

## To The New World

### *A Yorkshireman's trip to the United States and Canada*

William Smith

1892

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#### Liverpool To New York.

APRIL EIGHTH.—It was in the afternoon of this watery April day, that I found myself hurrying-along the landing stage at Liverpool, in order that I might reach the tender that should convey me to the vessel by means of which I hoped to reach the New World. I had been dining with a friend living on the Cheshire side of the Mersey, and having delayed our starting until too near the hour of the vessel's departure, I was only enabled at the last moment to scamper on deck, when the tender moved away, the passengers meanwhile waving their adieus to the friends on shore. A short run down the river, to where our vessel lay at anchor, and then, ourselves, our luggage, with some of the friends of the passengers, were deposited on the deck of the splendid steam ship, the *Majestic*, of the White Star Line. Another spell of leave-taking followed, but when three peals of the ship's bell had rung out, the friends had barely time to hurry across the gangway, ere it was lifted and the small craft vanished from the side of the monstre vessel, while the waving of hats and handkerchiefs continued until the landing stage was again reached.

After the confusion had died away, I hastened to find the steward who could show me the "state room" which I should have to occupy, with two fellow travellers, during the voyage. This proved to be a most comfortable apartment, and though it was what is known as an "inside room," it was as light, as airy, and altogether as pleasant as could be wished for. The berths, or sleeping places, were of ample dimensions, well appointed with mattresses and linen, and spotlessly clean. A wash-hand stand, mirror, and a couple of life-preserving belts, made up the furniture of the room. An electric light was fixed under the ceiling, and ventilation was obtained by means of openings over the upper berths. The ventilation is so admirably managed that one rises in the morning, free from any impression of having slept in a confined area.

My next visit was to the saloon that I might secure a suitable place at the table, and this precaution, I can assure my readers, is very necessary, inasmuch as the place assigned to you by the second steward must be retained during the voyage. Should you defer your application too long, you will in all probability find yourself located just above the screw, which at certain times will seriously interfere with your digestion and general comfort. Let me advise all who contemplate a long sea voyage to secure seats at table and sleeping berths as far as possible from the screw. I may here mention that feeding is an important item in the programme of "life at sea," and the remark of an American writer to the effect that such life consists "mainly of the hours spent at meals with time for a little recreation between," is not so very wide of the mark. The table is a most liberal one, for, in addition to three full meals, supper is also supplied but without the formality of setting out the tables. Meal times are, however, used as pleasant opportunities for friendly intercourse. My companions at table were of the most agreeable character, and certainly the time spent at meals was devoid of dulness or *ennui*. Seated at the head of the table was a Liverpool merchant whose frequent visits to the States made him an authority as to "life at sea," and also as to life in New York

and the States generally. On his right was an Australian M.L.A. , who had served his adopted country as Post-master General and Commissioner of Customs. He was a warm supporter of Imperial Federation for the Colonies, and had spoken in favour of such a union from his place in the Senate. He had with him as travelling companion, a gentleman from Victoria, who was deputed by his Government to report upon the irrigation schemes of every country he might choose to visit, and for this end he had already been to Russia, Germany, France, Holland, etc., and was now on his way to California to inspect the successful methods of irrigation in that part of the States. Mr. Fraser expected to send in his report in the course of a few months, after having spent two years in its preparation. On the left of our president sat a gentleman from Leeds, whom I had known for many years. He was on his way to Mexico and the West Indies. The rest of our company consisted of the writer, and a gentleman from Hull with his wife and family.

After dinner and when the vessel was fairly on its way, I began to take stock of my fellow passengers, and, if possible, to select from amongst the large number on board a few with whom I might venture to “scrape an acquaintance,” but, being the first day, I found an unusual amount of stiffness, but this wore off during the next twenty-four hours, and thereafter I had abundant experience of how communicative strangers can become at sea. For the next six days one could have as much pleasant converse as he wished for, and in the case of three fourths of the passengers, there was a general desire to be agreeable, and to give and receive information.

Amongst the passengers was a family from Connecticut, who had been travelling in Europe for some months. They were most agreeable companions, their conversation being marked by that good breeding and refinement characteristic of the educated classes in their own and the neighbouring State of Massachusetts. Equally entertaining and instructive was the conversation with the family of Dr. W. H. Buck, of Brooklyn, a well known minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The family had been spending twelve months in Europe, visiting France, Italy, Spain, Egypt, etc., and their reminiscences of travel helped on many occasions to relieve the tedium of the voyage.

The saloon passengers numbered 250, and amongst them were many who were adepts in ocean travel. One of my companions in the “state room” went on his first trip to the States in the year 1848 ; was 35 days on the sea, and paid £18 for very indifferent accommodation. He had made some half score voyages to the New World since that time, and could spin long yarns as to the improvements in ocean travel.

Forty years have indeed made wonderful changes in this respect, and it may be worth while to briefly note the progress which has been made since Fulton in 1807 built his steam ship *The Clermont*, which, to the amazement of the people of New York, sailed up the Hudson at the rate of five miles an hour, notwithstanding an adverse wind and strong current. It was not until 1815 that a steamboat appeared on the Thames, and four years later the first steam-propelled vessel crossed the Atlantic. It came from Savannah, from which place it took its name. It was twenty-five days on the trip, though the usual time for one of the fast clipper ships was only from 16 to 21 days. In 1838 the mails were first sent by steam ships, and then only to Halifax and Boston, and it was not until 1848 that the mails were conveyed by steamers between Liverpool and New York. Surely the record of Atlantic steam navigation, from the year 1848 to the present time, is calculated to astonish one, when we consider how extraordinary and rapid has been its progress. In the former year, one vessel a week from either side of the ocean was considered sufficient to meet the requirements of travellers, now there are ninety steam ships engaged in the Atlantic passenger trade.

