

**A SUMMER  
JOURNEY  
IN THE WEST**

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A Summer Journey in the West by Mrs. Steele

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**MRS. STEELE**

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# SUMMER JOURNEY IN THE WEST.

BY MRS. STEELE,  
AUTHOR OF HEROINES OF SACRED HISTORY.

"I write that which I have seen,"—LE BAUM.



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## P R E F A C E .

THIS little book assumes to be nothing more than a note book of all that passed before the observation of the author, during a summer tour of four thousand miles, through the great lakes; the prairies of Illinois; the rivers Illinois, Mississippi, and Ohio; and over the Alleghany mountains to New York. Since she has been 'urged by friends to print,' the author has added to her notes and letters, some little information regarding the western States, in hopes her book may be of use to future tourists and emigrants, who will here find an account of the distances, prices, and conveyances, throughout the author's route. Anxious to guard against errors, information acquired upon the road, has been compared with the best Gazeteers. Accuracy, in a newly settled country, is difficult, and accounts differ much; still the author trusts the traveller who may honor her by taking her book for his guide, will not be far mis-led.

*New York, May, 1841.*





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## LETTER I.

JUNE 14th, 1840.

*My dear E.*—The variety of scenes which have passed before my eyes since I last beheld you, and the crowd of new ideas acquired thereby, have not obliterated your Shaksperian adieu from my mind:

“Think on thy Proteus, when thou haply see'st  
Some rare note-worthy object in thy travels,”

were your last words—in consequence of this desire, I hereby send you all I deem note-worthy. With what delight did I find myself once more upon the Hudson! Although so often seen, to me it is still lovely, for custom cannot stale its beauties. I pass along this river as through a gallery of cabinet pictures. The sunny vista and romantic glen of Gains-

borough—the frowning cliff and murderous dell of Rosa—the Dutch cottage of Teniers—the Italian villa and graceful trees of classic Weir—cattle, as if just sprung from out a Berghman and grouped upon the shore, or standing ‘in the cool translucent wave,’ their ‘loose train of amber-dropping hair,’ not being ‘braided with lilies,’ but occupied in flapping the flies away!—all these, and many more are placed side by side before me as I float along.

You have never seen this famed stream, and I will therefore describe it to you minutely. Mine will not be ‘notes by the way,’ nor ‘crayoning,’ nor ‘pencil sketches,’ but perfect Daguerrotype likenesses of all I see.

With a bold rush our steamboat was free of the wharf and out into the stream. Ascend now to the upper deck with me and you will obtain a fine view of the city of New York and its noble bay. Upon one side lies the city with its mass of houses, churches, and vessels; beyond is Long Island. Observe what a pretty back ground is Staten Island: its numerous white buildings show well against the green elevated ridge behind them; then turn your eye to the opposite side and you will behold New Jersey, with its pretty city, and villages, and churches; and in the center of all this is the glassy water covered with steamboats, brigs, ships of war, and vessels of all sizes, and dotted with pretty fortress islets. Hoboken with its neat church and romantic colonade are passed, and the rugged cliffs of Weehawken rise upon our left as we ascend the river. These cliffs are the commencement of the Palisade rocks, which soon retreat into the interior to arise again above. Bull’s

Ferry (worthy of a better name,) next appears, with Fort Lee, pretty rural retreats, whose white houses, churches, and fences, are pencilled as with white chalk upon the river's green and sloping bank.

From the east side, turret and spire have passed away, and villages and country seats adorn the shores until we arrive at Spuyten Duyvel creek, rendered famous by the redoubtable Van Corlear, who swore he would pass it in spigt den Duyvel; and also as being the boundary line of Manhattan Island. To a hasty observer, the shores beyond this are as lonely and wild as if we were hundreds of miles from any city; but if you will fix your eyes steadily upon the woodlands which line the river banks, you will catch glimpses, between the trees, of Grecian portico, Yankee piazza, or Dutch gable, telling of many a summer haunt of the city's 'tired denizen.'

Upon the west side the Palisade commences, a perpendicular wall, or to speak more scientifically, 'a columnar escarpement,' from three to eight hundred feet high, and two miles broad, thus continuing for twenty miles along the New Jersey side of the river. As you dabble in geology, I must not forget to tell you these rocks are of the trap formation, passing into green stone. Under it are layers of slate, sandstone, and grey limestone, much of which is used in the city and its neighborhood. Sloops were lying at the foot of the rocks, as we passed, taking in their load of sandstone flagging, or roofing slate for the use of the citizens. These sloops, which carry masts sixty or seventy feet high, show the height of these cliffs, as when seen anchored below them they appear like skiffs. A few stone-cutters have erected