

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydow Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Melville Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo  
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
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**The Complete Works of Artemus  
Ward –Part 4: To California and  
Return**

Artemus Ward

# Imprint

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## PART IV. TO CALIFORNIA AND RETURN.

### 4.1. ON THE STEAMER.

New York, Oct. 13, 1868.

The steamer Ariel starts for California at noon.

Her decks are crowded with excited passengers, who instantly undertake to "look after" their trunks and things; and what with our smashing against each other, and the yells of the porters, and the wails over lost baggage, and the crash of boxes, and the roar of the boilers, we are for the time being about as unhappy a lot of maniacs as was ever thrown together.

I am one of them. I am rushing around with a glaring eye in search of a box.

Great jam, in which I find a sweet young lady, with golden hair, clinging to me fondly, and saying, "Dear George, farewell!" – Discovers her mistake, and disappears.

I should like to be George some more.

Confusion so great that I seek refuge in a stateroom which contains a single lady of forty-five summers, who says, "Base man! leave me!" I leave her.

By and by we cool down, and become somewhat regulated.

### NEXT DAY

When the gong sounds for breakfast we are fairly out on the sea, which runs roughly, and the Ariel rocks wildly. Many of the passengers are sick, and a young naval officer establishes a reputation as a wit by carrying to one of the invalids a plate of raw salt pork, swimming in cheap molasses. I am not sick; so I roll round the deck in the most cheerful sea-dog manner.

....

The next day and the next pass by in a serene manner. The waves are smooth now, and we can all eat and sleep. We might have enjoyed ourselves very well, I fancy, if the Ariel, whose capacity was about three hundred and fifty passengers, had not on this occasion

carried nearly nine hundred, a hundred, at least of whom were children of an unpleasant age. Captain Semmes captured the Ariel once, and it is to be deeply regretted that that thrifty buccaneer hadn't made mince-meat of her, because she is a miserable tub at best, and hasn't much more right to be afloat than a second-hand coffin has. I do not know her proprietor, Mr. C. Vanderbilt. But I know of several excellent mill privileges in the State of Maine, and not one of them is so thoroughly "Dam'd" as he was all the way from New York to Aspinwall.

I had far rather say a pleasant thing than a harsh one; but it is due to the large number of respectable ladies and gentleman who were on board the steamer Ariel with me that I state here that the accommodations on that steamer were very vile. If I did not so state, my conscience would sting me through life, and I should have harried dreams like Richard III. Esq.

The proprietor apparently thought we were undergoing transportation for life to some lonely island, and the very waiters who brought us meals, that any warden of any penitentiary would blush to offer convicts, seemed to think it was a glaring error our not being in chains.

As a specimen of the liberal manner in which this steamer was managed I will mention that the purser (a very pleasant person, by the way) was made to unite the positions of purser, baggage clerk, and doctor; and I one day had a lurking suspicion that he was among the waiters in the dining-cabin, disguised in a white jacket and slipshod pumps. . . .

I have spoken my Piece about the Ariel, and I hope Mr. Vanderbilt will reform ere it is too late. Dr. Watts says the vilest sinner may return as long as the gas-meters work well, or words to that effect. . . .

We were so densely crowded on board the Ariel that I cannot conscientiously say we were altogether happy. And sea-voyages at best are a little stupid. On the whole I should prefer a voyage on the Erie Canal, where there isn't any danger, and where you can carry picturesque scenery along with you – so to speak.

## II. — THE ISTHMUS.

On the ninth day we reach Aspinwall in the Republic of Granada. The President of New Granada is a Central American named Mosquero. I was told that he derived quite a portion of his income by carrying passengers' valises and things from the steamer to the hotels in Aspinwall. It was an infamous falsehood. Fancy A. Lincoln carrying carpet-bags and things! and indeed I should rather trust him with them than Mosquero, because the former gentleman, as I think some one has before observed, is "honest."

I intrust my bag to a speckled native, who confidentially gives me to understand that he is the only strictly honest person in Aspinwall. The rest, he says, are niggers — which the colored people of the Isthmus regard as about as scathing a thing as they can say of one another.

I examine the New Grenadian flag, which waves from the chamber-window of the refreshment saloon. It is of simple design. You can make one.

Take half of a cotton shirt, that has been worn two months, and dip it in molasses of the Day & Martin brand. Then let the flies gambol over it for a few days, and you have it. It is an emblem of Sweet Liberty.

At the Howard House the man of sin rubbeth the hair of the horse to the bowels of the cat, and our girls are waving their lily-white hoofs in the dazzling waltz.

