

which it was bordered, the stream being narrow between that side and the shore. The boy strained his eyes in trying to catch a glimpse of the cottage, through every opening of the trees, and listened; but he could not see it for the leaves beyond, and the place was quite still. The old man, standing at the bows, struck the pole into the banks, to urge the vessel through the narrow channel; and while the boy sat thinking of Annie, lying in her little room asleep, he saw the island slowly pass and fade behind them.

#### A PILGRIMAGE TO THE GREAT EXHIBITION FROM ABROAD.

NOTHING which has occurred for years has been more calculated to gratify the pride of an Englishman than the Great Exhibition. Everywhere abroad the wonder which it has excited can only be conceived by those who have witnessed it. The novelty of the Glass Palace itself, the rapidity and energy with which it has been erected and furnished, and its final pre-eminent success, have stamped an indelible feeling of the greatness of England in all nations. Wherever you have gone—the one great topic of conversation has been the Great Exhibition; the one great topic of the newspapers was the Great Exhibition; the Great Exhibition met your eye on all walls, and in the windows of shops, post-offices, and railway stations, on placards in great letters. Steamers and railways were all put into concert with this one great object, and were compelled to accelerate their motions to meet the impatience and expectation of the universal public. To any one coming from England the only and the eternally recurring question was, "Have you, then, really seen the Great Exhibition?"—to which an affirmative answer was the mother of a million particular queries.

It was our lot the other day to find ourselves on the way to England, in a considerable throng of foreigners, proceeding to this all-absorbing spectacle. We were crossing Belgium, and the greater number of our fellow-travellers were Germans. On arriving at that most wretched of wretched places, Ostend, late in the evening, one of those scenes of confusion took place which are taking place every day, and which the Government never takes the slightest trouble to put an end to. In all other countries some rational kind of language is spoken; but as nobody is at the trouble to learn the hodge-podge of a language called Belgian, and as there is rarely an official employed at the station who can speak a word of English, German, or French, the confusion that prevails is perfectly astounding—and, in fact, so long as Ostend stands, it appears clear that Babel will never be at an end. All the passengers' luggage, even to their carpet-bags and hat-boxes, being taken from them at Vervier, examined, and carriage for every pound charged, it is then

put into a separate wagon, and the unlucky traveller passes the rest of the journey in hoping that he may get his effects again, but believing that he never shall.

Arrived at Ostend, out rush all the hoping and despairing hundreds of travellers; one asks for his luggage in French, another in English, a third in German, a fourth in Italian, a fifth in Swiss, and a sixth in Hungarian. To all these demands the porters reply by shakes of the head, and the utterance of a jargon, that only adds to the confounding and unintelligible hubbub. At length the frantic travellers, fearful of not being in time to secure their ship, see a lot of luggage dragged forth, and deposited on a bench under a shed, for every one to claim his own. Never was there a finer opportunity for clever fellows to carry off what is *not* their own; for, though you have a receipt containing the number of your packages, your name, and what you have paid for it, yet as nobody understands one another, and five hundred people at once are dragging at the trunks, bags, and hat-cases, in the dark, nothing would be easier than for half of it to be carried off by wrong people; and, if it be not so, it redounds as much to the credit of the nation for honesty, as it does to its discredit for business arrangements.

At length, after half an hour of the most terrific shouting, scrambling, hauling, and sorting, one half of the exasperated passengers find that their luggage is not there at all! Then are vociferated furious demands in a dozen languages, with a violent holding up of green bits of paper—the receipts for the unlucky articles that are not received, nor even visible. These vociferations are answered by the Belgian porters pointing to the benches where luggage should be, but is not, and by still more frantic protestations, on the part of the travellers, that their articles are not there. Then rush a few scores to another unopened wagon on the line, which is desperately defended by the porters with the outcries of "Transit! transit!"—the only intelligible word they utter, and a word which only adds to the agitation of the travellers, who protest that their articles are not put in transit; a word which fills them with the horrible idea of their property being shipped off to London, while they themselves are going to Dover or to Calais.

At length, in our case, after nearly an hour's delay, the station-master was found, the only one who seemed capable of an English or French word; and by his authority, the transit-goods wagon being opened, the missing articles came to light. All now hurried away, some to the English steamer bound for Dover, and some to the one bound direct for London; we to the latter, congratulating ourselves that we were about to set foot on board the vessel of a nation of men of business, and that all our troubles would be at an end. Unfortunate flattery of an internal national pride! To



our consternation, we found ourselves on board a notorious old tub, we believe the very worst steamer that sails from the port of London. We do not mention it, for obvious reasons, but everybody who knows anything of Ostend steamers knows it. Nothing can be more excellent, sea-worthy, and commodious than the same company's steamers to Antwerp, in one of which we had recently made a delightful passage out. Nothing can be conceived more wretched than this one, in which we found ourselves about to sail at midnight. It was built, we believe, some time about the days of Noah, and for the faculty rather of diving than sailing, every wave of any pretension regularly sweeping over its forecastle, and its motion being at about the rate of four knots an hour!

