

AFRICAN STEAMSHIPS

ALL ABOUT VESSELS WHICH SAIL AROUND THE BLACK CONTINENT.

Special Correspondence.
WASHINGTON, D. C.—Few people realize the enormous extent of the present steamship travel about Africa. All of our great Atlantic liners now have ships which leave New York regularly for the Mediterranean, and not a few of these call at Algeria and have branch lines to Egypt. There are regular sailings to Europe from every African port, and there is a continuous line of vessels stretched like a necklace of beads about the black continent.

I went from New York to Morocco on one of the big steamers of the North German Lloyd, which in eight days landed me at the Strait of Gibraltar. We passed the Azores, almost touched Spain, and, in coming into port, could see the heights of Africa over the way. I crossed the strait in a launch to Tangiers, which is only a few miles distant, and then coasted the northern shores of the Mediterranean sea, including Algeria, Tunisia and Tripoli. After leaving the Land of the Nile, I took a ship through the Suez canal and then went down the 1,400 miles which comprise the length of the Red sea, going out through Bab-el-Mandeb to Aden, in southern Arabia. From that port I had one of the steamers of the Indian ocean to carry me around the Great Horn of East Africa, and I went on other steamers southward along the east coast, passing through the Mozambique channel to Beira, in Portuguese East Africa. From Cape Town I journeyed up the west coast of the continent to the Madeira Islands, not far from Gibraltar, where I had started in, and thence went to Southampton and home to New York. It will thus be seen that I have circumnavigated the continent. I have gone over the routes of the early Phoenicians, who were sent around Africa about 600 B. C. by an Egyptian king, as described by Herodotus, and have touched nearly all the places that Vasco da Gama and Bartholomew Diaz discovered at about the time that Columbus came across the Atlantic and found our new world.

BIG STEAMSHIPS TO THE CAPE.
 There are now a half dozen lines of steamers plying between England and the Cape of Good Hope. They make the voyage in from 17 to 23 days, and there are other and slower vessels which, stopping at the various ports, are a month or so on the way.

Some of these ships go down the east coast by way of the Suez canal, and some sail back and forth by the west

coast alone. Then, there are ships which go to the Cape of Good Hope on their way to Australia, steamers which sail that way to India, and other lines which make the trip around the continent, starting in at one side and coming back by the other, and vice versa.

The fare from London to Cape Town ranges from \$120 to \$250 and there are second class rates, by which one can go as cheaply to Cape Town as he can travel first class fare from New York to Liverpool. The vessel upon which I came from the Cape of Good Hope to England was one of the big mail steamers of the Union Castle line. It was the Saxton, a vessel of over 12,000 tons. We made the trip in just 17 days, and were landed at Southampton at the very hour we were told we would reach there before leaving.

THE UNION CASTLE LINE.
 The Union Castle line is one of the oldest of the African steamship companies. As the Union line, which was founded 45 years ago, it sent its first steam vessels regularly to South Africa. There were only two of the company's ships which then exceeded 500 tons. About 20 years later this line was united with the Castle company, the two being combined by Sir Donald Currie, who is still the president of the organization. At that time the contract for the mails was based on a 37-day passage with a \$500 bonus for every day under that, and the postage rates were one shilling per letter. Since then the rates have been reduced to 2 cents, and the time to 16 1/2 days. There are now about a score of these mail steamers, and they all belong to the Union Castle company, which has perhaps a dozen or so other vessels in its African service.

These boats carry all the gold and diamonds that come from South Africa, their freight of that kind alone being annually worth at least \$150,000,000.

Among the other British lines are the Aberdeen, which sails from London to Natal direct, rounding the Cape of Good Hope and calling only at the ports of East Africa. These are ships of from 3,000 to 5,000 tons. They go down the west coast, stopping at the Canary Islands, and come first into port at Durban. From there they go to Lourenco Marques, Beira, Mozambique, Zanzibar and Mombasa. The trip to Mombasa costs \$220 and to Natal, \$150.

