

THE FAMILY TRAMP

BY CAROLYN WELLS

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 week-end Mecca is counted as nothing, and so when I was invited to a house party at a villa some 12 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 a 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 horrors was to take a bite before embarking.

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

He returned, followed by a porter, who wheeled on a truck a "put-up luncheon." Inside were carefully packed compartments containing several courses of a delicious cold luncheon.

Ample provision of serviettes and etched paper protected the stands 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.

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

The crossing on the Channel steamer was not so new, nor now the dreadful tales I have heard of this experience to be more peevish malignity. I sat on the deck of the darning boat, and when the spray grew mischievous, kind-hearted attendants wrapped me in tarpaulin macintoshes, or whatever may be the French for their queer raincoats.

I ruined my hat and feathers, but in the exhilaration that made a dash through the tumbling, rioting sea, who could think of personal economy? All too soon we reached Calais, and heavy cases and living breathing people confronted me. Unlike Dover, the harbor at Calais is like an exquisite aquarelle. The high lights and half-tones are marvelous, and the composition is a masterpiece.

I made my two rules that should be invariably observed by the traveler from London to Paris: there is no 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 could not understand a word.

But the troubles were all because of my luggage, which they divided into two classes: A, living breathing people; B, First—When crossing the English Channel, on no account take with you any luggage except hand-luggage.

Second—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, like a white antimacassar sized like a pillow-sham. The cars are exceedingly comfortable and the whole ride a delight.

I reached the Gare du Nord about 7 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 a long drive, and the ride from the station to the Palace Vendome 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 Vendome Column, with a pale little French man ready to admit that Paris might go to my head, even as London went to my head.

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 a hero of a French play, and was solicitous for my welfare in the best of English. From my windows I could see al fresco dining in a garden which looked like Marie Antoinette's ideas of Launay Park.

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'oeuvre 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 gaiety 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 Emmine!

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

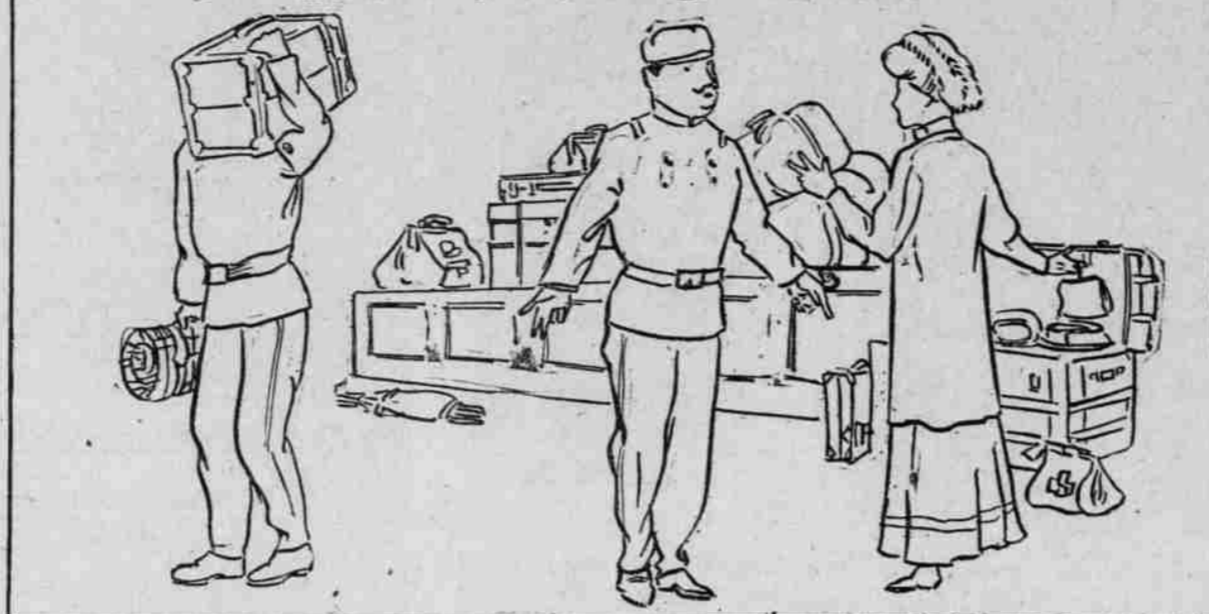
Three stalwart Englishmen, and the dignified wife of one of them, might seem a strange party with which to visit Montmartre by night; but it was an ideal way to go. In the motor-car we could whiz from one ridiculous "Cabaret Unique" to another. We could look in at the absurd illusions of "Le Ciel," we could leer at the filmy 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 we gave place to amusement.