We have a quadrille, in which an English person slips up and jams his massive brow against my stomach. He apologizes, and I say, "all right, my lord." I subsequently ascertained that he superintended the shipping of coals for the British steamers, and owned fighting cocks.

The ball stops suddenly.

Great excitement. One of our passengers intoxicated and riotous in the street. Openly and avowedly desires the entire Republic of New Grenada to "come on."

In case they do come on, agrees to make it lively for them. Is quieted down at last, and marched off to prison, by a squad of Grena-

dian troops. Is musical as he passes the hotel, and smiling sweetly upon the ladies and children on the balcony, expresses a distinct desire to be an Angel, and with the Angels stand. After which he leaps nimbly into the air and imitates the war-cry of the red man. . .

..

The natives amass wealth by carrying valises, &c., then squander it for liquor. My native comes to me as I sit on the veranda of the Howard House smoking a cigar, and solicits the job of taking my things to the cars next morning. He is intoxicated, and has been fighting, to the palpable detriment of his wearing apparel; for he has only a pair of tattered pantaloons and a very small quantity of shirt left.

We go to bed. Eight of us are assigned to a small den upstairs, with only two lame apologies for beds.

Mosquitoes and even rats annoy us fearfully. One bold rat gnaws at the feet of a young Englishman in the party. This was more than the young Englishman could stand, and rising from his bed he asked us if New Grenada wasn't a Republic? We said it was. "I thought so," he said. "Of course I mean no disrespect to the United States of America in the remark, but I think I prefer a bloated monarchy!" He smiled sadly — then handing his purse and his mother's photograph to another English person, he whispered softly. "If I am eaten up, give them to Me mother — tell her I died like a true Briton, with no faith whatever in the success of a republican form of government!" And then he crept back to bed again.

....

We start at seven the next morning for Panama.

My native comes bright and early to transport my carpet sack to the railway station. His clothes have suffered still more during the night, for he comes to me now dressed only in a small rag and one boot.

At last we are off. "Adios, Americanos!" the natives cry; to which I pleasantly reply, "ADOUS! and long may it be before you have a chance to Do us again."

The cars are comfortable on the Panama railway, and the country through which we pass is very beautiful. But it will not do to trust it much, because it breeds fevers and other unpleasant disorders, at all seasons of the year. Like a girl we most all have known, the Isthmus is fair but false.

There are mud huts all along the route, and half-naked savages gaze patronizingly upon us from their doorways. An elderly lady in spectacles appears to be much scandalized by the scant dress of these people, and wants to know why the Select Men don't put a stop to it. From this, and a remark she incidentally makes about her son, who has invented a washing machine which will wash, wring, and dry a shirt in ten minutes, I infer that she is from the hills of Old New England, like the Hutchinson family.

....

The Central American is lazy. The only exercise he ever takes is to occasionally produce a Revolution. When his feet begin to swell and there are premonitory symptoms of gout, he "revolushes" a spell, and then serenely returns to his cigarette and hammock under the palm-trees.

These Central American Republics are queer concerns. I do not of course precisely know what a last year's calf's ideas of immortal glory may be, but probably they are about as lucid as those of a Central American in regard to a republican form of government.

And yet I am told they are a kindly people in the main. I never met but one of them—a Costa-Rican; on board the Ariel. He lay sick with fever, and I went to him and took his hot hand gently in mine. I shall never forget his look of gratitude. And the next day he borrowed five dollars of me, shedding tears as he put it in his pocket. . .

..

At Panama we lose several of our passengers, and among them three Peruvian ladies, who go to Lima, the city of volcanic eruptions and veiled black-eyed beauties.

The *Senoritas* who leave us at Panama are splendid creatures. They learned me Spanish, and in the soft moonlight we walked on deck and talked of the land of Pizarro. (You know old Piz. conquered Peru! and although he was not educated at West Point, he

had still some military talent.) I feel as though I had lost all my relations, including my grandmother and the cooking stove when these gay young *Senoritas* go away.

They do not go to Peru on a Peruvian bark, but on an English steamer. Off to Acapulco.

### 4.3. MEXICO.

We make Acapulco, a Mexican coast town of some importance, in a few days, and all go ashore.

The pretty peasant girls peddle necklaces made of shells and oranges, in the streets of Acapulco, on steamer days. They are quite naive about it. Handing you a necklace they will say, "Me give you pres-ENT, *Senor*," and then retire with a low curtsy. Returning, however, in a few moments, they say quite sweetly, "You give me pres-ENT, *Senor*, of quarter dollar!" which you at once do unless you have a heart of stone.

Acapulco was shelled by the French a year or so before our arrival there, and they effected a landing. But the gay and gallant Mexicans peppered them so persistently and effectually from the mountains near by that they concluded to sell out and leave.

