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ALL THAT I HAVE MET



MRS. CLAUDE BEDDINGTON

ALL THAT I HAVE MET

BY

Mrs. CLAUDE BEDDINGTON

“I am a part of all that I have met.”

—TENNYSON: “ULYSSES.”



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To my cousin W. B. Maxwell, who
encouraged me with his enthusiasm
and advice

PREFACE

Pious Wish.—"Let him who is without my book be assassinated!"—(adapted from) WALT WHITMAN.

"Prefaces are great wastes of time, and though they seem to proceed of modesty, they are bravery."—FRANCIS BACON.

WHEN the world-renowned interviewer from America, Mr. Isaac Marcossou, came to see me two years ago about my memoirs (as his fellow-countrymen call them) I showed him a list—a very long list—of the names of those people who would appear in my pages. After he had read through the formidable array he looked up at me through his horn spectacles and said: "You seem to have met everybody but God!" To which I replied—optimistically, perhaps: "Give me time!" and forthwith promised to put this story on the front page of my volume.

Mr. Marcossou is much struck by the orgy of commas in which British writers indulge. I think he rather prides himself on his own abstinence from this particular vice.

He was very interesting about journalism on both sides of the Atlantic. "In England," he said, "your magazines accept second-rate work from a first-rate author solely on his name. Now, the *Saturday Evening Post* takes the stuff on its merits only, and often turns down an inferior story by a big celebrity; whereas it will always print something really good even if by an obscure writer."

I sat at his feet and he gave me valuable advice. "Don't be afraid of a liberal use of the first personal pronoun. . . . The public of to-day wants anecdotes and still more anecdotes. . . . They like plenty of conversations in a book of reminiscences. . . . Be very sparing in your use of exclamation

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marks" (how well he knows this female failing!) "and, if possible, use them only inside of inverted commas . . ." And, as a final exhortation: "You can't be too personal."

Once committed to the project of writing a book I set about collecting advice from other kind author friends.

Mr. Louis Wiley, of the *New York Times*, told me: "Reminiscences, particularly those with a racy and occasionally indiscreet flavour, have a good market at present. Remember that a fairly good anecdote about a very great celebrity is more valuable than a first-rate anecdote dealing with an obscure person."

Lady Gregory, the gifted Irish dramatist, exhorted me: "Write just as you talk." My! isn't it difficult?

Mrs. Aubrey le Blond, the authoress, lecturer and mountaineer, said: "As for style: imagine that you are writing a chatty letter to a friend."

Desmond Chapman-Huston, the compiler and author of so many good biographies, said: "Bear in mind that the public wants a new point of view—it may be right or it may be wrong, but it must always be entertaining. . . . Readers are always more interested in what a man *was* than in what he *did*."

Hector Bolitho, the New Zealander who wrote that witty book "Thistledown and Thunder," warned me: "Always remember the power of under-statement. . . . Mind you provide plenty of quotable titbits for the reviewers."

Sir A. S. chaffed me: "Don't forget that the more people you mention in your book, the more copies you will sell! Don't we all love to see our names in print?"

L.M.N., the well-known novelist, said: "Always remember that ninety-nine out of a hundred readers are totally uneducated and almost illiterate, know nothing and think less."

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O.P.Q., the clever journalist, said : " Never insult your readers—who, after all, are reasonably cultured people—by writing down to them."

R.S.T., the celebrated man-of-letters, said : " Whatever happens, don't go near a literary agent : sharks are benevolent, and dormice energetic, compared with those gentlemen. You pay 'em ten per cent. and *you* do all the work."

U.V.W., the successful writer, said : " Don't attempt to do anything without an agent : it's the only way to make a success of a book."

X.Y.Z., who has a guilty conscience, said : " Take care you're not had up for libel ! "

And my lawyer, who has my interests truly at heart, begged : " For goodness' sake let me see it before you print it ! "

Luckily for the compilation of these memoirs I was born with a passion for recording everything. Since childhood I have kept a diary and since the age of ten I have carefully preserved all theatre, concert, opera, horse-show and dance programmes ; letters of interest ; photographs of every description ; newspaper cuttings ; race-cards ; game-cards ; autographs, and so on. From these I have made albums which form an illustrated chronological record of my life as well as a picture of the grand Victorian epoch, with its colossal prosperity ; the gay Edwardian age, with its social amenities and careless luxury ; and the Neo-Georgian time with its heavy taxation and menacing labour problems.

My mania for exactitude was such that when quite small I used to stand on a chair, tape-measure in hand, and divide my bedroom mantelshef into eighths, so that my treasured ornaments should stand symmetrically and equidistant thereon. As for lists, Braddons have them in their blood, and my mouth fairly waters when I see something that needs cataloguing.

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I adore system ; I worship organization. After men see the book I have compiled on organization they invariably say : “ I wish to God I had you in my office ! ” . . . but not before—alas !

It might truly be said of me that I have “ more ink than blood in my veins,” for my mother’s aunt was Miss M. E. Braddon, the “ best-seller ” of Victorian times, and one of the most prolific writers of any age ; her son is W. B. Maxwell, the well-known novelist, on whose shoulders the mantle has certainly descended ; my mother’s father, Sir Edward Braddon, wrote with much the same facility as his sister, though his output was considerably smaller ; my father’s second cousin was Dinah Mulock (of the Kilnagarna branch), the renowned authoress of “ John Halifax, Gentleman,” a book which has probably done more good in the world than any other novel ever written ; one of my father’s sisters, Mrs. Arthur Kennard, published some very readable novels ; and another, Mrs. Alfred Austin, translated several of Edouard Rod’s books into English.

Not content with having literary blood in their veins, several members of my family have married writers. My cousin, Florence Syme, was the wife of Edmond Holmes, poet and philosopher, who, in his turn, is related to Lafcadio Hearn. My Aunt, Hester Mulock, married Alfred Austin, the late Poet Laureate. Another Aunt, Nina Mulock, married Arthur Kennard, whose nephew, Sir Coleridge Kennard, wrote “ Level Crossings ” ; and my second cousin, Pamela Dames-Longworth, is the wife of that rising young journalist, Patrick Murphy.

E. B.

*Arkwright Lodge,
Hampstead.*

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CHAPTER I

GREAT BREEDERS

For birth and ancestry and those things which we have not brought about ourselves, I scarcely call these things our own.—OVID.

SINCE all the Best People start their reminiscences with an account of their pedigree, I will conform—for once—to the general custom and begin this book with my family tree.

When it is realized that my paternal grandmother, Frances Sophia Berry, of Cloneen in the King's County, was twenty-first in lineal descent from Edward I of England, and through that monarch went straight back to Charlemagne, and that my paternal grandfather, Thomas Molloy (later Mulock) was descended from Niall of the Nine Hostages, King of Ireland in 371 A.D., my readers may easily imagine how amused I feel when somebody who meets me for the first time comments: "You don't look at all English!"

The Molloys were originally O'Mulloys, and the head of the clan was Hereditary Standard Bearer to the English Sovereign in Ireland.

"The Mulocks," so I read,* "appear to be descendants of an old Irish family, who, in the reign of Henry V, assumed the

* Burke's "Landed Gentry of Ireland."

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name of Myllok from the lands held by them at Myllok, now Meelick, on the Shannon, and obtained the customary letters patent to enable them to enjoy the benefits of English law and hold their lands by English tenure. The surname of the family in course of time came to be written Mullock and eventually Mulock."

One branch of the Mulock family owns Kilnagarna and the other Bellair, formerly Bally-ard, in the King's County. My grandfather, Thomas Molloy, changed his name to Mulock in 1843, so as to inherit the estate of Bellair from his maternal uncle.

In the 'nineties my father bought an estate called Ballycumber House, near the family place—then occupied by his eldest brother William—and Harry Mulock followed suit by buying a small property next door, Moorock Lodge, thus making a total of four Mulock houses in the King's County.

A propos of this, there is a good story told about a father travelling with his small son in the train between Portarlinton and Athlone. The boy, looking out of the window and asking perpetual questions, points to a house and says: "Whose is that place, Papa?" The father replies, "That belongs to a Mulock." A few minutes later the boy espies another house and asks: "Who lives there, Papa?" The answer comes once more, "A Mulock." More miles go by and after getting the same reply four times the puzzled boy asks: "Papa, what *is* a Mulock?"

My grandfather, Thomas Homan Mulock (formerly Molloy), born in 1798, died in 1889, was what is called in Ireland a "great charácther"—with the accent on the penultimate. His father, Laurence Molloy, of Clonbela in the King's County, sent him to Trinity College, Dublin (where most good Irish Protestants go) with the idea that he

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should take Holy Orders. The youth took his degree, forsook theology for medicine, married Miss Frances Berry of Cloneen in 1828, and settled down to the life of an Irish landlord—shooting and all—at Bellair, the estate he inherited from his maternal uncle in 1843. It is recorded that in 1849 he was High Sheriff of King's County—probably a most unconventional one.

His knowledge of medicine came in very useful during the years he lived at Bellair, for he “doctored” the peasantry and the tenantry for miles round at his own expense. His therapeutics were simple to a degree, yet highly efficacious. He had two prescriptions always handy: one called “The White Bottle” (this was castor oil) and the other “The Sour Bottle” (of which the active principle was quinine). Whatever the ailment, one or the other of these two bottles was administered, and the results are said to have been admirable.

My grandmother gave birth to fifteen children—ten sons and five daughters—in twenty-one years, the legend being that she and her neighbour Mrs. Bailey, of Moorock Lodge, whose score was eighteen, kept the local Mrs. Gamp so busy between them that that worthy could never take on another job. After the fifteenth child she was pronounced by the family medico to be “delicut” (and no wonder!) and ordered abroad.

In great pecuniary embarrassment—those were the dark days of potato famines, Fenian outrages and unpaid rents—my grandparents sent the three elder boys, John, Tom and Dick, out to Australia, where the gold-digging boom was then at its height. The youngest was sixteen and the oldest only nineteen. The three younger boys, Willie, Harry and Frank (my father), all passed with flying colours from Trinity College, Dublin, into the Indian Civil Service, in those days a favourite profession among the younger sons of Irish County

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Families, who were attracted by the interesting life, high pay and £1,000 a year pension. George became an engineer and the father of Commander Mulock, D.S.O., of the Royal Navy.

