Paine Albert Bigelow

The Ship-Dwellers: A Story of a Happy Cruise

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Paine A.

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Содержание

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"The grand object of all travel is to see the shores of the Mediterranean."

Dr. Samuel Johnson.

I
THE BOOK, AND THE DREAM

It was a long time ago – far back in another century – that my father brought home from the village, one evening, a brand-new book. There were not so many books in those days, and this was a fine big one, with black and gilt covers, and such a lot of pictures!

I was at an age to claim things. I said the book was *my* book, and, later, petitioned my father to establish that claim. (I remember we were climbing through the bars at the time, having driven the cows to the further pasture.)

My father was kindly disposed, but conservative; that was his habit. He said that I might look at the book – that I might even read it, some day, when I was old enough, and I think he added that privately I might call it mine – a privilege which provided as well for any claim I might have on the moon.

I don't think these permissions altogether satisfied me. I was already in the second reader, and the lust of individual ownership was upon me. Besides, this was a *New Pilgrim's Progress*. We had respect in our house for the old *Pilgrim's Progress*, and I had been encouraged to search its pages. I had read it, or read at it, for a good while, and my claim of ownership in that direction had never been disputed. Now, here was a brand-new one, and the pictures in it looked most attractive. I was especially enamoured of the frontispiece, "The Pilgrim's Vision," showing the "Innocents" on their way "abroad," standing on the deck of the *Quaker City* and gazing at Bible pictures in the sky.

I do not remember how the question of ownership settled itself. I do remember how the book that winter became the nucleus of our family circle, and how night after night my mother read aloud from it while the rest of us listened, and often the others laughed.

I did not laugh – not then. In the first place, I would not, in those days, laugh at any *Pilgrim's Progress*, especially at a new one, and then I had not arrived at the point of sophistication where a joke, a literary joke, registers. To me it was all true, all romance – all poetry – the story of those happy voyagers who sailed in a ship of dreams to lands beyond the sunrise, where men with turbans, long flowing garments and Bible whiskers rode on camels; where ruined columns rose in a desert that was once a city; where the Sphinx and the Pyramids looked out over the sands that had drifted about them long and long before the Wise Men of the East had seen the Star rise over Bethlehem.

In the big, bleak farm-house on the wide, bleak Illinois prairie I looked into the open fire and dreamed. Some day, somehow, I would see those distant lands. I would sail away on that ship with "Dan" and "Jack" and "The Doctor" to the Far East; I would visit Damascus and Jerusalem, and pitch my camp on the borders of the Nile. Very likely I should decide to remain there and live happy ever after.

How the dreams of youth stretch down the years, and fade, and change! Only this one did not fade, and I thought it did not change. I learned to laugh with the others, by-and-by, but the romance and the poetry of the pilgrimage did not grow dim. The argonauts of the *Quaker City* sailed always in a halo of romance to harbors of the forgotten days. As often as I picked up the book the dream was fresh and new, though realization seemed ever further and still further ahead.

Then all at once, there, just within reach, it lay. There was no reason why, in some measure at least, I should not follow the track of those old first "Innocents Abroad." Of course, I was dreaming again – only, this time, perhaps, I could make the dream come true.

I began to read advertisements. I found that a good many ship-loads of "Pilgrims" had followed that first little band to the Orient – that the first "ocean picnic" steamer, which set sail in June forty-two years before, had started a fashion in sea excursioning which had changed only in details. Ocean picnics to the Mediterranean were made in winter now, and the vessels used for them were fully eight

times as big as the old *Quaker City*, which had been a side-wheel steamer, and grand, no doubt, for her period, with a register proudly advertised at eighteen hundred tons! Itineraries, too, varied more or less, but Greece, Egypt, and the Holy Land were still names to conjure with. Advertisements of cruises were plentiful, and literature on the subject was luminous and exciting. A small table by my bed became gorgeous with prospectuses in blue and gold and crimson sunset dyes. The Sphinx, the Pyramids, and prows of stately vessels looked out from many covers and became backgrounds for lofty, dark-blue camels and dusky men of fantastic dress. Often I woke in the night and lit my lamp and consulted these things. When I went to the city I made the lives of various agents miserable with my inquiries. It was hard – it was nerve-racking to decide. But on one of these occasions I overheard the casual remark that the S. S. *Grosser Kurfürst* would set out on her cruise to the Orient with two tons of dressed chicken and four thousand bottles of champagne.

I hesitated no longer. Dear me, my dream had changed, then, after all! Such things had not in the least concerned the boy who had looked into the open fire, and pictured a pilgrimage to Damascus and Jerusalem, and a camp on the borders of the Nile.

My remembrance of the next few days is hazy – that is, it is kaleidoscopic. I recall doing a good many things in a hurry and receiving a good deal of advice. Also the impression that everybody in the world except myself had been everywhere in the world, and that presently they were all going again, and that I should find them, no doubt, strewn all the way from Gibraltar to Jerusalem, when I had been persuading myself that in the places I had intended to visit I should meet only the fantastic stranger. Suddenly it was two days before sailing. Then it was the day before sailing. Then it was sailing day!

Perhaps it was the hurry and stress of those last days; perhaps it is the feeling natural to such a proximity. I do not know. But I do know that during those final flying hours, when I was looking across the very threshold of realization, the old fascination faded, and if somebody had only suggested a good reason for my staying at home, I would have stayed there, and I would have given that person something valuable, besides. But nobody did it. Not a soul was thoughtful enough to hint that I was either needed or desired in my native land, and I was too modest to mention it myself.

There had been rain, but it was bright enough that February morning of departure – just a bit squally along the west. What a gay crowd there was at the pier and on the vessel! I thought all of New York must be going. That was a mistake – they were mostly visitors, as I discovered later. It would average three visitors to one passenger, I should think. I had more than that – twice as many. I am not boasting – they came mainly to be sure that I got aboard and stayed there, and to see that I didn't lose most of my things. They knew me and what I would be likely to do, alone. They wanted to steer me to the right state-room and distribute my traps. Then they could put me in charge of Providence and the deck-steward, and wash their hands of me, and feel that whatever happened they had done their duty and were not to blame.

So I had six, as I say, and we worked our way through, among the passengers and visitors, who seemed all to be talking and laughing at once or pawing over mail and packages heaped upon the cabin table. I didn't feel like laughing and talking, and I wasn't interested in the mail. Almost everybody in the world that meant anything to me was in my crowd, and they were going away, presently, to leave me on this big ship, among strangers, bound for the strange lands. My long dream of the Orient dwindled to a decrepit thing.

But presently we found my state-room, and it was gratifying. I was impressed with its regal furnishings. After all, there were compensations in a habitation like that. Besides, there were always the two tons of dressed chicken and those thousands of champagne. I became more cheerful.

Only, I wish the ship people wouldn't find it necessary to blow their whistle so loud and suddenly to send one's friends ashore. There is no chance to carry off somebody – somebody you would enjoy having along. They blow that thing until it shivers the very marrow of one's soul.

How the visitors do crowd ashore! A word – a last kiss – a "God bless you" – your own are gone presently – you are left merely standing there, abandoned, marooned, deserted – feeling somehow

that it's all wrong, and that something ought to be done about it. Why don't those people hurry? You want to get away now; you want it over with.

A familiar figure fights its way up the gang-plank, breasting the shoreward tide. Your pulse jumps – they are going to take you home, after all. But no, he only comes to tell you that *your* six will be at a certain place near the end of the dock, where you can see them, and wave to them.

You push to the ship's side for a place at the rail. The last visitors are straggling off now, even to the final official. Then somewhere somebody does something that slackens the cables, the remaining gang-plank is dragged away. That whistle again, and then a band – our band – turns loose a perfect storm of music.

We are going! We are going! We have dropped away from the pier and are gliding past the rows of upturned faces, the lines of frantic handkerchiefs. Yes, oh yes, we are going – there is no turning back now, no changing of one's mind again. All the cares of work, the claims of home – they cannot reach us any more. Those waiting at the pier's end to wave as we pass – whatever life holds for me is centred there, and I am leaving it all behind. There they are, now! Wave! Wave! Oh, I did not know it would be like this! I did not suppose that I might – need another handkerchief!

The smoke of a tug drifts between – I have lost them. No, there they are again, still waving. That white spot – that is a little furry coat – such a little furry coat and getting so far off, and so blurry. My glass – if I can only get hold of myself enough to see through it. Yes, there they are! Oh, those wretched boats to drift in and shut that baby figure away! Now they are gone, but I cannot find her again. The smoke, the mist, and a sudden drift of snow have swept between. I have lost the direction – I don't know where to look any more. It is all over – we are off – we are going out to sea!

II
IN THE TRACK OF THE INNOCENTS

We are through luncheon; we have left Sandy Hook, and the shores have dropped behind the western horizon. It was a noble luncheon we sat down to as we crossed the lower bay. One stopped at the serving-table to admire an exhibition like that. Banked up in splendid pyramids as for a World's Fair display, garnished and embroidered and fringed with every inviting trick of decoration, it was a spectacle to take one's breath and make him resolve to consume it all. One felt that he could recover a good deal on a luncheon like that, but I think the most of us recovered too much. I am sure, now, that I did – a good deal too much – and that my selections were not the best – not for the beginning of a strange, new life at sea.

Then there was Laura – Laura, age fourteen, whose place at the table is next to mine, and a rather sturdy young person; I think she also considered the bill of fare too casually. She ventured the information that this was her second voyage, that the first had been a short trip on a smaller vessel, and that she had been seasick. She did not intend to be seasick on a fine, big steamer like this, and I could tell by the liberality with which she stowed away the satisfying German provender that she had enjoyed an early and light breakfast, followed by brisk exercise in getting to the ship. The tables were gay with flowers; the company looked happy, handsome, and well-dressed; the music was inspiring. Friends left behind seemed suddenly very far away. We had become a little world all to ourselves – most of us strangers to one another, but thrown in a narrow compass here and likely to remain associates for weeks, even months. What a big, jolly picnic it was, after all!

Outside it was bleak and squally, but no matter. The air was fine and salt and invigorating. The old *Quaker City* had been held by storm at anchor in the lower bay. We were already down the Narrows and heading straight for the open sea. Land presently lost its detail and became a dark outline. That, too, sank lower and became grayer and fell back into the mist.

I remembered that certain travellers had displayed strong emotions on seeing their native land disappear. I had none – none of any consequence. I had symptoms, though, and I recognized them. Like Laura, aged fourteen, I had taken a shorter voyage on a poorer ship, and I had decided that this would be different. I had engaged a steamer-chair, and soon after luncheon I thought I would take a cigar and a book on Italy and come out here and sit in it – in the chair, of course – and smoke and think and look out to sea. But when I got to the door of my state-room and felt the great vessel take a slow, curious side-step and caught a faint whiff of linoleum and varnish from the newly renovated cabin, I decided to forego the cigar and guide-book and take a volume on mind cure instead.

It seems a good ship, though, and I feel that we shall all learn to be proud of her, in time. In a little prospectus pamphlet I have here I find some of her measurements and capacities, and I have been comparing them with those of the *Quaker City*, the first steamer to set out on this Oriental cruise. If she were travelling along beside us to-day I suppose she would look like a private yacht. She must have had trouble with a sea like this. She was little more than two hundred feet long, I believe, and, as already mentioned, her tonnage was registered at eighteen hundred. The figures set down in the prospectus for this vessel are a good deal bigger than those, but they are still too modest. The figures quote her as being a trifle less than six hundred feet long, but I can see in both directions from where I sit, and I am satisfied that it would take me hours to get either to her bow or stern. I don't believe I could do it in that time. I am convinced that it is at least half a mile to my state-room.

The prospectus is correct, however, in one item. It says that the *Kurfürst* has a displacement of twenty-two thousand tons. That is handsome, and it is not too much; I realized that some moments ago. When I felt our noble vessel "sashay" in her slow majestic fashion toward Cuba, and then pause to revolve the matter a little, and after concluding to sink, suddenly set out in a long, slow, upward

slide for the moon, I knew that her displacement was all that is claimed for it, and I prepared for the worst; so did Laura, and started for her state-room suddenly…

Later: I don't know how many of our party went down to dinner. I know one that did not go. The music is good, but I can hear it very well from where I am. No doubt the dinner is good, too, but I am satisfied to give it absent treatment.

There is a full-blown Scientist in the next room. She keeps saying "Mind is all. Mind is all. This is nothing. This is – this is just – " after which, the Earthquake.

What an amazing ocean it is to be able to toss this mighty ship about in such a way! I suppose there is no hope of her sinking. No hope!

Somebody sent me a basket of fruit. I vaguely wonder what it is like, and if I shall ever know? I suppose there are men who could untie that paper and look at it. I could stand in awe of a man like that. I could —

However, it is no matter; there is no such man.

But it was bright next morning, though a heavy sea was still running. I was by no means perfectly happy, but I struggled on deck quite early, and found company. A stout youngish man was marching round and round vigorously as if the number of laps he might achieve was vital. He fetched up suddenly as I stepped on deck. He spoke with quick energy.

"Look here," he said, earnestly, "perhaps you can tell me; it's important, and I want to know: is a seasick man better off if he walks or sits still? I'm seasick. I confess it, fully. My interior economy is all disqualified, and I want advice. Now tell me, *is* a seasick man better off when he walks or when he sits still?"

