

## Ocean Passenger Travel.

### *Ocean steamships ; a popular account of their construction, development, management and appliances*

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1891

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THERE are, undoubtedly, many men and women in New York today who went down to the Battery and cheered and waved their hands in greeting to the first steamship that entered this port from Europe. This important event took place on April 23, 1838, and it was doubly interesting and significant because not only the first transatlantic steamship came to anchor in the harbor on that day, but the second also ; steam travel across the sea thus beginning with a race that was earnestly contested and brilliantly won. Furthermore, it was a race that attracted infinitely more attention than any of the contests that have succeeded it. Two steam-vessels had crossed the Atlantic in years previous, both having started from this side ; the Savannah, from Savannah, in 1819 ; and the Royal William from Quebec, in 1831 ; but neither of these voyages had demonstrated the feasibility of abandoning the fine sailing packets and clippers for steamers when it came to a long-voyage. The Savannah used both steam and sail during eighteen of the twenty-five days required for a passage to Liverpool, and more than one clipper overtook and passed her during the voyage. The Royal William had to utilize all her hold for coal in order to carry sufficient fuel to insure a completion of the voyage. The reasons for the commercial failure of such craft are, therefore, apparent ; but they proved to be available and profitable for coastwise traffic, and meantime inventive genius was at work on plans and models and theories, all intended for the construction of a steamship capable of carrying goods and passengers between Europe and America, and of outrunning the packets. Public interest, accordingly, was deeply stirred on both sides of the ocean when, in 1837, it was learned that two steam-vessels were on the stocks, building for the American service. These were the Sirius, at London, and the Great Western, at Bristol. It was these vessels that made the first race ; the Sirius making the trip, measured from Queenstown, in eighteen and a half days, and the Great Western in fourteen and a half days. The Sirius, having had nearly four days' start, came in a few hours ahead of the winner. She brought seven passengers, and whether the Great Western had others than her crew on board cannot now be ascertained.

At this time there were several lines of sailing vessels in operation between America and Europe, among the most important of which were Williams & Guion's Old Black Star line, afterward merged into the Guion line of Steamships ; Grimshaw & Co.'s Black Star line ; C. H. Marshall & Co.'s Black Ball line ; and Tapscott's line. All these concerns conducted a profitable business in carrying passengers, and the ships were provided with accommodations for the three classes into which travelers have been divided from early times. It is impossible at this day to determine with exactness the volume of passenger traffic in clippers, for no complete records were kept ; but that it was comparatively light may be inferred from the fact that provision was made in the large ships for from ten to thirty first-cabin and twenty second-cabin passengers.

The steerage capacity varied from eight hundred to one thousand, and it was a long time after steamship lines had been established before immigrants ceased to come over in clippers. In fact, for ten years after the inauguration of the first steam line the immigrants had no choice—the steamships carrying none but cabin passengers. The rates were, £30 for first cabin ; £8 for second cabin ; and £5 to £8 for steerage. The appointments of cabins and state-rooms were meagre as compared with the great steamships of to-day, but the table fare was substantially the same that is provided now. The first-cabin passengers fared as they might in a good hotel ; those in the second cabin, or “ intermediates,” as they were called, had a plentiful supply of plain well-prepared food, and the needs of the steerage passengers were looked after by the British Government, which instituted an official bill of fare. These matters will be described in greater detail farther on.

In the *Marine News* of April 4, 1838, published in New York, the agents of the Sirius advertise her as a “New and Powerful Steamship, 700 tons burden, 320 horse-power.” The advertisement continues :

This vessel has superior accommodations, and is fitted with separate cabins for the accommodation of families, to whom every possible attention will be given.  
Cabin, \$140. 00, including provisions, wines, etc.  
Second cabin, \$80.00, including provisions.

Commenting upon the arrival of the Sirius and Great Western, the *New York Courier and Enquirer* of April 24, 1838, said :

What may be the ultimate fate of this excitement whether or not the expenses of equipment and fuel will admit of the employment of these vessels in the ordinary packet service we cannot pretend to form an opinion ; but of the entire feasibility of the passage of the Atlantic by steam, as far as regards safety, comfort, and despatch, even in the roughest and most boisterous weather, the most sceptical must now cease to doubt.

The “fate of the experiment,” as far as the Sirius was concerned, was decided by the initial voyage. She had taken four hundred and fifty tons of coal at Queenstown, all of which had been consumed before passing Sandy Hook, and had it not been for the sacrifice of spare spars and forty-three barrels of rosin to the demands of the furnace, she would not have entered the upper bay under steam. Nevertheless there were people who trusted her capability to get back to Queenstown with the same quantity of coal, and among these confident, not to say venturesome, travellers, were the Chevalier Wyckoff and James Gordon Bennett, Sr. The Sirius made better time on the eastward trip, but she never again crossed the ocean. For many years she plied between Cork and Dublin.

As a business venture the Great Western was more successful, and she made in all thirty-seven round voyages between Bristol, or Liverpool, and New York. Sixty-six passengers sailed in her on her first voyage from New York. Enthusiastic reporters of that day record that at least one hundred thousand persons crowded the Battery and other points of view to see her off. She had been advertised as follows :

BRITISH STEAM-PACKET SHIP GREAT WESTERN,  
JAMES HOSKEN, R.N., *Commander* :

Having arrived yesterday from Bristol, which place she left on the 8th inst., at noon, will sail from New York for Bristol on Monday, May 7th, at 2 o'clock P.M.