Thus Bellair was evacuated and the family transplanted at first to Paris. My grandfather told a good story of a Frenchman, to whom he had described the lovely home in Ireland, a dozen miles from the nearest town, asking: "Et combien d'enfants avez-vous, Monsieur?"

"Quinze," replied the proudly prolific parent.

"Ah! Je suppose que là-bas il n'y a pas d'autres distractions!" rejoined the Latin gentleman.

As one of the tenants put it: "Thim Mulocks is therrible free breeders!"

From France they migrated to Italy and lived for some years at the Casa Bleu, a villa on the outskirts of Florence, where my father learnt to speak Italian like a Tuscan and to know his Dante by heart. To this day—and he is now eighty years old—he speaks the language perfectly with the Florentine accent of his boyhood, and it is highly diverting to watch the faces of the officials in an Italian hotel when he makes his first appearance. "Santissima Vergine!" was the pious ejaculation of the booking-clerk, "Come parla bene l'italiano!" (Holy Virgin! How well he speaks Italian!) While the Manager, flabbergasted at the flow of his native language from such an unexpected quarter, exclaimed: "Straordinario! Il signore ha l'aria di un milor inglese, però parla il puro toscano!" (Extraordinary! He looks like an English nobleman, yet he speaks the purest Tuscan!)

After his wife's death in Italy in 1863, my grandfather returned to his dilapidated estate in Ireland and lived the life of a scholar and a recluse in a cottage just outside the demesne until his death at the age of ninety-one. I can just remember the old gentleman when my parents took me to stay with him

GREAT BREEDERS

in the summer of 1884. Gentle in manner, with snow-white hair, finely cut features and beautiful complexion—perhaps his simple diet of potatoes and milk had something to do with this—he was the very picture of a grandfather. He saw four sovereigns on the English throne: George III, George IV, William IV and Queen Victoria.

CHAPTER II

“ JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN ”

ON April 20th, 1826—just over a hundred years ago—was born to Thomas Mulock, of Kilnagarna in the King’s County, and his spouse, the girl baby who thirty-one years later was to be acclaimed as the authoress of one of the most famous books and perhaps the most spiritual novel ever written in English.

Although Dinah Mulock was a staunch opponent of Women’s Rights she herself held very advanced views for a girl of her generation: for instance, she was an avowed champion of marriage with a deceased wife’s sister.

Before she was twenty years old she had settled her mother, her two younger brothers and herself in a house in London and announced her intention of supporting all four of them by her writings. It must have been a hard struggle at the start, but she set her teeth and won through in the end.

She began with children’s stories and pot-boilers for the magazines, then wrote several three-volume novels, each one more successful than the last, until, in 1857—after five years of labour polishing her manuscript—she published her finest work, “ John Halifax, Gentleman.”

To those who might think this book *démodé* I would like to point out that 150,000 copies of it in a sixpenny edition alone, were sold within the twelve months from April, 1925,

“JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN”

to April, 1926, and the librarian of any big lending-library will tell you that from two to six copies of this novel are in constant circulation. It has been translated into several foreign languages and enjoys a big sale on the Continent.

Her own splendid character shines through the pages of her books—her warm sympathy with the under-dog, her fine appreciation of the beauty of the English countryside, her earnest but far from orthodox Christianity (she was always at loggerheads with the Church owing to her championship of marriage with a deceased wife's sister), and through it all gleams her love of romance . . . was not her own life packed with it ?

She had such a dislike for her Christian name of Dinah—in fact, she said as much in one of her poems—that she always manœuvred to keep it out of her title-pages, preferring to send out her books “by the author of ‘The Ogilvies,’” or “by the author of ‘Olive,’” to name two of her early novels.

Once “John Halifax, Gentleman” burst upon the world her fame was established and she goes down to posterity, not under her own name, but as the author of that beautiful book.

In the early 'fifties she settled at Wildwood Cottage, a quaint, old-world house at North End, Hampstead, a corner rich in literary memories. One of her neighbours was Coventry Patmore; another was Eliza Lynn-Linton, the novelist who provided periodic excitement in mid-Victorian coteries by her vigorous trouncings of the girl of the period. Imagination boggles at what the poor dear lady would have said had she lived to behold the young lady of the present day.

Talk of plots for novelettes! Dinah Mulock's life offers enough material for half a dozen. When she was a spinster of thirty-eight there happened an accident close by Wildwood

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Cottage: a carriage was overturned and a man was thrown out on to the road with a broken leg. He was carried into her house and there she nursed him back to health and strength. The inevitable happened: the patient turned wooer and married his Dinah in the year 1865.

But this is not all. He turned out to be George Lillie Craik, a partner in Macmillan's, so for the second time in my family—did not Miss Braddon become Mrs. John Maxwell?—a rising woman-novelist married a publisher. And, in both cases, they lived happily ever after. Now would anybody with a turn for mathematics like to work out the odds against an eligible publisher being reduced to a helpless condition at the very gate of a spinster-authoress?

The couple remained childless, but once more Romance stepped in to take a hand in the game. One frosty starlit night an abandoned girl babe was found on the Heath, hard by the door of Wildwood Cottage. Dinah Craik, big-hearted as ever, took in the tiny foundling, brought her up like her own child, adopted her legally and named her Dorothy Craik. I well remember seeing this lady, after her marriage to an Irishman called Pilkington, at a horse-show at Moate in Co. Westmeath.

On October 12, 1887, aged sixty-one, quite young for a Mulock, Dinah Craik died quietly of heart-failure, leaving behind her the memory of a good and gallant personality and an imperishable monument, "John Halifax, Gentleman."

It is commonly believed that sons take after their mother and daughters resemble their father. Whether this theory be correct or no, it is interesting to note that Dinah Mulock had a very able though somewhat eccentric father.

Thomas Mulock (1789-1869) was born in Dublin and went into business with a firm in Liverpool at the age of twenty-three. Three years later there is reported in the *Gentleman's*

“JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN”

Magazine an “eloquent eulogium” delivered by Mr. Mulock at the Liverpool Pitt Club to the memory of William Pitt and Edmund Burke.

Dr. Thom, a well-known Minister in Liverpool, described Thomas Mulock as “perhaps the ablest man, as well as the most original genius,* who has temporarily resided in Liverpool, and enriched its religious literature by his writings,” and further refers to him as “this talented and extraordinary man.” In Picton’s “Memorials of Liverpool,” he is referred to as “an able and original writer and speaker, a great admirer of George Canning and a Tory to the backbone.”

When he was twenty-seven he retired from business; matriculated at Magdalen College, Oxford, a curious reversal of the usual procedure, and devoted himself thenceforth to writing and speaking—two highly typical Mulock pursuits, now I come to think of it.

In 1820 he lectured on English Literature at Geneva and Paris, where his compatriot Thomas Moore went to hear him. Mulock became at this time an impassioned defender of Byron’s morals, and a fervent admirer of his poetry—so fervent that he worked hard to bring the alleged infidel into the fold of pious belief . . . that is to say, the belief of Mulock. Writing to Thomas Moore from Ravenna on December 9th, 1820, Byron refers to Mulock:

“He wrote to me several letters upon Christianity to convert me; and if I had not been a Christian already, I should probably have been [one] now in consequence. I thought there was something of wild talent in him, mixed with a due leaven of absurdity—as there must be in all talent, let loose upon the world, without a martin-gale.”

* N.B.—This was before the day of “F. E.”

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That the word "wild" should have been applied by Byron, of all people, to the man who was trying to convert him, has an irony which both of them probably missed.

Right up to the last Thomas Mulock poured out letters, articles and lectures; even at eighty years old, after the disestablishment of the Irish Church, he wrote a brilliant article which was almost prophetic in its foreshadowing of the fate of the Irish landlords.

He has been described by a contemporary as "a tall, handsome man, of gentlemanly bearing, very witty, and an excellent conversationalist, but decidedly eccentric and obstinate to a degree." And this will do nicely as a picture of most of the breed.

CHAPTER III

IN THE SERVICE OF INDIA

MY three great-aunts all had distinguished husbands—Sir Henry Norman, Sir George Chesney and Sir Mortimer Durand—and all three men spent most of their long and active lives serving in British India.

Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wylie Norman began his military career as an Ensign of eighteen in the Bengal Infantry, fought in the Sikh war of 1848-49, and many actions on the Peshawar frontier; helped to suppress the Sonthal Insurrection; was acting Adjutant-General throughout the Indian Mutiny, 1858-59; went through the siege and capture of Delhi and the relief of Lucknow—most of this time fighting alongside Lord Roberts; was Assistant Military Secretary to the Duke of Cambridge; Military Secretary to the Government of India, and Member of Council of the Secretary of State for India.

When his fighting days were over he was made Governor, first of Jamaica and then of Queensland; was appointed Aide-de-Camp to Queen Victoria, and wound up his splendid career as Governor of Chelsea Hospital from 1901 till he died on October 27th, 1904, a Field-Marshal.

Lord Roberts told my mother, while driving her about Lucknow: "I would have given anything to have done what Henry Norman did at the Shah Najuf Mosque during the Relief. The mutineers were holding it and our troops

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were being hit by their own bullets ricochetting off the walls of the Mosque. Their nerve broke and they turned to retreat when Norman shouted: 'Not that way, men! Come on here!' and led an attack forwards, whereupon the tide turned and the dismayed mutineers fled from the back of the Mosque down the River Gamtee."

It is an open secret that Sir Henry Norman was offered the Viceroyalty of India while he was Governor of Queensland, but he declined the honour on account of old age.

It was a real privilege for me to go to see the old Field-Marshal and my great-aunt at Chelsea Hospital. It was like a big, quiet country place in the heart of London, and the smooth green lawns—kept as only the British know how—were a joy to the eye.

My aunt showed me the exquisite Grinling Gibbons carved overmantels in one of the big reception rooms and explained how well—all unwittingly—they had been preserved by the vandals who had covered them with thick coats of paint some centuries ago.

The Rt. Honble. Sir Mortimer Durand, P.C., G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., to give him all his titles and decorations, but affectionately known to everybody as "Morty," was my great-uncle, and never was a man more adored by his family.

