

## CANAWLERS AT REST

### GEORGE DUTCH DAVIS

**b. about 1815**

**d. after 1877**

**By Carolyn I. Schmidt**

Although little is known about the early or later life of Captain George Dutch Davis, his service on a packet boat on the Wabash & Erie Canal has been recorded by several historians. Their articles not only show his personality, but give us insight as to the operation of a canal boat and problems he encountered.

The earliest reference found about George was the 1850 United States Federal Census, which shows George D. Davis, age 35, Boat Captain from New York, living with his wife, Jemima Davis, age 33, from Ohio, and daughter, Emma Davis, age 2, from Ohio, in a hotel run by Calvin Anderson in Fort Wayne, Wayne township, Allen county, Indiana. Living with them are 39 others including Geo Hoskinson, age 20, Packet Boat Agent; Samuel Denton, age 16, Packet Driver; and William R. Belden, age 29, Canal Agent.

In Bert Griswold's *The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne, Indiana* he says "the captains of the packets, the highest class passenger boats on the canal, the following are remembered: Thomas R. Filton, W. S. B. Hubbell, M. Van Horne, John M. Wigton, Clark Smith, Byron D. Angell, William Sturgis, Benjamin Ayres, George Hoskinson, William Phillips, George Alvord, James Popple, Nathan Nettleton, Thomas B. McCarty, Christian Snively, J. E. Motherwell, Charles Sherwood, Elias Webb, William Dale, **George D. Davis**, and J. R. Smith. Referring to the old canal days, Byron D. Angell says (1917): 'The Dickey's owned a packet line on the canal which, in 1849, was purchased by Jerome Petrie, of Little Falls, New York. Mr. Petrie pur-

chased a number of packets which had been in use on the Erie Canal in and when they reached the Wabash & Erie Canal it was found that they were twenty feet too long to enter the locks. A section was removed from the middle of each boat. [Although W&E locks were built on the original Erie Canal standard of 90 ft. long, between 1836-1862 the Erie was enlarged and its locks made 110 feet long to accommodate larger boats. At the same time the width of the Erie was changed from 40 feet wide to seventy feet wide.] In 1852 I was sent to Terre Haute as the agent of the canal at that place, and in the following year was made a captain of the Queen City, one of the best packets plying between Terre Haute and Lafayette. Later I was the captain of boats running between Lafayette and Toledo, and finally had charge of the canal office at Lafayette. One who lives in the present day has no conception of the Fort Wayne of the days of the old Wabash & Erie canal. Time has wrought wonderful transformations."

In H. S. Knapp's chapter on "The Old Packet Lines and their Captains" in his 1877 *History of the Maumee Valley* he relates the following about Captain George Dutch Davis and later on quotes Davis:

"Captain George Dutch Davis, now of the United States Revenue office, Toledo, kindly furnishes 'some recollections of the palmy days of the Miami and Wabash canals, together with the names of boats and captains,' which may be properly appended here. The fact may be recalled that the office of captain of a canal packet boat, in those times, was regarded as invested with a dignity equal to that now awarded to one in command of the best steamer that floats upon the lakes; and, though slower and more expensive, they had the advantage of railway coaches on the score of comfort. Some of the generation of to-day make merry when they recur to what now strikes them as the slow modes of travel and transportation of the canal days, and commiserate the condition of their fathers, whose highest rate of speed in a passage packet boat was from seventy-five to a hundred miles in twenty-four hours, while, by improvements since made, six hundred miles, in the same length of time, can be conveniently passed over in railway coaches; yet, if they had 'roughed it' through the black swamp, when, indeed, it *was* a 'black swamp'—though one no longer—paying high rates of passage in the rude and comfortless vehicles that then conveyed the United States mails, and struggling, often on foot, half the distance through mud and water, because the horses had not the strength to draw their weary load; and again when off the stage routes, to undertake a journey of hundred miles, one would leave home on horse-back, and before reaching his

destination, would perhaps travel by the various conveyances of pirogue, raft and canoe, and finally be glad to finish his journey after several days of severe toil, on foot and horse less; and, if our young friend would recur to the fact that farm products, in many places, did not pay transportation charges to reach a market; and also to the fact that the country merchant often paid more in freights on some of his goods, than the invoice amounted to in the market where purchased; he would not then marvel at the exultation indulged in by the inhabitants of the Maumee valley, when the canals were opened for travel and transportation uses.