I gave it up, and the Diplomat (we learned later that he was connected with the consular service) passed to the next possible source of information. I heard him propounding his inquiries several times during the morning as new arrivals appeared on deck.

He was the most honest man on the ship. The rest of us did not confess that we were seasick. We had a bad cold or rheumatism or dyspepsia or locomotorataxia or pleurisy – all sorts of things – but we were not seasick. It was remarkable what a floating hospital of miscellaneous complaints the ship had become, and how suddenly they all disappeared that afternoon when the sea went down.

It was Lincoln's Birthday, and, inspired by the lively appearance of the deck, a kindly promoter of entertainment went among the passengers inviting them to take part in some sort of simple exercises for the evening. Our pleasure excursion seemed really to have begun now, and walking leisurely around the promenade-deck one could get a fair impression of our company and cast the horoscope. They were a fair average of Americans, on the whole, with a heavy percentage of foreign faces, mostly German. Referring to the passenger-list, one discovered that we hailed from many States; but when I drifted into the German purlieus of that register and found such prefixes as Herr Regierungs-präsident a. D., and Frau Regierungs-präsident a. D., and looking further discovered Herr Kommerzienrat, Herr Oberpräsidialrat von, and a few more high-power explosives like that, I said, "This is not an excursion, after all; it is a court assembly." I did not know in the least what these titles meant, but I was uneasy. I had the feeling that the owner of any one of them could nod to the executioner and dismiss me permanently from the ship. The interpreter came along just then. He said:

"Do not excite yourself. They are not so dangerous as they look. It is only as one would say, 'Mr. and Mrs. Councilmanofthethirdward Jones, or Mr. MayorofOshkosh Smith, or Mrs. Commissionerofhighways Brown.' It is pure decoration; nothing fatal will occur." I felt better then, and set out to identify some of the owners of this furniture. It was as the interpreter had said – there was no danger. A man with a six-story title could hardly be distinguished from the rest of his countrymen except when he tried to sign it. But a thing like that must be valuable in Germany; otherwise he would not go to the trouble and expense of lugging such a burden around on a trip like this, when one usually wants to travel light.

The ship gave us a surprise that night, and it was worth while. When we got to the dining-room we found it decorated with the interwoven colors of two nations; the tables likewise radiant, and there were menus with the picture of Abraham Lincoln outside. We were far out in the blackness of the ocean now, but here was as brilliant a spot as you would find at Sherry's or Delmonico's, and a little company gathered from the world's end to do honor to the pioneer boy of Kentucky. I think many of us there had never observed Lincoln's Birthday before, and it was fitting enough that we should begin at such a time and place. I know we all rose and joined in *America* and the *Star-Spangled Banner* at the close, and we are not likely to forget that mid-ocean celebration of the birth of America's greatest, gentlest hero.

III
DAYS AT SEA

We have settled down into a pleasant routine of lazy life. Most of us are regularly on deck now, though one sees new faces daily.

We have taken up such amusements as please us – reading, games, gossip, diaries, picture-puzzles, and there are even one or two mild flirtations discoverable. In the "booze-bazaar" (the Diplomat's name for the smoking-room) the Reprobates find solace in pleasant mixtures and droll stories, while they win one another's money at diverting games. They are an attractive lot – the Reprobates. One can hardly tear himself away from them. Only the odors of the smoking-room are not quite attractive, as yet. I am no longer seasick – at least, not definitely so; but I still say "Mind is all" as I pass through the smoking-room.

We are getting well acquainted, too, for the brief period of time we have been together. It does not seem brief, however. That bleak day of departure in North River is already far back in the past – as far back as if it belonged to another period, which indeed it does. We are becoming acquainted, as I say. We are rapidly finding out one another's names; whether we are married, single, or divorced – and why; what, if anything, we do when we are at home; how we happened to come on this trip; and a great deal of useful information – useful on a ship like this, where the voyage is to be a long one and associations more or less continuous. We form into little groups and discuss these things – our own affairs first – then presently we shift the personnel of our groups and discuss each other, and are happy and satisfied, and feel that the cruise is a success.

There are not many young people on the ship – a condition which would seem to have prevailed on these long ocean excursions since the first Oriental pilgrimage, forty-two years ago. I suppose the prospects of several months on one ship, with sight-seeing in Egypt and the Holy Land, do not look attractive enough to the average young person who is thinking of gayer things. One can be gay enough on shipboard, however, where there is a good band of music; a quarter-deck to dance on; nooks on the sun-deck to flirt in; promenades and shuffleboard, with full dress every night for dinner. No need to have an idle time on an excursion like this if one doesn't want it; which most of us do, however, because we are no longer entirely young, and just loaf around and talk of unimportant things and pretend to read up on the places we are going to see.

We need to do that. What we don't know about history and geography on this ship would sink it. Most of us who have been to school, even if it is a good while ago, keep sort of mental pictures of the hemispheres, and preserve the sound of certain old familiar names. We live under the impression that this is knowledge, and it passes well enough for that until a time comes like this when particular places on the map are to be visited and particular associations are to be recalled. Then, of course, we start in to classify and distinguish, and suddenly find that there is scarcely anything to classify and less still to distinguish. I am morally certain that there are not ten of us on this vessel who could tell with certainty the difference between Deucalion and Deuteronomy, or between the Pillars of Hercules and the Golden Horn. The brightest man on the ship this morning asked if Algiers was in Egypt or Spain, and a dashing high-school girl wanted to know if Greece were not a part of Asia Minor.

We shall all know better when we are through with this trip. We shall be wonders in the matter of knowledge, and we shall get it from first hands. We shall no longer confuse Upper and Lower Egypt, or a peristyle with a stadium. We are going to know about these things. That is why we are here.

In the matter of our amusements, picture-puzzles seem to be in the lead. They are fascinating things, once one gets the habit. They sell them on this ship, and nearly everybody has one or more. The tables in the forward cabin are full of them, and after dinner there is a group around each table pawing over the pieces in a rapt way or offering advice to whoever happens to be setting them. Certain of our

middle-aged ladies in particular find comfort in the picture-puzzles, and sit all day in their steamer-chairs with the pieces on a large pasteboard cover, shifting and trying and fitting them into place. One wonders what blessing those old *Quaker City* pilgrims had that took the place of the fascinating picture-puzzle.

We are getting south now, and the weather is much warmer. The sun is bright, too, and a little rainbow travels with the ship, just over the port screw. When the water is fairly quiet the decks are really gay. New faces still appear, however. Every little while there is a fresh arrival, as it were; a fluttering out from some inner tangle of sea magic and darkness, just as a butterfly might emerge from a cocoon. Some of them do not stay. We run into a cross-sea or a swell, or something, and they disappear again, and their places at the table remain vacant. The Diplomat continues his fight and his inquiries. Every little while one may hear him ask: "Is it better for a seasick man to walk or to sit down?" The Diplomat never denies his condition. "Oh, Lord, I'm seasick!" he says. "I'd be sick on a duck-pond. I'd be sick if the ship were tied to the dock. I'd be sick if anybody told me I was on a ship. Say, what is a fellow like that to do, anyway? And here I am bound for Jerusalem!"

Down here the water is very blue. We might be sailing on a great tub of indigo. One imagines that to take up a glass of it would be to dip up pure ultra-marine. I mentioned this to the Diplomat.

"Yes," he said, "it is a cracker-jack of an ocean, but I don't care for it just now."

But what a lonely ocean it is! Not a vessel, not a sail, not a column of smoke on the horizon!

We are officially German on this ship, and the language prevails. Our passenger-list shows that we are fully half German, I believe, and of course all the officers and stewards are of that race. The consequence is that everybody on the ship, almost, speaks or tries to speak the language. Persons one would never suspect of such a thing do it, and some of them pretty well, too. Even I got reckless and shameless, and from a long-buried past produced a few German remarks of my own. They were only about ten-carat assay, but they were accepted at par. I remember an old and very dear German man in America who once said to me, speaking of his crops, "Der early corn, he iss all right; aber der late corn, she's bad!"

My German is not as good as his English, but you'd think it was better, the serious way these stewards accept it. They recognize the quality – they have many cargoes of the same brand.

We have two exceedingly pretty girls on this ship – one of them as amiable, as gentle, as lovely in every way as she is pretty. The other – well, she is pretty enough in all conscience, and she may be amiable – I wouldn't want to be unfair in my estimate – but if she is, she has a genius for concealing it from the rest of the passengers. Her chief characteristic besides her comeliness seems to be a conviction that she has made a mistake in coming with such a crowd.

We can't domesticate that girl – she won't mix with us. The poor old Promoter, one of the kindliest creatures alive, approached her with an invitation to read aloud a small selection for the little Lincoln memorial he was preparing. She declined chillily – gave him the "icy mitt," the Diplomat said.

"I nevah do anything on shipboahd," she declared, and ignored his apologies.

She spends most of her time disposed in a ravishing fashion in a steamer-chair, reading a novel or letting the volume drop listlessly at her side, with one of her dainty fingers between the pages to mark the place, while her spirit lives in other worlds than ours. The Promoter says she is cold and frigidly beautiful – a winter landscape. But then the Promoter is a simple, forgiving soul. I think she is just flitter and frosting – just a Christmas-card. A ship like this is democratic – it has to be. We are all just people here.

It is also cosmopolitan – it has to be that, too, with a crowd like ours. This Sunday evening affords an example of what I mean. In the dining-room forward there are religious exercises – prayers and a song service under the direction of the Promoter – a repetition, no doubt, of the very excellent programme given this morning. Far aft, on the quarter-deck, a dance is in progress, under the direction, I believe, of our German contingent; while amidships, in the "booze-bazaar," the Reprobates and their Godless friends are engaged in revelry, probably under the direction of Satan.

The ship is very long, and the entertainments do not conflict or compete. One may select whatever best accords with his taste and morals, or, if he likes variety, he may divide his time. Everything is running wide open as this luminous speck of life – a small, self-constituted world – goes throbbing through the dark.

IV
WE BECOME HISTORY

We had been four days at sea, boring our way into the sunrise at the rate of three hundred and sixty miles a day, when we met the "Great Sight" – the American fleet of sixteen ships of war returning from its cruise around the world.

It had been rumored among us when we left New York that there was a possibility of such a meeting. It was only a possibility, of course, for even a fleet is a mere speck on a wide waste of ocean, and with engines on both sides driving at full speed the chances of intersection were small.

So we went about figuring and speculating and worrying the officers, who were more anxious over the matter than we were, but conservative, nevertheless. We only learned, therefore, or rather we guessed, I think, that our Marconi flash was travelling out beyond the horizon, and the loneliest sea imaginable, trying to find an answering spark.

During the afternoon of the Sunday previously mentioned a sentence on the blackboard, the first official word, announced, with a German flavor, that it was "not quite impossible" that the meeting would occur next morning, and this we took to mean that wireless communication had been established, though we were not further informed.

There was a wild gale during the night and a heavy sea running at daybreak, but the sky was clear. A few stragglers were at early breakfast when, all at once, a roll of drums and a burst of martial music brought us to our feet.

We did not need any one to tell us what it meant. "The fleet!" came to every man's lips, and a moment later we were on deck. Not only those in the dining-room came. Sick or well, bundled together somehow, from every opening our excursionists staggered forth, and, climbing to the sun-deck, looked out across the bridge to where the sunrise had just filled the morning sky. There they were – far, faint, and blurred at first, but presently outlined clear – stretched across the glowing east, lifting and tossing out of the morning, our sixteen noble vessels on their homeward way!

At that moment I think there was not one on our ship who did not feel that whatever might come, now, the cruise was a success. Foreign lands would bring us grand sights, no doubt, but nothing that could equal this. We realized that, fully, and whispered our good-fortune to one another as we gazed out upon that spectacle of a lifetime.

Viewed across our bow, the vessels appeared to form a continuous straight line, but they divided into two sections as they came on, eight vessels in each, and passed in column formation. In a little while we were close to them – they were just under our starboard bow – their upper decks black with men turned out in our honor. We waved to them and our band played, but we did not cheer. We were too much impressed to be noisy, nor could we have made our voices heard across that wild shouting sea. So we only looked, and waved, and perhaps wiped our eyes, and some of us tried to photograph them.

They passed in perfect formation. Heavy seas broke over them, and every billow seemed to sweep their decks, but their lines varied not a point and the separating distances remained unchanged. So perfect was the alignment that each column became a single vessel when they had left us behind.

It was over, all too soon. Straight as an arrow those two noble lines pierced the western horizon, passed through it, and were gone. We went below then, to find chairs flying, crockery smashing, and state-rooms in a wreck. It was the rough day of the trip, but we declared that we did not mind it at all. By wireless we thanked Admiral Sperry, and wished him safe arrival home. Then presently he returned thanks, and good wishes for our journey in distant lands.

We meant to vote resolutions of gratitude to our captain that night at dinner for his skill in finding the fleet. But it was our rough day, as I have mentioned, and nobody was there to do it –

at least, there was not enough for a real, first-class, able-bodied resolution. We did it next evening – that is, to-night. Between the asparagus and the pheasant we told him some of the nice things we thought of him, and ended up by drinking his health, standing, and by giving a great "Hoch soil er leben!" in real German fashion.