His commanding stature, dignified presence, good looks, gentle manner and quiet charm always made me think of the strong, silent hero in a romantic novel, and one of the proudest moments of my life was that when, as a child, some time in the 'eighties, I trotted about the Crystal Palace holding tightly my idolized Uncle Morty's hand, while he patiently answered the usual fusillade of questions.

Sir Mortimer Durand's career as Minister in Kabul, his



SIR MORTIMER DURAND
Washington Post

IN THE SERVICE OF INDIA

services to the Empire as negotiator of the agreement which gave us the Durand Line, and his work as Minister in Teheran and Ambassador in Washington, are well known ; but some of the stories he used to tell me about his adventures may be new to many readers.

One day in Afghanistan he noticed, fastened to the top of a tree, a large iron cage containing a highly suggestive pile of whitened bones. On inquiring of his escort what it meant, that worthy explained : “ A man started a rumour that the Russians were advancing on Afghanistan. This created a panic in the country, so the Amir ordered the man to be locked inside this cage high up on the tree, in order that he should the better see the enemy arrive.” The wretched victim lingered for several weeks before he starved to a merciful death.

Another day, while driving to the Durbar, Morty Durand saw marching along the road a company of Afghan troops, every man in it with bandaged eyes. He was told that these men had mutinied, so the Amir had all their eyes gouged out, to make an example.

During his reign the Amir Abdur-Rahman—described by Sir Percy Sykes as an oriental Henry VIII in appearance and a dark-skinned Machiavelli in character—was reputed to have done away with 120,000 of his subjects. He was a warlike despot and a true believer in frightfulness. Asked to look through a new telescope at the moon, he refused, saying : “ Oh, blow the moon ! What’s the use of the moon to me ? Can’t you make a gun of it ? ”

Before leaving Kabul, Durand reached the climax of his remarkable career when he signed the Frontier agreement with the Amir on November 12th, 1893, and the Durand Line remains a monument to the statesmanship of a great public servant. It is generally acknowledged also that Durand

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created the Imperial Service Troops, consisting of the combined armies of the Native States officered by Indians, nicknamed "Durand's Fad" and loyally supported by Lord Roberts.

Much of the actual organization of the Imperial Service Troops was carried out by Colonel Sir Howard Melliss, and he told me, with justifiable pride, that there were few sights in the world to beat the march past of the Bikanir Camel Corps—all native cadet riders with leopard skins under their saddles. These troops contributed no fewer than 26,000 men in the Great War and rendered valuable services in the 3rd Afghan War of 1919.

In November, 1914, I was staying at Somerhill in Kent for a shoot, what time the Maharajah of Bikanir and his suite were of the house-party. His Highness explained how utterly alien to his race was the modern warfare: "We Sikhs have been bred for centuries past to charge the enemy on horseback and we hope to die thus gloriously in battle, but our men can never get used to this business of sitting in a hole in the ground, waiting for a shell to fall and blow them to atoms."

Uncle Morty had a highly developed, if quiet, sense of humour, and told a delightful story of a lady newly-arrived in India who lay awake o' nights expecting the dreaded mosquitoes. When the jackals began to howl, she exclaimed: "*There* they are!"

While Minister Plenipotentiary at Teheran, where he remained for six years, the Omar Khayyám Club in London saw fit to appoint him as their highly appropriate President.

Some of the members of this Club, hearing a report that the tomb of Omar, at Nishapur in Persia, was in a sadly dilapidated condition, sent an urgent message to Durand to

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beg the Shah, Nasir-i-Din, to have the tomb of the great poet put into decent repair.

Uncle Morty accordingly broached the subject at his next meeting with the monarch, a good old sportsman, but that gentleman asked, greatly surprised, "Do you mean to say that there is in London a Society connected with Omar Khayyám?" Loud laughter. . . . "Why! he has been dead over a thousand years!"

To this Uncle Morty: "All the more reason to do honour to his memory." But the Shah retorted: "No, I cannot order that the tomb shall be repaired. We have got many better poets than Omar Khayyám: indeed, I myself . . ."

Nasir-i-Din adored childish jokes. Indeed one courtier won his heart by turning out all the lights in the palace and then explaining: "*Le Chat*" (a pun, of course, on Shah) "*voit parfaitement bien la nuit.*" For this jest he was rewarded by his Royal Master with a pension for life.

Durand made the big mistake of his life when he went to Washington as British Ambassador. The very qualities which made him such a success in dealing with Orientals caused his unpopularity in the United States, where people like pep, bonhomie and such enlivening characteristics. His typically English shyness was mistaken for arrogance, and he was by nature utterly incapable of understanding the complexity of American life, politics and journalism. He became the victim of unfortunate intrigues and in 1906 resigned from his high office, all the more tragically because he had written to his sister as early as 1895: "It would be a grand work to bring England and America together; the grandest work an Englishman could do for his country."

A curious sidelight is thrown upon the inmost feelings of this most reserved man when he writes to his staunch friend,

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Lord Roberts : “ I have never passed a day of my life without a pang of regret at not being a soldier.”

To quote from an article in *The Times* :

“ That Durand had been unfairly treated was the impression of men of the calibre of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Roberts and Lord Curzon, and one can only regret that his sense of injustice prevented him from accepting the governorship of Bombay, which might have led to the glorious consolation of the Viceroyalty of India for which Lord Dufferin deemed him worthy.”

After his retirement from the storm and stress of public life he went to live peacefully by the sea in his favourite County of Cornwall, where he devoted his last years to literature. This great public servant died on Whitsunday, June 8th, 1923, devotedly tended to the last by his beloved daughter.

CHAPTER IV

VICTORIAN

MY mother's aunt, Miss M. E. Braddon, was the best-seller of her day, yet a more unspoilt, sensible, simple soul could not be imagined.

Born in 1837 (the year of Queen Victoria's accession to the Throne), the daughter of a Cornish lawyer, she began to write at the early age of twenty-three, when her first novel, "The Trail of the Serpent," came out in serial form.

The following year she made a terrific sensation with "Lady Audley's Secret," a book which in those prudish days fluttered the dovescots by its daring, but which, compared with some of the pornographic publications of England and America during the last decade, seems innocuous indeed to us. The literary critic of *The Times*, however, was quick to spot a winner and reviewed it most favourably in that august newspaper. From that time onwards the flow of novels from her facile pen—all with good plots and all very readable—never ceased: her total score came to something over seventy.

She had a curious habit—common to most Braddons and inherited by me—of writing for hours at a stretch on a blotting pad on her lap. When she was tired of this position she would write standing up at a high desk.

Although she created so many romances in her books, she

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herself was quite unromantic in appearance. I never met a gifted woman who was less of a *poseuse* than "The Aunt," as we all called her. She wore an extensive "Queen Alexandra" fringe and carried herself with no little dignity. As a child I stood somewhat in awe of her at first sight, but soon realized how kindly and sympathetic she was.

The wife of a Cambridge Professor once told me: "It was a positive treat to hear your Aunt Braddon talk: she never groped or hesitated for a word and it was always exactly the right word and the only word that could describe just what she meant."

Her publisher, John Maxwell, was also her husband, and in both respects the partnership was ideal. They lived at Richmond in a Georgian house with real "atmosphere" and an old-fashioned garden, where "The Aunt" gave the famous luncheon parties at which most of the celebrities of the day were to be met. The Duchess of St. Albans, daughter of Bernal Osborne; cheery Lionel Brough (1836-1909), the journalist and comedian; handsome, breezy-mannered Mrs. John Strange Winter of "Bootle's Baby" fame; and Jerome K. Jerome, were some of the guests I call to mind; and they were typical of her gatherings.

Jerome was never a dressy man and loved to tell the story of how he rang the bell of the Richmond house one day at 1.15 p.m., only to be told: "Mrs. Maxwell can't see you because she's giving a luncheon party;" the butler at the same time trying to shut the front door in the face of one whom he took for a tramp.

Miss Braddon published her last book, "Miranda," when she was in her seventy-seventh year: she lived to see the first year of the Great War, and died on February 14th, 1915, at the age of seventy-eight, with the satisfaction of knowing that



W. B. MAXWELL

Photo : Russell, London

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her literary mantle had fallen upon a worthy successor in the person of her gifted son, W. B. Maxwell.

Good sons are born, not made. Never has there been a more unselfish son than Willie Maxwell. He devoted many years of his life to his mother, even continuing to live in her house at Richmond after his marriage to the witty Miss Sydney Moore, cousin of Colonel Moore-Brabazon, M.P., of Tara House in the County Meath.

Unlike his mother, W. B. Maxwell began to write fairly late in life ; still, he seems to have inherited, to some extent, her prolific pen, and, like her, produces on an average a book once every twelve months, with the exception of the four years he served as captain with the Royal Fusiliers in the Great War. Tastes vary—luckily for the world in general—but my three favourites among his many fine novels are “The Ragged Messenger” (1904), “The Guarded Flame” (1906) and “Spinster of this Parish” (1922).

Alfred Austin, who married one of my Mulock aunts, and was appointed Poet Laureate to Queen Victoria in 1896, was the smallest human being I ever saw outside a circus. Wilfrid Blunt called him “a little cock-robin of a man.” What miseries of self-consciousness I suffered as a lanky child when he stood on a footstool to kiss me ! And how we nephews and nieces used to suffer from smothered hysterics while his wife went through the pantomime of whistling under chairs and sofas for him, called “Alf ! Alf ! Alf !” the while, as though he were a toy dog.

He said to me one day, in all seriousness : “My child, have you ever noticed how many great men are called *Alfred* ? . . . Alfred the Great, Alfred Tennyson” . . . Here was my cue . . . a slight pause . . . after which I, as a dutiful niece, added, “And *you*, Uncle Alf !”

Nobody could fathom why Alfred Austin was made Poet

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Laureate, since his only apparent claim to fame was his exquisite prose. I therefore asked a niece of Lord Salisbury point-blank: "Why on earth did your Uncle give the Poet Laureateship to my Uncle Alfred?"

She answered: "Because it was absolutely the only honour Mr. Austin would accept from the Government as a reward for his long years of service to the Conservative Cause."

A knighthood he spurned, a grant of money he despised, so in the end he attained the one ambition of his life. How many of us can say the same?

