

# GOLDEN GATE

BY JOSEPH HUSBAND

FROM the terminals of the long piers that reach out from Oakland across the shallows, the city lies, like a gray shadow, north and south along the hills that separate the broad Pacific and the gleaming Bay. With a churning of green waters, the ferries glide swiftly to and fro — giant structures that skim the surface of the water like Martian insects.

Gulls whirl and glide, shrieking and calling; they perch on the roofs of the ferryhouse and on the superstructure of the ferry — smooth stolid birds that seem carved from blocks of wood white-painted, standing on yellow pegs.

The passengers cluster on the forward deck. The whistle announces the departure, its sudden bass note sending the gulls screaming in long sinuous curves of flight. The black tarred walls of the slip yield silently to the pressure of the ferry as it leans against them. Then, smoothly, the vessel glides out beyond the lighthouses on the slip-ends into the sparkling blue of the Bay.

Far inland the water reaches, east and south and north. For the greater part it is shoal, and the color of bottle-glass. From the shore line green mountains rise in smooth round curves; and between the hills the Bay pushes its salty fingers, prying inland, reaching and groping among the hills.

On the eastern shore, half hidden by protruding land, in San Pablo Bay, is Mare Island. From the sheltered water rise the dim lattice masts of a battleship; lean destroyers, with bold white numerals on their chisel bows, are

leashed to their moorings; storeships and vessels of naval service crowd together, brothers all in their uniform of gray.

The ferry silently and swiftly skims toward the city. Already the tower of the Market Street ferry terminal lifts its landfall. Ahead, and on the starboard bow, Goat Island pushes up its peak of green from the water. Yerba Buena, once the name of the present city of San Francisco, is its name on the chart; Goat Island it is called. There is a mantle of green above its black rock walls, and white buildings are scattered along the summit and up the eastern slope. It is a naval training station, where sailors are made to man the gray fleet and guard this Western portal of the nation.

San Francisco. As romantic as the beauty of the Bay which bears her name is the story of the city. When the struggling colonies were locked in war with an old-world power, and when the starving troops of Washington were wintering at Valley Forge, was founded, on the sand dunes above the mighty Bay, the Franciscan Mission of the gentle Saint Francis of Assisi. For almost a century, vast plains and the white peaks of the Rockies held apart the East from the West. More remote even than Callao and Canton from the ports of Salem and Boston was this unnoticed outpost. Occasional vessels dropped into the harbor for wood and water, white courses and royals on slim masts bearing them soon again to sea. Within the lives of active men to-day, less than

a thousand people clustered along the shores.

Then came rumors of gold. In 1846 the Stars and Stripes were hoisted above the town; in 1849 a vast city of tents and shanties covered the sand dunes.

In the once empty harbor, five hundred vessels swung abandoned at their cables, or rotted on the mud flats, their crews deserted, to try their mad fortune in the gold fields. Other shipping crowded the water — vessels bringing food and luxuries to the gold-crazed town.

But to-day stands a city of rare beauty, where once were streets of board and canvas; and from the rich acres of the back country comes a harvest by millions richer than the gold dust once washed from the mountain soil.

Goat Island drops behind the advancing ferry, and the Bay opens to the north. Islands green with verdure pierce sharply up from the ultramarine water. Behind them higher walls and mountains rise, Tamalpais above all, on the sky line. From the north and from the south the land slides down between the ocean and the Bay, in pointing fingers that barely touch their tips. Here in that narrow strait of separating water is the entrance to the Bay — the Golden Gate.

Higher mounts the city above the fringes of docks along its shore. The square outlines of buildings are visible, the black lines of streets cut or curve over the many hills in checkerboard pattern.

Beyond the dark break of Market Street, which leads back from the tall tower of the ferry terminal, are the Twin Peaks, smooth conical breasts in silhouette against the pale sky, the apex of a crescent of hills which form a background to the city. There is a resinous odor in the air. The smell of forests and of bay.

On the right the city rises to Telegraph Hill — a criminal settlement in early days; but now its base is serrated by streets and even lines of buildings, and a green park crowns its peak. In the centre is Nob Hill, the white mass of a princely hostelry on its summit, where once were situated the palaces of the pioneers, the nabobs of a new-world royalty. To the left and south the hills are lower, and the city fades imperceptibly in the distance, wharves along the shore as far as the eye can see.