"But in turning to the recollections of Capt. Davis: he states that in the year 1843, Samuel and Archie Mahon, brothers, commenced running two small packets between Toledo and Fort Wayne—starting and stopping without reference to regular time—sometimes camping out, and getting their meals at farm houses along the line of canal. Nothing, however, was permanently undertaken in packet boating until the summer of 1844, when Samuel Doyle and William Dickey, of Dayton, Ohio, organized a line making regular trips between Toledo and Cincinnati, and from Toledo to Lafayette, comprising the following boats, namely: "Erie," "Banner," "Ohio," "Indiana," "Illinois," "Missouri," "Kentucky," "Tempest," "Cataract," "Atlantic," "Fashion" and a steam propeller named "Niagara."

"Capt. George Dutch Davis opened the first regular packet office in Toledo, in 1844, and in 1845 resigned the position to again take charge of his boat, and Wm. J. Finlay was given charge of the office, and retained it until the opening of the Toledo and Wabash railroad in 1854 caused the withdrawal of the line. During the last five years of the existence of the line the proprietorship was in the hands of Jerome Petree, of Little Falls, N. Y., and E. B. Holmes, of Brockport, N. Y., who purchased the interest of Doyle & Dickey in 1849.

"The names of the old packet captains, which have a choice place in the memories of thousands yet residents of the Maumee valley, and of other thousands distributed over distant regions, are given below, and the disposition which the hand of Providence has made of them:

"Thomas B. Filton, deceased; W. S. B. Hubbell, deceased; M. Van Horne, resides in Iowa; John M. Wigton, Toledo; Clark Smith, deceased; A. Vanness, deceased; Byron O. Angel, Fort Wayne; Wm. Sturgess, deceased; Benjamin Ayres, deceased; Joseph Hoskinson, Napoleon; William Phillips, Lima; Charles Sherwood, Cincinnati; Christian Snively, deceased; George Alvord, in Arkansas; James Popple and Nathan Nettleton, St. Louis; Thomas B. McCarty, late State Auditor of Indiana, at Indianapolis; Elias Webb, Middletown, Ohio; William Dale, New York; Geo. Dutch Davis, Toledo; J. R. Smith, Cincinnati.

"George Owen and David S. Davis, of Dayton, were proprietors of the first packet line from Dayton to Cincinnati. Samuel Doyle was the first to experiment with steam on the Miami canal — having built in 1845, the propeller "Niagara," at a cost of \$10,000. She was commanded by Capt. William Dale, and proved a failure financially."

Although Knapp reports canal captains had "dignity," George Dutch Davis lost his "dignity" during an incident that occurred on his boat. According to Paul Fatout in his book *Indiana Canals*:

"Captain Davis of the *Indiana* was an urbane officer, but on one occasion he lost his amiability because of a British traveler named J. Richard Beste. The Englishman came up the lower line, squabbling with the skipper all the way, friction possibly aggravated by a British accent and foreign sense of humor that may have annoyed the Hoosier captain. The climax came at Lafayette. There, said Beste, 'discovering that there was not a single chamber pot on board ... I had requested the steward to have one brought and offered to pay for it if required; but ... though a shop was close at hand, the master had not allowed the steward to send for one.' A distressing situation. Evidently the Britisher seriously ruffled the usually genial commander, else he would surely not have rejected an appeal in such a crisis.

"With or without accessories, the *Indiana* was a great favorite. Among her crew were two musical mariners, and when she neared port the tooting of Ed Parker's clarinet and the dulcet tones of Bill Patchin's fiddle drew a welcoming crowd to the dockside."

J. Richard Beste may have seemed to be a very demanding passenger, but when reading his book *The Wabash: or Adventures of an English Gentleman's Family in the Interior of America* one can better understand why this was. Just before leaving Terre Haute, Indiana, the canal bank broke and he and his family had to wait a week while it was repaired and he had been very ill. His physician, Dr. Read, accompanied them to the canal wharf to board a canal boat. Beste reports his trip from Terre Haute to Toledo in August 1851 in one chapter. When he refers to the Indiana canal boat or Ohio canal boat he is giving the state in which it is owned and not the name of the boat.

"Tuesday, 12th August. At five o'clock in the afternoon, we stepped from the little quay at Terre Haute on board the Indiana canal boat. Three horses were harnessed to a rope, about fifty yards ahead of the boat; they started at a moderate trot; and the town, where we had tarried so long, was soon lost to our sight. No other passengers were on

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board: and we wandered over the vessel, well pleased with the promise it gave us of tolerable accommodation. The captain, [not Davis] a very young man, was very civil and attentive to our wants; and told us that tea would be served at seven o'clock, which there, on that day, was the precise hour of sunset.