Napoleon has no right in Mexico. Mexico may deserve a licking. That is possible enough. Most people do. But nobody has any right to lick Mexico except the United States. We have a right, I flatter myself, to lick this entire continent, including ourselves, any time we want to.

The signal gun is fired at 11, and we go off to the steamer in small boats.

In our boat is an inebriated United States official, who flings his spectacles overboard, and sings a flippant and absurd song about his grandmother's spotted calf, with his *ri-fol-lol-tiddery-i-do*. After which he crumbles, in an incomprehensible manner, into the bottom of the boat, and howls dismally.

We reach Manzanillo, another coast place, twenty-four hours after leaving Acapulco. Manzanillo is a little Mexican village, and looked very wretched indeed, sweltering away there on the hot

sands. But it is a port of some importance, nevertheless, because a great deal of merchandise finds its way to the interior from there. The white and green flag of Mexico floats from a red steam-tug (the navy of Mexico, by the way, consists of two tugs, a disabled raft, and a basswood life-preserver), and the Captain of the Port comes off to us in his small boat, climbs up the side of the St. Louis, and folds the healthy form of Captain Hudson to his breast. There is no wharf here, and we have to anchor off the town.

There was a wharf, but the enterprising Mexican peasantry, who subsist by poling merchandise ashore in dug-outs, indignantly tore it up. We take on here some young Mexicans, from Colima, who are going to California. They are of the better class, and one young man (who was educated in Madrid) speaks English rather better than I write it. Be careful not to admire any article of an educated Mexican's dress, because if you do he will take it right off and give it to you, and sometimes this might be awkward.

I said: "What a beautiful cravat you wear!"

"It is yours!" he exclaimed, quickly unbuckling it; and I could not induce him to take it back again.

I am glad I did not tell his sister, who was with him and with whom I was lucky enough to get acquainted, what a beautiful white hand she had. She might have given it to me on the spot; and that, as she had soft eyes, a queenly form, and a half million or so in her own right, would have made me feel bad.

Reports reach us here of high-handed robberies by the banditti all along the road to the City of Mexico. They steal clothes as well as coin. A few days since the mail coach entered the city with all the passengers stark-naked! They must have felt mortified.

#### **4.4. CALIFORNIA.**

We reach San Francisco one Sunday afternoon. I am driven to the Occidental Hotel by a kind-hearted hackman, who states that inasmuch as I have come out there to amuse people, he will only charge me five dollars. I pay it in gold, of course, because greenbacks are not current on the Pacific coast.

Many of the citizens of San Francisco remember the Sabbath day to keep it jolly; and the theatres, the circus, the minstrels, and the music halls are all in full blast to-night.

I "compromise," and go to the Chinese theatre, thinking perhaps there can be no great harm in listening to worldly sentiments when expressed in a language I don't understand.

The Chinaman at the door takes my ticket with the remark, "Ki hi-hi ki! Shoolah!"

And I tell him that on the whole I think he is right.

The Chinese play is "continued," like a Ledger story, from night to night. It commences with the birth of the hero or heroine, which interesting event occurs publicly on the stage; and then follows him or her down to the grave, where it cheerfully ends.

Sometimes a Chinese play lasts six months. The play I am speaking of had been going on for about two months. The heroine had grown up into womanhood, and was on the point, as I inferred, of being married to a young Chinaman in spangled pantaloons and a long black tail. The bride's father comes in with his arms full of tea-chests, and bestows them, with his blessing, upon the happy couple. As this play is to run four months longer, however, and as my time is limited, I go away at the close of the second act, while the orchestra is performing an overture on gongs and one-stringed fiddles.

The door-keeper again says, "Ki hi-hi ki! Shoolah!" adding, this time however, "Chow-wow." I agree with him in regard to the ki hi and hi ki, but tell him I don't feel altogether certain about the chow-wow.

To Stockton from San Francisco.

Stockton is a beautiful town, that has ceased to think of becoming a very large place, and has quietly settled down into a state of serene prosperity. I have my boots repaired here by an artist who informs me that he studied in the penitentiary; and I visit the lunatic asylum, where I encounter a vivacious maniac who invites me to ride in a chariot drawn by eight lions and a rhinoceros.

John Phoenix was once stationed at Stockton, and put his mother aboard the San Francisco boat one morning with the sparkling remark, "Dear mother, be virtuous and you will be happy!"

....

Forward to Sacramento—which is the capital of the State, and a very nice old town.