In the centre of the Bay, and facing the Golden Gate, is Alcatraz, another giant rock, its summit covered with the white buildings of a military prison. Above their roofs is the light: that shaft of white which, from dusk to dawn, swings its tireless circle, flashing against the buildings of distant Oakland, illuminating dark chambers in San Francisco, touching with its fleeting radiance the embowered houses of Sausalito.

It is gone, swinging its far-flung circle of light; round and round it travels. It is Alcatraz.

A sleek bark, her gray hull gleaming in the sunshine, rides to anchor in the open road. Her sails are smoothly furled on yellow spars. The flag of France flutters at her peak. Perhaps she has paid visit to the Marquesas, those alluring islands which have passed from us since the days when Captain David Porter gave to them the name of Washington, and hoisted the Stars and Stripes over 'Massachusetts Bay.' Steel cargo carriers ride to their chaips, red bilges flashing between the waves, rust-streaked plates denoting some great circle course completed. The ferries are more numerous; from the Market Street tower their courses radiate; they tie the city to the encircling shore of the Bay.

Right and left are the wharves; like the teeth of a comb they line the city's

waterfront. Solid wharves they are, with modern concrete structures upon them; and everywhere, above the roofs of the wharf buildings, rise the funnels of ships, and here and there the masts of a sailing vessel.

Those staunch steamers with the blue band on their stacks thread the wide measure of the Pacific. They will call at distant ports, and perhaps will exchange their cases of machinery or motor-cars, in the once pestilential harbor of the ancient Dutch city of Batavia, for sacks of Java sugar or pungent spices.

Here are ships from Melbourne and Sydney; they have stopped perhaps at Auckland, and called at Raratonga, Papeete, and Honolulu; their steel holds are stuffed with fleece and rabbit-skins and frozen meat.

Here are ships that trade with Singapore, and that have rested in Hongkong harbor; their amicable business takes them often to Japan, and Manila is on their itinerary.

A white liner is sliding out from a dock far down the shore below the city. She flies the flag of Japan, and her name is the something Maru. She, too, is a ferryboat, and her regularity is as punctilious; only the interval of time is extended; her path is the Pacific instead of San Francisco Bay.

There is a black forest of masts in the distance beyond the slip. They are the masts of the Alaska fleet, which tends the fisheries in our vast northern territory; their course lies along a hazardous and rocky coast. Sails are their power, for speed in their trade is not worth the price of coal. Their cargoes of tinned salmon may be slowly borne.

Like a huge yacht, with clipper hull and a streak of gold from stem to stern, is this black steamer with rakish masts and twin slanting funnels. Her name on her lovely stern is in Chinese characters of gold. There is almost the romance of a sailing vessel in her fine lines.

In the next slip are two diminutive river-steamers, with high pilot houses forward and great stern paddle wheels. At sunset they will churn across the Bay for a night inland; one up the Sacramento River to the city of the same name, the other up the San Joaquin to Stockton. They are reminiscent of the romantic days, for by their routes traveled the gold-seekers on their way to Eldorado.

The city lies south of the Golden Gate. Against its western front the winds of the Pacific sweep the sand dunes. On a broad beach of shining sand great breakers churn their white foam into gold caught from the light of the setting sun. Strong from the sea comes its saline breath, and there is a cold moisture in the air.

But the northern portal of the Gate presents a different aspect. There are no sand beaches here. Sheer from the sea tower the black crags. At their feet, the water swirls and eddies, sucking between the rocks and dashing into spray against the cliffs. Behind the shore the hills mount upward, green curves behind curves of green.

And between the point of sandy dunes, where lies the city of San Francisco, and the point of rock-ribbed hills to the north, is that narrow channel of deep water that unites the ocean and the Bay.

On a fine day, if the horizon is clear, it is possible to see from the heights on the northern portal the rocky islands of the Farallones — bird-inhabited islets, which guard the Gate like sentinels, full thirty miles at sea. And at night the Farallones light is sometimes visible, a prick of light on the black rim of the horizon.

Sheltered in the lea of the great hills, and separated by the strait from San Francisco, is the town of Sausalito. Like some foreign village it clings to the steep hillside, house above house, all

lost in the green of trees and gardens. The ferries to Sausalito run on frequent schedule; north they skim, past the wharves and past Alcatraz. A bugle, sweet and distant, sounds from the white-crowned rock, and the flag flutters slowly down from the staff. San Francisco is flattening out in the distance. To the west becomes visible the green of the Presidio, and a tall column on the shore, which marks the site of the great exhibition of a few years past.

