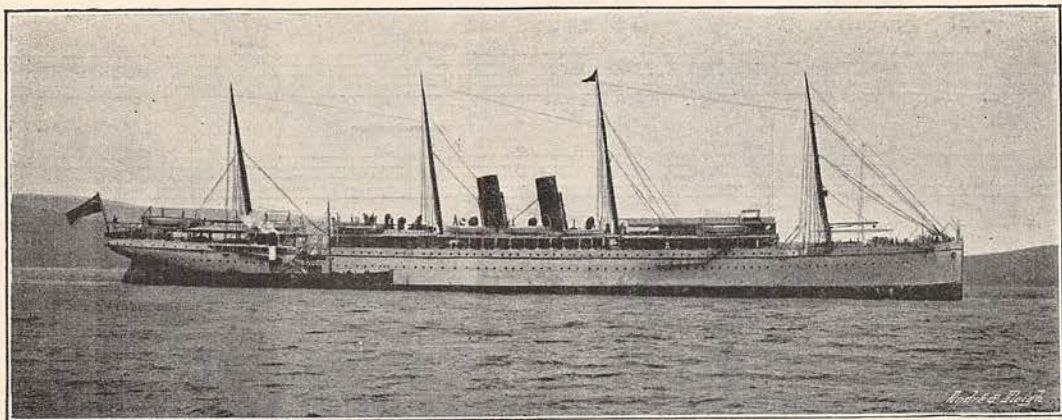


GIANTS OF THE CANAL.



R.M.S. CALEDONIA (P. & O.).



STEAMERS of every flag and from every shipyard under heaven: steamers grey-painted, carrying troops to the East; war-steamers; a dapper yacht; a frowsy old tramp with yellow rust-streaks daubing her

flanks; Egyptian police launches; and a French convict ship for Noumea, in New Caledonia: all these following stem and stern in endless procession, with rarely a half-mile gap between, and all heading for Suez and the Red Sea beyond. In the other direction a similar file making for that triangular harbour of tumbled concrete blocks, Port Saïd. The Canal they are traversing is the greatest and busiest water-way the world has ever seen, but yet it has its limits of width and depth, and when the vessels pass each other, one has to steam into a siding and bring up.

The Suez Canal would be no place for a *Paris* or a *Lucania*, or any of the big 9,000-ton Atlantic liners. And similarly, it would refuse passage to the *Rodney*, or the *Howe*, or any of the larger war-ships. At a later period of the world's history it may take these, and even the larger vessels which succeeding generations will most certainly do their travelling in; but at present the channel is only dredged to a depth of twenty-five feet seven inches, and it is not always well to drive the last inch too fine.

With the larger craft, this depth of water is a matter of nice calculation. Some of the giants go out of British rivers with their Plimsolls afloat and the twenty-seven-foot

mark on the stem-head comfortably awash. But the fire-hold staff calculate their consumption to a ton a day, and as the bunkers empty so does the draught diminish. These big fellows, too, have cellular bottoms for water ballast, many of them, and by emptying a trimming tank or two can gain the valuable inches when the pinch comes at Port Saïd.

So it may be said that 7,500 tons is the very outside limit in size for a ship which is to pass through the Canal, but there are scarcely half-a-dozen which strain its capacities to anything like this extent.

The North German Lloyd to China and Japan, Australia and New Zealand, sailing from Southampton, have fine ships, but none of them come up to the limit mark. Nor have the Barcelona Compañia Transatlántica, which run to the Philippine Islands and the East generally. The Messageries Maritimes Company, which will take one to Japan with the height of luxury and comfort, have no boat larger than the *Océanien*, of 4,198 tons. The British India, the Anchor, Bibby's, and all the other lines which use the Canal have fine handsome vessels, but they none of them own the giants. It is left for two British companies to top the list in point of size. The Peninsular and Oriental, with their *Caledonia*, a monster of 7,500 tons, may claim the possession of the largest of the giants. She is 486 feet in length—that is, about as long as St. Paul's Cathedral—with 54 feet of beam, and with main engines of 11,000 horse-power. Next comes the Orient Company, with the twin-screw *Ophir*.

