



VIA CORNWALL TO EGYPT

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"A LADY'S CRUISE IN A FRENCH MAN-OF-WAR"

"GRANITE CRAGS OF CALIFORNIA," "FIRE FOUNTAINS OF HAWAII"

"IN THE HEBRIDES," ETC.



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CHAPTER I.

NOTES OF TWO WINTRY CRUISES IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL.

THE fact that a large mail steamer should, on the morning of March 13, 1880, have been wrecked in a dead calm and dense mist on the rocky coast of Anglesea, within five miles of Holyhead, and that her signals of distress should have been distinctly heard in that port, without producing her result than a discussion between the coastguard and the harbour-master as to whether assistance should be sent, resulting in a determination to do nothing, because they were not sure whence the sound came, and it might have been some one firing guns on the mountain to warn vessels from approaching the land"—such a fact, I say, is an episode in the shipping annals of A.D. 1880 which surely worthy of record.

Yet, as on this occasion no lives were lost in consequence, it was allowed to pass unnoticed, and nothing more will be heard on the subject till the next vessel goes

down with all hands in sight of port, as we might very well have done had we been left solely to the mercy of the proper authorities. No thanks to them that we all reached the land in safety!

The steamship *Montana*, of the Guion Line (gross tonnage, 4320), left New York for Liverpool on March 2, with a moderate number of passengers, chiefly Americans, and a cargo consisting principally of fresh meat and oysters. The furious gales of the previous fortnight were followed by comparative calm, which lasted till the 9th, when foul weather set in, and we had a very dirty night. One big sea stove in two of our boats, but happily did no further damage, and the vessel rode splendidly, with amazingly little motion, considering what an angry tempest was raging. The storm suddenly abated, and was followed by days so balmy and a sea so glassy in its calm, that the March lion seemed to have indeed given place to the March lamb.

Thus pleasantly sped our last days, in enjoyment of clear sunshine, and on the evening of the 12th we separated for the night without a misgiving, other than that late obedience to the proverbs "Roose (*i.e.* Praise) a fair day at evening," and "Never halloo till you are out of the wood," which, to an old traveller, becomes second nature. But the newer hands were mapping out their hours and deciding by what trains to travel, as surely as though they were already in Liverpool.

Towards midnight a dense mist came on, and though the captain, first and third officers, and quarter-master