

Tales and Sketches.

PEN PHOTOGRAPHS.

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JOTTINGS BY THE WAY.

A few days have only elapsed since a magnificent Pullman Palace car passed on the Great Western Railway, and within two hundred yards of where I now write, filled with passengers who never changed cars since they left San Francisco, only seven days before. I contrasted their journey and one I made in 1850 to this El Dorado of the West. The gold mania was then at its height. Thousands and tens of thousands were crowding all the thoroughfares on the way to the golden sands of California. Some risked the dangers of the stormy Cape; others went through northern Mexico or over the United States territory, but by far the greater number went by the Isthmus of Panama. To-day we have splendid saloon cars furnished with all the luxuries of an eastern palace from ice-creams, pine-apples, old port, roast beef, and pumpkin pies, to beds of down, silken curtains, golden tassels, Brussels carpets, marble wash-stands and dressing-tables, and all these comforts while whirling along over hill and dale; through luxuriant forests and tangled weed-bound swamps—over undulating prairies like the rolling sea—alkali plains, arid as the Sahara desert—through mountain gorges and over hilly spurs, and deep defiles, and yawning canyons, and placid rivers, and roaring cataracts, until the same passengers and the same car that left New York, are landed on San Francisco wharf, within thirty feet of the Pacific, and in one short week. Now, look at the other side of the picture. I need not tell of the horrors of the "middle passage" across the plains—the thousands of lives that were lost by famine, disease and the tomahawk—or of the discomforts and tediousness of a voyage around the Tierra del Fuego, but I remember well, as if it were yesterday, the miseries of the way by Chagres. I was then in my teens, and like other young men, hopeful and ardent. I also plunged into the mighty torrent of emigration to the West. The old Crescent City steamship took out with us nine hundred souls of all nationalities and tongues; there was scarcely standing room, and the "spoon fashion" mode of packing had to be adopted, not only between decks, but also on the deck and in the open air. Grumbling, oaths and quarrels were the order of the day. The deep guttural of the German—the sharp accented tones of the Frenchman—the melodious notes of the Spaniard, Portuguese and Italian—the patois of the French Canadian, and the Hebrew of the Jew, were at that time sacrilegious, swore they ever so roundly, but I have no doubt Pandemonium was a respectable place to the hold and deck of this ship. After ten days of sea-sickness and disgusting scenes, a home-sick swain might have been seen in the miserable village of Chagres—standing, the picture of despair, in the midst of mud the most tenacious, and rain the most pitiless, and lightning and thunder the most intense,—and native women, and men and children, the most nude and barbarous, and ugly and shameless, as ever the sun shone on. The natives are a mongrel race of Indians and Negroes and Spaniards, and possessing cunning and rascality in a superlative degree. The houses of these villages are composed of bamboo for walls, and rushes for roofs. Windows and chimneys are almost unknown, and dirt the most filthy was in abundance on all hands. The river Chagres empties into the Caribbean Sea at this point, and on a bold rocky promontory, overlooking the surrounding country, was built several centuries ago, by the Spaniards, a formidable fortress called San Lorenzo.—Beautiful cannon made of silver, and a brass amalgam, still overtop the parapets, but some of them, in mere wantonness, have been cast over the precipice, and are sticking in crevices of the rocks. The place was several times, in its history, taken by the buccaners, whose resort was the Isle of Pines, but now, battlements, casements, magazines, fosse and salient angles, are one mass of ruins.

With the exception of small patches of rice and sugar-cane, the luxuriant and boundless forest was everywhere. The air was loaded with the most delicious perfume from orange groves, pine-apple plants, and the laden lemon and lime trees. I left Canada frost-bound and snow-covered in April, and in twelve days after was revelling in the bounties of the tropics, "where the leaves never fade and the skies seldom weep." In spite of the poet's assertion the sky seems to find no trouble in procuring the tears. At this time there was no railroad and no river boats built, but canoes of the rudest construction were in abundance. The stern end was covered with palm leaves or thatched with rushes, and so low was this rude cabin that a "six footer," like myself, for convenience sake, should have been constructed after the model of a telescope, and "thusly" draw myself within myself; but, as it was, my knees and chin were in close relationship for four long days, during which it rained incessantly. The river was much swollen, and our propulsive power were three naked savages, either pushing with poles, or paddling or towing our canoe. The banks of the river were beautiful, overhung with trees and climbing plants, and blossoming shrubs; and were it not for the incessantly discordant notes of Paroquets,—the chatter of monkeys—the screech of birds of prey—the sound of the alligator as he glided into the water from some cosy nook,—and the thought of boa-constrictors