The *Ophir* carries word on her counter that Glasgow is her port, but as her home quarters are Tilbury Docks, and her only

other place of call in these islands is a passing anchorage inside Plymouth Breakwater, she cannot be said to have very much to do now with the Clyde: although, indeed, she was built there, engines and all, in 1891 by Messrs. Napier.

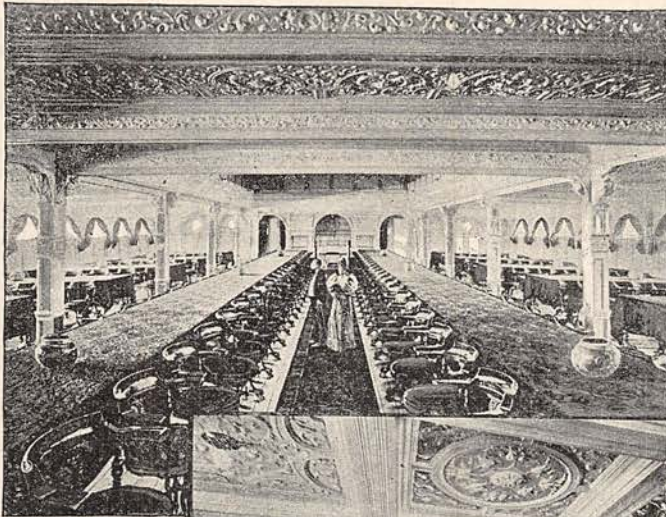
The eye picks her out at once as she steams down the long lane of the Canal, carrying her superstructure high above the line of the flanking sand-dunes. Other craft, with their dazzle of all-nation flags, sink to the size of pigmies as she comes down on one at "slow ahead"; and with her black hull, her white tracery of decks and boats, and her pair of slender pole-masts raking aft parallel with the funnels, she makes many of them look grotesquely small. She has as many decks as a Spanish galleon of the olden days, more bedrooms than most hotels, stowage-holds the size of a large warehouse, hydraulic cranes for handling her cargo. She has 220 men of a crew—officers, quarter-masters, and deck-hands; engineers, greasers, firemen, and trimmers; table-stewards, state-room stewards and stewardesses for all three classes; cooks, bakers, butchers; electricians, musicians, and refrigerator men.

Of her many passengers, who would dare to divide these up into genera? Most of them came aboard in tenders when the giant was lying in the river off Tilbury; and as one looked down upon them from above as they poured across the gangways, one was shaken with the lust to moralise, as one is by fever in a swamp. It was a thing impossible to cast off. Tender-load by tender-load they came up: emigrants, laughing and reckless, sour and glum, tearful and white, knaves and honest folk—these for the third class. Another

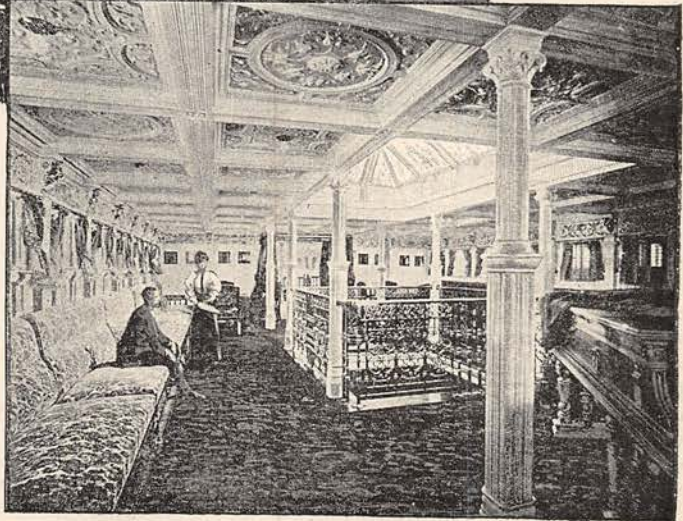
tender-load of first and second: a cricket-team for Australia, with straw hats and ties to match, and a healthy crowd to bid them "God-speed, and get runs"; an earl and his coterie; a brace of yellow-haired actresses; business-like globe-trotters; lean Australian squatters, with wives be-diamonded; clerks who talked of posts lost, and traders who had lost their trade; and then more emigrants for the third class. And all—men, women, and children—save here and there a stray Italian, were loaded to the breaking strain with hand-baggage, after the unchangeable custom of these islands. There were successful men and failures amongst that vast inflowing crowd, but it was the failures who caught the eye, the recruits into the ranks of the unfortunate, who had striven at home for perhaps a lifetime, and in despair were going to "try the Colonies." There were men who had dropped from the first class in life into travelling second,

