

Omaha Boy's Trans Pacific Voyage

AT SEA, July 12, 1906.—From Omaha, Nebraska, to Sydney, Australia, is a long distance. But in these days of swift travel on sea and land the journey is agreeably and quickly performed. Quite recently I set out on this lengthy trip from the fair gateway of the middle west. On one of the fast overland trains the journey to the coast is made with every degree of comfort. From San Francisco I sailed June 29 on board the Ventura for the distant antipodes. Very soon I passed through another gateway, the famous Golden Gate, with the Cliff House and seal rocks to the left. Myriad of big seagulls followed the wake of the ship down the bay. Perhaps in no other part of the world are so many snow-white seagulls to be seen as those which make their habitat in the charming and magnificent harbor of San Francisco. When sunset threw its flickering beams across the waters of the California coast, with its many hills, had entirely faded from view and the good ship began its long voyage over the trackless deep of the great Pacific. With Tennessee we thought:

Life at Sea on Deck.
Sea life is not conducive to mental or bodily activity. Many people who go to sea provide themselves with a numerous supply of books and magazines, only to find when they are out at sea that the best they can do is to dream on deck and watch the wonderful blue of the Pacific by day or its strange fire-like phosphorescence by night. Every incident that occurs at sea, no matter how childish or trifling, is welcomed with eagerness. If it serves to break the monotony of life on the ocean wave—a distant sail, a shark or an innocent joke among the passengers. We were five days out without passing a steamer when one night the maddening light of a steamer was observed. Immediately all eyes were directed toward it. Quite close it was recognized to be a sister ship, the Sierra, bound from Australia to America. Silently in the night that big ship moved over the lonely ocean, with many a soul aboard longing for home, and many another soul in a distant port waiting for that ship to come.

The Fourth of July was celebrated with much festivity. Of course, there were no terrific noises from giant firecrackers. A few children, in the dining room, enjoyed themselves tooting a few small horns. The dining room was tastefully decorated by the chief steward and his second assistant with the Stars and Stripes. This, together with a right royal festive board and music and the celebration of the day of Independence day aboard the Ventura.

Place to Study Human Nature.
Perhaps nowhere else do we come so much in touch with our fellows as on board ship, entering so to speak into the innermost room of those we meet, which after all is the one place in the human heart where that single, simple word "I" may be found with all its plans, hopes, fears and secrets. After the first day at sea the cold

formalities of life ashore are put aside and men begin to warm toward one another. Each passenger's history is soon found out, and if it be a woman who gently questions, perchance the reason why the trip has been undertaken. Little confidences are exchanged and before the voyage has ended the bond of many a lasting friendship has been cemented. It is strange, too, with what regrets farewells are exchanged when the ship at last reaches port. This is the point where the paths and lives of many who have lived so intimately together for a short time soon widely diverge. Aboard an ocean liner one finds a great variety of human characters brought together. One of the same roof you will find those who call themselves part of the "300"; then comes the middle class, then the steerage and finally the crew. But we cannot correctly class this collection of human beings as they are written down on the passenger books. No one must measure them by a higher standard. While they have all human souls, with all their accompanying hopes, ambitions, joys and disappointments, yet many a noble hero has been found among the men who are written down as the great crew away down in the hot, burning depths of the ship. Of this motley crowd some have embarked for health or pleasure, others for business. A few have fallen in one place and have set out with fresh hope and greater courage for new adventures. There are others who are returning home. They are the happiest. That one word "home" is ever before them; they see it written in golden letters as they gaze out upon the distant horizon. To them it is the well-spring of an endless life, and at night when the stars come out and shine bright above the deep, who can tell what fervent prayers ascend somewhere for the safe return of those who are near and dear.

Disposition to Grumble.
Another class of people is found at sea, just as on land. They are the grumblers. They are found among the passengers and also among the crew. But, speak to them of their voyage, nothing seems good to them. The voyage is too long, the ship too slow. It's too rough one day, and too windy another. Such people seem to forget the innumerable conveniences of modern steamships in comparison to the old-fashioned sailing ships that crossed the seas in the days of our grandfathers. In these days a voyage across the Pacific lasted during many months and was attended by countless discomforts and many a danger. Today the voyage from "Frisco to Sydney" is made in the quick time of twenty-one days. All the way across the passenger has all the luxuries, comforts and courteous attention of a first-class hotel. All the art and skill of experienced cooks are engaged, preparing with care the food, which is served in the most dainty, appetizing manner. The traveler today on a long sea trip sits down at table and finds a daily change of fresh fruits, meats and vegetables. And to add to this a library, a doctor and a barber. What more can a man want who has nothing else to do but watch the sea and sky and dream lazily of the strenuous times he has left behind, with all their anxious care and nervous strain.

After a week's sail the high, mountainous coast of Hawaii was sighted. Even after a short six days' voyage it was a gladsome sight. Giant peaks, rugged and sharp, reared themselves, one behind the other. It was the early gray of a July morning when we passed to windward that sorrowful island home of the unfortunate lepers, forever made famous by the noble Damien, apostle of the lepers. We sailed along the coast with the sun across the water. Its golden beams upon the mountain tops fern clad hills and green valleys, with their sparkling streams. Dawn along this beautiful coast was sweet and charming in its aspect. Passing Diamond Head, over 700 feet high, the volcanic crater of the harbor of Honolulu. Approaching closer to the shore, the coconut groves, sugar plantations and verdant pastures became visible. This, together with the native dwellings, vine covered cottages and lovely tropical foliage, presented a picture too beautiful to paint in words. When the Ventura was tied up at the Oceanic company's wharf, many gladly took the opportunity of going ashore and visiting that delightful land of flowers and sunshine—Hawaii.

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