

The Emily Emmins Papers



By Carolyn Wells

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Title: The Emily Emmins Papers

Date of first publication: 1907

Author: Carolyn Wells (1862-1942)

Date first posted: July 29, 2016

Date last updated: July 29, 2016

Faded Page eBook #20160724

This ebook was produced by: Mardi Desjardins & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

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By

Carolyn Wells

With Illustrations by
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G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1907

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

TO
EDITH MENDALL-TAYLOR

IN MEMORY OF
PICCADILLY



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THE EMILY EMMINS PAPERS



It has always seemed to me a pity that nearly all of the people one meets walking in New York are going somewhere. I mean they have some definite destination. Thus they lose the rare delight, that all too little known pleasure, of a desultory stroll through the city streets. For myself, I know of no greater joy than an aimless ramble along the crowded metropolitan thoroughfares. Nor does *ramble* imply, as some might mistakenly suppose, a slow, dawdling gait. Not at all; the atmosphere of the city itself inspires a brisk, steady jog-trot; but the impression of a ramble is inevitable if the jog-trot have no intended goal.

I am a country woman,—that is, I live in a suburban town; but it is quite near enough to the metropolis for us to consider ourselves near-New Yorkers. And Myrtlemead is a dear little worth-while place in its own way. We have a Current Culture Club and a Carnegie library and several of us have telephones. I am not a member of the Club, but that must not be considered as any disparagement of my culture—or, rather, of my capacity for assimilating culture (for the Club's aim is the disbursement of that desirable commodity). On the contrary, I was among the first invited to belong to it.



Oh! yes, you have temperament, she twittered.

“You must be a member, Miss Emmins,” said the vivacious young thing who called to lay the matter before me, “because you have so much temperament.”

This word was little used in Myrtlemead at this time (although, since, it has become as plenty as blackberries), and I simply said “What!” in amazement.

“Oh! yes, you have,” she twittered, “and you create an atmosphere. Don’t attempt to deny it,—you know you do create an atmosphere.” This was too much. I didn’t join the Club, although I occasionally look in on them at their cultured tea hour, which follows the more intellectual part of their programme. As they have delicious chicken-salad and hot rolls and coffee, I find their culture rather comforting than otherwise.

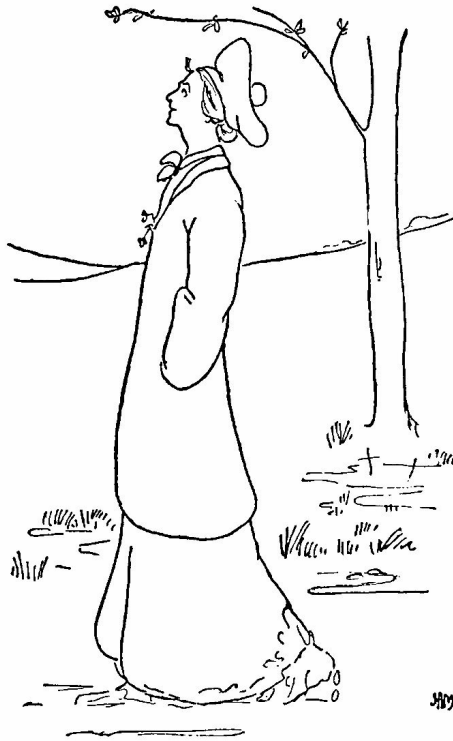
Living so near New York, I find it convenient to run into the city whenever I hear it calling.



Lilacs blossom along the curb

In the spring its calls are especially urgent. I know popular sympathy leans toward springtime in the country, but for my part, as soon as March has blown itself away, and April comes whirling along the cleared path of the year, I hurry to keep my annual appointment to meet Spring in New York. The trees are budding in the parks, daffodils and tulips are blooming riotously on the street-corners, while hyacinths and lilacs blossom along the curb. A pearl-colored cloud is poised in that intense blue just above the Flatiron Building, and the pretty city girls smile as they prank along in their smart spring costumes behind their violet mows. The birds twitter with a sophisticated chirp, and the street-pianos respond with a brisk sharpness of tune and time. The very air is full of an urban ozone, that is quite different from the romantic lassitude of spring in the country.

Of course, all this is a matter of individual taste. I prefer walking in dainty boots, along a clean city pavement, while another equally sound mind might vote for common-sense shoes and a rough country road.



Common-sense shoes and a rough country road.

And so, as I, Emily Emmins, spinster, have the full courage of my own convictions, I found myself one crisp April morning walking happily along the lower portion of Broadway. Impulse urged me on toward the Battery, but, as often happens, my impulse was side-tracked. And all because of a woman's smiling face. I was passing the offices of the various steamship companies, and I saw, coming down the steps of one of them, a young woman whose countenance was positively glorified with joy. I couldn't resist a second glance at her, and I saw that both her hands were filled with circulars and booklets.

It required no clairvoyance to understand the situation; she had just bought her first ticket to Europe, and it was the glorious achievement of a lifelong desire. I knew, as well as if she had told me, how she had planned and economized for it, and probably studied all sorts of text-books that she might properly enjoy her trip, and make it an education as well as a pleasure. And as I looked at the gay-colored pamphlets she clutched, I was moved to go in and acquire a few for myself.

With Emily Emmins, to incline is to proceed; so I stepped blithely into the big light office and requested booklets. They were bestowed on me in large numbers, the affable clerk was most polite, and,—well, I'm sure I don't know how it happened, but the first thing I knew I was paying a deposit on my return ticket to Liverpool.

I may as well confess, at the outset, that I am of a chameleonic nature. I not only take color from my surroundings, but reflect manners and customs as accurately and easily as a mirror. And so, in that great, business-like office, with its maps and charts and time-tables and steamer

plans, the only possible thing to do seemed to be to buy my ticket, and I did so. But I freely admit it was entirely the influence of the ocean-going surroundings that made the deed seem to me a casual and natural one. No sooner had I regained the street, with its spring air and stone pavement, than I realized I had done something unusual and perhaps ill-advised. However, a chameleonic nature implies an ability to accept a situation, and after one jostled moment I walked uptown, planning as I went.

Two days later the postman brought me an unusually large budget of mail. The first letter I opened caused me some surprise, and a mild amusement. It began, quite cosily:

MISS EMILY EMMINS.

Dear Madam: Learning that you intend sailing from New York in the near future, I take the liberty of calling your attention to the Hotel Xantippe as a most desirable stopping place during your stay in this city.

The letter went on to detail the advantages and charms of the hotel, and gave a complete list of rates, which, for the comforts and luxuries promised, seemed reasonable indeed! But how in the world did the urbane proprietor of the Hotel Xantippe know that I contemplated a trip abroad? I hadn't yet divulged my secret to my fellow-residents of Myrtlemead, and how an utter stranger could learn of it, was a puzzle to me. But the other letters were equally amazing. One from a dry-goods emporium besought me to inspect their wares before going abroad to buy. Another begged me to purchase their shoes, and gave fearful warnings of the shortcomings of English footgear. Another, and perhaps the most flattering, requested the honor of taking my photograph before I sailed. But one and all seemed not only cognizant of my recently formed plans, but entirely approved of them, and earnestly desired to assist me in carrying them out.

With my willingness to accept a situation, I at once assumed that somehow the news of my intended departure had crept into one or other of the New York daily papers. I couldn't understand why this should be, but surely the only possible explanation was my own prominence in the public eye. This, I placidly admitted to myself, was surprising, but gratifying. To be sure, I had written a few nondescript verses, and an occasional paper on some foolish thing as a fine art, but I had not reached the point where my name was mentioned among "What Our Authors are Saying and Doing."

However—alas for my vainglory!—a neighbor soon explained to me, that all up-to-date business firms procure lists of those who have bought steamship tickets, and send circular letters to each address. This was indeed a blow to my vanity, but so interesting were the letters which continued to pour in that I cared little for the reason of their sending. They pleased me mightily, because of their patronizing attitude, treating me as if I were either Josiah Allen's wife or a Choctaw Indian. Invariably they assumed I had never been in the metropolis before, and would prove exceeding ignorant of its ways. Nor were they entirely mistaken.

One elaborate circular set forth the wonders of the city as viewed from the "Seeing [or Touring] New York Motor-Coach." Now I had passed these great arks hundreds of times, but it had never occurred to me to enter one. And yet, so great is my susceptibility to suggestion, that I determined to take the trip before leaving my native land.

Another letter left me hesitating as to whether my proposed journey was advisable after all. This letter was from the Elsinore Travel Bureau, and explained how, by the purchase of a new-fangled stereoscope and innumerable sets of "views," one could get far more satisfaction out

of a European trip by staying at home than by going abroad. "So real are the scenes," the circular assured me, "that one involuntarily stretches out a hand to grasp what isn't there." Surely, realism need go no farther than that; yet some over-exacting people might demand that the grasped-for thing should be there.

At least, that's the way I felt about it; and besides, now that all Myrtlemead was stirred up over my going to Europe, I couldn't decently abandon my project. That's one of the delightful annoyances of life in a country village. Everybody belongs to everybody else, and your neighbors have a perfect right to be as interferingly helpful as they choose. My house was besieged by what I came to call the noble army of starters, for the kind-hearted ones brought me every imaginable help or hindrance to an ocean voyage.



They walked away with their plaids in their arms and their heads in the air.

I had already bought myself a steamer rug, whose soft bright colors and silky texture delighted my soul; but none the less were steamer rugs brought me by dozens, as intended loans. It was with a slight air of resentment that my would-be benefactors received my humble apology for possessing a rug of my own, and walked away with their plaids in their arms and their heads in the air. Then came one who earnestly advised me not to take my lovely, silky rug, as it was sure to be ruined on the steamer, and after that to be devoured by moths during its summer in a steamer trunk. The best plan, she informed me, was to hire a rug from the steamship company, as I would hire my deck-chair, and leave my own rug at home, to be used as a couch robe. Being amiable by nature I agreed to this plan. Next came a neighbor who, having heard that I had concluded to hire a rug on the steamer, asked to borrow mine to take with her on a lake trip. Of course I lent it to her, but a few weeks later, when I tried to cuddle into one of the small harsh rugs that the steamship company provides, I almost regretted my amiability.

Then came friends with cushions—large, small, and double-jointed. Also, they brought air-pillows, and water-pillows, and patent contrivances for comfort, that were numerous and bulky, and adequately expressed their donors' kind interest in my well-being at sea. Also came many

sure and absolute remedies for sea-sickness, or preventives thereof. Had I taken them all with me, and had they made good their promise, not one of the cabin passengers, or the steerage, need have been ill for a moment. Interspersed among the more material gifts was much and various advice.

This was easily remembered, for taken as a whole it included every possible way of doing anything. Said one: "Pack your trunks very tightly, for clothing carries much better that way." Said another: "Pack your trunks very loosely; for then you will have room to bring home many purchases and yet declare at customs only the same number of trunks as you took with you from America." Said a third: "Let me help you pack, for if a trunk is crammed too tightly or filled too loosely, it makes all sorts of trouble."

But, being amiable, I smiled pleasantly on all, agreed with each adviser, and held my peace. For, to me, preliminaries mattered little, and I knew that as soon as I was fairly at sea, or at least beyond the three-mile limit, I could make my own plans, and carry them out without let or hindrance.

My itinerary was, of course, arranged and rearranged for me, but usually the would-be arbiters of my destinations fell into such hot discussions among themselves that they quite forgot I was going away at all. But it mattered little to me whether they advised the Riviera by way of the North Cape, or the Italian lakes after the Cathedral tour; for my entire summer was irrevocably planned in my own mind. No "touristing" for me. No darting through Europe with a shirtwaist in a "suit" case, and a Baedeker in my other hand.



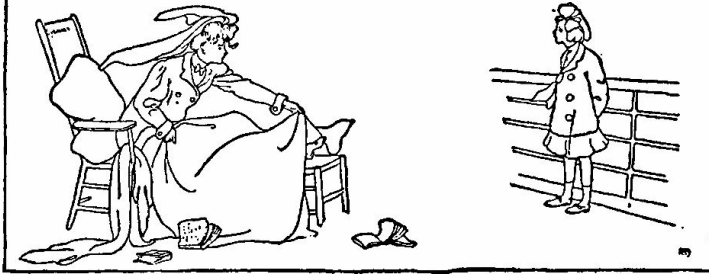
No "touristing" for me.

No, my "tour of extended foreign travel," as our local newspaper persisted in calling it, was, on my part, an immutable resolve to go by the most direct route to London and remain there until the date of my return ticket to New York. This plan, being simple in the main, left me leisure to listen to my friends' advices and recommendations. But, though I listened politely, I really paid little heed, and at last I sailed away with the advice, in a confused medley drifting out of

my memory.

The only points that seemed to be impressed on my mind were that, in London parlance, “Thank you” invariably means either “Yes” or “No” (nobody seemed quite sure which), and that in England one must always call a telephone a lift.

II. *Crossing the Atlantic*



The most remarkable effect of a sea-trip is, to my mind, its wonderful influence for amiability. I hadn't passed Sandy Hook before I felt an affable suavity settling down upon me like a February fog. I am at all times of a contented and peaceful nature, but this lethargic urbanity was a new sensation, and, as I opined it was but the beginning of a series of new sensations, I gave myself up to it with a satisfied feeling that my trip had really begun.

And yet I was haunted by a vague uneasiness that it hadn't begun right. I had planned to be most methodical on this voyage. I had resolved that when I came aboard I would go first to my stateroom and unpack my steamer trunk, arrange my belongings neatly in their proper portholes and bunks, find my reserved deck-chair, and attach to it my carefully tagged rug and pillow. Then I meant to take off and pack away my pretty travelling costume, and array myself in my "steamer clothes," these having been selected with much care and thought in accordance with numerous and conflicting advices.

Whereas, instead of all this, I had hurriedly looked into my stateroom, and only noted that it was a tiny white box, piled high with luggage, part of which I recognized as my own, and the rest I assumed belonged to my as yet unknown room-mate. Then I had drifted out on deck, dropped into some chair, I know not whose; and, still in my trig tailor-made costume and feathered hat, I watched the coast line fade away and leave the sea and sky alone together.

Suddenly it occurred to me that I was receiving "first impressions." How I hated the term! Every one I knew, who had ever crossed the ocean before I did, had said to me, "And you've never been over before? Oh, how I *envy* you your first impressions!"

As I realized that about seventy-nine people were even then consumed with a burning envy of these first impressions of mine, I somehow felt it incumbent upon me to justify their attitude by achieving the most intensely enviable impressions extant.

And yet, so prosaic are my mental processes, or else so contrary-minded is my subconscious self, that the impression that obtruded itself to the exclusion of all others was the somewhat obvious one that the sea air would soon spoil my feathers. While making up my mind to go at once to my stateroom and save my lovely plumes from their impending fate, I fell to wondering what my room-mate would be like. I knew nothing of her save that her name was

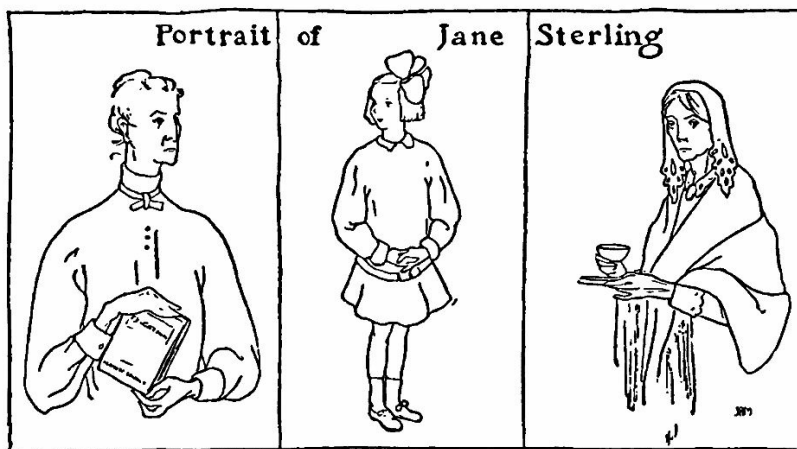
Jane Sterling. This, though, was surely an indication of her personality, for notwithstanding the usual inappropriateness of cognomens, any one named Jane Sterling could not be otherwise than well born, well bred, and companionable, though a bit elderly.

I seemed to see Jane Sterling with a gaunt face, hooked nose, and grizzled hair, though I admitted to myself that she *might* be a fragile, porcelain-like little old maid.

This conflict of possibilities impelled me to go to my stateroom and make Jane Sterling's acquaintance, and, incidentally, put away my best hat.

So I started, and on my way received another of my "first impressions."

This was a remarkable feeling of at-homeness on the steamer. I had never been on an ocean liner before, yet I felt as though I had lived on one for years. The balancing of myself on the swaying stairs seemed to come naturally to me, and I felt that I should have missed the peculiar atmosphere of the dining-saloon had it not assailed my senses.



Portrait of Jane Sterling

As I entered Stateroom *D*, I found Jane Sterling already there. But as the physical reality was so different from the lady of my imagination, I sat down on the edge of my white-spread berth and stared at her.

Sitting on the edge of the opposite berth, and staring back at me, was a small child with big eyes. She wore a stiff little frock of white piqué, and her brown hair was "bobbed" and tied up with an enormous white bow. Her brown eyes had a solemn gaze, and her little hands were clasped in her lap.

It was quite needless to ask her name, for Jane Sterling was plainly and unmistakably written all over her, and I marvelled that the name hadn't told me at once what she looked like.

"How old are you, Jane?" I asked.

"Seven," she replied, with a little sigh, as of the weight of years.

Her voice satisfied me. She was one of those unusual children, whom some speak of as "queer," and others call "old-fashioned."

But they are neither. They are distinctly a modern variety, and their unusualness lies in the fact that they have a sense of humor.

"And is this your first trip abroad?" I went on.

"No, my seventh," said Jane, with a delicious little matter-of-fact air.

"Indeed! Well, this is the first time I have crossed, so I trust you will take pity on my ignorance, and instruct me as to what I should do."

I said this with an intent to be sociable, and make, the child feel at ease, but no such effort was necessary.

"There is nothing to do diffelunt," she said, with a bewitching smile. "You just do what you would in your own house."

It was the first really good advice I had had concerning my steamer manners, and I put it away among my other first impressions for future use.

Then Jane's mother appeared, and I learned that she occupied the next stateroom, and that she hoped Jane would not annoy me, and that she was glad I liked children, and that she had three, and that they crossed every year, and that if I wanted anything at all I was to ask her for it. Then she put a few polite questions to me, and duly envied me my first impressions, and returned to her other babies.