and on their faces was written the aching fright lest they should descend further into the rough and tumble struggle of the third.

Others joined at Plymouth—first class only; superior folk these, with



MAIN SALOON.



MUSIC ROOM.

(Views taken on the R.M.S. "Caledonia," P. & O.)



GRAND STAIRWAY OF ORIENT S.S. OPHIR.

money—a few left at Gibraltar; and more came on board with the mails at Naples, also for the first class, because the railway journey indicates the warm man.

For days and days many remained invisible, and one only knew of their existence from the printed names in the passenger list; but in the Canal, where the ship's decks were as steady as the pavement of a street, and there was no tremor of engine or waft of oil to tell that she was a steamer and not a shore-house, these came from their rooms, white and listless, and a steward got their long chairs, whereon they stretched themselves out, to be stared at like new boys in a school. And the stock joke was bandied round: "They must have come aboard in mid sea—probably from a diving-bell."

By the time the ship has got to the Canal everybody knows everybody else, personally or by reputation, and little coteries and cliques have been formed, and passengers are beginning to bet knowingly on the outcome of current flirtations. New hands have got over marvelling at the vast number of meals they can sit down to in a day, and the inordinate quantity of nutriment they can stow away at each. Old hands have got over the thick of their tales about experiences in other ships—mostly tales of weather and of woe. And those who have not brought white duck clothing with them begin to perceive the promise of heat, and make purchases from the barber's store.

Reputations have been made, and are still in the process of making, with wonderful

rapidity. There is a Melbourne timber-merchant who can give anyone else two rings at deck quoits and a bad beating. There is a middle-aged gentleman, going out to Colombo with the view of planting tea, who has made himself so noisy in his cups that the stewards are forbidden to supply him with anything more potent than coffee. There is a young gentleman off to seek his fortune in New South Wales, who gives at second-hand on the grand piano in the drawing-room. Mr. Grain's musical sketches with such excellent effect that he has been rewarded with the *sobriquet* of "Corney," and wears it with vast

gusto and enjoyment. And there is a baby in swaddling clothes credited with the best lungs on earth.

One cannot say that business is altogether neglected. Already one silver mine near Coolgardie (owned on board) has changed hands; and already "our Mr. Jenkins" from Manchester has struck up a warm friendship for Mr. Stokes, the great dry goods store-keeper in Adelaide, which one can't help thinking is not altogether disinterested and platonic. And as there is a tutor on board with an unamiable cub, into whom he drills the great truths of the Latin *Accidence* for twenty minutes daily, one may say that these two do business also.

But on the whole, the state of the passengers is one of rest and change and amusement, or of thorough *far niente*, combined with slight over-eating. In the mornings and afternoons amusement sometimes palls, but in the evenings never. The passengers go hard at it. Amongst the third class they get the accordion to work, and have a shindig beside the fore-hatch. In the second they make music also, and the young men and maidens dance with industry and vigour; whilst the Failures gloat over past splendours, or, Micawber-like, look complacently at what may perhaps come next.

