

CHAPTER II.

Arrival of the Pilot—First Look at American Newspapers.

Saturday, 4th January, 1890.

WE shall arrive in New York harbour to-night, but too late to go on shore. After sunset, the Custom House officers are not to be disturbed. We are about to land in a country where, as I remember, everything is in subjection to the paid servant. In the United States he who is paid wages commands.

We make the best of it. After having mercilessly tumbled us about for nine days, the wind has graciously calmed down, and our last day is going to be a good one, thanks be. There is a pure atmosphere. A clear line at the horizon divides space into two immensities, two sheets of blue sharply defined.

Faces are smoothing out a bit. People talk, are becoming in fact quite communicative. One seems to say to another: "Why, after all, you don't look half so disagreeable as I thought. If I had only known that, we might have seen more of each other, and killed time more quickly."

The pilot boat is in sight. It comes towards us, and sends off in a rowing boat the pilot who will take us into port. The arrival of the pilot on board is not an incident. It is an event. Does he not bring the New York newspapers? And when you have been ten days at sea, cut off from the world, to read the papers of the day before is to come back