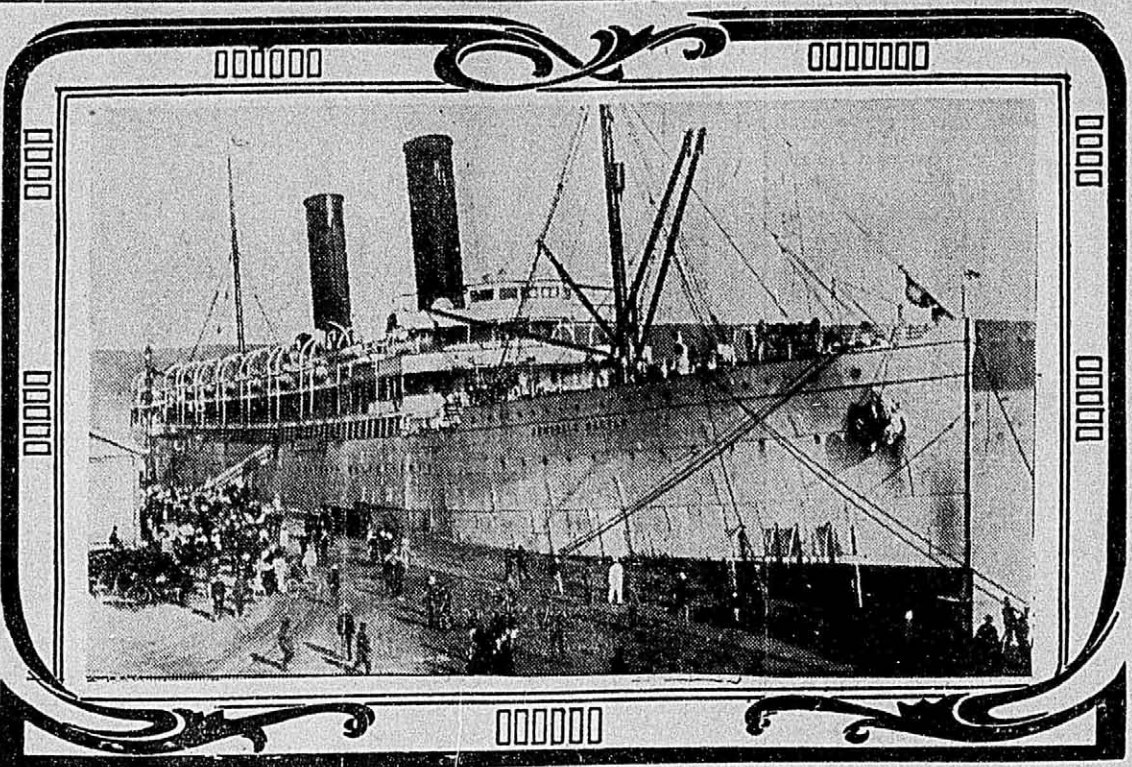
Then there is the Bucknall steamship line, which goes to Cape Town by way of Madeira and also calls at Natal. Its fares to Natal are \$160 and to Cape Town \$140. The ships are of about 6,000 tons each. The Natal line, to Durban direct, has smaller vessels, but it charges just about the same rates, while the British India line, which goes from London to the Suez canal and down the east coast, costs considerably more. Passengers on the latter boats must tranship at Aden, and the vessels are comparatively small. The rate to Mombasa or Zanzibar is \$225, while to Delagoa Bay, the port for the Transvaal, it is more than \$300.

LIFE ON AN AFRICAN STEAMER.
 Traveling on these African steamers is, it seems to me, much more agreeable than on the great floating hotels which cross the Atlantic. The ship which brought me from South Africa, was almost 600 feet long, 60 feet wide and more than 40 feet deep. The first class cabins were on the upper deck, and the ventilation was such that we were perfectly comfortable when we crossed the equator. The ship rolled a bit, but only a few of us were seasick, and the voyage was enjoyable from one end to the other.

Leaving the Cape of Good Hope, we did not stop until we reached Madeira, 14 days later. During this time the passengers became well acquainted, and all seemed anxious to have a good time shortly after leaving a collection, averaging about \$5 apiece, was taken up from the first and second class passengers, and this formed a purse of several hundred dollars. Each was used as a premium for games and contests, into which all the passengers entered. It was a sort of Olympic games held in midocean, in which both ladies and gentlemen joined. There was considerable rivalry between the first and second classes, and each had its champions. Among the sports entered into by the ladies were the spoon and egg sprints and the potato race. In the spoon and egg race a hen egg is laid on the deck at a certain spot and the girl contestant must run and scoop this up with a spoon and carry it without letting it fall, back to the goal. The distance is 30 or 40 yards. It requires skill to get the egg into the spoon and a steady hand to carry it.

