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ESTABLISHED 1850
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All Aboard.

By P. O'D.
(Toronto Saturday Night.)

A passenger liner is a vessel entirely manned by people who have to be fixed. Sometimes it is done by the use of great names—great in the steamship company, that is—sometimes by vulgar coin of the realm, and once in a long while by sheer force of personality. But it is best not to depend too much on the last—it very seldom works. Money is surest, and after that good introductions.

Possibly the untravelled reader—all four of you, girls, who like yourself have never been across before—will wonder why there should be so much fixing to be done. But there is—there is everything. You find it out right in the beginning when you notify the steamship company that you are thinking of toddling over with them, and would they please pick you out a nice shelf on which to repose at night and during your spells of indisposition.

Do they immediately leap at this chance to do a little more business? No, they do not. They turn a smooth but marmoreal countenance upon you, and explain that the ship you want to go on has been all booked up for months. They can give you a nice inside cabin for four or six down in the vitals of the ship, convenient to the engine-room or the kitchen—awfully comforting if you have developed a peculiar and violent distaste for food. But that is the best they can do for you.

"Well, what other ships have you got?" You ask, suspecting that this is not the only ark afloat on the bosom of the deluge, and that there are other Noahs who may have a little more accommodation for the animals.

The other ships are all booked up, too—navigation must be one of the most profitable industries in the world. So finally in despair you tell the agent to do the best he can for you on the boat of your first choice. You simply throw the burden upon Divine Providence and him. That is just what the agent wants. He knows that Divine Providence won't interfere with his business—at least, not in this life—and he is free to chivy the passengers about in much the same way as Shem, Ham, and Japhet must have handled their passengers on the best advertised of the early liners.

Incidentally, the cabin-stewards must have had the very Dickens of a time on the Ark. The booking-agents of the day, no doubt, threw the travelers together with the same superb disregard of suitability. We are quite convinced that the elephant had to climb into an upper berth, while the monkey snored comfortably below, and that the lion shared a cabin with the lamb. As a matter of fact, that is probably the origin of the saying about the lion and the lamb lying down together in peace—the lion was probably too sick to do anything, and the lamb too sick to care a darn if he did.

We, who write this, got an inside cabin. Of course, it was inevitable that we would. In the first place, we ordered it fairly late—our solvency being of an uncertain and flimsy character—and in the second we didn't know which kind of cabin was most desirable. As

a matter of fact, if we had been asked offhand, we would probably have plumped for an inside one as being so much safer. It must be very annoying to have a big wave sloshing in over your bed. And, if you close the port-hole think of the giant cuttlefish hanging around outside, gazing at you with hungry saucer eyes, and waving their tentacles threateningly.

"I'm sorry, I can only give you an inside room," said the agent.

Then we know we were being made the victim of circumstances. If he had said he was sorry he could only give us the captain's quarters, we would have felt equally bad about it.

"Isn't there anything can be done?" we asked, giving our best imitation of a man who has just heard a shocking and unexpected piece of news. He shook his head sadly, and our depression grew.

"Perhaps you know someone at headquarters," he suggested.

Swiftly we ransacked our brains for the name of someone we might safely blackmail. Then we remembered once being introduced to one of the heads of departments. It was at a little Press outing and we two had got very chummy indeed—we recall that we exchanged hats and were only prevented from exchanging the rest of our clothes by the active interference of the rest of the company present. But we feared that he might have forgotten us—the better the time the shorter the memory.

It is not our intention to weary the reader with an account of the intricate negotiations into which we plunged by mail. We would if they had resulted in anything, but they didn't—not in the way of an outside cabin. We got the one the agent first picked out for us. None of the people who were expected to cancel had the slightest intention of doing so—the mean old things! The only people who ever cancel are the ones who have berths in the stoke-hole, we presume.

We have just been down to inspect our quarters—we are writing this on shipboard, friend reader—and we are busily figuring out some system of going to bed in installments. At a rough guess our bunk is about four feet six long and half that in width. Obviously we can't get the whole of our personality into it at once.

"But why don't you draw your knees up?" asked the bright and resourceful reader.

But then the reader doesn't know the height of our knees—how could she? If we were to do that, we would poke the gentleman above us out of his bunk, and as he will probably have a device of a time getting into it, he might—but the thing doesn't bear thinking of. The only solution is for us to discover some way of going to sleep in halves, half at one time and half at another. But then the upper half of us may be hanging out of the berth a good deal, anyway, and so the problem may solve itself.

But, to come back to the people who have to be fixed, an experienced traveller got hold of us a week or so ago and gave us the benefit of his accumulation of wisdom on the vasty deep.

"The first thing when you get on board," he said, "is to get hold of the saloon steward and have him pick you out a nice table with a nice bunch of people."

That sounds easy and reasonable. Naturally one would like a nice table and nice people about one—say, a select assortment of merry flappers to walk the deck with, soulful maidens to quote Swinburne to, and an occasional vamp to sit about with in the moonlight.

But how is the thing to be done in the first hour or two on shipboard? You can't very well take the steward around the ship with you and mark the ladies off for selection. It might even savor of indelicacy. Besides, the ladies might have other plans—they very often have where we are concerned. And how is one to size up the fair sex in these very advanced times by a casual inspection? The gay person in the open-work stockings may be an officer of the W.C.T.U. The rather grim lady in the black rimmed spectacles may later take them off and develop unexpected social gifts. But the difficulties of the thing are obvious.

