



Journal, 1836

From 18 years of age upwards the American adventure had often occurred to me. I had read much and pondered more on the subject, and from all I could learn it appeared to me the only field in which I could employ my education and capital to advantage. It also appeared likely to improve my constitution enfeebled by long ill health, which prevented me from launching into any speculation at home. On this subject, I consulted the celebrated Dr. Abercrombie, whose opinion coincided with my own, and encouraged me in the enterprise. From the moment the resolution was formed, a cheerful anxiety took possession of the mind till the long expected morning arrived - the morning of the first of June, when I was to bid adieu to friends, country, and all I held dear. During the bustle of the moment in removing my luggage, I felt, as I had all along been, quite at ease, and could converse on the uncertain journey before me with perfect composure, but on grasping the hand of a friend for perhaps the last time, I was so overcome as to be unable to speak; even the tears, in spite of every effort to restrain them, came trickling down my cheeks, and in an instant all my resolution failed me. Till now, I never had the least idea that the word

farewell could have made such an impression on me, But no sooner was home out of sight than my former peace returned. In Dumfries I had some matters to arrange, and also to meet my brother John, who was to accompany me to the Western world. An omnibus conveyed us to Glencairn Quay where the Nithsdale steamer was preparing for Liverpool. My brother Alexander, my sister Catharine, and a few acquaintances, were with us, while my eldest brother James attended upon our luggage, which was being conveyed to the vessel in one of his own carts. The Quay was much crowded at the time, and the number of passengers destined for Liverpool more than generally happened. Several of them were my intimate acquaintances, and like myself on their way to America. Our luggage being safe on board, we withdrew to an inn till the moment of final separation arrived. Before I went on board, I remained some minutes a silent spectator of the moving scenes around me where friends drowned in tears were parting perhaps never to meet again. Exactly at noon we set sail amidst the waving of handkerchiefs, and the nodding of heads, and while I could distinguish the feature of a friend or mark the spot where he stood, I never turned my eyes another way. Fondly too I watched the receding shores of my fatherland on which I gazed till it sank beneath the distant wave. So powerful was the fading view that a tear stole forth as I moved

amidst a crowd of heedless strangers

"Scotland, the land of all I love

"The land of all who love me

"Land where green sod my youth has trod

"Where sod shall lie above me."

Uncertain as the concluding sentiment might be it was deeply rooted in my mind, and I seemed confident, go where I would, that time would yet restore me to my native shores to breathe my last amidst associations, over which remembrance lingers with the greatest fondness.

The day was really delightful, and the voyage would have been so had not the deck of the vessel been crowded with sheep for the Liverpool Market a great nuisance to the passengers, who had scarcely a place to stand on. Towards evening the wind blew fresh, and sea-sickness attacked many of the passengers, but did not trouble me. We reached the Clarence Dock, Liverpool, at midnight and the moment we reached the side, the vessel was boarded by four excise officers on duty for the prevention of smuggled goods. The late hour of landing rendered it necessary that our luggage should remain in the vessel till morning. Having been several times in Liverpool, I escorted my brother and a relative, William Dinwiddie, to my accustomed place of resort, but here we were disappointed, my bed in the house being occupied. Flower, a policeman, on duty

after several ineffectual attempts, assisted us in finding lodgings, and we got to bed about 2 o'clock in the morning.

This: June 2. Dinisiddie and myself astir before 6 o'clock. Called on Jas. and Tho. McMillan, two fellow passengers from Dumfries, and also on their way to America. Made a short examination of several vessels preparing for New York and particularly the Thomas of Whitehaven, lying in the King's Dock. We next went to the Withsdale, and found all hands busy discharging, while the preventive officers were as actively on the search for contraband whiskey, the only seizable article. Almost every box and package underwent examination. Some were tried with prongs, others were forcibly entered if not opened for their inspection. A trunk belonging to J. McMillan took their attention, and nothing would satisfy but the contents turned inside out. My acquaintance acknowledged he had one bottle of brandy in it, the gift of a particular friend, but, on examination, it proved to be a bottle of small beer which caused no little merriment to the officers, and others who were anxiously watching the result. Some sneers were passed on M.M. and the temperate gift of his friend which he felt poignantly but answered coolly as the bottle was replaced in the trunk. M.M. was quite as much confounded as the officers, and could not account for the mistake. This circumstance alarmed me considerably as my brother had secreted three gallons of malt liquor in a barrel of potatoes. co-

wound at one end with a piece of sack cloth. This also became an object of jealousy, and was scrutinized as narrowly as the external surface would permit or the prong would penetrate. It however had the luck to escape. My brother was not present and had the secret been discovered, I had made up my mind to disown the package - as it carried no address.

