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[From All the Year Round.]

THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELER.

Behold me on my way to an Emigrant Ship, on a hot morning early in June. My road lies through that part of London generally known to the initiated as "Down by the Docks." Down by the Docks, is Home to a good many people—to too many, if I may judge from the overflow of local population in the streets—but my nose insinuates that the number to whom it is Sweet Home might be easily counted. Down by the Docks is a region I would choose as my point of embarkation aboard ship if I were an emigrant. It would present my intention to me in such a sensible light; it would show me so many things to be run away from.

Down by the Docks they eat the largest oysters and scatter the roughest oyster-shells known to the descendants of Saint George and the Dragon. Down by the Docks they consume the slimiest of shell-fish, which seem to have been scraped off the copper-bottoms of ships. Down by the Docks the vegetables at green-grocers' doors acquire a saline and a scaly look, as if they had been crossed with fish and sea-weed. Down by the Docks they "board seamen" at the eating-houses, the public-houses, the slop-shops, the coffee-shops, the tally-shops, all kinds of shops mentionable and unmentionable—board them, as it were, in the piratical sense, making them bleed terribly, and giving no quarter. Down by the Docks the seamen roam in mid-street and mid-day, their pockets inside-out, and their heads no better. Down by the Docks the daughters of wave-ruling Britannia also rove, clad in silken attire, with uncovered dresses streaming in the breeze, bandanna kerchiefs floating from their shoulders, and ermine not wanting. Down by the Docks you may hear the incomparable Joe Jackson sing the Standard of England, with a horn-pipe, any night; or any day may see at the waxwork, for a penny and no waiting, him as killed the policeman at Acton and suffered for it. Down by the Docks you may buy polonies, saveloys, and sausage preparations, various, if you are not particular what they are made of besides seasoning. Down by the Docks the children of Israel creep into any gloomy cribs and entries they can hire, and hang slops there—pewter watches, seawater hats, waterproof overalls—"firthe rate article, Thjack." Down by the Docks such dealers exhibiting on a frame a complete nautical suit without the refinement of a waxen visage in the hat, present the imaginary wearer as drooping at the yard-arm, with his seafaring and earthfaring troubles over. Down by the Docks the placards in the shops apostrophise the customer, knowing him familiarly beforehand, as, "Look here, Jack!" "Here's your sort, my lad!" "Try our sea-goin' mixed, at two and nine!" "The right kit for the British Tar!" "Ship ahoy!" "Splice the main-brace, brother!" "Come, cheer up, my lads! We've the best liquors here, and you'll find something new in our wonderful Beer!" Down by the Docks the pawnbroker lends money on Union-Jack pocket-handkerchiefs, on watches with little ships pitching fore and aft on the dial, on telescopes, nautical instruments in cases, and such-like. Down by the Docks the apothecary sets up in business on the wretchedest scale—chiefly on lint and plaster for the strapping of wounds—and with no bright bottles, and with no little drawers. Down by the Docks the shabby undertaker's shop will bury you to next for nothing, after the Malay or Chinaman has stabbed you for nothing at all; so you can hardly hope to make a cheaper end. Down by the Docks anybody drunk will quarrel with anybody drunk or sober, and everybody else will have a hand in it, and on the shortest notice you may revolve in a whirlpool of red shirts, shaggy beards, wild heads of hair, bare, tattooed arms, Britannia's daughters, malice, mud, maundering and madness. Down by the Docks scraping fiddles go in the public-houses all day long, and, shrill above their din and all the din, rises the screeching of innumerable parrots brought from foreign parts, who appear to be very much astonished by what they find on these native shores of ours. Possibly the parrots don't know, possibly they do, that Down by the Docks is the road to the Pacific Ocean, with its lovely islands where the savage girls plait flowers, and the savage boys carve cocoa-nut shells, and the grim, blind idols rouse in their shady groves to exactly the same purpose as the priests and chiefs. And possibly the parrots don't know, possibly they do, that the noble savage is a wearisome impostor wherever he is, and has five hundred thousand volumes of indifferent rhyme, and no reason, to answer for.

