

**Rambles Abroad**

BY VALONA BREWER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Herewith the first of a series of letters written exclusively for WINNETKA TALK by Mrs. Valona Brewer, well known Winnetka violinist, who is engaged upon a tour of European countries. Other letters will appear at frequent intervals. They represent the impressions of a keen observer and promise delightful reading. Don't miss the "Rambles Abroad" feature.

A great many people are travelling to Europe, Tourist Third Cabin, these days—a great many more intend to do it, some time. It is to both groups that these random jottings are addressed. Being written by a musician, they may possibly take on a musical tone, so to speak. On the other hand, there is as much to see as to hear in Europe, and I intend to record "the luck of the road" impartially.

Our boat, a Cunard, sailed from Montreal, one advantage of this route is the lovely trip down the St. Lawrence past the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland; another is, that you have a chance to adjust yourself somewhat to life on the ocean liner before reaching the open sea. Then, too, there is the undoubted thrill of seeing icebergs. We saw a great many, and majestic fellows they were, too. I'll pass hastily over our four days in mid-ocean. There were people on board who came down to breakfast, smilingly, and went out and played shuffle-board

on deck afterwards—I wasn't one of them. In fact, on most mornings dieting had a singular attraction.

Our list of passengers was made up largely of college people, students—and professors—and a great many English "going home." We even had an English nobleman and his wife, but as they weren't wearing their coronets on board, we mistook them for ordinary mortals, until the last night out. In spite of the rough sea we managed a jolly fancy dress ball, also an excellent concert, at which two members of our little group performed—another won a prize for the most original fancy dress costume. It should have been awarded for bravery. Being a delightfully pretty girl she deliberately decked herself out as the dowdy harrassed matron of an orphanage with six bedraggled youngsters (borrowed for the occasion, much to their glee) hanging on her skirts. To our great satisfaction, when the first cabin passengers put on their concert, they were obliged to borrow all their performers from us!

You are constantly reminded that you are in England, on a Cunard boat—nowhere more vividly than at the fine Church of England service on Sunday, when you join heartily in singing "God Save the King," at the end. Luckily, when we came into the beautiful Plymouth harbour, the sea was quiet, and there was no fog, so that our first view of the hospitable looking shores of England made us understand a little of the feeling of the many English on board who call this lovely place

Our party remained on board, to land

at Cherbourg, where another beautiful picture greeted us—the shores of France. The little town, lying there quietly in the setting sun, looked exactly like a grand opera setting. It surprised you, rather, that the tenor did not step out from one of those delightful old doorways, and start singing an impassioned aria. We were told that there was barely time to go through the customs and catch the Paris train; therefore we hustled, after the true American fashion, into our own compartment, tipped our porters—we've been tipping ever since—and somewhat breathlessly settled down for the long ride to Paris. But we were to learn something that night about the habits of French trains. An official came strolling along presently to inform us that "of necessity it had been decided to send the train four hours later." Really, we were somewhat pleased, I think. We wanted a chance to explore those quaint streets; so, quite merrily, we climbed out and proceeded to "do" the town. My companion and I, of an adventuresome spirit, became separated from the rest

of the party—and spying a lively looking café, entered and tried our French on the proprietor by ordering coffee and sandwiches. How complacent we felt, when he really understood us. However, our smug self-satisfaction didn't last long. Presently, out of the noisy crowd, a nice-looking Englishman came up to us, and said, quietly, "If you are alone, I advise you not to stay here; it is not quite a safe place for ladies." Somewhat flattered that our true characters had been so immediately recognized, but being still used to our American freedom, we were in a quandry—besides, the coffee was good—so, notwithstanding the gallant Englishman, we held our ground. But how relieved we were when the rest of the party suddenly appeared around the corner—to save us from "murder and sudden death." And we all stayed in the disreputable café, making merry, until it came time to board the train—which really started this time—for Paris.

Valona Brewer.

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