

To the Land of the Andes

I have always had a strong desire to travel in foreign countries; to look upon strange and varied scenes, and observe the manners and customs of other nations. More particularly was my attention directed to South America, the Land of the Andes; and probably no writer ever made a greater impression on my mind than Humboldt. In him I beheld the perfect type of the scientific traveler; hardy, enthusiastic and untiring. How often there rose before my mental vision in brilliant colors, his life breathing pictures of the Land of the Incas, the Solitude of Quito, the majestic Chimborazo and the awful Cotopaxi.

It seemed to me, however, that the goal of my ambition, to traverse the Andes, was unattainable; and it was not until the summer of 1855 that I had saved enough money to pay my passage, when I formed the resolution to leave for Valparaiso, a port on the Coast of Chile, in the ensuing autumn. I was then in Decatur, a town in Central Illinois. During the latter part of June I visited the Falls of St. Anthony, on the Upper Mississippi, the first journey of any consequence I ever made. I returned to the City of Chicago, where I remained until some time in October, leaving there for my home, where I was detained some two months and a half. I employed myself during this period of time in improving myself in landscape and architectural drawing. I think that I can

In New York

time was not unprofitably spent, as I frequented the Astor Library every day during the latter part of my stay.

At length the Ship Sophia Walker was ready for sea. I went aboard the day before sailing, and the jolly old captain told me to chock my trunk and make myself at home.

March 5th. 1856. I arrived in the City of New York on the last day of the year 1855, and for more than two months have awaited the sailing of a vessel for Valparaiso. But the longest delays have an end, at least so I thought this morning when the steaming came alongside to tow us out to sea.

Early in the morning I took my last stroll up South St, supplied myself with the morning edition of city papers, and returned to the little ship which for aught I know will be my home for many long and weary weeks. Before eight o'clock the passengers and crew, the former six in number, were on board, and at 8:50 the Sophia Walker, Capt. C. R. Moore dropped down from pier 37 East River; the American flag was unfurled from the peak, the parting gun fired, the farewell cheer given by friends on shore, and heartily answered by the crew, and I felt that my journey had commenced; whether it shall be long and adventurous time alone will determine.

The City, with its forest of masts in the foreground, lessened in the view, and Staten Island, with its romantic scenery, crowned by many a lovely villa, and robed in the mantle of winter, rapidly receded in the distant perspective. At 11:45 the pilot was discharged, when with a merry crew and lively passengers, our ship stood boldly out toward the boundless horizon, for a voyage around Cape Horn. I watched the Highlands of Neversink, as many a voyager has done before, until they faded in the dim distance. An intervening wave would hide them for a moment from my view, another moment, and they were visible; but soon the last material tie that bound me to my native land had disappeared; I hope not forever. I could not see this and the white-capped waves close around us without

girl had a watermelon, which she offered me. She was a bright little thing. I gave her a piece of money, which called forth many thanks from the parents. I ate my breakfast in Viña del Mar, and then proceeded to the mouth of the Enchava, and bathed, and at half past one o'clock P. M. I entered Valparaiso, having accomplished all that I wished to in taking sketches. My journeying in Chile is now brought to a close; and I will sum up the distances traveled. In my first journey I performed six hundred miles by land, and two hundred ^(and forty) by sea. In the second journey, eight hundred and fifty two miles, fifty of which was by railroad, and two hundred and forty by sea. In my last visit to the country, I walked about seventy five miles, not noting the railroad travel. In total fourteen hundred and twenty seven miles by land, and four hundred and eighty by sea; nineteen hundred and seven in all.

Thursday, March 18th. Yesterday morning I learned that an English barge, called the Bolina, was going to sail for San Francisco, in a day or two. After due reflection on the subject, I thought it best to abandon my project of going to Atacama. I have not money enough to go as I could wish; this I consider a sufficient reason, for abandoning the project. I found the captain of the barge, and with him, repaired to the consignees, where I paid my passage money, and received a receipt therefor. The fare is one hundred dollars. I made what little purchases I wished to, yesterday, and this morning came off with the captain to see the vessel. I am now on board. My first impression was not as favorable as I could have wished; but I begin to like her better. I will write more anon. — Since writing the above, I have been ashore and brought my traps aboard. I bade my friends in the "Fabrica" farewell, receiving a letter from Mr. Stacrett to a friend of his in Sacramento. Going out of the gate, I met the "Old Man," who shook me by the hand, and said he presumed I could never return. I stopped in at a book-store, and purchased a couple of Harper's Magazines, and in another minute I had stepped from off the shore of Chile. The captain is ashore, and we will probably sail to-morrow. Everything is decided. The mate looks like a bull headed stave, and the second-by English aboard. The mate is an old man-of-war-man, and his weather beaten features in bearing a thousand storms, have become so hard and antiquated, as to warrant the belief that he was one of the companions of Capt. Cook.