She takes no Steerage Passengers. Rates in the Cabin, including Wines and Provisions of every kind, 30 guineas ; a whole State-room for one person, 50 guineas. Steward's fee for each passenger, £1 10s. sterling. Children under 13 years of age, half price. No charge for Letters or Papers. The Captain and Owners will not be liable for any Package, unless a Bill of Lading has been given for it. One to two hundred tons can be taken at the lowest current rates.

Passage or freight can be engaged, a plan of cabin may be seen, and further particulars learned, by applying to RICHARD IRVIN, 98 Front St.

Other steamships made experimental voyages across the Atlantic after this, and several attempts were made to establish regular lines, that is, a service with stated times of sailing from one year's end to another ; but none of these succeeded until 1840, when the British & North American Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company was organized. The chief promoter of this concern was Mr. Samuel Cunard, of Halifax, and the name of the corporation was speedily forgotten in the popular adoption of his name to designate the line. Mr. Cunard and his associates had been keen observers of the various experiments in steam navigation, and naturally they profited by others' failures. By no means the least important feature of their enterprise, by which it differed from previous ventures, and by which it secured a fighting chance for prosperity, was an arrangement with the British Government for carry-

ing the mails. The first mail contract covered a period of seven years at £60,000 annually. This service was monthly in the beginning, afterward fortnightly, and the points touched were Liverpool, Halifax, and Boston. Eventually, with increased subventions from the Government, a weekly service was established between Liverpool and New York, as well as a semi-monthly service between Liverpool and Boston. The first fleet of the Cunard line consisted of four vessels the Britannia, Acadia, Caledonia, and Columbia. Another steamship, the Unicorn, made what was probably a voyage of announcement for the company. The Unicorn was the first steam-vessel from Europe to enter Boston Harbor, where she arrived on June 2, 1840. Although Boston made as much fuss over this event as New York had over the arrival of the Sirius and Great Western two years before, regular communication with Europe was not established until the arrival of the Britannia, the real pioneer of the Cunard line. She left Liverpool on Friday, July 4, 1840, and made the voyage to Boston, including the detour to Halifax and delay there of twelve hours, in fourteen days and eight hours. That Mr. Cunard was correct in believing that transportation by steam would stimulate travel between the continents is clear enough to us now ; but he and his associates must have felt justified in the undertaking by the fact that the Britannia carried ninety cabin passengers on her first trip.

Although the passengers had “ the run ” of the entire ship, their accommodations were little, if any, better than those provided in the clippers. The saloon and state-rooms were all in the extreme after-part of the vessel, and there were no such things as comfortable smoking-rooms on deck, libraries, sitting-rooms, electric lights and annunciators, automatic windows to port-holes ; and there were no baths to be obtained except through the kind offices of the boatswain or his mate, who vigorously applied the hose on such passengers as came dressed for the occasion when the decks were being washed in the early morning. “ State-room ” was much more of a misnomer then than it is now. On the most unpretentious modern steamship there is room enough in the chambers to put a small trunk, and even other articles of convenience to the traveller ; and one may dress, if he takes reasonable care, without knocking his knuckles and elbows against the wall or the edges of his berth. Nowadays, too, the state-room is usually large enough to accommodate three or four persons, while some are arranged to hold more, if the ship is crowded. The pioneer steamship had chambers so narrow that there was just room enough for a stool to stand between the edge of the two-feet- wide berth and the wall mere closets. There were two berths in each room, one above the other. By paying somewhat less than double fare a passenger given to luxury might have a room to himself, according to the advertisement of the Great Western. Within such narrow quarters, however, everything possible was done for the passenger’s comfort. A gentleman, now in business in New York, who crossed in the earliest days of the Cunard line, and who has since sailed on the modern racers, says that the difference is by no means as great as might be expected. He puts it this way :

“ The table was as good then as it is now, and the officers and stewards were just as attentive. There is more costly ornamentation now ; but that aside, the two great improvements over the liners of forty-five years ago are in speed and space. There is more room now to turn around in, and the service is somewhat better.”

This is a very good-humored view of the matter. It is not probable that latter-day travellers would be content to put up with narrow rooms, smoking lamps, low ceilings, and plain edibles, all of which are now entirely changed. The traveller to-day demands more than comfort and safety. Travelling is in the main itself a luxury, and as more and more Americans have found themselves with sufficient means to indulge in it, they have demanded more and more luxurious surroundings and appointments. It is in response to this demand and the growth of the traffic, that within the last few years there has been placed upon the transatlantic lines a fleet of steamships that surpass in every respect anything that the world has seen.

For several years the Cunard line enjoyed what was substantially a monopoly of the steam carrying trade between England and America, although individual vessels made trips back and forth at irregular intervals, and various and unsuccessful attempts were made to establish a regular service. The first enterprise of this kind that originated in the United States was the Ocean Steam Navigation Company. In 1847 this corporation undertook to carry the American mails between New York and Bremen twice a month. The Government paid \$200,000 a year for this service, and the vessels touched at Cowes, Isle of Wight, on each trip. Two steamships were built for this line, the Washington

and Herman. When the contract with the Government expired both were withdrawn and the project was abandoned. About the same time C. H. Marshall & Co., proprietors of the Black Ball line of packet-ships, built a steamship, the *United States*, to supplement their transatlantic business, but the venture proved to be unprofitable. Then came the New York & Havre Steam Navigation Company. This line was also subsidized by the Government for carrying the United States mails between New York, Southampton, and Havre, fortnightly, at \$150,000 annually. The two steamships built for this purpose were wrecked, and two others were chartered in order to carry out the mail contract, until the *Fulton* and the *Arago*, two new steamships built for the line, were ready for service in 1856.