"The construction of the canal boat was—in miniature—much the same at that of the lake and river steamers. There was no hold or under-deck; but, on the deck at the stern, were raised the kitchen, steward's room, and offices; in the centre of the boat, was the large saloon—the sitting room of all by day, the sleeping room of male passengers by night; adjoining it was the ladies' saloon; beyond which again, was a small cabin containing only four berths. This cabin was separated by a doorway and curtain from the ladies' saloon, and on the other side opened upon the bow of the vessel. In it, was a looking-glass, a hand basin, two towels, a comb and a brush, for the use of the ladies. It was a rule in the boats that no gentleman should go into the ladies' saloon without express invitation from the ladies; consequently, the third little room was sacred to the female sex unless entered from the bow, in which case a male occupant would cut off the ladies from their washhouse. Dr. Read had, however, declared that it was necessary that I should have this small room in order that I might be secure from the draughts and night air that would be let into the men's saloon at night; and the canal boat agents at Terre Haute had contracted to secure the same for me throughout the length of the passage. Dr. Read had particularly insisted on this, fearing that the slightest chill would produce a return of the illness from which I was, in truth, scarcely convalescent.

"A flat roof spread over the whole of the saloons; and on it was piled the luggage; and here passengers walked up and down or sat to enjoy the view.

"The view, however, as yet 'was naught'; the banks were low; and thick woods, in which were only partial clearings, shut us in on both sides. I have omitted to mention that the climate of Terre Haute had, of late, been ren-

dered much more salubrious than it formerly was by the flooding of a large wood. Somewhere about here, there had been a marshy valley covered with magnificent timber; but reeking, also, with a miasma that poisoned those around. By the advice of Dr. Read, the waters of the Wabash had been let into the hollow, and the whole valley turned into a lake, flooding the timber as it stood. Fancy such a waste of timber in 'the old country' within a short distance of water carriage! There it still stood, rotting away; and, it was asserted that the pestilential vapour no longer arose from this 'drained bog', as an Irish emigrant described it to me.

"Our children had wondered where they were to sleep, as there were no visible berths amid the red moreen curtains that hung round the ladies' saloon, to give it an air of comfort in this August weather; they dreaded to have to pass four nights on the floor, as they had done at Mrs. Long's hotel; but they said they were now more used to hardships than they had then been; and they, also, drew comparative comfort from seeing a washhand basin and two towels, instead of the amiable American woman's small tin pie dish. The steward, however, soon solved their doubts by hooking up some shelves to the wall, and laying mattresses and sheets upon them.

"We were summoned to tea; but, after the good living of the Prairie House, all complained bitterly of the bad tea and coffee, of the heavy hot corn bread, and of the raw beef steaks.

"I then produced my brandy bottle. Dr. Read had advised me to give a tablespoonful of brandy to each one of my children every night and morning, in hope of keeping off the ague and fever of the canal: and I administered his prescription regularly as long as we were in the boats. The youngest two-year-old boy had, indeed been ill for some time; and by the teaspoonful of the same medicine sweetened with sugar, had been cured—much to his own dissatisfaction; he declared that he liked to be ill; the physic was so nice.

" 'After tea, we all began,' writes Agnes, 'a most murderous attack upon the mosquitoes that swarmed on the windows and inside of berths, in expectation of feeding upon us as soon as we should go to bed. But those on whom we made war, were soon replaced by others; and the more we killed, the more they seemed to come to be killed, like Mrs. Bond's ducks; It was as though they would defy us to exterminate the race. At last, we gave up the task as hopeless, and resigned ourselves, as well as we could to pass a sleepless night.'

"Wednesday. 'What with turning about on account of the heat and trying to catch the mosquitoes, who bit us dreadfully, we did not get much rest; and we rose next morning unrefreshed. After breakfast, which was much the

same as the tea had been, Papa began reading some of *The Corsair* aloud to us; but it was soon found out that our travels had not made us more poetical; and the dull muddy canal, on which we looked through the small windows of the boat, accorded so ill with Byron's description of

‘the glad waters of the dark blue sea,’

that the reading was soon cast aside. The monotony of the day was only broken by the many locks that we had to pass through; although it was not agreeable to feel the boat strike suddenly against the wall or the floodgates with force enough to throw down those who were not on their guard. Then the violent rush of the waters from above, while the boat was rising with them, rather made us imagine that we were in Noah's ark.’

