

# **Chapter 13**

Rizal's Visit to the United States

Rizal first saw **America** on **April 28 1888**. His arrival was marred by racial prejudice for he saw the discriminatory treatment of the **Chinese** and the **Negroes** by the **white Americans**.

He kept notes of what he observed during his trip from **San Francisco** to **New York**, where he took a ship for **England**. We get a first-hand impression of **America**, some which were rather unfavorable but true. Rizal was a man of truth.



## **Arrival at San Francisco**

The steamer **Belgic**, with Rizal onboard, docked at **San Francisco** on Saturday morning, **April 28 1888**. All passengers were not allowed to land due to quarantine measures against an apparent **cholera epidemic** in the **Far East**.

Rizal was surprised because he knew there was no cholera epidemic in the Far East and protested the actions of the health authorities alongside the other passengers. The **American consul in Japan** and the **British governor of Hong Kong** certified the health of the ship and its crew.

Rizal discovered that the measures were **racially motivated**.

The ship was carrying **Chinese low-wage workers** and the **administration of California** sought to win favor by impeding them from entering the country.

Contrary to the supposed quarantine measures, **700 bales of Chinese silk** and the **ship's doctor** unloaded from the ship with no fumigation or protest, and **customs employees** ate aboard the supposedly infected ship.

After a week Rizal and all **first-class passengers** were allowed to unboard. All **Chinese** and **Japanese second and third class passengers** however were forced to remain onboard for an unspecified longer period.



## **Rizal in San Francisco**

Rizal registered at the **Palace Hotel** on **May 4 1888**, which was then considered a first-class hotel. Rizal stayed in San Francisco for two Days, **May 4 to May 6 1888**. The President was then **Grover Cleveland** and he denoted **Leland Stanford** the Californian senator at the time and his founding of **Stanford University**.

## **Across the American Continent**

Rizal left **San Francisco** for **Oakland** on **May 6 1888 4:30PM**, nine miles across San Francisco Bay by ferry boat. In Oakland, he boarded the train for his trip across the continent. He woke up on **May 7** and had a good breakfast in **Reno, 'The Biggest Little City in the World'**. He visited **Ogden, Salt Lake City**, and **Provo** on **May 8** and denoted the mountains in the middle of the lake not dissimilar to **Laguna de Bay**



He passed through **Colorado** on **May 9** and denoted **traveling so high** that he saw **snow and icicles**, and that Colorado was plentiful in trees and horses. He woke in **Nebraska** on **May 10** and visited **Omaha**, denoting it as the biggest city he's been in since San Francisco and how the **Missouri river** is twice as wide as the **Pasig river**.

He woke up in **Chicago** on **May 11** and denoted the cultivation of the country, and a particular cigar store's Indian figures. He proceeded to **Canada** and the **Niagara Falls** on **May 12** and denoted how it was the greatest and most imposing cascade he has been but its beauty and refinement matches not the **falls at Los Banos**.

He woke in **Albany** on **May 13** and denoted the size of the city, the solitary beauty of the **Hudson Bay** akin to the **Pasig river**, and how the architecture is not inferior to Europe's. He reached **New York** and spent **three days** in the city which he called the '**Big Town**'. He visited landmarks like the memorial to **Washington** who Rizal commented '**A great man with no equal in his country**' and saw the Statue of Liberty when he left on May 16 aboard the steamer **City of Rome**.



## Rizal's Impressions of America

Rizal had **good** and **bad** impressions of the **United States**

He denoted (1) The **material progress** in the great cities, huge farms, busy industries. (2) The **drive and energy** of the American people. (3) The **natural beauty** of the land. (4) The **high standard of living**. (5) The **opportunity for a better life** offered to immigrants.

He also denoted the **lack of racial equality** and existence of **prejudice**. Both concepts antithesis to the purported values of **freedom, democracy, and fairness**. A **Negro** may not marry a **White**, Hatred exists for the **Chinese** which extends to all **Asiatics** as they fail to see the reference, and much ignorance exists.

*"America is a land par excellence of  
freedom but only for the whites"*

**-Jose Rizal, to Jose Alejandro**  
regarding his impressions on America