The most important American rival which foreign corporations have encountered in transatlantic steam navigation was the famous Collins line. Mr. E. K. Collins had grown up in the freight and passenger business between New York and Liverpool, and in 1847 he began to interest New York merchants in a plan to establish a new steamship line. Two years later a company which he had organized launched four vessels—the *Atlantic*, *Pacific*, *Arctic*, and *Baltic*. They were liberally subsidized; the Government paying to the company \$858,000 yearly for carrying the mails; conditions imposed being that the vessels should make twenty-six voyages every year, and that the passage from port to port should be better in point of time than that made by the Cunarders. The Collins line met the conditions successfully; its vessels making westward trips that averaged eleven days, ten hours, and twenty-one minutes, as compared with twelve days, nineteen hours, and twenty-six minutes by the British steam-ships. The vessels of the Collins line cost upward of \$700,000 each. This was a great deal of money to put into a steamship in those days, and as the largest of the fleet was considerably smaller than the smallest of the steamships that now ply between New York and European ports, there was naturally a good percentage of cost in the appointments for the comfort of the passengers. Many features that have since come to be regarded as indispensable on board ship were introduced by the Collins vessels. Among them none attracted more comment when the *Atlantic* arrived at Liverpool, at the end of her first voyage, English visitors to the vessel, as she lay at anchor in the Mersey, saw for the first time the comfortable chair with its movable head-rest and foot-rest, in which Americans are accustomed to recline while undergoing shaving. Another novelty was a smoking-room in a house on the after-part of the deck. In the predecessors of the *Atlantic* smokers had to get on as well as might be in an uninviting covered hatchway known as the “fiddle.” The Collins line vessels had not only a dining-room sixty feet long by twenty feet broad, but had a general saloon sixty-seven feet by twenty feet. These were divided by the steward’s pantry. Rose, satin, and olive woods figured prominently in the decorations; there were rich carpets, marble-topped tables, expensively upholstered chairs and sofas; a profusion of mirrors; all the panels and the saloon windows were ornamented with coats-of-arms and other designs emblematic of American freedom; all of which made, according to an English writer, a “general effect of chasteness and a certain kind of solidity.”

The Collins line obtained its share of a steadily increasing passenger traffic between the Old and New Worlds. It carried freight at from \$30 to \$40 a ton; it had the advantage of an immense subsidy; but to all intents and purposes the corporation was bankrupt at the end of six years. It cost too much to maintain the high rate of speed required by the Government. Moreover, two vessels were lost; the *Arctic*, which went down after a collision with a French steamer off Cape Race, in September, 1854, when two hundred and twenty-two of the two hundred and sixty-eight people on board were drowned; and the *Pacific*, which was never heard from after she left Liverpool on June 23, 1856.

Almost simultaneously with the inauguration of the Collins line another candidate for ocean business appeared, bringing with it two innovations of great importance to all travellers. This was the Liverpool, New York, & Philadelphia Steamship Company, better known, even in its own offices, as the Inman line. It was the original plan of this company to establish a line between Liverpool and Philadelphia, and for several years, beginning in 1850, no calls were made at New York. The Inman Company was successful in securing a contract from the British and Canadian Governments for carrying the mails via Halifax, and was the successor to the Cunard line on that route; the company then settled down, with a comfortable mail contract, to carrying passengers, freight, and mail between Liverpool and New York, calling at Queenstown on every trip.

During the Crimean War the transatlantic trade received a severe check, as more than half the steamships were withdrawn and placed in the service of the British and the French Governments as

transports. During that time the Collins line and other American lines received quite an impetus by many of the vessels of both the Cunard and Inman lines being required for transport duty. At the close of the Crimean War, however, a reaction set in when these ships were again put in commission, with a decidedly disastrous effect on the American lines.

In 1855 Commodore Vanderbilt endeavored to get a subsidy from the American Government for a mail line to Europe, but, notwithstanding his failure to procure this contract, he placed three or four vessels on the route between New York, Southampton, and Havre, and later on the Bremen route. The venture was more or less profitable. Almost the last remnants of American enterprise in Atlantic passenger traffic disappeared with the steam-ships Fulton and Arago of the New York and Havre line, which were withdrawn in 1868. Mention should, however, be made of the American line, with four iron screw steamers, which began to run between Philadelphia and Liverpool in 1873, and ran regularly since its inception, without any Government subsidy.

Two innovations introduced by the Inman line became prominent features of ocean business, and it may be left an open question as to which was the more important. One was the use of the screw-propeller, and the other was the carrying of steerage, or third-class, passengers. Previous to 1850 all steamships built for transatlantic voyages had been side-wheelers, and even as late as 1870 there were steam-vessels that came into the port of New York with the walking-beam, familiar to patrons of modern ferry-boats and river steamers. The principle of the screw-propeller had been known and utilized for many years ; but it was not believed that a steamship could cross the ocean in safety unless side-paddles were employed. The first iron transatlantic screw steamship was the City of Glasgow (except the Great Britain, which first arrived in New York on September 10, 1845, making but two transatlantic trips, and therefore not entering as a factor into this trade), built on the Clyde by Tod & McGregor. She made four successful voyages between Glasgow and New York before she was purchased by the corporation that afterward became known as the Inman line. This innovation, although it did not result at first in any marked increase of speed, soon found approbation in the policies of rival companies.

The other innovation was equally long in finding acceptance among oceanic steamship companies, but it eventually prevailed, even to the extermination of the clipper ship as a passenger carrier. It may be remarked just here that the introduction of the screw-propeller added to the discomforts of the cabin passengers ; for in the first vessels of the Inman line the state-rooms and saloons were retained in the after-part of the ships, where the motion of the sea and the noise of the screw were most apparent.