“We enjoyed, however, the current of air that we felt at such times; and some of the children insisted that it had been cooled by the water from under which, they said, it rushed.

“About Covington, a town some fifty miles from Terre Haute, the scenery is remarkably pretty: the canal passes through what seems to be a healthy sandstone country. But, tormented by the mosquitoes, by heat, and by thirst, our onward course was very wearying; and the wished-for change made us well pleased when we arrived, in the evening, at LaFayette, where we were to move into another canal boat. We little knew what was in store for us!

“LaFayette, —opposite to which was fought the famous battle of Tippecanoe, by which General Harrison at length reduced the Indians to sue for peace,—LaFayette is said to be a flourishing town of about ten thousand inhabitants. I did not see anything to support this character during the few minutes that I was able to go on shore. Here I procured a fresh supply of whiskey, to mix with our canal water, which we were afraid of drinking alone; and I also sent on board one of those pieces of furniture [chamber pot] which are found in very European bed-room, but not one of which exists in any boat on this canal. I mention this that the English shareholders may send out a supply. The bell soon summoned us to the boat which was to take us onwards; and which was so inconveniently drawn up that females could only enter it by passing through the windows, from the saloon of the one into that of the other. Our children were much amused by the spiteful delicacy with which an elderly spinster so intruded herself, and by the equanimity with which a respectable Quakeress thrust herself and numberless bags and baskets, that hung on her arms, through the double aperture. Several other people followed them; and, with dismay, we anticipated the closeness and heat of the cabins during the coming night.

“ ‘The last bell had sounded,’ writes Lucy, ‘when we saw a carriage driven very fast towards the wharf; a gen-

tleman and a lady and three children, with their black nurse, got out of it and came towards the boat. Our departure was delayed while they scrambled on board, and while their luggage was transferred from their rough-and-ready. We then started; and, for some time, all occupied themselves with catching mosquitoes, which swarmed in this boat ten times worse than in the other. We got out our needlework, and passed the time in working and answering or eluding the various questions that were put to us; and in admiring the beautiful country we were passing through. We remarked numbers of beautiful flowers, that in England are grown with the greatest care, here growing wild: amongst them, were rhododendrons that spread to a great size. We also remarked a great number of tortoises basking in the sun, but which took to the water as we passed.’

“ ‘Bed-time came, and I was preparing to go to my inner cabin, when the elderly spinster called out—’ Well now; I want to go to bed. I wish the gentleman would go to his own room.’

“ ‘I am going’ said I; ‘Good night.’

“ ‘Well, but I reckon,’ she cried, ‘that he’s not going to sleep there! If he does I shall call the captain.’

“ ‘I have pre-engaged this cabin for myself for the last fortnight,’ I observed.

“ ‘I won’t stand it!’ she exclaimed in all the rage of elderly spinster American modesty. ‘The idée of a man sleeping there! I’ll call the captain.’

“The captain, who was in the men’s saloon, hearing his name invoked, appeared at the door; and some of the women joined the old maid in requiring the expulsion of so dangerous a person from their vicinity. The captain, G. Davis [George Dutch Davis], of the Ohio boat, assented instantly; and desired me to go into the men’s cabin.

“ ‘What do you say to this memorandum?’ I asked; and I read aloud; ‘The bearer has paid his fare for self and family and baggage, through to Toledo, and has secured the four berths in the small saloon in the bow of the boat, and seven berths in the ladies and gentlemen’s cabin; as by way-bill. LaFayette, August 13th, 1851. W. H. Noble, Agent.’

“ ‘I care nothing for that. I am captain of this boat; and out you shall come!’ replied the fellow [Davis].

“Here my wife interfered, and explained that we had come by the canal on the express understanding that I should have that room, as the open windows in the larger saloon might be fatal after my illness.

“ ‘I promise the ladies,’ I added, ‘that I will leave the little cabin by the wash-room and over the roof, so as not to set foot in their own saloon.’

“Captain Davis, however, only blustered the more against any agent daring to dispose of his boat; and as I still refused to give way, exclaimed, ‘Let the ladies decide. It’s



their affair: whatever they conclude, I guess I'll have done like thunder.'

"Upon the ladies, my wife then threw herself; told what we had suffered, told her fears, and appealed to them as wives and mothers. The Quakeress immediately said, 'I have no objection to the gentleman sleeping there;' and all the wives and mothers, one by one, said the same; the old maid was neither, and would not consent, thought she no longer objected to the proposal.