and anacondas, all nature would have seemed a perfect Paradise. At last we were landed at a small village called Loggona, from which we had to travel to Panama, a distance of about twenty miles over the Andes. Here my troubles began in earnest. I had my few things packed into a small trunk, and as no mules could be hired, I was obliged to stow away my all into an india-rubber bag, and strap it on the back of a negro, to whom I paid \$8.00 to carry it to Panama. I tied a pair of shoes to the outside of the bag, as there was no room inside, and, by the light of the moon, I indulged in a bath in the river before lying down for the night; but when I began to dress, and missed my boots, and to this day they are to me *non est*, I went to the darkey's hut for my shoes, but he was in blissful ignorance of their whereabouts, and thus I stood barefooted, where shoemakers were curiosities, and no comrade with any shoes or boots to fit. To go into a rage would not mend matters and to swear would not conjure up the lost property; so, when the morning came I rolled up my "unmentionables" to my knees, and marched toward the Pacific, whistling to keep my courage up. There is a small insect called the "jigger," which burrows in the sand on the Isthmus, and when it finds its way under the toe-nail, or under the skin of the human foot, lays thousands of eggs, which bring forth larvae, and these excite such an amount of irritation and inflammation as to produce death. Death from this cause is a common occurrence among the natives. With these facts before my mind's eye, every time I planted my "understandings" into the mud I had my hopes and fears about these gentry. I was every little while examining with a critic's eye, my pedal extremities. If Bolivar's army crossed through those valleys and mountain gorges, and waded through those rapid mountain streams, barefooted, then I say they deserved all the booty in a thousand Montezumas. The road was strewn with the carcasses of mules, and numerous wounds were silent witnesses of human mortality, the victims being far from home and kindred. The thick jungle and the boundless forests were said to be the secret haunts of native robbers, who pounced upon the sick and weary, robbing and putting them to death, with none to defend them to death, with none to defend them or to enquire as to their fate. In the valleys was interminable mud, and on the mountain tops were bare rocks, into which mules and ponies had worn deep circular holes with their feet, and these were from eight to twelve inches in depth. This attrition of the rocks had been going on for centuries. During our first day's journey it rained incessantly, and every few hours heaven's artillery would roar and below up and down the deep gorges, vibrating and reverberating until the earth felt as tremulous as the air. As night closed in, part of our company sought shelter in a solitary ranche; but we were told of a large hotel, kept by an American about two miles farther on, and although weary and foot-sore, a comrade and myself pushed for more congenial shelter, but the heavy timber, thick foliage, and deep valleys were—in the tropics—soon shrouded in almost palpable darkness. It could almost be felt. The thick underwood on both sides of the narrow pathway was so filled with creeping plants, and the cactus of all kinds that it was impossible to lose the way. But what with pulling cactus' thorns out of my feet, "stunning" my toes against obtrusive boulders—the howls of distant beasts—the panic-stricken condition of my comrade, and the hunger that was giving our stomachs sharp monitions, we were in no amiable mood. We had so far carried a bow-knife in one hand, and an Allan's "pepper-box" revolver in the other; but my knife had dozens of times come in contact with the rocks, and my revolver had been freely baptized in the flowing streams, until no human force could cut with the one, nor could ingenuity explode the other. In daylight their appearance might be formidable against a bandit, but in Cimmerian darkness they were like the caudal extremity of "grumphil," more ornamental than useful. However, our prowess was not tested, for about midnight we hailed a camp fire, far down in the valley, and when we reached it, we found the "Washington" Hotel consist of a large, patched mainsail of a ship stretched between four trees, with a perpendicular pole hoisted in the centre *a la cirrus*. Our beds consisted of a damp ground, or the flat side of a slab, without beds or bedding. We made a supper out of "hard tack" and cold boiled beans, and after curling up dog-style we were soon in the land of Morpheus. After being overtaken by our comrades in the morning, we pursued the uneven tenor of our way through a country less mountainous and more thickly settled. The rivers were occasionally spanned by old stone bridges, and sometimes the road was paved for hundreds of yards with boulders. These bridges and highways were said to have been built by the Spaniards to enable them to connect by land communication the two seas. Towards sundown the Pacific burst upon our view, lying as quiet as a sleeping infant, and studded as far as the eye could reach with beautiful islands, rejoicing in perpetual verdure. The city of Panama lay at our feet, and with its turrets and sleepers and battlements, looked somewhat like civilization, after being a week in the wilderness among semi-barbarous natives and even satiated with the grandeur of the lofty Andes. But after passing the walls of the city the delusion vanished; we might sum up a description of the whole city by saying that walls—once formidable—were crumbling to decay. The casements were the habitations of the owls and bussards,—the southern scavengers. The parapets were lying in the ditch outside. Splendid cannon were dismantled on the ramparts *minus*