When Fulton launched the first steam ship, which was built by him in America, the engines being supplied by Boulton and Watt, of Birmingham, England, the voyage to America was seldom completed under thirty days, now we “cross the ferry” under seven days. Fulton’s pioneer ship was 133 feet long, 18 feet broad ; and 9 feet deep ; the engine had a diameter of piston of 24 inches, with 4 feet stroke. The *Majestic*, which carried me out and home, is a twin screw steamer, of 9,851 tons gross, I.H.P. , 17,000, 565 feet long, and breadth 57 feet 6 inches. Each screw is driven by a set of triple expansion engines with cylinders, 43, 68 and 110 inches, and a stroke of 60 inches. Her consumption of fuel is 300 tons per day. She has 16 boilers with 146 fires. Her screw shafts are 2 feet 9 inches in diameter and 140 feet long Her best speed on service is a mean of 20.18, and taking the mean of ten voyages it is 19.72 knots per hour, or upwards of 20 miles.

After this digression, I return to my fellow passengers, and note that the gentlemen on board comprised American and Canadian business men, including a party of eleven cheese factors who had been to England to ascertain the prospects of their particular trade during the coming season ; a correspondent of the *Boston Herald* ; the principal of the firm of manufacturers who own the model village and works at Saltaire, in Yorkshire ; a Liverpool city councillor ; and a representative of the Religious Tract Society. The balance of the male passengers was made up of doctors, clergymen, colonels, captains, bankers, and tourists. The last named, mostly Americans, so long as sickness kept off, and they could find willing listeners, were untiring in their descriptions of the sights they had seen in the old country ; in the gay capital of France ; amongst the antiquities of Rome, and the historic cities of the land of Palestine.

The shades of night had fallen upon us ere we crossed the bar, and the myriad lights of the great city were lost to our view. “The hurry and bustle of departure ; the din and turmoil of a mighty seaport had given way to the strangely contrasting silence of a great screw steamer driving her way through an unruffled sea.”

APRIL NINTH.—We arrived at Queenstown at 9.15 a.m., and as soon as our vessel was anchored about a mile from the shore, a number of small boats came alongside. These were manned by members of both sexes, and contained fruit, lace handkerchiefs, shawls, caps, bog-oak eccentricities, blackthorn sticks and shillelaghs of all sizes. A thick rope was let down from the deck of the vessel, and the noose of the rope having been adjusted about the person wishing to ascend, he or she was hoisted on board by a series of jerks, a distance of some ten or twelve yards. The women were evidently old hands at the game and performed the climbing feat most dexterously. No sooner were all the traders and their wares on board than the deck portion assigned to emigrants was literally covered with articles for sale. The women did the trading, and were energetic and noisy in their endeavours to secure customers.

As we had five hours to wait for the mails a considerable number of the passengers went on shore, myself amongst the number. I was much pleased with Queenstown Harbour—the lovely Cove of Cork, where the houses rise terrace over terrace from the water’s edge, and face the sunny south. On arriving at the landing stage, I joined a party who were bent on exploring the district. We engaged an outside jaunting car, and away we trundled over a tree-shaded road, catching glimpses of wood and water, mountain and dell. As our young Irish driver, with Jehu impetuosity, is urging his steed to show off his points, for the benefit of the “English jintlemen,” we are continually being accosted by boys and girls, who, starting up from the road side, carrying specimens of whin in their hands, and running by the side of the car, plead earnestly for any little gratuity we may be willing to bestow, and certainly their nimbleness, good looks, long-windedness, and stirring appeals in their native tongue, entitled them to our consideration, and their efforts were not in vain. One could not but notice the

variety of costumes, and picturesque raggedness, as well as the good looks, pleasant wit, and readiness of repartee, of the native population of this port.

After a ten miles' ride we reach Queenstown again, and dismissing our car near the post office, we walked through the town to see the new and handsome Cathedral and other places of interest. We ascended to the highest point of the town, and were amply repaid for our exertions by the magnificent prospect we obtained of the bay and its surroundings. That island just beneath us, with the extensive Naval and Ordnance Stores, is Haulbowline. Not the least curious object on it is the tank which supplies the navy with water. It is cut in the solid rock, and though it has not been emptied since the year 1814, is cool and limpid as a mountain spring. Just beyond Haulbowline is Rocky Island, the gunpowder depot ; the store-rooms are excavated in the rock, and connected by small apertures. Farther away to the left is Spike Island, and straight before us is the lighthouse and the harbour's mouth, protected by two forts. It was a lovely day, and it was a real pleasure to look out upon that beautiful sheet of water, capable of containing the whole British Navy, stretching away like a bay before us, completely sheltered and land-locked on all sides, and surrounded with bold headlands and shores ; steamers plying to and from Cork, and vessels of various tonnage, riding at anchor or flitting before the breeze.

We were glad, however, on reaching the landing stage to find the tender ready for conveying us back to the *Majestic*, for whilst we were walking the streets of Queenstown, beggars by the dozen beset us on every side with their incessant appeals. Curses or blessings followed, as the demands were disregarded or met.

