

## LETTER LIV.

THE UNITED STATES.

*St. Etienne (France), 20th October, 1852.*

AN old Scotch skipper who, many years ago, consigned his vessel to me in Buenos Ayres, and who, never having crossed the tropics before, continued his homely system of navigating by dead reckoning, drew up in the latitude of the river Plate, but in three or four hundred miles to the west of his right longitude. So he lengthened his passage by all this distance; and when one of his passengers was at last deputed by his bewildered companions to ask him whereabouts they were, the skipper answered, with great sang-froid, "Weel, accordin' to ma reckonin', we're among the bushes lang ago!" In like manner, I have been navigating my book by dead reckoning. I am wofully out of my longitude; and if my readers will look at the paging here, they will find I have been among the bushes long ago. I mean

that, as the skipper ought to have been at Buenos Ayres when he was hundreds of miles from it, I ought to have been at *finis* a hundred pages back, whereas I am only now entering on our travels in the United States.

Now, although I have full notes of those travels, and feel inclined to have *my* say, as others have had theirs, about our transatlantic brethren, I must deny myself that pleasure almost *in toto*, satisfied as I am that a very great volume of matter such as mine, is more than likely to prove a very great bore, if not, indeed, a great discouragement to looking into it at all.

We sailed, then, from Vera Cruz, on the 22nd of October, 1849. The weather was very fine, and in four days we were to be in a country which for years I had desired to visit. Yet, when I began to consider the onerous charge I had undertaken, I was somewhat daunted as to the result. I had ten individuals (eight of whom could not speak English), to take charge of, directly or indirectly, from Mexico to London, including a tour by land of some thousand miles in the United States. However, I had prepared them

all for the worst, and they seemed resolved to carry out resolutely our great undertaking.

We had a pleasant, though somewhat rough passage (touching at Tampico); and we were five, instead of four days over it. We arrived off Mobile point at noon, 27th; and here a dispersion began. Some were for Mobile, some to take a small auxiliary steamer for New Orleans, and some were to remain in the packet to proceed by her to Southampton. It will scarcely be credited that only *two* passengers remained for the entire voyage, and even then, not because they liked it, but because of the additional expense of the United States' route. It was sad for an Englishman to see thus practically the superiority of another nation over our own, in what we so much pride ourselves—expeditious travelling. And I am bound, moreover, in justice to the United States, here to remark, that I sent all my original communications from Mexico, *via* New York, leaving the duplicates for the direct steamers; nor, as far as I can recollect, did any of my duplicates precede my originals in arrival. Such a state of things was sure to work its own cure; and it is pleasant to observe that we are now in a fair way to having

an efficient working of the Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company.

To return to the Teviot. Finding that a considerable part of Mr. Escandon's family were at Mobile, *en route* for Mexico, I determined to proceed thither alone—proposing to rejoin my party at New Orleans on the 29th, and leaving H— to take care, till then, of all our friends—a serious undertaking for her, but to which all assented willingly.

Mobile is a second New Orleans, renowned for cotton. When I had seen our Mexican friends, who were at the great hotel (I need scarcely repeat what so many have said, that everywhere in the United States you have huge hotels), and had made a comfortable breakfast, I sallied forth to pick up the latest English news. At the door I found a gentlemanlike American, and begged him to direct me to a reading room. “You are a stranger?” he said, in the interrogative style. “Yes, I am.” “Then,” said he, “I will accompany you to our reading rooms.”

“Any particular news from England?” said I, as we walked along. He stopped, and stared at me. “Particular news from England?” he

repeated,—“Where have you been? *Astounding* news!”—and he made a full pause. I prepared myself to hear of a revolution. “Five eighths!” he exclaimed, with frightful energy—“Five eighths! by the morning’s telegraph.” I then found that speculation was running high in the “raw material” at Liverpool; and that the packet had brought news of a further fall or rise (I forget which) of five-eighths of a penny per pound in cotton. And I beg you to understand, that I am giving you literally what passed between my civil guide and myself.

The following day I spent most pleasantly with my new friends, and Mr. Eustace Barron, a gentleman of great celebrity, and of the highest standing in Mexico. He belongs to one of the prominent Irish families settled in Andalusia, of whom I have spoken in the first volume. Having two or three days to spare, Mr. Barron and Don Fernando Escandon resolved to go over to New Orleans with Mr. G— and myself, and there, on my arrival, I found my party “all right,” at the palatial Hotel of San Carlos, a building which, if viewed as a mere *public house*, might, indeed, safely be called the eighth wonder of the world.