Leaving this matter for the present, it is worth noting that the steady increase in passenger traffic between the two continents led to the organization of many other companies that tried to find a share in the carrying business. The Glasgow & New York Steamship Company was started in 1854 by Tod & McGregor, shipbuilders ; the service was fortnightly. In 1859 they decided to confine their business to ship-building, and the fleet and good-will were then sold out to the Inman line, who continued the service for a year or two, but finally withdrew the fleet from Glasgow and concentrated their entire business between Liverpool, Queenstown, and New York.

During- the period from 1850 to 1860 many Atlantic lines were established, several of which are in successful operation to-day. The new-comers during that decade, as well as in the following decade, adopted generally the innovations ventured by the Inman line ; but it was not until after 1870 that the side-wheeler disappeared from the ocean, and it was not until 1874 that clipper ships ceased to bring immigrants. It is said that the life of an iron steamship is unlimited; that time enough has not elapsed since the first iron ships were floated to determine how long they would naturally last under good usage. The importance, therefore, of the innovation introduced by the Inman line may be readily inferred when it is stated that the oldest steamship belonging to any of the regular lines now in the passenger service between New York and European ports was built in 1867. Within the last year or two steel has been almost entirely substituted for iron, it being lighter and more durable.

Although the transatlantic lines multiplied rapidly, and the business induced by foreign traffic increased steadily, there was no other marked improvement in the service until 1870, when the

Oceanic Steam Navigation Company entered upon its career. In this case also the legal title of the corporation has been forgotten in the popular adoption of a short name to designate the line ; and this new enterprise has been known almost from the beginning as the White Star line. Their first steamship was the Oceanic, and its model and appointments throughout became the pioneer of the great fleet that now plies regularly between this county and Europe. It was not so much that the proprietors of the White Star line endeavored to outdo their rivals in conveniences for passengers, table-fare, and the like, but that they heeded the complaints of the travellers who suffered from the noise and motion in their state-rooms in the afterpart of the boat. In the old style of steamships the passenger who desired to sleep had to contend against the noise of the screw, the creaking of the steering apparatus, and the most extreme motion possible upon the vessel. The White Star line arranged its saloons and state-rooms so as to bring them as near as possible to the centre of gravity ; placing them, therefore, amidships.

It is not essential now to state what mechanical improvements this change involved further than to say that previous to this date the cabin quarters in sailing-vessels and steamships, both naval and mercantile, were located in the afterpart of the ship, and this for the reason that it enabled the passengers to fully occupy that part of the ship which was not invaded by the crew for working purposes. The year 1870, therefore, marks an epoch in steam navigation, and the vessels of all the principal lines, built since that date have been conformed to the model set by the Oceanic, and the best ships of to-day are so arranged that the passengers who pay the highest rates are located in all their necessary movements in the central part of the vessel.

From year to year the speed has been improved, until so many steamships are classed as racers that the rivalry has come to be centred in appointments and luxurious accommodation. The inauguration of the Oceanic Company marked the beginning of what may be called the second epoch in transatlantic travel, and with the first voyage of the City of New York a third epoch was begun. This last period, into which we have hardly entered, is distinguished by the twin-screw steamship. There are now nine great vessels of this class in the passenger service between European ports and New York : the City of New York and the City of Paris, of the Inman line ; the Majestic and the Teutonic, of the White Star line ; the Augusta Victoria, the Columbia, the Normannia, and the Fürst Bismarck, of the Hamburg- American line ; and La Touraine of the French line. These new vessels are not remarkably superior to the best single-screw steamships in the matter of speed, and any advantage gained in this respect may be attributed to their having greater horse-power. As may be seen from the record of fast passages, the Etruria and the Umbria, of the Cunard line, are not only very close seconds to the best twin-screw ships, but are even ahead of several of the new type of vessel. The great merit of the twin-screwship lies in the increased safety which its mechanism insures. It admits of avoiding obstacles that would surely wreck a single-screw vessel, of better handling in case of collision, and of surer progress in the event of the breaking of a shaft.

Such steamships as the City of New York and the City of Paris, of the Inman line (which is now controlled by American capital, and may in a sense be regarded as an American enterprise), are designed so as to carry about 500 first-cabin passengers each, and the Etruria and Umbria, of the Cunard line, about 600 ; but these vessels carry less steerage passengers than other ships, which adds greatly to the comfort of saloon passengers. It is not probable that the \$700,000 expended for the construction of a vessel of the Collins line would much more than suffice to pay for the decorations and conveniences afforded to passengers on the Inman ships. In correspondence with modern ideas they are subdivided into twenty-four watertight compartments, and this, with due allowance for the architect's notions, has led to the supplying of bath-rooms about the ship, according to the number of passengers carried ; several suites of rooms on the promenade and saloon decks are arranged with bath-rooms and toilet-rooms. The second-class passengers have also their own bath-rooms, smoking-room, and saloon dining-room. The steerage is so divided that the third-class passengers are not only away forward, but aft also ; and they have the whole of one deck to themselves for promenading and getting glimpses of ocean view.

These are features that apply to so many of the best steamships now plying between New York and European ports, that it would be unjust to describe any one ship as against another ; but as the City of New York in 1890 made the highest average speed of all the Atlantic " greyhounds," and for that

matter the highest average speed of any steamship in the world, it is but fair to mention her wonderful performance. During the year 1890 she made eight trips to the eastward, and the average of each trip from Sandy Hook lightship to Roche's Point, Queenstown Harbor, was six days, four hours, and five minutes ; the average of her eight trips to the westward from Roche's Point to Sandy Hook lightship was six days, five hours, and forty-four minutes. On the four trips each way from August to November, inclusive, her average west-bound voyages were six days and forty-two minutes, and the east-bound voyages six days and fifty-three minutes. For the whole season on her trips to the eastward she averaged 19.12 knots per hour, and to the westward 18.91 knots per hour. She has made a slightly better average than her sister, the favorite City of Paris, and she beat her powerful rival, the Teutonic, seven times out of ten during the season of 1890.

