spirits of all on board are raised by several degrees. We have the pleasure of feeling ourselves bounding forward, on towards the sunny south. There is no resting, but a constant pressing onward, and, as we look over the bulwarks, the waves, tipped by the foam which our ship has raised, seem to fly behind us at a prodigious speed. At midday we find the ship's run during the twenty-four hours has been 280 miles—a splendid day's work, almost equal to steam!

We are now in latitude 39° 16', about due east of the Azores. The air is mild and warm; the sky is azure, and the sea intensely blue. How different from the weather in the English Channel only a short week ago! Bugs are now discarded, and winter clothing begins to feel almost oppressive. In the evenings, as we hang over the taffrail, we watch with interest the bluish-white sparks mingling with the light blue foam near the stern—the first indications of that phosphorescence which, I am told, we shall find so bright in the tropics.

An always interesting event at sea is the sighting of a distant ship. To-day we signalled the 'Maitland,' of London, a fine ship, though she was rolling a great deal, beating up against the wind that was impelling us so prosperously forward. I hope she will report us on arrival, to let friends at home know we are so far all right on our voyage.

The wind still continues to blow in our wake, but not so strongly; yet we make good progress. The weather keeps very fine. The sky seems to get clearer, the sea bluer, and the weather more brilliant, and even the sails look whiter, as we fly south. About midday on the eighth day after leaving Plymouth we are in the latitude of Madeira, which we pass about forty miles distant.

As the wind subsides, and the novelty of being on shipboard wears off, the passengers begin to think of amusements. One cannot be always reading; and, as for study, though I try Spanish and French alternately, I cannot settle to them, and begin to think that life on shipboard is not very favourable for study. We play at quoits—using quoits of rope—on the poop, for a good part of the day. But this soon becomes monotonous; and we begin to consider whether it may not be possible to get up some entertainment on board to make the time pass pleasantly. We had a few extempore concerts in one of the middies' berths. The third-class passengers got up a miscellaneous entertainment, including recitals, which went off very well. One of the tragic recitations was so well received that it was encored. And thus the time was whiled away, while we still kept flying south.

On the ninth day we are well south of Madeira. The sun is so warm at midday that an awning is hung over the deck, and the shade it affords is very grateful. We are now in the trade-winds, which blow pretty steadily at this part of our course in a south-westerly direction, and may generally be depended upon until we near the Equator. At midday of the tenth day I find we have run 180 miles in the last twenty-four hours, with the wind still steady on our quarter. We have passed Teneriffe, about 130 miles distant—too remote to see it—though I am told that, had we been twenty miles nearer, we should probably have seen the famous peak.

To while away the time, and by way of a little adventure, I determined at night to climb the mizen-mast with a fellow-passenger. While leaving the deck I was chalked by a middy, in token that I was in for my footing, so as to be free of the mizen-top. I succeeded in reaching it safely, though to a green hand, as I was, it looks and really feels somewhat perilous at first. I was sensible of the feeling of fear or

apprehension just at the moment of getting over the cross-trees. Your body hangs over in mid-air, at a terrible incline backwards, and you have to hold on like anything for just one moment, until you get your knee up into the top. The view of the ship under press of canvas from the mizen-top is very grand; and the phosphorescence in our wake, billow upon billow of light shining foam, seemed more brilliant than ever.

The wind again freshens, and on the eleventh day we make another fine run of 230 miles. It is becoming rapidly warmer, and we shall soon be in the region of bonitos, albatrosses, and flying fish—only a fortnight after leaving England!

Our second Sunday at sea was beautiful exceedingly. We had service in the saloon as usual; and, after church, I climbed the mizen, and had half an hour's nap on the top. Truly this warm weather, and monotonous sea life, seems very favourable for dreaming, and mooning, and loafing. In the evening there was some very good hymn-singing in the second-class cabin.

Early next morning, when pacing the poop, we were startled by the cry from the man on the forecastle of "Land ho!" I found, by the direction of the captain's eyes, that the land seen lay off our weather-beam. But, though I strained my eyes looking for the land, I could see nothing. It was not for hours that I could detect it; and then it looked more like a cloud than anything else. At length the veil lifted, and I saw the land stretching away to the eastward. It was the island of San Antonio, one of the Cape de Verds.

As we neared the land, and saw it more distinctly, it looked a grand object. Though we were then some fifteen miles off, yet the highest peaks, which were above the clouds, some thousands of feet high, were so clear and so beautiful that

they looked as if they had been stolen out of the 'Arabian Nights,' or some fairy tale of wonder and beauty.