In 1883 Austin paid the first of many visits to Lord Salisbury (the 3rd Marquess) at his beautiful Elizabethan home, Hatfield, in Hertfordshire. That great gentleman was wont to harangue the youthful members of the house-party before the little man arrived: "Now understand, children! I will not have you laugh at Mr. Austin just because he is so small. He is an admirable person and a great friend of mine, so . . . no giggling, please!"

It can easily be imagined how invaluable a man combining such journalistic, political and social gifts, was to his Chief and to his Party. Having no fish of his own to fry and asking for no limelight, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the Conservative Cause, and was able—not only by his leaders in *The Standard*, the most influential Tory newspaper of those days, but also by his personal influence with the foremost politicians—to do excellent work, which no man with a conspicuous official position in the country could have accomplished.

Between 1866 and 1898 Alfred Austin made a great success of journalism, a profession which, in his hands, became one of serious dignity. He wrote for many years either the first or the second leader in *The Standard*—then "A power in the

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land, the oracle of the propertied and mercantile classes, the exponent of solid Conservative respectability"—on an average of five days in the week. This he continued to do under three successive editors. He also took a full share in editing the *National Review*, besides contributing many papers, political and literary, to the *Quarterly Review*.

At his country house, Swinford Old Manor, in Kent, there was an extension of the telegraph line from the town of Ashford. At five o'clock in the afternoon *The Standard* telegraphed to him the subject of the morrow's leader. Alfred Austin then shut himself up in his study for a couple of hours. At 7.30 p.m. a boy on a bicycle left the house with the manuscript, which at eight o'clock he placed on the London train at Ashford Station, so that it reached the *Standard* office in time to be printed in the next morning's edition.

The range of subjects for these leaders was necessarily very wide, and my Aunt—herself a scholar and a linguist of no mean calibre—had arranged in her husband's study an exhaustive collection of books of reference to cope with every possible eventuality.

She told me: "Occasionally there would come along a real 'stumper' from *The Standard*. One day they telegraphed 'Please write article on death of Principessa ——,' an obscure Italian surname which conveyed naught to your Uncle. Trusting to my early upbringing in Italy he came to me and asked, 'Have *you* ever heard of this woman?' I racked my brains and finally remembered that this Principessa ——'s lady's maid had applied to enter my mother's service some time in the 'fifties at Bagni di Lucca, a health resort to which our family went every summer. Well, between the two of us we managed to concoct an article on the defunct Princess, but it took some doing!"

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Alfred Austin was a frequent guest at Knebworth in the days of Robert, 2nd Earl of Lytton, Viceroy of India. He told me of an amusing house-party there to which was invited Ouida. Unkempt and frowsy, clad in trailing tea-gowns and high-heeled satin shoes from breakfast till bed-time, and exacting the perpetual incense of flattery from all the males within range, she got on everybody's nerves, but the climax was reached when she persuaded her luckless host to escort her on what she was pleased to call a country walk. Poor Lord Lytton was forced to crawl at a funereal pace beside her, while she tottered on her pointed heels and dragged her silken skirts through the damp grass. After about an hour of this exhausting business he came back to the house a wreck.

Ouida (her real name was Louise de la Ramée), for all her self-complacency, was occasionally taken down a peg or two. At some fashionable party, after she had been railing against the inhabitants of the United States, a lady, recently arrived from Washington, went straight up to her and said, "So you don't like Amurricans? You know, you *ought* to! They read all your nasty books!"

She died in miserable poverty in Florence in 1908, aged sixty-eight.

The Austins possessed the rare gift of being able to attract to their picturesque Tudor house many of the celebrities, chiefly literary, of the day. This was before the days of Bridge, Mah Jongh and Jazz fiends, when people had something worth while to say and knew how to say it. Uncle Alfred himself was a brilliant talker and had at his command a rich and scholarly vocabulary, a thing growing daily rarer. Seated very erect at table, with his leonine head, backward sweep of thick, white hair, flashing eyes, authoritative manner and eloquent tongue—that was the time when he showed to the best advantage.

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As a girl I used to sit agape at the Austins' dinner-table, listening to the conversation of such distinguished Victorians as Sir Alfred Lyall, Sir Lepel Griffin and Sir Theodore Martin, a benign old gentleman, who wore a frock-coat and a top-hat all day in the garden.

CHAPTER V

THREE IRISH BEAUTIES

I HAD three beautiful Mulock Aunts: Mary, with chestnut-coloured hair and a demure centre-parting; Hester, with a black head, dark flashing eyes and a brilliant complexion, nicknamed "The Pirate"; and Nina, a dazzling blonde with forget-me-not blue eyes and a skin like a magnolia petal. Each of these women was a rare combination of beauty, brains, culture and charm, so it was no wonder that they attracted into their respective orbits many of the artistic and gifted people of their day. Watts, Leighton, Millais and Du Maurier delighted in making portraits of them, and they received enough admiration to turn any but their intelligent heads.

Mary Mulock married Frederick Pepys Cockerell, descendant of the famous diarist and cousin of the lovely Theresa, Marchioness of Londonderry, and of Muriel, Viscountess Helmsley, and himself most extremely handsome.

Hester Mulock married Alfred Austin.

Nina Mulock married Arthur Kennard, a wealthy iron-master and owner of the steam-yacht *Zuleika*. She rapidly gained the reputation of a Society beauty and a popular hostess, and the fact that the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) was one of her greatest admirers gave an added brilliance to her entertainments at 17, Eaton Place.

The loyalty of the members of our Royal Family to their

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friends is proverbial, and the affectionate relationship between H.R.H. and Aunt Nina continued unbroken till his fatal illness. When in London he never missed his weekly visit to Eaton Place, and many were the amusing incidents on these occasions, thanks to his hostess's unconventional ways.

The etiquette when the Prince called upon my Aunt was that everybody else should leave the room : sometimes we children were still in the drawing-room when the butler showed him in, whereupon we had to back out of the Royal Presence as gracefully as we best could—often colliding unavoidably with the furniture on our way to the door ; after our exit we could hear from the landing the Prince's laughter at our discomfiture.

Aunt Nina was the living embodiment of all those qualities summed up in the general acceptance by the English of the word "Irish." Impulsive, generous-hearted, brilliant-witted, unbalanced, illogical and unconventional to the last degree, her personal magnetism was devastating and lasted to the day of her death.

Once when the Prince of Wales went to see her at Eaton Place, she received him quite unaffectedly at the front door, announcing with a merry twinkle in her eye : "I'm sorry, Sir ! All the rooms are full of painters and plasterers, so there's nowhere for us to sit but on the stairs." And sit on the stairs they did quite happily, the Prince highly amused at the novel situation. It is almost unnecessary to emphasize the fact that the hostess was a singularly attractive creature. Only a very lovely woman could have "got away with it."

Paolo Tosti, the musical pet of Victorian Smart Society, was one of the many who fell under the spell of her charm, and told me : "Your Aunt Nina was one of the most exquisite creatures of an epoch which produced Lillie Langtry, Lady de Grey, Mrs. Cornwallis-West and Mrs. Wheeler. I admired

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her so profoundly that I felt constrained to dedicate a song to her. Now, she was absolutely unmusical, so I took the melody of the *Guards' Waltz*, the most popular dance-tune of those times, turned it into a sentimental love-ditty in her honour and presented it to her with these words: 'You are a very beautiful woman, but you have no ear for music; I therefore dedicate to you this song, written round the *Guards' Waltz*, because it is probably the only tune you know.' "

There was a fine grand piano at Eaton Place, but she never used it except to cut out dresses on. Mrs. Montagu Tharp remembers how she and Aunt Nina cut out their respective trains on it in the year 1869, when the two of them were presented as brides at Court.

Here is the description, copied from the newspaper of that date,* of the dress:

"Mrs. Arthur Kennard" [presented] "by the Countess of Mount-Charles.†

Train and corsage of the richest white satin, lined with white taffeta, trimmed with white roses and the finest old Elizabethan point; petticoat of white tulle bouillonne, with apron, looped up with white roses.

Headdress, diamonds, white plumes and lace lappets."

Below is an account, copied from a newspaper of 1869, of

"THE DRAWING ROOM"

"The Drawing Room of Tuesday was a full and brilliant one.

The cold weather did not deter the world of rank and

* The following extracts are given exactly as printed in the originals.

† The Earl of Mount-Charles is a title now borne by the Marquess Conyngham (Peerage of Ireland).

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fashion from paying homage to Her Majesty. But it was a very trying day to sit for a long time in a carriage in the park, and there can be no doubt to the delicate it was a dangerous proceeding.

It seems really quite unnecessary to wait in the park at all. When the Drawing Rooms were held in St. James's Palace there was not room sufficient to hold the company, and they were compelled to remain in their carriages till there was a move forward to the Throne Room. The company passes through the major part of the Palace, and along some very magnificent saloons. For instance, the Drawing Room company proceed from the grand staircase to the new ball-room, an apartment of magnificent proportions, which was designed by the Prince Consort to be the most beautiful room in Europe ; from thence the company are ushered into the old dining-room, thence to the music-saloon, and from that apartment, by a side door on the right, enter the spacious picture gallery at the upper right-hand of which is the entrance into the Throne Room."

Cowes Regatta Week, at the beginning of August, was in those days even more fashionable than now, and Aunt Nina, thanks to her husband's yacht and her own fascination, became one of its most admired *habituées*.

Here is a description of an afternoon party at Cowes, copied from a newspaper of 1869 :

"Lady Otho Fitzgerald wore a polonaise of white muslin and lace, with a petticoat of two shades of blue.

There were present their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, their Imperial Highnesses the Cesarewitch and Cesarevna of Russia, the Duke of

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Edinburgh, Prince Leopold, Prince and Princess Leinigen, the principal members of the households of her Majesty and the Prince of Wales, and the suite of the Grand Duke and Duchess.

The Princess of Wales and the Cesarevna were dressed alike. They wore polonaises of toile ecru worked all over in open work and embroidery, and trimmed on the edge with deep insertion and work, over ruby silk dresses.

Their Royal Highnesses appeared slightly fatigued and pale, which may be accounted for by the fact that a dance had been given the previous evening on board the Russian yacht, which was kept up until four o'clock that morning.

When the guests were about to land a strong tide was running, the Royal steam launch coming to grief, its bowsprit being carried away through coming in contact with the landing place. The ladies landed with the utmost difficulty, struggling in the boats to keep their footing."

