

THE QUAKER CITY PILGRIMAGE.

Return of the Holy Land Excursionists—The Story of the Cruise—A Merito-Gonic Picture of Life on Board—The Expedition Not All Quite de Rose.

The steamship Quaker City, Captain Danca, with her excursionists, returned yesterday morning to this port from her cruise to the Holy Land and the Mediterranean. The steamer arrived at Bermuda from Madeira on the 11th instant, which island she left for New York on the 15th, with passengers and crew in good health, who yesterday were safely landed at the foot of Wall street, where the Quaker City is now. The steamer is in good condition, and will probably in about two weeks be placed again on the Charleston line. The expedition has terminated successfully and to the satisfaction of the majority of those participating in the same. The Quaker City, with the excursionists on board, it will be recollected, left New York on the 6th of June, with sixty-seven passengers, sixteen of whom were ladies, who, with the exception of seven passengers who left the steamer at Alexandria, in Egypt, returned on board of the vessel; those who left her at Alexandria having returned to the United States by a direct route. At Constantinople a fireman was lost, who, one night when going on board, fell overboard and was drowned. No other mishaps occurred during the whole of the cruise.

The Quaker City brings back the following passengers:—

- Captain W. R. Hoel, Colonel James K. Hyde, John G. Isham, Dr. A. H. Jackson, Wm. E. James, Colonel P. K. May, George W. Kraus, Charles J. Langford, Mrs. Mrs. Larrow, Daniel D. Leary, E. K. Lockwood, Mrs. Lockwood, Louis McDonald, Captain Lucius Moody, Julius Houston, Arba Nelson, Dr. R. A. Nelson, Thomas B. Neahy, Miss Julia Newell, Dr. J. M. Payne and wife, Rev. G. W. Quveen, D. D.; N. Santord, M. A. Serraty, S. L. Severance and wife, Nicholas Serrico, John A. Van Nuetrad, Miss Lauglion, Dr. E. Andrews, Major J. G. Barry, Moses K. Beane, Miss E. H. Beach, R. Bell and wife, Dr. G. B. Biron, J. W. Bond, wife and infant; Miss M. E. Bond, Dr. M. Brown, Miss Kate Brown, Rev. Henry Bulard, Miss Marie Chadeayne, Samuel L. Clemons ("Mark Twain"), Bloodgood H. Custer, Albert Crane, M. D.; Abner Crane, Jr.; J. D. Crocker and wife, J. W. Davis, Colonel J. W. Deany, Fred. D. Moore and wife, Mrs. C. G. Dunton, George F. Dunton, H. K. D. Nelson, Mrs. A. W. Fairbanks, Colonel J. Harbo Foster, Dr. William Gibson and wife, Hon. J. S. Hademan, Goddard Heist.

The Cruise of the Quaker City.

To THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—

The steamer Quaker City has accomplished at last her extraordinary voyage and returned to her old pier at the foot of Wall street, after an absence of five months and a half. The expedition was a success in some respects, in some it was not. Originally it was advertised as a "pleasure excursion." Well, perhaps it was a pleasure excursion, but certainly it did not look like one; certainly it did not act like one. Anybody's and everybody's notion of a pleasure excursion is that the parties to it will of a necessity be young and giddy and somewhat boisterous. They will dance a good deal, sing a good deal, make love, and pray very little. Anybody's and everybody's notion of a well conducted funeral is that there must be a hearse and a corpse, and chief mourners and mourners by courtesy, many old people, much solemnity, no levity, and a prayer and a sermon withal. Three fourths of the Quaker City's passengers were between forty and seventy years of age! There was a picnic crowd for you! It may be supposed that the other fourth was composed of young girls. But it was not. It was chiefly composed of rusty old bachelors and a child of six years. Let us average the ages of the Quaker City's pilgrims and set the figure down at fifty years. Is any man insane enough to imagine that this picnic of patriarchs sang, made love, danced, laughed, told anecdotes, dealt in ungodly levity? In my experience they sinned little in these matters. No doubt it was pronounced here at home that these frolicsome veterans laughed and sang and romped all day, and day after day, and kept up a boisterous excitement from one end of the ship to the other; and that they played blind-man's bluff or danced quadrilles and waltzes on moonlight evenings on the quarterdeck; and that at odd moments of unoccupied time they jotted a laconic item or two in the journals they opened on such an elaborate plan when they left home, and then skurried off to their whist and euchre tables under the cabin lamps. If these things were pronounced, the presumption was at fault. The venerable excursionists were not gay and frisky. They played no blind man's bluff; they dealt not in whist; they shirked not the irksome journal, for almost most of them were even writing books. They never romped, they talked but little, they never sang, save in the almighty prayer meeting. The pleasure ship was a synagogue, and the pleasure trip was a funeral excursion without a corpse. [There is nothing exhilarating about a funeral excursion without a corpse.] A free, hearty laugh was a sound that was not heard oftener than once in seven days about those decks or in those cabins; and when it was heard it met with precious little sympathy. The excursionists danced, on three separate evenings, long, long ago (it seems an age), quadrilles, of a single set, made up of three ladies and five gentlemen (the latter with handkerchiefs around their arms to signify their sex, who timed their feet to the solemn wheezing of a melodeon; but even this monotonous organ was vetoed by a signal and dancing was discontinued.