The New Orleans friends, for whom we had letters of introduction, were very kind, and shewed us all the wonders of this great capital of the south. The extent of the buildings in which the cotton is deposited, the quantities of the raw material, and the packing, cannot be viewed without unfeigned astonishment.

We walked along the *Levee*, on the 30th, accompanied by our friend Don J. Martinez del Rio, who had been our fellow-passenger thus far. We went to choose a steamer for Cincinnati,—for the *Levee* at New Orleans is a very different affair from the *levee* at St. James’s. The former is a noble quay and embankment, stretching along the Mississippi, and forming the harbour, or we might almost say docks of the vast port. Steamer after steamer of mighty dimensions—ship after ship, of every kind, lay alongside this grand *Levee*, and shewed at once the extent of both the home and foreign traffic and commerce of New Orleans.

And such a puffing and blowing of steamers ready to sail! It was almost frightful, when high pressure came across one’s mind. I said so to Mr. Behn, our kind New Orleans friend; and in answer, he gave me the comfortable hint to see that

Miss R— was always *well abaft* in the steamer, as *there*, in case of an explosion, the danger was least. Even at the *Levee*, not many days after our visit, one of the high pressure steamers exploded, with most disastrous results, close to the very spot over which we were walking.

We fixed on our steamer—one of the best—called the “*Concordia*.” Next morning, the ladies did all their *shopping*; at 5 P.M., 31st, we went on board, and an hour afterwards were steaming up the Mississippi. Of this great aqueous highway of the States, so much has been written, said, and seen, that I may well afford to give but a passing glance at the seven days which we passed in stemming the tide of waters which, under the name of the Mississippi, flow from their source into the ocean. People, in general, complain much of the *monotony* of the vast forests through which the river chiefly flows: but for my part, I was so wrapt up in the magnitude of the woods, in the expanse of the waters, and sometimes for hours together in the stillness and solemnity of the scene, that all feeling of tedium, consequent on monotony, was banished from my mind. Besides, the Mississippi does not always bathe forests on

either side of its course: towns, villages, hills, villas, cultivated lands and farms, with occasional eminences, rise, at no great intermediate spaces, before your view; and finally, the steam-boats and vessels which you are constantly meeting and overtaking,—with the dangerous, but exciting amusement of racing with other boats, of which we had our share—all diminish the monotony of the Mississippi, such as it might doubtless be forty or fifty years ago.

On the 5th of November, and fifth day of our voyage, after having passed the towns of Natchez and Vicksburg, with other minor places, we arrived at Memphis, a rising town, like all those on this line of river, and of which we took a hurried view. Here we changed steamers, and prosecuted our voyage in one called the “*Chief Justice Marshal*.”

The next place we made, New Madrid, is at this moment doing its best to outstrip the old and more celebrated city of that name; and on the 8th we left the Mississippi to enter on the Ohio at another aspiring place, Cairo, which stands at the junction of the two rivers. The scene here is very fine, and we enjoyed it under beautiful although very cold weather. We had Kentucky on one

side, and Indiana on the other. On the 9th, at an early hour, we arrived at Louisville, where we went on shore, having the advantage of a few hours' stay, while the steamer unloaded old and reloaded new cargo. Louisville is a very handsome city, with a regular go-ahead population. Judge: in 1810 it had 1,357 inhabitants; in 1820, 4,012; in 1830, 10,352; in 1845, 21,210. At the same rate of increase, doubling its population in five years, it had in 1850, 42,400; and at this present day, 1852, it must have nearly 60,000 inhabitants. So Louisville in forty years has doubled its population four times and a half. Going on at the same ratio for the *next* forty years, Louisville would contain in 1892 about a million and a half of inhabitants. We were on board our steamer at half-past ten, A.M., and at eleven set forward on our voyage. Before daylight of the 10th we were at the conclusion of our river passage, Cincinnati, the queen city of the West. So many travellers have made it familiar to the English reader, that I may safely pass it almost *sub silentio*. We found still alive there people who recollected the spot as part of the great forest; and now, the forest cleared, we have

a beautiful city of 100,000 inhabitants, and a cultivated country all around. As New York is the recipient of Irish immigrants, so of German is Cincinnati, the great point whence they spread themselves over the far west in agricultural pursuits. We spent one day here, and among its other wonders, we had an opportunity of seeing its porcine riches. About one-third of a million of hogs are annually slaughtered and cured in this place. Its total yearly exports amount to upwards of sixty millions of dollars. And of Cincinnati I have no time to say more than that we spent a delightful day in it and its environs.

