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## Chapter 2, Westward Ho!

### Page 6: Excerpts on the grueling journey from West Prussia to Los Angeles

"In April, 1853, when I had reached the age of nineteen... a letter was received from my brother, J.P. Newmark, who in 1848 had gone to the United States and (attracted by the discovery of gold) had later settled in Los Angeles. My brother invited me to join him in California. (My father) said he had no doubt that my future would be benefited by such change... My mother when informed of my proposed departure was beside herself with grief... My sorrow was the greater when on Friday July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1853, I stood face to face with the actual realization, among absolute strangers on the deck of that vessel that was to carry me from Gothenburg to Hull and far away from home and kindred. With deep emotion my father bade me good-bye on the Gothenberg Pier. I remember distinctly remaining on the deck as long as there was the least vision of him...

We now entered the open sea which was very rough and I retired, remaining in my bunk for two days or until we approached Hull, suffering from the most terrible sea sickness I have ever experienced. On Sunday morning we reached Hull and having transferred our baggage to the train we proceeded to Liverpool, (England). There was semi-monthly steamer (ship) service from Liverpool to New York. *The Star King*, a three-masted sailing vessel... was booked to leave the following morning and we left Liverpool on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July. In the beginning we had an ample supply of fresh meat, eggs and butter.... but after that the meat commenced to deteriorate, the eggs turned stale and the butter became rancid; and as the days passed everything grew worse. On August 28<sup>th</sup> exactly 49 days after our departure from Liverpool we arrived at New York. (As) I was to obtain funds from my brother with which to continue the journey... I had to remain in New York three weeks until their receipt. I engaged

second- cabin passage via Nicaragua (aka the Isthmus). On September 20<sup>th</sup> I left New York for Nicaragua...sailing on the steamer *The Illinois* as one of some 110 travelers from Europe hurrying to California. I can recall little of the voyage to the eastern coast of Nicaragua, 900 passengers huddled together on three flat bottomed boats. When we reached Lake Nicaragua we had to trust ourselves to the uncertain *bongos*—the easily overturned native canoes. The only drinking water we could get was from the river; the heat was intense and the mosquitos seemed omnivorous. This part of the trip was replete with misery to many but for me the hardships could not interfere with the sublime scenery in this tropical country: orange and lemon trees..monkeys and parrots! A walk or two along the river bank (brought us) to Virgin Bay where we took mules to convey us to San Juan del Sur. This journey was prived as interesting as it was amusing. Imagine if you please 900 men, women and children from Northern climes, long accustomed to ways of civilization, everyone in search of a mule or horse, the only modes of transportation. The steamship company furnished the army of animals and the nervous tourists furnished the jumble! In the scramble I managed to get hold of a fine mule; had the animal been left to his own resources he might have followed the caravan; but in my ignorance I attempted to guide him and the mule deftly walked into a restaurant to the great amusement of the diners but to the terrible embarrassment of the rider. All in all we travelled 12 miles on mule and finally arrived at San Juan del Sur. I engaged a hammock for the night for one dollar and the on the next day we transferred to the steamer *Cortez*, amidst great rejoicing, for the last lap of the journey. Finally on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1853 we entered the Golden Gate (and the frontier town San Francisco.)

As there was no stagecoach line between San Francisco and the south, I was compelled to continue my journey by sea; and on the morning of October 18<sup>th</sup> I boarded the steamer *Goliath*...bound for Los Angeles. On October 21<sup>st</sup> we arrived in San Pedro harbor. Not a minute was lost between the arrival of passengers and the departure of stagecoaches to Los Angeles. We tore along at breakneck speed (Sixteen passengers pulled by six horses.) We drove by ranch houses and I saw beef cut into strings and hung up over fences to dry, it seemed as though I had landed on another planet. At last with shouts and yells we arrived at the only real hotel in town, the Bella Union. I was immediately taken to my brother's place of business where he received me with great affection and I began my first adventures in Los Angeles."