The pilgrims played dominoes when too much Josephus or Robinson's Holy Land Researches, or book writing, made recreation necessary—for dominoes is about as mild and stultic a game as any in the world, perhaps, excepting always the leadenly insipid diversion they call playing at croquet, which is a game where you don't pocket any balls and don't care on anything of any consequence, and when you are done nobody has to pay, and there are no cigars or drinks to sew off, and, consequently, there isn't any satisfaction whatever about it—they played dominoes till they were rested, and then they blackguarded each other privately in prayer time. When they were not reading, they were unanimously prompt when the dinner gong sounded. Such was our daily life on board the ship—serenity, decorum, dinner, confines, prayers, sleep. It was not lively enough for a pleasure trip; but if we had only had a corpse it would have made a gorgeous funeral excursion. It is all over now; but when I look back, the idea of these venerable fossils skipping forth on a six months' picnic, seems exquisitely ludicrous. The advertised title of the expedition—"The Grand Holy Land Pleasure Excursion"—was a ghastly misnomer. "The Grand Holy Land Funeral Procession" would have been better—much better.

An advertisement, the "Plymouth Collection of Hymns" was used on board. It was frequently used. We had a prayer meeting every night. On this part of the subject I wish to touch very lightly. I could not quarrel, no one could quarrel, with the prayer meetings. We are all taught to respect these things. I merely mention them as being a unique feature to pleasure excursionists, and worthy of imitation in future picnics. There were those in the ship's company who attributed the fact that we had a steady breeze of storms and head winds for six mortal months solely to the prayer meetings. But I was not of that faction. There were those who were abandoned enough to believe that some time or other a particularly aggravating and long-drawn prayer meeting would bring down a storm that would sink the ship. I was not of that party either. I said all along that we hadn't prayer meetings enough; we ought to have them before breakfast, and between meals, and every now and then, and pretty much all the time. These were my sentiments. I do not brag, but those were certainly my sentiments. The argument that they prayed the same old prayers over again every night was nothing to me. I knew that if they only performed oftener and held out long enough, they were bound to start something fresh after a while. There is nothing that gives startling variety to a picnic like prayer meetings. Especially when the "Plymouth Collection" is used, because as a general thing the tunes are a shade too complicated for the excursionists, and so, when they are properly taught, they are so edifyingly lively.

Whenever we went, in Europe, Asia or Africa, we made a sensation, and I suppose I may add, created a furore. None of us had ever been anywhere before; we all hailed from the interior; travel was a wild novelty to us, and we conducted ourselves in accordance with the national instincts that were in us, and transmuted ourselves with no ceremony, but conventionalities. We always took care to make it understood that we were Americans—Americans! When we found that a good many foreigners had hardly even heard of America, and that a good many more knew it only as a barbarous province away off somewhere, that had lately been at war with somebody, we plied the ignorance of the Old World, but secured no lot of our imperium. Many and many a simple community in the Eastern hemisphere will remember for years the incursion of the strange herds in the year of our Lord 1867, that called themselves Americans, and seemed to imagine in some unaccountable way that they had a right to be proud of it. We generally created a furore, partly because the coffee on the Quaker City was venerable and sometimes the more substantial fare was not strictly first class; and partly because our natural aversion of sitting long at the same board and eating from the same dishes.

The people of those foreign countries are very, very ignorant. They looked curiously at the costumes we had brought from the wilds of America. They observed that we talked loudly at table sometimes. They noticed that we looked out for expenses and got what we conveniently could out of a frame, and wondered where in the mischief we came from. In Paris they just simply opened their eyes and stared when we spoke to them in French! We never did succeed in making those things understand their own language. One of our passengers said to a shopkeeper, in referring to a proposed return to buy a pair of shoes, "Allow me to buy a pair of shoes—perhaps you mean Monday," and would you believe it, that shopkeeper, a born Frenchman, had to ask what it was that had been said. Sometimes it seems to me, somehow, that there must be a difference between Parisian French and Quaker City French.