The fastest westward trip on record is that of the Teutonic, her time of 5 days, 16 hours, and 30 minutes being made in August, 1891. Her best eastward trip was made in September, 1891, in 5 days, 21 hours, and 22 minutes, which is also the fastest trip on record to the eastward.

The fast ships of several lines now make a seven-days' journey from port to port ; these lines are the Cunard, Inman, White Star, North German Lloyd, Hamburg-American, French, Guion, and Anchor. Their vessels are well fitted, the passengers find every convenience at hand, and, barring extremely bad weather, the traveller may imagine that he is confined but a few days to a first rate hotel on land. Nevertheless, it may be worth while to mention one or two comparatively minor features that have been introduced lately to make the journey to Europe comfortable. The Midland Railway Company of England and the London & Northwestern Railway Company have both adopted the American system of checking baggage, and it is now possible to have your trunks checked at your house for delivery in London, although the steamship may terminate its journey at Liverpool. This service naturally calls for a small extra fee, but it is hardly more than would be charged by an expressman who would take your trunks to the dock where the steamship lies awaiting your departure. It is quite the custom now, also, for steamship companies to issue letters of credit to passengers, who, for one reason or another, may not care to deposit their moneys with the banking houses. On one line, at least, passengers can rent steamer-chairs previous to sailing at fifty cents each for the trip, and when they arrive on board they simply apply to the deck-steward for their chairs. At the offices of all the principal lines steamer-chairs may be engaged at the time tickets are procured, but the price charged for the trip is one dollar ; the enterprise being managed by an independent concern who have obtained the privilege from the different lines.

Every traveller may have at least one interesting souvenir of the voyage across the Atlantic. The names of the passengers, and in some cases their home addresses, are neatly printed upon folios along with a blank chart for recording the progress of the voyage, and more or less information about the company, the vessel, and the fleet of which it is a member. A sufficient number of these passenger lists are printed to assure one at least for every cabin passenger, and the lists are usually distributed in the saloon soon after the vessel leaves her dock. They are not only prized as souvenirs, but they are invaluable in assisting one to make acquaintances or avoid them, for that matter. It is the custom of the Inman and Guion lines to distribute passenger lists at the gang-plank just previous to the sailing of the vessel, so that friends of passengers may carry away a token of the great journey , and speculate as to how companionable this or another person will prove to the party in which they are especially interested. On nearly all the larger vessels there is a miniature newspaper printed by the ship's printer, which gives the usual amount of " local" gossip and happenings peculiar to the surroundings ; articles are contributed by the passengers, and sometimes there is a good deal of talent on board. Reports of concerts and domestic entertainments, etc., are given.

Rivalry between the various lines has led to the establishment of agencies in various parts of this country and Europe.

Abroad the agents seek mainly, if not exclusively, to induce emigration. In this country the agents deal almost exclusively with those to whom travel has become a well-earned luxury. The central point of agencies is in Chicago. The agents there control the territory west of Chicago, and are in constant communication with the head-offices in New York, and they have their sub-agents scattered about everywhere, but especially in the Northwest. The New York offices are promptly informed by the

Chicago agents concerning the number of people booked for certain steamships, and the chief stewards make provision accordingly.

Before showing how the steward has to provide for his passengers, it will be interesting to note, as well as may be, the increase in transatlantic voyaging. Exact records of cabin passengers have not been kept until within a few years ; but it will be remembered that in the time of the clipper ships ten first-cabin passengers was the average on a ship. As it is now, the different steamship lines entering the port of New York employ several men to look after the landing of passengers. Their duties are mainly directed to steerage people ; but recently they have also kept records of those who come over in either first or second class. From these records, kept in the Barge Office in New York City, it appears that ocean travel varies according to the business situation in this country. Following is an exhibit of the number of cabin passengers that arrived at this port during the years between 1881 and 1890, inclusive : 1881, 51,229 ; 1882, 57,947 ; 1883, 58,596 ; 1884, 59,503 ; 1885, 55,160 ; 1886, 68,742 ; 1887, 78,792 ; 1888, 86,302 ; 1889, 96,686 ; 1890, 99,189.

From one point of view, at least, these figures are very striking. In 1889 there was a great show in Paris that attracted world-wide attention and interest. In the spring of that year every steamship agent announced to prospective passengers that all vessels would be crowded, and that the volume of passenger traffic between the continents would swamp the capacity of every line. But the figures speak for themselves. Viewing the increase of oceanic travel, it appears that the financial depression of 1884 kept many people at home who otherwise might have crossed the ocean. After that distressing season had passed travel resumed its normal condition, and an increase may be noted with each year. When finances in this country had been somewhat adjusted we find that 86,302 cabin passengers landed at New York in 1888. Then came the Paris Exposition, and the record for 1889 is 96,686. That was the greatest year for ocean travel known theretofore. Yet 1890 came along, and the record of 1889 had been broken. The total number of arrivals of cabin passengers for that year being 99,189.

These figures mean that Americans are getting rich enough to travel ; nothing more. An agent of an excursion company said to me during 1889 :

“ It doesn't need an Exposition in Paris to induce travel. Europe is the loadstone ! All we have to do is to show people that they can get to *Europe* at a moderate cost, and that fetches 'em.”