APRIL TENTH.—Desiring to inspect the vessel, I obtained the necessary permission from the captain, who kindly instructed one of his officers to accompany me. We commenced our task by a descent of several flights of iron stairs to the engine room, the engines being deep down below the water line. This accounts in a great measure for the little vibration which is felt on the vessel from the working of the powerful machinery. The ventilation of the engine room was a matter worth notice, it being perfectly cool and yet there were no unsightly appliances, for fresh air was obtained through a grating in the awning deck, whilst for the ventilation of the saloon, smoke room, and library, there were “ shoots” carefully kept from the view of the passengers. These catch the breeze and keep the rooms delightfully cool and pleasant. I may here say that in no part of the ship during the passage did I come across that sickly, stuffy atmosphere so common in ocean steamers, and to this I attribute, in a great measure, my freedom from the least feeling of sickness, either on the outward or homeward trip. It will be pleasant information to the intending traveller to know that the engines are virtually silent, so far as the voyager can tell, and also that the noisy, grating steam-steering apparatus is arranged so far away from the berths that it is no source of discomfort to the passengers. Below the engine-room are the boilers where an army of stokers are constantly pouring coals, at the rate of three hundred tons per day, under the sixteen boilers. From the glimpse we obtained of these men we could see that they were toiling and sweltering far below the decks to keep up the power necessary to drive the immense vessel.

From the engine-room we proceeded to inspect the second-class or intermediate accommodation, which is located on the after part of the vessel. The provision for the comfort of the second-class passengers is, to our thinking, simply admirable, and with the exception of the extra gilding and lavish decoration, fully equal to the first-class. The saloon, smoking-room, state-rooms, baths and lavatories, are all fitted in the most pleasing and substantial manner, and if the very superior accommodation of this class was more widely known, I feel convinced that many more travellers would be induced to make the trip between England and the States. As the second-class fares are only half the amount of the

first-class, a great inducement to travel is offered to the tourist or business man. My advice to the would-be economical traveller is to visit the *Majestic* or *Teutonic* before taking his passage, and he will be surprised to find that the second-class accommodation on these vessels is far ahead of what could be found in the first-class on steamers of twenty years ago.

The steerage passengers, of whom we had 930 on board, are well cared for on the *Majestic*, for the reason, no doubt, that they contribute in a material degree to the financial success of the company. So far as this vessel is concerned, the days of exposure and suffering from want of shelter are at an end. The whole of the upper deck space on this, the longest ship in the world, is reserved for steerage passengers alone, and along each side under the bulwarks runs a sheltered bench where they can sit in comfort. In other words, they have over a sixth of a mile of covered and sheltered deck space, with a continuous bench the entire length. The single women are kept entirely separate, and are located in charge of a matron at the extreme after-end. A comfortable smoke-room is provided for the male passengers, and in the married people's quarters is bath room accommodation, with hot and cold water. Separate rooms for families are provided in abundance, with electric lights, perfect ventilation, and lavatories of the most approved type. Nothing seems to have been overlooked that can contribute to the health and comfort of the steerage passengers, and no doubt many of these passengers find the life on board this vessel a world of luxury and cleanliness to which they have heretofore been unaccustomed.

Stepping on deck once more, my companion called my attention to the space for promenade afforded to saloon passengers, this being 2457 feet long, by 18 feet wide, clear of the deck-houses on both sides. Generally during the day a portion of this space would be occupied by a double row of deck chairs, with their fair occupants engaged in reading, gossip, flirtation, or nursing their feelings. For a more detailed description of the other parts of the ship, I shall avail myself of information furnished by a journalist of repute.

“ The saloon is a banqueting hall of superb brilliancy. The style is Renaissance, and the tones ivory and gold. The length is over 60 feet, the breadth a trifle short of that measurement. Nearly all the sides of this great room, and the vast canopy which covers it, is a sea of ivory and gold, crowned with a dome of mirrors. Bas-relief golden figures of tritons, nymphs, and other members of Neptune's court gambol in the ivory sea beside the ports, and classic ornament and electric lamps flash and glow across the ceiling. The fore and after-ends of the room exhibit fine specimens of carved oak cabinet work, and the couches and seats are sumptuously upholstered. The ports are large and numerous, and each one is set in a deep square mounting of elaborate brass *repoussé* work, glistening like burnished gold. At dinner, when the electric lamps are aglow, the discs of deep blue sky appearing through them, make these squares look like so many colossal jewels. In the ornament of the ceiling you note what look like huge Orders of the Garter. They are open ventilators, but you would never discover the fact, because the glittering radii of glass have been so cut and arranged as to produce the effect of a solid star. For the saloon passengers on the *Majestic* there are sumptuous apartments for eating, smoking, reading, sleeping, excellent service everywhere, and an unequalled strolling ground.

