

ON THE OTHER SIDE.

(Written for THE COURIER by C. Y. Smith.)

*Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn.—Mr. Shakespeare.
It would seem not.—Mr. Smith.*

AT 11 o'clock Saturday June 18, 1892 I stood on Pier No. 40 Cunard wharf New York City lost in the whirl of bustling truckmen amidst trunks of all sizes and description, bundles, packages, boxes, valises, men, women, babies, umbrellas, canes, dogs and miscellaneous articles. About ten men were trying to sell me a steamer chair at the same time. I was alone so far as any of my acquaintances were concerned, and realizing the danger of being trampled on, for I am not as large in stature as some people I know, I quickly directed my steps onward in order to avoid the rush. The great steamer Etruria, a magnificent vessel lazily lay by the wharf. Her mighty sides reared above like a fortress. As I stepped my left foot on the gangway, my right foot being the last to trod on American lumber, a small portion of my throat contracted and it was with much difficulty that I swallowed a lump which had in the mean time gathered in the rear portion of my mouth. Slowly I crowded my way through the many human beings that were pushing in all directions and was soon standing by the railing where I could watch the surging mass.

The deck of the steamer was full and the wharf below was full. There was a great deal of kissing going on; some were crying; others were laughing and having a beautiful time. Some were excited and some were not; others had lost their friends and relatives and could not find them, and others had no relatives or friends there to lose. I was among this number. Out of all the motley throng, there was not one to whom I could say good bye, not one whose hand I could grasp in farewell, and just before it was time for the great steamer to start on her watery journey, I strained my eyes to find just one familiar face to which I might cast a smile of recognition, but there was none there, not even one. So when, at 11:30 the lines were cast off and the propellers began slowly to move and the distance between the steamer and wharf to widen, I saw the passengers throw kisses to their friends and relatives, and the air filled with flying handkerchiefs and umbrellas and shouts of good bye, pleasant journey and the like. I did as did the rest. I threw kisses, waved my handkerchief shouted good bye and farewell, and for ten minutes or so I was as sociable as any body.

In a few moments the pier, black with those who had come to take a last long look upon departing friends, was lost to view and Mrs. Liberty was seen standing on her pedestal high, over the starboard bow of the Etruria. She had not changed much since I saw her last and was quite busy enlightening the world when we passed her by. I waved to her my handkerchief and followed with my eyes the waves as they broke from the bow of the steamer and gradually diverged until they tossed their saucy foam against her rock foundation. We were heading for the open sea and the clanging of the gong notified the passengers that dinner was now ready. I entered the companion way and descended the spiral stair way leading to the dining room and at the further end of the room on the second seat from the end, convenient for hasty exit in case of unforeseen events, I sat me down to partake of the substantial brought by colored waiters who were later on to be feed for services not rendered. On my right sat my highly valued friend Frank. He had a slight advantage over me in the way of size and was particularly exempt from sea troubles. Directly opposite us sat five of the fair ones representing various portions of the United States, to whom I was introduced by our guardian Mr. Shepherd who with his wife officiated over the flock. Our special artist and wife from Boston with a lady from New York occupied seats at the other end of the table. I ate a swanking dinner and was too busy to talk much to my companions, although I said I was glad to meet them and exchanged the usual courtesies incident to an introduction. I noticed that every chair in the room was occupied by passengers who seemed eager to eat all they could in order to keep even with the commissary department. When the meal was over I sought the fresh salt air on the promenade deck above.

Slowly meandering along I finally sat down upon a chest close to the railing overlooking the second class cabin and steerage, musing as to the ups and downs of life in a general way, and contemplating what sort of an effect would be produced upon persons with weak

stomachs by a given number of waves of a certain velocity rolling against a vessel of a known tonnage on which said persons were passengers. As I sat there it seemed to me as if somebody was moving the steamer. I looked anxiously around me and seeing no special activity among my fellow travellers concluded I was mistaken. However my seat became uncomfortable and my feet which had been swinging indifferently in the air I placed firmly upon the deck and tried to look unconcerned. It was a beautiful day overhead, though a little dubious below. The sea gulls which had been flitting about the mast heads and sailing in graceful curves through the air were leaving us one by one and the shores of America began to grow dim in the distance.

Soon I realized my situation. For seven days and seven nights I was to be subjected to the elements without, and seven days and seven nights to the elements within. I was on a large ocean steamer which was fast seeking the midst of a gigantic sea where the winds blew and the waters inhabited with mighty whales, sharks and devouring sea-serpents, tossed and foamed mountain high. Overhead the boundless sky. Beneath the boundless sea. The land was out of sight. The steamer on which I sailed was but a molecule in comparison with the vasty deep and I could easily infer from the surrounding circumstances that against such odds I was powerless; I stood no show on the ocean. My desire was to be happy but not sociable. The mightiness of the sea filled me with awe and wonder mingled with doubt. Supper was called but I failed to respond. For reasons of my own I preferred to remain on deck. A two days trip on the Pacific Ocean, from San Pedro to San Francisco, when the waters had were turbulent, had given me sufficient experience in aquatic life, to fully realize the truth of the saying that "There are moments when we wish to be alone." There were others on the deck stretched out in steamer chairs who did not take any notice of the dinner gong and I felt confident if one could have ascertained their thoughts he would have found them for the greater part confined to the uncertainty of food on shipboard. I have never been fully able to understand under what inspiration the poet wrote the following lines.

"Oh who can tell
The joy he feels,
When o'er the sea
The vessel reels?"

I shall avoid many of the details of the six days that followed. My warm friend Frank was very kind in my hours of misery, and every night he tucked me in my little cot and during the day kept me nicely wrapped up in blankets and otherwise looked out for my comfort. Occasionally some of the party would come around to the place where I was seen to a disadvantage and enquire how I felt but I never was very enthusiastic. One of the party who lives in St. Joe, Missouri was extremely discontented during the entire trip and really looked quite melancholy so Frank told me. I did not see her from the time we ate our first dinner until we arrived at Liverpool. We were so near, and yet so far.

The most difficult feat I found necessary to perform, was the descent of the spiral stairway at night and to walk the entire length of the dining saloon along a narrow hall to a much narrower stateroom where the air was very close; the port hole being kept closed on account of the sea washing in at night. To ascend in the morning was twice as sorrowful but seven nights I descended and seven mornings I ascended and for five days I never took the time to remove my wardrobe once horrible as it may seem, and I used to wash my face in the salt sea air that blew around the promenade deck in the day time. The deck steward would sometimes bring me something to eat, and I remember well at one time he gave me some French peas, about ten, which I ate with a wholesome relish, but my ambition was at such a low ebb that I refrained from asking for more. I would at times watch the steward come out of the companionway with plates of food for my contemporaries in trouble and my appetite would be appeased and often I would eat a piece of chicken and a little potato and although I relished tigs very much and once in a while ate an orange with difficulty I seldom if ever cared for pork. I have known people who have been made to feel very uneasy by merely mentioning pork in their presence when they were on the water. The last thing at night before retiring down my spiral retreat I took a glass of hot lemonade. It acted as a bracer for my long journey to the stateroom and toned the system generally.

(To be continued next week.)