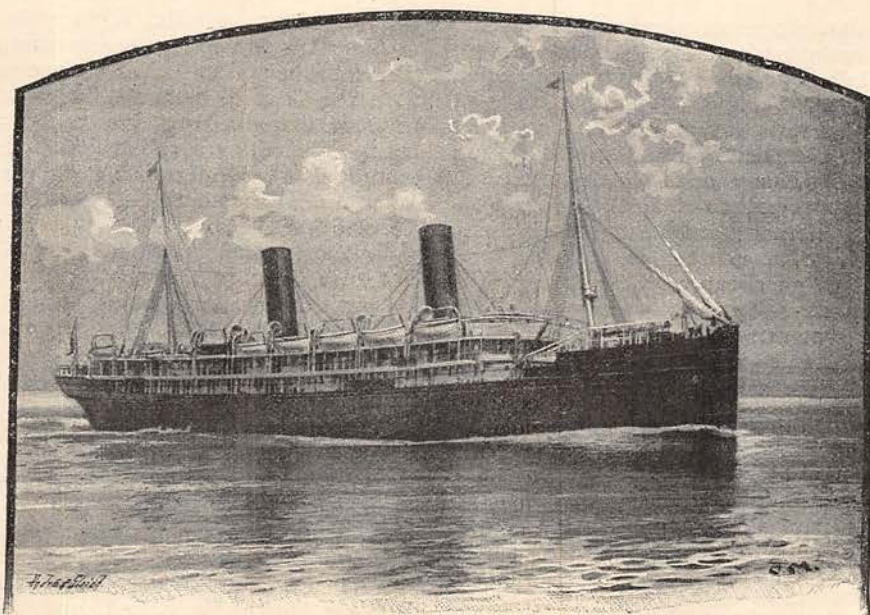
In the first cabin they dine late, and, by reason of the size and excellence of their dinner, they have to sit for awhile in quietude, either with *café noir* or with cigarette *solus*. And meanwhile, the band—which, like the poor, is an institution they have

always with them—plays. From a strictly musical point of view, the band is not above the higher criticism. As an adjunct to this sea-hotel, it is worth much fine gold. It takes away the attention of mamma when Araminta is flirting with John Edward in one of the many dozen blocks of inky shadow made by the electric light for that precise purpose. It soothes papa's after-dinner snooze. It pins in the head of the up-country squatter the last remembrance he will have of London music-halls, burlesque plays, and the *intermezzo* from *Cavalleria Rusticana* for the next six years. And if there is not too much roll on, it assists those Terpsichorean exercises which never pall at sea, whatever they may do ashore—the waltz, the lancers, and the barn dance.

The number of matrimonial engagements contracted on board one of these liners is abnormal, if one calculates per hour of stay and per head of passengers. Young men, we will say, have come from some up-country station in the Colonies and have been to England—home, they call it, even though they are native-born—and had their fling among the decent English towns and the comely English women, and have spent their money, and are going back again. It is all very good fun on board; but—there is that back blocks sheep-run, or whatever it may be, looming in the rear of everything. The horror of loneliness creeps over them, and

they tell themselves that it is not good for man to live alone; and so, under the pressure of the moment they marry something which they frequently would be glad to get rid of afterwards at a remarkably small price.

There is not the high poker play going on in the Canal which one finds on board the boats of the Atlantic ferry, partly because the passengers do not understand it so well, partly because of the heat, and partly because they cannot afford to waste the money. The professional card-sharper, who spends his entire time travelling backwards and forwards between New York and Liverpool, is an animal unknown on the lines which run to the East. But in the smoking-room there are usually half-a-dozen rubbers going, and certainly there is loo, and nap, and poker as well, though hard armour-plated gambling is the exception rather than the rule. So, too, is hard drinking. There used to be some excuse for chronic soaking in the old days of long passages and torrid heat; but now the trips are of much shorter duration, and science keeps the temperature endurable. The punkah is a thing of the past. The *Ophir* and *Caledonia* have large refrigerating engines for use on the homeward voyage, when they bring back thousands of tons of butter, and poultry, and beef, and mutton, and these keep all eatables and potables cool. And, in addition, they have powerful machinery for



ORIENT S.S. OPHIR.

(From a photograph by J. Adamson & Son, Rothesay, N.B.)



DOME OF SALOON, ORIENT S.S. OPHIR.

induced draught ventilation, so that in the hottest, muggiest weather one can always have a sluice of air streaming through one's cabin, or down the back of one's neck.