Adios, Chile!

Friday, March 19th. I was up early this morning. The sky was cloudless, and the Bay ruffled by cat's paws. Aconcagua loomed up grandly. — Evening: I dated the above this morning, and still we are in Valparaíso Bay. There has been a strong fair breeze this afternoon, but the captain's affairs were not arranged, so that he could not sail. He came off this evening, and says that he will sail to-morrow. The passengers, four in number, have been aboard most of the day; some of them awaiting with impatience. I have been engaged in working up my sketches to day. The nine o'clock gun has just fired, and the brass band on the line-of-battle-ship "Fanges," anchored near by, are playing, "God Save the Queen!" The lights blaze from the town like brilliant stars. "View in the Bay of Valparaíso, ^{at night} as celebrated."

Saturday, March 20th. Morning clear and fine. Waited during the forenoon, with great anxiety for the captain. Several gentlemen came on board of us, at one o'clock P.M. Thirty minutes past one the captain came off and ordered the topsails loosed; and the sailors, a fine crew, manned the capstan, with cheering songs. Three shore boats took us in tow, for the air in the Bay was calm, and at half past three P.M. we caught the strong breeze from the south. The party of sea captains, and other gentry from the shore, shoved off in one of the whale boats, nearly all drunk. They gave us a hearty cheer, which was loudly responded to by those on board. Valparaíso now rapidly receded, as our barge sped on her way, with a nine knot breeze. The surface of the Ocean outside was covered with white caps, whilst the glassy bosom of the Bay seemed like molten lead. Is it possible, I thought to myself, that I am leaving Chile. I could scarcely realize it, yet so it is, and I said "Adios! Chile," "Adios! Cordilleras," with regret. One of our passengers, a Chileno, appears to have left his love in Santiago, and as he cast a look of fond regret towards the fading shore, said, — "Adios Carmelita! Mi alma!" I pointed to the Peak of Aconcagua, which reared its glittering summit into the regions of everlasting silence, and winter, and said, — "Alla, es mi alma!" How familiar to me was the aspect of the country. The Sierra Biscacha and Maipo, and Bell of Quilota, all faintly visible. The white sandy beach, at the mouth of the Cuquara, and the foot of the Valley of Aconcagua. But all are fading away. Will I ever see them again. "Adios Chile!" What a multitude of thoughts crowd through

San Francisco

Travelers speak of this port, and that bay, "being the finest in the world, and passed San Francisco by in silence. Thousands, in their eager rush for gold have scarcely seen the splendid Bay of San Francisco. From where we are anchored, the suburbs of the City, and a portion of the shipping are only visible. On the opposite side of the Bay is Oakland, and the ranches and farms which dot the slope, near the beach, remind one in their fertile beauty of the Vale of Aconcagua. The Island of Alcatraz is but a short distance from our anchorage, and the light on its summit shines brilliant against the heavy fog bank that envelopes the land beyond. Heavy blue masses of clouds, at sunset, hung around the Coast Range of mountains, whilst above was the soft splendor of the Pacific sky. This is my 62nd day on the Bolina. The discipline on board has not been so good as I like to see. Capt. Kirk has been remarkably kind, and gentlemanlike in his deportment toward me; but he has a bad failing;— getting half tight. He has been half seas over five or six times on the passage. I have passed away many a dull hour with "Me" in playing cards; and take it all in all, I expect to look on the voyage in the Bolina with pleasure. Our distance run is something over eight thousand miles, and throughout the passage we have had beautiful Pacific weather.

— The last entry in my Journal was made on the evening of May 19th. 1858, in the cabin of the English barge "Bolina." The custom house officer was aboard at the time, and although it was a late hour when I turned in, "Mac," and the intelligent and gentlemanly official of the Revenue were discussing politics and other important matters, under the stimulating influence of "John Bullcock." For aught I know the conference was kept up until the "wee sma hours of morn." The news of the Fraser river excitement was conveyed to us by the pilot, before we entered the "Golden Gate." The following morning we packed our trunks, and without regret left the Bolina, upon whose deck I had passed many happy hours, to be remembered with pleasure when looked back upon through the hazy vista of intervening time. Standing at the Custom House wharf, we procured a cab and proceeded to the "What Cheer House." San Francisco has so often been written about and described that

