

THE AMERICAN COLONY IN PALESTINE.

From Our Special Correspondent.

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt, Oct. 2, 1897.

The American excursion steamer Quaker City arrived here to-day from Jaffa, in Palestine. All the passengers are well.

The Quaker City brings about 20 or 40 of Old Adams's American-Colony dupes. Others have deserted before, and 17 have died since the foolish expedition landed in Palestine a year ago. Fifteen still remain outside the walls of Jaffa, with Adams, the prophet. These 15 are all that are left of the original 160 that sailed from Maine 12 months ago, to found a new colony and a new religion in Syria, and wait for the second coming of Christ. The colonists have been sadly disappointed. The colony was a failure, and Christ did not come. The colony failed on account of heavy taxes and poor crops—a discrepancy between the almanac and the Book of Revelations interfered with the Second Advent. Adams, the Prophet of God, got drunk in September, 1896, and remains so to this day. It is to be hoped that he will see the error of his ways when he gets sober.

The famous Adams colonization expedition may be considered as finished, extinguished, and ready for its obituary. The 15 want to go home badly enough, but they have got no money, are in debt to Adams, and must stay and work for him. So ends one of the strangest chapters in American history. This man Adams is a shrewd man, and a seductive talker. He got up a new religion, and went about preaching it in the State of Maine and thereabouts. I have asked several of these colonists on board the ship what its nature was, but they are singularly reticent on the subject. They speak vaguely of a flood which was promised, but turned out to be a drought; they do not say what the flood had to do with their salvation, or how it was going to prosper their religion. They talk also of the long-forecasted assembling of the Jews in Palestine from the four quarters of the world, and the restoration of their ancient power and grandeur, but they do not make it appear that an immigration of Yankees to the Holy Land was contemplated by the old prophets as a part of that programme; and now that the Jews have not "swarmed," yet one is left at a loss to understand why that circumstance should distress the American colony of Mr. Adams. I can make neither head nor tail of this religion. I have been told all along that there was a strong free-love feature in it, but a glance at the colonists of both sexes on board this ship has swept that notion from my mind.

Mr. Adams preached his new doctrine, and gathered together a little band of 160 men, women and children last year, and sailed for Jaffa, in Syria. They were simple, unpretending country people, nearly all from one county (Washington) in Maine, and received Adams's extravagant account of the beauty of the paradise he was taking them to, and the richness of its soil, with full confidence. Many of the colonists brought horses, and all manner of farming implements, and all seem to have started with a fair amount of money. Adams became custodian of all the funds. They could not have selected a better—he has got them yet. He

had no money when he started out as a prophet, but now he is in reasonably comfortable circumstances, and his colonists are reduced to poverty. The first crop of the colonists did not return them even the seed they put in the ground. This year they raised what is considered in Syria a very good crop—seven bushels of wheat to the acre (the natives call a season like this a "blessed year")—but they had sowed two bushels of seed to the acre; they had to save two bushels out for next year's planting, rents and taxes took rather more than the balance, and so no fortunes were made. In Palestine the Government takes one-fourth of the gross yield of the field, the landlord from whom the farmer rented takes one-fifth of the gross yield, and what is left must be saved for seed. Foreigners must rent land, they cannot own it. The colonist who raised the best crop this year lost \$500 on it. He thinks if he had raised a better one it would have beggared him. Irrigation would make the rich plain of Jaffa yield astonishing crops of wheat, but at the same time it would make it yield still more astonishing crops of thorns and thistles seven feet high; and, therefore, on the whole, it would be unwise to irrigate, even if one had the facilities for it.

For one year, under the flaming sun of Syria, the colonists have struggled along, moneyless, disappointed, disheartened, and hopeless. The prophet treasurer, Adams, has had to support them most of the time, because he could not help himself. He is glad to get rid of any that leave him, no doubt, and they are glad enough to get away from the filthy, thieving, miserable horde of pauper Arabs that have infested their "paradise" like vermin for so many weary months. Poor Adams himself has suffered much. Our Consul at Jerusalem has been obliged to imprison him twice for various reasons; his lambs, whom he was trying so hard to lead to heaven by a new road, have grumbled sore and sighed for the flesh-pots of America; his crops have come to naught, and even the wife of his bosom, instead of comforting him in his season of affliction, would deprive him of the poor consolation of getting drunk. He has had a harder run of luck than almost any prophet that ever lived, because, in addition to his mere ordinary sufferings, he has had the humiliation of seeing all his prophecies go by default. It cannot be otherwise than disgusting to a prophet when his prophecies don't fit the almanac.

The Quaker City has now become an emigrant-ship for fanatical pilgrims from the Holy Land. What is to be the next chapter in her eventful history?

What I have said about the Adams expedition I got from the Adams refugees themselves, and I have no doubt it is entirely correct. The names of those who are passengers by the Quaker City are as follows:

Mrs. P. W. Tabbutt, E. A. Tabbutt, Miss Drusilla Ward, Moses W. Leighton, Mrs. Nancy S. Leighton, M. B. Leighton, G. W. Ames, Z. Corson, Misses D. E. and L. Corson, Leonard Corson, Mrs. C. M. Corson, Mrs. C. H. Wilkins, F. M. Williams, E. K. Emerson, John A. Briscoe, Mrs. Charlotte A. Briscoe, Misses Lizzie C. and Julia Briscoe, Charles E. Burns, Mrs. Lucy W. Burns, J. B. Ames and wife, A. Norton and wife, F. Norton, E. C. Norton, E. Norton, L. P. Norton, P. F. Emerson, Mr. Rogers and wife.

About half of the above list pay their own way. The other half are provided with funds raised for the purpose by various United States Consuls in the Levant. The refugees propose to go by English steamer from Alexandria to Liverpool, and thence home to America.

MARK TWAIN.