We were vain and set up, and why not? Had we not been the first Americans to give our fleet welcome home? We felt that we had become almost history.

V
INTRODUCING THE REPROBATES

We are a week at sea now, and have been making our courtesy to the sunrise half an hour earlier every morning. That is to say, we have gained three hours and a half, and when the first bugle blows for half-past seven, and commands us to get up and muss around and be ready for the next bugle half an hour later, it means in the well-regulated civilized country we've left behind that it's just four o'clock, and time to turn over and settle down and really enjoy life. The result is you swear at the bugler, when you ought to love him for the trouble he takes to get you up in time for breakfast.

After breakfast, the deck. It is good to walk around and around the promenade these fine mornings down here, even though the sea keeps billowy and the horizon line lifts and falls with its majestic swing. You are no longer disturbed by it. Your body has adapted itself to the motion, and sways like an inverted pendulum. You feel that you have your sea-legs almost as well as the stewards, and this makes you proud and showy before the other passengers. It is February, but it is not cold down in this violet, semi-tropic sea. The air is fresh enough, but it is soft and gratifying, and one almost imagines that he can smell flowers in it. Perhaps it is a fact, too, for we are not far from land now; we shall reach Madeira to-morrow morning.

Yet somehow the thought of land is not exciting. I do not believe any of us are eager for it. We are quite restored now, even the Diplomat, and the days on shipboard are serene and pleasantly satisfying.

So many happy things go to make up the day. It is refreshing to play shuffleboard on the after deck with Laura, age fourteen, and her companion, the only other girl of her age on board. It is inspiring to hear the band play every morning at ten when one is not too close to the strenuous music. I suppose beating a bass drum and cymbals makes muscle, and the man does not realize how strong he is. It is diverting to drift into the smoking-room – now that I do not mind its fragrance any more – and watch the Apostle (so christened because of his name and general build and inspired look) winning money from the Colonel at piquet, while the Horse Doctor discusses the philosophies of life in a manner at least pleasing to the unregenerates.

I should add, I suppose, that the Horse Doctor is not really that by profession, but having been dubbed so one day by his fellow-Reprobates, the Apostle and the Colonel, his cheerful reply: "Yes, I expect to be taken for one – travelling, as I do, with a couple of asses," fixed the title for him permanently. We enjoy the Reprobates. They are so ingenuous in their morals, and are corrupting the smoking-room in such a frank, unrestricted way. We enjoy their arguments too, they are so free and personal. We disapprove of the Reprobates, but we love them because we are human and born in sin, and they stand for all things we would like to do – if we dared.

It is inviting and comfortable almost anywhere on the ship these days. It is good just to sit in the sun and dream; to lean over the rail and watch the little rainbow that travels with us, the white lace that the ship makes in its majestic sweep, to wander back to the stern and follow the interminable wake of the screw as it stretches back beyond the horizon line. Then there is the sunset; it was wonderful to-night. The air was perfectly clear, the sun a red disk going down cleanly cut into the sea. Laura and I saw it from amidships, looking out across the high stern of the vessel that sank now below the horizon, then lifted into the sky. Even the chief engineer and the ship's doctor came out to look at it, and told us to watch for the green sun which would appear the instant after setting. Later – after dinner, I mean – we danced.

They have put a stout awning over the quarter-deck and strung a lot of electric globes there so that when the music is going and the illumination is turned on, the place is gay and pretty and cosey, and those of us who have not danced for twenty years of more begin to sit up straighter when the

music starts, and presently we forget that all is vanity and life a sorry mess at best, and look about for a partner, and there on the wide, lifting, falling quarter-deck caper away the years. It is not so much wonder, then, that the prospect of land does not arouse any feverish interest. We are willing to go right on sailing for a while and not bother about land at all.

VI
A LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE

It was a mistake, however, to be indifferent to Madeira. We are no longer so. Whatever enthusiasm we lacked beforehand we have acquired now. Of all fair, jewelled islands of the sea, it is the particular gem. Not one of us on this ship but has made up his mind to go to Madeira again some day, and to stay there and live happy ever after; or, if not during life, to try to exchange a corner of heaven for it when he dies.

We knew nothing about Madeira except what the little prospectus told us, and the day before arrival we began to look up guide-book information on the subject. There was not much of this on the ship; I suspect that there is not much anywhere. Madeira was known to the Phœnicians, of course, that race of people who knew everything, went everywhere, built all the first cities, invented all the arts, named everything, and then perished. I ought to be sorry that they perished, I suppose, but I'm not. I've heard enough of that tribe on this ship.

The Patriarch is stuffed full of Phœnician statistics, and to touch any line of historical discussion in his hearing is like tripping over a cord attached to a spring gun. He is as fatal as an Irishman I once knew who was perfectly adorable until some question of race came up. Then it was time to stand from under. According to Malone there was originally but one race – the Irish. All the early saints were Irish; so was Abraham; so was Noah; so was Adam; so was – but that is far enough back. I remember hearing him tell one night how, in a later day, when Alexander the Great set out to conquer Asia, he first sent emissaries to make peace with Ireland as a precaution against being attacked in the rear.

But I am beginning to wander. There is no trace of the Phœnicians, I believe, on Madeira to-day, and the early history of the island is mainly mythical. When ancient Mediterranean sailors went exploring a little into the Atlantic and saw its purple form rise on the horizon they decided that it must be the mouth of hell, or at all events the abode of evil creatures, and hastily turned back. One account says that in the course of time a gentleman named Taxicab – probably the inventor of the vehicle later known by that name – and his companion were shipwrecked on Madeira and set up a monument in celebration of the event. I don't know what became of Taxicab and his friend or the monument, but about the same time it was discovered again by a Portuguese named Zargo, who set it afire as a means of clearing the land of its splendid forests and kept the fires going for seven years.[1]

Zargo's devastation began about five hundred years ago, and the island has required all those centuries for recovery. It may be added that he believed Madeira to be the lost Atlantis, though a point of land thirty miles long and fifteen miles wide could hardly be more than a splinter of that vanished continent. More likely Madeira and the fragmentary islets about it formed that mythical Ultima Thule referred to by Ulysses, when, according to Tennyson, he said:

> "My purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
> Of all the western stars, until I die.
> It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
> It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
> And see the great Achilles whom we knew."

Perhaps Madeira was indeed a home of gods and favored spirits in the olden days. It would have been a suitable place. When we drew near enough to see its terraced hills – lofty hills they are, some of them in the interior rising to a point six thousand feet above the sea – and to make out the

[1] By referring again to the German guide-book I find that the first gentleman's name was not Taxicab, but as that is nearer to what it looks like than anything that can be made out of the real name I will let it stand.

tiny houses nestling like white and tinted shells against the green, we changed our minds about being willing to sail past without stopping, and when at last we swung slowly into the Harbor of Funchal we felt somehow that we had come upon an island enchantment in the middle of the sea.

For everything was so marvellous in its beauty: the green hills, terraced almost to the very top; the gorges between, the little fairy city just where the hills flow into the sea. With glasses one could make out flowering vines on many of the walls. Even with the naked eye, somebody presently discovered a great purple mass, part way up the hillside. The glass showed it to be a house almost covered with bougainvillea – our first vision of this lavish and splendid flower of the Mediterranean.

As we drew in and came to anchor, we saw descending upon us a fleet of small, curious boats, filled with half-naked men. We prepared for the worst, but they merely wanted us to throw coins over in the liquid azure which they call water in this country, whereupon their divers would try to intercept the said coins somewhere between the top and bottom of the sea. We didn't believe they could do it, which was poor judgment on our part.

If those amphibians did not always get the coins, they generally did. They could see them perfectly in that amazing water, and they could dive like seals. Some of the divers were mere children – poor, lean creatures who stood up in their boats and shouted and implored and swung their arms in a wild invitation to us to fling our money overboard. They did not want small money – at least, not very small money – they declined to dive for pennies. Perhaps they could only distinguish the gleam of the white metal. Let a nickel or a dime be tossed over and two or three were after it in a flash, while a vehement outbreak of Portuguese from all the rest entreated still further largess. It was really a good show, and being the first of its kind, we enjoyed it.

We had to go ashore in boats, and the water was not smooth. It was not entirely easy to get into the landing-boats, and it was still less easy to get out at the stairs which ascended to the stone piers. Every billow would throw the little boats six or eight feet into the air, and one had to be pretty careful to step just at the right instant or he would leave one foot on a high step and the other in the boat, far below. Several of our best passengers were dismembered in that way.

Once on shore, the enchantment took hold of us again. It was so sunny and bright and the streets were so attractive – all paved with small black cobbles, set in the neatest and most careful fashion. Our conveyances were waiting just at the end of the pier, and they were, I believe, the most curious conveyances in the world. They were not carriages or carts or wheeled vehicles of any sort, but sleds – here in a land of eternal summer – sleds with enclosed tops, and drawn by oxen.

Their drivers were grave, whiskered men who motioned us to get in; after which we started, and they began greasing the runners as we went along. They did this by putting a grease-soaked rag in front of a runner now and then and driving over it.

I don't think an American would do it that way. He would take a barrel of soft soap and a broom and lubricate the whole street. Their way is neater, and about as effective, I suppose; besides, when they have been doing it another three hundred years or so, they will have some grease on these streets, too. Already one may see indications of it here and there.

Our course was uphill, and we ascended along a panorama of sunny life and tinted flower-hung walls to the outskirts of that neatest and most charming of cities – continuously expressing our delight in the general attractiveness of everything: the wonderfully laid streets; the really beautiful sidewalks of very tiny vari-colored cobbles all set in perfect mosaic patterns; the glow and bloom of summer everywhere. We admired even the persistent little beggars who ran along on both sides of the sleds, throwing camellias into our laps, crying out, "Penny! Penny!" their one English word – hopping, dancing, beseeching, and refusing to be comforted.

We gave to the first of these tormentors, but it was not a good way to get rid of them. It was like putting out molasses to satisfy a few flies. A dozen more were around us, going on in a most disturbing manner. Our driver finally dispersed them by making some terrific motions with his whip-handle.

We were at the outskirts at last, but only at the beginning of the real climb. A funicular railway takes one up farther, and presently we are ascending straight to Paradise, it seemed to us, by a way that led through a perfect wilderness of beauty – flower, foliage, and waving green, with tiny stucco houses set in tangled gardens and slopes of cane – while below and beyond lay the city and the harbor and our ship at anchor on the violet sea.

Would we be so enchanted with the magic of this Happy Isle if it were not our first landing after a long winter voyage, which if not stormy was at all events not entirely smooth? Perhaps not, yet I think there are certain essentials of beauty and charm that are fundamental. The things we dream of and do not believe exist; the things that an artist will paint now and then when he forgets that the world is just a place to live and toil and die in, and not really to be happy in at all. But those things are all here in Madeira, and when we learned that nobody ever gets sick here, and that everybody gets well of everything he happens to have when he comes, we said: "Never mind going on; send the ship home, or sink it; we will abide here and roam no more."

At the end of the funicular there was still more hill to climb, and one could either do it afoot or be carried up in a hammock. Most of us young people did it afoot, allowing enfeebled men of eighteen and twenty the comfort of the hammocks. As they passed us we commented on their luxury, and made it otherwise interesting for them. It was pleasant enough walking and there was a good deal to see. The foliage was interesting, ranging as it did from the palm of the tropics to the pine of the northern forests. You can raise anything in Madeira, except money – there is not much of that, and things are cheap accordingly. No doubt it is the same in heaven, but I am getting ahead of my story.

We lunched at the top, in a hotel that was once a convent and still has iron-barred windows, but before luncheon we walked out for the view to a little platform which seems when you step out on it to be hanging in the air, so that you involuntarily hesitate and reach for something firm. All the distance you have climbed in the ox-sleds, by the funicular, and afoot drops away perpendicularly at your feet, and you are looking down, straight down, and still down, to what seem fairy tree-tops and a wonderful picture valley through which a tumbling ribbon of water goes foaming to the sea. It is the most sudden and dramatic bit of scenery I know.

We had delicious strawberries at our luncheon – strawberries that required no sugar – and a good many other kinds of fruit – some of which we could identify and some of which the Reprobates discussed in their usual unrestrained fashion, calling one another names that were at once descriptive and suited to the subject in hand. There were pomegranates and guavas and comquats and loquats; also there was Madeira wine, of course, and hereafter I am going to know something about native wines in the lands we visit before I begin business – that is, wholesale business. But never mind – let it go; it is a good deal like sherry, only it tastes better, and the Reprobates said – but as I mentioned before, let it go – it really does not matter now.

We descended that long, paved, greased hill in toboggans that are nice, comfortable baskets on runners. They hold two and three, according to size, and you get in and two men take you in hand, and away you go. You go, too. A distance of two miles has been made in three minutes in those things. I don't think we went as fast as that, but it was plenty fast enough for the wild delight of it, and if I had money enough and time enough I would go there and slide and slide away the eternal summer days.

It was a swift panorama of flower and sunlit wall and distant sea – the soft air rushing by. Now and then we would whirl past a carrier – a brown, bent man with one of those great sleds on his shoulders, toiling with it up the long, steep hill. They were marvellously picturesque, those carriers, but I wish they wouldn't do it. It takes some of the joy out of the slide to feel that somebody is going to carry your toboggan up the hill on his back.

