

heavily. With bright skies above—favouring breezes—ocean in the best of humours singing our lullaby—friendly, familiar faces all around—reading, conversation, music, songs tender, comic, national, sentimental, in the evening—what could heart wish for besides? I began to have a better opinion of the Atlantic, and frankly forgave all the ill it had done me at different times. Chatting with the doctor of the ship, who was a Canadian, I remarked that, judging by the performances at the dinner-table, he was not likely to have many patients on his hands this voyage. “No,” he replied, “these are fine strong men from St. John’s; it’s a pleasure to look at them,”—an opinion in which I am sure their wives and sweethearts heartily concurred. A doctor, I observe, judges a man very much by his physique, and has small respect for those who cannot digest their victuals, or who resemble disembodied spirits, not having body enough to cover their souls decently. Very interesting it was to listen to the buzz of conversation in the saloon, and to note how the English, Scotch and Irish accents blended—the English deep, stomachic, musical; the Scotch broader, stronger, rougher, more emphatic and more thoracic; the Irish soft, sibilant, dental, and, when not too pronounced, quite mellifluous. One great business on board, to which all seemed to devote themselves heartily, was eating. It was a pleasure to witness such a display of keen, healthy appetites. If any were at first, from sea-sickness, “dangerously ill,” they became speedily dangerously well, as far as attacks on the victuals were concerned. All care and business being laid aside, the undivided energies of our systems were given to digestion. For the time being we became “patent digesters.” I began to fear that, were this kind of life to be prolonged, the man would be lost in the animal—the intellectual swallowed up in the sensual. As a change, however, from a different state, in which the brain was unduly taxed, it seemed very agreeable; and I began to see that there was something in eating as a means of increasing the happiness of existence.

Onward our good ship sped, under the persuasive influence of wind and steam; and ere long we were in mid-Atlantic, nine hundred miles of ocean behind us and as many before. When one thinks of such a position, there is something in it to awaken high and serious thought. Afloat on the world of waters; around you

“The awful pitiless sea
With all its terror and mystery;
The dim, dark sea, so like unto death,
That divides and yet unites mankind.”

Between you and those hungry waves, in their ceaseless unrest, there is but a thin plank. Let a bolt start or a seam yawn, and you and your frail barque are buried in those dark abysses—down in those awful charnel-houses where are strewn the wrecks of many gallant ships, the bones of many brave mariners, the riches of all lands, side by side with the bleaching skeletons of the huge monsters of the deep. This vast expanse of restless, uneasy waters—

“Calm or convulsed, in breeze or gale or storm.