

## Reminiscences of European Study and Travel.

No. 1.

BY DR. WELFON.

*To the Editors of The Acadia Athenæum.*

DEAR SIRS,—In complying with your request to furnish something for the columns of the ATHENÆUM, I do not know that I could do better than place before your readers some of my experiences in Europe during the two years now recently ended.

This, with your permission, I will do in a series of articles, to which the present will be merely introductory, dealing only with the incidents of my

## VOYAGE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

Not, indeed, that I propose to write anything new about the sea or life upon the sea. Who could expect to do this, after so many have made the attempt and failed? Still, I can readily understand how not a few who have crossed the "great pond" should come to believe that their experiences thereon might have some interest for others, they have been so deeply interesting to themselves. Indeed, in many instances, the interest has been of an extraordinarily *exciting* kind. Looking downward into the mighty waters, they have been *affected* almost beyond the power of utterance. Into these peculiarly *stirring* contemplations of the sea, however, I did not enter, and will therefore leave their description to those who have.

The voyage was made in the barque "Belvidere," which had just been launched from the ship-yard of Shubael Dimock, Esq., of Windsor, one of those enterprising men of whom Nova Scotia has reason to be proud; for they have made her, in proportion to her population, the first ship-owning country in the world. She was commanded by Capt. Dexter, a man of kindly and urbane manner, and of superior skill and judgment in his profession. The cargo was deals; and as these were piled high upon the deck, the centre of gravity was elevated to a higher point above the keel than consisted at least with the comfort of those on board. With

the deck thrown into an angle varying from fifteen to forty-five degrees, according as the wind pressed less or more upon the sails, it was often impossible to move about upon it except on all-fours. This effort, repeated from day to day, was quite enough to develop certain Darwinian tendencies in the hands and feet. Still, this was the kind of "going to sea" I had deliberately chosen, and I resolved therefore to enjoy it.

Under the circumstances, I could not help feeling a kind of sympathy for the "Belvidere," for it was evident that she sailed under great disadvantages, and that under fair treatment she would behave most handsomely. As it was, her prompt answering to the helm, and her clean and unlabored method of going through the water, did her much credit.

On the 17th of August, 1876, the voyage was begun; the dome of the dear old Acadia that was, was soon lost to view as we sailed round Blomidon and steered down the bay. But here our progress was very slow, on account of calms, head-winds, and fog. And such fog! It was none of the light, fantastic stuff which may be seen floating up the sides of the North Mountain, or lying like a silver scarf upon the breast of Blomidon on a June morning, but the genuine article, such as can be found only between Briar Island and Grand Manan; the kind, that is, that drizzles, and drips, and drenches, not only wetting through one's garments but creeping into his very bones.

I very much regret that I did not preserve a bottle or slice of it, for the Museum. But after two or three days it lifted, the wind came round to the north, and we were soon rounding Cape Sable. It was not far from this that we were entertained with the magnificent sporting of a shoal of whales. Judging from the number which were showing their huge backs, and spouting at the same time, I should think there were scores and hundreds of them. They "made the deep to boil like a pot." The explanation of their gigantic rollicking given me by one of the sailors was that they were "courtin' and