Jane proved a most delightful roommate, and, as she was never intrusive or troublesome, I felt that I had drawn a prize in the ship's lottery.

The morning of the second day I rose with a determination to get to work. I had no intention of dawdling, and, moreover, I had much to do. In the first place, I wanted to get settled in my deck-chair, in that regulation bent-mummy position so often pictured in summer novels, and study my fellow-passengers. I had been told that nothing was so much fun as to study people on deck. Then I had many letters to write and many books to read. I wanted to learn how to compute the ship's log, and how to talk casually of "knots." After all these had been accomplished, I intended to plan out my itinerary for the summer. This I wanted to do after I was out of all danger of advice from friends at home and before I made the acquaintance of any one on board who might attempt to advise me.

So determined was I to plan my own trip that I would have been glad to get out on a desert island and wait there for the next steamer, rather than have any assistance in the matter of laying out my route.

Immediately after breakfast, therefore, arrayed in correct steamer costume, and carrying rug, pillow, paper-covered novel, veil, fur boa, and two magazines, I went to my deck-chair and prepared to camp out for the morning. As the deck steward was not about, I tried to arrange my much desired mummy effect myself. Technique seemed lacking in my efforts, and, slightly embarrassed at my inability to manage the refractory rug, I looked up to see Jane watching me.

"You mustn't put the rug over you," she explained, in her kind little way. "You must put yourself over the rug."

At her advice I got out of the chair, and she spread the rug smoothly in it.

"Sit down," she said, briefly, and I obeyed.

Cleverly, then, she flung up the sides and tucked in the corners, until the rug swathed me in true seventeenth-trip fashion. Jane proceeded to arrange my pillow and the other odds and ends of comfort. She disapproved, however, of my reading-matter.

"Magazines won't stay open," she observed, "and paper books won't, eever."

Jane's few mispronunciations were among her chiefest charms.

"But it won't matter," she added cheerfully. "You won't read, anyhow."

This reminded me that I had no intention of reading, being there for the purpose of studying my fellow-passengers.

I was still obsessed by that strange sensation of inanition.

Although beatifically serene and abnormally good-natured, I felt an utter aversion to exertion of any kind, mental, moral, or physical. Even the thought of studying my fellow-travellers seemed a task too arduous to contemplate.

And so I sat there all the morning and not a fellow-traveller was studied.

"This won't do," I said to myself, severely, after luncheon. "Here you are, not a hint of sea-sickness, the day is perfect, you know how to adjust your rug, and all conditions are favorable. You *must* study your fellow-travellers."

But the afternoon showed little improvement on the morning. As a result of desperate effort, I scrutinized one lady and decided to call her the Lady with the Green Bag.

It wasn't a very clever characterization, but it was, at least, founded on fact.

Another I conscientiously contemplated, and finally dubbed her the Lady Who Isn't an Actress. This was rather a negative description, but I based it on the neatness of her vanity-bag and the carelessness of her belt, and I am sure it was true.

The Clucking Mother was easily recognized, and a pink-cheeked and white-handed young man, who attempted to talk to me, I snubbed, and then to myself I designated him as Simple Simon.

I wasn't really rude to him, and I fully intended to make acquaintances among the passengers later on; but I am methodical, and after I had all my other tasks attended to, I hoped to have two or three days left for social intercourse.



Simple Simon.

But after a time the chair next mine was left vacant, and then a laughing young girl seated herself in it.

Apparently it didn't belong to her, and she sat down there with the express purpose of talking to me. My arduous study of my fellow-travellers had somewhat wearied me, and her sudden and uninvited appearance disturbed that serene calm which I had supposed

unassailable, and so I angrily characterized her in my mind as a Bold-Faced Jig.

This name was so apt that it really pleased me, and I involuntarily smiled in appreciation of my appreciation of her.

So sympathetic was she (as I afterward discovered) that she smiled too, and then I couldn't, in common decency, be rude to her. She chatted away, and before I knew it I was charmed with her. I didn't change the name I had mentally bestowed on her, but, instead, I told her of it, and it delighted her beyond measure. I told her, too, how I intended to devote the next two days to planning my summer trip, then a day for writing letters, and after that I hoped to play bridge, or otherwise hobnob socially with certain people whom I had mentally selected for that purpose.

The Bold-Faced Jig laughed heartily at this.

"Haven't you any idea where you're going to travel?" she asked.

"Not the slightest."

"Well, let me advise you——"

"Oh, please don't!" I cried. "I left my planning until now in order to get away from all advisers. I *must* decide for myself. I know just what I want, and I can't bear to be interfered with."

The B.-F. J. looked amazed at first, and then she laughed.

"All right," she said. "Now listen, Miss Emmins. I think you're delightful, and I'm going to help you all I can by *not* advising you. But if you've not finished your itinerary plans in two days, mayn't I tell you then what I was going to advise?"

"Yes," I said, with dignity and decision, "if you will keep away from me for two days, and do all you can to keep others away."

She promised, and it was more of a task than it might seem, for as I sat in my deck-chair, or, oftener, at a table in the library, surrounded by Baedekers, time-tables, maps, guide-books, and Hare's *Walks in London*, many of the socially inclined or curious-minded paused to make a tentative remark. My replies were so coolly polite that they rarely ventured on a second observation, but I soon discovered that my laughing friend had told her comrades what I was doing, and they awaited the result.

It is strange what trivialities will interest the idle minds of those who dawdle about in the library of an ocean steamer.

Jane would occasionally come and stand by me, saying wisely, "Are you still making your tinnery?"

When I said yes, she sighed and smiled and ran away, being desirous not to bother.

The first morning I engaged in this work, I read interestedly of picture-galleries and architectural specialties. That afternoon my interest waned, and I studied time-tables and statistical information. The next morning I grew sick of the whole performance and, bundling the books and maps away, I went out to my deck-chair, and idled away the hours in waking dreams that never were on sea or land.

That afternoon the Bold-Faced Jig approached me.

"It's all over," I said. "I've capitulated. I make no plans while I'm on this blessed ocean. It's wicked to do anything at all but to do nothing."

"And don't you want my advice?" she asked, laughing still.

"I don't care," I answered. "You can voice your advice if you choose. I sha'n't listen to it, much less follow it."

Her girlish laughter rang out again. "That was my advice," she said. "I was going to tell you not to plan any trip while you are at sea. Just enjoy the days as they come and go; don't count

them; don't do anything at all but just *be*.

"I'm not through yet," she went on. "Don't write any letters or read any books. Don't study human nature, and of all things don't voluntarily make acquaintances. If they happen along, as I did, chat a bit if you choose, and when they pass on, forget them."

And so I took advice after all. I made no plans, I made no abstruse diagnoses of human character, I made no acquaintances save such as casually happened of themselves. And the days passed in a sort of rose-colored haze, as indefinite as a foggy sunrise, and as satisfying as a painted nocturne of Whistler's. And so, my first impressions of my first ocean crossing are indeed enviable.



The trip from Liverpool to London I found to be a green glimpse of England in the shape of a biograph. But the word *green*, as we say it in our haste, is utterly inadequate to apply to the color of the English landscape. Though of varying shades, it is always green to the n^{th} power; it is a saturated solution of green; it is a green that sinks into the eye with a sensation of indelibility. And as this green flew by me, I watched it from the window of a car most disappointingly like our own Pullmans.

I had hoped for the humorous absurdities of the compartmented English trains. I had almost expected to see sitting opposite me a gentleman dressed in white paper, and I involuntarily watched for a guard who should look at me through a telescope, and say "You're travelling the wrong way."

For my most definite impressions of English railway carriages had been gained from my "Alice," and I was annoyed to find myself booked for a large arm-chair seat in a parlor car, with my luggage checked to its London destination on "the American plan"!

What, pray, was the use of coming abroad, if one was to have all the comforts of home?

As if to add to the unsatisfactoriness of my first impressions of English travel, I found myself sitting opposite a young American woman.

We faced each other across a small table, covered with what seemed to be green baize, but was more likely the reflection of the insistent landscape.

The lady was one of those hopeless, helpless, newly rich, that affect so strongly the standing of Americans in Europe.

She was blatantly pretty, and began to talk at once, apparently quite oblivious of the self-evident fact that I wanted to absorb in silence that flying green, to which her own nature was evidently quite impervious.

"Your first trip?" she said, though I never knew how she guessed it. "My! it must be quite an event in your life. Now it's only an incident in mine."

"You come often, then?" said I, not specially interested.



“The one with the plaid travelling-cap.”

“Yes; that is, we shall come every summer now. You see, he made a lot of money in copper,—that’s my husband over there, the one with the plaid travelling-cap,—so we can travel as much as we like. We’ve planned a long trip for this year, and we’ve got to hustle, I can tell you. I’m awfully systematic. I’ve bought all the Baedekers, and this year I’m going to see everything that’s marked with a double star. You know those are the ‘sights which should on no account be omitted.’ Then next year we’ll do up the single stars, and after that we can take things more leisurely.”

“You’ve never been over before, then?” I observed.

“No,” she admitted, a little reluctantly; “I went to California last year. I think Americans ought to see their own country first.”

I couldn’t help wishing she had chosen this year for her California trip, but the accumulation of green vision had somehow magicked me into a mood of cooing amiability, and I good-naturedly assisted her to prattle on, by offering an encouraging word now and then.

“He’s so good to me,” she said, nodding toward her husband. “He says he welcomes the coming and speeds the parting dollar. Isn’t that cute? He’s an awfully witty man.”

She described the home he had just built for her in Chicago, and it seemed to be a sort of Liberal Arts Building set in the last scene of a comic opera.

For a moment, I left the green to itself, while I looked at my unrefractive countrywoman with an emotion evenly divided between pity and envy. For had she not reached the ultimate happiness, the apotheosis of content only possible to the wealthy Nitro-Bromide? And what was I that I should depreciate such soul-filling satisfaction? And why should my carping analysis dub it ignorance? Why, indeed!

After a few more green miles, an important-mannered guard, who proved to be also guide, philosopher, and friend, piloted me to a dining-car which might have been a part of the rolling-stock of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Nothing about it suggested the anticipated English discomfort, unless it might be the racks for the glasses, which, after all, relieved one of certain vague apprehensions.

But at dinner it was my good luck to sit in a quartet, the other three members of which were

typical English people.

I suppose it is a sort of reflex nervous action that makes people who eat together chummy at once. The fact of doing the same thing at the same time creates an involuntary sympathy which expands with the effects of physical refreshment.

I patted myself on my mental shoulder as I looked at the three pleasant English faces, and I suddenly became aware that, though of a different color, they affected me with exactly the same sensation as the clean, green English scenery.

This, I conclude, was because English people are so essentially a part of their landscape, a statement true of no Americans save the aboriginal Indian tribes.

My table-mates were a perfect specimen of the British matron, her husband, and her daughter. I should describe them as well-bred, but that term seems to imply an effect of acquisition by means of outside influences. They were, rather, well-born, in a sense that implies congenital good-breeding.

Their name was Travers, and we slid into conversation as easily as a launching ship slides down into the water. Naturally I asked them to tell me of London, explaining that it was my first visit there, and I wished to know how to manage it.

"What London do you want to use?" asked Mr. Travers, interestedly. "You know there are many Londons for the entertainment of visitors. We can give you the Baedeker London, or Dickens's London, or Stevenson's London, or Bernard Shaw's London, or Whistler's London _____,"

"Or our own W. D. Howells's London," I finished, as he paused in his catalogue.

"I think," I went on, "the London I want is a composite affair, and I shall compile it as I go along. You know Browning says 'The world is made for each of us,' and so I think there's a London made for each of us, and we have only to pick it out from among the myriad others."

"That's quite true," said Mrs. Travers. "You'll be using, do you see, many bits of those Londons mentioned, but combining them in such a way as to make an individual London all your own."

The prospect delighted me, and I mentally resolved to build up such a London as never was on land or sea.

"But," I observed, "aside from an individually theorized London, there must be a practical side that is an inevitable accompaniment. There must be facts as well as opinions. I should be most glad of any hints or advices from experienced and kind-hearted Londoners."

"Without doubt," said Mr. Travers, "the question trembling on the tip of your tongue is the one that trembles on the tip of every American tongue that lands on our shores—'What fee shall I give a cabman?'"

I laughed outright at this, for it was indeed one of my collection of tongue-tipped questions.



He treats you to his opinion of you in choice Billingsgate.

“But, sadly enough,” went on the Englishman, “it is a question that it is useless for me to answer you at present. An American must be in London for four years before he can believe the true solution of the cab-fee problem. The correct procedure is to give the cabby nothing beyond his legal fare. If you give him tuppence, he looks at you reproachfully; if you give him fourpence, he scowls at you fearfully; if you give him sixpence, he treats you to his verbal opinion of you in choice Billingsgate. Whereas, if you give him no gratuity, he assumes that you have lived here for four years, and lifts his hat to you with the greatest respect.”

“Why can’t I follow your rule at once?” I demanded.

“I do not know,” returned Mr. Travers. “Nobody knows; but the fact remains that you cannot. You think you believe the theory now, because you hear me set it forth with an air of authority; but it will take you at least four years to attain a true working knowledge of it. Moreover, you will ask every Englishman you meet regarding cab-fees, and so conflicting will be their advices that you will change your tactics with every hansom you ride in.”

“Then,” said I, with an air of independence, “I shall keep out of hansom-cabs, until I am fully determined what course to pursue in this regard.”

“But you can’t, my dear lady,” continued my instructor. “To be in London is to be in a hansom. They are inevitable.”

“Why not omnibuses?” I asked, eager for general information. “I have long wanted to ride in or on a London ’bus.”

Mr. Travers’s eyes twinkled.

“You have an American joke,” he said, “which cautions people against going into the water before they learn how to swim. I will give you an infallible rule for ’buses: never get on a

London 'bus until you have learned to get on and off of them while they are in motion.”



“What waggery,” observed Mrs. Travers.

“What waggery!” observed Mrs. Travers, in a calm, unamused tone, and I suddenly realized that I was in the midst of an English sense of humor.

The dinner progressed methodically through a series of specified courses, and when we had reached the vegetable marrow I had ceased to regard the green distance outside and gave my full attention to my lucky find of the Real Thing in English people.

Mr. Travers’s advice was always excellent and practical, though usually hidden in a jest of somewhat heavy *persiflage*.

We discussed the English tendency to elide letters or syllables from their proper names, falling back on the time-worn example of the American who complained that Englishmen spell a name B-e-a-u-c-h-a-m-p and pronounce it *Chumley*.

“But it’s better for an American,” said Mr. Travers, “to pronounce a name as it is spelled than to elide at his own sweet will. I met a Chicagoan last summer, who said he intended to run out to Win’c’s’le.”

“What *did* he mean?” I asked, in my ignorance.

“Windsor Castle,” replied Mr. Travers, gravely.

The mention of Chicago made me remember my companion in the parlor car, and I spoke of her as one type of the American tourist.

“I saw her,” said Mrs. Travers, with that inimitable air of separateness that belongs to the true Londoner; “she is not interesting. Merely a smart party who wears a hat.”

As this so competently described the lady from Chicago, I began to suspect, what I later came thoroughly to realize, that the English are wonderfully adept in the making of picturesque phrases.



“Merely a smart party who wears a hat.”

During our animated conversation, Miss Travers had said almost nothing.

I had read of the mental blankness of the British Young Person, and was not altogether surprised at this.

But the girl was a delight to look at. By no means of the pink-cheeked, red-lipped variety immortalized in English novels, she was of a delicate build, with a face of transparent whiteness. Her soft light brown hair was carelessly arranged, and her violet eyes would have been pathetic but for a flashing, merry twinkle when she occasionally raised their heavy, creamy lids.

Remembering Mrs. Travers’s aptness in coining phrases of description, I tried to put Rosalind Travers into a few words, but was obliged to borrow from the Master-Coiner, and I called her “The Person of Moonshine.”

By the time I was having my first interview with real Cheddar cheese, the Traverses were inviting me to visit them, and I was gladly accepting their delightfully hospitable and unmistakably sincere invitation.

Scrupulously careful to bid good-bye to my Chicago friend before we reached London, alone I stepped from the train at Euston Station with a feeling of infinite anticipation.

Owing probably to an over-excited imagination, the mere physical atmosphere of the city impressed me as something quite different from any city I had ever seen. I felt as if I had at last come into my own, and had far more the attitude of a returning wanderer than a visiting stranger.

The hansom-cabs did not appear any different from the New York vehicles of the same name, but I climbed into one without that vague wonder as to whether it wouldn’t be cheaper to buy the outfit than to pay my fare.

My destination was a club in Piccadilly—a woman's club, which I had joined for the sole purpose of using its house as an abiding-place.

The cab-driver was cordial, even solicitous about my comfort, but finally myself and my hand-luggage were carefully stowed away, the glass was put down, and we started.

It was after dark, and it was raining, two conditions which might appall an unescorted woman in a strange city. The rain was of that ridiculous English sort, where the drops do not fall, but play around in the air, now and then whisking into the faces of passers-by, but never spoiling their clothes. It was enough, though, to wet the asphalt, and when we swung into Piccadilly, and the flashing lights from everywhere dived down into the street, and rippled themselves across the wet blackness of the pavement, I suddenly realized that I was driving over one of the most beautiful things in the world.

I looked out through my hansom-glass darkly, at London. Unknown, mysterious, silent, but enticing with its twinkling eyes, it was like a masked beauty at a ball. Yet, beneath that mocking, elusive witchery, I was conscious of an implied promise, that my London would yet unmask, and I should know and love her face to face.



I suppose that the earliest thing that happens anywhere is the London dawn. In all my life, my waking hours had never reached three o'clock A.M., from either direction, and when, on the first morning after my arrival in London, I was awakened at that hour by a gently intrusive daybreak, I felt as if I had received a personal and intentional affront.

I rose, and stalked to the window, with an air of haughty reproach, intending to close the shutters tightly until a more seemly hour.