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XIII A French Week-End



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her villa at St. Germain-en-Laye. The villa being a fascinating old French mansion, self-furnished, a house party being composed of most delightful people, the host and hostess past grand masters in the art of entertaining, the visit was, a 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 sparkling 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 hix 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, with ease, without realizing it. To motor over to Chantilly, for the sole purpose of feeding the carp, is a different matter from seeing "rights 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 offer such wonderful attractions in the way of souvenirs to take to the dear ones at home. For the value of a foreign-bought "souvenir" which the London salespeople call "dynety"—they having no more idea of the meaning than of the pronunciation 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.

And the French money is so easy to compute, that the sovereign rule is to 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 a breeze, 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 coincidence, my mind reverted to the Laughing Cavalier, and I wondered if these two were smiling at the same thought.

Undesired of seeing more at this time, I returned to my open, victoria-like cab. Those foolish Paris cabals! 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, once for a 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 a systematic, 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 Imelight unto sunlight, and Paris is to London as the very essence of Paris is ephemeral, so the nature of London makes for perpetuity; and London is, of all things, the place to go back to.

(The End.)

THE TORTONIS' STAR ACT BY SEWELL FORD.

BEING PROFESSOR SHORTY Mc CABE'S VERSION OF A VAUDEVILLE TEAM ELEVATED TO THE PEERAGE.

WHAT I was after was a souss in the sound; but say, I never know just what's goin' to happen to me when I get to roamin' around Westchester County!

I'd started out from Primrose Park to hoof it over to a little beach a ways down shore, when along comes Domnick with his blue dump cart. Now, Domnick's a friend of mine, and for a foretinner he's the most enterlatin' cuss I ever met.

Course, he wears rings in his ears, and likely a seven-inch knife down the back of his neck. He ain't perfumed with violets either, but he's got a look at 'em; but the ash collectin' business don't call for beau d'Espagne, does it?

"Hallo!" says Domnick. "You lika ride?"

Well, I can't say I'm stuck on being bounced around in an ash cart; but I knew Domnick meant well, so in I gets. We'd been joltin' along for about four blocks, swavin' in pigeon-toed conversation, when there shows up on the road behind us the finest rig I've seen outside of a circus.

In front, hitched up tandem, was a couple of black and white patchwork ponies that looked like they'd broke out of a sportin' print. Say, with their shiny hoofs and yeller harness, it almost made me want to look at 'em. But the buggy was part of the picture, too. It was the dizziest ever—just a couple of upholstered settees, balanced back to back, with a driver's seat, cushions and all, blazin' turkey red.

On the high side was a coachman, with his hands legs cased in white pants and yeller topped boots; and on the other well, say! you talk about your polka dot symphonies! They was as big as quarters, and them in the parasol matched the ones in her dress.

"I'd been gawpin' at the outfit a couple of minutes before I could see anything but the dots, and then all of a sudden it tumbles that it's Sadie's drivin'. She finds me about the same time, and jabs her sunshade into the small of the driver's back, to make him pull up. I tells Domnick to haul in, too, but his old skate is on his hind legs, with his ears pointed front, wakin' up for the first time in five years, so I has to drop out over the tail board.

"Well, what do you think of the rig?" says Sadie.

"I guess me and Domnick's old crow has about the same thoughts along that line," says I. "Can you blame us?"

cheer her up while she tackled it. Seems she'd got rash a few days before and misread a prescription, and the Duke and Duchess of Kildere over to call on the Wigghorns. Sadie'd been actin' as sort of advance agent for their Dukelets during the winter, and she'd been makin' a date for a call. This was the day.

It would have gone through all right if some one hadn't put the Duke wife to what he was up against. Maybe you know about the Wigghorns? Course, they've got the goods, for about a dozen years ago old Wigghorn choked a car patent out of some poor inventor, and his bank account's been pyramidin' so fast ever since that he's in the light figure class; but when it comes to the monkey dinner crowd, they ain't even counted as sane sicks.

"Why," says Sadie, "I've heard that they have their champagne standin' in rows on the sideboard, and that they serve charlotte russe for breakfast!"

"That's an awful thing to repeat," says I.

