



From Lady Duffus Hardy, *Through the Cities and Prairie Lands. Sketches of an American Tour*. New York: R. Worthington, 1881.

On riding in the Pullman car:

Of the many routes to San Francisco we chose the Pennsylvania Line of the railway, which takes us as far as Chicago, having been informed by some old tourists that we should find it by far the most picturesque and agreeable, besides being the smoothest to run over, the rails being steel and laid with special care, and the new carriages being built with all consideration for the comfort and convenience of their passengers. We had rather a dread of American railways, having heard so much of their reckless speed and willful disregard of all rules and regulations, that we started on our journey in some trepidation of spirit, with a nervous feeling that something *must* happen before the end of it. But we gained confidence as we discovered the surprising fact that life is equally dear to its owners here as at home, and that drivers, engineers, and other employes are as attentive to their duties here as in any other quarter of the globe. We settled ourselves comfortably in the seats of our luxurious Pullman car, and prepared to enjoy the scenery. [72]

We fly swiftly through the highly cultivated State of Pennsylvania; for three or four hundred miles, we are surrounded by a panorama of picturesque beauty—sparkling rivers, winding through undulating hills and verdant plains, with here and there pretty villages creeping up the green hill-sides or nestling at their feet. Presently something that looks like a dark wriggling worm, with a fierce fiery eye, comes wickedly towards us. We are rounding the wonderful horseshoe curve; it is our own engine, which seems to be coming in one direction while we are going in another; but it is all right; it drags us round, and speeds along on level ground once more. We pass the Alleghany Mountains, which on this occasion wear a crown of jeweled flames leaping in lurid fury upon the dusky night, as though they were trying to regain the heaven whence they had first descended. We pass Pittsburgh, with its thousand furnaces glowing in their own murky atmosphere, flashing their flames, like threatening fires, in the face of the fair white moon. [73]

As the night closes in, the excitement and novelty of our day's travel calms down, and we turn our attention to the internal arrangements of our temporary home, and are interested in watching our comfortable, velvet-cushioned section turned into a cozy sleeping-place; soft mattresses, snowy sheets, and warm, gaily striped blankets are extracted from behind the ornamental panels overhead; the curtains are let down; and lo! We may go to our rest as soon as we please. But we do not please until we have

consulted our conductor, whose sole occupation during the day has been walking to and fro the cars, punching our tickets till they resemble a piece of perforated cardboard. If this process is to be carried on during the night we think we shall have small chance of rest. But the matter is satisfactorily settled; we may sleep in peace. That punching process is our biggest bug-bear throughout the entire journey. Some are so careful of their tickets that they never can find them when they are wanted; and the appearance of the conductor is the signal for a general hunt. Pockets are ransacked, portmanteaus are turned out, people nervously feel themselves all over, plunge under the seats, crawl over the floor. "It *must* be somewhere." It is found at last, perhaps wedged in a crack of the window, or it has dropped into the luncheon-basket and is extracted from a jelly-jar, strongly impregnated with an odour of pepper and cheese. I pin mine, as they impale blue-bottles and butterflies, on the the side of the car. Gentlemen, as a rule, dispose of theirs easily enough, and wear them, like a dustman's badge, stuck in their hatbands, or like a cavalier's order, pinned upon their breasts. [74]

This harmless piece of cardboard was the white elephant of our lives. We never knew what to do with it. It looked so little and meant so much. We kept early hours in this our traveling home, and towards nine o'clock the lights were lowered, and, soothed by the monotonous movement and rhythmical rumble of the train, we were soon sleeping as calmly and pleasantly as in our own beds at home.

Our trial came in the morning, when we marched to the dressing-room to perform our toilette and found a whole army of disheveled females, [75] armed with toothbrushes, sponges, etc., besieging the four-foot space yclept [sic] "the ladies' dressing-room," each waiting for the first sign of surrender to march in and take possession. This was the miserable epoch in our daily lives through all the overland journey; in everything else our car life was delightfully luxurious and pleasant. Perhaps there were a dozen ladies who every day had to grapple with the same difficulty and stand shivering, all more or less *en dishabille* (rather more than less), biding their time to take temporary possession of the solitary soap-dish and basin provided for their ablutions. The public are already deeply indebted to Messrs. Pullman and Co. for an easy and luxurious mode of traveling, but the debt might be increased a thousandfold by a small sacrifice on their part. By devoting a single section to the purpose of a second dressing-room, they would add considerably to the accommodation of the ladies, and might fairly issue a placard of "Traveling made Perfect."

On the emigrant train passengers:

At last we creek and rumble into the station at Omaha. Our poor dummy's joints are rusty and want oiling. It seems glad to stop, and so are we. We glance round us, and feel we are on the threshold of a new world. The platform is crowded with a motley assemblage of people, from which the "gen- [84]

teel" element seems to be wholly eliminated. There is a hurrying to and fro of many feet, a general bustle and confusion reigning everywhere. A very babel of voices is ringing round us. The harsh guttural German, the liquid Italian, and the mellifluous Spanish mingles with the Yankee twang and the Irish brogue. The emigrant train has just arrived and disgorged its living freight. The platform overflows with them, they are everywhere, all with a more or less travel-stained look. Having been penned up so long in such close quarters they are glad to get out and stretch their legs and rinse the dirt from their grimy faces. Swarthy men, with bare arms, are splashing about in buckets; some are performing their ablutions under the pump, or in anything that comes handy. One sad eyed German woman, with a child in her arms, is sitting entrenched amongst an army of bags and bundles, and dipping an old handkerchief into a pint cup of water is wiping her child's face and her own, refreshing themselves as they best could therewith. I stop and put a packet of candy into the little one's hand. The mother stares [85] vacantly, and slowly extracting a copper coin from a poor, little, ragged purse, which she drew from her bosom, offers it in payment.

The women as a rule look faded, wan, and anxious; the men energetic and strong, confident and assured, with a bright, never-say-die look upon their faces.

They look as if they meant "work," and were able to do it. There seem to be only a few loafers and loungers scattered among them, weak, indolent creatures, who had not pluck enough to fight their way in their own land, and are journeying in search of a general El Dorado, a sort of "Tom Tidler's ground," where they could go "picking up gold and silver."

They are to wait three hours at the station before they resume their journey west. It is a strange gathering, that flock of varying nationalities, all bound on one adventurous errand—a wave of the Old World breaking on the shores of the New.