“ Entering from the promenade deck, and descending one flight to the upper deck, we proceed along a short corridor on the port side ; past some large state rooms, barber's shop, refreshment bar, we come to the smoke room. It is difficult to conceive such a smoker's retreat outside Pall Mall. The extreme quiet of the decorations, the handsome lazy-looking couches, the general air of old-fashioned aristocratic comfort and luxury, the utter absence of all stiffness, render it difficult to believe one's-self in a steamer's smoke room. The wood-work is all of that particular rich, dark mahogany one sees sometimes in old mansions. The

walls are covered with a richly-embossed gilt leather of a dark tone. Fitted with panels are large, bright oil paintings, representing the picturesque Mediterranean shipping of the Middle Ages. Figures in high relief, carved in pear wood, fill many niches. The ceiling reproduces an extremely handsome Old English plaster pattern in quaint, variously shaped panels, and is pierced with two lantern lights of stained glass. Light enters in the daytime through square windows looking on the deck, screened at will with stained glass blinds, and at night streams down over the room through the lantern lights. This is an entirely novel and beautiful effect, produced by placing the electric lamps at the back of the stained glass instead of in the room." The demand on the accommodation in this room is seldom slight.

"The Library, entered from near the promenade deck, is a handsome room, fitted with bookcases containing 1,000 carefully selected volumes of beautifully-bound high-class works ; and around a large oval central expanse of glass about three feet from the floor (it covers in the dome of the saloon) are arranged a number of small writing tables with a light armchair on either side, and a stationery rack to maintain a discreet privacy between the writers. Everything in the room is of extreme elegance, an elegance which is both more delicate and of a higher degree than men ordinarily affect. The woodwork above the couches is panelled with light oak, but this is simply so much ground on which designs are burnt and gilt and carved until it constitutes but a tint to show up the elaborate and exquisite decoration.

"The main entrance to the library and saloon, the vestibules, staircases, passages, etc., are all of carved and panelled oak, with white and gold ceilings. The design on the upper panels is the famous linen pattern, with the wood carved lengthways to represent the fold of stuff. The carving on the lower panels is more elaborate. There is a stateliness and tranquil magnificence pervading these approaches that goes well with so noble a ship.

"On the promenade deck there are four, and on the upper deck nineteen state rooms of surpassing comfort and splendour. Some of them are fitted with double bedsteads, chests of drawers, arm-chairs, writing-tables, and couches, as if cabin space was of no consequence. All are in the highest degree luxurious ; the walls being covered with highly-finished decorative work, and in order to render these rooms equal to their beauty, the appliances for heat, light, and ventilation are in each case placed under the control of the occupant. He has but to raise his hand, and his apartment is filled with light, with warm air, or with cool air, as he may desire."

Having finished our tour of the vessel, a few more general observations regarding this splendid ship, and we shall continue our description of the voyage. The *Majestic* is intended as a war ship, and is the second mercantile armed cruiser afloat, and can in case of necessity be mounted with twelve Armstrong guns. "Her value as a troopship is based on the following facts. She can provide accommodation for a thousand cavalry or two thousand infantry. She could reach Halifax, N.S., in five days, and Cape Town in twelve and a half days. *Via* Suez, she could land troops at Bombay in fourteen days, at Calcutta in seventeen and a half days, at Hong Kong in twenty-one and a half days, and at Sydney in twenty-two days. Her coal supply is sufficient for seventeen days, steaming at full speed, or for three months cruising at half speed.

"People who know nothing of the journey to New York beyond the accounts they read of the Atlantic 'swell,' are often surprised how fragile women seem to dare it with tolerable impunity. I am afraid their admiration for this particular form of courage would diminish considerably after a visit to the *Majestic*. With saloons and state-rooms, and of course promenade deck, absolutely amidships in a vessel but a few feet shorter than the defunct *Great Eastern*, with an awning deck permanently overhead and canvas all around, with no fumes, no

vibration, with perfect ventilation and light, with a table to satisfy an epicure, with a special pantry for the deck steward on the promenade deck, so that every passing fancy can be instantly satisfied on the spot ; with a ship that does not roll but stands up and spurns the hurricane ; with all these conditions in one's favour, one need not possess a very robust physique to enjoy a trip in the *Majestic* despite the weather."

APRIL ELEVENTH.—This morning was anything but inviting in its appearance. The rain was coming down in torrents, and we had a lively experience of the Atlantic "roll," and a fine roll it is. At breakfast, our table had guards along the edges and down the middle, to keep the plates and glasses from being thrown off. In the forenoon, when the ladies were taking their ease on deck, swathed in wraps and waterproofs, a "roll" of unusual dimensions came on, and some half dozen of the fair ones were pitched out of their chairs, and looked like animated mummies as they rolled over on the deck. At the same moment, the feet of three gentlemen who were parading slipped from under them, and they, too, were at once sprawling over the deck. From twelve o'clock yesterday to the same hour to-day, we have made 470 miles, so that we have now covered more than a third of the distance between Liverpool and New York.

Was much interested during the day in noticing the many expedients adopted by the passengers to "kill time." Amusement is afforded the gentlemen by the games of shuffle-board, quoits, chess, draughts, cards, backgammon, etc., and the ladies find pleasure in throwing sweets and coins, for a scramble by the children in the steerage. The weather being fine, we have not much sickness on board, though we have always a few of the gentler sex who are in that condition of helplessness which is a result of a mild attack of the *mal de mer*. This evening we had a concert in the saloon, which was very enjoyable.

APRIL TWELFTH.—At 10.30 a.m. the gong was sounded for Divine service, which was held in the saloon, the congregation consisting of a goodly number of the passengers. The reading-desk was placed on the end of one of the centre tables, and the red Union Jack of England and the Stars and Stripes of America were laid over the desk, and very appropriate they seemed to the occasion. The beautiful and comprehensive Liturgy of the Established Church was read by a clergyman one of the passengers, and the singing was very effective, being led by an impromptu choir of excellent voices.