Exclusive of my brother, Dinwiddie, the Mr. Millans, and myself, five other individuals joined us as adventurers to America, and with the exception of one were all from the neighborhood of Dumfries, Rob. Armstrong from Cooshogle, near Sanguhar, and John Edgar, Chas. Smith, Momy White, and Ann Fisher, from Kirkmahoe - the two latter being on their way to meet their future husbands. Nearly all our company had met, and having held a short conference, it was agreed that the luggage should be collected in a body to remain on the quay in charge of two while the others made a proper examination of different vessels in order to select one for the voyage. It was our desire to get aboard a packet ship could such have been attained. But yesterday one had sailed, and eight days would elapse ere another followed. Liverpool, indeed at this time, afforded few opportunities to New York. Having executed our commission, we selected the Corinthian, a merchantman, and an old British ship but American built. It afforded better accommodations than any other, being large and

sonny, upwards of 800 tons burden. but what was of some consequence, it was the first advertised to sail. The passage money at this time, compared with the spring of the year, was high and we had some difficulty in striking a bargain—but owing to the number of individuals in company it was reduced to four pounds, fifteen shillings, each, besides four and sixpence apiece for hospital money. We all to the number of eight, the McMillan family excepted, agreed at the above sum for a passage in the 2nd Cabin each giving in a deposit of one pound—the balance to be paid when every thing was safe on board which, according to our agreement, we had the liberty of doing as soon as the lumps quit work in the evening. This was considered a favorable circumstance and we had our luggage hastily conveyed to the vessel, but while in the act of disloading the cars, we were told to save our trouble for not a single article would be got aboard even for some days. It was to no purpose we represented our agreement with the agent J. W. Shaw, who unfortunately by this time was not at the office but the written orders of his brother had as little effect as we had upon the "lumpers," those engaged in loading the vessel. The only alternative was to let our luggage remain all night under the cover of the shed beside the dock, agreeing among ourselves that a strict watch be kept over it.

During the afternoon the McMillans deposited their luggage alongside the rest. They had made up their minds

to sail in the Corinthian, but had not entered into any agreement. One of the agent's clerks was aboard and the matter was settled on the same conditions— a deposit was made, and a receipt granted. Things were so far well, and we remained wonderfully content by the side of our boxes till evening when Edgar, Armstrong, and J. M. Millan, were appointed watches for the night. The two latter, previous to taking their station, accompanied J. M. Millan and myself to Mr. M.'s lodgings where we partook of a hearty supper, proud of the idea of keeping all together across the Atlantic. Passed the night with Mr. M.—

Frid: June 3. By the time I got up Armstrong and J. M. Millan had arrived to breakfast, which discussed, we made off to the Corinthian, but still no prospect of getting the luggage aboard. The main obstacle was the principal lumper, a red hot Irishman, who riding far above all commission, exhibited the most striking instance of domineering arrogance that can be conceived. While his eye was over the labring "lumpers", he kept walking about in a tattered great coat as if he had been my Lord Duke, & replying in his native brogue with disdain to whoever spoke to him. It was our belief that a bribe would have set things to right, but this we considered too much condescension to such a brute; and as we had called twice upon the agent without finding him, we could not better ourselves. During the dinner sees the Captain, who had now no control over the vessel, but