"Oh, well," says she, "Mrs. Wigghorn's a good-natured soul, and I do think the Duke might have stood her for an afternoon. He wouldn't, though, and now I've got to go there and call it off, just as she's got herself into her diamond stomacher, probably to receive them."

"You couldn't ring in a couple of subs?" says I.

"For a minute Sadie's blue eyes lights up like I'd passed her a plate of peach pie cream. 'If I only could!'" says she. "Then she shakes her head. 'No,' she says, 'I should hate to lie. And, anyway, there's no one within reach who could play their parts.'"

"Ain't they the wonders, these women?" "That bein' the case," says I, "it looks like you'd have to go ahead and break the bad news. What do you want strolled up just as fearless as though their clam chowders was fit to eat."

"And that's what fetched us up against the Tortonis. They were well placed, at a corner veranda table where no one could miss seein' 'em; and, as they'd just finished a plate of chicken salad and a pint of genuine San Jose chart, they was lookin' real comfortable and elegant."

"Say, to see the droop-eyed way they sized us up as we makes our entry, you'd think they was so tired doin' that sort of thing that life was hardly worth while. You'd never guess they'd been livin' in a hall bedroom on crackers and bologna ever since the season closed, and that this was their first real feed of the Summer, on the strength of just

me to do—hold a bucket for the tears!"

Sadie said all she expected of me was to help her forget it afterwards; so we rolls along towards Wigghorn Arms. We'd got within a mile of there when we meets a Greek peddler with a bunch of toy balloons on his shoulder, and in less'n no time at all them crazy quilt ponies was tryin' to do back somersaults and other folk stunts. In the mix-up Mr. Coachman says he'll have to chase back to a blacksmith shop and have it glued on.

"Well, hurry up about it," says Sadie, "well, hurry up about it. We'll walk along far as Apawattuck Inn and wait there."

Course, I ain't never been real chummy with Tortonis—his boardin' house name's Skinny, you know—but I've seen him knockin' around the Rialto off'n for years; so as I goes by the next table I hits my lid and says, "Hello, Skinny. How goes it?" Say, wasn't that friendly enough? But what kind of a come back do I get? He just looks at my eyebrows, as much as to say, "How bold some of these common folks is gettin' to be!" and one sure the other way, Sadie and I look at each other and swap grins.

"What happened?" says she.

"I hit a 15-cent lump of Hygeia passed to me," says I. "And with the ice trust still on top, I calls it extravagant."

"Who are the personages?" says she.

"Well, they're the Duke and Duchess," says I. "They're the Dukelets waitin' to do a parlor sketch on the bargain day matinee circuit; but from the looks now I guesses they're travelin' incog' for the afternoon, anyway."

"How lovely!" says Sadie.

"Our seler lemandes came along just then, so there was business with the straw'n' word, and in the minute he ties us up to them speckled ponies he maps out the drive with the spotted ponies and that side saddle cart. I gave Sadie the nudges to look to the front, and they had their eyes glued to that outfit, like a couple of Hester-at-kids lookin' at a hoky poky wagon.

watch Skinny judgin' up the house out of the corner of his eye. I'll bet there wa'n't one in the audience that he didn't know just how much of it they was takin' in; and by the easy way he leaned across the seat back and chinned to Sadie, as we got started, you'd thought he'd been brought up in one of them carts. The madam wa'n't sayin' in the rear, either. She was just as much to home as if she'd been usin' up a green transfer across Thirty-fourth. If the style was new to her, or the motion gave her a tingly feelin' down her back, she never mentioned it.

They did lose their breath a few, though, when we struck Wigghorn Arms. It's a whackin' big place, all fenced in with fancy iron work and curlicue gates fourteen feet high.

"I've just got to run in a minute and say a word to Mrs. Wigghorn," says Sadie. "I hope you don't mind waitin'?"

"Oh, no, they didn't. They said so in havin' been booked for 50 performances. He was wearin' one of them torrid suits you see 'in Max Blumstein's show window, with a rainbow band on his straw hat, and a pair of white, with a blue collar shirt that you button under the spin with a brass safety pin. She was chortlin' a Peter Pan peekaboo that would have made Comstock gasp. And neither of 'em had seen a pay day for the last two months."

But it was done good, though. They had the tray jugglers standin' around respectful, and the other guests wonderin' how two such real House of Mirthers should happen to stray in where the best dishes on the card wa'n't more'n 50 cents a double portion."

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she loomed up like a bale of hay in a door.