APRIL THIRTEENTH.—This is a glorious morning ; a clear blue sky overhead, and a calm sea all around. A purely sweet fresh air, which it is a perfect luxury to inhale, as we parade the deck in the early hours of the day, and the vessel sailing along as smoothly as if on a lake. I learn to-day that we have on board 250 saloon passengers, 50 intermediate, 930 steerage, of many nationalities, and a crew of 335 persons, making a total of 1,565 souls. This afternoon, about three o'clock, a brisk gale sprung up, and the vessel pitched along at a fearful rate, and now and again, during the evening, when the storm was at its worst, the water came over the bows, and on to the deck in hundreds of tons. The rain also came down in torrents, so that the captain with the men on the bridge had to keep vigilant watch, while the ladies had an uneasy time of it also, and were only relieved by the assurance that the storm would have spent itself ere the hour came for retiring to rest. Notwithstanding the seeming danger, the sight was a grand one. The huge seas came rolling along, and as they reach the bows the ship lifts herself, and the terrible force of the mountains of water is broken, and they go past us, with a hissing sound, as if of great disappointment, at not being allowed to wreak their strength upon our vessel. At nine p.m. the storm had abated, but an element of danger still remained, for a dense fog had come on, and for several hours, after I had retired to my berth, the screeching of the fog-horn was heard, making night hideous, and bringing on that peculiar feeling of apprehension and uncertainty which must always accompany this condition of things on

shipboard. So far as I could judge, and my surmise proved subsequently to be correct, the vessel was sailing along at its utmost capacity of speed, notwithstanding the danger of collision in the darkness. But, I suppose, the opinion of experts is, that in case of collisions there is less danger in a high rate of speed than in a moderate rate, as the swifter vessel is likely to escape with the least damage, while the danger of damage to the other is not increased. It would seem that this theory is acted upon, though I am pleased to say, that we had no opportunity of proving its soundness or otherwise. There came in the early morning, a sensation of relief, when the sound of the hour-bell came upon the ear, with the cheerful cry of the watchman, "All's well!"

APRIL FOURTEENTH.—The sea to-day has been on its very best behaviour, and nearly the whole of the passengers have been on deck, and it was observable that those of my companions who had succumbed to sea sickness for the first few days out, had now fully recovered, and appeared none the worse for their enforced retirement. Preparations have been going on during the day for an entertainment of vocal and instrumental music, with recitations, to be given in the saloon after dinner, and a programme of choice selections and fair proportions, is the result. After the concert ended, a number of ladies "took up the collection," and a sum of £21 was obtained, to be divided equally between the Seamen's Orphanages of Liverpool and New York.

APRIL FIFTEENTH.—During the forenoon of to-day many anxious eyes were on the look-out, in order to catch a glimpse of land, and when this was sighted, a general rush was made by nearly all the passengers to the point from whence the pleasant prospect could be seen. It was the low-lying sand strip, on which the Fire Island lighthouse stands, which first met our gaze. We had now taken the pilot on board, and after a few hours sailing, we perceived ahead of us the Highlands of the Navesink, a part of the New Jersey shore. I was now much indebted to two intelligent Americans, who busied themselves pointing out to me the various objects of interest as they came into view. With this help to a true appreciation of the different localities, and the weather everything that could be desired, no harbour could be entered under auspices more favourable, or better calculated to afford a complete and enjoyable inspection of the ever-changing panorama. The sun was in full blaze, and we could see, stretching northwards from the Navesink Highlands, a long strip of yellow sand, partly wooded, on which stood the long-looked for goal of our voyage, the lighthouse on the narrow peninsula of Sandy Hook. As the tide was high, we had no difficulty in crossing the bar, and rounding the "Hook" we proceeded up the bay and soon anchored at the Quarantine Station. The Customs officer now came on board, and took up his position at the head of one of the dining tables in the saloon, and the passengers had each to pass before him and sign a declaration that he or she had nothing liable to duty. After a delay of nearly two hours, we started on the last portion of our voyage, and now there opened up to our view one of the grandest harbours in the world; indeed, it is averred that the Bay of Naples and the Bay of Rio Janeiro are the only harbours that rival that of New York. It is a triangular sheet of water, from nine to twelve miles on each side, and almost completely land-locked. On the north-western boundary of the bay we saw the green hills of Staten Island, studded with villas and graced with luxuriant foliage. North-ward, we could discern the narrow entrance to the inner harbour, which may be likened to a gateway from the sea, whilst on either hand, as sentinels to guard the pass, are Forts Wadsworth and Tompkins. We are now able to see, in the far distance, the spires of the city; the fleets of vessels which are within its docks, and, on our right, the long and level sandy strip of Coney Island, with the elephant, and the apparently interminable stretch of hotels and other buildings which crowd the foreshore of this place,—the playground of the metropolis.



