

**MARCO PAUL'S TRAVELS
AND ADVENTURES IN THE
PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE.
ON THE ERIE CANAL**

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Marco Paul's Travels and Adventures in the Pursuit of Knowledge. On the Erie Canal by Jacob Abbott

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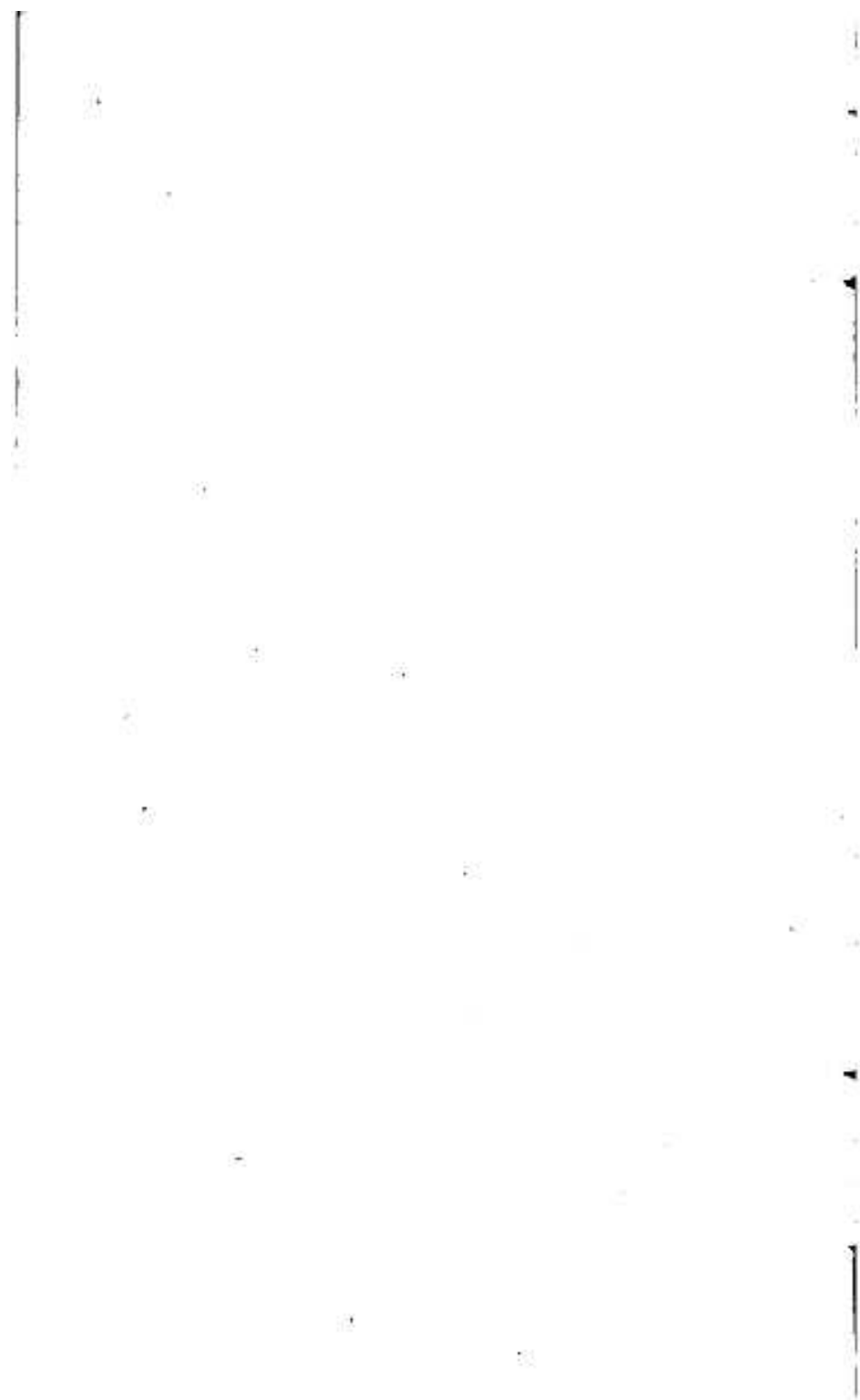
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*Marco Paul's travels and adventures in
the pursuit of knowledge*

Jacob Abbott

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BY THE AUTHOR OF
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MARCO PAUL ON THE ERIE CANAL

CHAPTER I.

PLANNING.

As Forester was sitting upon a settee, by the side of one of the great doors leading into the ladies' cabin, on board the North America, coming up to Albany, thinking of future plans, he said to himself, "How shall I begin to interest Marco Paul in the acquisition of knowledge?"

There were a great many passengers walking to and fro upon the deck of the steamboat. Others were seated on settees and chairs, reading newspapers, or looking at the scenery. At this moment Marco came up from the gentlemen's cabin, and walked slowly along towards Forester, looking this way and that, as if he did not know what to do with himself.

"Marco," said Forester, "come and sit down here, by me." So Marco came and took his seat by the side of Forester, on the settee.

"Marco," said Forester, "I have been consider-

ing what it is best to have you study first, and I have pretty nearly decided."

"Well," said Marco, "what is it?"

"See if you can guess."

"Arithmetic?" said Marco.

"No," replied Forester.

"Grammar?" said Marco.

"No," replied Forester, "nothing like that."

"What is it then?" said Marco. "I don't think I can guess."

"The Erie canal," said Forester.

"The Erie canal!" repeated Marco. "How am I going to study the Erie canal?"

"There are two modes of acquiring knowledge," said Forester; "the study of books, and the study of things,—or observation. You study books when you read in books an account of the object, or a narrative of the events, or a statement of the principles, which you wish to learn. When we learn by observation, we go out and see for ourselves, instead of taking the statements or explanations of others."

"Which is the best?" asked Marco.

"Both combined make the best method of study," said Forester; "first to learn from books all that we can, and then go and make our observations. I propose that you should study the Erie canal in that way. We cannot learn from observation alone, because we want some guide. We want to know where to look, and what to look for. The Erie canal, for instance, is several

hundred miles long. It would take a great while to explore it wholly from end to end. We want, therefore, to look at books first, so as to learn what the points of interest are, and then we can go out and make our observations to advantage."

"But it would be better, if we had time enough, to do it all by observation," said Marco.

"No," said Forester; "there are some things which we cannot learn by observation. We can only get them from books."

"Such as what?" said Marco.

"Why take such a point as this; which end of the Erie canal is highest? It begins at Lake Erie, and extends through the State of New York to Albany, where it comes into the Hudson river. As it comes along, it sometimes rises and sometimes falls, and,"—

"I thought," interrupted Marco, "that the water in a canal was always level."

"Yes," said Forester; "at any particular place the water is level, or nearly level; but then, in making a canal, after going along a little way on a level, if the engineer comes to a place where the land descends, and the country takes a lower level, he stops there and builds a lock; that is, a place with great gates to shut in the water. Then he begins below, and makes another piece of the canal on the lower level; and they have a very curious way of letting the boats down from one level to another, and also of raising them up from the lower level to the higher, when they are going the