

NEW ALBANIAN IN EUROPE.

Interesting Letter from Mr. W. S. Culbertson – The Ocean Trip –
Liverpool – Sketches of Notable Places in London –
To Paris and Genoa.

Correspondence New Albany Ledger

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In accordance with my promise on leaving home, I drop you a few lines. As you are probably aware, owing to high water we had some trouble in reaching Cincinnati and at one time feared we would not be able to continue our journey. We started by the Dayton, Hamilton and Erie Road, and, though we went through water two feet deep for miles, arrived in New York in good condition, but an hour behind time.

We remained at the Fifth Avenue Hotel until Tuesday evening, and as the steamer Gallia was to sail Wednesday morning, 13th, at 6½, thought best to go on board the evening before; but how uncertain are all things on land or sea! When morning came a dense fog enveloped everything and delayed departure till Thursday morning.

We crossed the bar at Sandy Hook about noon and "old ocean" gave us a very rough reception. Many did not appear at one o'clock luncheon, and when six o'clock dinner came not more than twenty-five out of one hundred and sixty passengers made their appearance.

Mrs. C. and myself missed but one meal; many of the passengers did not appear at the table until we arrived at Queenstown.

Although racks were put on the tables from the first day out, it was difficult to keep plates or anything else in position, and occasionally – even with all the care that could be taken – there would be a smash up of glass and queensware.

Nothing very startling occurred until Wednesday, the 20th, about ten o'clock in the morning – the sea running mountain high – an alarm of fire was given and the steamer soon filled with smoke, causing great consternation. Myself and family were in the dining saloon and remained there, believing as it was daylight and every officer at his post, that the fire would soon be extinguished, which it was, without serious damage to the steamer.

The passage to Queenstown was an unusually rough one – from there to Liverpool quite smooth and pleasant. We reached Liverpool on Saturday morning, making the passage in nine days.

On landing I was surprised to find the grass as green as it is in May with us, and I found this to be the case throughout England, owing, I am told, to an unusually mild season.

Liverpool is noted as being the largest shipping port in the world, and consequently has the most extensive and said to be the best system of docks, which are eight miles in extent.

The warehouses are immense, but built more for strength and durability than for architectural beauty. The population is said to be 400,000.

From Liverpool we went to London by the North Western R.R., a first class road in every particular – distance 210 miles – time 4½ hours. The country between the two cities is very fine, admirably cultivated and very thickly settled. We passed through manufacturing towns on this route; the workmen's houses mostly built of brick. I am told they are built and owned by the companies owning the works, and occupy entire squares, are precisely alike though small and occupying very little ground; yet they have every appearance of comfort.

I will now attempt to give you a bird's eye view of a few of the many objects and places of interest in this immense city of London, with a population said to be four millions.

We stopped at the First Avenue hotel, said to be the finest in the city – opened last November, and is well kept. The tourist from the United States will be surprised when he drives up to a first class hotel to be met at the door by a very respectable looking, polite young man, dressed in a handsome suit of blue cloth and cap to match, all being richly trimmed with wide gold lace; looking more like a military officer than a servant. When you enter the hotel, any time in the day, the door is opened by a man dressed in the same way; also the elevator man and the errand boys are dressed in the same manner. On entering the dining room for breakfast or any other meal you will be waited on by a genteel looking young man, dressed just as our young men are when dressed for a fashionable party, fine black cloth suit, low vest, immaculate shirt front, collar, neck tie, &c.; and they understand their duties well. When you receive your bill for the use of rooms, you will find charged candles, services of room, &c.

All the hotels have a restaurant attached where you can take your meals at any time you wish. The hotel breakfast commences at 12 o'clock in some of the most fashionable places, and dinner at 6:30 and 7. If you take a meal at either, the head waiter inquires the number of your room, and either collects the price of the meal or has it charged to you. A man that is in any hurry had better not attempt to take a fashionable dinner in a European hotel, as the time required is about one and a half hours. There are from eight to ten courses served, and if you do not wish that offered you must wait until the next is offered.