We shot out on the level at last, and started on a little tour of the town. Laura and I wandered away alone, and stopped at little shops, and tried to transact business, and finally bought a clay water-jug for a hundred and twenty reis, which is to say sixpence, which is to say twelve cents. Money in Madeira is calculated in reis, just as it is in the Azores, and the sound of the word suddenly recalled the

visit of the *Quaker City* "Pilgrims" to those islands, and the memory of Blucher's disastrous dinner-party.

But they will take anything that looks like money in Madeira, rather than miss a trade, and when a person who has been accustomed to calculating dollars and cents is suddenly confronted with problems of reis and pence and shillings and half-crowns and francs, he goes to pieces on his money tables and wonders why a universal currency would not be a good thing.

All the streets in Madeira have that dainty cobble paving, and all the sidewalks are laid in the exquisite mosaic which makes it a joy to follow them. The keynote of the island is invitation. Even a jail we saw is of a sort to make crime attractive. I hasten to add that we examined only the outside.

We were adopted by a guide presently – a boy whose only English was the statement that he could speak it – and were directed quietly but firmly toward places where things are sold. We tried to impress upon him in such languages as we could think of that we did not want to buy anything, and that we did not care much for a guide, anyway. We said we wanted to see bougainvillea – a lot of bougainvillea, in a great mass together, as we had seen it from the ship. He nodded excitedly and led us away, but it was only to a place where they sold embroideries which we did not care for, though they were cheap enough, dear knows, as everything is cheap here – everything native at least.

When our guide grasped the fact at last that we did not want to do any buying, he became sad, weakened gradually, dropped behind, accepted a penny, and turned us over to another guide of the same sort. We wandered about Funchal in that way until it was time to embark, adopted by one guide after another, and abandoned to our fate when they realized that we were not worth anything in the way of commissions from the merchants and very little in any form. We did get a guide at last who knew where the bougainvillea house was, but it was too late then to go to it. It did not matter; there were flowers enough everywhere and bougainvillea on many walls.

The place did not lose its charm with close acquaintance. It seemed entirely unspoiled. We saw no suggestion of modern architecture or European innovation – no blot anywhere, except a single motor-car – the only one, I believe, in Funchal. There is but one fly in the ointment of Madeira comfort – the beggars. They begin to beg before they can walk, and they call, "Penny! Penny!" before they can lisp the sacred name of "Mamma." However, one good thing has come of our experience with them. They have prepared us for beggars elsewhere. We are hardened, now – at least, we think we are. The savor of pity has gone out of us.

But I was speaking of architecture. Without knowing anything on the subject, I should say that the architecture of Madeira is a mixture of Spanish and Moorish, like that of Mexico. Only it is better than anything in Mexico. From the ship, the stucco, tile-roofed city is flawless; and as we steam away, and night comes down and lights break out and become a jewelled necklace along the water's edge, our one regret is that we are leaving it all behind.

Good-bye to Madeira – a gentle place, a lovely place – a place to live and die in.

VII
A DAY TO OURSELVES

We had another full day at sea, after Madeira – a day of reflection and reminiscence, for each of us had some special joy to recall. Perhaps that of the Diplomat was as picturesque as any. He told it to me privately, but a thing like that should not be allowed to remain concealed forever; besides, the young lady is in darkest Germany now and does not know English, anyway. That last-named fact was responsible for the incident.

The Diplomat had just landed at the bottom of the slide, he said, when two of our party – Americans – came along with a bright-faced and quite stylish-looking German girl who was not having a very good time because they knew no German and she no English. It was clearly a case for the Diplomat, who is an unattached person, full of the joy of travel and familiar with all languages, living and dead.

He had not been presented to the young German person on the ship, but he had seen her now and again in company with an older, rather plain-looking woman, very likely her maid. No doubt the young woman was a countess, or a baroness, or at all events a person of station and importance. Politely enough he proffered his services as escort, was accepted, and the two set out gayly to enjoy the halcyon Madeira afternoon.

She was a most sociable companion, the Diplomat said, ready for anything that resembled a good time. They visited places of interest; they dropped into little shops; he bought flowers for her; they had refreshments here and there – dainty dishes and pleasant Madeira wines – keeping up, meantime, their merry German clatter. They became quite gay, in fact, and whenever they met any of the ship party, which they did frequently enough, the Diplomat, as he confessed to me, became rather vain and showy – set his hat on one side and did a sort of fandarole, accompanying his step with operatic German airs. At such moments she even took his hand and entered into the spirit of the occasion.

Altogether it was a charming experience, and they were both sorry when it was time to return to the ship. Arriving there they were met by the older, plain-looking woman, who greeted his companion with words that were pleasant enough, gentle enough, but which partook of the nature of a command. Then it dawned upon the Diplomat; it was not the older, plain-looking woman who was the maid!

"I would have done it just the same," he explained to me in a dark corner of the deck, after dinner, "just the same, of course, being a gentleman, only under the circumstances I might have cut out the cakewalk and the music."

A ship is a curious place altogether; a place of narrow limits and close contact, yet full of subterranean depths from which surprises may develop at any moment. The Chief Engineer, to whom I sit next at meals, often quotes meditatively,

"A ship it is a funny thing,
It sails upon the sea – "

The Chief does not recall the rest of the stanza, but we all admit the truth of what he does remember. Ship life on the whole is not like other life; ship characteristics do not altogether resemble those on land.

Take the "Porpoise," for instance. I have no doubt that the Porpoise on land is a most excellent and industrious business man, more or less absorbed in the daily round of his ventures – a happy-hearted contented Hebrew person, fairly quiet (it doesn't seem possible, but I am willing to believe

it), on the whole a good citizen, satisfied if his name appears now and then in the local paper, when he gets in some new line of goods or makes an improvement on his home.

But on shipboard the Porpoise is just – a porpoise. He is fat, as his name implies, and describes revolutions of the ship, blowing constantly. At no time of day and in no part of the ship will you be safe from the Porpoise. He is from an interior town – an unimportant town, by its census and location, but it has become important on this vessel.

He has instructed us upon other subjects, too. Nothing is too complicated, or too deep, or too abstruse for the Porpoise. He will attack any question at sight, and he will puff and spout and describe circles and wallow in his oratory, and follow his audience about until he has swept the deck clean. Yet we love that Porpoise, in spite of everything. He is so happy and harmless and gentle. It is only because he is on a ship that he is a bore.

Also, we love the "Mill." The Mill is a woman – a good woman – one of the kindliest souls on earth, I suspect, and her mouth is her warrant for her name. It goes all the time, but it does not deal with important things. Indeed, nothing is too unimportant for her hopper, and she grinds exceeding small. Just now, for an hour or so, she has been explaining that she did not sleep very well last night, and minutely cataloguing the reasons why. She will keep it up for another hour, and then if somebody hasn't dropped her overboard she will dig up something else of equal value and go right on, refreshed and rejoicing in the consciousness of well-doing.

The Mill would not act this way at home – she would not have time. It is only because she is on a ship where everybody is idle and irresponsible and "different," and likely to be peculiar. As Laura, age fourteen, said to me to-day – paraphrasing the words of the old Quaker spinster to her sister, "I think everybody on this ship is peculiar except thee and me, and sometimes I think *thee* is a little peculiar." That expresses the situation, and on the whole we enjoy it. We are like the little boy whose reputation for being a strange child did not interfere with his happiness. "Gee, ain't it great to be crazy!" was his favorite remark, and whatever we may be on this ship, we are content with the conditions, and would not change them, even if we could.

VIII
OUT OF THE SUNRISE

I have seen the shores of Africa and Spain! The bath steward came very early, this morning – earlier than usual. He had his reasons, but I had forgotten and was sleepy, so I said "No," and tried to doze again. Then all at once from the deck there arose a swell of music – rich, triumphant music – an orchestration of "Holy, Holy, Holy" – such a strain as one might expect to hear if the eternal gates should swing ajar. I remembered, then; it was Sunday morning – but there was something more. Land! The land that lies on the other side of the ocean!

In a moment I was at my port-hole, which is on the starboard side. We had changed our course and were bearing more to the north. Directly in front of me the sun was rising. The east was a mass of glowing outlines – golden clouds and hill-tops mingled. It was the Orient – that is what it was – the Far East; the sun rising over Africa! Something got hold of me then – I hardly know what. Certainly I was not unhappy; but then it was all so sudden and spectacular, and I had waited for it so long.

I do not remember how I got dressed; only for a moment at a time could I drag myself away from that port-hole. The sun rose higher – the outlines of Morocco became more distinct, but they did not lose their wonder of color – their glory of purple and gold. I realized now that the prospectuses had not exaggerated the splendor of the East, even on their gorgeous covers – that they could not do so if they tried. By the time I was on deck we were running close enough to the lofty shores to make out villages here and there and hill-top towers – the habitation and the watch-towers of the Moors. How eagerly and minutely one scanned these with the glass to distinguish the first sign of Oriental life – to get a glimpse of the reality of what had so long been but a romance and a dream. It was those people who had conquered Spain and built the Alhambra.

What was going on inside those curious flat-topped houses and those towers? Marvellous matters, no doubt, that had to do with nargileh and magic and scimiters and flying carpets and scarcely imperceptible nods to the executioner who always hovered among the draperies in the background. The Reprobates appeared and declared there was no romance anywhere in sight and never had been in that direction; that Morocco was just a place of wretched government and miserable people whose chief industries were laziness and crime. There are moments when I would be willing for this ship to sink to properly punish the Reprobates.

The Diplomat was better. He said there was as much romance and magic over there as ever, and more executioners; and the Diplomat knows. We would pass Ceuta, the African Pillar of Hercules, before long, he told us. The other pillar was the Rock of Gibraltar, which lay still farther ahead.

We went over to the other side of the ship presently, for we were overlooking the Bay of Trafalgar, where a little more than a hundred years ago Horatio Nelson died, after convincing the combined navies of France and Spain that it required something besides numbers to win a victory. Nelson went into that fight with thirty-two vessels, little and big, against forty of the combined fleets. He hoisted the signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," and every man did it. One half of the combined fleets struck their colors, and the rest made off, or sank, and with them went Napoleon Bonaparte's scheme for invading England.

We looked out on the placid water, laughing in the Sunday morning sunlight, and tried to imagine those vanished fleets – stately ships of the line with their banks of guns; smart frigates and rakish cutters – all that splendid concourse of black hull and towering canvas, and then the boom and the flash of guns – the conflict and the glory of that morning so long ago. This much was real, and it was romance; not even the Reprobates could brush away the bloom.

The captain came by and pointed ahead to Tarifa, where the Barbary pirates a long time ago levied tribute on the merchants and added the word "tariff" to the dictionary. Their old castle has

fallen into ruin, but the old industry still thrives, under the same name. Then we went back to starboard again for a look at Tangier, where, alas, we were not to land, because Algiers had been provided for us instead.

But now Gibraltar, the crouching lion of Trafalgar, had risen from the sea. The English call it "The Rock," and that is just what it looks like – a big bowlder shaped like a sleeping lion – its head toward Spain, its tail toward Africa. I think most persons have an idea that the Rock lies lengthwise, east and west – I know I thought so. Instead it lies north and south, and is really a stone finger pointed by Spain toward the African coast. It is Great Britain's pride – it has cost enough for her to be proud of it – and is her chief stronghold.

About it are gathered her warships of to-day – dark, low-browed fighters like our own – any one of them able to send to the bottom a whole fleet like Nelson's and the combined fleets besides. They look quiet enough, ugly enough, and drowsy enough, now. So does Gibraltar, but it is just as well, perhaps, not to twist the Lion's tail. We had no intention of doing so, and I don't see why they were so afraid of us. They wouldn't let us visit their shooting-galleries – the galleries where they keep their big guns, I mean; they wouldn't let us climb the Rock on the outside; they wouldn't even let us visit an old Moorish castle which stands about half-way up. Perhaps they thought we would spike their guns, or steal the castle, or blow up the Rock with infernal machines.

They did let us take carriages and drive along the main streets of the city, through a park or two and out to Europa Point, I think that was the place. We were interested, but not enthusiastic. After Madeira, one does not go mad over the beauties of Gibraltar. The vehicles were funny little affairs – Spanish, I suppose; the driver spoke the English of Gibraltar – an English which nobody outside of Gibraltar, and only a few people there, can understand; the road was good; the flowers – bluebells, yellow daisies, dandelions and heliotrope – all wild – were profuse and lavishly in bloom everywhere along the way. Had we come direct to Gibraltar, we should have raved over these things like enough, and we did rave a little, but it was a sort of placid ecstasy. Military hospitals and barracks and officers' quarters are not the kind of scenery to excite this crowd.

It was different, though, when we got to Europa Point. There, on one side rose the great Rock abruptly from the sea, while before us stretched the Mediterranean, all blue and emerald and iridescent, like a great fire-opal in the sun. It was our first glimpse of the water along whose shores began the history and the religions of more than half the world. "The grand object of all travel is to see the shores of the Mediterranean," said Dr. Johnson, and there were some of us who not until that moment, I think, fully grasped the fact that this object, this dream of a lifetime, was about to be accomplished.

