

LETTER FROM "MARK TWAIN."

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Home Again---Disembarkation of the Pilgrims
---A Motley Crew---Review of the Trip---
What Might have Been---A Model Pleasure
Excursion---Passenger List Extraordinary.

Home Again.

NEW YORK, November 20th.

The steamer *Quaker City* arrived yesterday morning and turned her menagerie of pilgrims loose on America—but, thank Heaven, they came ashore in Christian costume. There was some reason to fear that they would astound the public with Moorish *haks*, Turkish *fezzes*, sashes from Persia, and such other outlandish diablerie as their distempered fancies were apt to suggest to them to resurrect from their curious foreign trunks. They have struggled through the Custom House and escaped to their homes. Their Pilgrim's Progress is ended, and they know more now than it is lawful for the Gods themselves to know. They can talk it from now till January—most of them are too old to last longer. They can tell how they criticised the masterpieces of Reubens, Titian and Murillo, in Paris, Italy and Spain—but they, nor any other man, can tell precisely how competent they were to do it. They can give their opinion of the Emperor of France, the Sultan of Turkey, the Czar of Russia, the Pope of Rome, the King of Italy, and Garibaldi, from personal observation—but, alas! they cannot furnish those gentlemen's opinion of *them*. They can tell how they ascended Mont Blanc—how they tried to snuffle over the tomb of Romeo and Juliet—how they gathered weeds in the Coliseum, and cabbaged mosaics from the Baths of Caracalla—how they explored the venerable Alhambra, and were entranced with the exquisite beauty of the Alcazar—how they infested the bazaars of Smyrna, Constantinople, and Cairo—how they "went through" the holy places of Palestine, and left their private mark on every one of them, from Dan unto the Sea of Galilee, and from Nazareth even unto Jerusalem and the Dead Sea—how they climbed the Pyramids of Egypt and swore that Vesuvius was finer than they; that the Sphinx was foolishness to the Parthenon, and the dreamy panorama of the Nile nonsense to the glories of the Bay of Naples. They can tell all about that, and they will—they can boast about all that, but will they tell the secret history of the trip? Catch them at it! They will blow their horns about the thousand places they have visited and get the lockjaw three times a day trying to pronounce the names of them (they never *did* get any of those names right)—but never, never in the world, will they open the sealed book of the secret history of their memorable pilgrimage. And I won't—for the present, at any rate. Good-bye to the well-meaning old gentlemen and ladies. I bear them no malice, albeit they never took kindly the little irreverent remarks I had occasion to make about them occasionally. We didn't amalgamate—that was all. Nothing more than that. I was exceedingly friendly with a good many of them—eight out of the sixty-five—but I didn't dote on the others, and they didn't dote on me. We were always glad to meet, but then we were just as glad to part again. There was a little difference of opinion between us—nothing more. They thought they could have saved Sodom and Gomorrah, and I thought it would have been unwise to risk money on it. I never failed to make friends on shipboard before—but maybe I was meaner than usual, this trip. Still, I was more placable than they. Every night, in calm or storm, I always turned up in their synagogue, in the after cabin, at seven bells, but they never came near my stateroom. They called it a den of iniquity. But I cared not; there were others who knew it as the home of modest merit. I bear the pilgrims no malice, now, none at all. I *did* give them a little parting blast in the *Herald*, this morning, but I only did that just to see the galled jade wince.

A Model Excursion.

People always jump to the conclusion that passengers of diverse natures, occupations and modes of life, thrown together in great numbers on board a ship, must infallibly create trouble and unending dissatisfaction for each other. This idea is wrong. Diverse natures (when they are good, whole-hearted human natures,) blend and dovetail together on shipboard as neatly as the varicolored fragments of stone in an exquisite mosaic—it is your gang of all-perfection, all-piety, all-economy, all-uncharitableness—like ancient mosaic pavements in the ruins of Rome, the stones all one color, and the cracks between them unpleasantly conspicuous—it is a gang like this that makes a particularly and peculiarly infernal trip. I am tired hearing about the "mixed" character of our party on the *Quaker City*. It was not mixed enough—there were not blackguards enough on board in proportion to the saints—there was not genuine piety enough to offset the hypocrisy. Genuine piety! Do you know what constitutes a legal quorum for prayer? It is in the Bible: "When two or three are gathered together," etc. You observe the number. It means two (or more) honest, sincere Christians, of course. Well, we held one hundred and sixty-five prayer-meetings in the *Quaker City*, and one hundred and eighteen of them were scandalous and illegal, because four out of the five real Christians on board were too sea sick to be present at them, and so there wasn't a quorum. I know. I kept a record—prompted partly by the old reportorial instinct, and partly because I knew that their proceedings were null and void, and ought not to be allowed to pass without a protest. I had seen enough of Legislatures to know right from wrong, and I was sorry enough to see things going as they were. They never could have stood a call of the house, and they resented every attempt of mine to get one.

