

## Palace Car Life on the Pacific Railroad

Excerpts from Williams, Henry. *The Pacific Tourist*. New York: H. T. Williams, 1876. p. 8-10.  
Newberry Library call number: G89.974.

*Pleasure of Overland Travel.—Palace Car Life on the Pacific Railroad.*— In no part of the world is travel made so easy and comfortable as on the Pacific Railroad. To travelers from the East it is a constant delight, and to ladies and families it accompanied with absolutely no fatigue or discomfort. One lives at home in the Palace Car with as much true enjoyment as in the home drawing-room, and with the constant change of scenes afforded from the car window, it is far more enjoyable than the saloon of a fashionable steamer. For an entire week or more, as the train leisurely crosses the Continent, the little section and berth allotted to you, so neat and clean, so nicely furnished and kept, becomes your home. Here you sit and read, play your games, indulge in social conversation and glee, and if fortunate enough to possess good company of friends to join you, the overland tour becomes an intense delight.

The sleeping cars from New York to Chicago, proceeding at their rushing rate of forty or more miles per hour, give to travelers no idea of the true comfort of Pullman car life. Indeed the first thousand miles of the journey to Chicago or St. Louis has more tedium and wearisomeness, and dust and inconvenience than all the rest of the journey. Do not judge of the whole trip by the first days out. From Chicago westward to Omaha the cars are far finer, and traveling more luxurious, likewise the rate of speed is slower and the motion of the train more easy than on roads farther east.

At Omaha, as you view the long Pacific train just ready to leave the depot for its overland trip, (often over 600 feet in length), giving an appearance of strength, massiveness, and majestic power, you can but admit it is exceedingly beautiful and impressive; this feeling is still more intensified when a day or so later, alone out upon the upland plains, with no living object in sight, as you stand at a little distance and look down upon the long train, it seems the handsomest work of science ever made for the comfort of earth's people.

The slow rate of speed, which averages but sixteen to twenty miles per hour, day and night, produces a peculiarly smooth, gentle, and easy motion, most soothing and agreeable. The straight track, which for hundreds of miles is without a curve, avoids all swinging motions of the cars; sidelong bumps are unknown. The cars are connected with the Miller buffer and platform, and make a solid train, without the discomfort of jerks and jolts. And the steady, easy jog of the train, as it leisurely moves westward, gives a feeling of genuine comfort, such as no one ever feels or enjoys in any other part of the world.

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Palace car life has every day its fresh and novel sights. No railroad has greater variety and contrasts than the Pacific Railroad. The great plains of Nebraska and Wyoming are not less impressive than the great Humboldt Desert. The rock majesties of Echo and Weber are not more wonderful than the curiosities of Great Salt Lake and the City of Desert. And where more grandly and beautifully could a tourist drop down and finish his tour, than from the grand towering summits of the Sierras, and amid the golden grain fields of California, its gardens, groves, and cottage blossoms?