The Patriarch forgot the Phœnicians for a little and began to talk about Athens and of Mars Hill from which St. Paul had preached, though he added presently that it was quite certain St. Paul's grandfather had been a Phœnician; the Diplomat quoted something about his soul being "far away sailing on the Vesuvian Bay"; the Porpoise began to meditate audibly how far it was in a straight line to Jerusalem; the Mill ground a quiet little grist about flannels she expected to wear in Egypt; even the Reprobates were subdued and thoughtful in the face of this watery theatre that had held the drama of the ancient world.

We drove back to the town, separated, and wandered about where fancy led us. Laura and I had a little business with the American consul, who is an example of what an American consul ought to be: a gentleman who is a consul by profession and not by party favor, being the third Sprague in line who has held the post. Through him we met a most interesting person, one who brought us in direct contact, as it were, with that old first party of Pilgrims to make the Oriental cruise. Michael Beñunes was his name, guide and courier to Mark Twain and his party, forty-two years ago.

Beñunes must have been a handsome creature in those days; he is a handsome creature still – tall, finely featured, with flowing black hair – carrying his sixty-five years as lightly as wind-flowers – gay, voluble, enthusiastic – ready for the future, glorying in the past. He took us to a coffee-house and

entertained us, and held us enthralled for an hour or more with his tide of eloquence and information. He told us of the trip he had made through Spain with the "Innocents"; of many other trips in lands near and far. He told us of the things in Gibraltar we had not seen – of the galleries and the monkey-pit; also, of the wonderful monkeys themselves who inhabit the Rock and are intelligent almost beyond belief – who refrain from speaking English only because they are afraid of having red coats and caps put on them and being made into soldiers.

Gibraltar was once a part of Africa, according to tradition, and the monkeys remained on the Rock when the separation took place. But guides know that a subterranean passage from the bottomless monkey-pit connects the Rock with Africa to this day; also that the monkeys travel back and forth through it and keep posted on warfare and new inventions, in preparation for a time when they shall be ready to regain their lost empire, and that sometimes at dusk, if one lies hidden and remains very quiet, he may overhear them discuss these things, as in the failing twilight they "walk together, holding each other's tails."

We could have listened all night to Beñunes, for he made the old time and still older traditions real to us. And perhaps Beñunes would have talked all night, for he declared – and we believed him – that he could talk for five hours without a break. Naturally I expected to pay the score in the coffee-house and to make some special acknowledgment to Beñunes for his time. Not at all; he called the waiter with a flourish, threw down more than enough money and told him to keep the change, regretting volubly that we could not partake further of his hospitality. We should have the freedom of the city – of everything – he said, when we came again. Ah me! I suspect there is only one Beñunes, and that he belongs to a time which will soon vanish away.

We went through the town – almost a closed town, because it was Sunday, and not an inviting town, I think, at best. Here and there were narrow streets that wound up or down, yet were only mildly seductive. But it is a cosmopolitan town – the most cosmopolitan town on earth, perhaps. Every kind of money is in use there – every language is spoken.

"Picture postals twelve for a quarter!" was the American cry that greeted us at every turn. If we had been English it would have been "twelve for a shilling," or if German "*zwölf für ein Mark*," no doubt. They do not mistake nationalities in Gibraltar – they have all kinds to study from. Moors we saw – black, barelegged, and gayly attired – a taste of the Orient we were about to enter – and if there were any nationalities we did not see in this motley-thronged Mediterranean gateway I do not recall them now. We bought a few postal cards, and two fans with bull-fights on them, but unlike the *Quaker City* "Pilgrims" we bought no gloves.

I did look at certain stylish young creatures who passed now and then, and wondered if one of them might not be the bewitching saleslady who had sold those gloves. And then I remembered: she would not be young and bewitching any more; she would be carrying the burden and the record of many years. Unlike the first "Pilgrims," too, we did not hear the story of the "Queen's Chair." That was worn out, at last, and exists to-day only in the guide-books. We drove over to Spanish Town by and by, but it was still less inviting over there, so we drove back, passed out through the great gates which close every evening at sunset, and waited at the pier for the little tender, for it was near evening and we were through with Gibraltar – ready for the comfort of the ship.

It is a curious place – a place of a day's interest for the traveller – of enormous interest to the military world. For two hundred years it has been maintained with English blood and treasure, until it has become the most costly jewel of that lavish kingdom. There are those to-day – Englishmen – who say it is not worth the price – that it is no longer worth any price – and they advocate returning it to Spain. No army could take it, and no army wants to take it – nothing could be gained by taking it any more. But it is one of England's precious traditions, and it will take another two hundred years of vast maintenance before England will let that tradition go.

There were papers on the tender, London and Paris journals, but the only American news was that Congress had been advised against tinkering with the tariff. That did not interest us. Had we not

been face to face with the headquarters of tariff that very morning, and heard the story of how that noble industry was born? This later item was mere detail.

Back on the ship, looking at the lion couchant while the twilight falls and the lights come out along its base. There is no harshness now. The lion's skin has become velvet – it is a veritable lion asleep among fireflies. We lift anchor and steam slowly into the Mediterranean. The lion loses its form, becomes a dark wedge, the thin edge toward Spain. Night deepens as we creep farther around; the wedge shortens, contracts to a cone, a pyramid – the level sea changes to a desert. The feeling somehow grows that Africa has reclaimed its own – the Lion of England has become a pyramid of the sands.

IX
EARLY MEDITERRANEAN EXPERIENCES

Our first day in the Mediterranean was without a flaw. It was a quiet, sunlit day – just pleasantly warm – the ship steady as a rock on that luminous, level sea. No wonder the ancients did not want to leave these placid tides and venture out upon the dark tossing Atlantic which they could see foaming just beyond the Pillars of Hercules. No wonder they peopled those hungry wastes with monsters and evil spirits. Here, on this tranquil sea, there were no unfamiliar dangers. The summer shores that shut them in held all their world – a golden world of romance wherein gods mingled with the affairs of men; where fauns and hamadryads flitted through the groves; where nereids and tritons sported along the waves.

We have all day and night to get to Algiers – now less than three hundred miles away – so we are just loafing along making wide circles – "to test the compass," one of the officers said a while ago. I did not know they had to test compasses, and I'm rather doubtful about the matter, still. I suspect that officer is enjoying himself quietly at our expense. I suspect it, because he is the same officer who told the Credulous One the other day when the ship was rolling heavily, that the jarring, beating sound we heard every now and then was made by the ship running over whales. The noise was really made by the screw lifting out of the water, and pounding the surface with its blades, but the Credulous One, who is a trusting soul – a stout lady of middle age and gentle spirit – believed the whale story and repeated it around the ship. She said how many whales there must be down here, and pitied them whenever she heard that cruel sound.

That officer came along again, a moment ago, and told us that the mountains nearest are called the Sierra de Gata, which sounds true. Somewhere beyond them lies Grenada and the Alhambra, and there, too, is the old, old city of Cordova, capital of the Moorish kings, and for three hundred years one of the greatest centres of commerce in the world. But these things are only history. What we care for on a day like this is invention – romance – and remembering that somewhere beyond that snowy rim Don Quixote and Sancho wandered through the fields of fancy and the woods of dream makes us wish that we might anchor along those shores and follow that vagrant quest.

I drifted into the smoking-room and mentioned these things to the Reprobates, but they did not seem interested. They had the place all to themselves and the Doctor was dozing in one corner – between naps administering philosophy to the Colonel and the Apostle, who were engaged in their everlasting game of piquet. He roused up when I came in to deal out a few comforting remarks.

"What do they care for scenery, or romance," he said, "or anything else except to gamble all day? All you've got to do is to look at them to get an inventory of their characters. Just look at the Colonel for instance; did you ever see a better picture of Captain Kidd? Made his money out of publishing the Bible without reading it and thinks he must go to the Holy Land now to square himself. And the Apostle, there – look at him! Look at his shape – why, he's likely to blow up, any time. Some people think these are patients of mine. Nice advertisement, a pair like that!"

I thought the Doctor a trifle hard on his fellow-Reprobates. I thought the Colonel rather handsome, and I had seen him studying his guide-book more than once. As for the Apostle, I said that I never really felt that he was about to blow up; that appearances were often deceitful and very likely there was no immediate danger.

They were not inclined to be sociable – the Colonel and the Apostle. They merely intimated that we might go away, preferably to a place not down on the ship's itinerary, and kept on with their eternal game.

It is curious, the fascination of that game, piquet – still more curious how anybody can ever learn to play it. In fact nobody ever does learn it. There are no rules – no discoverable rules. It is

purely an inspirational game, if one may judge from this exhibition of it. After the cards are dealt out, the Colonel picks up his hand, jerks his hat a little lower over his eyes, skins through his assortment, and says "Huh!" At the same time the Apostle puts on his holiest look – chin up, eye drooped, bland and child-like – examines his collection, and says, "Goddlemighty!"

Then they play – that is, they go through the motions. The Colonel puts down a handful of cards and says "Eight." The Apostle never looks at them, but puts down a bigger handful of his own and says "Eleven." Then the Colonel puts down another lot and says "Fourteen." Then the Apostle lays down the balance of his stock and the Colonel says, "Hell, Joe," and they set down some figures. When they are through, the Colonel owes the Apostle seven dollars.

Yes, it is a curious game, and would make the Colonel a pauper in time, if nature did not provide other means of adjustment. After the Apostle has his winnings comfortably put away and settled into place, the Colonel takes out a new five-dollar gold piece, regards it thoughtfully, turns it over, reads the date, and comments on its beauty. Then suddenly he slaps it down on the table under his hand.

"Match you, Joe," he says, "match you for five!"

But the Apostle is wary. He smiles benignly while he turns his face from temptation.

"No you don't," he says, "never again."

The Colonel slaps the coin down again, quite smartly.

"Just once, Joe," he wheedles; "just once, for luck!"

The Apostle strokes his chubby, child-like countenance with the tips of his fingers, still looking away – his eyes turned heavenward.

"I won't do it, I tell you. No, now go on away. I told you yesterday I wouldn't match you again – ever."

"Just once, Joe – just this one time."

"I won't do it."

The Apostle's attitude is still resolute, but there is a note of weakening in his voice and his hand is working almost imperceptibly toward his pocket.

"Just once more, Joe, just for five dollars – one turn."

The Apostle's hand is in his pocket.

"Now, I tell you," he says, "I'll match you this one time, and never again."

"All right, Joe, just this one time, for luck; come on, now."

The coins go down together, and when they are uncovered the Colonel takes both, always. Then the Apostle jerks up his cap, jams it on, and starts for the deck.

"Hold on, Joe; just once more – just for luck."

"You go to hell, will you?"

This is the programme daily with but slight variation. Sometimes the Apostle wins less than seven dollars – sometimes he loses more than five; but he always does win at piquet and he always does lose at matching. Thus do the unseen forces preserve the balance of exchange.

We crossed over and came in sight of the mountains of Algeria during the afternoon, and all the rest of this halcyon day we skirted the African shore, while Laura and I and two other juveniles kept a game of shuffleboard going on the after deck. To-night there is to be another grand dinner and dance, in honor of Washington's Birthday. We shall awake to-morrow in the harbor of Algiers.

X
THE DIVERTING STORY OF ALGIERS

This is a voyage of happy mornings. It was morning – just sunrise – when we met the American fleet homeward bound; it was morning when we caught the first glimpse of Madeira and steamed into the harbor of Funchal; the shores of Morocco – our first glimpse of the Orient – came out of the sunrise, and it was just sunrise this morning when I looked out of my port-hole on the blue harbor and terraced architecture of Algiers. And the harbor of Algiers *is* blue, and the terraced architecture is white, or creamy, and behind it are the hills of vivid green. And there are palms and cypress-trees, and bougainvillea and other climbing vines. Viewed from the ship it is a picture city, and framed in the port-hole it became a landscape miniature of wondrous radiance and vivid hues.

One of our passengers, a happy-hearted, elderly Hebrew soul, came along the promenade just outside my state-room and surveyed the vision through his glass. Presently he was joined by his comfortable, good-natured wife.

"Vat you get me up so early for, Sol?" she said.

He handed her his glass, his whole face alive with joy of the moment – fairly radiant it was.

"I yust couldn't help it!" he said. "Dot sunrising and dot harbor and dot city all make such a beautiful sight."

A beautiful sight it was, and it had the added charm of being our first near approach to the Orient. For Algiers is still the Orient, though it has been a French colony for nearly a hundred years. The Orient and the Occident have met here, and the Occident has conquered, but the Orient is the Orient still, and will be so long as a vestige of it remains.

The story of Algiers, like that of every Mediterranean country, has been a motley one, and bloody enough, of course. The Romans held it for nearly five hundred years; the Vandals followed them, and these in turn were ousted by the Arabs, about the year 700 a. d. Blood flowed during each of these changes, and betweentimes. There was always blood – rivers of it – lakes of it – this harbor has been red with it time and again.

It did not stop flowing with the Arabian conquest – not by any means. Those Arabs were barbarians and robbers – Bedouins on land and pirates on the sea. They were the friends of no nation or people, and when business was dull outside, they would break out among themselves and indulge in pillage and slaughter at home for mere pastime. About the time Columbus was discovering America they were joined by the Moors and Jews who were being driven out of Spain and who decided to take up piracy as a regular business.