carriages, and having emblazoned upon them the coat of arms of imperial Spain. The sentry soldiery were barefooted and rejoiced in shouldering Queen Bess flintlocks, surmounted by bayonets which, in antique beauty, were in keeping with the muskets. The uniform seemed to be an "omnium gatherum" of several nationalities, but these Sons of Mars felt the dignity of their position and strutted in conscious pride on the crumbling ruins of former greatness, almost like Marius amid the ruins of Carthage. The streets of Panama are like the streets of all Spanish cities, very narrow and dirty. No sanitary regulations are observed, and the garbage and filth which the rains do not wash into the bay, are eaten up by the buzzards, which are to be seen in large flocks perched upon the house-tops, and we believe the law protects them from molestation or injury. The Plaza is a large square in the centre of the city, and is used for a market, parade ground, etc. There is a very ancient and imposing cathedral facing this square. It is Gothic in design and can lay claim to architectural beauty. The niches are still filled with respectable images of the Apostles and the Madonna. It is true the intrepid Paul, by some misfortune, had lost his arm, and Peter had a dilapidated nose, and several of the images were badly defaced, but what remained of these venerable Fathers showed that when young the artist, or rather sculptor, had done his duty. A truncated steeple, with roof and sides exposed, rejoiced in the possession of a tongueless bell. A darkey, sitting straddle of a cross beam, with a bar of iron in his hand, did duty as bellman, and the matins and vesper bells were intoned by this sable musician, whose zeal exceeded his knowledge of euphony.

The city was filled to suffocation by people of all nationalities, waiting for a passage to the land of gold. Some had through tickets by certain steamers, and had been waiting for weeks, and even months, for the ship to which they were assigned. We were obliged to take a passage in a small French barque of about 400 tons burden. It hailed for Marseilles, and neither captain nor crew could speak English. The vessel was an old fishery vessel, having high bulwarks forward, and it was said had weathered many a storm on the Banks of Newfoundland. Between decks was very low, not exceeding 5 1/2 feet, and yet in this small craft were stowed away one hundred and twenty-two souls to be, to do, and to suffer, during a two months' voyage on the treacherous deep. We were a motley crew, and when we were assembled on deck a more grotesque picture Hogarth never painted. The jabbering Chilean and Peruvian—the swarthy Spaniard and Portuguese—the portly German and the everlasting meershaun—the fiery Southerner with the bowie knife in his boot and a cold revolver at his waist—rubicund John Bulls and lank Scots—shrewd Yankees and homesick Canadians—volatiles, Frenchmen and mercenary Jews—lawyers, doctors, teachers, clergymen, farmers, mechanics, &c., were all represented on the deck of the old "Ocean" barque. After watering at the small island of Taboga, about six miles from Panama, we set sail south-west towards Gallipagos Islands to catch the trade winds. But scarcely had we left land about one hundred miles astern, than we becalmed, and for twenty-one days we did not make twenty miles headway. It was wearisome to lie down night after night with the sails flapping against the mast, and to wake up, morning after morning, to find the sea calm as a mill pond, and our vessel lying.

"Like a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean."

After a time intermittent breezes permitted us to creep along southerly until the trade winds were reached off the coast of Peru. It is true these winds were blowing from the north-west, but by long tacks progress was made towards our goal. We crossed the line a few degrees to the south, and, as usual, old Neptune paid us a visit. He shaved a few of the passengers with a rusty hoop-net failing to insure these blind-folded victims a cold *douche* in a deep meat tub. It was a source of mirth to all but the unfortunate recipients of these high honors from the god of the sea. The fourth of July was celebrated on board by the usual speech making, singing of patriotic songs, denunciations of Great Britain and the red flag, which "was a fit emblem of tyranny and oppression." The captain sang in good style the *Marseillaise* Hymn in honour of the French Republic, and put upon one of the two ladies on board a red night-cap to personify the goddess of Liberty. He also dealt out a copious supply of brandy, and, as might be expected, the half-starved crowd got hilarious, and some got "gloriously drunk." As evening drew on, the noise from a sort of maudlin revelry was indescribable. The shouts and yells—the muttering and drivelling idiocy of the sot—the obscene song and jest in half a dozen languages—the oaths of those who were sufficiently intoxicated to be madmen, and the quarrels about trifles of those who had been boon companions, were disgusting and alarming. Two of the sailors had quarrelled over a game of dice, and in fury they vainly attempted to throw one another overboard. A German had insulted a little Vermonter, and was chased up stairs and down stairs—fore and aft—by him, armed with a huge knife. The German at last took shelter in the cabin. An Alabamian quarrelled with a John Bull about John Calhoun and on the Slavery question, and when it not for the interposition of friends, blood would have been spilled. A Jew had his extraction cast in his teeth by an Hibernian, and although after a time both parties were apparently reconciled, yet, strange to say, after sealing their bonds of amity with free libations from the bottle, next morning

