

# LIFE ON THE OCEAN.

A Trip From Cape Breton to Dublin.

NOTES OF A STUDENT'S VOYAGE.

Monday Sep. 2nd.—About four in the afternoon I embarked in the S. S. Elba, commanded by Capt. Leech, leaving the International Pier, deal laden for Glasgow. The afternoon was most enjoyable, as the new ship, the commodore of the fleet, moved majestically along passing by large ships, steam and sailing, that are to be seen almost every day busily engaged in the coal trade. As we steamed along the beautiful harbor of Sydney, with scarcely a ripple on the length and breadth of the grand sheet of water, the thought would frequently come to my mind—shall I ever again behold Sydney harbor as I now see it; on one side its pretty town built on a high elevation, looking its very best, on the other its rich scenery reflected in the glossy surface of its water by the golden rays of the setting sun. As South Sydney is fast receding from sight, with a tinge of sadness I turn to the right to take a last fond glance of her twin sister, North Sydney. The coal is being shipped at all the piers with great rapidity, and the trade has every appearance of being briskly carried on. Every now and then a tremendous noise is heard, as the coal drops from the cars into the holds of the vessels, while the puff, puff, and the shrill notes of the engine far away at Sydney mines tells us that the work is going on just as lively there as here. North Sydney is a busy and attractive town, and this afternoon it looks a perfect gem, as its many fine buildings sparkle like so many jewels in the sunlight. It is now drawing late in the evening and I am still on deck taking a last farewell look at Cape Breton until gradually the shades of night set and leave me no longer the pleasure of gazing upon the land where I spent many happy days with gentle, kind and hospitable friends, God be with them! Away I go to my humble cot and turn in with lonely thoughts and sad remembrance of the past few hours that disturbed my slumbers till far advanced in the night.

Tuesday, 3rd.—The first thing that brought me to my recollection this morning was the steward coming into my state room all smiles offering me a cup of coffee and a sandwich. Having breakfasted I betake myself on deck to see nothing but a great circle of water round about, and a clear blue sky overhead. The wind is blowing a slight breeze from the west and the ship moving gracefully along at the rate of ten and a-half knots an hour. Every one on board is in good cheer at the bright prospects of having a pleasant passage, and of soon seeing their dear friends at home. But in the latter case I am an only exception, for I am turning my back on home, going to a foreign land where I know no one, and no one knows me. However, I am spending to-day as happy as could be expected under the circumstances. With plenty of good things to eat, a good appetite to do them justice, a select company to pass away a dull hour—what for the present can one deserve more! At supper, the Captain, a cheery man, asked me to stay up to see Cape Race Light, as we expected to pass in sight of it about ten o'clock. Up I remained till eleven o'clock, and yet no sign of that land-mark I'm so anxious to see on dear old Terra Nova. The Captain assigns the cause to a thick fog which enveloped it, and completely shut it out from sight, otherwise says he, we would see both lights. Cape Pine and Cape Race as we passed not more than eight or ten miles from

them. For two hours we have been passing through signal lights, which lay like sparks of fire in the bosom of the ocean, the only warning of the poor bunkers to keep their schooners from being run down by ships ploughing along by them almost every hour of the day and night. I can't help thinking what would be the fate of the poor fellows if their fragile vessels were run down by a large ship such as now passed by them apparently unmindful of their night signals.

Wednesday, 4th.—This day opens fine with a nice breeze from the north, the ship making splendid progress and every sign of fine weather. Breakfast being finished I make my way on the bridge to find the first officer, Mr. Harris enjoying his smoke, and with spy-glass in hand trying to make out what seemed to him a large square rigged ship. I have still my doubts about the little mite he calls a "square rigger." We entered into a friendly chat, during which he told me several interesting tales about his twenty years sea-faring life. These were so full of interest to me at least, that by the sound of the bell I was not a little surprised to find that an hour had passed away during the course of his narrative. In the afternoon the wind veered from the north-west and began to freshen up and continued to increase until twelve o'clock at night when it reached a strong breeze. The sea taking the ship's broadside began to pitch her very much about, so much so that every moveable thing in the cabin began to sail round in happy confusion. The nausea of sea sickness began to take hold on me, and I had all I could do to keep from sacrificing my supper. To add to my discomfort the water coming over the ship, and with each heavy roll she gave was fast finding its way into the cabin. With the water leaking through the deck—the ship being new there were a great many leaks in her—and coming in large quantities through a badly fitted exhaust pipe which lay under my berth, by morning it was no trouble to take a swim in my stateroom if I felt so disposed. From the water trickling down during the night, I had to seek shelter from the top to the under berth. But even here I could not sleep, for the slushing of the water about the cabin floor kept me awake all night.