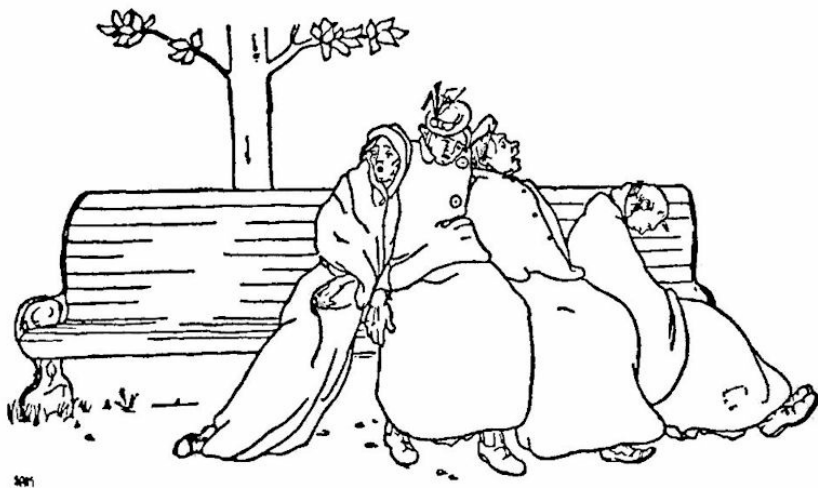
As there are only six window-shutters in the whole city of London, it is not surprising that none of these was attached to my window; but it really didn't matter, for after reaching the window that morning I never thought of a shutter again until I returned to America.

My window, which was a large French affair in three parts, looked out upon Piccadilly. It opened on a small stone-railed balcony, and as I looked out three pigeons looked in. They were of the fat and pompous kind and they strutted along the railing, with a frankly sociable air, cocking their heads pertly in an endeavor to draw my attention to the glistening iridescence of their neck-feathers.

I liked the pigeons, and I told them so, but even better I liked the sight across the street.

Green Park at dawn is as solemnly impressive as the interior of Westminster Abbey. The trees sway and quiver, giving an occasional glimpse of the Clock Tower of Parliament House. From the throats of myriad birds comes a sound as of one blended twitter, and a strange, unreal radiance pervades the whole scene. With the rapidly increasing daylight definiteness ensues, and railings, benches, roadway, and other details of the Park add strength to the picture.

Having seen three o'clock in Green Park, I promptly forgot my errand with the shutters, and, hastily donning conventional morning costume, I prepared to watch four o'clock, and five, and six appear from the same direction.



They were occupying the only earthly home they possessed.

As outlines became clearer I noticed a park bench directly opposite my window, on which sat four old women. All were garbed in black, and all were sleeping soundly. I was then unaware of the large proportion of the elderly feminine in London's seamy side of population, and so casual was the aspect of the quartet that it did not occur to me they were occupying the only earthly home they possessed.

They seemed to me more like duplicate Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshines, who had paused for a time in Green Park instead of in mid-ocean.

But after I had seen the same women there at three o'clock on a dozen consecutive mornings I began to realize that they were part of the landscape.

Nor was I unduly sorry for them. They sat on that bench with the same air of voluntary appropriation that marked the birds in the trees, or the pigeons on the railing. And as the days went on I became accustomed to seeing them there, and ceased to feel any inclination to go out and try to persuade them to enter an old ladies' home.

At about seven o'clock the omnibuses began to ply. I had never known before what was indicated by the verb *to ply*. But I saw at once that it is the only word that properly expresses the peculiar gait of an omnibus, which is a cross between a rolling lurch and a lumbering wobble. Fascination is a mild term for the effect these things had on me.

One omnibus might not so enthrall me. I don't know; I have never seen one omnibus alone. But the procession of them along Piccadilly is the one thing on earth of which I cannot conceive myself becoming tired.

Their color, form, motion, and sound all partake of the primeval, and their continuity of effect is eternal.

My Baedeker tells me that the first omnibuses plying in London were "much heavier and clumsier than those now in use." But of course this is a mistake, for they couldn't have been.

I have heard that tucked away among the gay-colored advertisements that are patchworked all over these moving Mammoth Caves are small and neatly-lettered signs designating destinations. I do not know this. I have never been able to find them. But it doesn't matter. To get to Hampstead Heath, you take a Bovril; to go to the City, take Carter's Ink; and to get

anywhere in a hurry, jump on a Horlick's Malted Milk. There is also a graceful serpentine legend lettered down the back of each 'bus, but as this usually says "Liverpool Street," I think it can't mean much.

Personally, I never patronize one of the things. They are too uncanny for me, and their ways are more devious than those of our Seventeenth Street horse-cars.

Besides, I always feared that, if I got in or on one, I couldn't see the rest of them as a whole. And it is the unbroken continuity that, after the coloring, is their greatest charm. I have spent many hours watching the Piccadilly procession of them, "like a wounded snake drag its slow length along," and look forward to many hours more of the same delight. But the dawn, the daybreak, and the early morning slipped away, and all too soon my first day in London had begun.

My mail brought me difficulties of all sorts. There were invitations from people, whom well-meaning mutual friends had advised of my arrival. There were offers from friends or would-be friends to escort me about on shopping or sight-seeing tours. There were cards for functions of more or less formality, and there were circulars from tradesmen and professional people.

With a Gordian-knot-cutting impulse, I tossed the whole collection into my desk, and started out alone for a morning walk.



Tossed the whole collection into my desk.

Nor shall I ever forget that walk. Not only because it was a "first impression," but because it was the most beautiful piece of pedestrianism that ever fell to my lot.

My clubhouse home was almost at the corner of Hamilton Place, and as I stepped from its portal out into Piccadilly I seemed to breathe the quintessence of London, past, present, and to come.

Meteorologically speaking, the atmosphere was perfect. The reputation for fogginess, that

London has somehow acquired, is a base libel. Its air is marked by a dazzling clearness of haze that, more than anything else, “life’s leaden metal into gold transmutes.”

Thus exhilarated at the start, I began my stroll down Piccadilly, and at every step I added to my glowing sense of satisfied well-being. I turned north into Berkeley Street, and thus started on my first sight-seeing tour. And was it not well that I was by myself?

For the most kind and well-meaning cicerone would probably have said,

“Do you not want to see the house where Carlyle died?”

And how embarrassed would I have been to be obliged to make reply:

“No, not especially. But I do want to see where Tomlinson gave up the ghost in his house in Berkeley Square.”

Nor would my guide have been able to point out that perhaps mythical residence. But I had no trouble in finding it. Unerring instinct guided me along Berkeley Square, till I reached what I felt sure was the very house, and since I was satisfied, what mattered it to any one else?

This being accomplished, I next proceeded in a desultory and inconsequent fashion to explore Mayfair.

Aided, like John Gay, by the goddess Trivia, I knew I could

securely stray

Where winding alleys lead the doubtful way;
The silent court and opening square explore,
And long perplexing lanes untrod before.

And as I trod, I suddenly found myself in Curzon Street. This was a pleasant sensation, for did I not well know the name of Curzon Street from all the English novels I had ever read? Moreover, I knew that in one of its houses Lord Beaconsfield died, and in another the Duke of Marlborough lived. The detail of knowing which house was which possessed no interest for me.

I rambled on, marvelling at the suddenness with which streets met each other, and their calm disregard of all method or symmetry, till I began to feel like “the crooked man who walked a crooked mile.”

Attracted by the name of Half-Moon Street, I left Curzon Street for it. Shelley once lived in this street, and I selected three houses any one of which might have been his home. I went back, I traversed some delightful mews (what *is* the plural of mews?), crossed Berkeley Square, and then, somehow or other, I found myself in Bond Street, and my mood changed. At first the shops seemed unattractive and I felt disappointment edging itself into my soul.

But like an ugly woman, possessed of charm, the crammed-full windows began to fascinate me, and I forgot the inadequate sidewalks and unpretentious façades in the absorbing displays of wares.

Bond Street shop-windows are hypnotic. Fifth Avenue windows stolidly hold their exhibits up to one’s view, without a trace of invitation, but Bond Street windows compel one to enter, by a sort of uncanny influence impossible to resist.

Though I expected to shop in London, there was only one article that I was really anxious to buy. This was a jade cube. For many years I had longed for a jade cube, and American experts had contented themselves with stating there was no such thing in existence. Time after time, I had begged friends who were going to the ends of the earth to bring me back a jade cube from one of the ends, but none had accomplished my errand.

I determined therefore to use every effort to secure a jade cube for myself, and forthwith

began my quest.

A mineralogist on Bond Street showed more interest at once than any of my personal friends had ever evinced. Though he declared there was no such thing in existence, he further remarked his entire willingness to cut one for me from the best quality of Chinese jade.



He was quite as interested.

He was quite as interested as I was myself, and, though it seemed inartistic to end so quickly what I had expected to be a long and difficult quest, I left the order.

The cube turned out a perfect success, and will always be one of my dearest and best-loved possessions. It has the same charm of perfection that characterizes a Japanese rock-crystal ball, and the added interest of being unique. There was, too, a charm in the interest shown in the cube by the old mineralogist, and also by his wife.

The day I went after the completed polished cube, the elderly madame came into the shop from a back room, to congratulate me on the attainment of my desire.

Incidentally, the good people endeavored (and successfully) to persuade me to buy further of their wares.

They had a bewildering assortment of semi-precious stones, curious minerals, and wrought metals and strange bits of handiwork from foreign countries. Beads, of course, in profusion, and fascinatingly ugly little idols. As all these things have great charm for me, and as I am always easily persuaded to buy, I bought largely, to the great satisfaction of the elderly shopkeepers. But, as I had learned a little of their tricks and their manners I offered them, a bit shamefacedly, a lower price in each instance than they asked. To my relief, they took this proceeding quite as a matter of course, and cheerfully accepted the smaller sum without demur.

But to return to that first morning, after my interview with the mild-mannered mineralogist I

strolled along Old Bond Street back to Piccadilly.

The Tennyson's Brook of omnibuses was still going on, and I stood on the corner to watch them again. From this point of view the effect is quite different from that seen from an upstairs window.

You cease to generalize about the procession, and regard the individual 'bus with a new awe.

The ocean may be wider,—the Flatiron Building may be taller,—but there's nothing in all the world so big as a London omnibus.



An English telephone is a contradiction in terms. If it is in England, it isn't a telephone. It is a thing that looks something like a broken ox-yoke, that is manipulated something like a trombone, and is about as effectual as the Keeley Motor.

A course of lessons is necessary to learn to use one, but the lessons are wasted, as the instrument is invariably out of order, and moreover, nobody has one, anyhow.

But one morning, before I had discovered all this, I was summoned to the telephone booth of the Pantheon Club, and blithely grasped the cumbersome affair, with its receiver on one end and its transmitter on the other. I ignorantly held it wrong end to, but that made no difference, as it wouldn't work either way.

"Grawsp it stiffer, madame," advised the anxious Buttons who engineered it. At length I discovered that this meant to press firmly on a fret, as if playing a flute, but by this time the party addressing me had been disconnected from the other end, and all attempts to regain communication were futile.



“Grawsp it stiffer, M’am.”

The boy took the instrument, and I have never seen a finer display of human ingenuity and patience than he showed for the next half-hour trying to hear that chord again. Then he gave it up, and, laying the horrid thing gently in its cradle, he nonchalantly informed me that if the party awrsked for me again, he’d send me naotice, and then demanded tuppence.

This I willingly paid, as I was always glad to get rid of those copper heavy-weights; and, too, it seemed a remarkably small price even for a telephone call,—until I suddenly remembered that I hadn’t made the call,—nor had I received it.

The call was repeated later, and after another distracting session of incoherent shouting, and painfully-cramped finger muscles, I learned that I was invited to an informal dinner that evening at Mrs. Marchbanks’s at seven-thirty.

I had not intended to plunge into the social whirl so soon, and had declined all the many invitations which had come to me by mail.

But somehow the telephone invitation took me unawares, and, too, I was so pleased to succeed in getting the message at all that it seemed ungracious and ungrateful to refuse. So, I took a fresh grip on the fretted monster, and, aiming my voice carefully at the far-away transmitter, I shouted an acceptance. I hoped it reached the goal, but as there was nothing but awful silence afterward, I had to take it on faith, and I went away to look over my dinner gowns.

The invitation had been classed as “informal,” but I knew the elasticity of that term, and so, though I did not select my very best raiment, I chose a pretty *décolleté* frock, that had “New York” legibly written on its every fold and pucker.

So late is the dusk of the London spring that I easily made my toilette by daylight, and was all ready at seven o’clock.

Carefully studying my Baedeker maps and plans to make sure of the distance, I stepped into my hansom just in time to reach my destination at a minute or two before half past seven, assuming that New York customs prevailed in England.

The door was opened to me by an amazed-looking maid, who seemed so uncertain what to

do with me that I almost grew embarrassed myself.

Finally, she asked me to follow her up-stairs, and then ushered me into a room where my hostess, in the hands of her maid, was in the earliest stages of her toilette.

"You dear thing," she said, "how sweet of you to come. Yes, Louise, that *aigrette* is right. Here is the key of my jewel case."

"I fear I have mistaken the hour," I said; "the telephone was a bit difficult,—but I understood half past seven."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Marchbanks, studying the back of her head in a hand-mirror, "but in London seven-thirty means eight, you know."

This was definite information, and I promptly stored it away for future use. Also, it was reliable information, for it proved true, and at eight the guests began to arrive.

Dinner was served at quarter to nine, and all was well.

Incidentally I had learned my lesson.

The half-hour in the drawing-room before dinner was an interesting "first impression" of that indescribable combination of warmth and frost known as a London Hostess.

Further experience taught me that Mrs. Marchbanks was a typical one.

The London hostess's invariable mode of procedure is a sudden, inordinate gush of welcome, followed immediately by an icy stare. By the time you have politely responded to the welcome, your hostess has forgotten your existence. Nay, more, she seems almost to have forgotten her own. She is vague, self-absorbed, and quite oblivious of your existence. I have heard of a lady with a gracious presence. The London hostess is best described by a *gracious absence*.

But having adapted yourself to this condition, your hostess is likely to whirl about and dart a remark or a question at you.

On the evening under discussion, my hostess suddenly broke off her own greeting to another guest, to say to me, "Of course you'll be wanting to buy some new clothes at once."

This statement was accompanied by a deliberate survey, from *berthe* to hem, of my palpably American-made gown, and as the incident pleased my sense of humor, I felt no resentment, and amiably acquiesced in her decision.

Then, funnily enough, the conversation turned upon good-breeding.

"A well-bred Englishwoman," my hostess dictatorially observed, "never talks of herself. She tactfully makes the person to whom she is talking the subject of conversation."

"But," said I, "if the person to whom she is talking is also well-bred, he must reject that subject, and tactfully talk about the first speaker. This must bring about a deadlock." She looked at me, or rather through me, in a pitying, uncomprehending way, and went on:

"The well-bred Englishwoman never makes an allusion or an implication that could cause even the slightest trace of discomfiture or annoyance to the person addressed."

This, of itself, seemed true enough, but again she turned swiftly toward me, and abruptly inquired, "Doesn't the servility of the English servants embarrass you?"

This time, too, my sense of humor saved me from embarrassment, but I began to think serious-minded persons should not brave the slings and arrows of a well-bred Englishwoman.

Geniality and ingenuousness are alike unknown to the English hostess. It is a very rare thing to meet a *charming* Englishwoman. Good traits they have in plenty and many sterling qualities which Americans often lack, but magnetism and responsiveness are as a rule not among these qualities.

And I do not yet know whether it is through ignorance or with *malice prepense* that an

English hostess greets you effusively, and then drops you with an air of finality that gives a "lost your last friend" feeling more than anything else in all the world.

This state of things is of course more pronouncedly noticeable at teas than at dinners. At an afternoon reception, the hostility of the hostess is beyond all words. Moreover, at English afternoon teas there are two rules. One is you may not speak to a fellow-guest without an introduction. The other is that no introduction is necessary between guests of the house. One of these rules is always inflexibly enforced at every tea; but the casual guest never knows which one, and so complications ensue.

English hostesses always seem to me very much like that peculiar kind of flowered chintz with which they cover their furniture—the kind that looks like oilcloth, and is very cold and shiny, very beautiful, very slippery, and decidedly uncomfortable.

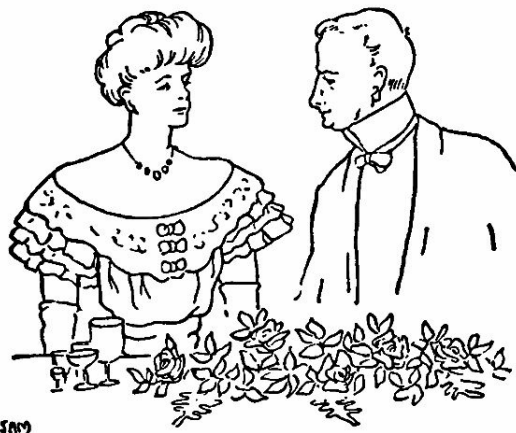
But in inverse proportion to the conversational unsatisfactoriness of the English women are the entertaining powers of the English men. They are voluntarily delightful. They make an effort (if necessary) to be pleasantly talkative and amusing.

And, notwithstanding the traditional slurs on British humor, the English society man is deliciously humorous, and often as brilliantly witty as our own Americans.

At the dinner I have mentioned above, I was seated next to a somewhat insignificant-looking young man of true English spick-and-spanness, and with a delightful drawl, almost like the one written as dialect in international novels.

Perhaps in consideration of my probable American attitude toward British humor, he good-naturedly amused me with jokes directed against his national peculiarities.

He described graphically an Englishman who was blindly groping about in his brain for a good story which he had heard and stored away there. "Ah, yes," said the supposed would-be jester; "the man was ill; and he said his physician advised that he should every morning take a cup of coffee and take a walk around the place."



He amused me with jokes directed against his national peculiarities.

"He had missed the point, do you see," explained my amusing neighbor, "and the joke should have been 'take a cup of coffee, and take a walk on the grounds,' do you see?"

So pleased was the young man with the whole story, that I laughed in sympathy, and he went on to say:

"But you Americans make just the same mistakes about our jokes. Now only last week *Punch* had a ripping line asking why the Americans were making such a fuss about Bishop Potter, and said any one would think he was a meat-potter. Now one of your New York daily papers borrowed the thing, and made it read, 'What's the matter with Bishop Potter? Any one would think he was a meat packer.' 'Pon my honor, Miss Emmins, I know that for a fact!"

"Then I think," I replied, "that we ought never again to throw stones at the British sense of humor."

In the pause that followed, a bulky English lord across the table was heard denouncing the course taken by a certain political party. So energetic were his gestures, and so forceful his speech, that he had grown very red and belligerent-looking, and fairly hammered the table in his indignation.



Denouncing the course taken by a certain political party.

The young man next to me looked at him, as an indulgent father might look at a naughty child. "Isn't he the saucy puss?" said my neighbor, turning to me with such a roguish smile that his remark seemed the funniest thing I had ever heard.

I frankly told my attractive dinner partner that the men of London society were far more entertaining than the women. He did not seem surprised at this, but seemed to look upon it as an accepted condition.