Piratic industry, combined with slavery, flourished for a matter of four centuries after that; then Commodore Decatur with a handful of little vessels met the Algerian fleet off Carthagena on the 20th of June, 1815. Decatur was a good hand with pirates. He went to work on that fleet and when he got through there wasn't enough of it left to capture a banana-boat. Then he appeared before Algiers and sent a note to the Dey demanding the immediate release of all Americans in slavery. The Dey replied that as a mere matter of form he hoped the American commander would agree to sending a small annual tribute of powder.

"If you take the powder you must take the balls with it," was Decatur's reply, and thus the young American republic, then only about thirty years old, was first to break down the monstrous institutions of piracy and enslavement which for more than a thousand years had furnished Algerian revenues.

One Hussein (history does not mention his other name, but it was probably Ali Ben) was the last Dey of Algiers, and his memory is not a credit to his country's story. He was cruel and insolent; also, careless in his statements.

Piracy under A. B. Hussein flourished with a good deal of its old vigor, though I believe he was rather careful about plundering American vessels. Hussein was also a usurer and the principal creditor of some Jewish merchants who had a claim against France. The claim was in litigation, and Hussein, becoming impatient, demanded payment from the French king. As France had been the principal sufferer from Hussein's pirates, it was not likely that the king would notice this demand. Soon after, in the Dey's palace, the Kasba, at a court function the Dey asked of the French consul why his master had remained silent.

"The King of France does not correspond with the Dey of Algiers," was the haughty reply, whereupon Hussein struck the consul on the cheek with his fan, and said a lot of unpleasant things of both king and consul.

That was the downfall of Algiers. A blockade was established by the French, and three years later the French army of invasion marched in. Fifteen hundred guns, seventeen ships of war, and fifty million francs fell into the hands of France, as spoil of war. Algiers was no longer the terror of the seas. Over six hundred thousand Christian people had suffered the horrors of Algerian bondage, but with that July day, 1830, came the end of this barbarism, since which time Algiers has acquired a new habit – the habit of jumping at the crack of the French whip.

I may say here in passing that we were to hear a good deal of that incident of the Dey, the French consul, and the fan. It was in the guide-books in various forms, and as soon as I got dressed and on deck one of our conductors – himself a former resident of Algiers – approached me with:

"Do you see that tower up there on the hill-top? That is the Kasba. It was in that tower that Hussein, the last Dey of Algiers, struck the French consul three times on the cheek with his fan – an act which led to the conquest of Algiers by France."

I looked at the tower with greatly renewed interest, and brought it up close to me with my glass. Then he pointed out other features of the city, fair and beautiful in the light of morning: the mosque; the governor's palace; the Arab quarter; the villas of wealthy Algerines. He drifted away, then, and the Diplomat approached. He also had been in Algiers once before. He said:

"Do you see that tower there on the hill-top? That is the Kasba. It was in that tower that Hussein, the last Dey of Algiers, struck the French consul three times on the cheek with his fan – an act which led to the conquest of Algiers by France."

He went away, and I looked over the ship's side at the piratical-looking boatmen who were gathering to the attack. They were a picturesque lot – their costumes purely Oriental – their bare feet encased in shoes right out of the *Arabian Nights* pictures. I was just turning to remark these things to one of the Reprobates, the Colonel, when he said:

"Do you see that tower up there on the hill-top?"

"Colonel," I said, "you've been reading your guide-book, and I saw you the other day with a book called *Innocents Abroad*."

He looked a little dazed.

"Well," he said, "what of it?"

"Nothing; only that tower seems to be another 'Queen's Chair.' I've been to it several times in the guide-book myself, and I've already had it twice served up by hand. Let's don't talk about it any more, until we've been ashore and had a look at it."

XI
WE ENTER THE ORIENT

We went ashore, in boats to the dock, then we stepped over some things, and under some things and walked through the custom-house (they don't seem to bother us at these places) and there were our carriages (very grand carriages – quite different from the little cramped jiggle-wagons of Gibraltar) all drawn up and waiting. And forthwith we found ourselves in the midst of the Orient and the Occident – a busy, multitudinous life, pressing about us, crowding up to our carriages to sell us postal cards and gaudy trinkets, babbling away in mongrel French and other motley and confused tongues.

What a grand exhibition it was to us who had come up out of the Western Ocean, only half believing that such scenes as this – throngs of sun-baked people in fantastic dress – could still exist anywhere in the world! We were willing to sit there and look at them, and I kept my camera going feverishly, being filled with a sort of fear, I suppose, that there were no other such pictures on earth and I must catch them now or never.

We were willing to linger, but not too long. We got our first lesson in Oriental deliberation right there. Guides had been arranged for and we must wait for them before we could start the procession. They did not come promptly. Nothing comes promptly in the Orient. *One does not hurry the Orient – one waits on it.* That is a maxim I struck out on the anvil, white-hot, that first hour in Algiers, and I am satisfied it is not subject to change. The sun poured down on us; the turbaned, burnoused, barefooted selling-men rallied more vociferously; the Reprobates invented new forms of profanity to fit Eastern conditions, and still the guides did not come.

We watched some workmen storing grain in warehouses built under the fine esplanade that flanks the water-front, and the picture they made consoled us for a time. They were Arabs of one tribe or another and they wore a motley dress. All had some kind of what seemed cumbersome head-gear – a turban or a folded shawl, or perhaps an old gunny-sack made into a sort of hood with a long cape that draped down behind. A few of them had on thick European coats over their other paraphernalia.

We wondered why they should dress in this voluminous fashion in such a climate, and then we decided that the wisdom of the East had prompted the protection of that head-gear and general assortment of wardrobe against the blazing sun. Our guides came drifting in by and by, wholly unexcited and only dreamily interested in our presence, and the procession moved. Then we ascended to the streets above – beautiful streets, and if it were not for the Oriental costumes and faces everywhere we might have been in France.

French soldiers were discoverable all about; French groups were chatting and drinking coffee and other beverages at open-air cafés; fine French equipages rolled by with ladies and gentlemen in fashionable French dress. Being carnival-time, the streets were decorated with banners and festoons in the French colors. But for the intermixture of fezzes and turbans and the long-flowing garments of the East we would have said, "After all, this is not the Orient, it is France."

But French Algiers, "gay, beautiful, and modern as Paris itself" (the guide-book expression), is, after all, only the outer bulwark, or rather the ornate frame of the picture it encloses. That picture when you are fairly in the heart of it is as purely Oriental I believe as anything in the world to-day, and cannot have changed much since Mohammedanism came into power there a thousand years ago. But I am getting ahead too fast. We did not penetrate the heart of Algiers at once – only the outer edges.

We drove to our first mosque – a typical white-domed affair, plastered on the outside, and we fought our way through the beggars who got in front of us and behind us and about us, demanding "*sou-penny*" at least it sounded like that – a sort of French-English combination, I suppose, which probably has been found to work well enough to warrant its general adoption.

We thought we had seen beggars at Madeira, and had become hardened to them. We *had* become hardened toward the beggars, but not to our own offerings. One can only stand about so much punishment – then he surrenders. It is easier and quicker to give a sou-penny, or a dozen of them, than it is to be bedevilled and besmirched and bewildered by these tatterdemalion Arabs who grab and cling and obstruct until one doesn't know whether he is in Algiers or Altoona, and wishes only to find relief and sanctuary. Evidently sight-seeing in the East has not become less strenuous since the days when the "Innocents" made their pilgrimage in these waters.

We found temporary sanctuary in the mosque, but it was not such as one would wish to adopt permanently. It was a bare, unkempt place, and they made us put on very objectionable slippers before we could step on their sacred carpets. This is the first mosque we have seen, so of course I am not a purist in the matter of mosques yet, but I am wondering if it takes dirt and tatters to make a rug sacred, and if half a dozen mangy, hungry-looking Arab priests inspire the regular attendants in a place like that with religious fervor.

They inspired me only with a desire to get back to the beggars, where I could pay sou-pennies for the privilege of looking at the variegated humanity and of breathing the open air. The guide-book says this is a poor mosque, but that is gratuitous information; I could have told that myself as soon as I looked at it. Anybody could.

We went through some markets after that, and saw some new kinds of flowers and fruit and fish, but they did not matter. I knew there were better things than these in Algiers, and I was impatient to get to them. I begrudged the time, too, that we put in on some public buildings, though a down-town palace of Ali Ben Hussein, the final Dey of Algiers – a gaudy wedding-cake affair, all fluting and frosting – was not without interest, especially when we found that the late Hussein had kept his seven wives there. It was a comparatively old building, built in Barbarossa times, the guide said, and now used only on certain official occasions. It is not in good taste, I imagine, even from the Oriental standpoint.

But what we wanted, some of us at least, was to get out of these show-places and into the shops – the native shops that we could see stretching down the little side-streets. We could discover perfectly marvellous baskets and jugs and queer things of every sort fairly stuffing these little native selling-places, and there were always fascinating groups in those side-streets, besides men with big copper water-jars on their shoulders that looked a thousand years old – the jars, I mean – all battered and dented and polished by the mutations of the passing years.

I wanted one of those jars. I would have given more for one of those jars than for the mosque, including all the sacred rugs and the holy men, or for the palace of A. B. Hussein, and Hussein himself, with his seven wives thrown in for good measure. No, I withdraw that last item. I would not make a quick decision like that in the matter of the wives. I would like to look them over first. But, dear me, I forgot – they have been dead a long, long time, so let the offer stand. That is to say, I did want the jar and I was willing to do without the other things. There was no good opportunity for investment just then, and when I discussed the situation with Laura, who was in the carriage with me, she did not encourage any side-adventures. She was right, I suppose, for we were mostly on the move. We went clattering away through some pleasing parks, presently, and our drivers, who were French, cracked their whips at the Algerine rabble and would have run them down, I believe, with great willingness, and could have done so, perhaps, without fear of penalty. Certainly French soldiers are immune to retribution in Algiers. We saw evidence of that, and I would have resented their conduct more, if I had not remembered those days not so long ago of piracy and bondage, and realized that these same people might be murdering and enslaving yet but for the ever-ready whip of France.

From one of the parks we saw above us an old, ruined, vine-covered citadel. Could we go up there? we asked; we did not care much for parks. Yes, we could go up there – all in good time. One does not hurry the Orient – one waits on it. We did go up there, all in good time, and then we found it was the Kasba, the same where had occurred the incident which had brought about the fall of Algiers.

They did not show us the room where that historic spark had been kindled, but they did tell us the story again, and they showed us a view of the city and the harbor and the Atlas Mountains with snow on them, and one of our party asked if those mountains were in Spain. I would have been willing to watch that view for the rest of the day had we had time. We did not have time. We were to lunch somewhere by and by, and meantime we were to go through the very heart, the very heart of hearts, of Algiers.

That is to say, the Arab quarter – the inner circle of circles where, so far as discoverable, French domination has not yet laid its hand. We left the carriages at a point somewhere below the Kasba, passed through an arch in a dead wall – an opening so low that the tallest of us had to stoop (it was a "needle's eye," no doubt) – and there we were. At one step we had come from a mingling of East and West to that which was eternally East with no hint or suggestion of contact with any outside world.

I should say the streets would average six to eight feet wide, all leading down hill. They were winding streets, some of them dim, and each a succession of stone steps and grades that meander down and down into a stranger labyrinth of life than I had ever dreamed of.

How weak any attempt to tell of that life seems! The plastered, blind-eyed houses with their mysterious entrances and narrow dusky stairways leading to what dark and sinister occupancy; the narrow streets bending off here and there that one might follow, who could say whither; the silent, drowsing, strangely garbed humanity that regarded us only with a vague scornful interest and did not even offer to beg; the low dim coffee-houses before which men sat drinking and contemplating – so inattentive to the moment's event that one might believe they had sat always thus, sipping and contemplating, and would so sit through time – how can I convey to the reader even a faint reflection of that unreal, half-awake world or conjure again the spell which, beholding it for the first time, one is bound to feel?

Everywhere was humanity which belonged only to the East – had always belonged there – had remained unchanged in feature and dress and mode of life since the beginning. The prophets looked and dressed just as these people look and dress, and their cities were as this city, built into steep hillsides, with streets a few feet wide, shops six feet square or less, the dreaming shopkeeper in easy reach of every article of his paltry trade.

I do not think it is a very clean place. Of course the matter of being clean is more or less a comparative condition, and what one nation or one family considers clean another nation or family might not be satisfied with at all. But judged by any standards I have happened to meet heretofore I should say the Arab quarter of Algiers was not overclean.

But it was picturesque. In whatever direction you looked was a picture. It was like nature untouched by civilization – it could not be unpicturesque if it tried. It was, in fact, just that – nature unspoiled by what we choose to call civilization because it means bustle, responsibility, office hours, and, now and then, clean clothes. And being nature, even the dirt was not unbeautiful.

Somebody has defined dirt as matter out of place. It was not out of place here. Nor rags. Some of these creatures were literally a mass of rags – rag upon rag – sewed on, tacked on, tied on, hung on – but they were fascinating. What is the use trying to convey all the marvel of it in words? One must see for himself to realize, and even then he will believe he has been dreaming as soon as he turns away.