Imagine our astonishment at finding this old wash-tub the only vessel on this day awaiting the thronging visitors to the Great Exhibition! There was cabin accommodation in it for forty passengers, and there were on board one hundred and thirty! The amazement of these one hundred and thirty foreigners, chiefly Germans, who had come to the sea with the idea that they were to be conveyed over by the greatest maritime nation in the world, and therefore with corresponding ideas of the vessel and its comforts, it would be impossible to describe. They remonstrated, but it was clear that remonstrance was useless. Seeing the agent of the company on board, I—for I may now use the singular number, my companion, a lady, having found a berth for herself—expressed my astonishment that no better preparations were made for the expected influx of foreigners on this great occasion; declaring that it was at once an insult to the passengers, and a disgrace to our country. The agent assured me that a new vessel would be substituted for this in a few days, which I hope is the fact; but for the present night the prospect for all on board was dismal enough. The forty lucky fellows had secured their berths; the ninety unlucky ones had the choice of the cabin floor, the tables, the seats, and the deck. To make the matter worse, the wind rose simultaneously with the vessel's quitting the port, and blew strongly direct in our teeth. The old tub began to tumble about with a short chopping motion well known to crossers of that part of the Channel, and the crowded company, three-fourths of whom had probably never seen the sea before, and had all the German horror of the *See-Krankheit*, began to look awfully pale out of their dark forests of beards and whiskers.

My few observations to the agent had procured me a berth; a clear proof that the company was well aware that the less public observation was drawn to their accommodations for foreign visitors of the Exhibition, the better; but as this must have been done at the expense of some unfortunate victim, I did not take possession

of it till I saw that no one else would. At length, tired with some days of hard travelling, I threw myself down in it in my clothes, and slept till five o'clock. On awaking, the scene was indescribable. The whole of the cabin, berths, seats, floor, tables, and under tables, was one dense chaos of rueful wretches—almost every one of them in the agonies of sea-sickness. The picture would have been worth something to a painter, from the strange aspect of the huge-bearded and mustachioed faces amid the chaos of carpet-bags, boots, and boxes; but being no painter, I made a precipitate retreat upon deck. The old tub was wallowing along, half buried a-head in the waves, and the sailors, drenched to the skin, very composedly assured me that one day they should all go down together. On the deck were crowds of people who had endured the stormy night-air rather than the atmosphere below. Some sat bowed down, their heads hidden in the huge hoods of their cloaks like penitentiary hermits; others, with sharp peaked hoods, stalking about very much like so many Robinson Crusoes coming home from their desolate islands. Here one man, with an enormous yellow beard, and head of hair of the same colour, raised himself from his arms, on which he had lain on the cabin roof, like some old lion out of his hair; and others lay stretched about, or still and livid as so many corpses. One old man in a great white night-cap, and loose dirty great-coat, sat motionless on one of the benches for hours, and to my surprise, on looking at his lower extremities, I perceived that he had violet stockings on. The shabby-looking old man was no other than the Catholic Archbishop of T—; and his brother, a distinguished Belgian nobleman, soon after made his appearance.

It seemed to me that I had never seen so wretched, and even vulgar, a set of people flung together on any occasion. The effects of one breezy night in that old boat of Mathuselah's, had been, in combination with strangely wild beards and queerly cut cloaks, to almost unhumanise my unlucky fellow-travellers; but as the morning advanced, and we came into still water, a rapid metamorphosis took place. Breakfast came and completed it; and, one after another, that uncouth and grizzly company most wonderfully brightened, and furnished themselves up into a most respectable, well-looking, and gentlemanly assembly. One pretty woman after another, too, emerged into daylight, and it was soon evident that we were in the midst of a very superior and intelligent class of people.