In the potato race three rows of 10 raw potatoes are laid upon the deck, the potatoes of each row being three feet apart. There is a bucket at the end of each row. In this game three girls can contest at one time. Each takes a row and attempts to gather her potatoes more quickly than the others. The potatoes can be picked up only one at a time, and all must go into the bucket at the end of the row.

The Big Cape Liners and the Life Upon Them—Potato Races and Cock Fights—A Fashionable Crowd—Steamers to the Congo and the Gulf Of Guinea—The Ships of Mediterranean Africa—Travel on the Red Sea—To Australia Via Cape Town.



Photographed for the "News" by Frank G. Carpenter.
BIG AFRICAN LINER AT DURBAN, NATAL.

There are now a half dozen lines of steamers plying between England and the Cape of Good Hope. They make the voyage in from 17 to 23 days, and there are other and slower vessels which, stopping at the various ports, are a month or so on the way.

The one who finishes first, getting her whole 10 in her bucket, is the winner. Another sport in which both sexes contested, was threading the needle. In this the boy puts the thread through the eye, while the girl holds the needle. The couple which threads first is successful.

As to games for the men, these were legion and some most ridiculous. One was marking the deck with what was called the bow line stretch, and another was a pillow fight contest. In the latter two men balancing themselves astride a pole with a mattress beneath them, fought each other with pillows until one was knocked off the mattress. There were about 40 contestants for the prize and an Englishman won it.

Then there was the human cock fight, in which two men with their arms tied over their knees and fastened there by a stick, attempted to crowd each other out of a ring on the floor by means of their toes, and also the contest to see who could eat a biscuit or drink a bottle of soda water in the shortest time, and then run the length of the deck.

For these games both old and young entered, and South African legislators and colonels vied with tourists, gold miners and engineers to see who was best. These were also cricket matches where the balls were caught by nets put up at the sides of the deck, and concerts and dances night after night.

ETIQUETTE AND FASHION.
 The man or woman who goes to South Africa with no more baggage than a hat, a shirt, a pair of trousers and a pair of shoes will feel much out of place. There is more dressing on these steamers than on the biggest ships which cross the Atlantic. On the way from the Cape of Good Hope to Madeira there was not a man in the first class who did not put on Tuxedo or a steel pen coat and a stiff boiled shirt for dinner each night, and most of the ladies wore low necks and short sleeves. This custom prevails on all steamers, and on both sides of the continent. There is full dress at all the dances and concerts, and the party in the saloon during the evening looks more like that of a Washington parlor than like the rough and tumble crowd which one always finds on the big Atlantic liners.

As to the meals on the ships, they are excellent. I had good board even on the small Mediterranean coastal steamers and on the vessels along the east coast. The eating on the ships from the Cape to London is about as good as on the Atlantic, and there are four or five meals a day. Here for

instance is my schedule for one day: At 7:30 a. m. the boy entered my cabin with tea and a cracker, which I ate in bed. At 8:30 I had a good breakfast in the dining saloon, at 1 a lunch with soup and dessert, at 4 o'clock tea in the saloon, and at 6:30 dinner. The latter meal lasted an hour or more, and, in addition, there was a supper late in the evening.

I cannot imagine a better health trip than a sea voyage around Africa. There are several lines which go down one coast and up the other. One of the best is a German African line by which one starts at Hamburg and can go either east or west. If he chooses the western route he calls at Las Palmas in the Canaries and then goes on to Cape Town, the voyage there taking 23 or 24 days. Leaving the Cape of Good Hope the ship next calls at Port Elizabeth, the Liverpool of South Africa, and then goes on to East London and Durban, the capital of Natal. The two next stoppages are in Portuguese East Africa, and then come Mozambique, Chinde and Dar es Salaam, the capital of German East Africa. From there the ships go on to Zanzibar, Tunga, and Mombasa, and thence north to Aden and on up the Red sea and Suez canal to the Mediterranean. They go from Port Said to Naples, and thence out back through the Strait of Gibraltar to Hamburg. The whole trip, including board, costs just about \$400 first class, and it takes about two months to make it.