The following contemporary articles on the doings and fashions of the day will interest and amuse my lady readers :

" CAUSERIE DE TOILETTE "

(From our Special Correspondent)

" As regards the prettiest ball-dresses now worn, I cannot do better than by describing one or two of the prettiest worn at the balls and afternoon parties at Cowes, these being the first of the fashionable gatherings ' after the season is over,' premising that the prettiest and most fashionable dresses are not, as heretofore, made with tunics, but with the skirts plainly gathered into the waist with no flounces or trimmings of any kind, save a few

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sprays of flowers. After what has gone before in the matter of flouncings and trimmings, and festooned tunics, the innovation is a remarkable one, and is the sure precursor of a more simple style of dress among the votaries of fashion. . . .

The dress worn by Mrs. Arthur Kennard at the Club House Ball was a charming combination of white tulle and embroidery of white floss silk, white, as usual, being considered the very best taste. . . .

The event of the evening was, however, the accident which happened to Miss Codrington, daughter of Admiral Sir Henry Codrington, whose dress caught fire, and she was fortunately saved from, perhaps, a terrible fate by the promptitude of Lord Otho Fitzgerald,* who, with great presence of mind and without a moment's hesitation, extinguished the flames, sustaining a trifling injury himself—but I am wandering from 'toilettes' to 'causerie.' I have seen several very charming 'toilettes' which I will endeavour to describe for the benefit of your readers. . . .

Silver gauze and tulle, spotted with silver, are again worn, adorned with flowers; though looking exceedingly smart and dressy, it is, to our thinking, a very 'prononcé' style.

One young lady wore a white tulle dress looped up with long trailing wreaths of holly, and a spray of holly worn in the hair."

Careless of appearance and regardless of conventions as she seemed, there was one occasion on which Aunt Nina surprised everybody. Her adoring husband liked her to drive

* The Right Honble. Lord Otho Augustus Fitzgerald, P.C., M.P., third son of 3rd Duke of Leinster, born 1827, died 1882.

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about London in a smart carriage behind a pair of showy high-stepping blacks. Now, the horse on the near side was adorned by nature with a magnificent tail, while the one at the off-side—like the Manx cats—had none. Aunt Nina, therefore, insisted that her coachman should fasten an artificial tail on this animal each time it was driven. For some time all went well and the turn-out made an imposing appearance, until one day at the height of the London Season, while going round Hyde Park at the most fashionable hour of the afternoon, the false tail fell off. At that very moment whom should Aunt Nina's eagle eye perceive driving towards her but the Prince of Wales! Quick as lightning she called to her coachman: "Pull over at once to the right-hand side of the road!" instructions which the terrified man obeyed, risking several lives in the process. Thanks to this masterly, if illegal, move of my aunt's, the Prince rolled past her carriage on the side of the horse with a long tail, and suspected nothing.

Irish to the last degree in character, she would suddenly sally forth with ink-stained fingers and a pair of stout boots—she walked for miles every day—to order a sixty-guinea dress at Jay's.

She was one of those writers who put almost as much ink on to their fingers as on to their foolscap. I remember as a child watching her eat an entire meal with a pair of black gloves on and marvelling, fascinatedly, at her dexterity. Doubtless it bored her to use pumice-stone.

Like most women with great social gifts, she had a husband who loathed every form of fashionable entertainment, and it must be confessed that she occasionally gave parties without telling him about them beforehand. A man-about-town of those days told me of this incident: "I was 'sitting-out' with a fair partner on the stairs at Eaton Place at one of

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your Aunt's smart balls . . . house crammed to bursting point, of course . . . when suddenly an angry little figure, dressed in night-shirt and night-cap, candle in hand, appeared on the bedroom-landing above us and exclaimed : 'What the doose does this mean ? ' ' No doubt the storm broke over my aunt's head next morning ; meanwhile—she had given her dance.

CHAPTER VI

GLADSTONE AND WILDE

ONE of my earliest memories is of walking hand-in-hand with somebody along a street, then came a horrified hush as we stopped in front of a newspaper kiosk, placarded all over with posters, "Death of Gordon." . . . I saw people's set faces, and then I understood vaguely that this tragedy had been brought about by one Gladstone. This was January 26th, 1885.

It would be difficult to make the tolerant young people of the present day realize the personal animosity against Gladstone when I was a child. In the best Conservative circles dogs were trained to swallow a titbit on the word "Salisbury!" and to refuse it with a growl on the word "Gladstone!" The G. O. M.'s portrait ornamented the bottom of a certain useful china article of toilet.

To an Irishwoman like myself, it will always be one of the greatest tragedies in the history of the world that Ireland was not granted Gladstone's Home Rule Bill of 1886. It was the mildest, most anæmic, milk-and-watery measure of self-government imaginable. Unfortunately for Ireland, Gladstone was born years ahead of his time, and the narrow-minded, orange-spectacled voters of his day were incapable of appreciating his splendid vision.

Stories of Gladstone's gracious personality abound: his charm was devastating, and he possessed the secret of making

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you believe, when he talked to you, that you were the only person in the world. Once, during a discussion on the relative virtues of different makes of razors, he turned round and said to a young school-boy present : “ Now, tell me, which do *you* think is the best kind of razor ? ” Of course, that boy was his slave for life.

One of Gladstone’s relations told me of an amusing incident at Hawarden. He was sitting writing at a desk while a roomful of young people discussed in hushed and respectful whispers the difficulty of packing a bath-sponge, its usually dripping condition and altogether odious behaviour on a journey, each suggesting different methods of dealing with the problem. Suddenly to their horror—for they had imagined that their illustrious relative was too absorbed in affairs of State to overhear their prattle—he turned round in his chair and boomed at them : “ Lay a towel on the floor, put the sponge on the towel, and *jump on it !* ”

Another early memory is equally clear. My mother’s aunt, Mrs. Maxwell (Miss Braddon, the novelist), had given a large wedding reception when her daughter married Selous, a brother of the renowned big-game hunter, and her picturesque Georgian house at Richmond was packed with celebrities, but I was too busy being a bridesmaid to pay much attention to the guests ; the one figure I remember in all that crowd was a plump, pasty, flabby, round-faced, preposterously-garbed man, who came up to one of my pretty aunts as I stood beside her, kissed her hand and made an outrageously flattering speech, which produced in me a slight feeling of nausea. What it produced in my aunt I shall never know. He moved on and she turned to me and said in awed tones : “ That was Oscar Wilde ! ”

I never again met Wilde, but I had, and still have a friend who was fated to know him well.

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In the early 'eighties there stood at the bottom of Salisbury Street, Strand, an old house, now pulled down, kept by a family called Marritt, who might have stepped straight out of Dickens's pages. This building was divided into separate flats, or rather floors, and in this warren Harry —, then a London schoolboy, had the run of a lower floor. Here he used to spend his half-holidays in a little sanctum which he had fitted up as a schoolboy's library.

One day he encountered on the stairs a young man of wonderful appearance who stopped him and asked: "What are you doing here?" For answer the boy showed the stranger his belongings, discussed for some time his literary tastes and was then invited to come and visit the floor above, which must at that date have been one of the most remarkable apartments in London.

The long room was panelled principally in white, and on the panels were inscribed many autographs of famous men and women. Sarah Bernhardt's name was scrawled with a carpenter's pencil right across one panel. Those of Ellen Terry and Henry Irving were on another. The furniture, rugs, hangings and blue china were a revelation to the eyes of one on whom the new æsthetic movement was yet to dawn. Lilies were everywhere, and on an easel at one end of the room, like a sort of altar, stood Edward Poynter's great yellow portrait of Lillie Langtry, as yet unknown to the world at large as a professional beauty.

This chance acquaintance ripened into a sort of friendship, and soon the boy was bringing his Greek poets to the room upstairs, sharing them in a charmed atmosphere with one to whom Greek was a spoken language and its poetry a living thing.

Young Harry was occasionally allowed, too, to look on at wonderful gatherings which took place in the long, white room: gatherings where all the celebrities of that most

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interesting age passed before his eyes, for Oscar Wilde was then at the zenith of his early fame and social brilliance.

The floor beyond Oscar Wilde's rooms was inhabited by Frank Miles, one of the most popular artists of the day, who was then engaged upon a series of portraits of beautiful women which used to appear in *Life*, a series hardly less famous than Spy's cartoons for *Vanity Fair*. Miles and Wilde were friends and shared the weekly gatherings. Thus the boy came to know both the men fairly well before time eventually broke up the establishment. Frank Miles committed suicide and Oscar Wilde went to America on a lecturing tour. The Marritt *ménage* came to an end and the whole incident was over.

Some years later, in 1885, when Harry was at Cambridge, he thought to revive the acquaintance and invited both Oscar Wilde and his pretty wife, Constance, to come up to the 'Varsity for a Greek play. Oscar accepted the invitation and his visit was a great success. His wit delighted the undergraduates, and it was after an evening in College rooms, when story-telling had been invoked, that he sat down and wrote the story of "The Happy Prince," which he had just before sketched in outline to his enthralled audience.

It was after this visit to Cambridge that the following letters—so typical of the Oscar Wilde of that time—were written, all the more interesting, I hope, because they have never before been published. Not one of these letters is dated and there is an average of four words to each line—rank affectation !

LETTER FROM OSCAR WILDE TO HARRY ———*

of course I remember the blue-coat boy, and am charmed to find he has not forgotten me.

* The following letters are published by permission of Mr. V. B. Holland, and are reproduced exactly as they appear in the originals.

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Your letter gave me great pleasure and if possible I will come down to see the Eumenides—which I suppose will look like Hamlet surrounded by the witches of Macbeth—but you have not told me the date of the production yet, so I cannot say if I will be really free.

I have a very vivid remembrance of the bright enthusiastic boy who used to bring me my coffee in Salisbury Street, and am delighted to find he is devoted to the muses but I suppose you don't flirt with all nine ladies at once? which of them do you really love? whether or not I can come and see you, you must certainly come and see me when you are in town, and we will talk of the poets and drink Keats' health. I wonder are you all Wordsworthians still at Cambridge, or do you love Keats, and Poë, and Baudelaire? I hope so.