the Irishman was in the jaws of death, and the day following he was consigned to the deep. Whispers of foul play were heard, and the Jew was henceforth ostracized, which, however, he bore with perfect non-chalance and defiance. Imagine such a motley crowd on a small vessel, over a thousand miles from land, and holding such high revelry during the hours of darkness, with no lights to be seen except the flickering lamps suspended over the compass, and a lunatic asylum would be a Paradise to it. The captain tried to lay the devil he had raised, but his efforts were in vain, for the more he attempted to exercise authority the more uproarious the revellers became, including even the sailors; and had a squall visited us any time during that long night, it is doubtful if sufficient sober sailors could have been secured to reef a sail or pull a rope. I did not feel safe between decks, and so sought an empty place on the quarter deck, near the helmsman, where I caught "cat naps" of sleep, until at gray dawn the cry of fire echoed through the ship, and paralyzed for a time every man who heard it. The confusion of the previous evening was intensified tenfold, and as I cast my eyes forward I perceived the gallery was in flames. The cooking apparatus was the most primitive kind and improvised at Panama. Two large tin boilers were inserted into a brick structure with arches underneath. A crack had been made in the bottom of these arches in some way, and the fire had communicated with the deck, and from there had spread to the wooden part of the cook-house. The sober men on board went to work, and with axes tore down and committed to the deep the burning fragments, and thus extinguished the flames. In the midst of the uproar and confusion there were numbers who had fallen into such a lethargy from beastly intoxication, that no trampling upon, or hauling by the legs, or reminders from clenched fists in the ribs, elicited more than a grunt, or a half uttered oath, and who—if the fire had got the mastery—would have perished without waking from their sleep. This misfortune to the "caboose" put an end to culinary operations, and although our provisions, so far, had consisted of fat pork, beans, biscuit and rice, half cooked, yet these had "smelt" fire, but *but, miserable dictu!* we were forced to eat raw pork. Where were the *trichina spirales*? What a feast these burrowers would have had in the muscles of such a woe begone company! A few nights afterwards, while the drowsy watch was enjoying quiet snoozes, a squall rose suddenly, and while all their efforts were employed in reefing sails, the fore and main hatches were left open—several heavy seas were shipped, which went bowling down into the hold among the provisions, &c. This reduced our fare to raw pork, and mouldy and wormy biscuit. About meal time might be seen employed in the delightful occupation of picking to pieces the green "hard tack," and culled out carefully worms from the pulpy mass. Dyspepsia at these times was unknown, and these "tit-bits" were relished beyond all expectation. The quality was not objected to, but the quantity had become deficient. The continued theme was about something good to eat. Farmers would discuss with watering mouths all the bounties of the dairy and the home kitchen, and often longed for a good drink from the richness of the "swill pail." The fat Dutchman began to thin in flesh, and the raw bones were merging fast towards transparency. My day-dreams were of home and its plentiful larder, and my night visions were made up of "castles in the air," composed of pies, cakes, custards, beef, potatoes, &c. O for a "square meal!" O for the hot biscuits, fresh butter, strawberries and cream, plum pudding and ham and eggs, of distant and welcome boards! Ye gods! what is your ambrosia or nectar in comparison to these substantial to starving men? Well, these miseries had an end, and after doing penance for a life-time by involuntary abstemiousness, we hailed land on the third of August, after being sixty-three days on the Pacific, and sixty days without seeing land or even a solitary vessel.

(To be Continued.)

Family Circle.

MISTRESSES AND SERVANTS.

[From "Old and New," for September.]

IS the position of a servant in itself ennobling? Yes, immediately assert one-half of our house-keepers, especially the older half; yes; because they are freed from responsibility, and, as a general rule, are well cared for. No, answers the hired girl; because I am still responsible for myself, and concern myself about the interests of my home and my family: these are my responsibilities, as your greater ones are yours; and, as an American, or Irish-American, I have learned to be independent. I don't want at twenty, thirty, or fifty, to be cared for, except as love cares for love; and that is not your interpretation of being cared for; kindness and love are different terms in your vocabulary.

