

THROUGH A MONOCLE

OUR SUMMER VISITORS

THEY stood at the corner of the street and looked enquiringly about them. Paterfamilias had in his face a shadow of exasperation and his under-jaw suggested a pugnacious temper. "Mother" was simply "tired." She did not care whether they found out where they wanted to go or not; for they were not going where she wanted to go, and that was right home to bed. "Auntie" was more ambitious. She was interested in getting to the somewhere they had in mind; and, moreover, it was plainly her job to keep the party in good humour by well-timed facetious remarks. The daughter stood erect, queenly, with a round regular-featured face very conscious of her up-to-date clothes and also of the fact that she made a refreshing picture as she waited, a lifted skirt revealing a neat shoe and the shine of cobwebby hosiery. They were a party of American tourists trying to discover which car to take to the next "sight" on their list.

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A POLICEMAN came along; and they surrounded him. They went at him precisely as they would have gone at a London "bobby" or a Parisian gendarme or a Cook's man in Naples if they had happened to be touring in Europe instead of Canada. Paterfamilias started to put his question in liquid Americanese when the pretty daughter broke in with an explanatory phrase which the Aunt at once contradicted, and then the Mother wearily begged them to let "Popper" do the talking. At this, "Popper" tried it again with a politeness which his set face constantly disowned; and the policeman gave them rather vague instructions in reply. They crossed the street and waited for their car. When the wrong one came along, they tried hard to board it; but the daughter's shrill voice called them back when she discovered that it carried the wrong sign. Finally they got on the right car—mine also—and took seats well up. During the journey Mother saw nothing but the back of the lady's dress in front; "Popper" gazed straight ahead and glowered; Auntie had put the daughter next the window and now gazed eagerly out past her immobile face which did not look as if the owner knew what was going on. Auntie, it will be observed, was working over-time. The rest of them were not going to bother looking until they came to the thing they had been told to look at.

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THEY were dear, familiar, hard-working, conscientious American tourists, doing their duty by the city in which they happened to find themselves, checking off the catalogued sights in their guide

books and preparing to talk about their "trip" when they got home. How often had I met them in various parts of the habitable earth, the bond slaves of Baedeker, sweet toilers in the galleys of Cook. It is easy to smile superior at them in their simple faith in the guide-book, their faithful treading of the beaten path, and their sublime unconsciousness of all else. But how much better they are than the stay-at-homes. How much more they will know, in spite of the fact that they are learning from the text-books, as do most scholars. They may lack initiative in seeking out things of interest for themselves; but they have ten times the enterprise of those who do not travel at all.

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I LIKE our summer streets the better for them. The young girls among them have something of the "chic" of the French woman and immensely more assurance than the "demoiselle." The matrons have usually the comfortable proportions of a German frau, and a gift of conversation far beyond the capacity of the brain-power behind it. The men alone are disappointing. They look immensely worse than they are, however. That grim, hard-as-nails expression which they habitually wear on their faces, is largely a pose. They do not act that way—at least, not when they meet one on the level of holiday-making. That is probably their business mask; and they become so accustomed to wearing it that they cannot get it loose even when making merry. In Canada, they seldom have that permanently bored expression which distinguishes them in Europe. They can comprehend Canada. It is so much like their own "home city." It is a game of comparison which does not leave them wholly at sea.

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BUT in an Italian city where the street cars are not run either as frequently or as swiftly as they are in Keokuk, Ia., where a street widening ordinance would find lots to do, where the hotels are unheated, lighted with candles and carpetless, where the drainage leaves much to be desired, where, in fact, everything is miles behind the equipment of an "up-to-date Amurrican village," these bored and burdened American men tourists wear a look of perpetual wonder that people will be insane enough to cross the ocean and go into raptures over such dilapidated and slowly decaying old failures. Their system of comparison breaks down. By everything they have ever judged a town by, these antiquated European living tombs are not worth a moment's consideration, except to see from what dead-and-alive surroundings the Dago immigrants flee when they set out for glorious America. Their women folk may moon about cathedrals and go "dippy" in art galleries and fall into a hypnotic trance in an old cloister and rave over undecipherable frescoes; but that is the silly way of women who go in for "Culture Clubs" and senseless literature. When these men come to Canada, however, there is little of this—unless they go to Quebec. They can compare Rochester with Toronto and know what they are talking about every trip. They are not bored then, though they may look as if about to close a ten million dollar deal with a "sharper."

THE MONOCLE MAN.

THE LATEST ROYAL GROUP—AT BARTON MANOR



Prince Edward, Princess of Wales, The Queen, Princess Mary, The Czar, The Czarevitch, Princess Victoria, The King, The Grand Duchess Olga (behind) The Grand Duchess Anastasia (in front), The Czarina, The Grand Duchess Titania, Prince of Wales, The Grand Duchess Marie. (Copyright, Debenham, Cowes)