As we drew near the English coast, but long before it was visible, an intense interest began to display itself throughout the throng of foreigners. Few had before approached the renowned island, and the idea of London seemed to hang in their imaginations like some great world of wonder which was about to reveal itself before them. Long, however,



before the slightest strip of the British coast came into view, before the dimmest glimpse of the lighthouse on the North Foreland, or the tower of Margate Church, caught the eye to the left, two vast lines of ships were seen coming from the opposite extremities of the horizon, and emerging to one point before us. Those were the first signs of the maritime greatness of England, and the spectacle was contemplated with exclamations of amazement. From the north and the south, hundreds of vessels were marching on their watery way, to or from the point which indicated the place of the Thames, and the position of London; marking out, as it were, two great high-roads of commerce, which, issuing from the vast maritime city of the world, would presently diverge into a thousand tracks, leading to every sea, and shore, and city on the globe.

As the coast of Kent became visible, and every minute its chalk cliffs, green slopes, and hanging woods more and more distinct, the interest of the spectators heightened; and, when we entered the Thames itself, the pleasant shores, and the passing up and down of multitudes of vessels, awoke continual outbreaks of admiration. Perhaps no Englishman ever feels so fully conscious of the greatness of this scene—the approach to London by the Thames—as when he ascends the river in the company of foreigners. There is but one such scene in the world, and it never fails to tell on those who see it for the first time. On land all is smiling, green, and cultivated. The very flats of Essex on the right, with their large herds of fine cattle, have their beauty; and the pleasant slopes, and neat villages, and towns of the Kentish shore, present a picture of the most perfect home-like prosperity and peace. But the life on the waters is the wonder. Great steamers, with long trails of smoke, gravely, as it were, steering away to distant ports either of our own island or the Continent; busy tugs dragging out to sea majestic East Indianmen, or other great merchant-ships; colliers in crowds with sails set, going up or down; shoals of fishing-smacks, and other craft. And, as you advance above Gravesend, the swift iron steamers to the different places on the river, flying past with crowds on deck, and music playing, as on some gay holiday. These fill the foreigner with augmenting wonder, and as you advance, the ever-growing throng of vessels that crowd the river; the hulks of convicts; the Seamen's Hospital in the old "Dreadnought," with its gilt Lion looking bravely from its prow; the war-steamers; the ships of all nations; the bustle of Woolwich and all its arsenals, its barracks, and its docks and workshops. The palace of Greenwich, that proud monument of the nation's care for its seamen; the hanging woods of the Park, and the domes of the Observatory lifting themselves above them, where longitude is presented itself familiarly to the mind of

every foreign passer-by, are contemplated with a feeling which breaks forth from long pauses of deep silence with the words—"Grossartig!" "Erstaunend!" "Unendlich!" "Uebereuclitend!"

Every man had his Panorama of the River out; fathers were pointing out to their daughters the various places, and their historic and statistical interests. One very intelligent German, whose only daughter was surveying the wondrous scene, pale with actual emotion, said to me, "Denken sie mir, mein Herr, es ist das erstmal dass sie es gesehen hat; und was für ein Gefühl, was für ein Eindruck es miss für ihr ganzes Leben seyn!" (Only think, sir, that it is the first time that she has seen it; and what a feeling, what an impression it must give her for her whole life!)

But as the Pool was approached, and the immense masses of shipping became visible that lay in the bed of the river; the forests after forests of masts; the great groups of steamers lying, as it were, in reserve, the huge Scotch and Irish ones that lay at the wharfs preparing for their next trips; the covered ship-building docks; the endless warehouses and workshops; but, above all, the miles of shipmasts and rigging showing themselves along the course of the St. Katherine's, the London, and the East and West India Docks, seeming to have no end, presented the most astounding idea of the commerce of the British Metropolis which could possibly enter the human mind. At every yard of progress, some object of interest presented itself. All, as all foreigners are, were particularly anxious to know exactly at what moment they were passing the Thames Tunnel. Then another recognised the Tower, London Bridge, and, high amid the smoke of the city, the dome of St. Paul's. And thus slowly making way amid the multitude of vessels in the Pool, and bringing to, at the St. Katherine's Wharf, amid the din of London's enormous life, and its astounding evidence of activity, the voyage of wonder closed. Hitherto everything had been calculated to gratify the pride of an Englishman; now came a scene which was a dreadful anti-climax. This was the examination of the passengers' luggage by the officers of the Customs.