"G. Davis saw the point was carried against him; and turning, in wrath, to the men who had all congregated at the open door of the cabin, exclaimed, **'The ladies do not object to the gentleman sleeping in their room! It's nothing to me who sleeps there. I'm captain of the boat, and I give you all leave to go in and sleep there if you like. All of you, do as you like.'**

"He stalked out of the cabin; and though the men looked at him with evident disgust, they did not administer Lynch law and duck him in his own canal.

"Verily, recording these transactions, I begin to feel that there must be a great many blackguards in the Northern States of America.

"As the shareholders of the canal were Englishmen, I felt that I had some right to appeal; and I seized the first leisure half-hour to write an account of the transaction to the agent of the English trustees at Terre Haute. I had never seen him; but I received the following letter from him.

"Terre Haute, August 25th, 1851

"Dear Sir, — Your favour has reached me, and I lose no time in making this respectful acknowledgment. It gives me great regret to learn that your treatment by Captain Davis was so scandalous; and I feel sure that, when the *proprietors* of the packet line are made acquainted with his conduct, a proper remedy will be applied. To secure this object, I shall send a copy of your favour to Messrs. Doyle, Petree, and Co., the employers of Capt. Davis, with such suggestions as may seem timely and proper.

"I will remark that, *as a trustee of the canal*, I have not the slightest control over the packet boats. They belong to *private* persons who pay toll for the privilege of navigating the same. With their internal policy, or with the persons who act as captains, I have nothing to do by any right conferred upon me. If I had, Captain Davis should not be permitted to insult and outrage respectable persons; and, as it is, I shall take the most prompt measures to see that his employers are made acquainted with his conduct towards yourself. I take this occasion to express my deep mortification at the conduct of Captain Davis, and beg you to be assured that whatever remedy is within my power will be cheerfully applied.

"With high consideration,

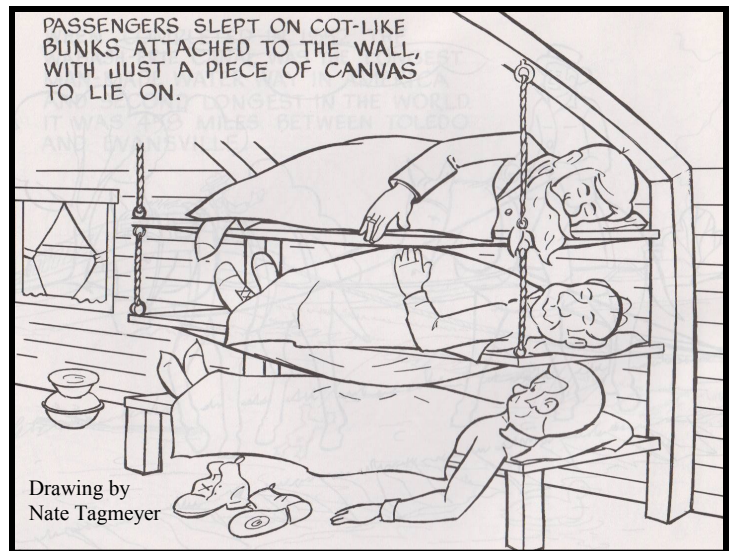
" 'Your obedient servant,

" 'Thomas Dowling'

"I have dwelt upon this matter that English shareholders may know how their property is managed in America. If for the same reason I linger yet upon this canal, let it be remembered that those whose property is here forcibly invested, have, probably, never before heard from a countryman who had traveled with his family from the Ohio River to Lake Erie by their ditch; and that it is very unlikely anyone will ever do so again; as, before long, the whole country will be intersected by railroads.

"But I must not yet pass on to another day.

" 'Papa went into his little room,' writes Lucy; 'and we had to go to bed. Everyone was quickly undressed and got into their berths, except Mrs. Ward, the lady who had come down in the carriage at LaFayette, and ourselves; and we, seeing that none of the others had thought of saying their prayers, felt rather shy at kneeling down before so many people: but we overcame our feelings and did so. When we rose from our knees, Mrs. Ward and her negress were still praying: and I was astonished to see that, before they rose, they both signed themselves with the sign of the cross. Until we saw this talismanic bond of union, we had thought that we were the only Catholics on board.