I glanced across the table at a young Englishwoman. She was an "Honorable," and possessed of a jointed surname. She was attired with great wealth and unbecomingness, and, to sum her up in a general way, she looked as if she did *not* write poetry.



She was an "Honorable" and possessed of a jointed surname.

"Yes," she was saying, "cabs are cheap with us, but if you ride a lot in a day, they count up." This is a stock remark with London women and I was not surprised to hear it again.

I glanced at my young man. He too had heard, and he quickly caught my mental attitude.

"Yes," he said, "Englishwomen and girls are very fit; they're good form, accomplished, and all that. But, though they know a lot, somehow, er,—their minds don't jell."

As this exactly expressed my own opinion, I was delighted at his clever phrasing of it.

But if the Englishman is charming as a dinner guest, he is even more so when he is host, as he often is at afternoon tea. And though I attended many teas presided over by London men, all others fade into insignificance beside the one given me at the *Punch* office.

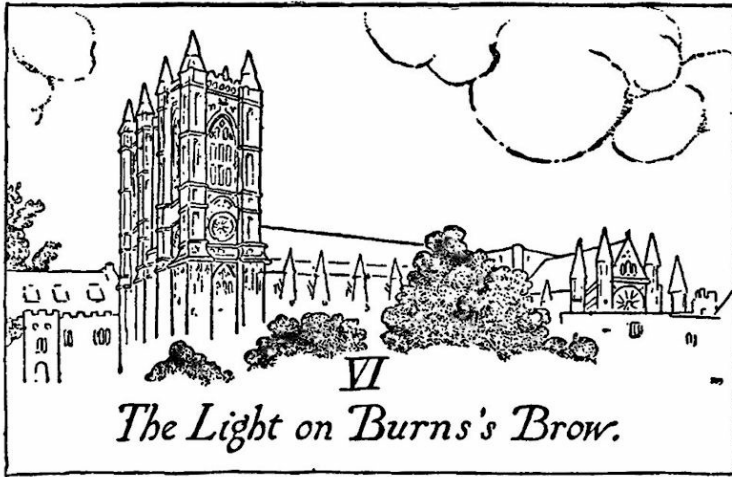
I was the only guest, the host was the genial and miraculously clever Editor of *Punch*.

The tea was of the ordinary London deliciousness, the cakes and thin bread-and-butter were, as always, over there, the best in the world; but it was served to us on the historic *Punch* table, the great table where every Friday night, since the beginning of that publication, its editorial staff has dined.

And as each diner at some time cut his monogram into the table, the semi-polished surface shows priceless memorials of the great British authors, artists, and illustrators.

I was informed by my kind host that I might sit at any place I chose. I hesitated between Thackeray's and Mark Lemon's, but finally by a sudden impulse I dropped into a chair in front of the monogram of George du Maurier.

The Editor of *Punch* smiled a little, but he only said, "You Americans are a humorous people."



My own subjective London was achieving itself. I have always remembered pleasantly, how,

Without a bit of trouble,
Arabella blew a bubble,

and, with emulative ease, I blew a beautiful, impalpable, iridescent sphere and called it London.

To be sure, a single interrogation point from an earnest Tourist would have burst my bubble, for my whole London hadn't a Tower or a British Museum in it.

Nor was this an oversight. Calling to my aid a moral courage that was practically a moral hardihood, I had deliberately concluded I would do no sightseeing. Not that I objected to seeing a sight, now and then, but the sight would have to put itself in my way, and the conditions would have to be such that I should prefer to go through the sight rather than around it.

Indeed, it was largely the word *sightseeing* that I took exception to. Such a very defective verb! Who would voluntarily put herself in a position to say, "I sightsaw the National Gallery yesterday," or "I have sightseen the whole City," and then have no proper parts of speech to say it with?

Moreover, I was not willing to go about my London carrying a Baedeker. In truth, my soul was possessed of conflicting emotions toward that little red book. As a directory it was invaluable. Never did I get an invitation to a place of mysterious sound, such as Kensington Gore, or Bird-in-Bush Road, but I ran to my Baedeker and quickly found therein the location, description, and directions for reaching the same. I soon mastered the pink and gray maps, with their clever contrivance of corresponding numbers, and with my Baedeker back of me I could have found the most obscure and bewildering address that even a Londoner is capable of devising.

But the pages devoted to "Sights which Should on No Account be Omitted," and the kindly advice on "Disposition of Time for the Hurried Visitor," I avoided with all the strength of

my unsightseeing soul.



The ingenious efforts of tourists to disguise their Baedekers.

I was often amused at the ingenious efforts of tourists to disguise their Baedekers. One tailor-made American girl had hers neatly covered with bright blue paper, quite oblivious of the fact that the marbled edges and fluttering red and black tapes are unmistakable. Another, a pedagogic Bostonian, had hers wrapped in brown paper and tied with a string. Another had a leather case which exactly fitted the volume. And I thought that as the nude in art is far less suggestive than the semi-draped figure, so the uncovered red book was really less noticeable than these futile attempts at disguise.

Having, then, definitely decided that I should eventually return to America without having set foot in the Tower, the Bank or the Charter-house, I drew a long breath of content, and gave myself up to the delight of just living in the atmosphere of my own London.

And yet, I wanted to go to the Tower, the Bank, and the Charter-house. I wanted to go to Westminster Abbey and Saint Paul's and the National Gallery. But I did not want to go for the first time. I wanted to revisit these places, and how could I do that when I had never yet visited them?

First impressions of Piccadilly or Hyde Park are all very well, but first impressions are incongruous in connection with Westminster Abbey. What has crude admiration to do with experienced sublimity? How absurd to let the gaze of surprise rest upon age-accustomed glory! What presumption to look at solemn ancient grandeur as at a novelty! I wished that I had been to Westminster Abbey many, many times, and that I could drift in again some lovely summer afternoon to revive old memories and renew old emotions.

But as this might not be, then would I keep away from it entirely, and study it from books as I had always done.

One day a departing caller carelessly left behind her a pamphlet entitled *The Deanery Guide to Westminster Abbey*. With a natural curiosity I picked it up and opened it.



That bore an advertisement of Rowland's Macassar Oil!

But I got no farther than the first fly-leaf, for that bore an advertisement of *Rowland's Macassar Oil*! I promptly forgot the existence of Westminster Abbey in the delight of finding that my London contained such a desirable commodity. Not that I wished to purchase the lotion, but I was absorbingly interested to learn that there really was such a thing. I had never heard of it before except in connection with the Aged, aged man, a-sitting on a gate, who manufactured Rowland's Macassar Oil from mountain rills which he chanced to set ablaze. The remembrance of that dear old white-haired man, placidly going his ways, and content with the tuppence ha'-penny that rewarded his toil, filled my soul to the exclusion of all else, and he made a welcome addition to the census of my own London. It was pleasant, too, to reflect on the sound logic of the English people when they coined the word "anti-macassar." How much more restrictedly definite than our word "tidy"!

Well, then next it came about that I went for a walk.

And, as was bound to happen sooner or later, I was strolling unthinkingly along, when I found myself with the Houses of Parliament on my right hand and Westminster Abbey on my left. I was fairly caught, and surrendered at discretion. The only question was which way to turn. As I had no choice in the matter, I should logically have gone, like John Buridan's Ass, straight ahead, and so missed both; but the Abbey, with an almost imperceptible nod of invitation, compelled me to turn that way, and involuntarily, though not at all unwillingly, I entered.

Whereupon I made the startling discovery that I was in the Poets' Corner! Now, I had definitely planned that if ever I *did* visit the Abbey, I would enter by the North Transept, and gradually accustom myself to the atmosphere of the place. I would go away after a short inspection, and return several times to revisit it, before I even approached the Poets' Corner. And to find myself thus unexpectedly and somewhat informally introduced to an inscription attesting the rarity of Ben Jonson, took me unawares, and my eyes rested coldly on the words, and then passed on, still uninterestedly, to Spencer, Milton, and Gray.



I took a few tentative steps, which brought me to the bust of our own Longfellow.

Uncertain whether to advance or retreat I took a few tentative steps, which brought me to the bust of our own Longfellow. The dignified and old-school New Englander is here represented as a plump-faced and jovial gentleman with very curly hair. The marble is excessively white and new-looking, and altogether the monument suggests the Longfellow who wrote "There was a little girl, who had a little curl," rather than the author of *Evangeline*. But if not of poetic effect, the bust is satisfactory as a fine type of American manhood, so I smiled back at it, and passed on.

Then, by chance, I turned into the South Transept.

It was about five o'clock on a midsummer afternoon, the hour, as I have often since proved, when the spell of the Poets' Corner is most potent—the hour when a prismatic shaft of sunlight strikes exactly on the marble forehead of Burns, and flickering sun-rays light up the face of Southey. There, above the mortal remains of Henry Irving, I stood, and as I looked up, I knew that at last Westminster Abbey and I were at one.

For I saw Shakespeare.

It was not the emotional atmosphere of the place, for that had not as yet affected me. It was not historic association, for I knew Shakespeare's bones did not rest there. It was not the inherent, artistic worth of the sculptured figure, for I knew that it has never been looked upon as a masterpiece, and that Walpole, or somebody, called it "preposterous." But it was

Shakespeare, and from his eyes there shone all the wonder, the beauty, and the immortality of his genius.

I am told the whole monument is wrong in composition and in execution, but that is merely

A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,—
Its body, so to speak; its soul is right.

Or at least it was to me, and from that moment I felt at home in Westminster Abbey.

Without leaving the United States, I could have found a more magnificent statue of Shakespeare in our own Library of Congress, but no other representation of him, in paint or stone, has ever portrayed to my mind the personality of the poet as does the Abbey monument.

I invited emotions and they accepted with thanks. They came in crowds, rushing, and soon I was unqualifiedly certain that I would rather be dead in Westminster Abbey than alive out of it. Having reached this important decision, I broke off my emotions at their height and went home.

The next day, as the sunlight touched Burns's uplifted brow, I was there again, and the next, and the next.

The first impressions being comfortably over, Shakespeare and I became very good friends, without the necessity for heaving breast and suppressed tears on my part.

I had affable feelings, too, toward many of the other great and near-great. It amused me to learn how many succeeded in getting into the Abbey by the mere accident of dying while there was plenty of room.

John Gay, they tell me, is one of the interlopers, and his epitaph,

Life is a jest and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it,

is dubbed irreverent.

But to my mind the irreverence is not in the sentiment, but in the fact that it is placed upon his tomb, the responsibility therefore, even though Gay requested it, lying with his survivors. Surely the man who wrote *Trivia* is as much entitled to honor as many others whose virtues are set forth in stone.

But if any one is disturbed by Gay's irreverence, he has only to step through the door which is close at hand, into the little chapel of St. Faith.

For some indefinable reason, this chapel breathes more the spirit of reverence and holiness than any other in the Abbey. There is no especial beauty of decoration here, but he who can enter the solemn little room without putting up the most fervent prayer of his life must be of an unresponsive nature indeed.



He so dominates the group of tourists he conducts that they often show signs of almost human intelligence.

It did not seem to me inharmoonious to visit the Chapels of the Sanctuary in charge of a verger. The Abbey guide is also a philosopher and friend. His intoned information is pleasantly in keeping with the chiselled epitaphs, and his personality is invariably delightful; and he so dominates the group of tourists he conducts that they often show signs of almost human intelligence. The guide answers questions, not perfunctorily, but with an air of personal interest. To be sure, he passes lightly over many of the most impressive figures and proudly exhibits the fearsome Death who jabs a dart at Lady Nightingale, while her husband politely endeavors to protect her. But after becoming acquainted with the chapels one may return on free days and visit, unescorted, the tomb of Sir Francis Vere.

The Waxen Effigies greatly took my fancy. Hidden away in an upper room, they are well worth the extra fee which it costs to see them. The verger describes them with a show of real affection, and indeed, I felt strangely drawn to the ghastly puppets, which are, undoubtedly, very like the kings and queens they represent. William and Mary are easily lodged in a case by themselves, and their brocades and velvets and real laces are beautiful to look upon, though stiffened by age and dirt. Elizabeth is a terror, and Charles the Second a horror, but vastly fascinating in their weird dreadfulness. Again and again I returned to my waxen friends, and found that they gave me more historic atmosphere than their biographies or tombs.

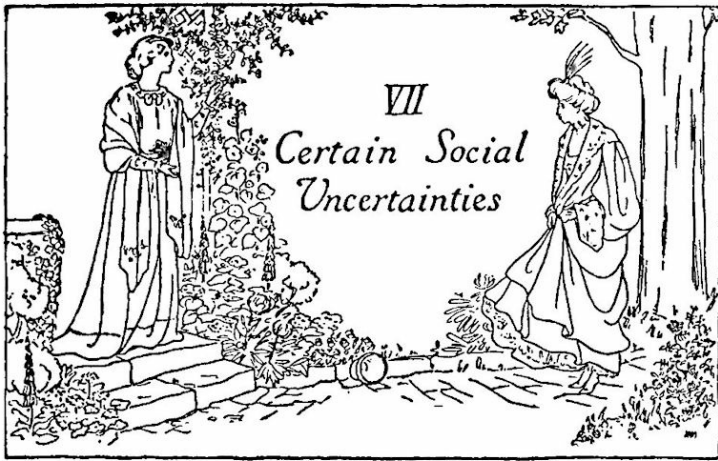
Hanging round the outside of the Abbey, I one day stumbled into St. Margaret's. The window is wonderful, of course, but I was more interested in remembering that here Mr. Pepys married the wife of whom he later naïvely chronicled:

"She finds, with reason, that in the company of other women that I love, I do not value her or mind her as I ought."

Having seen the church where Pepys was married, I felt an impulse to visit the house where he died. But I was relieved rather than otherwise to learn that no trace of the house now remains.

And, anyway, the house where he died wasn't the house where he made the pathetic entry in his *Diary*:

“Home, and, being washing day, dined upon cold meat.”



Londoners have no definiteness of any sort. Their most striking trait is, paradoxically, a vague uncertainty, and this is seen in everything connected with London, from the weather to the gauzy, undecided, wavering scarfs which the women universally wear.

Indeed I do not know of anything that so perfectly represents the mentality of an Englishwoman as these same uncertain morsels of drapery.

This state of things is doubtless founded on a logical topographical fact. Baedeker states that the city of London is built on a tract of undulating clay soil, and the foundation of the average Londoner's mind seems to be of equal instability.

I have learned from the recent newspapers that, owing to these lamentable subsoil conditions, Saint Paul's Cathedral is even now cracking and crumbling, and parallel cases may sometime be noted among the great minds of the Britons.

I trust this will not be mistakenly thought to mean any disparagement to the British mind, whether great or small. It is, I am sure, a matter of taste; and the English people prefer their waveringness of brain, as the Pisan Tower prefers to lean.

The result of this state of things is, naturally, a lack of a sense of proportion, and an absolute ignorance of values.

And it is this that makes it impossible, or at least improbable, to generalize about the manners and customs of London's polite society; though indeed anything so uncertain as their society ways can scarcely be called customs.

I received one morning from Mrs. C. a hastily-written note of invitation to dine with her that same evening.

"Quite informally," the note said, "and afterward," it went on, "we will drop in at Lady Sutherland's."

As I had learned that "quite informally" meant anything its writer chose it to mean, I was uncertain as to the formality of the function, and, having no idea who Lady Sutherland might be, I asked information of a casual caller.



“Why, in social importance, she’s only next to the King!”

“Who is she?” was the response, “why, in social importance, she’s only next to the King! that’s all! She’s the Duchess of Sutherland. She lives in Stafford House. You may not be familiar with Stafford House, but it is on record that when Queen Victoria was there, calling on a former Duchess of Sutherland, she took her leave with the remark, ‘I will now go from your palace to my humble home,’ referring to her own residence in Buckingham.”



And so for the informal dinner I arrayed myself

I was dumfounded! To be invited to Stafford House in that careless way, and to have the Duchess of Sutherland mentioned casually as Lady Sutherland,—well!

And so for the informal dinner I arrayed myself in the most elaborate costume in my wardrobe.

Nor was I overdressed. The informal dinner proved to be a most pompous function, and after it we were all whisked into carriages, and taken to the reception at Stafford House.

Once inside of the beautiful palace I ceased to wonder at Queen Victoria's remark. Admitted to be the most beautiful of all English private mansions, Stafford House seemed to my American inexperience far more wonderful than Aladdin's palace could possibly have been.

The magnificent Entrance Hall, with its branching staircase and impressive gallery, seemed an appropriate setting for the beautiful Duchess, who stood on the staircase landing to greet her guests. Robed in billows of white satin, and adorned with what seemed to me must be the crown jewels, the charming, gracious lady was as simple and unaffected of manner as any American girl. She greeted me with a sincerity of welcome that had not lost its charm by having already been accorded to thousands of others.

Then, a mere atom of the thronging multitude, I was swept on by the guiding hands of belaced and bepowdered lackeys, and, quite in keeping with the unexpectedness of all things in London, I found myself suddenly embarked on a sightseeing tour. But this was a sort of sightseeing toward which I felt no objection. To be jostled by thousands, all arrayed in costumes and jewels that were sights in themselves; to visit not only the great picture gallery of Stafford House, but the smaller apartments, rarely shown to visitors; to be treated by guests and attendants as an honored friend of the family and not as an intruder; all these things made me thoroughly enjoy what would otherwise have been a sightseeing bore.

It was a marvellous pageant, and to stand looking over the railing of the high balcony at the

crush of vague-expressed lights of London society, drifting slowly up the staircase in their own impassive way, was to me a "Sight Which Should on No Account be Omitted."

With a sort of chameleonic tendency, I involuntarily acquired a similar air, and like one in a dream I was introduced to celebrities of all degrees. Authors of renown, artists of repute, soldiers of glorious record, all were presented in bewildering succession.

Their demeanor was invariably gracious, kindly, and charming; they addressed me as if intensely interested in my well-being, past, present, and future. And yet, combined with their warm interest, was that indefinite, preoccupied, waveringness of expression, that made me feel positive if I should suddenly sink through the floor the speaker would go on talking just the same, quite unaware of my absence.

The feast prepared for this grand army of society was on a scale commensurate with the rest of the exhibition.

Apparently, whoever was in charge had simply provided all there was in the world of everything; and a guest had merely to mention a preference for anything edible, and it was immediately served to him.

The Londoners of course, being quite unaware what they wanted to eat, vaguely suggested one thing or another at random; and the vague waiters, apparently knowing the game, brought them something quite different. These viands the Londoners consumed with satisfaction; but in what was unmistakably a crass ignorance of what they were eating.

