









**A VOYAGE TO THE MOON:  
WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE MANNERS  
AND CUSTOMS, SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY,  
OF THE PEOPLE OF MOROSOFIA, AND OTHER  
LUNARIANS.**

**BY  
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"It is the very error of the moon,  
She comes more near the earth than she was wont,  
And makes men mad." — *Othello*.

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Appendix: Anonymous Review of *A Voyage to the Moon*, reprinted from *The American Quarterly Review* No. 5 (March 1828)



## APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC.

Having, by a train of fortunate circumstances, accomplished a voyage, of which the history of mankind affords no example; having, moreover, exerted every faculty of body and mind, to make my adventures useful to my countrymen, and even to mankind, by imparting to them the acquisition of secrets in physics and morals, of which they had not formed the faintest conception,—I flattered myself that both in the character of traveller and public benefactor, I had earned for myself an immortal name. But how these fond, these justifiable hopes have been answered, the following narrative will show.

On my return to this my native State, as soon as it was noised abroad that I had met with extraordinary adventures, and made a most wonderful voyage, crowds of people pressed eagerly to see me. I at first met their inquiries with a cautious silence, which, however, but sharpened their curiosity. At length I was visited by a near relation, with whom I felt less disposed to reserve. With friendly solicitude he inquired "how much I had made by my voyage;" and when he was informed that, although I had added to my knowledge, I had not improved my fortune, he stared at me a while, and remarking that he had business at the Bank, as well as an appointment on 'Change, suddenly took his leave. After this, I was not much interrupted by the tribe of inquisitive idlers, but was visited principally by a few men of science, who wished to learn what I could add to their knowledge of nature. To this class I was more communicative; and when I severally informed them that I had actually been to the Moon, some of them shrugged their shoulders, others laughed in my face, and some were angry at my supposed attempt to deceive them; but all, with a single exception, were incredulous.

It was to no purpose that I appealed to my former character for veracity. I was answered, that travelling had changed my morals, as it had changed other people's. I asked what motives I could have for

attempting to deceive them. They replied, the love of distinction—the vanity of being thought to have seen what had been seen by no other mortal; and they triumphantly asked me in turn, what motives Raleigh, and Riley, and Hunter, and a hundred other travellers, had for their misrepresentations. Finding argument thus unavailing, I produced visible and tangible proofs of the truth of my narrative. I showed them a specimen of moonstone. They asserted that it was of the same character as those meteoric stones which had been found in every part of the world, and that I had merely procured a piece of one of these for the purpose of deception. I then exhibited some of what I considered my most curious Lunar plants: but this made the matter worse; for it so happened, that similar ones were then cultivated in Mr. Prince's garden at Flushing. I next produced some rare insects, and feathers of singular birds: but persons were found who had either seen, or read, or heard of similar insects and birds in Hoo-Choo, or Paraguay, or Prince of Wales's Island. In short, having made up their minds that what I said was not true, they had an answer ready for all that I could urge in support of my character; and those who judged most christianly, defended my veracity at the expense of my understanding, and ascribed my conduct to partial insanity.

There was, indeed, a short suspension to this cruel distrust. An old friend coming to see me one day, and admiring a beautiful crystal which I had brought from the Moon, insisted on showing it to a jeweller, who said that it was an unusually hard stone, and that if it were a diamond, it would be worth upwards of 150,000 dollars. I know not whether the mistake that ensued proceeded from my friend, who is something of a wag, or from one of the lads in the jeweller's shop, who, hearing a part of what his master had said, misapprehended the rest; but so it was, that the next day I had more visitors than ever, and among them my kinsman, who was kind enough to stay with me, as if he enjoyed my good fortune, until both the Exchange and the Banks were closed. On the same day, the following paragraph appeared in one of the morning prints:

"We understand that our enterprising and intelligent traveller, JOSEPH ATTERLEY, Esquire, has brought from his Lunar Expedition, a diamond of extraordinary size and lustre. Several of the most expe-

rienced jewellers of this city have estimated it at from 250,000 to 300,000 dollars; and some have gone so far as to say it would be cheap at half a million. We have the authority of a near relative of that gentleman for asserting, that the satisfactory testimonials which he possesses of the correctness of his narrative, are sufficient to satisfy the most incredulous, and to silence malignity itself."

But this gleam of sunshine soon passed away. Two days afterwards, another paragraph appeared in the same paper, in these words:

"We are credibly informed, that the supposed diamond of the *famous* traveller to the Moon, turns out to be one of those which are found on Diamond Island, in Lake George. We have heard that Mr. A—y means to favour the public with an account of his travels, under the title of 'Lunarian Adventures;' but we would take the liberty of recommending, that for *Lunarian*, he substitute *Lunatic*."

Thus disappointed in my expectations, and assailed in my character, what could I do but appeal to an impartial public, by giving them a circumstantial detail of what was most memorable in my adventures, that they might judge, from intrinsic evidence, whether I was deficient either in soundness of understanding or of moral principle? But let me first bespeak their candour, and a salutary diffidence of themselves, by one or two well-authenticated anecdotes.