Here we were to commence our railroad travelling; and, keeping to the programme of our tour, we could give only one day to Cincinnati. But the following day was Sunday, when there is no traffic on the railways, and special trains were here unknown. Nevertheless, I went in the evening to the terminus, and to the resident manager there explained our dilemma. With great politeness, he at once offered to communicate with his superior: and the result was the following curious document, which now lies before me.

"Mrs. G. de A—, Miss A—, Mr. Z—, Mr. S—, 4; Mr. Robertson, Miss Robertson, Mrs. Landa, her sister, her daughters, 6; Mr. Garay, Mr. J. Garay, Mr. and Mrs. H—, Mr. M—, 4; Mr. B—, 1; Mr. Sierra, 1; Mr. Castro, Mr. Castro, jun., 2; Servants, 2; in all 21 persons.

"Pass Mr. Robertson and twenty persons from Cincinnati to Springfield on L. M. R. R. \$200.

"(Signed) P. W. STRADER,  
"Cincinnati, 10 Oct., 1849. Agent."

A pretty formidable party to have under my charge; yet, with here and there an exception, all worked harmoniously enough.

So at ten, A.M. of Sunday, the 11th, a special train came up to the station to receive us, and off we set; although, by the bye, I ought to mention that, finding we should have nothing to eat at Springfield unless previously ordered, I despatched a telegraphic message, and received answer, that dinner would be ready for twenty-one at half-past three, P.M.

Our whole way to Springfield ran along the Connecticut river, and through wood-land, with some clearances to make room for towns and villages; and as we whirled along their main streets, great

was the surprise of the inhabitants to see a special train, the first that had ever travelled on the line, which enjoys the name of the Little Miami Railroad. A derangement of the engine delayed us till four P.M., when we got to the hotel of the pleasant and important town of Springfield. Here is the United States' armoury (the most extensive in the country), built round a square of twenty acres of ground, and 3000 men are employed in it. The town contains 20,000 inhabitants.

We found an excellent dinner prepared for us; and while my party were enjoying their coffee in the evening I walked out alone. I found hundreds of decently and respectably dressed people going into the different churches. Between two conventicles or Methodist chapels I myself passed three hours; and I listened with interest and curiosity to the fervid, although exaggerated, prayers and discourses in both places of worship. The earnestness of the listening congregation, and their devout deportment and appearance, struck me as being highly creditable to the people of Springfield.

We left that town at ten P.M. by the railway, and travelled all night, arriving at 11 A.M. at

Sandusky, on the south of Sandusky bay, and there, admiring the beautiful view we had of lake Erie, we immediately took boat to cross for Buffalo and the Niagara falls. The steamer was a splendid one, the weather fine, the scene at once grand and novel—a lake 250 miles in length, with a picturesque shore, which we skirted as we went along. I do not know that I ever enjoyed anything much more. The two principal places at which we touched were the towns of Cleveland and Ohio, the greater part of the former built on a table land eighty feet above the lower city, and commanding a boundless prospect. At Buffalo we arrived at nine A.M., the 13th, and there we spent the day, concluding it with music and dancing, at our grand hotel, of (as usual), enormous size. It is kept by a Quaker; and when dinner-hour approached, I found, to my horror, that he would let my Mexican friends and ourselves have nothing but water! It was a *temperance* hotel. The scene which ensued between us was laughable; but we arranged in the end, and had our *wine*.

The city is really handsome, and containing from 40,000 to 50,000 inhabitants; although in 1812, during the war, our attacking force left only two houses standing.

## LETTER LV.

THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

*St. Etienne, November, 1852.*

HAVING much to see, we started very early next morning, for the falls; and, to reach them, we had to do twenty-two miles by railway to Schlosser, and thence a short distance by a stage-coach. By this time a considerable number of our party had separated from us, and only our more immediate friends accompanied us to the falls. We were, however, still fifteen in number.

Now with regard to the falls of Niagara and many other things which we saw in North America, I come too late to say anything which could be new or interesting. "Tout est dit, et l'on vient trop tard," as La Bruyère pathetically complains when he commences his *Caractères*,—"Le plus beau et le meilleur est enlevé. . . ."

Accordingly, of the Falls of Niagara and their surrounding beauties, I have little more to say than that we spent a long day in viewing them,