

In 1818 a storm destroyed four of his fleet. He sent one Lafage to New Orleans, who brought out thence a new schooner of two guns, manned by fifty men. He presently took a prize; but had hardly done so, when he was met by the revenue cutter *Alabama*, answered her challenge with a broadside, engaged her in a hard battle, and only surrendered after heavy loss. The schooner and prize were carried into Bayou St. John, the crew taken to New Orleans, tried in the United States Court, condemned and executed.

Once more Lafitte took the disguise of a Colombian commission and fitted out three vessels. The name of one is not known. Another was the *General Victoria*, and a third the schooner *Blank*—or, we may venture to spell it *Blanque*. He coasted westward and southward as far as Sisal, Yucatan, taking several small prizes, and one that was very valuable, a schooner that had been a slaver. Thence he turned toward Cape Antonio, Cuba, and in the open gulf disclosed to his followers that his Colombian commission had expired.

Forty-one men insisted on leaving him. He removed the guns of the *General Victoria*, crippled her rigging, and gave her into their hands. They sailed for the Mississippi, and after three weeks arrived there and surrendered to the officers of the customs. The Spanish Consul claimed the vessel, but she was decided to belong to the men who had fitted her out.

Lafitte seems now to have become an open pirate. Villeré, Governor of Louisiana after

Claiborne, and the same who had counseled the acceptance of Lafitte's first overtures in 1819, spoke in no measured terms of "those men who lately, under the false pretext of serving the cause of the Spanish patriots, scoured the Gulf of Mexico, making its waves groan," etc. It seems many of them had found homes in New Orleans, making it "the seat of disorders and crimes which he would not attempt to describe."

The end of this uncommon man is lost in a confusion of improbable traditions. As late as 1822 his name, if not his person, was the terror of the Gulf and the Straits of Florida. But in that year the United States navy swept those waters with vigor, and presently reduced the perils of the Gulf—for the first time in its history—to the hazard of wind and wave.

A few steps down the central walk of the middle cemetery of those that lie along Claiborne street, from Custom-house down to Conti, on the right-hand side, stands the low, stuccoed tomb of Dominique You. The tablet bears his name surmounted by the emblem of Free Masonry. Some one takes good care of it. An epitaph below proclaims him, in French verse, the intrepid hero of a hundred battles on land and sea; who, without fear and without reproach, will one day view, unmoved, the destruction of the world. To this spot, in 1830, he was followed on his way by the Louisiana Legion (city militia), and laid to rest with military honors, at the expense of the town council.

AT SEA.

ONE does not seem really to have got out of doors till he goes to sea. On the land he is shut in by the hills, or the forests, or more or less housed by the sharp lines of his horizon. But at sea he finds the roof taken off, the walls taken down; he is no longer in the hollow of the earth's hand, but upon its naked back, with nothing between him and the immensities. He is in the great cosmic out-of-doors, as much so as if voyaging to the moon or to Mars. An astronomic solitude and vacuity surrounds him; his only guides and landmarks are stellar; the earth has disappeared; the horizon has gone; he has only the sky and its orbs left; this cold, vitreous, blue-black liquid through which the ship plows is not water, but some denser form of

the cosmic ether. He can now see the curve of the sphere which the hills hid from him; he can study astronomy under improved conditions. If he was being borne through the interplanetary spaces on an immense shield, his impressions would not perhaps be much different. He would find the same vacuity, the same blank or negative space, the same empty, indefinite, oppressive out-of-doors.

For it must be admitted that a voyage at sea is more impressive to the imagination than to the actual sense. The world is left behind; all standards of size, of magnitude, of distance, are vanished; there is no size, no form, no perspective; the universe has dwindled to a little circle of crumpled water, that journeys with you day after day, and to which you



AT SEA.

seem bound by some enchantment. The sky becomes a shallow, close-fitting dome, or else a pall of cloud that seems ready to descend upon you. You cannot see or realize the vast and vacant surrounding; there is nothing to define it or set it off. Three thousand miles of ocean space are less impressive than three miles bounded by rugged mountain walls. Indeed, the grandeur of form, of magnitude, of distance, of proportion, etc., are only upon shore. A voyage across the Atlantic is a ten-day sail through vacancy. There is no sensible progress; you pass no fixed points. Is it the steamer that is moving, or is it the sea? or is it all a dance and illusion of the troubled brain? Yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, you are in the same parenthesis of nowhere. The three hundred or more miles the ship daily makes is ideal, not real. Every night the stars dance and reel there in the same place amid the rigging; every morning the sun comes up from behind the same wave, and staggers slowly across the sinister sky. The eye becomes a-hunger for form, for permanent lines, for a horizon wall to lift up and keep off the sky, and give it a sense of room. One understands why sailors become an imaginative and superstitious race; it is the reaction from this narrow horizon in which they are put—this ring of fate surrounds and oppresses them. They escape by invoking the aid of the supernatural. In the sea itself there is far less to stimulate the imagination than in the varied forms and colors of the land. How cold, how merciless, how elemental it looks!