During the reign of Louis the XIVth, the king of Siam having received an ambassador from that monarch, was accustomed to hear, with wonder and delight, the foreigner's descriptions of his own country: but the minister having one day mentioned, that in France, water, at one time of the year, became a solid substance, the Siamese prince indignantly exclaimed,—"Hold, sir! I have listened to the strange things you have told me, and have hitherto believed them all; but now when you wish to persuade me that water, which I know as well as you, can become hard, I see that your purpose is to deceive me, and I do not believe a word you have uttered."

But as the present patriotic preference for home-bred manufactures, may extend to anecdotes as well as to other productions, a story of domestic origin may have more weight with most of my readers, than one introduced from abroad.

The chief of a party of Indians, who had visited Washington during Mr. Jefferson's presidency, having, on his return home, assembled his tribe, gave them a detail of his adventures; and dwelling particularly upon the courteous treatment the party had received from their "Great Father," stated, among other things, that he had given them ice, though it was then mid-summer. His countrymen, not having the vivacity of our ladies, listened in silence till he had ended, when an aged chief stepped forth, and remarked that he too, when a young man, had visited their Great Father Washington, in New-York, who had received him as a son, and treated him with all the delicacies that his country afforded, but had given him no ice. "Now," added the orator, "if any man in the world could have made ice in the summer, it was Washington; and if he could have made it, I am sure he would have given it to me. Tustanaggee is, therefore, a liar, and not to be believed."

In both these cases, though the argument seemed fair, the conclusion was false; for had either the king or the chief taken the trouble to satisfy himself of the fact, he might have found that his limited experience had deceived him.

It is unquestionably true, that if travellers sometimes impose on the credulity of mankind, they are often also not believed when they speak the truth. Credulity and scepticism are indeed but different names for the same hasty judgment on insufficient evidence: and, as the old woman readily assented that there might be "mountains of sugar and rivers of rum," because she had seen them both, but that there were "fish which could fly," she never would believe; so thousands give credit to Redheffer's patented discovery of perpetual motion, because they had beheld his machine, and question the existence of the sea-serpent, because they have not seen it.

I would respectfully remind that class of my readers, who, like the king, the Indian, or the old woman, refuse to credit any thing which contradicts the narrow limits of their own observation, that there are "more secrets in nature than are dreamt of in their philos-

ophy;" and that upon their own principles, before they have a right to condemn me, they should go or send to the mountains of Ava, for some of the metal with which I made my venturous experiment, and make one for themselves.

As to those who do not call in question my veracity, but only doubt my sanity, I fearlessly appeal from their unkind judgment to the sober and unprejudiced part of mankind, whether, what I have stated in the following pages, is not consonant with truth and nature, and whether they do not there see, faithfully reflected from the Moon, the errors of the learned on Earth, and "the follies of the wise?"

**JOSEPH ATTERLEY.**

*Long-Island, September, 1827.*



# VOYAGE TO THE MOON.

## CHAPTER I.

*Atterley's birth and education – He makes a voyage – Founders off the Burman coast – Adventures in that Empire – Meets with a learned Brahmin from Benares.*

Being about to give a narrative of my singular adventures to the world, which, I foresee, will be greatly divided about their authenticity, I will premise something of my early history, that those to whom I am not personally known, may be better able to ascertain what credit is due to the facts which rest only on my own assertion.

I was born in the village of Huntingdon, on Long-Island, on the 11th day of May, 1786. Joseph Atterley, my father, formerly of East Jersey, as it was once called, had settled in this place about a year before, in consequence of having married my mother, Alice Schermerhorn, the only daughter of a snug Dutch farmer in the neighbourhood. By means of the portion he received with my mother, together with his own earnings, he was enabled to quit the life of a sailor, to which he had been bred, and to enter into trade. After the death of his father-in-law, by whose will he received a handsome accession to his property, he sought, in the city of New-York, a theatre better suited to his enlarged capital. He here engaged in foreign trade; and, partaking of the prosperity which then attended American commerce, he gradually extended his business, and finally embarked in our new branch of traffic to the East Indies and China. He was now very generally respected, both for his wealth and fair dealing; was several years a director in one of the insurance offices; was president of the society for relieving the widows and orphans of distressed seamen; and, it is said, might have been chosen alderman, if he had not refused, on the ground that he did not think himself qualified.

My father was not one of those who set little value on book learning, from their own consciousness of not possessing it: on the contrary, he would often remark, that as he felt the want of a liberal education himself, he was determined to bestow one on me. I was accordingly, at an early age, put to a grammar school of good repute in my native village, the master of which, I believe, is now a member of Congress; and, at the age of seventeen, was sent to Princeton, to prepare myself for some profession. During my third year at that place, in one of my excursions to Philadelphia, and for which I was always inventing pretexts, I became acquainted with one of those faces and forms which, in a youth of twenty, to see, admire, and love, is one and the same thing. My attentions were favourably received. I soon became desperately in love; and, in spite of the advice of my father and entreaties of my mother, who had formed other schemes for me nearer home, I was married on the anniversary of my twenty-first year.