All this fascinated me so that I greatly desired to try experiments, such as sprinkling their food thickly with red pepper or putting sugar in their wine. I have not the slightest doubt that they would have calmly continued their repast, without the slightest suspicion of anything wrong.

The air of the "passive patrician" of London society is unmistakable, inimitable, and absorbingly interesting; and never did I have a better opportunity to observe it than at the beautiful reception at Stafford House to which I was invited, "quite informally."

In contrast to this, and as a fine example of the Londoner's utter absence of a sense of proportion, listen to the tale of a lady who called on me one day.

I had met her before, but knew her very slightly. She was exceedingly polite, and well-bred, and of very formal manner.

The purpose of her call was to invite me to her house. She definitely stated a date ten days hence, and asked if I would enjoy a bread-and-milk supper. "For we are plain folk," she said, "and do not entertain on an elaborate scale."

I accepted with pleasure, and she went politely away.

But I was not to be fooled by intimations of informality. "Bread and milk," indeed! *that*, I well knew, was a euphonious burlesque for a high tea if not a sumptuous dinner. I remembered that she had called personally to invite me; that she asked me ten days before the occasion; and that the hour, seven o'clock, might mean anything at all.

Therefore, when the day came, I donned evening costume, called a hansom, and started.

I had never been to the house before, and on reaching it found myself confronted by a high stone wall and a broad wooden door.

Pushing open the latter, I doubtfully entered, and seemed to be in a large and somewhat neglected garden filled with a tangle of shrubs, vines, and flowers. Magnificent old trees drooped their branches low over the winding paths; rustic arbors, covered with earwiggy vines, would have delighted Amy March; here and there a broken and weather-beaten statue of stone or marble poked its head or its headlessness up through the wandering branches.

I started uncertainly along the most promising of the paths, and at last came in sight of a house.

A picturesque affair it was. A staircase ran up on the outside, and a tree,—an actual tree—came up through the middle of the roof. It was like a small, tall cottage, almost covered with rambling vines, and surrounded by an irregular, paved court.

From an inconspicuous portal my hostess advanced to greet me. She wore a summer muslin, simply made, and I promptly felt embarrassed because of my stunning evening gown.

Her welcome was most cordial, and expressive of beaming hospitality.

“You must enter by the back door,” she explained, “as the vines have grown over the trellis, so that we cannot get around them to the front door to enter; though of course we can go out at it. But this side of the house is more picturesque, anyway. Do you not think it delightful?”

A bit bewildered, I was ushered into a room, strange, but most interesting. It contained a mantel and fireplace which had been originally in Oliver Goldsmith’s house, and which was a valuable gem, both intrinsically and by association. The other fittings of the room were quite in harmony with this unique possession, and showed experienced selection, and taste in arrangement. The next room, in the centre of the house, was the one through which the tree grew. Straight up, from floor to ceiling, the magnificent trunk formed a noble column, around which had been built a somewhat undignified table.

Another room was entirely furnished with wonderful specimens of old Spanish marquetry—such exquisite pieces that it seemed unfair for one person to own them all. Any one of them would have been a gem of any collection.

My friend was a charming hostess; and when her husband appeared, he proved not only a charming host, but a marvellous conversationalist.

So engrossed did we all become in talking, so quick were my friends at repartee, so interesting the tales they told of their varied experiences, that the time slipped away rapidly, and the quaint old clock, which was a gem of some period or other, chimed eight before any mention had been made of the evening meal.

“Why, it’s after supper-time!” exclaimed my hostess, “let us go to the dining-room at once.”

The dining-room was another revelation. One corner was occupied by a huge, high-backed angle-shaped seat of carved wood, which carried with it the atmosphere of a ruined cathedral or a *Hofbrauhaus*. The latter effect was perhaps due to the sturdy oaken table which had been drawn into the corner, convenient to the great settee.

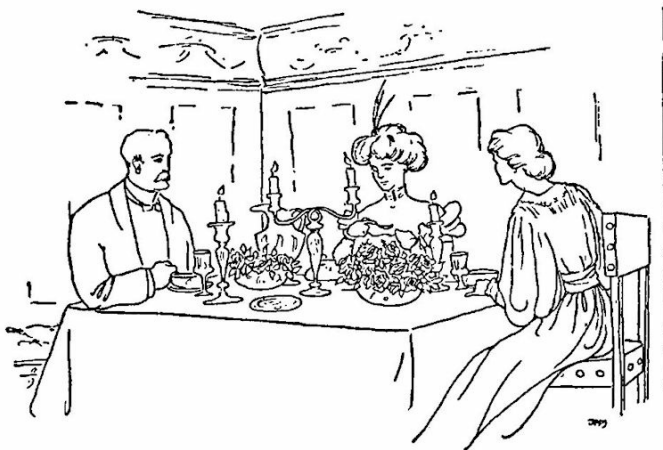
After we were seated, a maid suddenly appeared. She was garbed in a gorgeous and elaborate costume which seemed to be the perfection of a peasant’s holiday attire. Huge gold earrings and strings of clinking beads were worn with a confection of bright-colored satin and cotton lace, which would have been conspicuous in the front row of a comic opera chorus.



If you'll believe me, that Gilbert and Sullivan piece of property brought in and served, with neatness and despatch, a meal which consisted solely of bread and milk!

The bowls were of Crown Derby, the milk in jugs of magnificent old ware, and the old silver spoons were beyond price.

Yet so accustomed had I become to unexpectedness, and so imbued was I with the spirit of surprise that haunted the whole place, that the proceeding seemed quite rational, and I ate my bread and milk contentedly and in large quantities.



I ate my bread and milk contentedly and in large quantities.

There was no other guest, but I shall never forget the delight of that supper. Never have I seen a more innate and beautiful hospitality; never have I heard more delightfully witty conversation; never have I been so fascinated by an experience.

And so if Londoners choose to scribble a hasty note inviting one carelessly to a reception at Stafford House, and if they see fit to make a personal call far in advance to ask one to a bread-and-milk supper, far be it from me to object. But I merely observe, in passing, that they have no sense of proportion, at least in their ideas of the formality demanded by social occasions.



VIII

A Sentimental Journey

I suppose every one experiences sudden moments of self-revelation that come without rhyme or reason, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky: revelations that make clear in one illuminative flash conditions and motives that have been tangled in a vague obscurity of doubt.

It was when such an instantaneous radiance of mental vision came to me I realized at once why I had come to England. It was simply and only that I might visit Stratford-on-Avon.

Nor was this pilgrimage to be lightly undertaken. Well I knew that the position Shakespeare occupied in my lists of hero-worship demanded that a fitting tribute of emotion be displayed at sight of such material memorials as were preserved at his birthplace.

Moreover, I knew that, whatever might be my sense of reverential homage, in me the power of emotional demonstration did not abound.

But it is ever my custom, when possible, to supply or amend such lacks as I may note in my nature, by any available means.

And what could be wiser than when going on such an important journey, and where I knew my own powers would fall short of an imperative requirement, to take with me some one who should adequately supplement my shortcomings?

Being of a methodical nature, I have my friends as definitely classified and as neatly pigeon-holed as my old letters. Mentally running over my collection of available companions, I stopped at Sentimental Tommy, knowing I need look no further.

Of course Sentimental Tommy was not his real name, but it is my custom to bestow upon my friends such titles as seem to me appropriate or descriptive.

Sentimental Tommy, then, was the only man in the world, so far as I knew, who would make a perfect associate for a day in Stratford. His especial qualifications were a chameleonic power of adaptability, an instant and sympathetic comprehension of mood, an unbounded capacity for sentiment, and a genius for comradeship. He was also a man to whom one could say "come, and he cometh," without any fuss about it.

The date being arranged, I turned to my Baedeker and was deeply delighted to discover

that we must take a train from Euston Station. For it seemed that the wonderful columned façade of Euston was the only appropriate exit from London, when one's destination was Stratford. I had hoped that our route might cause us to pass through Upper Tooting, as, next to Stratford, this was to me the most interesting name in my little red book. I know not why, but Upper Tooting has always possessed for me a strange fascination and, though it sounds merely like the high notes of a French horn, yet my intuition tells me that it is full of deep and absorbing interest.

Sentimental Tommy met me at Euston Station, and bought tickets for Stratford as casually as if it had been on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Tommy was in jubilant spirits that morning, with the peculiar kind of international triumph which comes only to an American who has attained some especial favour of the English. Gleeefully he told me of his great luck: Only that morning he had been kicked by the King's cat! An early stroll past Buckingham Palace and along Constitution Hill had resulted in an interview with the royal feline, and the above-mentioned honorable result had been achieved. My observation to the effect that I didn't know that cats kicked, was met by the simple statement that this cat did,—and then we went on to Stratford.



Kicked by the King's cat.

The ride being in part through the same country that I had traversed when coming to London, I felt quite at home in my surroundings; and we chatted gayly of everything under the sun except the immortal hero of our pilgrimage.

That's what I like about Tommy—he has such a wonderful intuitive sense of conversational values. And though his obsession by Shakespeare is precisely the same as my own, and though he is himself a *Bartlett's Concordance* in men's clothing, yet I knew, for a surety, that he would quote no line from the poet through the entire day.

As we had neither of us ever been in Stratford before, we left the train at the station and paced the little town with an anticipation that was like a blank page, to be written on by

whatever might happen next.

Trusting to Tommy's instinct, we asked no questions of guidance, and started off at random, on a nowise remarkable street. It was an affable August day, and our gait was much like that of a snail at full gallop; yet before we turned the first corner tears stood in my eyes,—though whether caused by the thrill of being on Shakespeare's ground, or the reflection of Tommy's discernibly suppressed emotion, I've no idea.

But for pure delightfulness of sensation it is difficult to surpass that aimless wandering through Stratford, with a subconsciousness of what was awaiting us.

In London, historical associations crop up at every step; but, though pointing backward, each points in a different direction, and so they form a great semicircular horizon which becomes misty and vague in the distance. This is restful, and gives one a mere sense of blurred perspective. But Stratford is definite and coherent. Everything in it, material or otherwise, points sharply back to the one figure, and the converging rays meet with a suddenness that is dazzling and well-nigh stunning.

Stratford is reeking with dramatic quality, and a sudden breath of its atmosphere makes for mental unbalance.

"Don't take it so hard," said Tommy, with his gentle smile; "this is really the worst of it,—except perhaps one other bit,—and it will soon be over."

"Why, we haven't begun yet," said I, in astonishment.

"You're thinking of the Birthplace, the Memorial, and the Church. You ought to know that we can see, absorb, and assimilate those things in just about one minute each. It is this that counts,—this, and the footpath across the fields to Shottery."

"And the River," I added.

"Yes, and the River."

Following his unerring instincts, Tommy's steps led us, though perhaps not by the most direct route, to the Shakespeare Hotel.

"You know," he said, "intending visitors to Stratford are invariably instructed by returned visitors to go to the Red Lion Inn, or Red Bear, or Red something; but instinct tells me that this hostelry has a message for us."

Nor was the message only that of the typical English luncheon which the dining-room afforded. There were many other points about that hotel which impressed me with peculiar delight, from the quaint entrance hall to the garden at the back.

Each room is named for one of Shakespeare's plays, and has the title over its door. After hesitating between *Hamlet* and *Twelfth Night*, I finally concluded that should I ever spend a whole summer in Stratford, which I fully intend to do, I should take possession of the delightful, chintz-furnished *Love's Labour's Lost*.

The library was a continuation of fascination. A strange-shaped room whose length is half a dozen times its width, it seemed a place to enter but not to leave.

However, one does not visit Stratford for the delights of hotel-life, and, luncheon over, we again began our wanderings.

By good luck we chanced first upon the Memorial Theatre. The good luck lay in the fact that, having seen the outside of this Tribute to Genius, we had no desire to enter. It was remindful of a modern New England high school building, and, though we knew it contained authentic portraits and first folios, it had little to do with our Shakespeare.

We paused at the Monument, and commented on the cleverness of the happy thought that provided *Philosophy* to fill up the fourth side of Shakespeare's genius.

And then we went on to Henley Street and the house where Shakespeare was born.

We entered the narrow door-way into the old house, which shows so plainly the frantic endeavor at preservation, and we climbed the stairs to the room where the poet was born. The air was smoky with memory and through it loomed the rather smug bust, its weight supported by a thin-legged, inadequate table.

With Tommy I was not troubled by the objectionable thought of "first impressions." In the first moment we took in, with one swift glance, the fireplace, the walls, the windows, and the few scant properties, and after that our attitude was as of pilgrims returning to an oft-visited shrine.

In the room back of the Birthroom, the one that looks out over the garden, sat the old custodian of the place. He was a large handsome man with none of the doddering, mumbling effects of his profession.



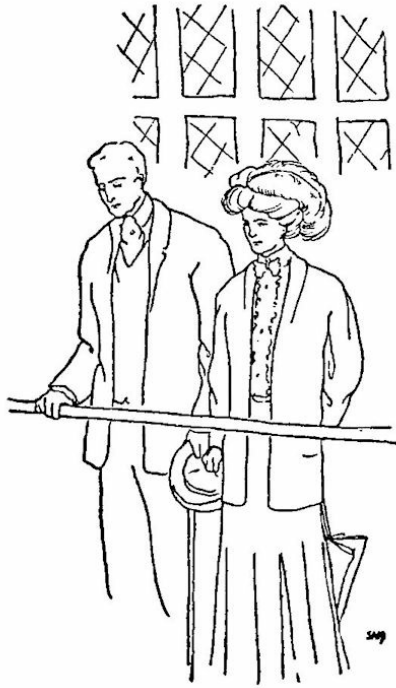
My thoughts all with Mary Arden.

He looked at me keenly, as I stood looking out of the back window, my thoughts all with Mary Arden, and he said, in a low voice, "You love him, too," and I said, "Yes."

A little shaken by the Birthplace, but of no mind to admit it, we went gayly through the Stratford streets, passing groups of Happy Villagers, and so suddenly did we meet the Avon, that we almost fell into it. We chanced upon two broad marble steps that seemed to be the terminal of a macadamized path to the river.

The Avon was using the lower of these two steps, so we sat on the upper one and watched the children sailing boats upon the Memorial Stream. This brought to my mind Mr. Mabie's word picture of Shakespeare at four years old, and for a time the baby Shakespeare took precedence over the man poet.

It is scarcely fair that the Avon should be so beautiful of itself, for this, with its vicarious interests, makes it too blessed among rivers.



At the chancel.

Then we went to Holy Trinity. The approach, plain as way to parish church, seemed like a solemn ceremony, and, as Tommy afterward admitted, "it got on his nerves."

Unbothered by verger or guide, oblivious to tourists, if any were there, we walked straight to the chancel, looked at Shakespeare's grave,—and walked away.

It was fortunate for me at this moment that I had taken Sentimental Tommy with me; for, as his emotions are so much more available than mine, so he has them under much better control.

I had expected to look around the church a bit, but Tommy led me away, through the old graveyard, to the low wall by the river. And there, under the waving old trees, we sat until we could pick up our lost three hundred years.

Back through the town we went; and I must needs stop here and there at the little shops, which, with their modern attempts at quaintness, display relics and antiques, more or less genuine.



The footpath across the fields.

Few of their wares appealed to me, so I contented myself with a tiny celluloid bust of Shakespeare, which by chance presented the familiar features with an expression of real power and intellect. It was strange to find this poet face on a cheap trinket, and with deep thankfulness of heart I possessed myself of my one souvenir of Stratford.

It is directly opposed to all the instincts of Tommy's nature to ask instructions in matters which he feels that he ought to know intuitively.

And so, upon his simple announcement, "This is the footpath across the fields to Shottery, —to Anne Hathaway's Cottage," we started.

As Tommy had hinted, during our walk from the station, there would be another bit of the real thing; and this was it. The walk across the fields was crowded with impulses that came perilously near emotional intensity. But from such appalling fate we were saved by our sense of humor. One cannot give way to emotion if one is conscious of its humorous aspect. And we agreed that as the path across the field had been here ever since Shakespeare trod it, and as it would in all probability remain for some time in the future, the mere coincidence that we were traversing it at this particular moment was nothing to be thrilled about.

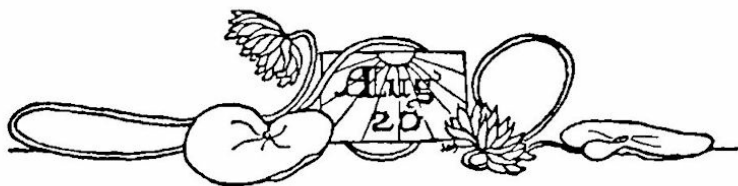
And yet,—it *was* the path from Stratford to Shottery, and we *were* there!

But it was a longer path than we had thought, and the practicality which is one of the chief ingredients of Tommy's sentiment moved him to look at his watch and announce that we would have to turn back at once, if we would catch the last train to London.

Not entirely disheartened at leaving Anne Hathaway's cottage unvisited,—for we both well knew the value of the unattained,—we turned, and wandered back to the station just in time for the late afternoon train.

And that was why we didn't discover until some time afterward that we had taken the

wrong road across the fields; and that, as we imagined our faces turned toward it, Anne Hathaway's cottage was getting further and further away to our left.





To be in London is to be in Society. Each invitation accepted brings two more, with an ultimate result like that of the old-fashioned "chain letter."

Having thoughtlessly begun a social career, I suddenly found my London carpeted with crimson velvet. And by insidious processes, and by reason of the advance of summer, the velvet carpet magically transformed itself into country-house lawns, the only difference being that the green velvet carpet was of a richer pile.

I had determined to accept no country-house invitations. The somewhat ample length and breadth of London itself was all the England I desired, and this I absorbed as fast as I could; my only difficulty being that I could not live nimbly enough.

But, like the historic gentleman who "loved but was lured away," I was invited to a Saturday afternoon garden party in the country, and, under pressure of argument by some cherished friends, I consented to go.

The Garden Party, unlike Sheridan, was seventy miles away; but I learned that it would be a typical English Garden Party of the three-volume sort, and though it necessitated a week-end stay, and concomitant luggage bothers, I stoically prepared to see it through.

I was to meet my cherished friends, who were none other than the Wag O' The World and his Wife, at Victoria Station.

This, of itself, was a worth-while experience, for meeting friends at a London station is always exciting. To begin with, they are never there. You rush madly about from one ridiculous, inadequate ticket wicket to another,—from one absurd, inadequate waiting-room to another,—and then you think that after all they must have said Charing Cross.