In Sacramento

in the chaparales of Mount Diablo. During my stay in San Francisco, I sent two letters to the "Alta California," describing my visit to the Baths of Chilian, and last journey in the country. They were both published entire, one of them the 25th. I overheard two of the passengers when I was on the boat, conversing about traveling. One of them said that he had read two letters in the "Alta," descriptive of scenery in South America, by a "pedestrian artist," and that they were "really beautiful," adding many flattering remarks, and producing the "Alta," of that day, requested his friend to read it. Of course I secretly rejoiced in the criticism. Night came on us at length, and the moon shone dimly through the clouds, as the steamer felt her way up the far famed Rio Sacramento. I saw enough to convince me that the scenery of the tule marshes on either bank was uninteresting. It was after two o'clock in the morning when we arrived at Sacramento, and I lay down on the cabin floor and slept until morning dawn. I hired a darkey to take my trunk to the "National House," which is kept by a German. I found Sacramento, as it is called, the "City of the Plain." It is a larger city than I expected to see. The American river empties into the Sacramento a short distance above the city. The waters of both rivers are turbid, and red in appearance. I spent the day in strolling about the place. I had a letter from my friend Stasett, of Valparaiso, to a man in Sacramento. I delivered it; but he gave me but little satisfaction. There are steamers plying between Sacramento and Marysville; but I took the stage on the morning of the 27th. for the latter place. The road led through the northern suburbs, and out upon the broad valley or rather Plain of the Sacramento, upon which, in isolated spots were scattered the California oak, a low bushy tree. On the eastward were the Sierra Nevada; but clouds hung over the crest, and only an occasional snow field was visible. They failed to impress me in the manner I had anticipated. For the most part the country is unoccupied; but I observed some beautiful cottages. On the left was the broad belt of vegetation that marks the course of the Rio Sacramento. When a few miles out, I saw the sharp incinerated peaks of the Butte Mountains, northwest of Marysville, which rise so singular and lonely from the level of the plain.

Again in Valparaiso

veiled the summit of the Aconcagua; but toward evening it melted away, and this "Sanctuary of the Cordilleras," loomed up in majestic grandeur; the loftiest of all of the Mountains of the Andes. The outermost vessel in the roads was the Powhatan Brigate, which had arrived but a few hours previous from Panama; and just as we were abreast of her, they ran up the Chilean flag to the fore, and fired a national salute, which was promptly answered from the battery on shore, the deep reverberations of the heavy artillery rolling its echoes far and wide among the mountains of the interior. The passengers all left the ship before she came to an anchor, and I was left pacing the deck alone. As soon as we were anchored, I left the ship, and was pulled ashore. I stepped on the mole and was again in Chile. I immediately directed my course to the Calle Teatro, to see if I could find the old Spanish woman who formerly rented me a room, and cooked my beefsteaks. I was not successful in finding her; but a Chilean family lived in the same house, and I rented a room next to the one I had previously occupied, and then proceeded to "El Inesto," and after calling on various Señoritas, I went to the "Hotel de la Republica," and took a room for the night. But it was after midnight before I could sleep. My brain was swimming with intense excitement, and I could scarcely realize that I was in Valparaiso. I brought my things from the ship yesterday, and fitted up my room, and to-morrow I will go to work on the Plaza del Orden for Messrs. Deach.

Sunday, June 10th. This is my 28th. birth day, and here I am this glorious Sabbath morn in the sweet clime of Chile. We had quite a shower of rain last night; but before sunrise it cleared off bright and beautiful. After breakfast this morning, I took a boat with the intention of going on board of the Caroline; but after pulling out to the Danish ship "Kaindoo," I learned that she had sailed early in the morning for Lima. I could yet see her in the offing. May fair winds attend her. I take my meals with a Chilean family, which, together with my washing, is to cost me 20 dols. per month.

July 15th. I changed my boarding place 4 weeks ago, and went to the same German house I had boarded at previous to my visit to California. I shall now try boarding myself. I rented a house on the first of this month, in the Calle Viscaya, for 10 dollars per month, which affords me sufficient accommodations for my cooking. We had a heavy rain in the month

the outlet of the Laguna de Elanguine. The next morning we were in Corral at an early hour. The weather still continued fine. We were here a few hours, and again were off for the north. I saw Osorno again in the afternoon, and the weather being very fine, the shores of Aranco were plainly discernible. In the evening we sighted the Island of Mocha, nearly opposite to which was a fire, on the main coast. The next day we were in Lota, and about 10 o'clock at night, although it was very dark, we anchored in - Valparaiso, and in the evening of the following day left Tomé to arrive in Valparaiso at half past 4 o'clock on the 12th. of January. I had been absent from Valparaiso nearly three months, and I must say I was never more rejoiced to see a place in my life. In that short time the only fruit I had reaped was bitter experience, barren of any material result. So much for trusting to other people's word. Fortunately I have a prospect of work, and to-morrow I shall commence getting out the joiners work for a house for Mr. Watson, of the firm of Loring & Co.

And thus at the close of the narration of this adventurous journey I bring to a termination this volume of my journal: its record of more than seven years of travel and adventure.