" 'The berths were in tiers, three rows high; and, that we might not be intermingled with other people, we girls took ours one above the other. I was put in the top one; for Catherine was too modest to climb so high; Ellen and Agnes were too short; and Louie still suffered from her pain in her side; so I mounted to the top. I lay awake but still, for a long time. At last, I heard every one turning and sighing with the heat; so I gave way to my own feelings, and did so too. But the shelves or trays on which we lay, were so short,

that I found my pillow constantly slipping down from under my head; and, if I put it lower down, my feet hung out at the other end; so that, although I was not very ill, I was obliged, at last, to curl myself up again and lie quite still, while the mosquitoes devoured, and the heat melted me. At last I went to sleep.

“ Thursday. ‘I waked up early,’ she continues, ‘covered with mosquito bites, which gave me entertainment for some time. Then came the pleasure of dressing before strangers; but Mama soon announced that Papa had left his room, so that we might pass into it, and to the basin and two towels. Every third person had to dip the jug into the canal for fresh water, which was not odoriferous.

“ ‘Then came the breakfast, where we broke our fast, indeed, and but little more; for the bread was hot and very heavy, and the beef steaks were dry, small and much underdone. I do not know how Papa managed; having been accustomed to share a good-sized steak with the pigs, he had now to share a very small one with the tortoises; and Captain Davis looked very black [angry] if any one asked to be helped a second time.’

“We passed through a great deal of beautiful country. Through scores and scores of miles of woodland that had never heard the axe; past thousands of acres where the trees were rotting in the steaming pools collected about them. For the canal sometimes passed along the slope of a rising ground, where the water wept through the bank on the lower side; for whenever hollows were to be passed over, its channel was not formed by being dug out of the earth, but by the piling of the earth on each side to form embankments. These were often broken violently away; and the water, let in through upper locks, trickled over them and formed morasses on each side. A county that might have otherwise been healthy, was thus changed into a swamp by the canal; and immense labours of drainage would be required before it could be rendered habitable, owing to the floods thus artificially produced. But who thought of inhabiting the region when the canal was made? The land was then a worthless desert, and the one thing needed, was to get through it. I should be curious to know whether future occupants will have any claim upon the canal to consume its own waters, like smoke, or whether ‘vested interests’ give the company a right to be a nuisance—like Established Churches in all countries, from Rome to Ireland.

“I never saw more magnificent timber than shaded the valley through which we passed. Great sticks of plank oak shot up straight from the bottoms without a knot or branch, until their heads spread out, some scores of feet above, like the tufted summits of the Italian pine. At times, partial clearings or little prairies opened vistas into the lands beyond, and still the same noble timber everywhere arose.



On the banks of the canal, as on mounds of higher earth, the spaces between the trees were filled with wild and untrodden copses. Shrubs, with large, gorgeous leaves, shot up amid creepers of various hues, and glistened in the sun. I regretted my little knowledge of botany, that prevented me from fully appreciating, as I enjoyed this magnificent vegetation.

“About Fort Wayne, the country is higher; but the soil seems equally rich. Near this, is an old block-house, formerly erected as a fortress against the Indians; an interesting antiquity in this country; and certainly more ancient than any other building in the State. At this little town, I went on shore again to replenish my brandy and whisky flasks; for there had been a large expenditure of the former on my third boy, who had been ill in the morning, and had, we feared caught the ague and fever of the district. But some of the passengers advised me to give him frequent spoonfuls of burnt brandy; and it was curious to see how speedily and how completely this cut short what threatened to be a serious attack. I was much amused by the lists of spiceries and grocery wares hung outside the doors of many little shops here and at the several villages we passed, and that were all headed ‘York fixings and Yankee notions:—perhaps they were made of wood.

“The word Yankee is as much used by Americans as by British; but, with the former it applies exclusively and only to the New England States;—to Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The people of these States, and these only, are called Yankees. Those who apply the term indiscriminately to all

Americans, commit the same blunder as would a foreigner who should call all British subjects Paddies.

"I found Mr. Ward, who, with his family, had joined us at Lafayette, an intelligent, civil gentleman, as the Americans say. He and his family were going this way towards Washington. We had much conversation together, as we sat on the roof of the saloons and screened ourselves with umbrellas from the heat of the sun. His children seemed exceedingly fond of their black nurse, and ran about the canal boat with her, calling her 'mammy'. She told my daughters, with the chattering communicativeness of all negroes, that the father of her mistress had bought her, when a child, to rescue her from the ill-usage she received from her first owner; that she had nursed his daughter and accompanied her when she married Mr. Ward, who had given her freedom in reward for much faithful service; and then she added that she intended to leave them as soon as they arrived at the end of her journey.