The waters of the bay bear a multitude of vessels, darting hither and thither at a great speed, and the incessant motion of the craft on the water is extremely interesting. This magnificent Lower Bay, could, if required, accommodate the navies of the whole world, having an anchorage ground covering eighty-eight square miles, whilst the inner harbour is an oval-shaped body of water, five miles broad and eight miles long. Above the forts already referred to, we saw the American Standard floating, our first introduction to the Stars and Stripes. Whilst the forts look comparatively tame, from a warlike point of view, we could make out a few insignificant looking black guns, having their muzzles out between the grass-covered mounds surmounting the intervening casements. We now pass the forts and steam up the expanding waters of the Upper Bay, and the picture becomes more and more striking. Right in front is the colossal statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World," a majestic female figure made of copper, 151 feet high, standing on a pedestal 155 feet high. This beautiful monument, situated on Bedloe's Island, seems at first sight of no unusual dimensions, but as we get nearer to it, it gradually grows into gigantic proportions. The statue was modelled by Bartholdi, a French sculptor, and was a gift to the American nation by the French people. In the right hand of the figure, held aloft, is a torch, lighted at night by electricity, and in the left hand is the Constitution. The statue and pedestal cost £200,000.

We are now fairly within the haven, and the vast commerce of the city is in full view. The scene is one never to be forgotten, when once gazed upon, and gives a zest to the anticipations of the traveller on his first visit to the New World. On our right hand is the Long Island shore, with its pretty villas standing behind their screens of foliage. On the left hand are the hills of Staten Island, crowned with elegant mansions, while below these, lining the edge of the bay, are prosperous looking villages. The water at this moment presents a lively and ever changing pleasure scene. Ocean steamers ; ferry boats of gigantic proportions and curious construction, to English notions ; steam tugs of no special attraction in build ; large and stately steamboats, with cabins tier above tier ; graceful pleasure yachts ; tall-masted and broad-sailed schooners ; tiny cobbles, with fleets of vessels anchored near the wharves, are scattered over the wide expanse. Beyond these can be seen the distant cities of Hoboken, New York, and Brooklyn.

We now pass on our left the villages of Clifton and Stapleton, with their fleet of yachts, and on our right, the thickly-populated shores which form the cove known as Gowann's Bay. We are now nearing the Liberty Statue and Governor's Island, with its antique circular stone fort, known as "Castle William." This is the head-quarters of an important branch of the American Army, the "Military Division of the Atlantic." Rounding the corner named "Red Hook" we come upon the East River, which runs between New York and Brooklyn, and from this point we get a splendid view of the magnificent Brooklyn Bridge, of which we shall have more to say anon.

Entering the Hudson river, we catch a passing glimpse of Broadway, that wonderful thoroughfare, which stretches right through the centre of the island on which New York stands. Two large buildings, right in front of us, now arrest our attention, and we learn that the one with the big square tower is the Produce Exchange, and the other, with its fifteen stories, is known as the Washington Building. Between these immense structures is the Bowling Green, and the granite structure known as Castle Garden is close at hand.

We now pass the docks, with their long projecting piers covered with substantial sheds. Passing slowly between these we notice the numerous ocean steamships, or large river steamboats, which are in the docks, and then, pleasantest sight of all, we reach the pier which terminates our voyage. Whilst our vessel is gracefully floating into her berth, we observe on the pier, amongst the crowd, one face which is quite familiar, and which has had much to do with

our taking this long journey. A few minutes more, and the gang-planks are fixed, and we are soon exchanging greetings with friends who have come to welcome our arrival. The Customs officers now appear upon the scene, and discharge their task, so far as I can see, and from my own experience, in a civil, respectful, and prompt manner. Having given my luggage to one of the "Express" agents, myself and my son went to the hotel which he had selected as our resting place for a brief period. I was now at liberty to commence my explorations of this wonderful city.

### New York and Brooklyn.

MY short stay in New York was made very pleasant by the most courteous and unostentatious hospitality. The first intimation I had of this was given to me soon after I landed, when a letter was placed in my hands saying that a temporary home was awaiting me in Brooklyn, and had been for years, and my taking possession was anxiously looked for. I had been told long before I left England, by warm-hearted friends in New York, that whenever I should visit the States I might expect to have "a real good time." What was included in that expressive Americanism I did not then understand, but having experienced the "time," I may add that not only during my stay in New York and Brooklyn, but all through the States and Canada, everything was done for me that could contribute to redeem that promise.

My son having arranged for us to stay at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, in Chambers Street, off Broadway, we made our way as best we could to that establishment. It was no easy task, for the streets we had to pass along were all but impassable from the roadways being choked up with heavy drays, trucks, baggage and freight wagons, and the quantity of merchandise of all sorts which covered the foot-pavements and drove us into the roadway, where the paving was of the most execrable character. We pass on our way liquor "saloons" in abundance ; the Elevated railway, with the trains speeding swiftly away overhead a strange sight to an Englishman ; telegraph and telephone poles, inartistic and unsightly in the extreme ; across tramcar lines, wondering how the cars keep on the track with such an uneven surface to travel upon. We go along streets where are tall tenement houses, showing where the poorer portion of the population live in a condition of semi-squalor, which is not conducive either to health or morality. The streets were overrun with the children of those unfortunates whose dreary lot it is to spend their lives in such unpleasant surroundings. High up across these streets the family wash was swaying to and fro in the breeze, the clothes lines stretching from window to window. In front of these homes, if they may be called such, were the balcony fire-escape ladders, which, useful as they may be in case of fire, are no adornment to the buildings, but positively unsightly. Of their usefulness there can be no question, being generally the only means of escape in case of sudden fire. The "Cosmopolitan" is, to all intents and purposes, a typical American hotel, though not on so grand a scale as the monster establishments on the Fifth Avenue and Broadway. Hotel life in America is on different lines altogether from those of any other country. In European countries, hotels, as a rule, are for the use of travellers only, but in the New World they are the only homes a large number of the people are acquainted with. A large proportion of newly-married persons take up their residence in hotels in preference to having the expense of fitting up a house, and the cares of house-keeping. The reason for this is said to be that the men are not so fixed in their employment in America as elsewhere, and removal to another and perhaps far distant part of the country is much easier effected when there is no home to break up. Also, many young people marry before they have saved up money sufficient to furnish a home, and though this would in England be deemed to be a very imprudent course of action, it is not looked upon in this light by our friends across the water. It has been justly said that "New York is a city of paradoxes. It is full of palatial dwellings and homeless people the most hopelessly homeless living not unfrequently in the bravest houses, and paying for unsocial subsistence a price that under a