The same men who keep these records at the Barge Office say that at least eighty per cent, of the arrivals from Europe represent people who live in this country ; that is, that not more, than 20,000 people during 1890 arrived in New York who did not live here, or who were not returning to their homes. Furthermore, it should be noted here that New York has become to so great a degree the port to which transatlantic business tends, that not more than fifteen per cent, of either immigrants or cabin passengers land at any other port. A few go to Boston, or Philadelphia, or Baltimore ; and a few come in *via* Quebec and the northern border ; but the figures at New York really represent the volume of passenger traffic.

It is not possible to give an exact comparison between the traffic now and when passenger steamships first began to run between this country and Europe ; but it will be remembered that the Cunards, beginning in 1840, had only four regular vessels. Now there are twelve steamship lines who have regular sailing days each week, and some have sailings twice and three times a week ; they all terminate or begin in New York, and on these lines there are eighty-five steamships which carry saloon and steerage passengers. These lines make landings at Queenstown, Liverpool, Southampton, Havre, Bremen, Hamburg, Moville (Londonderry), Glasgow, Antwerp, Boulogne, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen. No line employs less than four boats, and the Hamburg-American line keeps nineteen in commission. The North German Lloyd Company has the largest fleet of express steamships ; there are twelve in commission between New York, Southampton, and Bremen. This great fleet of eighty-five vessels is composed of the following-lines, given in the order in which they were established : Cunard line, 1840 ; Inman line, 1850 ; Allan line, 1853 ; Hamburg- - American line, 1856 ; Anchor line, 1856 ; North German Lloyd line, 1857 ; French line (Compagnie Générale Transatlantique), 1862 ; Guion line, 1864 ; White Star line, 1870 ; Netherlands line, 1872 ; Red Star line, 1873 ; Thingvalla line, 1879. Besides these lines there is also the Anchor line, Fabre line, and the

Florio line to Mediterranean ports ; Wilson line to London, and also to Hull ; National line to London, and also to Liverpool; Hill line to London; Union line to Hamburg; and Baltic line to Stettin. All these lines carry passengers.

This record, of course, takes no account of the lines to the South American continent or to Pacific ports. Freight lines, of which there are several, are out of the question for the moment.

A great many passengers are more anxious about the table-fare upon an ocean steamship than about the state-rooms, saloons, smoking-rooms, and other matters of transient comfort. There is really no need for worry about the table. There is always enough, and on the best boats there is always a great variety.

On one of the recent departures of a great liner from this port her larder was stocked as follows :

20,000 pounds of fresh beef (a portion of this, although all was available, was intended for the return trip, beef being cheaper here than in Liverpool) ; fresh pork, 500 pounds ; mutton, 3,500 pounds ; lamb, 450 pounds ; veal, 500 pounds ; sausage, 200 pounds ; liver, 230 pounds ; corned beef, 2,900 pounds ; salt pork, 2,200 pounds ; bacon, 479 pounds ; hams, 500 pounds ; tongues, 8 dozen ; sweetbreads, 200 ; fish, assorted, 2,100 pounds ; oysters, 5,000 ; clams, 5,000 ; soft-shell crabs, 500 ; green turtle, 200 pounds ; turkeys, 50 ; geese, 50 ; fowls, 248 ; chickens, 150 ; squabs, 300 ; snipe, 500 ; quail, 500 ; ducklings, 216 ; wild game, 108 pair. Butter, 1,500 pounds ; eggs, 1,200 ; condensed milk, 400 quarts; fresh milk, 1,000 quarts; ice cream, 400 quarts. Apples, 12 barrels ; pears, 10 boxes ; musk-melons, 100 ; water melons, 60 ; oranges, 16 boxes ; peaches, 10 crates ; bananas, 10 bunches ; huckleberries, 100 quarts ; gooseberries, 100 quarts; cherries, 250 quarts ; currants, 100 pounds; grapes, 75 pounds ; lemons, 14 cases ; pineapples, 100 ; plums, 150 quarts ; strawberries, 250 quarts ; raspberries, 250 quarts. Flour, 125 barrels ; potatoes, 140 barrels ; lettuce, 72 dozen ; asparagus, 30 dozen ; green peas, beans, tomatoes, 15 crates each ; Brussels sprouts, 10 baskets. Crackers, cakes in large variety, and a quantity of pickles, sauces, spices, extracts, pates de foie gras, truffles, caviare, canned and dried and fresh vegetables, and general groceries in the most generous quantity. About 500 other items appeared on her list of stores, besides wines, spirits, beer, mineral waters, cigars, etc.

One of the bills of fare presented to first-cabin passengers from such a commissariat is here given.

#### SOUPS.

Turtle and Spring.

#### FISH.

Scotch Salmon and Sauce Hollandaise.

#### ENTRÉES.

Blanquettes de Poulet aux Champignons.

Filets de Bœuf a la Bordelaise.

Cailles sur Canapés.

#### JOINTS.

Saddle of Mutton and Jelly.

Beef and Yorkshire Pudding.

York Ham and Champagne Sauce.

#### POULTRY.

Roast Turkey and Truffles.

Spring Ducklings.

VEGETABLES.

Pommes de Terre Duchesse.  
Asparagus. Potatoes. Parsnips.

SWEETS.

International Pudding.  
Rhubarb with Custard.  
Strawberry Jam. Tartlets. Sandwich.

PASTRY.

Genoise Pastry. Marlborough Pudding.  
Gooseberry Soufflés.  
Lemon Cream.

DESSERT.

Seville Oranges. Black Hamburg Grapes.  
English Walnuts. Madeira Nuts. Cantaloupes.  
Café Noir.