In a little recess, about half-way down the hill, heeding nothing – wholly lost in reverie it would seem – sat two venerable, turbaned men. They had long beards and their faces were fine and dignified. These were holy men, the guides told us, and very sacred. I did not understand just why they were holy – a mere trip to Mecca would hardly have made them as holy as that, I should think – and nobody seemed to know the answer when I asked about it. Then I asked if I might photograph them, but I could see by the way our guide grabbed at something firm to sustain himself that it would be just as well not to press the suggestion.

I was not entirely subdued, however, and pretty soon hunted up further trouble. A boy came along with one of the copper water-jars – a small one – probably children's size. I made a dive for

him and proposed buying it; that is, I held out money and reached for the jar. He probably thought I wanted a drink, and handed it to me, little suspecting my base design. But when he saw me admiring the jar itself and discussing it with Laura, who was waiting rather impatiently while our party was drifting away, he reached for it himself, and my money did not seem to impress him.

Now I suspect that those jars are not for sale. This one had a sort of brass seal with a number and certain cryptic words on it which would suggest some kind of record. As likely as not those jars are all licensed, and for that boy to have parted with his would have landed us both in a donjon keep. I don't know in the least what a donjon keep is, but it sounds like a place to put people for a good while, and I had no time then for experimental knowledge. Our friends had already turned a corner when we started on and we hurried to catch up, not knowing whether or not we should ever find them again.

We came upon them at last peering into an Arab school. The teacher, who wore a turban, sat cross-legged on a raised dais, and the boys, who wore fezzes – there were no girls – were grouped on either side – on a rug – their pointed shoes standing in a row along the floor. They were reciting in a chorus from some large cards – the Koran, according to the guide – and it made a queer clatter.

It must have struck their dinner-hour, just then, for suddenly they all rose, and each in turn made an obeisance to the teacher, kissed his hand, slipped on a pair of little pointed shoes and swarmed out just as any school-boy in any land might do. Only they were not so noisy or impudent. They were rather grave, and their curiosity concerning us was not of a frantic kind. They were training for the life of contemplation, no doubt; perhaps even to be holy men.

We passed little recesses where artizans of all kinds were at work with crude implements on what seemed unimportant things. We passed a cubby-hole where a man was writing letters in the curious Arabic characters for men who squatted about and waited their turn. We saw the pettiest merchants in the world – men with half a dozen little heaps of fruit and vegetables on the ground, not more than three or four poor-looking items in each heap. In a land where fruit and vegetables are the most plentiful of all products, a whole stock in trade like that could not be worth above three or four cents. I wonder what sort of a change they make when they sell only a part of one of those pitiful heaps.

We were at the foot of the hill and out of that delightful Arab quarter all too soon. But we could not stay. Our carriages were waiting there, and we were in and off and going gaily through very beautiful streets to reach the hotel where we were to lunch.

Neither shall I dwell on the governor's palace which we visited, though it is set in a fair garden; nor on the museum, with the exception of just one thing. That one item is, I believe, unique in the world's list of curiosities. It is a plaster cast of the martyr Geronimo in the agony of death. The Algerines put Geronimo alive into a soft mass of concrete which presently hardened into a block, and was built into a fort. This was in 1569, and about forty years later a Spanish writer described the event and told exactly how that particular block could be located.

The fort stood for nearly three hundred years. Then in 1853 it was torn down, the block was identified and broken open, and an almost perfect mould of the dead martyr was found within. They filled the mould with plaster, and the result – a wonderful cast – lies there in the museum to-day, his face down as he died, hands and feet bound and straining, head twisted to one side in the supreme torture of that terrible martyrdom. It is a gruesome, fascinating thing, and you go back to look at it more than once, and you slip out betweentimes for a breath of fresh air.

Remembering the story and looking at that straining figure, you realize a little of the need he must have known, and your lungs contract and you smother and hurry out to the sky and sun and God-given oxygen of life. He could not have lived long, but every second of consciousness must have been an eternity of horror, for there is no such thing as time except as to mode of measurement, and a measurement such as that would compass ages unthinkable. If I lived in Algiers and at any time should sprout a little bud of discontent with the present state of affairs – a little sympathy with the subjugated population – I would go and take a look at Geronimo, and forthwith all the discontent and

the sympathy would pass away, and I would come out gloating in the fact that France can crack the whip and that we of the West can ride them down.

We drove through the suburbs, the most beautiful suburbs I have ever seen in any country, and here and there beggars sprang up by the roadside and pursued us up hill and down, though we were going helter-skelter with fine horses over perfect roads. How these children could keep up with us I shall never know, or how a girl of not more than ten could carry a big baby and run full speed down hill, crying out "*Sou-penny*" at every step, never stumbling or falling behind. Of course, nobody could stand that. We flung her sou-pennies and she gathered them up like lightning and was after the rear carriages, unsatisfied and unabated in speed.

We passed a little lake with two frogs in it. They called to us, but they spoke only French or Algerian, so we did not catch the point of their remarks.

And now we drove home – that is, back to the fine streets near the water-front where we were to leave the carriages and wander about for a while, at will. That was a wild, splendid drive. We were all principals in a gorgeous procession that went dashing down boulevards and through villages, our drivers cracking their whips at the scattering people who woke up long enough to make a fairly spry dash for safety.

Oh, but it was grand! The open barouches, the racing teams, the cracking whips! Let the Arab horde have a care. They sank unoffending vessels; they reddened the sea with blood; they enslaved thousands; they martyred Geronimo. Let the whips crack – drive us fast over them!

Still, I wasn't quite so savage as I sound. I didn't really wish to damage any of those Orientals. I only wanted to feel that I could do it and not have to pay a fine – not a big fine – and I invented the idea of taking a lot of those cheap Arabs to America for automobilists to use up, and save money.

When we got back to town, while the others were nosing about the shops, I slipped away and went up into the Arab quarter again, alone. It was toward evening now, and it was twilight in there, and there was such a lot of humanity among which I could not see a single European face or dress. I realized that I was absolutely alone in that weird place and that these people had no love for the "Christian Dog."

I do not think I was afraid, but I thought of these things, and wondered how many years would be likely to pass before anybody would get a trace of what had become of me, if anything did become of me, and what that thing would be likely to be. Something free and handsome, no doubt – something with hot skewers and boiling oil in it, or perhaps soft concrete.

Still, I couldn't decide to turn back, not yet. If the place had been interesting by daylight, it was doubly so, now, in the dusk, with the noiseless, hooded figures slipping by; the silent coffee-drinkers in the half gloom – leaning over now and then, to whisper a little gossip, maybe, but usually abstracted, indifferent. What could they ever have to gossip about anyway? They had no affairs. Their affairs all ended long ago.

I came to an open place by and by, a tiny square which proved to be a kind of second-hand market-place. I altered all my standards of economy there in a few minutes. They were selling things that the poorest family of the East Side of New York would pitch into the garbage-barrel. Broken bottles, tin cans, wretched bits of clothing, cracked clay water-jars that only cost a few cents new. I had bought a new one myself as I came along for eight cents. I began to feel a deep regret that I had not waited.

Adjoining the market was a gaming-place and coffee-house combined. Men squatting on the ground in the dusk played dominoes and chess wordlessly, never looking up, only sipping their coffee now and then, wholly indifferent to time and change and death and the hereafter. I could have watched them longer, but it would really be dark presently, and one must reach the ship by a certain hour. One could hardly get lost in the Arab quarter, for any downhill stair takes you toward the sea, but I did not know by which I had come, so I took the first one and started down.

I walked pretty rapidly, and I looked over my shoulder now and then, because – well, never mind, I looked over my shoulder – and I would have been glad to see anything that looked like a Christian. Presently I felt that somebody was following me. I took a casual look and made up my mind that it was true. There were quantities of smoking, drinking people all about, but I didn't feel any safer for that. I stepped aside presently and stood still to let him pass. He did pass – a sinister looking Arab – but when I started on he stepped aside too, and got behind me again.

So I stopped and let him pass once more, and then it wasn't necessary to manœuvre again, for a few yards ahead the narrow Arab defile flowed into the lighter French thoroughfare. He was only a pick-pocket, perhaps – there are said to be a good many in Algiers – but he was not a pleasant-looking person, and I did not care to cultivate him at nightfall in that dim, time-forgotten place.

I picked up some friends in the French quarter, and Laura and I drifted toward the ship, pressed by a gay crowd of merry-makers. It was carnival-time, as before mentioned, and the air was full of confetti, and the open-air cafés were crowded with persons of both sexes and every nation, drinking, smoking, and chattering, the air reeking with tobacco and the fumes of absinthe. Everywhere were the red and blue soldiers of France – Chasseurs d'Afrique and Zouaves – everywhere the fashionable French costumes – everywhere the French tongue. And amid that fashion and gayety of the West the fez and the turban and the long flowing robe of the Orient mingled silently, while here and there little groups of elderly, dignified sons of the desert stood in quiet corners, observing and thinking long thoughts. And this is the Algiers of to-day – the West dominant – the East a memory and a dream.

XII
WE TOUCH AT GENOA

We lost some of our passengers – the wrong ones – at Algiers. They wanted to linger awhile in that lovely place, and no one could blame them. Only I wish that next time we are to lose passengers I might make the selection. I would pick, for instance – no, on the whole, I am not the one to do it. I am fond of all of our people. They are peculiar, most of them, as mentioned before – all of them, I believe, except me – but thinking it over I cannot decide on a single one that I would be willing to spare. Even the Porpoise – But we have grown to love the Porpoise, and the news that we are to lose him at Genoa saddens me.

We were pitched from Algiers to Genoa – not all at one pitch, though we should have liked that better. A gale came up out of the north and, great ship as the *Kurfürst* is, we stood alternately on our hind feet and our fore feet all the way over – two nights and a day – while the roar and howl of the wind were appalling. We changed our minds about the placid, dreamy disposition of the Mediterranean; also, about sunny Italy.

When the second morning came we were still a good way outside the harbor of Genoa, in the grip of such a norther and blizzard as tears through the Texas Panhandle and leaves dead cattle in its wake. Sunny Italy indeed! The hills back of Genoa, when we could make them out at last, were white with snow. To go out on deck was to breast the penetrating, stinging beat of the storm.

But I stood it awhile to get an impression of the harbor. It is no harbor at all, but simply a little corner of open sea, partly enclosed by breakwaters that measurably protect vessels from heavy seas, when one can get through the entrance. With our mighty engines and powerful machinery we were beating and wallowing around the entrance for as much as two hours, I should think, before we could get inside. You could stow that harbor of Genoa anywhere along the New York City water-front, shipping and all, and then you would need to employ a tug-boat captain to find it for you. It is hard to understand how Genoa obtained her maritime importance in the old days.

(I have just referred to the guide-book. It says: "The magnificent harbor of Genoa was the cause of the mediæval prosperity of the city," and adds that it is about two miles in diameter. Very well; I take it all back. I was merely judging from observation. It has led me into trouble before.)

We were only to touch at Genoa; some more of our passengers were to leave us, and we were to take on the European contingent there. It was not expected that there would be much sight-seeing, especially on such a day, but some of us went ashore nevertheless. Laura, age fourteen, and I were among those who went. We set out alone, were captured immediately by a guide, repelled him, and temporarily escaped. It was a mistake, however; we discovered soon that a guide would have been better on this bitter, buffeting day.

We had no idea where to go, and when we spoke to people about it, they replied in some dialect of Mulberry Street that ought not to be permitted at large. Laura tried her French on them presently, but with no visible effect, though it had worked pretty well in Algiers. Then I discovered a German sign, over a restaurant or something, and I said I would get information there.

I had faith in my German since my practice on the stewards, and I went into the place hopefully. What I wanted to ask was "Where is Cook's?" the first question that every tourist wants to ask when he finds himself lost and cold and hungry in a strange land. But being lost and cold and hungry confused me, I suppose, and I got mixed in my adverbs, and when the sentence came out it somehow started with "*Warum*" instead of "*Wo*" so instead of asking "Where is Cook's?" I had asked "Why is Cook's?" a question which I could have answered myself if I had only known I had asked it.

But I didn't realize, and kept on asking it, with a little more emphasis each time, while the landlord and the groups about the tables began to edge away and to reach for something handy and

solid to use on a crazy man. I backed out then, and by the time I was outside I realized my slight error in the choice of words. I did not go back to correct my inquiry. I merely told Laura that those people in there did not seem very intelligent, and that was true, or they would have known that anybody is likely to say "why" when he means "where," especially in German.

There are too many languages in the world, anyway. There is nothing so hopeless as to hunt for information in a place where not a soul understands your language, and where you can't speak a word of his. The first man at your very side may have all the information you need right at his tongue's end, but it might as well be buried in a cellar so far as you are concerned.

I am in deep sympathy with the people who invented Volapuk, and are trying to invent Esperanto. I never thought much about it before, but since I've been to Genoa I know I believe in those things. Only, I wish they'd adopt English as the universal speech. I find it plenty good enough.