In fact, there is everything on these great steamboats that luxury can think of; from paintings by Hemy and Walter Crane in the drawing-room, to a choice of two savouries for dinner; and if one has to pay for it, why, what else can be expected? If you want to go cheap, you can do it all the way—forty days—for a ten-pound note, third class; and you can amuse yourself by picking up character and—"extras."

But they are a queer crowd, these six or seven hundred passengers, take them in the thick. They wear diamonds and badly-fitting clothes, and usually have before them at dinner champagne glasses tinkling with ice; whereas, on one of the Indian liners the jewels would be less, the clothes better, and the drinks more inexpensive. There, too, the conversation would be almost entirely about the Service and the I.C.S., with here and there a word about the beauties of big game shooting, and

the impudence of Mr. Kipling in writing novels. On the Australian steamer the only "service" they understand is the one connected with the Church, or the other which hands round the mashed potatoes and makes the beds. Their talk is about what they have seen in England, the price of Botany wool scoured and unscoured, the McKinley and Wilson tariffs, the iniquity of shearers' unions, and the uncertainty of all things human in Australian securities and railway bridges. They are (again I repeat, in the bulk) men and women in the rough, hard-working, money-making state, who misuse the Queen's English most vilely, who look upon "Austrylia" as the land of the present and the future, and the British Islands as the Kingdom of the Blest, now and for all time. They are an infant people, and a sturdy and a prosperous, or they would not be able to support ships like the *Ophir* and *Caledonia* for their trafficking and travelling.

And now the great steamer has passed half-way down the Canal, and Ismailia is astern, and the sand walls which shut out the bitter lakes open out on either beam.

Night is coming down ; but as the sun sinks in hot lurid splendour behind the desert, a thousand electric lights snap out all over the ship, and from the projector in the bows a great sun burns, which makes the waterway of the Canal all gleaming, glaring white, or thrusts it into velvety darkness outside the cone of rays.

Amid Egypt's night the great steamer moves the 480 feet of her length silently on between the walls of sand, the most perfect machine for travel the world at present knows. On the passenger decks one can no more make out those who guide her than in a railway carriage one can overlook the driver of the engine. Our giant has discarded the old double awning of canvas. Her boat-deck, the highest of all, is an awning deck as well, and the forward end makes the navigating

bridge. It comes strange to one at first to see no officers in command, no high-heeled quartermaster sawing at the spokes of the steam-steering wheel ; but then one remembers that the steamer is a giant, and perhaps it is only fitting that giants should differ in niceties from other craft.

And so she passes on, to coal at Suez and again at Colombo, and then to make her 3,370 miles skirt round the great circle to Albany in Western Australia, at a fourteen-knot gait. They do not drive out here at the pace one sees in the western ocean. Distances are great, and those high speeds mean such a fearful outlay in fuel, and bunker capacity is a thing of limits. So one has a chance of staying longer away from the newspapers and letters which worry.

C. J. CUTCLIFFE HYNE.



DECEMBER.



HAT IN BEAVER AND VELVET, FOR GIRL OF FOURTEEN YEARS.

THIS month fashions are fairly established, and so similar are they to their predecessors that it is only the practised eye of the initiated in such matters that discerns the subtle changes in set of pleat or tie of bow. There is an apparent generosity of material in skirts and sleeves. The former, although

seamed to fit the hips closely, are of marvellous dimensions at the extreme edge, measuring from five to seven yards ; whilst the latter are

of remarkable size but generally picturesque form, some, indeed showing their origin from Venetian pictures of the sixteenth century ; and, again, the sleeve of the Stuart period with the additional large collar is a favoured style.

Young Girls' Hats and Costumes.

Beaver, fine and light, in black, white, and tan colours, and all velvet hats, are chiefly worn by young girls. The brims are wide and the crowns either of beaver or velvet, as shown in the opposite sketch. This is a beaver plateau with ruffled crown of velvet, and edged with narrow velvet frills, a bow and quills at one side. Another becoming style is shown on the figure, page 72, in grey beaver with raised brim, bound at the edge with petunia velvet, and velvet and plumes arranged as a trimming. The costume is of petunia satin-cloth with bordering of caracal ; the cape being braided in a good design and box-pleated into a yoke piece with cape