We had hoped that amid the many preparations made for smoothing the approach of the foreign visitors of all nations to the Great Exhibition, a change would have been made in this respect, befitting the honour and hospitality of the nation: that if it were deemed necessary still to subject the visitors to Custom House inspection, a measure very simple in itself, and perfectly efficient, would have been adopted, to spare all possible annoyance and detention; that is, that as two officers come on board at Gravesend, the luggage of the passengers should be examined on board, as the steamer came up the river, so that on arriving they might, without the slightest detention or delay, have proceeded



to their several quarters. This very plan, so easy, so obvious, so accordant with common-sense and politeness to our visitors, has been strongly recommended by the Parliamentary Committee, now sitting, to inquire into the affairs of the Custom House; and it is to us marvellous that it should not have been one of the very first regulations adopted for the comfort of the foreign visitors of the Exhibition. We draw attention to it the more particularly, because even now an Order in Council might at once remove the evil, and introduce a practice which could not possibly be attended by any mischief, but would add inconceivably to the comfort of foreigners arriving in London, and give a fine feeling of our liberal courtesy. Any case of difficulty in levying any duty might be referred to the Custom House on shore; but such cases must be rare, and the general body of the passengers would be exempt from the present most vexatious detention.

So far, however, from any relaxation in the old system, in one respect the rigour is increased. Foreigners are asked to produce their passports. When you ask the meaning of this, you are told it is done at the request of the Foreign Powers themselves, to prevent the entrance of dangerous characters. But why should we stoop to become the tools of foreign surveillance? Why not leave our law and police to protect public order, as they always have done?

However, on the packet touching the quay, the passengers are all marched off to the waiting-rooms of the Custom House, where their passports are examined, and while their luggage is brought from the ship to the examining-room. Here, then, were one hundred and thirty strangers cooped up like so many sheep, on their arrival in the capital of England, for several hours, while their luggage is brought ashore, and while afterwards they are, two by two, introduced to the examining-room. Proud as I had felt of the approach to London, I was proportionably mortified to be a witness of this humiliating termination—a termination in which we were sunk below many of the despotic powers of the Continent; for even on the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Danube, you have your baggage examined on board of the vessel; and in passing the Prussian frontier, the other day, neither I nor my friend had a single package opened. Every moment's miserable detention here was a torment uselessly and unnecessarily inflicted. The whole of the trunks and bags of the strangers, containing only their apparel, requisite during their visit, might just as well have been inspected on the deck, between Gravesend and London.

May it not, and shall it not, yet be so? There are yet three months at least before the close of the Exhibition. In the autumn, when on the Continent, as at home, the great bulk of professional people find themselves only at liberty,—when schools, universities,

law and government offices, are to a certain degree closed,—the fullest tide of travel towards this country will set in. Is it not worth while, then, to remove this wretched stumbling-block out of the way of our visitors; to adopt a course which can lose us nothing pecuniarily, but must gain us immensely in point of national character for courtesy and true kindness? Is it worth while to destroy that generous sense of our national greatness, which must unavoidably fill the mind of the foreigner who ascends the Thames amid the gigantic evidences of our enormous commerce, our physical and intellectual energies, our wealth and inexhaustible activity, by so miserable—so gratuitously miserable—a finale as this? It is but justice to say, that on this occasion the officers performed their unpleasant duty with a courtesy and a patience which did them the highest credit; but no courtesy of manner can obliterate the real discourtesy and annoyance of a useless and most tedious detention of often many hours, and the mortifying feeling of a reception of our foreign guests, so totally out of keeping with every other arrangement for this great and unprecedented gathering of the Nations.

#### THE BROTHERS.

A TALE OF "ARABY THE BLEST."\*

IN Araby the Blest two brothers lived:

All and Zeid. All, the elder one,  
Was married, and had children young and fair,  
The red-lipp'd fruitage of our human tree;  
But Zeid dwelt singly, though his love was great.

They had one field in common, which they sow'd  
With life-sustaining corn, marking no bounds  
Of mine and thine, but sharing it alike.

Harvest came round again. The one long field  
Of the two brothers glow'd like tawny fire,  
Self-ripening as with inward heat and life;  
And all the land, with depth of swarthy gold,  
Fermented in the vibrating noon-glare.  
All and Zeid work'd in the field all day,  
And All's wife and children also work'd;  
Till over heaven fell purple robes of night,  
And through star-kingdoms went the regal moon.

So, day by day they toil'd, till all the sheaves  
Were stack'd, and the last gleanings gather'd in:  
Then did each brother take his equal share,  
And rest was on the land, and vacancy.

And on a night, as Zeid lay in his bed,  
Steeping in dew of silence his calm soul,  
Into his mind, out of the quiet, grew  
These thoughts and words:—"My brother has a

wife  
And children, who depend upon his arm  
For food and raiment; while my own bare wants  
Are all I have to heed. Is it then just  
That I should take an equal share with him  
Of the rich strength and fatness of the land?"—  
Whereat, being strangely moved within his soul,  
He rose, and quickly clad himself, and went

\* The substance of this legend will be found in Marghoth's "Pilgrimage to the Land of my Fathers."

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