They had a flood here some years ago, during which several blocks of buildings sailed out of town and had never been heard from since. A Chinaman concluded to leave in a wash tub, and actually set sail in one of those fragile barks. A drowning man hailed him piteously, thus: "Throw me a rope, oh throw me a rope!" To which the Chinaman excitedly cried, "No have got—how can do?" and went on, on with the howling current. He was never seen more; but a few weeks after his tail was found by some Sabbath-school children in the north part of the State.

....

I go to the mountain towns. The sensational mining days are over, but I find the people jolly and hospitable nevertheless.

At Nevada I am called upon, shortly after my arrival, by an athletic scarlet-faced man, who politely says his name is Blaze.

"I have a little bill against you, sir," he observes.

"A bill—what for?"

"For drinks."

"Drinks?"

"Yes, sir—at my bar, I keep the well known and highly respected coffee-house down the street."

"But, my dear sir, there is a mistake—I never drank at your bar in my life."

"I know it, sir. That isn't the point. The point is this: I pay out money for good liquors, and it is people's own fault if they don't drink them. There are the liquors—do as you please about drinking them, BUT YOU MUST PAY FOR THEM! Isn't that fair?"

His enormous body (which Puck wouldn't put a girdle around for forty dollars) shook gleefully while I read this eminently original bill.

Years ago Mr. Blaze was an agent of the California Stage Company. There was a formidable and well-organized opposition to the California Stage Company at that time, and Mr. Blaze rendered them such signal service in his capacity of agent that they were very sorry when he tendered his resignation.

"You are some sixteen hundred dollars behind in your accounts, Mr. Blaze," said the President, "but in view of your faithful and efficient services we shall throw off eight hundred dollars off that amount."

Mr. Blaze seemed touched by this generosity. A tear stood in his eye and his bosom throbbed audibly.

"You WILL throw off eight hundred dollars—you WILL?" he at last cried, seizing the President's hand and pressing it passionately to his lips.

"I will," returned the President.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Blaze, "I'm a gentleman, I AM, you bet! And I won't allow no Stage Company to surpass me in politeness. I'LL THROW OFF THE OTHER EIGHT HUNDRED, AND WE'LL CALL IT SQUARE! No gratitude, sir—no thanks; it is my duty."

....

I get back to San Francisco in a few weeks, and am to start home Overland from here.

The distance from Sacramento to Atchison, Kansas, by the Overland stage route, is 2200 miles, but you can happily accomplish a part of the journey by railroad. The Pacific Railroad id completed twelve miles to Folsom, leaving only 2188 miles to go by stage. This breaks the monotony; but as it is midwinter and as there are well substantiated reports of the Piute savages being in one of their sprightly moods when they scalp people, I do not I may say that I

do not leave the Capital of California in a light-hearted and joyous manner. But "leaves have their time to fall," and I have my time to leave, which is now.

We ride all day and all night, and ascend and descend some of the most frightful hills I ever saw. We make Johnson's Pass, which is 6752 feet high, about two o'clock in the morning, and go down the great Kingsbury grade with locked wheels. The driver, with whom I sit outside, informs me, as we slowly roll down this fearful mountain road, which looks down on either side into an appalling ravine, that he has met accidents in his time, and cost the California Stage Company a great deal of money; "because," he says, "juries is agin us on principle, and every man who sues us is sure to recover. But it will never be so agin, not with ME, you bet."

"How is that?" I said.

It was frightfully dark. It was snowing withal, and notwithstanding the brakes were kept hard down, the coach slewed wildly, often fairly touching the brink of the black precipice.

"How is that?" I said.

"Why, you see," he replied, "that corpses never sue for damages, but maimed people do. And the next time I have a overturn I shall go round and keerfully examine the passengers. Them as is dead I shall let alone; but them as is mutilated I shall finish with the king-bolt! Dead folks don't sue. They ain't on it."

Thus with anecdote did this driver cheer me up.

#### **4.5. WASHOE.**

We reach Carson City about nine o'clock in the morning. It is the capital of the silver-producing territory of Nevada.

They shoot folks here somewhat, and the law is rather partial than otherwise to first-class murderers.

I visit the territorial Prison, and the Warden points out the prominent convicts to me thus:

"This man's crime was horse-stealing. He is here for life."

"This man is in for murder. He is here for three years."

But shooting isn't as popular in Nevada as it once was. A few years since they used to have a dead man for breakfast every morning. A reformed desperado told my that he supposed he had killed men enough to stock a graveyard. "A feeling of remorse," he said, "sometimes comes over me! But I'm an altered man now. I hain't killed a man for over two weeks! What'll yer poison yourself with?" he added, dealing a resonant blow on the bar.