Ahead, in the fine light of the late afternoon, are the hills of Sausalito, and behind them, Tamalpais. Angel Island is on the right, ahead. Between it and Sausalito is Richardson's Bay. A few ships are riding there, their crossed yards in graceful angle to their slim masts. They have a white band about their hulls and dummy ports of black. Over the cabins aft are thatches of palm leaves. They are from the islands of the South Seas, where the tropic sun beats hot on unprotected deck or roof.

The little bay, the hills, the distant mountain, and square-rigged ships seem like a picture of some far-off tropic island. But no native canoes dart out from land as the ferry approaches.

The sun is setting in flame behind the Golden Gate, and a small steamer in mid-channel stands black in the flood of light. Already Sausalito is in shadow.

The riding-lights shine faintly on the anchored steamers. The clouds in the east are graying. The sun has set.

There are evenings when the fog rolls in from the sea and floods over the Sausalito hills. Like billowing steam, it rolls against the hillsides and flows upward. Bells toll suddenly, foghorns sound monotonously. The whole Bay is mournful with their sound.

If it is at sunset, the fog may catch the dying light and glow with rose and tints of pearl; or it may shut out the world suddenly from view, a gray impenetrable curtain dropped before the eyes.

And there are nights when there is no fog. There is a whiteness in the eastern sky. From behind the black mass of Angel Island the moon rises, and touches Raccoon Straits and the Bay with its clear light.

To the right the lights of San Francisco are shimmering, a mighty coruscation of diamonds. Far beyond the Bay, similar lights in Oakland and Berkeley twinkle on the horizon.

The rising moon discloses the anchored vessels. On the smooth black water they ride, like models in a pool. Then, from the centre of the Bay sweeps the white finger of Alcatraz. Swiftly it comes, touching land and sea. For a brief second it lingers, then it rushes on, keeping its silent watch on San Francisco Bay.

# GUILTY!<sup>1</sup>

BY VLADIMIR KOROLENKO

[WITH the death of Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko passed away the last of the Russians who, like Leo Tolstoy, 'could not be silent' in face of what they regarded as evil, however powerful that evil was, and however wise silence seemed under the circumstances. 'A gadfly stinging the conscience of his countrymen,' was Korolenko's image of Socrates, in one of his early stories; and precisely such a mission the author performed through his long years of open warfare against all oppression and violence. A convinced *Narodnik*, an exile to the Siberian tundras under the tsars, an ardent champion of the revolutionary cause, Korolenko found himself after November, 1917, like Prince Kropotkin, Madame Breshkovsky, Plekhanov, and other veteran rebels, antipathetic to the new régime. It was not so much the aim of the Bolsheviki that Korolenko opposed, as the means they employed; for, like Romain Rolland, he considered the

means more important than the ends for the shaping of man's mind.

In the summer of 1920, A. V. Lunacharsky, Commissar of Education, visited Poltava (Ukraine), called on the ailing and fast-aging Korolenko, and heard from him straightforward bitter words of denunciation against the Government. As a fellow writer and journalist, Lunacharsky suggested that Korolenko write to him from time to time personal letters, which he promised to publish in the Bolshevist daily, *Pravda* (Truth), with his comments. One must state with regret that under the present régime Korolenko found more obstacles to free expression than before the Revolution. *Pravda* has failed to publish his Remarkable letters, and only recently were they smuggled abroad and issued by the *Sovremennya Zapiski*. The letters portray so eloquently their author's personality that they render all comment superfluous.—A. K.]

You know that in the course of my literary life I have 'sown not roses alone.' (An expression of yours in one of your essays about me.) Under autocracy I wrote a great deal against capital punishment, and had even won for myself the privilege to say about it in the press considerably more than was generally permitted by the censorship. At times, I even succeeded in saving doomed victims of military courts; there were cases when, after the deferment of the execution, they received proofs of the accused man's innocence (*e.g.*, in the case of Yousupov), though it also hap-

pened that such proofs arrived too late (in the case of Glousker and of others).

But executions without trial, executions 'in administrative order'—such things were an extraordinary rarity, even then. I recall only one case, when the infuriated Skalon [Governor-General of Warsaw] had two youths shot without trial. But this aroused such indignation, even in the spheres of military courts, that only the *post facto* 'approval' by the stupid Tsar saved Skalon from indictment. Even the members of the Chief Military Court assured me then that the repetition of such an act would be impossible.

Many improbable monstrosities had

<sup>1</sup>Translated and edited by Alexander Kaun.  
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