

THE ENGLISH MATRONS' TAIFERS

BY CAROLYN WELLS

THE trip from Liverpool to London I found to be a green glimpse of England in the case of a high graph. 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 indolence. 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 traveling 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 looked 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 paper, but was more likely the reflection of the insistent landscape.

The lady was one of those hopeless, helpless, newly rich, that I met 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.

"Yes; that is, we shall come every summer now. You see we made a lot of money in copper—that's my husband over there, the one with the plaid traveling-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'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 with an emotion."

I couldn't help wishing she had chosen this year for her California trip, but the accumulation of green vision makes me feel that I should be in a mood of cooling 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 Bromide? And what was that I should deprecate such soil-billing 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 a 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 quarter of the dining-car, the members of which were typical English people.

I suppose it is a sort of reflex nervous action that makes people cut together chummy at once. The fact of doing the same thing at the same time creates an involuntary sympathy which extends 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.

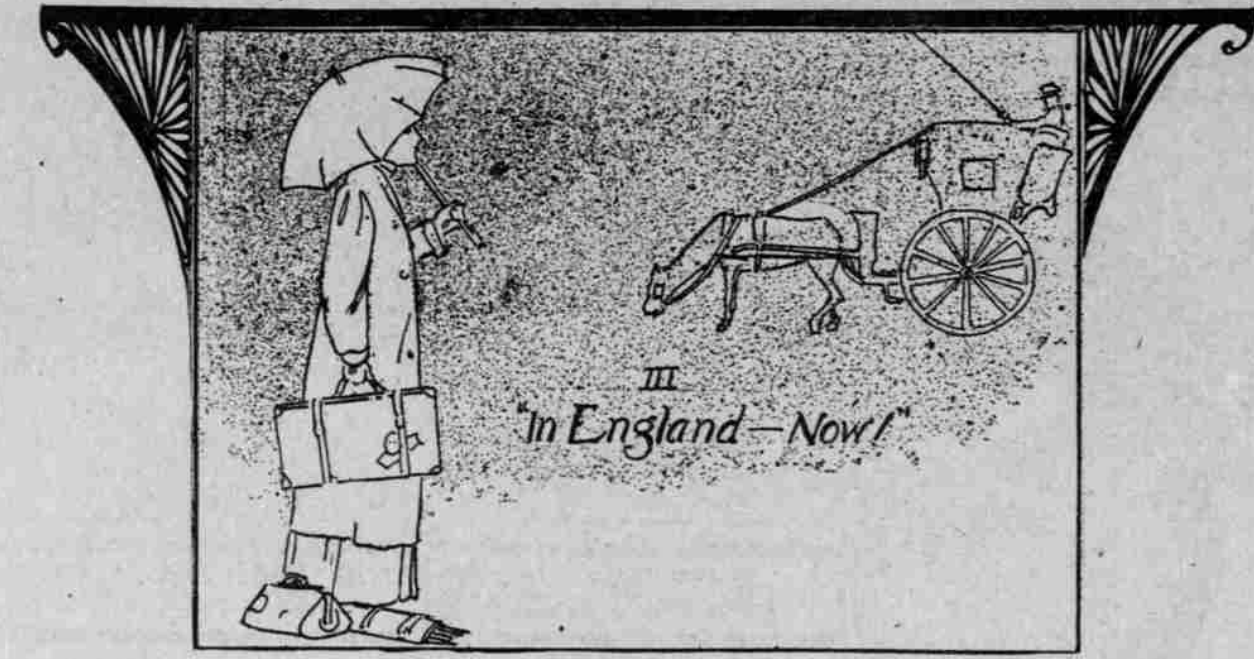
This, I conclude, was because English people are so essentially a part of their landscape, a statement true of no Americans save the aboriginal Indian tribes.

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-bred in a sense that implies congenital good-breeding.

Their name was Travers, and we slid into conversation as easily as a launching ship. I suddenly became aware that, though of a different color, they affected me with exactly the same sensation as the clean, green English scenery.

"I finished, as he pushed in his catalogue."