There used to live near Carson City a notorious desperado, who never visited town without killing somebody. He would call for liquor at some drinking-house, and if anybody declined joining him he would at once commence shooting. But one day he shot a man too many. Going into the St. Nicholas drinking-house he asked the company present to join him in a North American drink. One individual was rash enough to refuse. With a look of sorrow rather than anger the desperado revealed his revolver, and said, "Good God! MUST I kill a man every time I come to Carson?" and so saying he fired and killed the individual on the spot. But this was the last murder the bloodthirsty miscreant ever committed, for the aroused citizens pursued him with rifles and shot him down in his own doorway. . . .

I lecture in the theatre at Carson, which opens out of a drinking and gambling house. On each side of the door where my ticket-taker stands there are monte-boards and sweat-cloths, but they are deserted to-night, the gamblers being evidently of a literary turn of mind. . . .

Five years ago there was only a pony-path over the precipitous hills on which now stands the marvelous city of Virginia, with its population of twelve thousand persons, and perhaps more. Virginia, with its stately warehouses and gay shops; its splendid streets, paved with silver ore; its banking houses and faro-banks; its attractive coffee-houses and elegant theatre, its music halls and its three daily newspapers.

Virginia is very wild, but I believe it is now pretty generally believed that a mining city must go through with a certain amount of unadulterated cussedness before it can settle down and behave itself in a conservative and seemly manner. Virginia has grown up in the heart of the richest silver regions in the world, the El Dorado

of the hour; and of the immense numbers who are swarming thither not more than half carry their mother's Bible or any settled religion with them. The gambler and the strange woman as naturally seek the new sensational town as ducks take to that element which is so useful for making cocktails and bathing one's feet; and these people make the new town rather warm for a while. But by and by the earnest and honest citizens get tired of this ungodly nonsense and organize a Vigilance Committee, which hangs the more vicious of the pestiferous crowd to a sour-apple tree; and then come good municipal laws, ministers, meeting-houses, and a tolerably sober police in blue coats with brass buttons. About five thousand able-bodied men are in the mines underground, here; some as far down as five hundred feet. The Gould and Curry Mine employs nine hundred men, and annually turns out about twenty million dollars' worth of "demnition gold and silver," as Mr. Mantalini might express it, though silver chiefly.

There are many other mines here and at Gold Hill (another startling silver city, a mile from here), all of which do nearly as well. The silver is melted down into bricks of the size of common house bricks; then it is loaded into huge wagons, each drawn by eight and twelve mules, and sent off to San Francisco. To a young person fresh from the land of greenbacks this careless manner of carting off solid silver is rather a startler. It is related that a young man who came Overland from New Hampshire a few months before my arrival became so excited about it that he fell in a fit, with the name of his Uncle Amos on his lips! The hardy miners supposed he wanted his uncle there to see the great sight, and faint with him. But this was pure conjecture, after all.

....

I visit several of the adjacent mining towns, but I do not go to Aurora. No, I think not. A lecturer on psychology was killed there the other night by the playful discharge of a horse-pistol in the hands of a degenerate and intoxicated Spaniard. This circumstance, and a rumor that the citizens are "agin" literature, induce me to go back to Virginia.

....

I had pointed out to me at a restaurant a man who had killed four men in street broils, and who had that very day cut his own brother's breast open in a dangerous manner with a small supper knife. He was a gentleman, however. I heard him tell some men so. He admitted it himself. And I don't think he would lie about a little thing like that.

The theatre at Virginia will attract the attention of the stranger, because it is an unusually elegant affair of the kind, and would be so regarded anywhere. It was built, of course, by Mr. Thomas Maguire, the Napoleonic manager of the Pacific, and who has built over twenty theatres in his time and will perhaps build as many more, unless somebody stops him — which, by the way, will not be a remarkably easy thing to do.

As soon as a mining camp begins to assume the proportions of a city, at about the time the whiskey-vender draws his cork or the gambler spreads his green cloth, Maguire opens a theatre, and with a hastily-organized "Vigilance Committee" of actors, commences to execute Shakespeare.

#### **4.6. MR. PEPPER.**

My arrival at Virginia City was signalized by the following incident:

I had no sooner achieved my room in the garret of the International Hotel than I was called upon by an intoxicated man who said he was an Editor. Knowing how rare it was for an Editor to be under the blighting influence of either spiritous or malt liquors, I received this statement doubtfully. But I said:

"What name?"

"Wait!" he said, and went out.

I heard him pacing unsteadily up and down the hall outside. In ten minutes he returned, and said:

"Pepper!"

Pepper was indeed his name. He had been out to see if he could remember it; and he was so flushed with his success that he repeat-