Then you forget them, and become absorbed in watching the comic opera crowd of week-enders, in their neat travelling-suits of beflounced muslin, frilly lace scarfs, and stout boots.



The comic opera crowd of week-enders.

Wandering about in the luggage-room, I suddenly chanced upon my friends calmly sitting on their own boxes, and looking as if they had been evicted for not paying their rent.

And such a multiplicity of luggage as they had! I had contented myself with one box of goodly proportions, but my cherished friends had no less than twelve pieces of the varying patterns of enamelled blackness and pig-skinned brownness which only England knows.



Looking as if they had been evicted for not paying their rent.

“Why sit ye here idle?” I demanded.

“We await the psychical moment,” responded the Wag O’ The World; “you see they won’t

stick our luggage sooner than ten minutes before train time, and they're not allowed to stick it later than five minutes before train time. The game is to catch a porter between those times."

The game seemed not only difficult, but impossible, for the porters were not only elusive but for the most part invisible. Preoccupied-looking men strolled about with a handful of labels and a paste-pot, but could not be induced to decorate our luggage therewith.

"The principle is all wrong!" I declared. "It is absurd for one to be such a slave to one's luggage. Somebody ought to invent a trunk with legs and intelligence, that would run after us,—instead of our running after it!"

"Even that would not be necessary," responded the Wag O' The World, in his mild way; "if somebody would only invent a porter with legs and intelligence, it would fulfil all requirements."

Now this is the strange part.

Though there were more than a thousand people waiting to have their luggage stuck (*i. e.*, labelled), and though there were but few of the invisible porters, yet everybody was properly stuck, and started when the train did!

The next entertainment was the securing of an entire compartment for our party of three. This is always accomplished in England, but by many devious and often original devices.

"I've thought of a good plan, which I've never tried yet," observed the Wag O' The World, "to get a compartment to one's self. That is, to invent some collapsible rubber people,—like balloon pigs, you know,—that may be carried in the pocket, and blown up when necessary. Three or four of these, when blown up and placed in the various seats would fool any guard. And if one were shaped like a baby, with a crying arrangement that would work mechanically, the others would not be needed."

This plan was ingenious, but, like everything else in England, unnecessary. It is one of the most striking characteristics of the English that nothing is absolutely necessary to their well-being or happiness. If anything is omitted or mislaid, it is not missed but promptly forgotten, and no harm done.

After an hour or two of pleasant travel through the hop-poled scenery of Southeastern England, we reached a place with one of those absurd names which always suggest Edward Lear's immortal lyrics, where we must needs change cars.

My Cherished Friends strolled along the length of the platform to the luggage van, and judiciously selected such boxes as they cared to claim; though I am sure they did not get all of their own, and acquired a few belonging to other passengers. I easily picked out my own American trunk, and, surrounded by our spoil, we stood on the platform while the train wandered on.

After a long, but by no means tedious, wait there appeared on the other side of the platform a toy railroad train, so amateurish that it looked like one drawn by a child on a slate.

We were put into a box-stall, and locked in. The ridiculous little contraption bobbled along its track, and finally stopped in the middle of a beautiful landscape, and we jumped out to become part of it.

The barouche of our hostess awaited us, with still life in the shape of liveried attendants. A huge wagon awaited the luggage, which had mysteriously dumped itself out of the train, and we were whisked away to the Garden Party.

Partly to be polite, and partly because I couldn't help it, I remarked on the marvellous beauty of the country.

The Wag O' The World enthusiastically agreed with me. "But, Emily," he said, "if you could

only see this same country in the spring! These lanes are walled on either side with the pink bloom of the may,—and the wild flowers . . .”

Tears stood in the blue eyes of the Wag, at the mere thought of spring in Kent, and I realized at last why English poets have sometimes written poems about Spring.

We passed through the village, one of those tiny hamlets which acquire merit only by age and local tradition. The Happy Villagers stared at us with just the correct degree of bucolic curiosity, and we rolled on through the lodge gates, and along the winding, beautiful avenue to the house. In every direction stretched wide lawns of perfect grass, that probably acquired its uppish look when William the Conqueror trod it.

We were met by no humanity of our own stamp, but were shown to our room by benevolent-minded factotums, and gently advised to prepare for the Garden Party.

With the exception of entertainments of a public nature, I have never seen so beautiful and elaborate an affair. The guests, to the number of two hundred, came from all the country round; some in equipages dripping with ancestral glory, and some in motor-cars reeking with modern wealth.

The women's costumes were of themselves a study. The English woman's dress often inclines to the *bizarre*; and at a garden fête she lets herself loose in radiant absurdities, which she wears with the absolute self-satisfaction born of the knowledge that in the matter of feminine adornment England is the land of the free and home of the brave.

The Garden Party proceeded with the regularity of clock-work. The invitations read from four till six, and promptly at four the whole two hundred guests arrived. This occasioned no confusion, and the hostess greeted them with a neatness and despatch equalling that of our own Presidential receptions.

The guests then conversed in amiable groups on the lawn, while a band of musicians in scarlet and gold uniforms played popular airs.

All were then marshalled into a huge marquee, of dimensions exceeding our largest circus tent. Here, a Lucullan feast was served at small tables, and the country gentry, in their vague, involuntary way, amply satisfied their healthy English appetites.

After the feast, the assemblage was rounded up into a compact audience, to witness the performance of a troupe of Pierrots. The antics of these Mountebanks, with accompanying songs and dances, were appreciatively applauded, and then, as it was six o'clock, the assemblage dissolved and vanished, almost with the rapidity of a bursting bubble.

To my easily flustered American mentality, it all seemed like a feat of magic; and I looked in amazement at my hostess who, after the departure of the last guest, was as composed and serene as if she had entertained but a single guest. And like the insubstantial pageant faded, it left not a rack behind. More magic dissolved the tent, the band-stand, the Pierrots' platform, and all other incriminating evidence, and then, with true English forgetfulness, the Garden Party was a thing of the past, and dinner was toward.

The house-party numbered forty, and, after exchanging the filmy finery of the garden garb for the more gorgeous regalia demanded by candle-light, the guests repaired to the stately dining-hall. Of course, *repaired* is the only verb of locomotion befitting the occasion.

Sunday passed like a beautiful daydream. The English have a great respect for the Sabbath day, and, perhaps as a reward for this, the weather on Sunday is usually perfect. It is not incumbent on guests to go to church, but it is considered rather nice of them to do so; especially if, as happened in this instance, the old church is on the estate where one is visiting. Nor is it any hardship to sit in an old carved high-backed pew, that has belonged to the family

for ages.

Sabbath amusements are of a mild nature, one of the favorites being photography. English people have original ideas of posing, and any one who can invent a new mode of grouping his subjects is looked upon as a hero.

Aside from Lord Nelson's declaration, if there is one thing that England expects, it is Tea; and tea she gets every day. But of all the various modes of conducting the function, the out-of-door Tea at a country house is probably the most delightful.

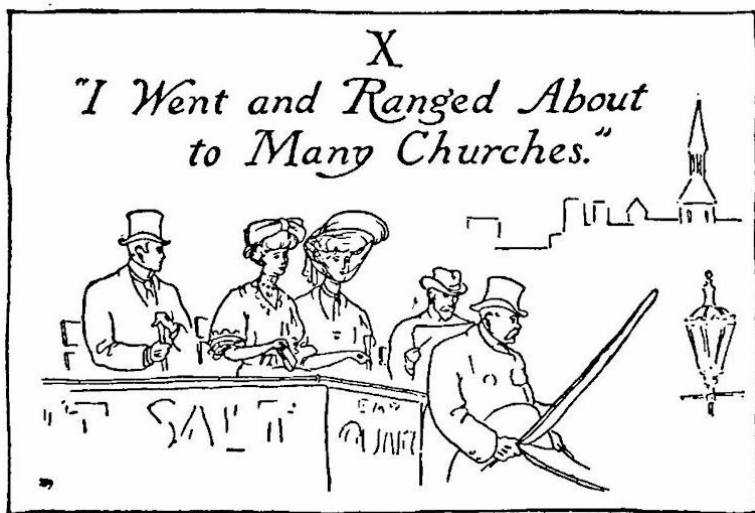
The appointments are the perfection of wicker, china, and silver, but it is the local color and surrounding that count most.



English people have original ideas of posing.

I cease to wonder that the English are only vaguely interested in their viands, for who could definitely consider the flavor of tea when in full view was a rising terrace leading to a magnificent old mansion of the correct and approved period of architecture, and covered with ivy that may have been planted by an Historical Character? or, looking in another direction, one could perceive a formal garden, with fountain and sun-dial; another turn of the head brought into view a unique rose orchard, unmatched even in England; while toward the only point of the compass left, rolled hills and dales that made many an English landscape painter famous.

Add to this the inconsequent and always delightful small-talk of English society, spiced here and there by their dreadful expletive, "My word!" and enlivened by the English humor, which is, to those who care for it, the most truly humorous thing on earth,—and I, for one, am quite ready to concede that these conditions combine to make Afternoon Tea a Spangle of Existence.



Miss Anna was certainly a godsend. It was due to her comprehension of the “human various,” and her experienced knowledge of London, that I was enabled to revisit places I had never seen before.

When she calmly asked me to spend a day sightseeing in the “City,” I gasped. But when she reminded me that I ought to look once more on some of the old landmarks of London, I was flattered into a gracious acceptance.

One soft, purry August morning we started out. I was supposed to be absolutely under her direction, but when she remarked casually that we would take a ’bus, I rebelled.

“I have never been in or on the horrid things,” I protested, “and I never intend to!”

But she only said, “We’ll stand on the corner of Oxford Street, and wait for a City Atlas,” and somehow I immediately felt quite accustomed to City Atlases,—and intuitively knew it would be a blue one,—but it wasn’t.

Imitating Miss Anna’s air of habitual custom, I swung myself aboard of the moving monster, and laboriously climbed the curving companion-way at the back.



When she remarked casually that we would take a 'bus, I rebelled.

Once in our seats, it was not so bad; though very like riding the whirlwind, without being allowed to direct the storm.

Miss Anna drew my attention to points of interest as we passed them. In her tactful way she humored my idiosyncrasy. She never said, "On your right is the 'Salutation and Cat,' where Coleridge and Southey and Lamb used to congregate of a winter evening." She said, instead, "Haven't you always thought 'Salutation and Cat' the very dearest tavern in all London?"

Nor when we came to the half-timbered houses of Holborn did she say, "Here lived Lamb's godfather, who was known to and visited by Sheridan."

She said: "Don't you like Hawthorne's way of putting these things? You remember how he tells us that on his first visit to London he went astray in Holborn, through an arched entrance, in a court opening inward, with a great many Sunflowers in full bloom."

All this pleased me, as did also Bumpus's great book-shop, which is, I think, in this neighborhood.

Another delightful pastime was observing the signs over the shop doors. As the English are adept in the making of phrases, so are they especially happy in adjusting their callings to their names.

Lest I be considered frivolous, I shall mention only two; but surely there could not be more appropriate names for dentists than two whose sign-boards proudly announced Shipley Slipper, and, across the street from him, Mr. Strong-i'th'arm.

We went on, absorbed in our view of kaleidoscopic London, until Miss Anna decreed that we go down to the ground again. There was no elevator as in the Flatiron Building, so we tumbled down the back stairs, and were thrown off.

The sequence of the places we visited I do not remember, but they seemed to be mostly churches and taverns.

St. Paul's was taken casually, as indeed it should be, being, like a corporation, without a soul.

Exteriorly, and from a goodly distance, St. Paul's is perfection. From the river, or from Parliament Hill, it is sympathetic and responsive. But inside it is a mere vastness of mosaic and gilding, peopled with shiny marbles of heroic size. There is an impressive grandeur of art, but no message for the spirit. It is magnificent, but it is not church.

Miss Anna and I walked properly about the edifice, fortunately agreeing in our attitude toward it.

From here, I think, she led me across something, and through something and around something else, and then we were in St. Bartholomew's church. Being the oldest church in London, St. Bartholomew's is historically important, but it is interesting and delightful as well. The very air inside has been shut in there ever since the twelfth century, yet one breathes it normally, and enjoys the sudden backward transition. Had I the time, I could easily find an inclination to walk every day round its ancient triforium.

As we left the church, the Charter-house put itself in our way. Though other British subjects were educated at this school, it remains sacred to the memory of Thackeray. From here he wrote to his mother, "There are but three hundred and seventy boys in this school, and I wish there were only three hundred and sixty-nine." But visitors to the Charter-house are glad that the three hundred and seventieth boy remained there, and stamped the whole place with his gentle memory. The atmosphere of the Charter-house is wonderfully calm; it does not connote *boys*, but seems tranquilly imbued with the later wisdom of the great men who spent their youthful days within its walls.

The stranger in London has a decided advantage over the resident, in that he can choose his heroes.

A friend of mine who lives in Chelsea proudly assured me that he could throw a stone from his garden into Carlyle's! The point of his remark seemed to be not his superior marksmanship, but the proximity to the garden of a great man. Now, were I of the stone-throwing sex, there is many a dead hero at whose garden I should aim before I turned toward Carlyle's. But of course this was because my friend lived in Chelsea. Therefore the non-resident, not being confined to a locality, can throw imaginary stones into any one's garden.

A desultory discussion of this subject caused Miss Anna to propose that our next stone be aimed at the garden of Dr. Samuel Johnson.

So to the Cheshire Cheese we went.

The imposing personality of Dr. Johnson, and the antiquity of the famous tavern, led me to anticipate great things; and I was sorely disappointed (as probably most visitors are) at the plainly spread table, the fearfully hard seats, and the trying umbrella-rack filled with sawdust.

Of course we occupied the historic corner, where, according to the brass tablet, Dr. Johnson loved to linger; but two young American women whose tastes are not of the sanded floor and mulled ale variety cannot at a midday meal, whoop up much of the atmosphere that probably surrounded the smoke-wreathed midnights of Johnsonian revelry.



Of course we occupied the Historic Corner.

Not that we didn't enjoy it, for we were of a mind to enjoy everything that day; but the appreciation was entirely objective. Methodically we climbed the stairs and viewed all the rooms of the old, old house, and on the top floor were duly shown by the guide the old arm-chair in which Dr. Johnson used to sit. A stout twine was tied across from arm to arm, that pilgrims might not further wear out the old cushion. When I, as an enormous jest, asked the guide to cut the string, that I might sit in the historic chair, he cheerfully did so, and I considered the fee well spent that allowed me to linger for a moment on the very dusty cushions of Dr. Johnson's own chair.



When I . . . asked the guide to cut the string . . . he cheerfully did so.

I afterward learned that the string business was a fraud, and was renewed and cut again for each curious visitor. I accept with equanimity this clever ruse, but I'm still wondering how they renew the dust.

While we were doing Early Restaurants Miss Anna said, "We must take in Crosby Place."

This pleased me hugely, for I remembered how Gloucester, in *Richard the Third* was everlastingly repairing to Crosby Place, and I desired to know what was the attraction.

I found it interesting, but, lacking Gloucester, I shall not repair there often. To be sure, it is a magnificent house, Gothic, Perpendicular, and all that; the hangings and appointments are, probably, much as they used to be, but after all, I do not care greatly for eating among Emotions.

Whereupon Miss Anna cheerfully proposed that we visit the Tower.

"No," said I, with decision; and then, my mind still on *Richard the Third*, I quoted: "I do not like the Tower, of any place."

I'm not sure I should have been able so bravely to disclaim an interest in the Tower, had it not been that the night before I had heard a wise and prominent Londoner state the fact that he had never visited it.

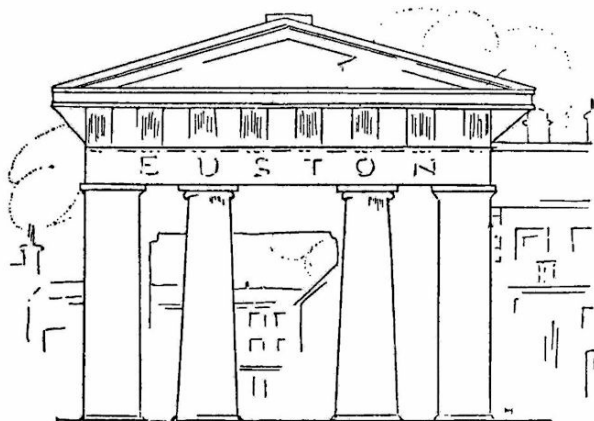
"No Londoner has ever been to the Tower," he declared. "We used to say that we intended to go some time or other, but now we don't even say that."

I was greatly relieved to learn this, for I'm positive that the Tower is hideous and uninteresting. As an alternative, I asked that we might visit the railway stations.

Aside from the romance that is indigenous to all railway stations, there are peculiar characteristics of the great London termini that are of absorbing interest. And so strong are the claims each puts forth for pre-eminence, it is indeed difficult to award a palm.

Euston has its columns, Charing Cross its Tribute to Queen Eleanor, St. Pancras a spacious roominess, and Victoria a wofully-crowded and limited space. Each station has its own sort of

people, and, though indubitably they must mingle upon occasion, yet the type of crowd at each station is invariably the same.



A mysterious influence which emanates from those wonderful columns.

And yet, after all, my heart goes back with fondest memories to Euston. Not the crowd, not even the atmosphere, but a mysterious influence which emanates from those wonderful columns. Not only the sight of them as you approach from London, but the queer, almost uncanny way in which they permeate the whole place. They follow you through the station and into the train, and not for many miles can you get out from under the presence of those perfect shapes.

Coming into London, Cannon Street is a good station to choose, if your route permit, but going out, Euston or Charing Cross should, if possible, be selected.

Before, after, or during, our station visits, we touched on a few more churches.

The Temple Church proved a delight because of the bronze Knights peacefully resting there. Miss Anna told me they were called Crusaders because they chose to lie with their legs crossed. This was probably true, for the position was maintained by all of them. Oliver Goldsmith is buried here, but I had no particular desire to throw a stone into his graveyard, and so we went on. Owing to a change of mood, we no longer rode on the 'buses, but took a hansom from one place to another. This was not as extravagant as it might seem, for, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, one cannot ride enough in London cabs to make the bill of any considerable amount, at least as compared to a New York cab bill. And Shakespeare averred that "nothing is small or great but by comparison."

As our cab bumpily threaded its way along the crammed Strand, the bright-colored mass of humanity and traffic seemed to me the pre-eminent London. I wanted no more sight-seeing, I wanted no more historical association, I merely wanted to continue this opportunity for feasting on real City London. I voraciously bit off large chunks of the atmosphere as we passed through it, which I am even yet digesting and assimilating.