wiser system might give them every domestic comfort the heart could wish." To an Englishman, whose house is his castle, the manner of living adopted by great numbers of the inhabitants of New York violates the very first requirements of the life the English affect, namely, individual privacy and family seclusion.

I had not very much experience of American hotels, not having spent more than six nights in them, during my stay in the country. But I was desirous to see the interior working of some of the larger and more fashionable establishments, and I had my curiosity gratified when visiting the "Hoffman" and "Fifth Avenue" hotels in New York, the "Auditorium" in Chicago, the "Grand Union" in Saratoga, and the "Windsor" in Montreal. Once located in any of these palatial buildings you may find every convenience, and do anything you like without going out. You can read off the tape all the latest transactions in Wall Street or the European exchanges ; you can telegraph all over the world ; you can buy railway tickets to any part of the States, and send your luggage by "express" ; you can buy all the newspapers ; you can secure your seats at any of the theatres ; you can buy a cigar at the stand and smoke it ; and you can get any drink that was ever concocted at the bar. At more than one of the hotels above named, a clothing store, a hosiery establishment, and a chemist's shop are all connected with the place, so that if you find on your arrival that the cut of your clothes is not in the prevailing fashion, you can be "fixed" in the latest style, at a short notice ; if your hair is not up to New York pattern, the barber is at hand, and you can be shaved, have your hair cut, your moustache dyed, your eyebrows painted, and your ears syringed ; if you do not care to incur the serious expense of sending to the wash, you can buy underclothing, shirts and socks, cravats and gloves ; you can sport boots of the most approved pattern, and one of Knox's latest hats ; and you can buy a bottle of perfume, a box of Carter's Little Liver Pills, or a bottle of Hood's Sarsaparilla, with equal ease, all without setting your foot out of doors. You can enter the hotel a seedy, travel-stained Englishman, and emerge a well-dressed, quasi-American, ready for opera, concert, or social reunion, for walking, riding, driving, or promenading.

On my visit to the largest of these caravansaries, I looked with something akin to awe upon that mysterious individual, the hotel clerk, who, I had been informed, was a walking encyclopædia, directory, railway, steamship, and postal guide, in fact, a universal fountain of knowledge and information. I had been given to understand that he, in common with his *confrères*, was a haughty and unapproachable despot, who, in the most supercilious manner, assigned travellers, at his will, to most uninviting quarters. I found him, and others of his class, to be the very reverse of all this, and when I visited their hotels merely on a tour of inspection, they were the most good natured and accommodating of mortals, answering my every enquiry with the greatest politeness. From the casual observations I was enabled to make, I should not be surprised if at times they were inclined to be despotic, for they are bored with most unanswerable questions, they are expected to be pleasant under most trying circumstances, to remember everybody staying in the hotel by name, and all their peculiarities and eccentricities, to give everyone the best room, and to lend a willing and sympathetic ear to every traveller who is in distress, or imagines that he is.

On the ground floor, as you enter an American hotel, is a large marble-paved entrance hall. A few negroes are lounging about, waiting to carry off any luggage the traveller may have in his possession. Part of the immense space is occupied by a counter, behind which is the gentleman who decides your destiny, so far as it relates to the position which you shall occupy within his domain. As it is said that "upon the benignity of his rule the comfort of the guests and the well-being of the house are in a great measure dependent," it is well to bear this in mind in your intercourse with the great man, and my advice is, always be on good terms with the hotel clerk, for he is undoubtedly a power, and can make or mar you. Before

he can do anything in the way of receiving you as a guest you must inscribe your name and residence in the ponderous visitors' book, which is placed before you on a mahogany pivoted desk. Then you are handed over to an ebony attendant, who conducts you to your room ; it may be in a " garret near the sky," for many of these hotels are from five to ten stories in height, and as the rooms " above" are equally as comfortable as the rooms " below," it is only a question of entering the lift, or " elevator," as it is called, and being whisked upwards to your destination in a few moments.

The remainder of the entrance hall is occupied by knots of gentlemen, sitting and standing, smoking and chatting, surrounded by spittoons of enormous size, generally made of brass ; a more useful or more indispensable article of furniture it would be difficult to name, for the American, whether smoking or chewing, expectorates profusely ; and, speaking of this habit, I met with it almost everywhere in the States, and at times under somewhat trying circumstances. Round the hall are situated the barber's shop, news stall, cigar store, boot-blackening room, telegraph and telephone offices, smoke room, and writing room. On the first floor are the reception, drawing, and ladies' rooms. To my mind, the vastness of the American hotels takes away all feeling of comfort and cosiness, and I would sooner spend a week in an old-fashioned English country hostelry, where the comfort of the guests is the paramount consideration, than spend the same period of time in one of these huge buildings, where your personality is altogether ignored, and like the inmates of some government establishments in the old country, you are only recognised by the number you happen to bear.