The only things that look familiar at sea are the clouds. These are messengers from home, and how weary and disconsolate they appear, stretching out along the horizon, as if looking for a hill or mountain top to rest upon,—nothing to hold them up,—a roof without walls, a span without piers. One gets the impression that they are grown faint, and must presently, if they reach much farther, fall into the sea. But when the rain came, it seemed like mockery, or irony on the part of the clouds. Did one vaguely believe, then, that the clouds would respect the sea, and withhold their needless rain? No, they treated it as if it was a mill-pond, or a spring-run, too insignificant to make any exceptions to.

One bright Sunday, when the surface of the sea was like glass, a long chain of cloud-mountains lay to the south of us all day, while the rest of the sky was clear. How they glowed in the strong sunlight, their summits shining like a bouquet of full moons, and making a broad, white, or golden path upon the water! They came out of the south-west, an endless procession of them, and tapered

away in the east. They were the piled, convoluted, indolent clouds of mid-summer—thunder-clouds that had retired from business; the captains of the storm in easy undress. All day they filed along there, keeping the ship company. How the eye reveled in their firm, yet ever-changing forms! Their under or base line was as straight and continuous as the rim of the ocean. The substratum of air upon which they rested was like a uniform layer of granite rock, invisible, but all-resisting; not one particle of these vast cloud mountains, so broken and irregular in their summits, sank below this aerial granite boundary. The equilibrium of the air is frequently such that the under surface of the clouds is like a ceiling. It is a fair-weather sign, whether upon the sea or upon the land. One may frequently see it in a mountainous district, when the fog-clouds settle down, and blot out all the tops of the mountains without one fleck of vapor going below a given line which runs above every valley, as uniform as the sea level. It is probable that in fair weather the atmosphere always lies in regular strata in this way, and that it is the displacement and mixing up of these by some unknown cause that produces storms.

As the sun neared the horizon these cloud masses threw great blue shadows athwart each other, which afforded the eye a new pleasure.

Late one afternoon the clouds assumed a still more friendly and welcome shape. A long, purple, irregular range of them rose up from the horizon in the north-west, exactly simulating distant mountains. The sun sank behind them, and threw out great spokes of light as from behind my native Catskills. Then gradually a low, wooded shore came into view along their base. It proved to be a fog-bank lying low upon the water, but it copied exactly, in its forms and outlines, a flat, umbrageous coast. You could see distinctly where it ended, and where the water began. I sat long on that side of the ship, and let my willing eyes deceive themselves. I could not divest myself of the comfortable feeling inspired by the prospect. It was to the outward sense what dreams and reveries are to the inward. That blind, instinctive love of the land,—I did not know how masterful and involuntary the impulse was, till I found myself warming up toward that phantom coast. The empty void of the sea was partly filled, if only with a shadow. The inhuman desolation of the ocean was blotted out for a moment in that direction at least. What phantom-huggers we are upon sea or upon land. It made no difference that I knew this to be a sham coast. I could feel its friendly influence all the same, even when my back was turned.

In summer, fog seems to lie upon the Atlantic in great patches, looking, perhaps, like spots of mold or mildew from an elevation of a few miles. One may see these patches far ahead looking so shallow that it seems as if the great steamer must carry her head above them. But she does not quite do it. When she enters this obscurity there begins the hoarse bellowing of her great whistle. As one dozes in his berth or sits in the cabin reading, there comes a vague impression that we are entering some port or harbor, the sound is so welcome, and is so suggestive of the proximity of other vessels. But only once did our loud and repeated hallooing awaken any response. Everybody heard the answering whistle out of the thick obscurity ahead and was on the alert. Our steamer instantly slowed her engines and redoubled her tootings. The two vessels soon got the bearing of each other, and the stranger passed us on the starboard side, the hoarse voice of her whistle alone revealing her course to us.

Late one afternoon, as we neared the Banks, the word spread on deck that the knobs and pinnacles of a thunder-cloud sunk below the horizon, that deeply and sharply notched the western rim of the sea, were icebergs. The captain was quoted as authority. He probably encouraged the delusion. The jaded passengers wanted a new sensation. Everybody was willing, even anxious, to believe them icebergs, and some persons would have them so, and listened coldly and reluctantly to any proof to the contrary. What we want to believe, what it suits our convenience, or pleasure, or prejudice, to believe, one need not go to sea to learn what slender logic will incline us to believe. To a firm, steady gaze, these icebergs were seen to be momentarily changing their forms, new chasms opening, new pinnacles rising; but these appearances were easily accounted for by the credulous: they were rolling over, or splitting asunder. One of the rarest things in the average cultivated man or woman is the capacity to receive and weigh evidence touching any natural phenomenon, especially at sea. If the captain had deliberately said that the shifting forms there on the horizon were only a school of whales playing at leap-frog, all the women and half the men among the passengers would have believed it.