As a complement to this view of London, we suddenly decided to call on a friend for a cup of tea. A personal, at-home tea would be a pleasant contrast to the publicity of our day.

Deciding upon the coziest and homeliest tea-dispenser, we drove to Mrs. Todd's in Kensington.

It is a great satisfaction to know that the unpromising portal of a London house will positively lead eventually to a delightful back garden, and tea.

We were welcomed by our charming hostess in her pretty trailing summeriness, and were immediately transformed from whimsical sight-seers into sociable tea-drinkers.

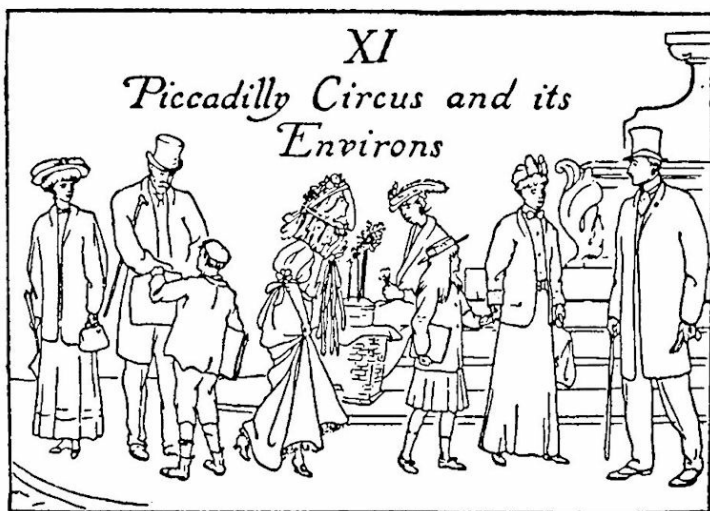
Though it was by no means a special occasion, the garden was bright with flowers and people, and the tea and cakes were served under the inevitable marquee. It was Mrs. Todd's weekly day at home, and the guests were all amiable and charming. A young woman with a phenomenal voice sang to us from the back parlor windows, and thereby gave a stimulus to the conversation. All was usual and orthodox. Everybody listened politely to everybody's else chatter, and, apparently unhearing, answered at random, and quite often wrongly.

It seemed to me that even in this land of bright flowers the blossoming plants were of unusually brilliant hues. As I took my departure I commented on this, and my hostess responded with a superb indifference: "Really? yes, they are rather good ones. The nursery man fetched them early this afternoon, and after you are all gone, he will come and carry them away"; and, if you please, those ridiculous plants were in pots, sunk into the earth, and giving all the effect of a beautiful growing garden!



Really? yes, they are rather good ones.

This fable teaches that our English sisters are not above the small bluffs more often ascribed to American femininity.



A favorite game of mine in London was to walk until I became tired or lost or both, and then take a cab back home.

Oftenest, the bright beckoning of Piccadilly allured me, and I strolled along that Primrose Path from Park Lane to Piccadilly Circus, my mind laid open like a fresh blotting-book, to receive whatever impress London might carelessly leave upon it.

Such delightful people as I would see!

Ladies, tricked out in pink filminess of raiment, ever striving to clutch one more handful of their *frou-frou*, as it waggishly eluded their grasp, and dawdled along the pavement behind them.

Yet, strange to say, the flapping frilliness rarely becomes muddily bedraggled, as it would on a New York street; it merely achieves that palpable grayness which marks everything in London, from its palaces to its laundry work.

The headgear of these same ladies can be called nothing less than alarming.



The headgear of these same ladies can be called nothing less than alarming.

During the summer of which I write, it was the whim to wear huge shapes of the mushroom or butter-bowl variety. These shapes, instead of being decorated with flowers or feathers, bore skilfully contrived fruits, that looked so like real ones I was often tempted to pluck them. Cherries and grapes were not so entirely novel, but peaches, pears, and in one instance a banana, seemed, at least, mildly ludicrous. I was rejoiced to learn that these fruits, being stuffed with cotton-wool, were not so weighty as they appeared; but they were indeed bulky, and crowded on to the hat in such quantities that it seemed more sensible to turn the butter-bowl the other side up to hold them.

Owen Seaman calls the English "the misunderstood people," but how can one understand those who put fly-nets on the tops of their cabs instead of on their horses, and wear peaches on their heads?

As difficult to understand as their own handwriting (and more than that cannot be said!), after the solution is puzzled out the Londoners are the most delightful people in the world.

But you must accept the solution, and take them at their own valuation; for they are unadaptable, and very sure of themselves.

Now, Piccadilly is not like this. It is smiling, affable, charming, and very yielding and adaptable. It will respond to any of your moods and will give you an atmosphere of any sort you desire. On one side, as you walk along, are houses, more or less lately ducal, but all of a greatly worth-while air. Citified, indeed, with a wealthy width of stone pavement, and a noble height of stone frontage.

On the other side is Green Park, with its shining, softly-waving trees, its birds, and its grass.

But, passing the Hotel Ritz, both sides suddenly give way to shops and restaurants which rank among the most pretentious in all the world.

Many of the tradesmen are "purveyors to the King," which magic phrase adds a charm to

the humblest sorts of wares.

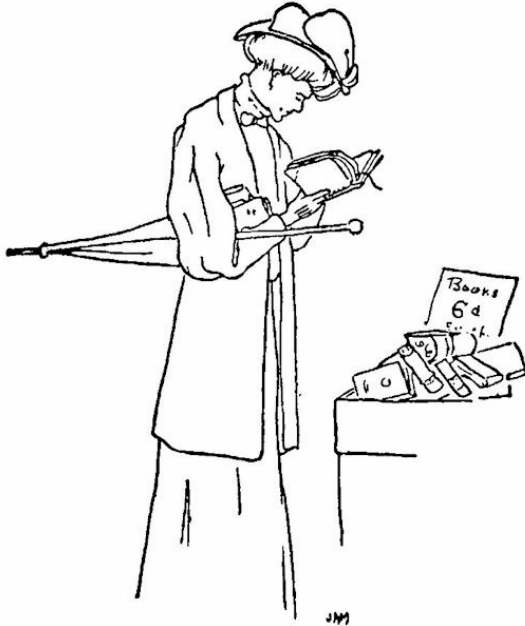
The book shops and the fruiterers' shops are, to me, most enticing of all. It is a delight to make inquiries concerning a book that is, perhaps, not very well known, and, instead of the blank ignorance or the substitutive impulse often found in American book-shop clerks, to receive an intelligent opinion, quickly backed, if necessary, by intelligent reference to tabulated facts.

The unostentatious, yet almost invariably trustworthy, knowledge of London booksellers is a thing to be sighed for in our own country. Not even in Boston (outside of the Athenæum) is one sure of receiving bookish information when desired. But in London the bookseller takes a personal interest in your wants, and feels a personal pride in being able to gratify them.

And the heaps of second-hand books are mines of joy.

Among them you may find, as I did, real treasures at the price of trash.

I chanced upon an early edition of Byron's poems—four little volumes, bound in soft, shiny green, with exquisite hand-tooling, and containing steel engraved book plates of old, scrolled design, which bore the name of somebody Gordon, whom I chose to imagine a near and dear relative of the late George Noel.



Among them you may find . . . real treasures at the price of trash.

Also, I found a paper-covered copy of an Indian edition of Kipling's early tales, and many such pleasant wares.

The fruit shops, too, have treasures both new and second-hand. This seemed strange to me, at first, and I learned of it by hearing a fellow-customer ask to hire a few pines.

After her departure I inquired of the shopman the meaning of it all.

He obligingly told me that many of his finest specimens of pineapples, canteloupes,

Hamburg grapes, and other spectacular fruits, could be rented out for banquets night after night, with but slight wear and tear on their beauty and bloom. One enormous bunch of black grapes, as perfect as the colour studies of fruit that used to appear as supplements to the *Art Amateur*, he caressed fondly, as he told me it had been rented out for the last nine nights, and was yet good for another week's work.

I then remembered the architectural triumphs of fruits that had graced many of the dinner tables I had smiled at, and I marvelled afresh at the English thrift.



“He told me it had been rented out for the last nine nights.”

All shops, streets, theatres, and traffic merge and congest in a perfect orgy of noise, motion, and color at Piccadilly Circus.

The first humorous story I heard in London was of the man who, returning from a festal function, inquired of the policeman, “Is this Piccadilly Circus, or is it Tuesday?” That story seems to me the epitome of London humor, and also a complete description of Piccadilly Circus.

The first few times I visited it I found it bewildering, but after I had learned to look upon it as a local habitation and a name, I learned to love it.

By day or by night, it is a great, crazy, beautiful whirl. Everybody in it is trying to get out of it, and everybody out is trying to get in. This causes a merry game of odds, and the elegant policemen send glances of mild reproof after the newsboys who hurtle through the crowd, yelling “Dily Mile!”

The rush of traffic here is considered a sure road to battle, murder, or sudden death, and the Londoner who crosses Piccadilly Circus rarely expects to get through alive.

But to me London traffic seems child's play compared to ours in New York. I sauntered safely through Piccadilly Circus, without one tenth part of the trepidation that always seizes me when I try to scurry across Broadway. The lumbering 'buses have no such desire to run over people, as that which burns in the hearts of our trolley-cars. The pedestrians are too deliberate of speed, and the traffic too gentle of motion, to inspire fear of jostlement.

to steal the saltspoons as souvenirs. Not to possess one or more of these tiny pewter affairs, which are shaped like coal-shovels, is to be benighted indeed. So I stole one.

After my tea, I would, perhaps, trail along toward Trafalgar Square, by way of Regent Street and Pall Mall. After a long look at the black and white grayness of the National Gallery, I would slowly mount its steps, and from there take a long look at the wonderful façade of St. Martin's-in-the-Field. Trafalgar Square is full of out-of-door delights, but if the mood served I would go into the National Gallery, and walk delicately, like Agag, among the pictures. I went always alone, for I did not care to look at certain pictures which I owned (by right of adoption of them into my London), in danger of hearing a companion say, "Note the delicate precision of the flesh tones," or, "Observe the gradations of aerial perspective." Nor did I want a "Hand-book," that would assert, "Without a prolonged examination of this picture it is impossible to form an idea of the art with which it has been executed."

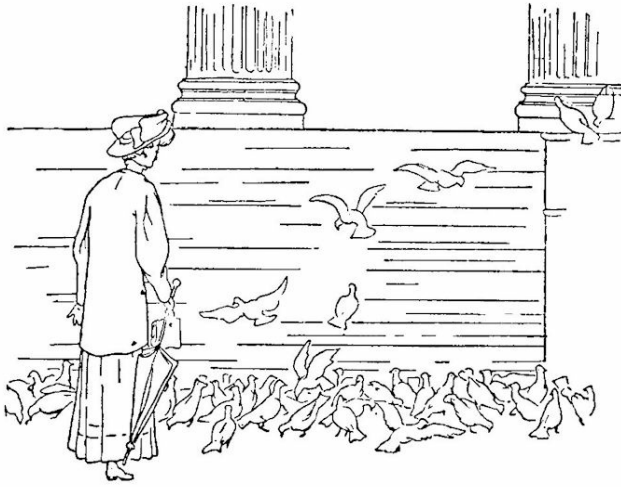
Unhampered by mortal suggestion, I paused before the pictures that belonged to me, prolonging my examination or not, as I chose, and for my own reasons.

Some pictures I should have loved, but for an ineradicable memory of their narrowly black-framed reproductions that crowd the wall spaces of friends at home, who "just love Art."

Other pictures I might have appropriated, but that a prolonged examination of them was impossible by reason of the massing in front of them of people who go out by the day sight-seeing.

And so I took my own where I found it, and happily wandered by *A man with Fair Hair* or *Clouds at Twilight* in a very bliss of art ignorance.

Then out-of-door London would call me again, and back I would go to Trafalgar Square, one of the lightest, brightest-colored bits of all England. From the asphalt to the welkin, from the Column to the Church, from the National Gallery to Morley's Hotel, are the most beautiful blues, and greens, and whites, and reds, and grays that can be supplied by the combined efforts of Nature, Time, and modern pigments. A sudden impulse, perhaps, would make me think that I had immediate need of the Elgin Marbles, and, with a farewell nod to the northeast lion (which is my favorite of the four), I would jump into a hansom and jog over to the British Museum. But often the approach was so clogged by pompous and overbearing pigeons that I would make no attempt to enter. Instead, I would find another hansom, and take a long ride over to the Tate Gallery.



The approach was so clogged by pompous and overbearing pigeons.

As I bounced happily along, I would note many landmarks of historic interest. Some of these were real, and others made up by myself on the spur of the moment, to fit a passing thought.

For, if I saw an old building of picturesque interest, I could make myself more decently emotional toward the antiquity of it by assuring myself that that was where Sterne died, or where Pepys “made mighty merry.”

And, after all, facts are of little importance compared with “those things which really are—the eternal inner world of the imagination.”

It was from the outlook of a hansom cab that I could get some of the best views of my London. Every turn would bring new sorts of motion, sound, and color. And, birdseyed thus, it was all so beautiful that I wondered what Shelley meant by saying “Hell is a city very much like London,”—if, indeed, he did say it.

Once in the Tate Gallery, I would fall afresh under the spell of the lonely wistfulness of G. F. Watts’ *Minotaur*.

Then I would go to gaze long on Whistler’s wonderful notion of Battersea Bridge on a blue night, and then betake myself to the Turner collection.

Here I could spend hours, floundering in unintelligent delight among the pictures, sensitive to each apotheosis of color and beauty, and not caring whether its title might be *Waves Breaking on a Flat Beach*, or *River Scene with Cattle*.

But too much Turner was apt to go to my head, and just in time I would tear myself away, hop into a hansom, and make for the Wallace Collection to be brought back to a sense of human reality by a short interview with the *Laughing Cavalier*.

What a city it is, where cabs and picture-galleries are within the reach of all who desire them!



The appetite for the social life of London grows with what it feeds on. Although at first indisposed to be lured into the Social Vortex, I found it possessed a centripetal force which drew me steadily toward its whizzing centre.

Nor was it long before I became as avid as any Londoner to pursue the bewildering course known as "going on."

There is a cumulative delight in whisking from Tea to Tea, and no two teas are ever alike.

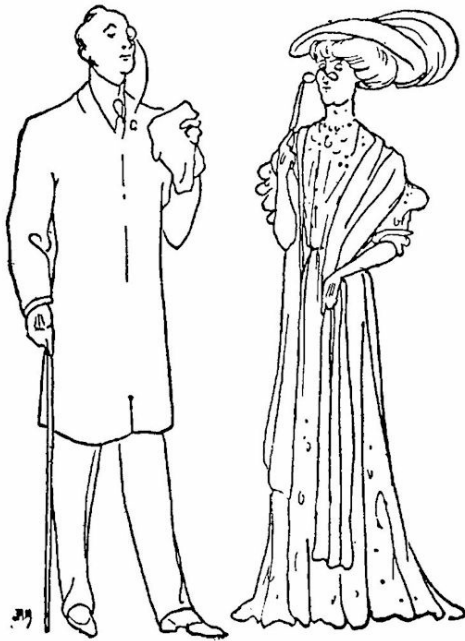
It pleased me greatly to classify and note the difference in London Teas.

In New York all Teas are alike in quality—the only difference being in quantity. But in London one Tea differeth from another, not only in glory, but in size, shape, and color.

Yet all are enjoyable to one who understands going on. If the Tea be of the Glacial Period, there is no occasion to exert your entertaining powers. Simply assume an expression of bored superiority, and move about with a few murmured, incoherent, and not necessarily rational words.

There is a very amusing story, which I used to think an impossible exaggeration, but which I now believe to be true.

Thus runs the tale: A guest at an afternoon tea, when spoken to by any one, invariably replied, "I was found dead in my bed this morning." As the responses to this were always, "Really?" or "Charmed, I'm sure," or "Only fancy!" it is safe to assume that the remark was unheard or unheeded.



"I was found dead in my bed this morning."

But this state of things is not certainly unpleasant, or to be condemned.

One does not go to a Tea to improve one's mind, or to acquire valuable information. The remarks that are made are quite as satisfactory unheard as heard. We are not pining to be told the state of the weather; we deduce our friend's good health from the fact of his presence; and it is therefore delightful to be left, unhampered, to pursue our own thoughts, and, if so minded, to make to ourselves our own analytic observations on the scene before us.

Again, if the Tea be of the Responsive Variety, and you are supposed to chat and be chatted to, then is joy indeed in store for you—for when Londoners do talk, they talk wonderfully well.

I went one afternoon to a Tea given for me by a well-known London novelist. The host, beside being an Englishman of the most charming type, and a clever writer, was of a genial, happy nature, which seemed to imbue the whole affair with a cosy gayety.

Though not a large Tea, many literary celebrities were present, and each gave willingly of his best mentality to grace the occasion.

Now, nothing is more truly delightful than the informal chatter of good-natured, quick-witted literary people. Their true sense of values, their quick sense of humor, their receptiveness, their responsiveness, and their instantaneous perception, combine to bring forth conversation like the words of which Beaumont wrote:

So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whom they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life . . . Wit that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly
Till that were cancelled.

Nor are Teas of this sort rare or exceptional.

Given the entrée to London's literary circles, occasions abound for meeting with these companions who do converse and waste the time together.

To my great regret, this is not to be said of America. A Literary Tea in New York means a lot of people, some, perhaps, bookishly inclined, invited to meet a Celebrity of Letters.

The Celebrity comes late, sometimes not at all, and he or she is often enveloped in a sort of belligerent shyness which does not make for coherent conversation of any sort. Moreover, Americans do not know how to give a Tea. We are learning, but we conduct our Teas in an amateurish, self-conscious way, and with a brave endurance born of our national do-or-die principles.

But to return to my going ons (which must by no means be confounded with goings-on).

From my Literary Tea, I went to a Musical Tea. This is distinctly a London function, and the music, while of the best, acts as a soaking wet Ostermoor laid on the feebly-burning vivacity of the occasion. The young girl sings, the long-haired gentleman plays a violin, the lady in the Greek gown plays the harp, and the guests arrive continuously, and escape as soon as possible.

But, like Kipling's lovable tramp, I "liked it all," and stood tranquilly holding my teacup, while I studied the Tussaud effects all about me.

Then, as it was Fourth of July, I betook myself to the reception at Dorchester House.

This is a most admirable institution. I mean the reception, not the house, though the statement really applies to both.

But it is a fine thing to celebrate our Independence Day in London. There is an incongruity about it that lends an added charm to what is in itself a stupendously beautiful affair.