Thursday, 5th.—At long last the morning light sheds its blessed rays once more upon us and things begin to look bright again. There is still a heavy sea on and the wind continues to blow strong from the north west. The ship is labouring heavily though bravely in the rough sea, which gives one enough to do to make two or three steps without being tripped up. The steward met with what was near being a serious accident this morning. He was just after laying the table for breakfast when the ship gave an extra heavy lurch which sent the dishes flying off the table, and in trying to save the smash he fell, with the contents of the coffee pot spilling over him, scalding his left shoulder and arm considerably. I felt for the poor man, and the more so because the way in which the Captain expressed his sentiments when he saw the empty coffee pot and chaos of broken dishes did not at all help to alleviate the sufferings of the poor steward. I made up my mind from what happened that I should go minus my breakfast, but after an hour or so as I lay between sleep and awake. I was agreeably surprised to find the victim of the coffee pot coming into my berth with my breakfast in a tray. About eleven o'clock, the captain put in an appearance, and told me he had been up all night, as the water came also into his berth, and prevented him from enjoying his rest. One of the sailors was sent to bail the water out of my room, that was splashing about from side to side every time the ship lurched. After some time he succeeded in getting his bucket filled, and was

moving off when she gave a great roll over which sent himself and the bucket rolling over against the side of my berth spilling its contents on top of me as I lay in bed. I looked at him with feelings akin to anger, and saw his half-turned face light up with a broad smile which spoke louder than words that he was enjoying the sight of a land lubber like me getting a taste of salt water. I spent the whole of the day in bed, for the most part trying to keep myself from falling all fours on the cabin floor and making myself believe that it was an envious position after all to be "rocked in the cradle of the deep."

Friday, 6th.—Another twenty-four hours have passed over and still this morning finds me in the same state as last night—lying on the broad of my back without a wink of sleep. I was badly shaken up by the gigantic summersaults the ship was turning all night from top to top of the mighty waves. The same process of getting the water out of my room had to be gone through as the previous morning, only the method of drying it up with cloths squeezed into the bucket was found readier than using a small tin can. The long dreary night being over the surroundings began to look brighter inside, but outside as I took a peep through the port hole, I could see nothing but mighty billows topped with a snow-drift foam. About twelve o'clock the steward brought me some dinner and told me the storm was still raging though the heavy sea was going down. A few hours passed by during which the crashing of the waves and the howling of the wind and the rocking of the ship seemed to have less effect upon me till at last I dropped off to sleep not to awake till far advanced in the morning.

Saturday, 7th, brings a change for the better. During the night the wind abated considerably, and the sea is not running so high as it did yesterday. After taking a cup of coffee, I arose to dress myself but found my clothes well saturated with salt water, so I had to discard them and procure dry shiftings. By dinner time I managed to get my sea legs on, though I reeled about like a drunken man and took my place at the dinner table when I learnt from the Captain that the deck cargo had shifted during the storm and considerable damage was done by the heavy sea sweeping over her. After dinner I ventured on deck for the first time since Wednesday evening. The sea looked very angry, as though it had not vented all its fury on us yet, but the second officer informed me that it was quite smooth now compared to the mountainous heights the seas reached during these last few days. I remarked that the air was much cooler now than when we left port; the reason is quite evident, said he, for now we are fifty-four degrees north of the equator, which leaves it four or five degrees colder here than at Sydney. After supper I went on deck again to have a walk around, though it was with very unsteady gait, having not yet recovered from giddiness brought on by seasickness. The ship is now on her course with canvas set to help her along, after being detained for thirty six hours hove to in the storm. I happened to pass by the engine house and had a chat with the chief, Mr. Kerkling, who was quietly enjoying his smoke standing at the door. After a short time we became fast friends, and finishing commenting on the bitterness of the storm-king's visit, he invited me down to see the double engine working. He showed me through the huge concern and took great pains in explaining to me the use of the different kinds of pipes and valves in connection with the engine. But half what he said was lost to me on account of the noise of the machinery at work. One thing he impressed on me was that the screw made 604,800 revolutions since we left Sydney. T. F. F.



Thomas A. Johns.

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