Following is a literal copy of a bill of fare for a second-cabin dinner on a favorite steamship :

SOUP.

Julienne.

FISH.

Boiled Rock Fish, butter sauce.

MEATS.

Haricot of mutton ; roast beef, baked potatoes ; boiled mutton, caper sauce ; mashed turnips ; potatoes. Rice pudding ; apple tart ; small pastry. Biscuits and cheese.

So the accommodations on board ship have kept pace with the growing traffic and the increasing demand for luxurious appointments. Vessels now are lighted by electricity in every quarter, including even the steerage; there is ample room for exercises and games on deck ; there are well-stocked libraries and music-rooms, no well-ordered ship being without a piano or organ, and some have both ; smoking-rooms are usually on the upper deck ; electric annunciators are handy; bath-rooms are numerous; the thrashing of the screw is heard faintly at the worst ; there is plenty and a variety of food ; and in short, the majority of cabin passengers fare for a week better, and are surrounded by more appointments of wealth and luxury, than they are accustomed to in their own homes.

Some specially interesting features have been introduced into the North German Lloyd service, and also on the express steamers of the Hamburg-American line to make a voyage attractive. Among these is the band that accompanies every vessel. The performers are the stewards of the second cabin, who must not only be good waiters but also musicians as well. They play through the long first-cabin dinner, which lasts from one to two hours, and again on deck in the evening. There are no Sunday services on these boats, but in the morning the band plays hymn tunes, and in the evening there is a " sacred " concert. All German and American holidays are observed on board, special attention being paid to the Fourth of July and Washington's Birthday, and particularly so on an eastward trip if the holiday occurs when the vessel is only a day or so out from New York ; when Christmas comes to the travellers at sea, they find themselves in the midst of a German festival, in which there is no lack of a

brightly adorned and illuminated tree. The steerage passengers are not forgotten on these occasions ; amusements and a special feast are provided for them.

The French line has some remarkable features of its own. Baggage may be checked by it to any point in France. The company provides a special train that waits on the steamship dock in Havre, and on the arrival of the vessel from New York takes the passengers and baggage to Paris at once, and puts them in close connection with trains for other parts of the continent. This system of transfer and checking baggage applies not only to cabin passengers, but to those in the steerage as well, and the French line is the only line that makes such arrangements. It is also the only line (except the Netherlands which touches at Boulogne for Paris) that supplies immigrants with all necessary utensils, including bedding ; and, more than that, it provides a wholesome wine at all meals in the steerage, and cognac once a day.

For the last eight years the French Government have permitted some of their naval officers to command the steamships of the French line, and in case of war they would retain command of these ships, which are specially constructed armed cruisers. All the crew must have served a certain time on a French man-of-war.

French festivals and American holidays are celebrated on board by concerts, balls, dinner-parties, and extra luxuries at the regular meals. Entertainment is provided for the steerage passengers, and a special menu is furnished for the festal days. On such occasions, too, the ships are gayly decorated with bunting from stem to stern. Another unique and pleasant feature of the voyage on the French line is the “ Captain’s Dinner.” This takes place just previous to the termination of the trip.

On the British lines Sunday is suitably observed ; the captain, in full uniform, supported by his officers, reads the Church of England services, to which all on board are invited. American and British holidays are also observed in a fitting manner, the vessels being always “ dressed” for the occasion. These lines also have a parting dinner, usually one or two evenings before arrival in port.

All incoming steamers are signalled off Fire Island or Sandy Hook, their arrival is telegraphed to the Quarantine station and the ship-news office, and in about three hours the vessel reaches Quarantine from Fire Island, or about one hour from Sandy Hook. At Quarantine the health officer boards her, and if it is found that she has no case of contagious disease on board she is permitted to proceed to her dock, which she reaches in about one hour and a half, including the time of examination by the health officer ; but if but if she has any serious case on board she is detained at Quarantine until she receives orders from the health officer to land her passengers. As soon as the vessel is reported inside Sandy Hook the revenue cutter starts down the bay to meet her, with the customs officers on board. The boarding officer places several staff officers on board, who go immediately to the saloon, where declarations are made and signed by the saloon passengers as to the contents of their trunks, etc., and all baggage is searched on arrival of the vessel at her dock, when those who attempt “ monkeying” with the customs officials will find out that the little trick does not pay.

Meantime, how do the steerage folk get on ?

Mention has been made of the British Government bill of fare. This was instituted when clipper ships were in vogue. It was ordered that a minimum weekly allowance of raw food should be provided for every adult third-class passenger as follows :

3½ pounds bread, or biscuit, not inferior in quality to navy biscuit ; 1 pound flour ; 1½ pound oatmeal ; 1½ pound rice ; 1½ pound peas ; ¼ pound beef ; 1 pound pork ; 2 pounds potatoes ; 2 ounces tea ; 1 pound sugar ; ½ ounce mustard ; ¼ ounce ground black pepper ; 2 ounces salt ; 1 gill vinegar.

A government inspector saw to it that these items or their equivalents were provided upon the departure of every ship carrying-third-class passengers, and that no ship went to sea without being provisioned for thirty days. The allowance, however, proved not to be altogether generous, and many

passengers brought stores of their own along. In any event, each passenger had to prepare his own meals at the cook's galley, for the number of cooks furnished was always insufficient. The kitchen is never commodious at the best, aboard ship, and it needs no imagination to picture the struggle of immigrants, one against another, for a turn at the fire. The government requisition is still in force, but it is substantially a dead letter, for not only the British but all European steamship companies now provide ample fare properly cooked and served, for all steerage passengers.