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"In England—Now!"

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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 were every Englishman you meet regarding cafes and conflicts, and will be their advice that you will change your tactics with every hand."

"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' 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, 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 the lucky find of the Real Thing in English people.

Mr. Travers' 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-t-i-f-u-l and pronounce it Chum.

"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's'sle."

"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.

ence, 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 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 is that you cannot. You think

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. The girl was a delight to look at. By no means of the pink-checked, red-lipped variety immortalized in English novels, she was of a delicate bin on the street, and her 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' aptness in colting phrases of description, I tried to put Rosalind Travers into a few words, but was obliged to borrow from the Master-Cheer, 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 goodbye to my Chicago friend before we reached London, alone I stepped from the train at Euston Station with a feeling of infinite anticipation.

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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 cab-driver was that of an 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 spilling 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

"How about them fierce, long-haired guys with the slouch hats you see in the bar here every night?" asked the House Detective.

"Oh, you mean those conversational fibroids that're always committing arson with their mouths?" said the Hotel Clerk. "They're professional Southerners, Larry. They don't grow down South. You don't find 'em there. The climate of the North is best suited to their culture. It's a word and a blow with them—a word and then blow for three or four hours."

"But I love to hear them spout. They always belong to old Southern families. There aren't any new Southern families anyway—it's only the prime old vatted, bottled-in-bond Southern families that talk about up here, but his Spring hoast of every one of those cooking sherry sports that he springs from fighting stock. And so he does. He'll spring carry the constitution waving has. He was going down to a church social in his capacity of a parent, to speak on the subject of temperance, and so naturally he took a gun about the size of a pair of skates in his hip pocket along with his manuscript showing what the 'hellish liquor traffic had done. A colored party' hauled out to a bottle of size.

"After all, Jeff is my favorite in the new school of constructive statesmanship. He comes from close to the soil. You know that when you see his collar. He spent his early life in a cave eating nuts. The first time he rode on a train they had to blindfold him and back him aboard up a plank. He eats his chewing tobacco on the car. The highwater mark of the '84 rise in the White River is still on his front teeth. When he needs manure they send

in evening slippers the most noticeable novelty is in the trimming of the vamp, which consists preferably of a small oblong buckle of gold with jewels, real or imitation, sunk into the surface, or of a comparatively small stiff bow made to stand upright instead of lying flat against the slipper.

Another striking model was entirely of white leather finished with black heels and trimmed at the sides and across the

vamp with an eighth-of-an-inch wide black band of patent leather. Side by side in one establishment were a pair of naive shoes touched up with white buttons and a pair which combined a pair of pale blue kid with white uppers, heels and sides. This same design combined also a brown vamp with white heels, sides and uppers, and is finished with a champagne colored sides and top.

If anything, the varieties of low cut shoes are more ornate than the high cut. For example, there is one model made of fancy leather—that is, leather veined with colors to form a leaf design. This is seen at its best in brown veined with ochre and red. In one case a tie of this leather is cut with a short vamp and a medium Cuban heel was finished around the edge with a half-inch wide band of gold gallow.

A particularly novel design of tie runs up well on the front of the foot, something after the fashion of a Juliette bed-spread slipper, and is finished with a high French heel and a short pearl buttoned opening a little to one side of the front line. In one example the champagne colored suede was embroidered in a double row of oblong eyelets across the front of the foot.

A tie with the vamp of one color and the remainder of quite another color seems to be one of the most popular models both in ties and pumps, and for ordinary wear the brown or ochre vamp and the black vamp is nowhere. Shown at one of the best custom shops are brown russets with uppers of champagne. Gray and white mixed pearl buttons, by the way, have taken the place almost entirely of black buttons in all the fancy shoes.

In one medium high tie of russet leather there are white eyelets and laces. Just all the rest. Compared with brown the black vamp is nowhere. Shown at one of the best custom shops are brown russets with uppers of champagne. Gray and white mixed pearl buttons, by the way, have taken the place almost entirely of black buttons in all the fancy shoes.

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