" 'But why do you want to leave them now?' asked Louie.

" 'Well now; I reckon I shall find as good a place somewhere else, missy,' she answered evasively.

" 'But are they not kind to you?' "

" 'Oh yes. Massa and Missy Ward very kind good people; but I can get higher wages. What e good to be free if no change place and get high wages?' "

"This was evidently not the whole truth; and she afterwards told that, having married one of her late master's slaves, he had died and left her a widow with one daughter; that that daughter was still a slave; and that her only hope was to earn enough to be able to buy the freedom of her child;—that nothing would have tempted her to leave the kind people and the children she now served but the hope of earning, in the great cities, what would enable her to ransom her own daughter.

"Poor creature! Hers was not an uncommon story. She was found on her knees in our inner cabin praying alone, with a fervor that our daughters had seldom seen equaled.

"We were much annoyed all this day by a passenger, who stood on the roof, or upper deck of the boat, with a fowling piece in hand, and constantly fired at the birds that flew across the canal. The detonation over head was unpleasant; but the man was a friend of the surly animal who commanded the boat [Davis], and remonstrance was felt to be useless.

"As we proceeded onwards, we had taken in a great number of passengers; many of whom only used the boat for short stages, from town to town; but many others now sought it as the only conveyance to the Lakes and the more busy districts we were here approaching. Though I had

manfully held out my little cabin during the preceding night, I would not risk a battle with the new comers; and selected a berth in the outer saloon amid my sons. Mr. Ward promised to do what he could to keep the windows shut through the night; and as every berth had its occupant, there was not much danger of catching cold.

"Friday. We had passed from the valley of the Wabash, running to the south-west, to that of the Meaumee [Maumee] river, which had a north-easterly current, and we had now cut off a little angle on the right and were at the place where our Wabash canal [Wabash & Erie] joined that from the Ohio at Cincinnati [Miami & Erie at Junction, Ohio]. Here we were to part with Frank and his next youngest brother, whom I had resolved to leave awhile in America, that they might be the better fitted for the country which I still looked upon as their future home. The climate had perfectly agreed with these two children. The account that I had heard of the Catholic colleges in the United States, had given me the greatest confidence in them; and the archbishop of Cincinnati had written me word that he would 'receive them with open arms and with truly paternal affection.'

"At Junction, we had found the Cincinnati boat; and there was an interchange of many passengers as they drew up side by side in the wide basin of the two canals. I commended my two poor boys to the care and kindness of the captain of the southern vessel who seemed to be a civil, good-tempered man, and we all took leave of one another, with what spirits we might.

" 'While our canal boat,' writes Louie, 'was stopping alongside of the other, Frank and Constable were standing at the window of theirs, and I was at the opposite window of ours. Frank was trying to keep up his spirits and smiling cheerfully; but Constable was behind him crying bitterly. It was *his* first separation from home; the other had been to school in England.

" 'Mind and write to me, dear Louie,' said Frank; 'Do not forget me; and when you look at the stars at night, think that I am looking at them also. The same stars will shine on us both; and that will be something in common.'

" 'And mind and pray for me,' sobbed out poor Constable, 'that I may be a good boy and soon come back to England.'

" 'Nonsense!' said Frank. 'Forget all about England; you had much better'—

" 'I protested against this,' continues Louie. 'The boat was just beginning to move. Frank put his hand through the window; I did the same; and we shook hands.

" 'Good bye once more,' he cried: 'henceforth I will be an American!'

"It was not the last speech I should most have

wished to hear from the lips of one of my brothers; but I had no time for any reply. The boats separated, and Frank and Constable were soon lost to my eyes. The rest of the day, of course, we were all melancholy and out of spirits. It was another break up in our family, who had all been so happy together at Talence. Perhaps, when we meet next, we might be all changed. We should no longer think and feel together. Frank meant to be an American; and I had certainly no desire to become one; for, disagreeable as the manners of American men might be, they were nothing compared to those of the women.'

We were now in Ohio state once more, and soon turned again into the valley of the Meaumee river; descending locks instead of ascending through them, as we had done on the previous days and nights. We passed Defiance, where, I had been told at Cincinnati, was the office for the sale of the remaining public lands of the State left unsold in this unhealthy bottom; and certainly the appearance of the country proved that the settlers had shown judgment—at all events in what they had left. We passed places called 'Napoleon', 'Damascus', and 'Providnece', which I should think the poor emigrants to these wooded marshes must have often invoked. Passengers continually thronged on board as the day went on, and gave us samples of American manners amongst themselves,—popular, vulgar manners, if you will; but still the manners of country-people and farmers of every class. The men, I admit, behaved invariably with propriety, self-respect, and consideration for one another. Let us consider whether, amongst farmers' wives and daughters in England, we should be likely to meet with anything like the following traits of American womanhood.