Laura and I made our way uphill and climbed some stairways, met a *gendarme*, got what seemed to be information, climbed down again, and met a man with a fish-net full of bread – caught in some back alley, from the looks of it. Then we followed a car-track a while along the deserted street, past black, desolate-looking houses, and were cold and discouraged and desperate, when suddenly, right out of heaven, came that guide, who had been following us all the time, of course, and realized that the psychological moment had come.

We could have fallen on his neck for pure joy. Everything became all right, then. He could understand what we said, and we could understand what he said; we tried him repeatedly and he could do it every time. That was joy and occupation enough at first. Then we asked him "Where was Cook's?" and he knew that too. It was wonderful.

We grew to love that guide like a brother. It's marvellous how soon and fondly you can learn to love a rescuer like that when you are a stranger in a strange land and have been sinking helplessly in a sea of unknown words.

He was a good soul, too; attentive without being officious, anxious to show us as much as possible in the brief space of our visit. He led us through the narrow, cleft-like streets of the old city; he pointed out the birthplace of Columbus and portions of the old city wall; he conducted us to the Hotel de Ville (the old Fieschi Palace), where we decided to have luncheon; he led us back to the ship at last, and trusted me while I went aboard to get the five *lira* of his charge.

Whatever the Genoese guides were in the old days, this one was a jewel. If I had any voice in the matter Genoa would inscribe a tablet to a man like that and put his bones in a silver box and label them "St. John the Baptist" instead of the set of St. John bones they now have in the Cathedral of St. Lorenzo, which he pointed out to us.

But the Cathedral itself was interesting enough. It was built in the ninth century, and is the first church we have seen that has interested us. In it Laura noticed again the absence of seats; for they kneel, on this side of the water, and know not the comfort of pews.

We passed palaces galore in Genoa, but we had only time to glance in, except at the Fieschi, where we lunched, and later were shown the rooms where the famous conspiracy took place. I don't know what the conspiracy was, but the guide-book speaks of it as "the famous conspiracy," so everybody but me will know just which one is meant. It probably concerned the Ghibellines and the Guelphs, and had strangling in it and poison – three kinds, slow, medium, and swift – these features being usually identified with the early Italian school.

The dim, mysterious streets of Genoa interested us – many of the houses frescoed outside – and the old city gates, dating back to the crusade; also some English signs, one of which said:

DINNER 3 LIRA, WINE ENCLOSED,

and another:

MILK FOR SALE, OR TO LET

I am in favor of these people learning English, but not too well. The picturesque standard of those signs is about right.

Our new passengers were crowding aboard the ship when we returned. They were a polyglot assortment, English, German, French, Hungarian – a happy-looking lot, certainly, and eager for the housing and comfort of the ship. But one dear old soul, a German music-master – any one could tell that at first glance – was in no hurry for the cabin. He had been looking forward to that trip. Perhaps this was his first sight of the sea and shipping and all the things he had wanted so long. He came to where I was looking over the rail, his head bare, his white hair blowing in the wind. He looked at me anxiously.

"Haben Sie Deutsch?" he asked.

I confessed that I still had a small broken assortment of German on hand, such as it was. He pointed excitedly to a vessel lying near us – a ship with an undecipherable name in the Greek character.

"Greek," he said, "it is Greek – a vessel from Greece!"

He was deeply moved. To him that vessel – a rather poor, grimy affair – with its name in the characters of Homer and Æschylus was a thing to make his blood leap and his eyes grow moist, because to him it meant the marvel and story of a land made visible – the first breath of realization of what before had just been a golden dream. I had been thinking of those things, too. We did not mind the cold, and stood looking down at the Greek vessel while we sailed away.

But a change has come over the spirit of our ship. It is a good ship still, with a goodly company – only it is not the same. We lost some worthy people in Genoa and we took on this European invasion. It is educational, and here in the smoking-room I could pick up all the languages I need so much if I were willing to listen and had an ear for such things. I could pick up customs, too. It is after dinner, and the smoking-room is crowded with mingled races of both sexes, who have come in for their coffee and their cigarettes, their gossip and their games. Over there in one corner is a French group – Parisian, without doubt – the women are certainly that, otherwise they could not chatter and handle their cigarettes in that dainty way – and they are going-on and waving their hands and turning their eyes to heaven in the interest and ecstasy of their enjoyment. Games do not interest them – they are in themselves sufficient diversion to one another.

It is different with a group of Germans at the next table; they have settled down to cards – pinochle, likely enough – and they are playing it soberly – as soberly as that other group who are absorbed in chess. At still another table a game of poker is being organized, and from that direction comes the beloved American tongue, carrying such words as "What's the blue chips worth?" "Shall we play jack-pots?" "Does the dealer ante?" and in these familiar echoes I recognize the voices of friends.

The centre of the smoking-room is different. The tables there are filled with a variegated lot of men and women, all talking together, each pursuing a different subject – each speaking a language of his own. Every nation of Europe, I should think, is represented there – it is a sort of lingual congress in open session.

The Reprobates no longer own the smoking-room. They are huddled off in a corner over their game of piquet, and they have a sort of cowed, helpless look. Only now and then I can see the Colonel jerk his hat a bit lower and hear him say, "Hell, Joe!" as the Apostle lay down his final cards. Then I recognize that we are still here and somewhat in evidence, though our atmosphere is not the same.

That couldn't be expected. When you have set out with a crowd of pleasure-seeking irresponsibles, gathered up at random, and have become a bit of the amalgamation which takes place in two weeks' mixing, you somehow feel that a certain unity has resulted from the process and you

are reluctant about seeing it disturbed. You feel a personal loss in every face that goes – a personal grievance in every stranger that intrudes.

The ship's family has become a sort of club. It has formed itself into groups and has discussed its members individually and collectively. It has found out their business and perhaps some of the hopes and ambitions – even some of the sorrows – of each member. Then, suddenly, here is a new group of people that breaks in. You know nothing about them – they know nothing about you. They are good people, and you will learn to like some of them – perhaps all of them – in time. Yet you regard them doubtfully. Rearrangement is never easy, and amalgamation will be slow.

Oh, well, it is ever thus, and it is the very evanescence of things that makes them worth while. That old crowd of ours would have grown deadly tired of one another if there hadn't been always the prospect and imminence of change. And, anyhow, this is far more picturesque, and we are sailing to-night before the wind, over a smooth sea, for Malta, and it has grown warm outside and the lights of Corsica are on our starboard bow.

XIII
MALTA, A LAND OF YESTERDAY

We came a long way around from Algiers to "Malta and its dependencies," the little group of islands which lies between Sicily and the African coast. We have spent two days at sea, meantime, but they were rather profitable days, for when one goes capering among marvels, as we do ashore, he needs these ship days to get his impressions sorted out and filed for reference.

We were in the harbor of Valetta, Malta, when we woke this morning – a rather dull morning – and a whole felucca of boats – flotilla, I mean – had appeared in the offing to take us ashore. At least, I suppose they were in the offing – I'm going to look that word up, by and by, in the ship dictionary, and see what it means. They have different boats in each of the places we have visited – every country preserving its native pattern. These at Malta are a sort of gondola with a piece sticking up at each end – for ornament, probably – I have been unable to figure out any use for the feature.

We leaned over the rail, watching them and admiring the boatmen while we tried to recognize the native language. The Diplomat came along and informed us that it was Arabic, mixed with Italian, the former heavily predominating. The Arabs had once occupied the island for two hundred and twenty years, he said, and left their language, their architecture, and their customs. He had been trying his Arabic on some natives who had come aboard and they could almost understand it.

The Patriarch, who had been early on deck, came up full of enthusiasm. There was a Phœnician temple in Malta which he was dying to visit. It was the first real footprint, thus far, of his favorite tribe, and though we have learned to restrain the Patriarch when he unlimbers on Phœnicians, we let him get off this time, softened, perhaps, by the thought of the ruined temple.

The Phœnicians had, of course, been the first settlers of Malta, he told us, thirty-five hundred years ago, when Rome had not been heard of and Greece was mere mythology; after which preliminary the Patriarch really got down to business.

"We are told by Sanchuniathon," he said, "in the Phoinikika, which was not only a cosmogony but a necrological diptych, translated into Greek by Philo of Byblus, with commentary by Porphyry and preserved by Eusebius in fragmentary form, that the Phœnicians laid the foundations of the world's arts, sciences, and religions, though the real character of their own faith has been but imperfectly expiscated. We are told – "

The Horse-Doctor laid his hand reverently but firmly on the Patriarch's arm.

"General," he said (the Patriarch's ship title is General) – "General, we all love you, and we all respect your years and your learning. We will stand almost anything from you, even the Phœnicians; but don't crowd us, General – don't take advantage of our good-nature. We'll try to put up with Sanchuniathon and Porphyry and those other old dubs, but when you turned loose that word 'expiscated' I nearly lost control of myself and threw you overboard."

The bugle blew the summons to go ashore. Amidst a clatter of Maltese we descended into the boats and started for the quay. Sitting thus low down upon the water, one could get an idea of the little shut-in harbor, one of the deepest and finest in the world. We could not see its outlet, or the open water, for the place is like a jug, and the sides are high and steep. They are all fortified, too, and looking up through the gloomy morning at the grim bastions and things, the place loomed sombre enough and did not invite enthusiasm. It was too much like Gibraltar in its atmosphere, which was not surprising, for it is an English stronghold – the second in importance in these waters. Gibraltar is the gateway, Malta is the citadel of the Mediterranean, and England to-day commands both.

But Malta has had a more picturesque history than Gibraltar. Its story has been not unlike that of Algiers, and many nations have fought for it and shed blood and romance along its shores, and on all the lands about. We touched mythology, too, here, for the first time; and Bible history. Long

ago, even before the Phœnicians, the Cyclops – a race of one-eyed giants – owned Malta, and here Calypso, daughter of Atlas, lived and enchanted Ulysses when he happened along this way and was shipwrecked on the "wooded island of Ogygia, far apart from men."

I am glad they do not call it that any more. It is hard to say Ogygia, and it is no longer a wooded isle. It is little more than a rock, in fact, covered with a thin, fertile soil, and there are hardly any trees to be discovered anywhere. But there were bowers and groves in Ulysses' time, and Calypso wooed him among the greenery and in a cave which is pointed out to this day. She promised him immortality if he would forget his wife and native land, and marry her, but Ulysses postponed his decision, and after a seven-year sample of the matrimony concluded he didn't care for perpetual existence on those terms.

Calypso bore him two sons, and when he sailed away died of grief. Ulysses returned to Penelope, but he was disqualified for the simple life of Ithaca, and after he had slain her insolent suitors and told everybody about his travels he longed to go sailing away again to other adventures and islands, and Calypsos, perhaps, "beyond the baths of all the western stars." Such was life even then.

The Biblical interest of Malta concerns a shipwreck, too. St. Paul on his way to Italy to preach the gospel was caught in a great tempest, the Euroclydon, which continued for fourteen days. Acts xxvii, xxviii contain the story, which is very interesting and beautiful.

Here is a brief summary.

> "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up in the wind, we let her drive…
>
> "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay upon us, all hope that we should be saved was taken away."

Paul comforted them and told how an angel had stood by him, assuring him that he, Paul, would appear before Cæsar and that all with him would be saved. "Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island."

The island was Melita (*i. e.*, Malta), and "falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground."

There were two hundred and sixteen souls in the vessel, and all got to land somehow.

> "And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold."

Paul remained three months in Malta and preached the gospel and performed miracles there, which is a better record than Ulysses made. He also banished the poison snakes, it is said. It was the Euroclydon that swept the trees from Malta, and nineteen hundred years have not repaired the ravage of that storm.

Gods, Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Germans, Spanish, Knights of Jerusalem, French, and English have all battled for Malta because of its position as a stronghold, a watch-tower between the eastern and western seas. All of them have fortified it more or less, until to-day it is a sort of museum of military works, occupied and abandoned.

After the Gods, the Phœnicians were the first occupants, and with all due deference to the Patriarch, they were skedaddling out of Canaan at the time, because Joshua was transacting a little business in warfare which convinced them that it was time to grow up with new countries farther west. The Knights of Jerusalem – also known as the Knights of St. John and the Knights of Rhodes – were the last romantic inheritors. The Knights were originally hospital nurses who looked after pilgrims that went to visit the Holy Sepulchre, nearly a thousand years ago. They became great soldiers in time: knightly crusaders with sacred vows of chastity and service to the Lord. Charles V. of Spain gave them the Island of Malta, and they became the Knights of Malta henceforth. They did not maintain their vows by and by, but became profligates and even pirates. Meantime they had rendered mighty service to the Mediterranean and the world at large.

They prevented the terrible Turk from overrunning and possessing all Europe. Under John de la Valette, the famous Grand Master, Malta stood a Turkish siege that lasted four months, with continuous assault and heavy bombardments. The Turks gave it up at last and sailed away, after a loss of over twenty thousand men.

Only seven thousand Maltese and two hundred and sixty knights were killed, and it is said that before he died each knight had anywhere from fifty to a hundred dead Turks to his credit. It must have been hard to kill a knight in those days. I suppose they wore consecrated armor and talismans, and were strengthened by special benedictions. And this all happened in 1565, after which La Valette decided to build a city, and on the 28th of March, 1566, laid the corner-stone of Valetta, our anchorage.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.