disliking to see our situation, gave his orders to take the boxes aboard, and it is almost impossible to conceive with what alacrity each commenced the work of embarkation, while an obstinate underling, the man stationed to partition off the berths and receive the hospital money, endeavoured in the height of a passion to put a stop to our labors. The agent himself arrived at this critical moment. It was then argued that all the luggage should go aboard, and that the balance of the passage money, including that for the New York hospital should be immediately discharged. While the rest of the company were getting the boxes in the 2nd cabin, J. McMillan and myself accompanied them to his office to complete our respective parts of the agreement. Others immediately followed, and every thing was soon settled with respect to eight of our party; but the McMillans were unable to get the agreement to their satisfaction. Besides the two brothers, their sister and her husband there were a little boy and an infant at the breast, for both of which full pay was demanded. This my friends strenuously opposed, and requested the agent to return their deposited money (5 sovereigns) which he refused to do. I could not remain silent at such injustice, and taking Mr. Mc's part, got myself involved in a quarrel that was bitterly contested for ten or twelve minutes when matters ran so high that we were ordered from the office. Deliberating in the street, and entirely at a loss what to do, we

were unexpectedly accosted by an individual, who, being in Shaw's office at the time, heard the whole dispute. His advice was to apply to Lieut: Low, the government agent for emigration, and where duty it is to see that no improper advantage be taken over emigrants. The man was kind enough to conduct us to the office of the Lieut: who was absent, but a ticket on the door showed he would shortly return. In the mean time we paid a visit to the ship where excepting some boxes belonging to my brother, every article was under the cover of the deck. The Lieut: was in on our return, but ours was a case that did not properly come under his jurisdiction. However he accompanied us to Shaw's office, but Shaw was absent and we remained long for his appearance to no purpose. The Lieut: left such word as eventually procured Mr. M. the whole of his deposite money. We were thus disappointed in proceeding together across the Atlantic, for he very shortly afterwards engaged on board the ship Thomas of Whitehaven. Nothing could show more forcibly the voracity and rascality of these shipping agents. Their object is to get you to part with your money, and then to treat you like brutes. Indeed what are we to think of men who after signing an agreement to take our luggage aboard, should at the same time place underlings for the express purpose of preventing us. The more I ponder over this matter it gives me to think that such rascals should be permitted to disturb unoffending strangers.

My mind being now relieved respecting the boxes, I devoted the evening to visit a friend from Newbridge, J. Renwick. We sat up late together, and contrary to his wishes set out to reach my host's lodgings, but lost my way in the dark. I managed however to find the place I lodged on former visits to Liverpool.

Sat: June 4. Spent the greater part of the day alone, traversing the streets most noted for bustle or ornament, and regaling my eyes with whatever was interesting in the windows of magnificent shops, where panes of glass were frequently met with four or five feet long and proportionally wide. Renwick, though unwell, accompanied me in a long walk during the afternoon. At his desire we went on board the *Cosinthean*, and had my fiddle conveyed to his room, where we passed a merry evening. The landlady had two young daughters, who, in return for my performance, favored us with a few songs. Remained with my friend.

Sun: June 5 This was the day appointed for the sailing of the *Cosinthean*, and I took a walk towards Princes Dock, to see what was transpiring. Was well aware I would find her unprepared for sea. The morning was wet, and the wind, which had for many weeks been from the East, was blowing strongly from the West. I felt sorrow at this as I stood on the deck of the deserted ship, which to all appearance might lie several days before it was in a condition to go to sea.

Called upon the Mr. Millany, and went to Edge Hill where

the great Liverpool and Manchester Railway, after passing under the city, emerges into open day. We intended to have spent an hour in St. James' cemetery, but found the gates closed - the public it appeared being prohibited only on the Sabbath day - St. James Walk and the adjoining shrubbery afforded us a pleasing retreat instead. From hence we turned our steps to the Princes parade at this time crowded with visitors enjoying the airy and delightful prospect on the river. It was full tide and several American ships moved gallantly into the docks.

Mon: June 6 - The Corinthian still unprepared for sea, and why so is difficult to conceive. Her full cargo seemed to be aboard, and all labor had ceased, but ropes, tackle, boxes and planks lay every where on deck in a careless and neglected manner; and save the Capt: the mate, and two or three boys, no seamen to man her had ever been observed on board. I grew heartily tired of this state of things, not aware how long it might continue, and every representation made to the agent was answered with the vessel will sail tomorrow. It was part of our bargain to have our expenses paid from the day of sailing till we actually sailed, but the wily agent found a subterfuge in the contrary winds that now prevailed. The Docks, streets, and everywhere was become wearisome, and the only comfort I had was an hour in the evening with Renwick and my fiddle.