

add slightly to the choice; perhaps when Russia civilises the whole of Central Asia it may open up a new route as far as China; but till that happy period, unless the traveller is willing, and at the same time able, to become a dervish, or something of that sort, like M. Vambéry, he had better not take the chance of risk in these regions. Many attempts have been made to pass from India to China, and *vice versa*, but as yet no one has succeeded. The difficulties of such an enterprise are very great, not so much from the races of people as from the physical character of that region of the earth. These difficulties can, however, be overcome; and in evidence of this, we have perhaps one of the most wonderful expeditions of modern times in the journey of the two Jesuit missionaries, Hue and Gabet, from Peking to Lhasa. When they were ordered to leave the capital of the Great Lama, they wished to do so in the direction of Calcutta, as being by far the nearest, and, at the same time, the easiest way; but in vain. By a policy rigidly insisted upon by the Chinese Government, no one is allowed to pass anywhere along the frontiers between China and India." This writer adds, that when travelling in Tibet he heard of many parties who wished to cross the frontier in that quarter, with the purpose only of having a few days' shooting of some particular animal which they wanted to bring home; but he never knew of any one who was able to gratify his wish. One man told him that he had taken some pieces of very bright red cloth and other tempting bribes for the officials on the Chinese side, but it was all to no purpose. "It is not easy to understand why this intense jealousy should exist, but about the fact there can be no doubt."

But dismissing any and all ideas of journeying by land through Europe, Asia, or Africa, our trip will be almost entirely by sea, the trans-continental route across America being excepted. Practically that route is to-day the best if you would reach quickly and pleasantly any part of the Pacific. The great railway is an enormous link binding the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans together. The Suez Canal and the Panama route have been mentioned in these pages—the first very fully; and place must certainly be had for a description of a railroad which is so intimately connected with the sea. But first we must reach it.

The passage across the "Great Atlantic Ferry" is now one of ease, and in the case of first-class passengers almost luxury. How different was it about forty years ago, even on the best steamships of that period! Charles Dickens has graphically described his experiences on board the *Britannia*, one of the earliest of the Cunard fleet, in one of his least-read works*—at least in the present generation. The little cupboard dignified by the name of "state-room;" the dingy saloon likened "to a gigantic hearse with windows in the sides;" the melancholy stove at which the forlorn stewards were rubbing their hands; the stewardess, whom Dickens blesses "for her piously fraudulent account of January voyages;" the excitement before leaving the dock; the captain's boat and the dapper little captain; the last late mail bags, and the departure, are all sketched from nature, as the great novelist alone could depict them. And now they are off.

"The sea! the sea! the open sea!

That is the place where we all wish to be,
Rolling about so merrily!

So all sing and say, by night and by day,

* "American Notes for General Circulation."