

LESSON 9

from **Innocents Abroad** (informational)
by Mark Twain

Everybody was sent scampering to the deck at seven o'clock this lovely morning of the thirtieth of June with the glad news that land was in sight! . . .

The picture . . . was very beautiful to eyes weary of the changeless sea, and by and by the ship's company grew wonderfully cheerful. But while we stood admiring the cloud-capped peaks and the lowlands robed in misty gloom a finer picture burst upon us and chained every eye like a magnet—a stately ship, with canvas piled on canvas till she was one towering mass of bellying sail! She came speeding over the sea like a great bird. Africa and Spain were forgotten. All **homage** was for the beautiful stranger. While everybody gazed she swept superbly by and flung the Stars and Stripes to the breeze! Quicker than thought, hats and handkerchiefs flashed in the air, and a cheer went up! She was beautiful before—she was **radiant** now. Many a one on our decks knew then for the first time how tame a sight his country's flag is at home compared to what it is in a foreign land. To see it is to see a vision of home itself and all its idols, and feel a thrill that would stir a very river of sluggish blood!

We were approaching the **famed** Pillars of Hercules, and already the African one, "Ape's Hill," a grand old mountain with summit streaked with granite ledges, was in sight. The other, the great Rock of Gibraltar, was yet to come. The

ancients considered the Pillars of Hercules the head of navigation and the end of the world. The information the ancients didn't have was very **voluminous**. Even the prophets wrote book after book and **epistle** after epistle, yet never once hinted at the existence of a great continent on our side of the water; yet they must have known it was there, I should think.

In a few moments a lonely and enormous mass of rock, standing seemingly in the center of the wide strait and apparently washed on all sides by the sea, swung magnificently into view, and we needed no **tedious** traveled parrot to tell us it was Gibraltar. There could not be two rocks like that in one kingdom.

The Rock of Gibraltar is about a mile and a half long, I should say, by 1,400 to 1,500 feet high, and a quarter of a mile wide at its base. One side and one end of it come about as straight up out of the sea as the side of a house, the other end is irregular and the other side is a steep slant which an army would find very difficult to climb. At the foot of this slant is the walled town of Gibraltar—or rather the town occupies part of the slant. Everywhere—on hillside, in the **precipice**, by the sea, on the heights—everywhere you choose to look, Gibraltar is **clad** with **masonry** and bristling with guns. It makes a striking and lively picture from whatsoever point you **contemplate** it.

Exercise 1: Context Clues

Read the passage above, paying special attention to the words in dark type. These are the Master Words you will study in this lesson. As you read, look for context clues in the sentences and paragraphs around each Master Word. Circle any words and phrases that give clues to the meaning of the Master Words.

| Master Words | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|-----------|------------|
| Place a check by words you feel you know; underline words you don't know. | | | | |
| clad | epistle | homage | precipice | tedious |
| contemplate | famed | masonry | radiant | voluminous |