" 'At one of these villages,' writes Lucy, 'seven girls came on board, making a great noise. They did not seem in the least abashed to find strangers in the saloon; but continued to laugh and talk as though they had been alone. When the last bell rang, they sprang up and crowded round one of their number, kissing her vehemently: then they ran through the cabin and disappeared. The one girl left alone, immediately began talking and asking questions of the other passengers as if she were an American woman grown. This night, all the berths were engaged, and mattresses were laid on the carpet. One old lady had not been able to secure any other than one of the highest on the third tier, and she asked the new little girl to be so good as to change with her.

" 'Indeed I shan't. I was here first and I've the first choice,' replied this child, about fourteen years old.'

" 'Well, now, my dear, I know that; but I guess you'll change for good nature.'

" 'But I don't like the top berth, so I shall keep my own.'

" 'But I can't climb so well as you, I'm so much

older; and it will do your young legs good; besides, you are to leave the boat, and land, long before morning.'

" 'But I don't like it, I tell you. Why should I have what I don't like any more than yourself? You're no better than me, and I've the best right to it.'

" 'I say, said the old woman angrily, 'that it's not at all proper for a little gal like you to be obstinate with your betters. Take the upper berth and hold your tongue.'

" 'I'm not going to do any such thing. My 'pa would never consent to it. And as to betters,—I don't know who made you my better. I guess you may just keep the top berth; for I certainly shan't give you this.'

" So saying, the young lady laid herself in her berth without undressing, that she might be ready to leave the boat in the night.

" 'Oh my!' exclaimed the old lady, 'I reckon I shall be suffocated up there before morning. I really never did see such an obstinate, ill-natured gal behave so to her betters.'

" 'I should like to know what makes you my better!' cried the child from her comfortable berth. 'I guess your father was no better than my 'pa; and I shall be as old as you some day.'

"The old woman made no answer; but scrambled up to her shelf by the aid of a chair.

"It is all very well to teach people out of the catechism, 'to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters;' but in the United States, no one will admit that he has or can have any betters. Two or three people expressed to me their wonder that I should return to Europe; 'They liked,' they said, 'they liked to live amongst their equals.'

" 'That is just the reason,' I replied, 'why I wish to return to Europe.'

"I never saw people packed so close as they were that night in the men's saloon. I and my remaining son had our accustomed berths in a corner: every other one of the three tiers round the walls was occupied; mattresses completely covered the floor, on which people lay as close as possible; the dinner table was covered with sleeping humanity more thickly than Captain Davis ever strewed it with beefsteaks; and those who lay under the table thought themselves favored, inasmuch as they could not be trodden upon.

"Saturday. At ten o'clock this morning, our hateful boat—for the wretched fare and accommodation on which I had paid about forty-five\* dollars a head, or about double

\*We question forty-five dollars a head. Perhaps it should have said four—five dollars a head for a 4 day trip starting at Lafayette on Wednesday and ending at Toledo on Saturday. The trip from Lafayette to Fort Wayne usually cost about two dollars.

the charge per day at the Prairie House, Terre Haute— was



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drawn up beside a crowded wharf at Toledo. My family had found some degree of fellowship in that of Mrs. Ward and her children; and had been amused by the manners and the squabbles of the other female passengers. We left the boat, thankful to the Almighty that we had been able to traverse between three and four hundred miles of an infected district without further illness; and rejoiced to find ourselves once more in a comparatively-civilized region.”

We do not know when George Davis quit canawling. The Wabash & Erie Canal declined through the 1860s and no longer carried traffic after 1874. The Miami & Erie Canal operated until the 1913 flood.

The 1870 United States Federal Census shows George D. Davis, age 54, Asst. Assessor U. S. Revenue from New York, living in Toledo, Lucas county, Ohio, with real estate valued at \$4,000 and a personal estate of \$1,000. He is the head of the household. Living with him are his wife, Jemima, age 52, from Ohio, keeping house; daughter

Emma, age 22, at home and Sandy Sergeant, age 11.

Checking further census records, genealogy charts and cemetery records, no further information was found on Captain George Dutch Davis. If he had held his temper, we might not ever have known about him.

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