Write and tell me what things in art you and your friends love best. I do not mean what pictures, but what moods and modulations of art affect you most.

Is it five years ago really?

Then I might almost sign myself an old friend, but the word old is full of terror.

OSCAR WILDE.

[The postmark on the envelope of this letter is dated November 5th, 1885.]

LETTER FROM OSCAR WILDE TO HARRY —

Station Hotel, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Harry, why did you let me catch my train? I would have liked to [have] gone to the National Gallery with you, and looked at Velasquez' pale evil King, at Titian's Bacchus with the velvet panthers, and at that strange heaven of Angelico's where everyone seems made of gold

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and purple and fire—and which, for all that, looks to me ascetic—everyone dead and decorative! I wonder will it really be like that, but I wonder without caring. *je trouve la terre aussi belle que le ciel, et le corps aussi beau que l'âme.* If I do live again I would like it to be as a flower—no soul but perfectly beautiful—perhaps for my sins I shall be made a red geranium!!

And your paper on Browning? You must tell me of it. In our meeting again there was a touch of Browning—keen curiosity, wonder, delight—

It was an hour intensely dramatic and intensely psychological—and, in art, only Browning can make action and psychology one. When am I to see you again? Write me a long letter to Tite Street, and I will get it when I come back. I wish you were here, Harry. But in the vacation you must often come and see me—and we will talk of the poets and forget Piccadilly!! I have never learned anything except from people younger than myself and you are infinitely young.

Your affectionate friend

OSCAR WILDE.

[The postmark on the envelope of this letter is dated November 8th, 1885.]

LETTER FROM OSCAR WILDE TO HARRY —

16 Tite Street, Chelsea, S.W.

Does it all seem a dream, Harry? Ah! what is not a dream? To me it is, in a fashion, a memory of music. I remember bright young faces, and grey misty quadrangles—Greek forms passing through Gothic cloisters—life playing among ruins—and, what I love best in the world, Poetry and Paradox dancing together!

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Only one evil omen—your fire! You are careless about playing with fire, Harry.

And my book? where is it? I must have it now. How delightful it would be were everything in one's house a gift! However, one's friends are always a gift—*θεοδωροι*.

It seems to me you were rather horrid to *your* friend, the poet in exile.

Ever yrs.

OSCAR

[The postmark on the envelope of this letter is dated November 27th, 1885.]

LETTER FROM OSCAR WILDE TO HARRY —

Central Station Hotel, Glasgow.

DEAR HARRY. I am away in the region of horrible snow and horrible note paper! lecturing and wandering—a vagabond with a mission! but your letter has reached me—like a strain of music wind-blown from a far land—you too have the love of things impossible—*ἔρωσ τῶν ἀδυνάτων—l'amour de l'impossible*—(how do men name it?) Something you will find, even as I have found, that there is no such thing as a romantic experience. there are romantic memories, and there is the desire of romance—that is all. Our most fiery moments of ecstasy are merely shadows of what somewhere else we have felt, or of what we long some day to feel. So at least it seems to me. And, strangely enough, what comes of all this is a curious mixture of ardour and of indifference—I myself would sacrifice everything for a new experience, and I know there is no such thing as a new experience at all. I

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think I would more readily die for what I do not believe in; than for what I hold to be true—I would go to the stake for a sensation and be a sceptic to the last! Only one thing remains infinitely fascinating to me, the mystery of moods. To be master of these moods is exquisite, to be mastered by them more exquisite still. Sometimes I think that the artistic life is a long and lovely suicide—and am not sorry that it is so.

And much of this I fancy you yourself have felt—much also remains for you to feel.—There is an unknown land full of strange flowers and subtle perfumes, a land of which it is joy of all joys to dream, a land where all things are perfect and poisonous. I have been reading Walter Scott for the last week—you too should read him, for there is nothing of all this in him.—Write to me at Tite Street, and let me know where you will be.

Ever yrs.

O W

Later in the same year Harry ——— dined with the Wildes in Chelsea, when “Bosie” (Lord Alfred Douglas), or perhaps it was Douglas Ainslie, was present. Constance Wilde, so Harry tells me, brought out for inspection a set of moonstone jewels, round which Oscar wove fantastic legends of the mystical life within their cloudy shimmer, and when the youth went to bed that night he had a dream of the moonstone people which was all in verse and which seemed to him the loveliest music he had ever heard.

He woke up, like Coleridge when he dreamt “Kubla Khan,” and, jumping out of bed, scribbled down what he could remember, which resulted in these curious stanzas, rational enough for dream-stuff, but oddly compounded of sense and sound. They, also, have never seen the light of

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print, and may form a fitting finale to an Oscar Wilde romance :

These are the realms of sweet moonbeams
And the beautiful daughters of dawn,
Whose palace is built of rainbow dreams
On a limpid lazuli lawn.

They tend their roses, some that the pale
Passionless moonbeams kiss,
While others with rosy finger-nail
The hands of the dawn caress.

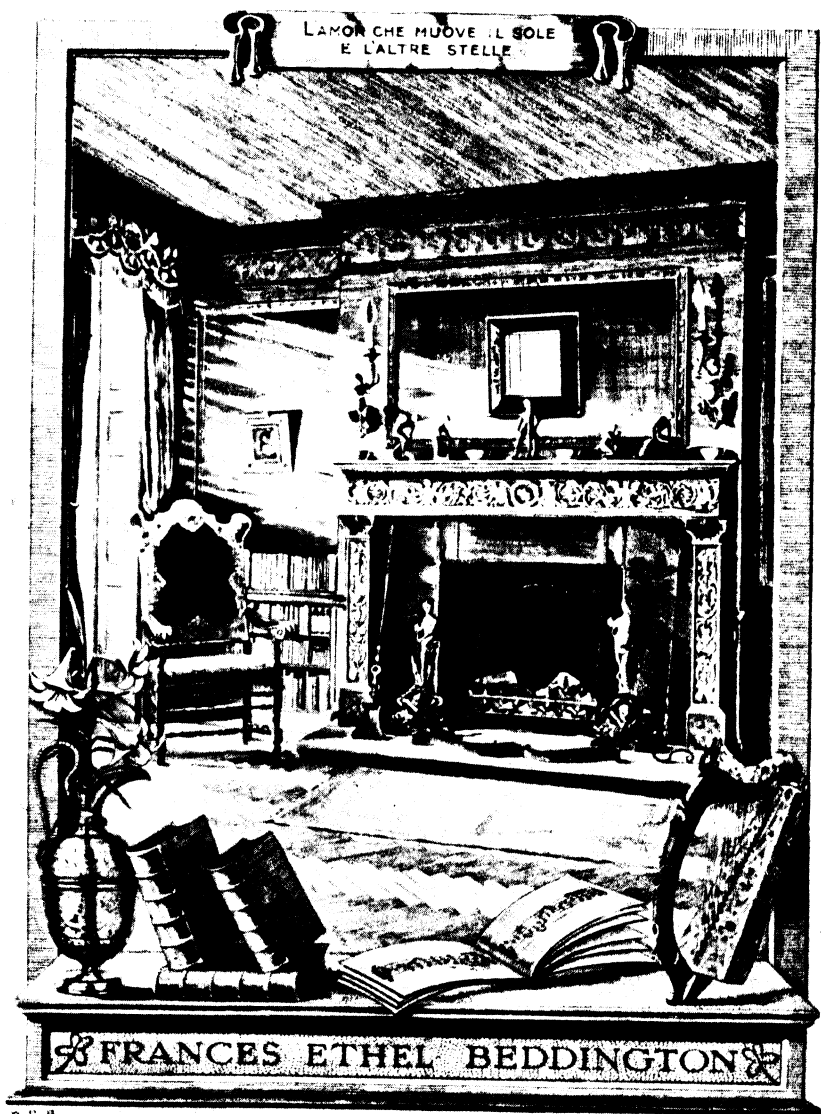
At noon they wreath their hyacinth heads,
Each queen in a vesture bright ;
But at even they wander in violet beds,
And weep for the sorrows of night.

And the air is dense with a melody
Murmurous, soft, and slow,
Pearling over with mystery
This that the dream-players know.

Most of Wilde's mots are familiar, but I quote two or three which I hope will be fresh to most readers. He was idly watching several friends looking up a train in that admirable but complicated book *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*, when he announced : " I would sooner lose a train by the *A B C* than catch it by *Bradshaw*."

He told Beerbohm Tree that when he went to America he had two secretaries—one for autographs and one for locks of hair : and within six months the one had died of writer's cramp and the other was completely bald.

A certain needy poet called Sandys was constantly borrowing money from his friend, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. At last the artist tired of this and offered to lend Sandys enough



BOOKPLATE DESIGNED BY W. P. BARRETT

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money to take him to America, whereupon Wilde drawled : " Of course, if one had the money to go to America one would not go."

Many of my friends knew Wilde. One of them was dining with Oscar and his Irish wife, Constance, one evening in the 'eighties, at a time when Wilde was madly in love with a beautiful actress then touring the Provinces.

Somebody asked the host : " Where have you been this last week ? " Upon which he launched into a vivid and poetic description, such as only he could give, of his visit to an exquisite Elizabethan country house, with emerald lawns, stately yew hedges, scented rose-gardens, cool lily-ponds, gay herbaceous borders, ancestral oaks and strutting peacocks. The guests sat enthralled, as usual, by the magic of Wilde's eloquence. When at last he stopped for breath there was a pause and the still, small voice of Constance was heard : " And did she act well, Oscar ? "

The nearest he had got to a Tudor mansion that week was the Blank Hotel at Birmingham, whither he had pursued the fair but frail leading lady.

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde (born 1856, died 1900) was the son of Sir William Robert Wills Wilde, an eminent Irish scientist.

Of his Irish fellow-countrymen Wilde wrote—and it might serve as his own epitaph : " We are too poetical to be poets ; we are a nation of brilliant failures, but we are the greatest talkers since the Greeks."

CHAPTER VII

IN THE WAY WE SHOULD GO

WHEN I look back on my childhood I see always in the foreground one dour but lovable figure.

My parents disliked girls' boarding-schools and were determined that I should enjoy a Continental education. Hence I was brought up by a duenna, Miss Mary Holden, who might well be called hereditary in the family, since she also looked after my mother's aunts and all her generation of Braddons, with collaterals, up to the number of fourteen, thus making, with Mulocks included, a total of three generations and seventeen charges. We all called her "Auntie," though she was no blood-relation, and under this name she wielded a despotic sway for a period of something like thirty years.