But I am wandering from my subject somewhat. I was only going to say that people of diverse natures make the pleasantest companionship in long sea voyages, and people all of one nature and that not a happy one, make the worst. If I were going to start on a pleasure excursion around the world and to the Holy Land, and had the privilege of making out her passenger list, I think I could do it right and yet not go out of California. This thought was suggested by a dream I had a month ago, while this pilgrimage was still far at sea. I dreamed that I saw the following placard posted upon the bulletin boards of San Francisco:

"PASSENGER LIST

OF THE STEAMER 'CONSTITUTION,'

CAPT. NED WAKEMAN.

Which leaves this day on a pleasure excursion around the world, permitting her passengers to stop forty days in London, forty in Vienna, forty in Rome, ten in Geneva, ten in Naples, ten in its surroundings, twenty in Venice, thirty in Florence, fifty in the cities of Spain, two days in Constantinople, half a day in Smyrna, thirty days in St. Petersburg, five months in the Sandwich Islands, six in Egypt, forever in France, and two hours and a half in the Holy Land:

Rev. Dr. Wadsworth,	Charles Low,
James Anthony,	Colonel Fry,
Archbishop Alemany,	Jo. Jones,
Paul Morrill,	Pete Hopkins,
Rev. Horatio Stebbins,	General Drum (absent),
John William Skae,	Colonel Catherwood,
Bishop Kip,	Squarza,
T. J. Lamb,	Squiggers' Citizen Sam
Gen. W. H. French,	Platt,
Ass Nudd,	Jim Coffroth,
Emperor Norton,	Frank Soulé,
Lewis Leland,	R. B. Swain,
Old Ridgeway,	One dozen Doctors, chosen
John McComb,	at large,
George Parker,	Five delegates from San
Frank Pixley,	Quentin,
Barry & Patten,	And Frank Bret Harte,
Admiral Jim Smith, late	George Barnes, Mark
of Hawaiian Navy,	Twain and 300 other
Captain Pease,	newspaper men, in the
Louis Cohn,	steerage."
Aleck Badlam,	

It was a dream, but still it was a dream with wisdom in it. That tribe could travel forever without a row, and preserve each other's respect and esteem. Keep the steerage passengers out of sight, and nothing could be said against the character of the party, either. The list I dreamt of, as above set down, could travel pleasantly. They would certainly make a sensation wherever they went, but they would as certainly leave a good impression behind. And yet this list is made up of all sorts of people, and people of all ages. Against the impressive solemnity of Jim Coffroth, we have the levity of Dr. Wadsworth; against the boisterousness of R. B. Swain, we have the graveyard silence and decorum of Alex. Badlam; against General Drum's fondness for showing military dress, we have the Emperor Norton's antipathy to epaulettes and soldier-buttons; against the reckless gaiety of Bishop Kip, we would bring the unsmiling, puritanical straight-lacedness of Anthony & Morrill; against the questionable purity of the five delegates from San Quentin, we would array the bright virtue of the 300 steerage passengers. Such was the pleasure party I saw in my dream. There was a crowd for you that could swing round the circle for six months, and never get home-sick—never fall out—never mope and gossip—never wear out a Napoleon carrying it in their pockets—never show disrespect to honest religion—never bring their nationality into disrepute—never fail to make Europe say, "Lo! these Americans be bricks!"

To Washington.

I am going to Washington to-morrow, to stay a month or two—possibly longer. I have a lot of Holy Land letters on the way to you that will arrive some time or other. MARK TWAIN.