"Why, how do you do?" she squeals, making swoop at Sadie as soon as the wheels stopped turnin'.

"And you did bring them along, didn't you? Now, don't say a word until I get Peter—he's just gone in to brush the cigar ashes off his vest. He wanted to be presented to the Duke and Duchess together, you know, Peter! Peter!" she shouts, and in through the front door she waddles, yellin' for the old man.

And say, just by the look Sadie gave me, I knew what was runnin' through her head.

"Shorty," says she, "I've a mind to do it."

"Flag it," says I. "You ain't got time!"

But there was no stoppin' her. "Listen," says she to the Tortonis. "Can't you play Duke and Duchess of Kildere for an hour or so?"

"What are the lines?" says Skinny.

"You've got to improvise as you go along," says she. "Can you do it?"

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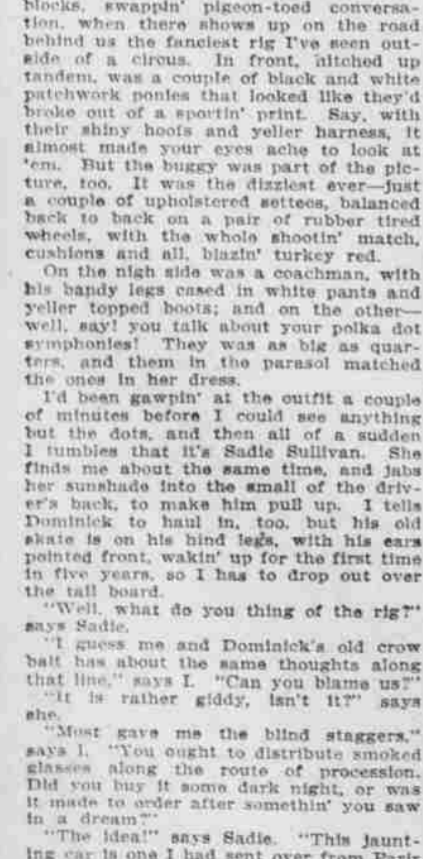
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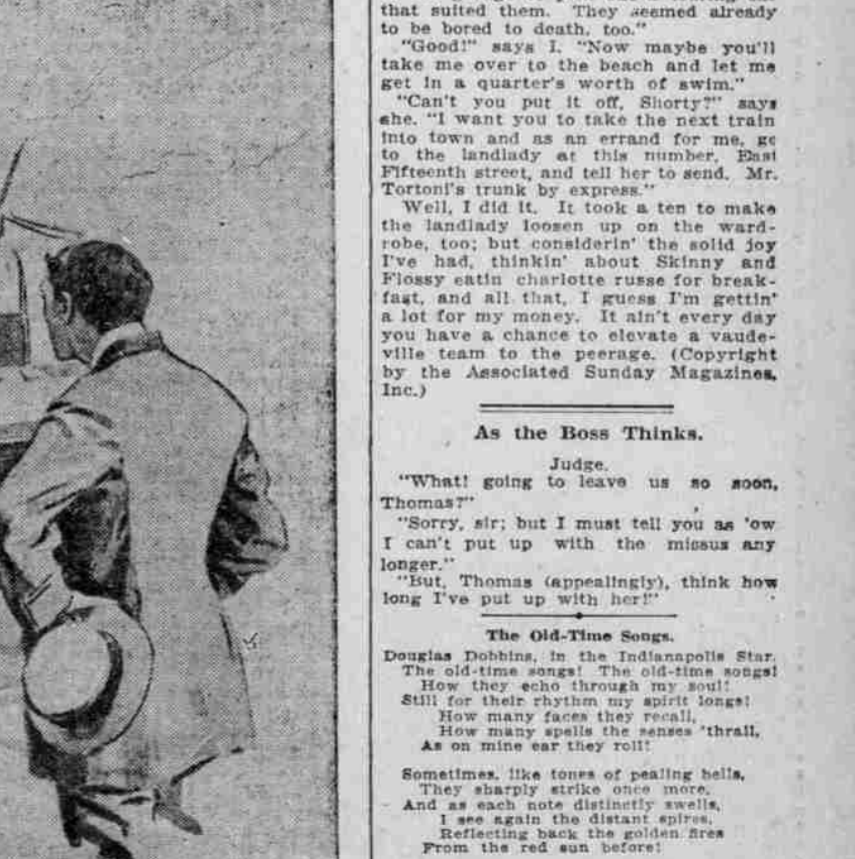
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