

**FIVE MONTHS' FINE  
WEATHER IN  
CANADA, WESTERN  
U.S., AND MEXICO**

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Five months' fine weather in Canada, western U.S., and Mexico by Mrs. E. H. Carbutt

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**MRS. E. H. CARBUTT**

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BY May (Rhodes) Carbutt

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## FIVE MONTHS' FINE WEATHER

IN

### CANADA, WESTERN, U.S. AND MEXICO.

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ON Saturday morning, 11th August, 1888, after a wonderfully quick passage, we found ourselves so close to New York, that we were almost certain to land in the evening, and, with the exception of a solitary croaker, who had prophesied misfortunes of all kinds ever since we left Queenstown, all the passengers packed their trunks, put on their best clothes, and prepared joyfully for land. However, the croaker was right this time. As we were sitting on deck after lunch, suddenly there was a horrible noise, and we were covered with soot and steam. The spindle to the high-pressure cylinder valve had broken inside the crossheads!

One's first idea was naturally that the poor fellows in the engine-room must be terribly scalded and knocked about, but happily no one was injured. That fear relieved, we could feel the bitter disappointment of the delay. Not only must we spend another dreary night in the stuffy cabins, but no doubt we should lose the race we were running with the new much vaunted *City of New York*, and anyhow, we had lost the glory of making the fastest passage on record.



A beautiful French steamer of the Transatlantique line passed and jeeringly offered to tow us in. Next day we saw with great satisfaction that she had not arrived in time to land her passengers in the evening, and when we learnt that the *City of New York* had done very badly, we felt almost consoled; but it was a very dull afternoon. A canary flew out from New York to welcome us, and a big fish swam about close to the ship for a long time, some said it was a shark, and some said it was a sturgeon.

The engines were got to work again after four hours' delay, and the run after dark was very interesting as we passed the immense hotels and tea-gardens in Coney Island and other favourite resorts, flaring with gas and electric lights. An American charged us strictly not to omit visiting West Brighton in the morning, when we should see "hundreds of thousands of men, women, children, cats, dogs, and other living creatures all bathing together." The Elephant Hotel was just distinguishable by its curious shape.

We stopped outside Sandy Hook for the night, and next morning at six o'clock we were all up, dressed, and breakfasting, eager to see the new world.

The harbour of New York is exceedingly pretty; the *Umbria* seemed to be going all the way to the hotel, we passed so far up the river. The statue of "Liberty," by Bertholdi, is very effective, the position is so fine, facing down the harbour as if welcoming the new comers. I suppose the design was not taken from the frontispiece of *Truth*, but it looks very like it—the lines are too

straight, and the pedestal too large and heavy. The saying current at the time of its presentation to America by the French nation came to one's mind: "All the liberty France ever had she gave to America."

Immediately after breakfast, the Custom's officer came on board, and took up his position in the dining-saloon. Everybody had to pass before him and sign a declaration he had nothing liable to duty. I noted that one gentleman declared two bottles of whisky and 150 cigars, and was allowed to take them in free. The whole business of disembarking was very wearisome, not the less so because of the heavy rain that fell all the morning. However, we were agreeably surprised with the Custom's House. We had been told over and over again that the officers were rude and rough, and did their best to annoy the traveller, often upsetting all his goods on to the ground, and leaving him to re-pack as best he might; while ladies spoke of heavy charges on old clothes, on the pretext that they were new. It used to be the rule to bribe the officials, but new men had been lately appointed on purpose to stop it, and should any one offer a bribe to one of these, the consequences would be serious. We had made up our mind not to bribe, as a few hours' delay at the docks would be better than a few weeks in New York, should we hit upon the wrong man.

- When, after weary waiting, our turn came, we found a very gentlemanly, quiet-mannered person, who did not look in the least bribable. He examined everything most minutely, opening with special interest any

parcel, such as a bit of needlework or a few gloves wrapped in paper, even looking into a tiny parcel containing net for veils, which could have hardly covered any contraband goods ; but whatever he touched he replaced, and at the end, he kindly helped us to lock up and strap our trunks. Of course the journey before us did not require new clothes or finery of any kind.

There is one point I was never able to clear up, as everybody told a different tale, viz. : do diamonds pay duty when unquestionably private property ? I was particularly asked what I had, but I had absolutely none, not even a ring. Some ladies put on their jewelry under their cloaks, and I noticed a gentleman with a magnificent solitaire in his rough tie, the only diamond out of place that caught my eye in America, where I was told everybody wore them all day long. A few years ago a gentleman I knew took over one brooch, and had to pay 170 dollars duty, although it was for a present ; but lately an American dealer is said to have passed a quantity free, simply by taking the precaution of having a monogram stamped on each case, which was taken to show private ownership.

I saw a Custom's officer unfasten and examine a few sticks and umbrellas tied together, perhaps six in all, and another furious at having to spend the morning finding out the exact sum a lady had to pay on two fans she had brought from Paris to give to her daughters.

At last we were free, and got into a landau, which is probably the oldest article in America, so dilapidated was it ; windows shattered, doors broken, lamps gone,