

THE SUMMER GIRL ON A LINER.

Leonie is hanging over the railing, with her eyes glued upon the shores of Ireland, as if the exhibit was especially prepared for her. I should not wonder if, paradoxically, it brings the shores of America nearer to her, and makes her a bit homesick. This first glimpse of land is apt to affect one that way if one has never crossed before. Our musical, polished New York theatrical manager, who has earned the reputation of being the diplomat of the steamer, is remarking: "What a place Faetnet Light would be to advertise on!" The International Rubber-neck Society is singing its college songs, with its usual group around it, and the swell set has finally awakened to the fact of its mistaken judgment and is trying to make amends—too late! Amends generally come too late in swell sets. But here we are! As we near the end of the trip each of us is sifted and shaken into our true positions—the same on sea as on land. If I should say this to Leonie—well, I can see her eyes flash and hear her ask what does a girl like me know about true positions. But one can't go through a social season or two in New York without knowing a thing or two. New York is a great educator. And it is a foregone conclusion, if both of us did not know something about things in general, we would not have been allowed to take this trip without a chaperon. Now there's the swell set—the girl with her chaperon. Of course, it was the Rubber-neck Society that dubbed them the swell set. That girl might have been the belle of the steamer. Between her airs and the indiscretions of herself and her chaperon,—particularly her chaperon—they are both ignored by the women, and to-day only two men—and those two Englishmen—have the courage to promenade the decks with them.

I am calling Leonie "Leonie" in this letter, because it is so far removed from her real name. Leonie is not French, she is Southern. Tom said I must humor her. He said the only way to get pleasure out of a trip was to humor your traveling companion. So I am humoring her. I don't think Tom told her to humor me. As I said before, she is Southern. She does not appear to notice that I am humoring her. Perhaps she is thinking I am a Yankee and am indebted to her a lot for that sword General Grant did not accept from General Lee at Appomattox so long ago. Anyhow, she seems to take things for granted. Among the rest she took the lower berth in our stateroom and left me the upper one. As I perform miracles twice a day in getting down and up, the only concession she makes is, she could not do it at all. She monopolizes the whole of the little mirror in dressing, and softens my reckless appearance as we sally forth by saying: "If only I could dress and arrange my toilette as easily as you do!" Not one acquaintance have I made, from the stateroom steward to the handsomest man on board, that she has not immediately appropriated him. There was finally but one thing left to me. It was a little book entitled 'Colloquial French.' I thought it would save me a lot of trouble in refreshing myself on idioms. Leonie has been refreshing herself all winter with real study. I got the book out from the depths of my trunk—came up humbly on deck, took my steamer chair down to the most unpopular nook, away from all those jolly Rubber-neckers, bundled myself in my rugs and began to study. In about two minutes, Leonie dropped the beau of the boat—the one man that it had been a real struggle for me to relinquish—and came to my corner. She did not like it. It was too windy and it had too much motion. But she brought her rug and

chair. Then she spied the little book with an ejaculation of joy. It was just what she wanted! She has the book. Humoring your traveling companion is great discipline.

This International Rubber-neck Society is a sort of hyphen that connects the different cliques. It was formed the second day out. Leonie and myself were made honorary members. They were the congenial fellows of the steamer, in bicycle suits, tennis suits, golf suits, white flannel suits and traveling suits, with songs and jokes, and out for a good time. But they did not know any of the ladies. I met one of them and introduced him to Leonie; the others accused him of not knowing us, but making the acquaintance by 'rubber necking and threatened they would make his steamer life miserable if he did not introduce the rest. He introduced them all as members of the International Rubber-neck Society, and the society was formed. Leonie and I were made honorary members, with the understanding that we must introduce them to whoever of the pretty girls they desired to meet—the list to be headed by one girl in particular. She was pointed out. We promised. She was the girl with the chaperon, and they were our neighbors in the dining saloon. She was taller and looked older than her chaperon, and was making a specialty of the broadest English accent and was drinking "high balls" to prevent seasickness. We did not think the Rubber-neckers would fancy her for long; but there was no denying that she was a great beauty, slender and willowy, with beautiful eyes and a complexion patented against the sunburn and tan of a sea trip and veiled for effect more than for protection. Her chaperon's complexion was of the same sort. They have never changed after leaving America, excepting to be more brilliant after every trip to the state-room.

They two, this girl who could have been the belle of the boat and her chaperon, who told us she was the wife of a prominent New York man, placed their steamer chairs in a spot on the upper deck adjacent to the portion that had been appropriated by the Rubber-neckers. The next day after our promise to bring about an introduction we were visited by a committee of the Rubber-neckers. It had been decided they did not care to meet the beautiful girl. They did not like the way she walked. It was too serpentine. They did not believe her complexion was natural. Her accent was affected. They considered her very rude; she had omitted to thank one of their number when he had assisted her out of a difficulty, and, too, she belonged to New York's 400! They knew she did. She said so. And she was very exclusive. She had said this also. And the Rubber-neckers did not think they could stand anything so dead elegant on shipboard. They were out for recreation. They really wanted to forget painful conventionalities. So since then the girl and her chaperon have been known as the swell set.

Being without a chaperon, however, has its inconveniences. Leonie and I have had to go down to our staterooms every night at the hour we are expected to go. The swell set have gone down just when they wanted to. To be sure, they have not stayed on the dark decks alone. They have each been protected by an escort, and from everything but the escorts themselves. Even the officers themselves have not deemed it best to interfere. But the officers have felt no hesitancy in discussing situations in a general way for the entertainment of other passengers. We would not have known all this if the inevitable concert for the benefit of families of sea-



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