Her vision is short-sighted. Granted. But hers also the deficiency of training in thought, and estimation of right values: therefore we should place ourselves at her stand-point, feel in imagination as she does, and then, returning to our freed moral and intellectual atmosphere with the result of our investigations, should aid her in placing herself at our horizon of thought. Confessing that it is kindness and benevolence, rather than friendship or love, as in other relations in life, which actuate our conduct to her, we should comprehend her

more ignorant position; and if our kindness warmed not into love, it would throw over itself a charm of manner which no general principles of philanthropy can impart.

All working lives are limited in variety, but especially the servant's. It is hard work, not to wash and iron, but to do it every Monday; not to sweep and dust, but to do it always in good humor. If we would bear the grievance of allowing our servants to occasionally mope, as we ourselves do, how much happier they would be. But no: we either speak to them, as if they were very faulty, or talk to some friend of our trial.

The ignorant must always be won; and yet we do not always see ladies exerting themselves to please or fascinate their servants. Selfishly considered, how great a gain it would be, at how slight a cost! Women, most admirable and kind fail in this matter of little politeness, which the ignorant value, because they are the small change of courtesy society. Do we rise when our servant stands, and, motioning her to a seat, assume ours? In sickness do we hand the glass of water on a plate to our nursery-maid, as to our friend? Do we pass in front of her without apologizing? Do we use the monosyllable, please, in requiring some attention? Is our smile as frank as to a stranger even? Is our "Good-morning" addressed to them? What an invisible barrier this salutation to part of the family, and its omission towards others, creates between individuals under the same roof!

We would anticipate the answer ready on our antagonist's lips, that servants neither care for nor are worthy of these small attentions. We maintain that they do value such little proofs of regard, if offered as from equal to equal; and that, if unworthy of them, the more need is it for us to lead them back to pleasantness and goodness in all ways.

Again, judging from the rules of some few house-keepers, it is to be inferred that the passion of love belongs by right to the upper classes. A servant with a beau is a nuisance, a monstrosity; it is as difficult for her to find a place as if she were one-armed. Courtship may mistake salt for sugar, though it is far more likely to enliven all the interests of life. Why should not our girls enjoy the society of their friends, male and female, in the evening? Are their hearts different from ours? Would we not do our work the quicker, if John were to visit us by and by? and better, too, if John were made welcome by others than ourselves? If every house-keeper knew, as a matter of course, her servant's friends, be they men or women, she need not fear their presence, and her gain in popularity among them would react upon her own domestics. The pride of a servant in her mistress is often touching. She wants her acquaintance to see how she lives, and what her position is; and, if her visitor is a man, she is proud still to have him know how she herself is regarded. Why should she not offer the cup of tea to a visitor? And when the house-keeper can afford only the cup of tea, nothing else would ever be demanded or taken, if the need for company were a recognized fact between servant and mistress. The separate food for separate tables is unnatural; the glands that excite the appetite are as lively in the "ladies" as in the "help." Saying this, we condemn, of course, the orderly house-keeper's bunch of keys. They proclaim in their jingle that the servant is thought dishonest; and every one is presumably innocent until proven guilty.

Love is beginning to be the modern reformatory power in our institutions. Have we tried it with our servants? We think that most mistresses are kind and indulgent, if such an epithet is praiseworthy. Have we a right to say that the domestics under our care learn to cut and make their own clothing, as well as the mistress's household work? that they are taught to read, if ignorant, and that they have many and many a ticket for public amusement.

Perhaps one of the chief reasons why a servant dislikes her position, as a servant, is because of the necessity that is imposed upon her to either wait till her afternoon or evening comes round, before going out, or to ask permission; not being granted even the indulgence of collegians to non-attendance at prayers on a certain number of days. Where there is only one domestic in a family, it would be very extraordinary if she rejected the wisdom of such a requisition; but where two or more are employed, it must be rather hard to prefix the "By your leave" to every desire for outdoor recreation. If it is understood by them that their larger duties must first be performed, and that the incidental ones, which may occur at any moment, are to be rendered by another servant, without interfering with appointed duties, why should they not go out? Do physicians recommend daily exercise in the open air to house-keepers only? Does not the miserable health of many of our girls spring from our neglect of their exercise? We are responsible for their bodies, as far as in us lies.

After all, a servant is not our slave; she gives us her work for our money. So far as an equivalent; but for that which makes the servant's position a pleasant one to herself, and to us an acceptable one, there is no standard of measurement. Conscience is the only scale which can test the quantity received and given; and if our conscience is the fairer, let us give good weight of sympathy and pleasantness; give it to the sinful and dishonest; give it as missionary work; give it on the selfish consideration that fair way's gain, in the end, more than rough. And if we are often disappointed, with all our pains, servants are not the only portion of mankind that disappoint us thus.