There are also a Portuguese steamer which goes from Lisbon three times a month for Loando, Benguela, and the ports of Portuguese West Africa, and there are British steamers from Liverpool every other Saturday for Sierra Leone, Accra, and Lagos. The fare to Loana Leone is \$90. These

same ships go to Liberia, the fare there costing \$120. The rate from Antwerp to the Congo is \$130 and to Lagos \$150.

MEDITERRANEAN AFRICA.
 Mediterranean Africa is very easily reached from Europe. The French branch lines from Naples to Alexandria, Tunis, and there are Italian ships which make the same ports. One can go almost daily in 24 hours from France to Algiers, and the trip to Tunis is not much longer. There are ships sailing weekly from Naples to Tunisia, and there is a line of vessels which goes from Tunis to Alexandria, calling at Sfax and Gabes and thence going on by way of Tripoli to Malta. These boats are of about one thousand tons each and are rather dirty. The fares are low.

At present the German lines are trying to catch the American travel to Egypt and both the Hamburg-American and North German Lloyd have branch lines from Naples to Alexandria. Within the past year or so the Hamburg-American has put its own steamers on the Nile and they now compete with the mail vessels of the Khedive and with those of Thomas Cook & Son, which have so long held a monopoly of that trade.

If one would visit Morocco he had best go direct to Gibraltar and take the steamer from there across to Tangier, or he can start at Marseilles and come down the coast of Spain on the French vessels to Malaga and cross to Morocco that way. The British have a Morocco line which makes a round trip of all the ports on the Atlantic from London in about 35 days. The cost is \$125, and during the voyage one calls at the Canary Islands and the Madeira, and also at seven different ports in Morocco. There is a Hamburg company which makes somewhat the same route, and a French line which goes from Marseilles to Tangier three times every month.

The African countries on the Red sea can be reached by several lines from Suez and there are daily steamers which will take you there by way of the canal. The Khedivial steamship line, which carries the royal mails of Egypt, is now sailing from Suez every Wednesday evening for Port Sudan and Suakim, and every two weeks from Massowah, Hodeidah and Aden. One of the stops of these boats is at Jeddah, where the pilgrimages start for Mecca. Massowah is the port for Italian Africa, and Port Sudan is

the terminus of the new railroad which has just been built across the Nubian desert from the Red sea to Khartoum.

The Italians have a line to Massowah, and the Messageries Maritimes, the great French line, stops at Djibouti, which is the best port for Abyssinia. There is a little railroad there belonging to the French which takes one in and almost to Harart and from there all travel must be on camels or mules.

There are also regular steamers sailing from Bombay to the ports of east Africa, and a number of large vessels which make regular trips to Australia via Cape Town. The White Star line has such a service, composed of steamers of about twelve thousand tons each; the New Zealand Shipping Company and "Shaw & Saville" have similar vessels. On these ships the passage to Cape Town costs from \$100 to \$150, and to Australia perhaps \$20 or \$30 more. Indeed one can make an ocean trip around the world in that way, taking the passage from London to New Zealand, and thence going on to England by the Strait of Magellan.

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NORD ALEXIS.

Halt's deposed president, now in hiding while his republic is in the throes of a civil war, bitterly resents the quiescent attitude of the United States and had counted on the assistance of this government in quelling the rebellion, and thus conserving his rights as president and safeguarding his big fortune, which is in peril.

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WHAT BAD HOUSING MEANS TO INDIANA.
 Bad housing means a loss in property values, a loss in the expense of crime and delinquency, a loss in the expense of disease and the death of citizens, a loss in the efficiency of the workmanship, a loss in homes, a loss in citizenship. Jacob Rills writes that he is not sure that the slum problem is presented in its most virulent form in some of our smaller towns: "It is just the same case as the difference between the country ruffian and the city ruffian. The former is apt to be ten times as bad as the latter, perhaps because he is a ruffian in spite of a better chance, whereas the other just goes by his name."—Albion Fellows Bacon in the December Charities and the Commons.

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