By birth a Presbyterian Scotswoman from the County of Fifeshire, she had in her character a strong tinge of Calvinism which even a life-long residence on the godless Continent failed to dispel. Sunday, under her rule, was a nightmare, a day to be dreaded all the rest of the week. All toys, paint-boxes, knitting, sewing-materials, hoops and bicycles were put away : no music was allowed save hymns (I learnt to play the organ in self-defence), and the sole book that might be read was the Bible.

The only occupations encouraged by her on this gloomy day were learning the Collects by heart, reading aloud from

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the Gospels till my sensitive throat was sore and she slumbered stertorously, attending Divine Service twice and Sunday School once in the twenty-four hours, and sucking Dundee peppermints—this last the one bright spot in the day.

One of her fixed ideas—doubtless to prevent my mind from dwelling on worldly vanities—was to convince me of my utter hideosity and unattractiveness. She would say: “Did you notice how those two young men stared at you in church to-day? That was because they were so horrified with your ugly face.” A favourite remark was this: “When you grow up you had better accept the first man who asks you to marry him, because you will never get a second chance!” If I had not been a thoroughly healthy child in mind and body, with no introspective leanings, this old lady’s methods might have broken my spirit completely. Had this campaign, so apt to develop into mental sadism, ceased in my teens it would not have been so hard to endure, but, alas! I was not so fortunate.

Under the stark influence of Auntie, which lasted until I was eighteen, I went through a period of extremely narrow-minded religiousness, believing in all sincerity that:

We are the sweet elected few,
Let all the rest be damned.
There’s room enough in Hell for you,
We won’t have Heaven crammed.

I joined a Bible-reading Society, one of whose pious rules was the reading of what Auntie called “the daily porrtion”; I prayed earnestly for my mother’s ultimate salvation one Sunday when she had sung selections from Gilbert and Sullivan operas, fearing eternal brimstone and fire would be her lot; and there were moments when my piety so overcame me that I contemplated devoting my life to a lepers’

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colony in some South Sea island as soon as I should be of an age to break this decision to my parents.

Auntie was indeed cast in a stern mould, and brought me up with the idea at the back of my head—is this Calvinism ?—that everything pleasant or comfortable must necessarily be wrong and, conversely, that most unpleasant or uncomfortable things were full of merit. The harder the chair, the greater the virtue ; or so did it seem to my young mind.

I think I can never have put up my feet on a sofa until I was twenty. As for breakfast in bed—that effete habit of the young to-day—I doubt whether I ever saw a breakfast-tray till after my marriage. Hot water to wash in of a morning was deemed a superfluous luxury, and many a time in 1891, during one of the coldest Swiss winters on record, did I break the ice in my water-jug when dressing for school at the horrid hour of seven. Memories of thirty-seven years ago must necessarily be blurred, but I feel sure that my morning washing was suitably abbreviated.

On the other hand, I distinctly remember—and there is no blurring of this image—a nursery-governess, of a sadistic turn of mind, who nightly forced poor, thin-skinned me, screaming for mercy, into a scalding hot bath. When I came out of the water in a parboiled state, looking more like a cooked lobster than a child, my feet were so tender that it was all I could do to bear the pressure of felt slippers.

A child's code of honour, "Thou shalt not sneak," is a curious thing. It never occurred to me to tell Auntie of this nightly torture, any more than about another disgraceful incident. One night, just as I was going to sleep, I heard unearthly groans from beneath the bed. I broke out into a cold sweat and my heart hammered against my ribs as I lay, half paralysed by terror, watching in the half-light the side of the bed. At length there emerged, slowly, a hand, then

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an arm, and lastly out crawled the housemaid, a young girl who judged this to be an excellent and amusing prank. If anybody had played this trick on one of my children I should cheerfully have seen the person lynched.

What nerve I might have had for swimming was broken in my early youth by the subtle cruelty of this same nursery-governess, sallow-skinned, black-avised tyrant that she was. She would steal up behind me in the sea, grasp me firmly by the middle and duck me under water *backwards*, before I had time so much as to shut my mouth, far less to take a breath. Now there is only one thing more unpleasant than to be ducked forcibly forwards and that is to be ducked forcibly backwards. It took me at least twenty years to grow out of my terror of sea-bathing, thanks to this woman's wicked behaviour.

However, out of evil cometh good. When in turn my small son refused even to paddle, far less to bathe, I let him be and chartered a boat in which he rocked up and down for several hours daily while the rest of us swam. Kind friends—are they not always ready with advice?—would admonish me, knowing naught of the subject: “Why don't you insist on that boy's bathing like every other child? . . . Goodness! If he were mine I should jolly well take him by the scruff of the neck and drop him into the water, whether he liked it or not!” “Would you?” said I dispassionately, and bided my time. For years I never even suggested that he should bathe; never chaffed him about his dread of the sea. And the result was that when the time came for him to have swimming lessons with the rest of his schoolfellows he became as keen as any other boy on swimming, leaving me flapping about on the shore like a hen that has hatched out a duckling. The moral is, of course, that a child's idiosyncrasy should be respected every whit as much as that of a grown-up.

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In common with all people of strong characteristics, I have borne in my time many nicknames. By the age of two and a half I was known in the North-West Provinces of India as the "Bengal Tiger," thanks to my invariable habit of scratching the face of any gentleman who had the temerity to kiss me. (This is probably a rare idiosyncrasy; nevertheless, it is, in my case, a lasting one.) Nowadays that dreadful habit of embracing tiny children is gradually dying out, thanks to modern knowledge of hygiene, but I remember the time when it was a sort of recognized drill for each infant to put up its blessed little innocent face for a more or less germ-infested kiss from every guest in the room. I understand that in super-hygienic America many children wear overalls embroidered with the sensible text: "Please *don't* kiss me!" How wise!

One article in Auntie's dietetic creed was that children must eat the fat of meat. Unfortunately for me, I was born with the same aversion as Jack Sprat, and how often have I stood in a corner of the dining-room, with tear-swimming eyes and a rising gorge, holding my chilled plate with its whitish coagulated gravy and grey lumps of semi-transparent mutton fat, wondering how long it would be before I was sick. Sometimes I was sick—sick in the corner—whereupon Auntie, in no wise affected by this display of weakness, would order: "Now go back to your place and begin again."

Another item for disciplining the mind and purging the body of all greed was that if you exclaimed: "Ah . . . h . . . h . . . h!" on the entrance of a favourite dish, you there and then forfeited the right to partake of it. The terrible thing was that all her petty cruelties were perpetrated from the highest possible motives.

When I contrast Auntie's cheerless *régime* with the system on which I fed my three children, I smile grimly and wonder

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whether the young generation are any the better for it. From the age of about twenty months (i.e., as soon as their spines would permit) all the children sat up at the dinner-table for all meals so that I might see everything they ate ; I made out elaborate lists for the kitchen of each child's favourite and abhorred dishes (there was a complete unanimity of opinion on the subject of tapioca pudding) ; the midday joint—roasted on a spit until the Great War drove us all to gas cookery—was served on a large hot-water dish with a gravy-well into which I dipped an especially warmed spoon wherewith to pour the red-corpuscle-forming juice over each child's food ; in the case of a slow chewer—and two out of the three chewed even longer than Mr. Gladstone—I read aloud some sprightly juvenile book, the better to amuse him or her, and thereby stimulate the flow of the gastric juices ; their warm courses were always served on a hot-water plate decorated with some quaint nursery rhyme and picture, to tickle the eye as well as the palate ; every delicacy was pressed upon them, in and out of season, myself speeding round the table during most of the meal in my enthusiasm to tempt their appetites ; they were induced to rest for at least three-quarters of an hour after a meal to aid digestion, and so on and so forth.

If ever they had a cold or any childish malady their time in bed was made as comfortable and amusing as my ingenuity could devise ; they were propped up against invalid bed-rests, thus escaping the irritation of perpetually slithering pillows ; the electric light was placed in exactly the right spot ; a large bed-tray was used for drawing, painting, jigsaw puzzles, card games and such sedentary pastimes ; gramophone records (preferably played with a loud and rasping needle) and of latter years a wireless set, beguiled the tedium and varied the programme.

The contrast as regards pocket-money was just as sharp.

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Auntie doled out a penny a week (paid on Saturdays), and this pocket-money I saved up until it accumulated sufficiently to buy a book, or a photograph of a favourite picture or a reproduction of an admired statue: "sweeties" had no lure for me.

She allowed me to keep my bric-à-brac, a varied assortment of trifles such as every child amasses, on my bedroom mantel-piece on condition that I dusted them. "The servants have enough work as it is, without having to clean all that rubbish!" said she—with perfect justice, it must be owned.

Auntie's favourite poet—for she was nothing if not patriotic—was Sir Walter Scott, and between us we could say by heart whole chunks of "Marmion," "The Lady of the Lake" and "Young Lochinvar." She was very fond of reading aloud to me while I did chip-carving, or coloured pictures atrociously in variegated chalks; consequently, Dickens, Thackeray and the like will always sound in my ears with a faint Dundee accent. Her Burns was, of course, an orgy. Auntie belonged to the age of Wyndham and Mary and I well remember her taste in decorations. In the Streatham Common house dusty Japanese paper fans were nailed to the walls; soiled pampas grass waved in cheap blue vases; the mantelshelf was draped in velvet of an "arty" and indefinite hue; Indian material, richly studded with small circular bits of looking-glass and smelling strongly of the Bazaar, hung in careless abandon over a rickety three-fold screen; a silver table—chief atrocity of the Early Victorian age—caught the unwary by one of its three precarious and projecting legs; the spiky horsehair stuffing of the chairs seemed to take a malicious pleasure in stabbing my thin little body when I sat down unwittingly; the dingy *portière* screamed like an ungreased cart-wheel every time the door was opened, and caught in the jamb every time the door was shut;

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the gas-lights left a large black circle on the ceiling and flickered intolerably while I did my home-work.