Travellers from many countries, with whom I came in contact, spoke well of the management of the American hotels, the excellence of the table, the quality of the food, and superior bedroom accommodation. The " American plan" as to charges is a fixed price for bedroom and three consecutive meals per day. This enables an Englishman to avoid a species of black mailing to which he has a decided objection, namely, the charges which come under the comprehensive phrase of " extras." For three meals and a bedroom the prices all over the States vary from 12s. to 25s. per day. The difference in price depends upon the class of hotel and the situation of the bedroom ; the meals being the same in all cases. Having entered your name in the visitors' book, it is well to have an understanding what is the rate at which you will have to pay. There is a story told of an Englishman, though I feel sure that he was not a Yorkshireman, who had a lively experience under the " American plan," and as the story gives some insight into the ample provision made in the cuisine department of the American hotels, I will reproduce it. It is said that an Englishman " arrived at the ' Fifty-fifth Avenue Hotel' after a rough passage over ; feeling a powerful appetite he looked at the programme and noted the hours for meals ; he observed that breakfast was served from seven to eleven o'clock, lunch from one to two, dinner (*à la carte*) from two to five, dinner (*table d'hôte*) at half-past five, tea from six to nine, and supper from nine to twelve—seventeen hours of copious refreshment. The new arrival, after careful consideration, struck out a plan of action. He was not a mean man, but thought himself bound to get the better of the hotel proprietor. He was up soon after seven in the morning only with the appetite of a cormorant who had swallowed a bottle of Angostura bitters.

" Being properly posted, he began with a melon with pepper and salt, and a few tomatoes cut up with cucumber and onion, and then took kindly to his hot rolls, his Graham bread, a slice of Spanish mackerel, a bit of beefsteak, a few eggs *au miroir*, a little broiled ham and some fried potatoes, a taste of smoked beef and eggs and a broiled chicken winding up the whole performance with a heap of rice cakes, a couple of peaches, tea, coffee, and other fixings. He walked down town in high glee, and came up smiling to lunch, making awful havoc among the raw oysters and the stewed oysters, the fried oysters and the pickled

oysters, the cold chicken, ham, and tongue. At dinner he was again to the fore, looking happy and hungry, but was rather streaked at the bill of fare, which included two soups, two fishes, seven cold dishes, six *relevés*, ten *entrées*, seven roasts, eighteen vegetables, nine varieties of pastry, eleven kinds of fruit, lemon and rum ice, creams and coffee. He was equal to the occasion ; beginning gently with tomato soup, he next attacked the boiled bass and the broiled white-fish, and after a little boiled chicken and ham fell upon the *entrées* like a lion. He despatched in quick succession fillet of beef larded, with mushrooms, oyster patties, sweetbreads with green peas, lobster à la *Valenciennes*, and rice birds in cases with champagne sauce, roast turkey poult and roast grouse, followed by lobster salad. At intervals my friend tasted at my solicitation sundry of our national vegetables, such as green corn, baked and stewed tomatoes, red beets, succotash, sweet potatoes, squash, Lima beans, and fried egg-plant. Through all this he worked heroically, but weakened on the pastry, paying little or no attention to the peach pie, the orange pie, the ‘punkin’ pie, the sliced-apple pie we are great on pies in my country the puffs and jellies and custards ; but brightened up at dessert among the grapes and raisins, English walnuts and American pecan nuts, citron melons and rosy-hearted water melons. He pulled through, he did, and arrived at the ice cream and coffee, tired perhaps, but not cloyed. As we did not get through dinner till about seven o’clock, he had only time to get a cup of tea and a slice of cake in the tea-room before we went to Booth’s. After the theatre he showed up, but with diminished vigour, at supper among the cold chickens and ham, the cold tongue, and the oysters hot and cold, raw and fried ; and then owned up fair and square that no such board and lodging could be got anywhere else in the world for the same money—about 13s. or 14s. a day all told, and no extras.”

One feature of American hotels is very praiseworthy, namely, that there is little apparent drinking in them. It is the exception, not the rule, to see wine or beer taken at meals, and in this connection I may add that open intemperance in the States is far less observable than in our own country. Gin drinking and sherry-cobbling are vulgarities confined to the bar-room, which is generally kept out of sight, in the ground-floor. The very first thing placed before a guest in every hotel and restaurant is a glass of iced water, and in the hot weather I experienced immediately on my arrival in the country, the thermometer registering 80° in the shade, this cold beverage was very acceptable. Iced water is provided in abundance in every railway carriage and station, and in the hotels you can obtain iced tea, iced milk, and a variety of other drinks, treated in a similar way. The strawberries I had for dessert on many occasions, with sugar and iced cream, were very pleasant and refreshing ; also a tumbler of milk, with a piece of ice in it, was a luxury after breakfast or tea.

A Yorkshireman’s trip to the United States and Canada (1892)

Author : Smith, William, F.S.A.S

Subject : United States — Description and travel

Publisher : London : Longmanns, Green & Co.

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : MSN

Book contributor : University of California Libraries

Collection : cdl; americana

Source : Internet Archive

<http://archive.org/details/yorkshiremanstri00smitiala>

Edited and uploaded to [www.aughty.org](http://www.aughty.org)

April 8 2013