In going to England in early May, we encountered the fine weather, the warmth, and the sunshine as of June that had been "central" over the British Islands for a week or more, five or six hundred miles from shore. We had come up from lower latitudes, and it was as if we had ascended a hill and found summer at the top, while a cold, backward spring yet lingered in the valley. But on our return in

early August, the positions of spring and summer were reversed. Scotland was cold and rainy, and for several days at sea you could in the distance hardly tell the sea from the sky, all was so gray and misty. In mid-Atlantic we ran into the American climate. The great continent, basking there in the western sun, and glowing with midsummer heat, made itself felt to the center of this briny void. The sea detached itself sharply from the sky and became like a shield of burnished steel, which the sky surrounded like a dome of glass. For four successive nights the sun sank clear in the wave, sometimes seeming to melt and mingle with the ocean. One night a bank of mist seemed to impede his setting. He lingered a long while partly buried in it, then slowly disappeared as through a slit in the vapor, which glowed red-hot, a mere line of fire for some moments afterward.

As we neared home the heat became severe. We were going down the hill into a fiery valley. Vast stretches of the sea were like glass bending above the long, slow heaving of the primal ocean. Sword-fish lay basking here and there on the surface, too lazy to get out of the way of the ship. Occasionally a whale would blow, or show his glistening back, attracting a crowd to the railing. One morning a whale plunged spitefully through the track of the ship but a few hundred yards away.

But the prettiest sight in the way of animated nature was the shoals of dolphins occasionally seen during these brilliant torrid days, leaping and sporting, and apparently racing with the vessel. They would leap in pairs from the glassy surface of one swell of the steamer across the polished chasm into the next swell, frisking their tails and doing their best not to be beaten. They were like fawns or young kine sporting in a summer meadow. It was the only touch of mirth, or youth and jollity, I saw in the grim sea. Savagery and desolation make up the prevailing expression here. The sea-fowls have weird and disconsolate cries, and appear doomed to perpetual solitude. But these dolphins know what companionship is, and are in their own demesne. When one sees them bursting out of the waves, the impression is that school is just out; there come the boys, skipping and laughing, and, seeing us just passing, cry to one another: "Now for a race! Hurrah, boys! We can beat 'em!"

One notices any change in the course of the ship by the stars at night. For nearly a week Venus sank nightly into the sea far to the north of us. Our course coming home is south-south-west. Then, one night, as you promenade the deck, you see, with a keen

pleasure, Venus through the rigging, dead ahead. The good ship has turned the corner, she has scented New York Harbor, and is making straight for it, with New England far away there on her right. Now sails and smoke-funnels begin to appear. All ocean paths converge here; full-rigged ships, piled with canvas, are passed, rocking idly upon the polished surface; sails are seen just dropping below the horizon, phantom ships without hulls, while here and there the black smoke of some steamer tarnishes the sky. Now we pass steamers that left New York but yester-

day; the *City of Rome*—looking, with her three smoke-stacks and her long hull, like two steamers together—creeps along the southern horizon, just ready to vanish behind it. Now she stands in the reflected light of a great white cloud which makes a broad track upon the water like the full moon. Then she slides on into the dim and even dimmer distance, and we slide on over the tropic sea, and, by a splendid run, just catch the tide at the moment of its full early the next morning, and pass the bar off Sandy Hook without a moment or an inch of water to spare.

John Burroughs.



MOTHER AND CHILD.

BITTER blasts and vapors dim—
What had they to do with him?
Spring, though she was far away,
Took dominion for a day,
Filled the air with breathings soft,
Bade a skylark sing aloft,
When we laid him in his bed,
Cloudless blue above his head.

It was not for him to reach
Manly height, and thought, and speech,
Not to climb untrodden steeps,
Not to search out unknown deeps,
Not through warring joy and pain
Kinglyness of soul to gain.
He had only baby words,
Little music, like the birds,
Sweetly inarticulate,
Nothing wise, nor high, nor great.
Sunny smiles and kisses sweet—
White and softly childish feet—
Curls that floated on the breeze—
We remember him for these.

They are weary who are wise.
He looked up with happy eyes,
Little knowing, little seeing,
Only praising God by being.

Oh, the life we could not save!
Do not say, above his grave,
That the fair and darling face
Was but lent a little space
Till the Father called him back,
By an unknown homeward track.
No, though Death came darkly chill—
Bade the beating heart be still,

Touching him with fingers cold—
What was given still we hold;
Though he died, as die the flowers,
He for evermore is ours.

Ours, though we must travel soon
Onward through Life's afternoon;
Shadows, falling long and gray,
Gather round the western day,
And our twilight visions show
How the years shall come and go.

Little maids, with tangled curls,
Change to slender, dreamy girls;
Chubby rogues grow tall, and then
Go their way as bearded men.
And the mother stands aside,
With an ache beneath her pride,
And a sorrow 'mid her joys,
For the vanished babes and boys;
So the earlier gladness wanes—
But the little one remains.

For a house that once has known
Tiny feet on stair and stone—
Steps that never more shall sound,
Feet at rest beneath the ground—
Keeps remembrance of the dead,
And the music of their tread.
Not at noonday, busy, bright,
Only in the quiet night,
With a thrill of sweetest pain,
Comes that music once again,
Heard in stillness and apart
Echoed from his mother's heart.

Margaret Veley.