It was not until the first trance of bliss was over, that I began to think seriously on the course of life I was to pursue. From the time that my mind had run on love and matrimony, I had lost all relish for serious study; and long before that time, I had felt a sentiment bordering on contempt for the pursuits of my father. Besides, he had already taken my two younger brothers into the counting-house with him. I therefore prevailed on my indulgent parent, with the aid of my mother's intercession, to purchase for me a neat country-seat near Huntingdon, which presented a beautiful view of the Sound, and where, surrounded by the scenes of my childhood, I promised myself to realise, with my Susanna, that life of tranquil felicity which fancy, warmed by love, so vividly depicts.

If we did not meet with all that we had expected, it was because we had expected too much. The happiest life, like the purest atmosphere, has its clouds as well as its sunshine; and what is worse, we never fully know the value of the one, until we have felt the inconvenience of the other. In the cultivation of my farm—in educating our children, a son and two daughters, in reading, music, painting—and in occasional visits to our friends in New-York and Philadelphia, seventeen years glided swiftly and imperceptibly away; at the end of which time death, in depriving me of an excellent wife, made a wreck of my hopes and enjoyments. For the purpose of

seeking that relief to my feelings which change of place only could afford, I determined to make a sea voyage; and, as one of my father's vessels was about to sail for Canton, I accordingly embarked on board the well-known ship the *Two Brothers*, captain Thomas, and left Sandy-hook on the 5th day of June, 1822, having first placed my three children under the care of my brother William.

I will not detain the reader with a detail of the first incidents of our voyage, though they were sufficiently interesting at the time they occurred, and were not wanting in the usual variety. We had, in singular succession, dead calms and fresh breezes, stiff gales and sudden squalls; saw sharks, flying-fish, and dolphins; spoke several vessels: had a visit from Neptune when we crossed the Line, and were compelled to propitiate his favour with some gallons of spirits, which he seems always to find a very agreeable change from sea water; and touched at Table Bay and at Madagascar.

On the whole, our voyage was comparatively pleasant and prosperous, until the 24th of October; when, off the mouths of the Ganges, after a fine clear autumnal day, just about sunset, a small dark speck was seen in the eastern horizon by our experienced and watchful captain, who, after noticing it for a few moments, pronounced that we should have a hurricane. The rapidity with which this speck grew into a dense cloud, and spread itself in darkness over the heavens, as well as the increasing swell of the ocean before we felt the wind, soon convinced us he was right. No time was lost in lowering our topmasts, taking double reefs, and making every thing snug, to meet the fury of the tempest. I thought I had already witnessed all that was terrific on the ocean; but what I had formerly seen, had been mere child's play compared with this. Never can I forget the impression that was made upon me by the wild uproar of the elements. The smooth, long swell of the waves gradually changed into an agitated frothy surface, which constant flashes of lightning presented to us in all its horror; and in the mean time the wind whistled through the rigging, and the ship creaked as if she was every minute going to pieces.

About midnight the storm was at its height, and I gave up all for lost. The wind, which first blew from the south-west, was then due south, and the sailors said it began to abate a little before day: but I

saw no great difference until about three in the afternoon; soon after which the clouds broke away, and showed us the sun setting in cloudless majesty, while the billows still continued their stupendous rolling, but with a heavy movement, as if, after such mighty efforts, they were seeking repose in the bosom of their parent ocean. It soon became almost calm; a light western breeze barely swelled our sails, and gently wafted us to the land, which we could faintly discern to the north-east. Our ship had been so shaken in the tempest, and was so leaky, that captain Thomas thought it prudent to make for the first port we could reach.

At dawn we found ourselves in full view of a coast, which, though not personally known to the captain, he pronounced by his charts to be a part of the Burmese Empire, and in the neighbourhood of Mergui, on the Martaban coast. The leak had now increased to an alarming extent, so that we found it would be impossible to carry the ship safe into port. We therefore hastily threw our clothes, papers, and eight casks of silver, into the long-boat; and before we were fifty yards from the ship, we saw her go down. Some of the underwriters in New York, as I have since learnt, had the conscience to contend that we left the ship sooner than was necessary, and have suffered themselves to be sued for the sums they had severally insured. It was a little after midday when we reached the town, which is perched on a high bluff, overlooking the coasts, and contains about a thousand houses, built of bamboo, and covered with palm leaves. Our dress, appearance, language, and the manner of our arrival, excited great surprise among the natives, and the liveliest curiosity; but with these sentiments some evidently mingled no very friendly feelings. The Burmese were then on the eve of a rupture with the East India Company, a fact which we had not before known; and mistaking us for English, they supposed, or affected to suppose, that we belonged to a fleet which was about to invade them, and that our ship had been sunk before their eyes, by the tutelar divinity of the country. We were immediately carried before their governor, or chief magistrate, who ordered our baggage to be searched, and finding that it consisted principally of silver, he had no doubt of our hostile intentions. He therefore sent all of us, twenty-two in number, to prison, separating, however, each one from the rest. My companions were released the following spring, as I have