

world? Tell me not so—say to me that it is a dream in which I have read your threatened withdrawal and that by-and-by I shall awaken and find it so. My friend, since leaving the farm which formed the subject of my last letter I have been again the inmate of a mad house; have languished in prison, have occupied a “casual ward”; have been on “strike” several times, have ‘tended bar’; have taught school, have attended the receptions of vice-royalty—in short, I have been every where and have seen every thing, and now you are going to prevent me from giving my experience to an anxiously waiting world! It is too—too much! ‘Scores of periodicals remain,’ you say. You forget my friend, that to me there was—there is but one! Where shall I find one so calculated by nature to sympathize with me as you were. You understood my every motive and feeling as no other man outside a lunatic asylum has ever done—could ever possibly do. Although our objects have been dissimilar we have both been actuated by desires wholly unselfish—mine to bring to the people the blessings of good and honest government—yours to elevate and expand their minds and improve their condition through knowledge. We are kindred souls, harmonious minds. We must not stop. We must go on. Say therefore, that you recall your decision and that you will continue to come to me as of yore.

[We are profoundly sensible of the compliments heaped upon us by this lunatic, but must refuse to recall a determination which, having been come to in one of our occasional lucid moments, is irrevocable.—Ed].

#### TEN DAYS ON THE GREAT EASTERN.

“TELL us about it,” said the unsophisticated youth. “I shall be most happy,” said Bolster; “if the company is agreeable.”

We had not anticipated anything like this. We felt we were running some risk when we admitted the unsophisticated, now on his trial trip, into the travellers room. We had broken one of our rules to favor him at his earnest solicitation, and we were prepared to be punished in some way because we had done so. But for a punishment so swift and so comprehensive we may as well own at once we were *not* prepared. We were a party of Commercial travellers sitting round the fire in one of the cosiest rooms on the road, and we were ready for almost anything in the line of story-telling; but that Bolster should be deliberately requested to repeat his Great Eastern yarn was something so preposterous that the majority of us looked upon each other for a space in stony silence. For that same majority knew Bolster and his story well. Few of us but had heard it at least once, some of us several times, while three or four had endured the infliction so often that they had come to regard Bolster as a sort of nightmare into whose clutches they were liable to fall at any moment if said Bolster happened to be one of the company. Bolster’s yarn was one of the things against which the fraternity were warned to be on their guard. Commercial travellers you know, have a code of signals by which the brethren are kept posted in matters affecting their health and comfort at hotels etc., while on the road. Every traveller for instance, who has arrived at anything like professional respectability knows that it will

be better for him to drive ten miles in the teeth of the storm to B rather than endure the terrors of No. 26 at A—, that he must not leave loose coin or valuables on his dressing table at W—; that he must carefully scrutinize the linen of his couch at X—, that he must be particular to fee the hostler at Y.— if he has any notion of catching the early train, and that he must on no account order meat pie or hash at S.— And so with regard to the peculiarities of his brethren of the road. H.—is a good fellow, but bibulous: P.—is afflicted with chronic forgetfulness as to small loans: C.—is never satisfied with less than two right bowers, and pegs double when he can; and if the alternative of sleeping on the table of the commercial room with one’s valise for a pillow or rooming with V. has to be faced, the table is to be regarded as a couch of oriental luxuriance. Now Bolster’s peculiarity was his story—the warning went forth that the name of the Great Eastern was not to be mentioned in Bolster’s presence, or if mentioned any reference by Bolster to his voyage in that monster of the deep was to be simply and quietly ignored. On this particular evening the recent sale of the vessel had been spoken of in the dining room of the hotel by some one outside the mystic circle, and had again been dragged into the conversation by the fledgling before referred to who now rounded up the sum of his imbecility by a request for the story! “I shall be most happy,” said Bolster, if the company is agreeable.”

“What else could the company” do but feign itself agreeable? Politeness is esteemed by all commercial travellers worthy of the name as one of the cardinal virtues, and so they had to express themselves as delighted, although they knew that for most of them the enjoyment of the evening was at an end, for when Bolster got on board the Great Eastern no one else had any chance that night.

“I was about twenty-one years of age,” began Bolster, “and had never yet been within sight or sound of the sea. My parents lived in a country village from whose quiet precincts I had wandered seldom and never far. We were comfortable and had saved some little money in a business which we had recently sold, and were now on the look out for something in the shape of an investment. I had the good fortune to be possessed of a relative whose mania for speculation had led him into schemes of the most extensive character, the profits of which he was extremely anxious should be retained in the bosom of the family if possible. So he told me, and drew such gorgeous pictures of wealth and independence in the near future that I could scarcely allow him to get to the end of his statement, but sprang at the bait like a young trout at his first fly. The scheme was this. It was a well known fact that the people of England were simply hungering and thirsting for information about Canada. Whole communities of well-to-do men and women were standing on the verge of the Atlantic Ocean calling and straining their eyes to the West in the hope that some well disposed and trustworthy person would come over and enlighten them on the subject of my native country. The effete despotisms of Europe were crumbling to decay—the people were being trampled upon—the rich were growing richer, the poor poorer: thousands were looking to Canada and longing for some one to tell them about it. Now here was the theatre for enterprise. And here were the means for its accomplishment. Here was a