The people stared at us everywhere and we stared at them. We generally made them feel rather silly, too, before we got done with them, because we bore down on them with America's greatness until we crushed them. And yet we took kindly to the manners and customs, and especially the kindness of the various people we visited. When we left the Azores, we wore awful capotes and used the tooth comb—

successfully. When we came back from Tanjier, in Africa, we were topped a high leader at the boulevard, and being with us, we attracted some attention in France and Spain we were naturally taken as for distinguished. In Italy they were glib at to look for tempered Garibaldians and sets of uniform. We anything significant in our enough made any place made Rome novel. We could have. We got out from here when we had all our children. of any kind, inment in Greece—they had but life's the. I Turban, that's Constantinople, how we turned. has, buggy scimitars, tepees, horse pistols, tapers, etc. The trousers, yellow soppors—Oh, we were gorged under illustrious signs of Constantinople barbed them are jaw—If, and even then failed to do us justice. They all dead by this time. They could not go through a run of business as we gave them and survive.

And then we went to see the Emperor of Russia. We just called on him as complimentary as if we had known him a century or so, and when we had finish'd our visit we Variegated ourselves with selections from Russian costumes and suited away a six more picturesque than ever. In Smyrna we posed up camels' hair shawls and other dainty things from Persia; but in Palestine—ah, in Palestine—our splendid career ended. They didn't wear any clothes there to speak of. We were satisfied, and stopped. We made no experiments. We did not try their costume. But we astonished the natives of that country. We astonished them with such eccentricities of dress as we could muster. We prowled through the Holy Land, from Caesarea Philippi to Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, a weird procession of pilgrims, gotten up regardless of expense, solemn, gorgeous, and astride of a sort of lot of horses, camels and ass laden loads that came out of Noah's ark, after eleven months of sea-sickness and short rations. If ever those children of Israel in Palestine forgot when Gideon's band went through there from America they ought to be cursed once more and finished. It was the rarest spectacle since ever astounded mortal eyes, perhaps.

Well, we were at home in Palestine. It was easy to see that that was the grand feature of the expedition. We had covered nothing much about Europe. We galloped through the Louvre, the FNA, the Uzzah, the Vatican—all the galleries—and through the pious and treasured churches of Venice, Pisa and the cathedrals of Spain; some of us said that certain of the great works of the old masters were gorgeous creations of genius (we found it out in the guidebook, though we got hold of the wrong picture sometimes), and the others said they were disgraceful old dubs. We examined modern and ancient anatomy with a critical eye in Flor nce, Rome or anywhere we found it, and praised it if we saw it, and if we didn't we said we preferred the wooden Indians in front of the cigar stores of America. But the Holy Land brought out all our enthusiasm. We fell into raptures by the barren shores of Galilee; we pondered at Taber and at Nazareta; we exploded into poetry over the questionable love-scenes of Nazareth; we meditated at Jezreel and Samara over the zeal of Jehu, who saw seventy sons of one gentleman, massacred all the worshippers of Baal in his district, and performed other magnificent missionary services; we roared, fairly roared, among the holy places of Jerusalem; we bathed in Jordan and the Dead Sea, reckless whether our accidental insurance policies were extra hazardous or not, and brought away so many jugs of precious water from both places that all the country from Jericho to the mountains of dead will suffer from drought this year, I think. Yes, the pilgrimage part of the excursion was its pet feature—there is no question about that. After Dubai, Assiout, Amheis, Amheis, beautiful Egypt had few charms for us. We merely glanced at it, and were ready for some. They wouldn't let us land at Malta—quarantine; they wouldn't let us land in Candia; nor at Algiers, Africa, nor at Malaga, Spain; nor at Cadix; nor at the Madeira Islands. So we got offended at all foreigners and turned our backs upon them and came home. I suppose we only stopped at the Azores because they were in the programme. We did not care anything about any place at all. We wanted to go home. Homesickness was abroad in the ship—it was epidemic. If the authorities of New York had known how badly we had it, they would have quarantined us here.

We sailed to sea the ship. I mention this because to sell the ship seemed to be as much of an object of the excursion as anything else, and so of course to know that we failed to sell her must necessarily be of interest to the public. We were to sell the ship and then walk home, I suppose. That would have given variety to the pleasure excursion at any rate.

The grand pilgrimage is over. Goodby to it, and a pleasant memory to it, I am able to say in all kindness. I bear no malice, no ill will towards any individual that was connected with it, either as passenger or officer. Such persons as I did not like at all yesterday I like very well to-day, now that I am at home, and always hereafter I shall be able to poke fun at the whole gang if the spirit so moves me to do, without ever saying a malicious word. The expedition accomplished all that its programme promised that it should accomplish, and we ought all to be satisfied with the management of the matter, certainly. But that such pleasure excursions as this are calculated to be unsuccessive with pleasure, I deny; and that a party more ill-served, by age and actual calamity, for skurrying around the world on a giddy picnic, ever went to sea in a ship since the world began, I deny also, most fervently.