



Curious Cargo: Voyages to the West Indies, South and Central America and the Mediterranean

Patrick Semple

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Make room Bill Bryson, there is a new travel writer in town! Imagine taking a trip with an erudite and informed companion who can regale you with relevant and entertaining information. Imagine standing under the stars at sea and wondering at Man's place in the universe with a fellow traveller who can draw on Voltaire, Joyce and the classics. Imagine pondering the place of religion in society with a seasoned veteran who is familiar with both sides of the debate. Gentle but tenacious, Patrick Semple is aware of the human frailty that drives the machine. This is an account of voyages taken by Patrick and his wife Hilary on cargo vessels carrying everything from bananas to buses. They are the sort of people you love to bump into in foreign parts. Self reliant but willing to share, private but willing to open up, self effacing but full of resources and nuggets of survival gold. This is the kind of travelling the world thinks has passed into folklore. Midnight coffee on the bridge with the captain; weeks at sea between ports; colour, culture and novelty when you put to shore. There are storms and placid sunlit seas. There is the sound of the ocean and all the while the "machine is machining". In this mode of travel there is time to reflect and space to set the mind free. Take this voyage and you will never take a banana or a vegetarian for granted again.

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