Shadwell church! Pleasant whispers of there being a fresher air down the river than Down by the Docks, go pursuing one another, playfully, in and out of the openings in its spire. Gigantic in the basin just beyond the church, looms my Emigrant Ship: her name,

the Amazon. Her figure-head is not disfigured as those beauteous founders of the race of strong-minded women are fabled to have been, for the convenience of drawing the bow; but I sympathize with the carver:

A flatterer carver who made it his care

To carve busts as they ought to be—not as they were.

My Emigrant Ship lies broadside-on to the wharf. Two great gangways made of spars and planks connect her with the wharf; and up and down these gangways, perpetually crowding to and fro and in and out, like ants, are the Emigrants who are going to sail in my Emigrant Ship. Some with cabbages, some with loaves of bread, some with cheese and butter, some with milk and beer, some with boxes, beds and bundles, some with babies—nearly all with chil ren—nearly all with bran-new tin cans for their daily allowance of water, uncomfortably suggestive of a tin flavor in the drink. To and fro, up and down, aboard and ashore, swarming here and there and everywhere, my Emigrants. And still as the Dock-Gate swings upon its hinges, cabs appear, and carts appear, and vans appear, bringing more of my Emigrants, with more cabbages, more loaves, more cheese and butter, more milk and beer, more boxes, beds and bundles, more tin cans, and on those shipping investments accumulated compound interest of children.

I go aboard my Emigrant Ship. I go first to the great cabin, and find it in the usual condition of a cabin at that pass. Perspiring landmen, with loose papers, and with pens and inkstands, pervade it; and the general appearance of things is as if the late Mr. Amazon's funeral had just come home from the cemetery, and the disconsolate Mrs. Amazon's trustees found the affairs in great disorder, and were looking high and low for the will. I go out on the poop-deck for air, and surveying the emigrants on the deck below (indeed they are crowded all about me, up there too) find more pens and inkstands in action, and more papers, and interminable complication respecting accounts with individuals for tin cans and what not. But nobody is in an ill temper, nobody is the worse for drink, nobody swears an oath or uses a coarse word, nobody appears depressed, nobody is weeping, and down upon the deck in every corner where it is possible to find a few spare feet to kneel, crouch, or lie in, people, in every unsuitable attitude for writing, are writing letters.

Now, I have seen emigrant ships before this day in June. And these people are so strikingly different from all other people in like circumstances whom I have ever seen, that I wonder aloud, What would a stranger suppose these emigrants to be!

The vigilant bright face of the weather-browned captain of the Amazon is at my shoulder, and he says, "What, indeed! The most of these came aboard yesterday evening. They came from various parts of England in small parties that had never seen one another before. Yet they had not been a couple of hours on board when they established their own police, made their own regulations, and set their own watches at all the hatchways. Before nine o'clock the ship was as orderly and as quiet as a man-of-war."

I looked about me again, and saw the letter-writing going on with the most curious composure. Perfectly abstracted in the midst of the crowd; while great casks were swinging aloft, and being lowered into the hold; while hot agents were hurrying up and down, adjusting the interminable accidents; while two hundred strangers were searching everywhere for two hundred other strangers, and were asking questions about them of two hundred more; while the children played up and down all the steps, and in and out among all the people's legs, and were beheld, to the general dismay, toppling over all the dangerous places; the letter-writers wrote on calmly. On the starboard side of the ship a grizzled man dictated a long letter to another grizzled man in an immense fur cap: which letter was of so profound a quality that it became necessary for the amanuensis at intervals to take off his fur cap in both his hands, for the ventilation of his brain, and stare at him who dictated, as a man of many mysteries who was worth looking at. On the larboard side a woman had covered a belaying-pin with a white cloth, to make a neat desk of it, and was sitting on a little box, writing with the deliberation of a book-keeper. Down upon her breast on the planks of the deck at this woman's feet, with her head diving in under a beam of the bulwarks on that side, as an eligible place of refuge for her sheet of paper, a neat and pretty girl wrote for a good hour (she fainted at last) only rising to the surface occasionally for a dip of ink. Alongside the boat, close to me on the poop-deck, another girl, a fresh, well-grown country girl, was writing a letter on the bare deck. Later in the day, when this self-same boat was filled with a choir who sang glees and catches for a long time, one of the singers, a girl, sang her part mechanically all the while, and

wrote a letter in the bottom of the boat while doing so.