A young man who crossed in the steerage last year described his fare to the writer, thus : " At breakfast," he said, " we usually had oatmeal porridge and molasses, with coffee in plenty, and rolls and butter. This was varied by hash instead of porridge on some days, or perhaps an Irish stew ; but fresh baked rolls and butter were always in abundance. There was always soup at dinner, and some boiled beef, pork, or fish with potatoes and bread. Supper did not amount to much, but there was plenty of plain, good stuff to eat. Roast beef and plum duff were served at Sunday's dinner."

This food was served to the steerage passengers by stewards, but there was no placing of dishes opposite the passenger's plate. The general meal was set down in the middle of the table, and " help yourself " was the order of the day. The steerage passengers do not cook their own food now, but they have to provide their own cups, plates, and other utensils, as well as their own bedding.

All captains of passenger steamships are scrupulously attentive to the needs of their steerage passengers. Not a day passes that they do not make a personal inspection of this department, and they are always approachable in the event of complaints arising on the part of the poorest travellers. It is related of one old-time commander—Captain John Mirehouse—that in order to assure himself of the proper quality and preparation of the steerage food, he invariably had his lunch served from the steerage galley at the dinner hour ; and he used to declare that his lunches were as wholesome and palatable as he could desire.

It must not be supposed that steerage passengers are all immigrants. Odd as it may seem, there are many world wanderers who cross and recross in the steerage, who travel over great parts of the world, and who, in their class, are as independent as the more luxuriously accommodated cabin people. Besides these curious characters there are Scottish carpenters and other mechanics who come over here for a few months at a time to take advantage of higher wages, and who return as they came when Christmas draws nigh. It will doubtless cause astonishment to most readers to learn that when the Teutonic made her last voyage to Europe, in December, 1890, she carried 1,400 passengers, more than 1,000 of whom were in the steerage.

The immigrant business has come to be so important a feature in transatlantic passenger traffic, that it may not be uninteresting to conclude this article with a few figures that show somewhat of its growth and proportions, and also the method of handling the immigrants. At least eighty-five per cent, of all immigration to the United States comes through the port of New York. The Board of Immigration was not established until 1847, and previous to that time records were rather loosely kept. The official figures, however, have been obtained, [1] showing that between 1783 and 1847, 1,063,567 immigrants came to this country ; between 1847 and 1873 there were 4,933,562 ; a marked falling off in the annual average occurring during the War of the Rebellion ; between 1873 and 1890, inclusive, 4,910,864. Immigration was heaviest in the years 1881, 1882, and 1883, the figures being 441,064 ; 455,450 ; and 388,267, respectively. The greatest arrival of immigrants in any one day was on May 11, 1887, when nearly 10,000 were landed at this port. The greatest number ever brought by a single ship was 1,767, by the Egypt, National line, in 1873. This good ship was destroyed by fire, July, 1890, in midocean, on her way to the eastward, but fortunately not a life was lost.

On the arrival of each vessel at her dock she is boarded by the Immigration Department boarding officer, and the Customs inspector and his assistants ; the latter examine the immigrants' baggage, and sometimes add considerable to Uncle Samuel's bank account in the way of duties or the confiscation of smuggled articles. Their baggage is then checked and placed on board the transfer boats and barges, which convey them to the Barge Office, where they are examined by a medical staff and then passed to the registration department in that building ; here they give their name, age, occupation, nationality, and destination ; if they appear as though they were liable to become a public charge, in

compliance with an Act of Congress, they are returned, by the same vessel on which they arrived, to the place from which they came. But an opportunity is given to their friends, if any should call, to guarantee that they will not become a public charge, and they are then allowed to leave the department in the custody of their friends. Parties seeking friends call at the information bureau, and if they satisfy the clerk as to their identity they are allowed to take their friends away. On leaving the steamship checks are given to them for their baggage, and it is stored at the Barge Office free of charge, and kept till called for.

There is a railroad ticket office in the Barge Office, where all the trunk lines are represented by one general agent, a sort of pool, and here the immigrant can secure tickets to any point and have baggage checked to destination; and at no other place can tickets be pro-cured at such low rates, nor can anyone but an immigrant get such a low rate. Each immigrant is allowed 150 pounds of baggage free, and the railroad companies transfer them and their baggage from the Barge Office to their respective depots free of charge.

A temporary hospital is located in the Barge Office, where immigrants not seriously ill are kept, and those who may have any serious illness are sent to hospitals under contract with the department for such patients.

Each steamship company was formerly required to pay to the United States Treasury a head tax of \$2.50 for each alien steerage passenger ; this fee was reduced to \$1.00, and some years ago it was still further reduced to fifty cents, the present rate. This tax goes to what is known as the Immigrant Fund.

In conclusion I might truly say that the modern ocean steamship of the great lines I have mentioned is the embodiment of the latest achievements of science and art of this enlightened age. So recent are many of the inventions that such a ship as the City of Paris or the Majestic could not have been built ten years ago at any price. The practical effect of all this to the traveller is to bring him very much nearer to the Old World than his father was, and to make the time spent in crossing the once dreaded ocean a delightful series of summer holidays.

[1] Through the courtesy of Mr. George W. Esslinger, assistant to Captain John E. Moore, landing agent.

Ocean steamships; a popular account of their construction, development, management and appliances (1891)

Author : Chadwick, French Ensor, 1844-1919 ; Seaton, Albert Edward, 1848-1930 ; Rideing, William Henry, 1858-1918 ; Gould, John H ; Kelley, J. D. Jerrold (James Douglas Jerrold), 1847-1922 ; Hunt, Ridgely, 1870-

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