The island is said to be alike famous for its oranges and pretty girls. Indeed the Major, who is very good at drawing the long bow, declared that he could see a very interesting female waving her hand to him from a rock! With the help of the telescope we could certainly see some of the houses on shore.

As this is the last land we are likely to see until we reach Australia, we regard it with all the greater interest; and I myself watched it in the twilight until it faded away into a blue mist on the horizon.

CHAPTER III.

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WITHIN THE TROPICS.

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INCREASE OF TEMPERATURE—FLYING FISH—THE MORNING BATH ON BOARD—PAYING "FOOTINGS"—THE MAJOR'S WONDERFUL STORIES—ST. PATRICK'S DAY—GRAMPUSES—A SHIP IN SIGHT—THE 'LORD RAGLAN'—RAIN-FALL IN THE TROPICS—TROPICAL SUNSETS—THE YANKEE WHALER.

17th March.—We are now fairly within the tropics. The heat increases day by day. This morning, at eight, the temperature was 87° in my cabin. At midday, with the sun nearly overhead, it is really hot. The sky is of a cloudless azure, with a hazy appearance towards the horizon. The sea is blue, dark, deep blue—and calm.

Now we see plenty of flying-fish. Whole shoals of the glittering little things glide along in the air, skimming the tops of the waves. They rise to escape their pursuers, the bonitos, which rush after them, showing their noses above the water now and then. But the poor flying-fish have their enemies above the waters as well as under them; for they no sooner rise than they risk becoming the prey of the ocean birds, which are always hovering about and ready to pounce upon them. It is a case of "out of the frying-pan into the fire." They fly further than I thought they could. I saw one of them to-day fly at least sixty yards, and sometimes they mount so high as to reach the poop, some fifteen feet from the surface of the water.

One of the most pleasant events of the day is the morning bath on board. You must remember the latitude we are in. We are passing along, though not in sight of, that part of the African coast where a necklace is considered full dress. We sympathise with the natives, for we find clothes becoming intolerable; hence our enjoyment of the morning bath, which consists in getting into a large tub on board and being pumped upon by the hose. Pity that one cannot have it later, as it leaves such a long interval between bath and breakfast; but it freshens one up wonderfully, and is an extremely pleasant operation. I only wish that the tub were twenty times as large, and the hose twice as strong.

The wind continues in our favour, though gradually subsiding. During the last two days we have run over 200 miles each day; but the captain says that by the time we reach the Line the wind will have completely died away. To catch a little of the breeze, I go up the rigging to the top. Two sailors came up mysteriously, one on each side of the ratlines. They are terrible fellows for making one pay "footings," and their object was to intercept my retreat downwards. When they reached me, I tried to resist; but it was of no use. I must be tied to the rigging unless I promised the customary bottle of rum; so I gave in with a good grace, and was thenceforward free to take an airing aloft.

The amusements on deck do not vary much. Quoits, cards, reading, and talking, and sometimes a game of romps, such as "Walk, my lady, walk!" We have tried to form a committee, with a view to getting up some Penny Reading or theatrical entertainment, and to ascertain whether there be any latent talent aboard; but the heat occasions such a languor as to be very unfavourable for work, and the committee lay upon their oars, doing nothing.

One of our principal sources of amusement is the Major. He is unfailing. His drawings of the long bow are as good as a theatrical entertainment. If any one tells a story of something wonderful, he at once "caps it," as they say in Yorkshire, by something still more wonderful. One of the passengers, who had been at Calcutta, speaking of the heat there, said it was so great as to make the pitch run out of the ship's sides. "Bah!" said the Major, "that is nothing to what it is in Ceylon; there the heat is so great as to melt the soldiers' buttons off on parade, and then their jackets all get loose."

It seems that to-day (the 17th) is St. Patrick's Day. This the Major, who is an Irishman, discovered only late in the evening, when he declared he would have "given a fiver" if he had only known it in the morning. But, to make up for lost time, he called out forthwith, "Steward! whisky!" and he disposed of some seven or eight glasses in the saloon before the lamps were put out; after which he adjourned to one of the cabins, and there continued the celebration of St. Patrick's Day until about two o'clock in the morning. On getting up rather late, he said to himself, loud enough for me to overhear in my cabin, "Well, George, my boy, you've done your duty to St. Patrick; but he's left you a horrible bad headache!" And no wonder.

At last there is a promised novelty on board. Some original Christy's Minstrels are in rehearsal, and the Theatrical Committee are looking up amateurs for a farce. Readings from Dickens are also spoken of. An occasional whale is seen blowing in the distance, and many grampuses come rolling about the ship—most inelegant brutes, some three or four times the size of a porpoise. Each in turn comes up, throws himself round on the top of the sea, exposing nearly half his body, and then rolls off again.