"A stranger would be puzzled to guess the right name for these people, Mr. Uncommercial," says the captain.

"Indeed he would."

"If you hadn't known, could you ever have supposed—?"

"How could I! I should have said they were in their degree, the pick and flower of England."

"So should I," says the captain.

"How many are they?"

"Eight hundred in round numbers."

I went between-decks, where the families, with children, swarmed in the dark, where unavoidable confusion had been caused by the last arrivals, and where the confusion was increased by the little preparations for dinner that were going on in each group. A few women, here and there, had got lost, and were laughing at it, and asking their way to their own people, or out on deck again. A few of the poor children were crying; but otherwise the universal cheerfulness was amazing. "We shall shake down by to-morrow." "We shall come all right in a day or so." "We shall have more light at sea." Such phrases I heard everywhere as I groped my way among chests and barrels and beams and unstowed cargo and ring-bolts and Emigrants, down to the lower deck, and thence up to the light of day again and to my former station.

Surely an extraordinary people in their power of self-abstractation! All the former letter-writers were still writing calmly, and many more letter-writers had broken out in my absence. A boy with a bag of books in his hand and a slate under his arm, emerged from below, concentrated himself in my neighborhood (espousing a convenient skylight for his purpose) and went to work at a sum as if he were stone deaf. A father and mother and several young children, on the main deck below me, had formed a family circle close to the foot of the crowded, restless gangway, where the children made a nest for themselves in a coil of rope, and the father and mother, she suckling the youngest, discussed family affairs as peaceably as if they were in perfect retirement. I think the most noticeable characteristic in the eight hundred as a mass, was their exemption from hurry.

Eight hundred what? "Geese, villain?" EIGHT HUNDRED MORMONS. I, Uncommercial Traveler for the firm of Human Interest, Brothers, had come aboard this Emigrant Ship to see what Eight Hundred Latter Day Saints were like, and I found them (to the rout and overthrow of all my expectations) like what I now describe with scrupulous exactness.

The Mormon Agent who had been active in getting them together, and in making the contract with my friend the owners of the ship to take them as far as New York on their way to the Great Salt Lake, was pointed out to me. A compactly-made, handsome man in black, rather short, with rich-brown hair and beard, and clear, bright eyes. From his speech, I should set him down as American. Probably, a man who had "knocked about the world" pretty much. A man with a frank, open manner and unshrinking look; withal a man of great quickness. I believe he was wholly ignorant of my Uncommercial individuality, and consequently of my immense Uncommercial importance.

Uncommercial. These are a very fine set of people you have brought together here.

Mormon Agent. Yes, sir, they are a very fine set of people.

Uncommercial (looking about.) Indeed, I think it would be difficult to find Eight Hundred people together anywhere else, and find so much beauty and so much strength and capacity for work among them.

Mormon Agent (not looking about, but looking steadily at Uncommercial.) I think so. We sent out about a thousand more yesterday, from Liverpool.

Uncommercial. You are not going with these emigrants?

Mormon Agent. No, sir. I remain.

Uncommercial. But you have been in the Mormon Territory?

Mormon Agent. Yes; I left Utah about three years ago.

Uncommercial. It is surprising to me that these people are all so cheery, and make so little of the immense distance before them.

Mormon Agent. Well, you see, many of 'em have friends out at Utah, and many of 'em look forward to meeting friends on the way.

Uncommercial. On the way?

Mormon Agent. This way 'tis. This ship lands 'em in New York City. Then they go on by rail right away beyond St. Louis, to that part of the Banks of the Missouri where they strike the Plains. There, wagons from the settlements meet 'em to bear 'em company on their journey 'cross—twelve hundred miles about. Industrious people who come out to the settlements soon get wagons of their own, and so the friends of some of these will come down in their own wagons to meet 'em. They look forward to that, greatly.