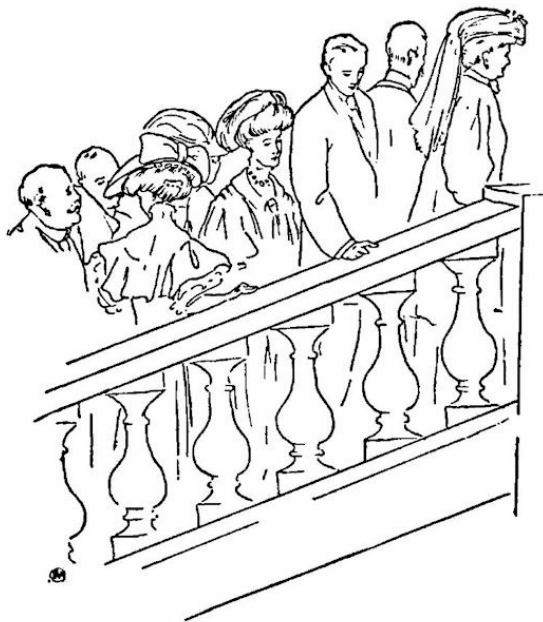
Dorchester House, one of the finest residences in London, is now the home of our own ambassador, and is thrown open for a great reception on the afternoon of every Fourth of July.

As my hansom took its place in the long line of waiting carriages I glanced up at the noble old stone mansion, and was thrilled with a new sort of patriotism when I saw our own Stars and Stripes wave grandly out against the blue English sky. Our flag at home is a blessed, matter-of-fact affair; but our flag proudly topping our Embassy in another land is a thrilling proposition, and I suddenly realized the aptness of the homely old phrase "so gallantly streaming."

Chiding myself for what I called purely emotional patriotism (but still quivering with it), I entered the marble halls of Dorchester House.

A compact, slowly-moving mass of people exactly fitted the broad and truly magnificent marble staircase.

Adjusting myself as part of this ambulatory throng, we moved on, mechanically, a step at a time, toward the top. On each landing, as the great staircase turned twice, were footmen in pink satin and silver lace, who looked like valentines. They are very wonderful, those English footmen, and sometimes I think I'd rather have one than a Teddy bear.



We moved on, mechanically, a step at a time.

At the top of the staircase our ambassador and his reception party greeted each guest with a cordial perfunctoriness, that exactly suited the occasion, and then an invisible force, assisted here and there by a very visible footman, gently urged us on.

Although the thought seems inappropriate to the splendor of the occasion, yet to me the marvel of the affair was the "neatness and despatch" with which it was managed. No crowding, no herding, no audible directions, yet the shifting thousands moved as one, and the route through the mansion, and down another staircase, was followed leisurely, by all. One might pause in any apartment to view the pictures or the decorations, or to chat with chance-met friends. By the admirable magic of the management, this made no difference in the manipulation of the throng. Eventually one came into a great marquee, built on terraces, and exquisitely draped inside with white and pale green. Here a sumptuous feast was served with the iron hand of neatness and despatch hidden in the velvet glove of suavity and elegant leisure. Here, again, one met hundreds of acquaintances, and made hundreds of new ones, the orchestra played national airs under two flags, and the scene was one of the brightest phases of kaleidoscopic London.

Then on, out into the great garden, full of delightful walks, seats, flowers, music, and rainbow-garbed humanity. More meetings of friends and strangers; more invitations for future going on; more introductions to kindly celebrities; more pleasant exchange of international compliment, and, above it all, the Stars and Stripes waving over Dorchester House!

From here I tore myself away to keep an engagement to Tea on the Terrace of the House of Commons.

This invitation had greatly pleased me, as it is esteemed a very worth-while experience, and, further, I was very fond of the genial M. P. and of his charming wife who had invited me. A bit belated, I reached the Lobby, where I was to meet my host, several minutes after the appointed

time.

Unappalled by this disaster, because of my ignorance of its magnitude, I asked an official to conduct me to Mr. Member of Parliament.

"Impossible," he replied, "Mr. Member has already gone to the Terrace, accompanied by his guests."

"Yes," said I, still not understanding; "I am one of his guests. Please show me the way to the Terrace."

He looked at me pityingly.

"I'm sorry, madame; but it is impossible for you to join them now. No one may go there unless accompanied by a Member, and the Member you mention may not be sent for."

This seemed ludicrous, but so final was his manner, that I became frightened lest I had really lost my entertainment.



So final was his manner that I became frightened.

Whether my look of utter despair appealed to his better nature, or whether he feared I was about to burst into tears, I don't know,—but I could see that he began to waver a little.

I thought of bribery and corruption, and wondered if so austere an individual ought to be approached along those lines. I remembered that an Englishman had spoken to me thus:

"I don't know of anybody in London who would refuse a fee, except a club servant or the King, and," he added reflectively, "I've never tried the King—personally."

Assisted by this knowledge, I somehow found myself being led down dark and devious staircases which gave suddenly out upon the broad, light Terrace. My guide then disappeared like an Arab, and I happily sauntered along in search of Mr. and Mrs. M. P.

The scene was unique. The long Terrace, looking out upon the Thames at the very point of

which Wordsworth wrote,

Earth has not anything to show more fair,

was filled with tea tables, at each of which sat a group of prominent London tea-drinkers and their friends. The background, the Perpendicular architecture of Parliament House, is crumbling in places, and I looked quickly away, with a feeling of apology for having viewed it so closely as to see its slight defects.

My host greeted me with an air of unbounded amazement.

“But how did you get down here?” he exclaimed.

“American enterprise,” I responded, but I learned that it had been an extraordinary and reprehensible act on the part of the official who had guided me.



My host greeted me with an air of unbounded amazement.

I was sorry to learn this, but glad that I had persevered to success.

Twelve people were at table, and that Tea is among my fairest London recollections.

The very atmosphere of the Terrace is Parliamentary, though, of course, not in a literal sense, and vague, unmeaning visions of woolsack and wig seem to mingle with the visible realities. On the one side the Thames, trembling with traffic; on the other the silent altitude of stone, that seems to grow hospitable and confidential as you sit longer at its feet. And between these, the tea-table, with its merry group, laughing at each other's jests, and carelessly throwing about those precious invitations which keep one going on.

My right-hand neighbor proved to be a large-minded editor of delightful personality.

We talked of books, and he said quite casually: “Yes, I fancy Henry James's works. And,

moreover, he's a charming man, personally. Would you care to go motoring down to Rye tomorrow, and spend the day at his place?"

While almost simultaneously on my other side a lady was saying, "Yes, indeed, I'll be glad to send you a card to the Annual Dinner of the Women Authors of Great Britain."

Truly, hospitality is the keynote of the Leaders of London Society. An apparent lack of warmth may sometimes be noticeable in their manner, but they deal out delightful invitations with a free and willing hand, the acceptance of which keeps one forever going on.

And, after all, one is too prone to generalize.

Hostesses are human beings, and, therefore, there are no two alike.

One may classify,—and the types fall easily into classes,—but one may not make sweeping assertions. And, too, in society, which the world over is a sham and purveyor of shams, are kind hearts always more than coronets?

And when one is gayly, perhaps flippantly, going on, one wants to see all sorts, and I went from my Terrace Tea to a private view of some paintings.

Then, after suitable robing, to a dinner; then to the opera, where the delicious incongruity of *Madame Butterfly* set to Italian grand opera music, was heightened by the dear baby who sat flat on the stage and waved the American flag into the very faces of the boxes full of English royalty.

And so, as Pepys would say, home, and to bed, feeling that there was certainly a fascinating exhilaration in London's game of Going On.



In London I met an American friend, a busy New York man of letters.

"I come to London every season," said he, "for six week-ends. These are spent at country-houses, and are planned for a long time ahead."

At first, I wondered what he did between the week-ends, but I soon learned that what with getting to and from one country-place, and arranging to go to and from another, the insignificant Wednesday or Thursday in between is totally lost sight of.

Distance to a week-end Mecca is counted as nothing; and so, when I was invited to a house-party at a villa some twelve miles out of Paris, I prepared to go as casually as if my destination were within the Dominions of the Unsetting Sun.

There seemed to be several routes from London to Paris, and each was recommended to me as "the only possible way"; but I decided upon the Dover-Calais route, and left Victoria station on the special train.

A friend who came to "see me off" insisted on providing me with a put-up luncheon, saying the only preventive of Channel bothers was to take a bite before embarking.

So persistent was he, that I accepted his offer to put an end to his argument, and waited in my compartment while he ran for the "bite."

He returned, followed by a porter, who wheeled on a truck a "put-up luncheon"! It was in a hamper, shaped like a large-sized wicker suit-case. This stupendous affair was pushed under the seat, and before I had time to remonstrate, my train started.

Impelled alike by hunger and curiosity, I finally opened the gigantic lunch-basket. Inside were carefully planned compartments containing several courses of a delicious cold luncheon. Ample provision of serviettes and oiled paper protected the viands from possible dust or cinders, and the array of flat silver was bewildering. Plates and cups fitted into their niches, and the whole collection was of a completeness beyond compare. This is as yet an untried field for American enterprise, but I suppose it will come.



I finally opened this gigantic lunch basket.

The disposition of the emptied hamper was simply to restore it to its place under the seat, and leave it there. Apparently it had the instincts of a homing pigeon.

Leaving Dover was like backing away from a picture post-card. I have sometimes thought lithographed colors unnaturally bright, but the green and white and blue of receding Dover on a sunshiny day make aniline dyes seem dull by comparison.

The crossing on the Channel steamer was delightful, and I now know the dreadful tales I have heard of this experience to be mere peevish malignity. I sat on the deck of the dancing boat, and when the spray grew mischievous, kind-hearted attendants wrapped me in tarpaulin mackintoshes, or whatever may be the French for their queer raincoats.

I ruined my hat and feathers, but, in the exhilaration of that mad dash through the tumbling, rioting sea, who could think of personal economy?

All too soon we reached Calais, and here, again, a living, breathing picture confronted me. Unlike Dover, the harbor at Calais is like an exquisite aquarelle. The high lights and half-tones are marvellous, and the composition is a masterpiece. But (and here I made my two rules that should be invariably observed by the traveller from London to Paris) there is not a more fearful wild-fowl living than your French customs inspector.

Troubles of all sorts cropped up, and the porters and officials talked such strange French that they couldn't understand mine!

But the troubles were all because of my luggage, which they divided into two classes. And hence my two rules:

(1) When crossing the English Channel, on no account take with you any luggage except hand-luggage.

(2) On no account take any hand-luggage.

These rules, carefully observed, will insure a happy, peaceful journey, for the accommodations for personal comfort are admirable.

The railroad train from Calais to Paris is a clean marvel of light gray upholstery, and white

antimacassars sized like a pillow-sham. The cars are exceedingly comfortable and the whole ride a delight.

I reached the *Gare du Nord* about seven o'clock in the evening, and, after a maddening experience with criminally imperturbable officials, I took a cab to my hotel.

Accustomed, all my life, to the few scattering cabs of New York City, I had thought London possessed a great many cabs; but Paris contains as many as London and New York put together. The French capital is paved with cabs, and of such a cheapness of fare that I soon discovered it was more economical to stay in them than to get out.

I well knew I must fight against the insistence of "first impressions"; but after all it *was* Paris, and I had never been there before, and the ride from the station to the *Place Vendôme* might therefore be allowed to thrill me a little.

Some of the streets seemed rather horrid, but after we swung into the Boulevard and came at last to the Vendôme Column, with a pale little French moon just appearing above it, I was ready to admit that Paris might go to my head, even as London went to my heart.

My chosen hotel, The Ritz, was once the old palace of the Castiglione, and still retains much of the palatial manner.

Exquisite in the modernness of its appointments, it possesses an atmosphere of historic France, and the combination comes perilously near perfection. The urbane proprietor, who looked like the hero of a French play, personally conducted me to my rooms and was solicitous for my welfare in the best of English. From my windows I could see *al fresco* diners in a garden which looked like Marie Antoinette's idea of Luna Park.



The urbane proprietor . . . personally conducted me to my rooms.

Noble old trees rose as high as the house, and from their branches hung great globes of vari-colored electric light. Statues guarded a fountain at one end, flower-beds surrounded the place, and at many tables gay humanity was toying with *chef d'œuvres* of French cooking.

The scene allured me. I hastily donned a dinner gown, and descended to take my seat at an attractively-placed table.

As I was alone, this might in New York have seemed indiscreet; in London, at least indiscreet; but in Paris, being a guest of the house, and under the protection of the august and benignant proprietor, it all seemed the most natural proceeding in the world.

The dinner was a dream; I mean, a sort of comic opera dream, where lights and flowers and gayety made a chimerical effect of happiness.

Of course, this pause over night at the hotel was part of my journey to the week-end party.

The next day my hostess would send for me, but these vicissitudes of travel were not at all unpleasant.

As I finished my dinner, and sauntered through the delicately ornate salons, callers' cards were brought me, and I was delighted to welcome some English friends who were passing through Paris on a motor tour.

"Come with us," they said; "our car is at the door, and we will go out and see 'Paris by night' in our own way."

Incongruous this, for Emily Emmins!

But my adaptability claimed me for its own, and, with what I fancied a French shrug of my shoulders, I mispronounced a French phrase of acquiescence, and declared myself ready to go.



With what I fancied a French shrug of my shoulders I mispronounced a French phrase of acquiescence.

Three stalwart Englishmen, and the dignified wife of one of them, might seem a strange party with which to visit Montmartre by night; but it was an ideal way to go. In the motor-car we could whiz from one ridiculous "Cabaret Unique" to another. We could look in at the absurd illusions of "Le Ciel," we could jeer at the flimsy foolishness of "L'Enfer," and make fun of its *attractions diaboliques*, yet all the time we were seeing the heart of Parisian Folly, and a very gay, good-humored, harmless little heart it is. Evil there might be, but none was observable, and the foolish young French people sat around with much the same air as that of young

Americans at Coney Island.

The “Cabaret du Neant” is supposed to be a fearsome place, where guests sit around coffins and see ghosts. But so like substantial tables were the coffins, and so sociable and human the ghosts, that awe gave place to amusement.

Home we whizzed, through the poorly lighted streets, which are indeed an anachronism in Gay Paris By Night.

Next day came the great touring-car of my week-end hostess, to take me to her villa, at St. Germain-en-Laye.

The villa being a fascinating old French mansion, self-furnished, the house party being composed of most delightful people, the host and hostess past grand masters in the art of entertaining, the visit was, as might have been expected, merely a kaleidoscope of week-end delights.

One absorbing entertainment followed another, but perhaps the picture that remains most clearly in my memory is the dinner on the terrace. A French country-house terrace is so much more frivolous than an English one. The outlook, over a formal garden, of modified formality; the splashing little fountains here and there; the decorated table on the decorated terrace; the shaded candles, flowers, and foreign service; the French moon, that has such a sophisticated paleness; the birds singing French songs in what are doubtless ilex trees—all go to make a peculiar charm that no other country may ever hope to attain.

The days were devoted to motoring to Versailles, Fontainebleau, and through Paris itself, and by this subtle method, one could sight-see without realizing it. To motor over to Chantilly, for the sole purpose of feeding the carp, is a different matter from seeing “sights which should on no account be omitted”; and to go with one’s host for a day’s run among the tiny French villages is a personally conducted tour with the sting entirely extracted.

The week-end over, I must needs pause a day or two in Paris, to rest myself on my journey back to London.

The shops offered wonderful attractions in the way of souvenirs to take to the dear ones at home. For the value of a foreign-bought “souvenir” lies in the fact of its non-existence in American shops, and such are hard to find, indeed. For the novelty in London to-day is the “reduced goods” in the New York department store to-morrow.

Moreover, the shops contained feminine raiment of wonderful glory! Only the fear of my “first impressions” of our American custom-house officers prevented my realizing my wildest dreams of extravagance.

Parisian clothes are marked by that quality which the London sales-people call “dynety”—they having no more idea of the meaning than of the pronounciation of the word.

But the Parisian woman, from the richest to the poorest, is first of all dainty; after that, correct, *chic*, modish—what you will.



The Parisian woman . . . is first of all dainty.

And the French money is so easy to compute. My sovereign rule is to multiply by two. If the price be in francs multiply by two, shift a decimal point, and you have dollars. If centimes, multiply by two, decimal point again, and you have cents.

This simple rule made Paris shopping easy.

I had determined, as this time Paris was a means and not an end, being merely incidental to my week-end trip, I would not go into the galleries, and perhaps become unduly attached to something I might find there.

A casual visit to the Louvre let me go through several rooms of pictures and statues unmoved, when suddenly I met my Waterloo.

All unexpectedly I came upon the *Venus of Milo*. It was a revelation. The casts and photographs I had hitherto seen of it I now discovered to be no more like the original statue than the moon is like the sun.

The form, perhaps, is not so inadequately represented, but the face, as shown in cast or picture, is a sadly futile attempt at imitation.

The real *Venus* has the most marvellous face in the world. There is an ineffable beauty of feature, and an exquisite repose of expression, that betokens no one affection, but the glorification of all that is great and beautiful.

But the fascination is unexplainable. I only know that into that wonderful face I could gaze for hours; but never again do I want to see a reproduction of it, of any sort.

In the Louvre, too, I found the *Mona Lisa*. Here again I had been misled by photographs and "art prints," and was all unprepared for the witchery of that baffling, bewildering smile. By a queer correlation of ideas, my mind reverted to the *Laughing Cavalier*, and I wondered if these two were smiling at the same thought.

Undesirous of seeing more at this time, I returned to my open, victoria-like cab. Those foolish Paris cabs! They seem so exactly like the vehicle in which Bella Wilfer elegantly sat, when she begged her parent, “Loll, ma, loll!”

But they are fine to see out of, and a city like Paris, made for show, should have cabs of wide outlook.

Paris is an achievement. Its coherent, consequent civic beauty ranks it among the seven beauties of the world. It is as systematically and methodically laid out as Philadelphia—but with a difference!

It is discreet and tactful, and ever puts its best foot foremost, the other probably being down at heel.

It is trim and tripping, where London is solidly lumbering,—but, give me London!

Paris is adorable; London is lovable. Paris is bewitching; London is satisfying.

Paris is to London as lime-light unto sunlight, and as absinthe unto wine. But as the very essence of Paris, is ephemeral, so the nature of London makes for perpetuity; and London is, of all things, a place to go back to.

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Transcriber's Notes:

Hyphenation and archaic spellings have been retained as in the original. Punctuation and typesetting errors have been corrected without note.

[The end of *The Emily Emmins Papers* by Carolyn Wells]