Sunday morning we went to hear Spurgeon, the celebrated Baptist minister, but were disappointed, as he was quite sick. The church is an immense structure, but not attractive in appearance. It holds upwards of

six thousand people and was well filled. The Sabbath is quite as well observed in London as in any of our large cities; all the stores of any importance are closed and the city has a Sunday appearance.

While in the city we visited Saint Paul's Cathedral, which is an immense structure, covering as much or more ground than one of our squares, and the expense must have been very great as expensive taste has been displayed in carving, frescoing, &c. Many of England's warriors and statesmen are buried there, and many of their resting places are marked by life size marble statues, but like most everything else in London that has any age are black and dirty.

We also visited Westminster Abbey. This as well as St. Paul's Cathedral belongs to the church of England. This church was commenced about nine hundred years ago, and has been added to until it is an immense building, and a person fond of examining such works of art as monuments, statues, &c., could spend days pleasantly and doubtless profitably in that place. It is a magnificent Gothic church, but is far more interesting as the only national place of sepulture in the world. Many of England's Kings and Queens are buried here. Edward the Confessor, Edward First and Third, Henry First and Seventh, and many others; also, Queens Elizabeth, Mary, Queen of Scots, and many others; also philosophers, statesmen and poets, a list of whose names would fill pages.

The Abbey is open to the public on week days from 11 to 3. There is service daily in the church at 7:45 and 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. I was much surprised to see that the only seats used by the congregation in that splendid edifice were very plain wooden benches, without any covering, and the seats in St. Paul's are the same, except that in the latter they are chairs. This to me appeared very strange, where so many millions had been spent, that the congregation should not be made comfortable whilst worshipping.

Most of the old churches were destroyed in the fire. One of the land marks that survived that terrible conflagration is the steeple on Helborn. This is a quaint, strange appearing old place, and is only permitted to remain on account of its historical interest, it being the only building left for miles around.

The Bank of England is an immense structure; but without any pretension to architectural beauty. It occupies an entire square and employs about seven hundred clerks. It is the largest banking institution in the world, and they never issue the same note a second time.

The thing that I felt very great interest in visiting was the Tower of London. The many horrible deeds perpetrated there have given this place a dark page in history. Occupied as a residence by Henry Eighth, here is the Star Chamber in which state trials were conducted in his reign; the room which Anne Boleyn occupied; the very spot where she,

Catherine Howard, Lady Jane Grey and others were beheaded, and the block and axe that were used in beheading Lords Loveet, Kilmarnock, and Balmoral after the rebellion of 1745.

The Jewel Tower in the same building is of much interest; the crown covered with diamonds, worn by Victoria at her coronation, and several other crowns that were worn by kings; also a large quantity of gold plate used upon state occasions, all enclosed in a high, eight square glass case surrounded by strong iron work, and guarded night and day. A *fac simile* of the celebrated Kohinoor diamond is there, but the original is kept by the Queen and worn on state occasions.

The Beauchamp Tower, also a part of the same building, was used as a prison for state prisoners. Lady Jane Grey and many others of her class were imprisoned there; many of them carved designs and lettering on the stone walls that are yet plainly to be seen. The Tower was built by William the Conqueror nearly nine hundred years ago and from the substantial manner in which it is built I think it would stand a thousand years longer.

Driving in London is very cheap. A cab will take three persons a course which is often three miles for one shilling and six pence – about thirty-seven cents of our money. The hansom is something different from anything we have; it has two wheels, the shafts are fastened to the saddle, the driver sits behind and is quite above the top. The top is something like our buggy top but is stationary. They are very pleasant to ride in and can be closed if desired.

We left London on Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock for Paris by way of Dover and Calais, and were agreeably surprised to find the English channel quite calm. Arrived at Paris at 8 p.m., took rooms at the Grand Hotel, and found it first class in every particular, charges included. You shall hear of Paris and surroundings anon. We are now at Genoa, Italy, and leave for Pisa Monday morning. We have all exceedingly enjoyed our trip since landing at Liverpool.

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