Nevertheless, we felt bound to do something about it—our friend was impressively insistent on the point—and we saw the saloon-steward. Incidentally, why do they call it a saloon on shipboard? Why use a name like that for a place where you eat? What's the idea of arousing recollections that are best kept in abeyance? Or is it part of a plan to make ocean travel attractive to dwellers in "dry" countries?

The steward was very nice about it. He said he would do anything he could for us, and what table would we like? We almost asked him what tables he had, but we caught ourselves in time. We had no desire to reveal our complete inexperience to him. We didn't wish to put ourself entirely at his mercy. Fortunately we remembered once hearing a friend of ours speak of having sat at the captain's table. That sounded rather impressive, so we mentioned it.

"Very sorry, sir," said the steward, "but the captain's table is filled up, sir."

"That is too bad," we said, as if our one idea in coming on the old ship at all was to be able to eat with the captain. But what do you think of those wily old dogs of captains filling up their table that way right in the start? It is clear that those splendid mariners don't believe in taking any chances. But what is their system? They certainly seem to work fast.

"There's the engineer's table," said the steward, "that's a very nice table. Or there's the doctor's or the paymaster's."

For a long time we hesitated between the doctor and the paymaster. It would be rather nice to have medical assistance right there at the table if any of those little illnesses incidental to a life on the ocean wave should occur—and they so often are brought on by the sight of food. But then, what if his table should be filled up with invalids? "Ay, there's the rub," as old Hamlet might remark.

The paymaster sounded good at first. We have always liked to associate with men who handle large sums of money. We like the intimate way they talk about the elusive stuff. But then, suppose he should take to reminding us of the little bill we might be running up say, in the smoking-room? That would have its distinct disadvantages.

On the whole, we decided in favor of the engineer. He would probably toss about a lot of technical language about mileage or knotsage, or whatever it is, and reciprocating engines and all that sort of thing, and then we could go up and astonish the girls on the deck with our nautical information.

"And don't forget the bath-steward," said our experienced friend, when he was putting us on to the ropes—wonderful how these nautical terms are creeping into our language already! "It is very important to arrange for your bath at a decent hour. Everybody wants it at the same time, you know, and if you don't fix him, he's liable to give it to you any old hour."

Obviously, it would be very awkward to have the bath-steward waking us up in the middle of the night, or calling us away from our meals to wash. Doggone, we'd do without it first! In fact, we hadn't figured particularly on taking baths at all, we thought people waited till the boat stopped and then had a swim. But, since we were expected to bathe—well, naturally, there was nothing else for it. We'd hate the bath-steward to have a bad opinion of us.

So far we have been trying to catch the bath-steward and "fix" him, but without success. He is a most elusive person. Probably he is waiting till all the tenders are in—should one do it by cheque—before he makes his decisions.

In the meantime, we have fixed the deck-steward and got a chair. In our cruise landlubber way we had thought the deck-chairs were free to all, and you just sat down wherever you liked—beside the prettiest girl in sight, for instance. But it seems not, and we were duly warned about this, too. It is a good deal of a gamble, however, and we are waiting anxiously to see what luck we are going to have. We don't worry so much about the chair he has given us; the question is, who have the chairs to right and left with-



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in talking distance of us?

But, when all is said and done, what difference do all these details really make? The thing is to be on a ship and to be heading for the romantic old ocean, where the ships of all time have gone their trackless way. Perhaps around some dim headland of the Gulf an ancient barque of Saint Malo will thrust its ghostly sails, or Ericson and his Norsemen come rowing down from Iceland in a swanboat of dream.

The sea and ships and sailormen are always romantic—even bath-stewards and deck-stewards, perhaps. And just now we are in a sentimental mood. We have watched the ship warp away from her dock, and across the widening strip of water we have seen old friends and relatives waving frantically in adieu. And when we have lost sight of them at one point, they have rushed to another, waving with undiminished energy, resolved that they shall see and be seen to the last. And hundreds of other people's friends and relatives were there, too, all waving and calling their good wishes till they were lost to blurred eyes.

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Under Secretary for India.

When Lord Sinha went back to his native India to become governor of two states, the post of Under Secretary for India became vacant. It has since been filled by the Earl of Lytton, who is connected with India in several ways. His grandfather took part in governing the Indian Empire, and India is his native land, for he was born at Sinla on August 9, 1876, and he has always taken an interest in Indian affairs.

The present Earl of Lytton is the second to bear the title, but the family has belonged to the peerage since 1866, when Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton was created a baron. He is chiefly remembered as a novelist, whose works will ever hold a place in English literature. The earldom was conferred upon his only son, who was Governor-General of India from 1876 to 1880, and later Ambassador to France. He died in 1891 and was succeeded by his son, the second Earl, recently appointed Under-Secretary to India.

The Earl of Lytton has devoted considerable time to the public service. He was Chairman of the Royal Commission for the Brussels, Rome and Turin exhibitions. In 1917 he was Additional Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, and in the following year he was British Commissioner for Propaganda in France. In 1910 he became Civil Lord of the Admiralty.

He has made several contributions to literature, the principal one being a "Life of Edward Bulwer, First Lord Lytton," the famous novelist, grandfather of the present Earl, who by the way does not use the compound surname Bulwer-Lytton, but Lytton only.



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