Uncommercial. On their long journey across the Desert do you arm them?

Mormon Agent. Mostly you would find they have arms of some kind or another already with them. Such as had not arms we should arm across the Plains, for the general protection and defence.

Uncommercial. Will these wagons bring down any produce to the Missouri?

Mormon Agent. Well, since the war broke out we've taken to growing cotton, and they'll likely bring down cotton to be exchanged for machinery. We want machinery. Also we have taken to growing indigo, which is a fine commodity for profit. It has been found that the climate on the further side of the Great Salt Lake suits well for raising indigo.

Uncommercial. I am told that these people now on board are principally from the South of England?

Mormon Agent. And from Wales. That's true.

Uncommercial. Do you get many Scotch?

Mormon Agent. Not many.

Uncommercial. Highlanders, for instance?

Mormon Agent. No, not Highlanders. They ain't interested enough in universal brotherhood and peace and good will.

Uncommercial. The old fighting blood strong in them?

Mormon Agent. Well, yes. And besides, they've no faith.

Uncommercial (who has been burning to get at the Prophet Joe Smith, and seems to discover an opening). Faith in—!

Mormon Agent (far too many for Uncommercial). Well.—In anything!

Similarly on this same head, the Uncommercial underwent discomfort from a Wiltshire laborer: a simple fresh-colored farm-labourer, of eight-and-thirty, who at one time stood beside him looking on at new arrivals, and with whom he had this dialogue:

Uncommercial. Would you mind my asking you what part of the country you come from?

Wiltshire. No, a bit. There! (exultingly) I've worked all my life o' Salisbury Plain, right under the shadow o' Stonehenge. You mightn't think it, but I have.

Uncommercial. And a pleasant country too?

Wiltshire. Ah! 'Tis a pleasant country.

Uncommercial. Have you any family on board?

Wiltshire. Two children, boy and gal. I am a widder, I am, and I'm going out alonger my boy and gal. That's my gal, and she's a fine gal o' sixteen (pointing out the girl who is writing by the boat). I'll go and fetch my boy. I'd like to show you my boy. (Here Wiltshire disappears, and presently comes back with a big shy boy of twelve, in a superabundance of boots, who is not at all glad to be presented.) He is a fine boy too, and a boy fur to work! (Boy having undutifully belted, Wiltshire drops him.)

Uncommercial. It must cost you a great deal of money to go so far, three strong.

Wiltshire. A power of money. There! Eight shillens a week, eight shillens a week, eight shillens a week, put by out of the week's wages for ever so long.

Uncommercial. I wonder how you did it.

Wiltshire (recognising in this a kindred spirit). See there now! I wonder how I done it! But what with a bit o' subscription here, and what with a bit o' help there, it were done at last, though I don't hardly know how. Then it were unfort'net for us, you see, as we got kep' in Bristol so long—nigh a fortnight, it were—on account of a mistake w' Brother Halliday. Swaller'd up money, it did, when we might have come straight on.

Uncommercial (delicately approaching Joe Smith). You are of the Mormon religion, of course?

Wiltshire (confidently). O yes, I'm a Mormon. (Then reflectively.) I'm a Mormon.—(Then, looking round the ship, feigns to deny a particular friend in an empty spot, and evades the Uncommercial for evermore.)

After a noonlike pause for dinner, during which my Emigrants were nearly all between decks, and the Amazon looked deserted, a general muster took place. The muster was for the purpose of passing the Government Inspector and the Doctor. Those authorities held their temporary state amidships, by a cask or two; and, knowing that the whole eight hundred emigrants must come face to face with them, I took my station behind the two. They knew nothing whatever of me, I believe, and my test money to the unpretending gentleness and good nature with which they discharged their duty, may be of the greater worth. There was not the slightest flavor of the Circumlocution Office about their proceedings.

The emigrants were all now on deck. They were densely crowded aft, and swarmed upon the poop-deck like bees. Two or three Mormon agents stood ready to hand them on to the Inspector, and to hand them forward when they had passed. By what successful means, a special aptitude for organization