In 1891 the family's exodus to the Continent was decided upon, and Auntie sold all her household effects by auction. I was too young at the time to know what atrocities they were, so listened sympathetically while she expressed her indignation, couched in a Scots accent slightly stronger than usual, at the "miserrable prrice" they fetched. For years she would wind up her perorations with: "Neveerr! Neveerr sell yourr furnrnitue by auction! It's sheerr rrobberry!!"

One of her treasured possessions filled me with envy and admiration. It was a watch, made in Geneva, with I-don't-know-how-many-rubies (probably Auntie increased the number while my eyes grew wider) in its inside, and an elaborately-coloured enamelled representation of some mythological incident on its back. On this trinket she placed a fabulous value—more eye-widening on my part, and, needless to say, I firmly believed in her estimate of its vast worth. Children were highly ingenuous in my day.

Our first foreign nursery-governess—engaged because (A) she was a Protestant; (B) she had no English; and, consequently, (C) she was cheap—was very young and very, very homesick. She had never before left Switzerland—probably never been out of her home-town, Lausanne—and her nostalgia was so acute that she cried all day and most of the night during the first month of her stay with us in England.

At that time Auntie took for us a small house on Streatham Common, a region which found much favour in my eyes because of its close proximity to the Crystal Palace and Brock's Thursday evening firework display.

What shame I endured at church when Mademoiselle, red-eyed and swollen-nosed, wept her way, visibly and audibly, through the entire children's afternoon service, of which she,

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incidentally, understood not one syllable. At meals what tortures I felt, as an admirably self-controlled British child, while she, drooping and dishevelled (it was a curious phenomenon that whenever she cried her heavy fair plaits were invariably loosed from their moorings), wept large, pear-shaped tears into each successive plate! Niobe was dry-eyed compared with this poor creature in an alien land.

But youth is proverbially resilient, so, in course of time, Mademoiselle settled down to the strange surroundings, customs, climate, language and diet of England, and actually sought another post in this country when Auntie eventually removed us to Switzerland. By this time I had learnt, perforce, not only to speak fluent French (with a faint Swiss accent, needless to say), but to interpret everything to Mademoiselle. I fear she must have postponed learning English till her next post.

CHAPTER VIII

I SEE STARS

THE year 1895 seems to have been an exceptional one as regards theatrical and musical treats, since my parents, home on leave from India, spent several months in London and took me to hear most of the great artists of the day.

In June I saw the incomparable Patti at Covent Garden as Zerlina in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Victor Maurel, the great French baritone, as the amatory hero, and Philip Brozel as Don Giovanni. Of the plot I understood nothing—which was perhaps as well—but graven for all time on my memory is the vision of that great little artist, Adelina Patti, running about the stage patting and poking the upholstery of the armchairs and settees, as if to say: "My! what a luxury to sit on a springy seat like the rich folks!" She was actually fifty-two years old that night, yet she gave me, a child, the illusion that she was just another young creature, with youth's insatiable curiosity about new things and its infinite capacity for enjoyment.

As for her voice, it seems to me now, looking back over many years of *coloratura* sopranos, that it was warmer and richer than any other of its type and—glory be to goodness!—it was always dead in the middle of the note. Young sopranos might do worse than buy all Patti's gramophone records and copy her phrasing, breathing, expression and tone—if they can.

Patti and Melba were among the few, the very few *prime*

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donne who gave me the impression that their singing was entirely natural. I was totally unconscious of their method of voice-production—whether they breathed from their ribs or their diaphragms ; whether their tongues were arched or flat ; whether they inflated their upper chests or their tummies ; whether their mouths were rounded to emit the tone or extended in the simulacrum of a grin . . . they just sang in the same effortless and unarguable way as do nightingales and blackbirds, and as the Almighty must surely have meant people to sing. Doubtless both these ladies worked like dogs, but they were big enough artists to conceal the fact from their audience. Patti once wrote in the birthday-book of a friend : “ A beautiful voice is the gift of God.” Well, that was exactly the feeling she gave you when she sang.

Among the brilliant audience at *Don Giovanni* that night were the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra), Princess Victoria of Wales, Princess Maud of Wales (later Queen of Norway), the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George V and Queen Mary), the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, and the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.

There was one unpleasant hitch in the opera, when Signor Pini-Corsi, who sang the part of Masetto, kept the stage waiting so long before coming on for Patti's *aria* “ *Batti, batti* ” that she was obliged to withdraw, and the curtain was lowered for what seemed like an eternity. When, eventually, the missing gentleman was unearthed, W. H. Squire played the violoncello obbligato to the *aria* and it was a huge success. I should imagine that those who heard the *diva* telling Pini-Corsi later exactly what she thought of him must have enlarged their Italian vocabulary to a considerable extent.

One strange peculiarity—was it not unique ?—of Patti's career was that in all her contracts she insisted on a clause

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exempting her from rehearsals. This was probably a cunning method of sparing her extra fatigue, but it must have been a sore trial to the other members of the cast, who sometimes did not know her by sight until the first night of the opera.

Patti had three husbands, the last of whom is still alive, sampling with each one a different nationality. At twenty-five she married an aristocratic Frenchman, the Marquis de Caux ; at forty-three she became the wife of an astute Italian, Signor Nicolini ; and at fifty-six she went to the altar with a Swede, Baron Rolf Cederström.

For some years she lived at—of all places—Clapham. Imagine the richest and most famous singer of the time driving nightly in a cab or carriage all the way from Clapham to Covent Garden Opera House and back !

She died in 1919, aged seventy-six, and was buried in England. The following year her body was exhumed and taken to the huge cemetery of Père Lachaise near Paris.

It is interesting in these days of commercialized art to recall that Patti was the first operatic singer to insist on high fees but, however much she asked, it is on record that no manager ever lost over her. Her annual earnings* between 1861 and 1881 averaged from £30,000 to £35,000. In June, 1885, Colonel Mapleson, the celebrated English operatic *impresario*, engaged her for a total of eight performances at £500 a night, whether opera or concert. In America in 1888 she was paid at the rate of £1,000 a night, plus a further percentage on the gross receipts, which probably increased her profit by half as much again. She made nearly £50,000 out of her 1888 season in the Argentine, and her share of the profits worked out at £1,600 a night in Buenos Ayres. But perhaps the climax was reached when she was paid a fee of £800 for singing one song, " Home, Sweet Home " at the

* The following statistics are taken from Mr. Herman Klein's life of Patti.

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inauguration of the New Auditorium in Chicago in December, 1889. Would anybody with a mathematical turn of mind like to work out how much per note the *diva* got for this performance?

In 1927, Chaliapin's fee for two operatic performances in Vienna was £1,200—not bad for a country ruined by the war. Mr. Charles Cochran paid Chaliapin £2,500 for two performances of opera in the Albert Hall. He thus received £2,500 to sing for forty minutes!

Even these figures are dwarfed by the fantastic sums made by cinema stars in 1926. Here is a table of salaries in the United States film industry according to the Press:

	per year.	per week.	
Harold Lloyd	£208,000	£4,000	
Tom Mix	"	"	
Charles Chaplin	£156,000	£3,000	+ a percentage of the profits.
Douglas Fairbanks	"	"	"
John Barrymore	£104,000	£2,000	
Buster Keaton	£83,000	£1,600	
Adolph Menjou	£52,000	£1,000	
Reginald Denny	£36,000	£700	
Mary Pickford	£104,000	£2,000	+ a percentage of the profits.
Lillian Gish	£78,000	£1,500	
Gloria Swanson	£72,000	£1,380	
Norma Talmadge	"	"	
Colleen Moore	"	"	

Two thousand of the lesser-known cinema stars earn a total of £2,000,000 (two millions sterling) annually.

Mae Murray in 1927 asked £2,000 a week for appearing in a number of British films.

At Covent Garden we also heard in 1895 Melba and.

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Victor Maurel, the great baritone from Marseilles, in Verdi's *Rigoletto*.

In those days there were two rows of boxes which extended all the way round the house, and almost every woman in them blazed with real jewels. Among the audience were the Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (formerly Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh), the Crown Prince and his lovely Crown Princess of Roumania (later King Ferdinand and Queen Marie), Princess Alexandra of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (who married Prince Ernest of Hohenlohe-Langenbourg the following year), and Prince and Princess Philip of Coburg.

The outstanding memory of that evening for me—such are the trifles that strike deepest in childish memories—was the curious transparency of the Crown Prince of Rumania's ears with the light burning pinkly through them.

Another opera I heard at Covent Garden in June was Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, with an unforgettable performance of Santuzza by the Italian, Bellincioni, the creator of the rôle. She was a magnificently dramatic actress with a fine voice to boot.

One day in June came a concert at St. James's Hall by Sarasate (1844–1908), the wonderful Spanish violinist, a magnetic player whose sense of rhythm only Kreisler has equalled. Sarasate electrified me when he played his Spanish dances, but I did not care so much for his interpretation of the first Sonata of Brahms in G, op. 78, and Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata*. I was much impressed by his shock of hair, and have since grown to wonder, after many years of musical experience, whether musicians have magnificent heads of hair before they become professionals, or whether practising music makes the hair grow.

CHAPTER IX

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

BROUGHT up from birth as I had been on a diet of Gilbert and Sullivan, I remember with what awe I gazed upon that fierce-looking, white-whiskered old gentleman, Sir W. S. Gilbert, in the refreshment tent at a Stanmore School Cricket Garden Party in the year 1895. At that date I was too young to engage lions in intelligent conversation and our talk was brief. He said, knowing children: "Why don't you have another ice?" and I replied politely and truthfully: "Thank you very much—I've had three already." He pressed me no more.

It struck me as odd that Sullivan was not with him—the two names had always seemed a sort of Siamese-twin affair in my youthful mind—but, mercifully, I was so preoccupied with (1) the delicate technique of swallowing ices without the cold stabbing of some tender nerve in my young teeth, and (2) the shepherding of a small sister subject to violent bilious attacks, that I refrained from making tender inquiries as to the whereabouts of his illustrious partner. For aught I know, the pair had already quarrelled irrevocably.

Gilbert was thirty-five and Arthur Sullivan twenty-nine years old when they first met, and was there ever such a collaboration since the world began? Heine's poetry set to Schumann's music is the only other perfect partnership I can call to mind.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

A demon for detail and a martinet at rehearsals, Gilbert was never more pleased than when Lord Charles Beresford and Lord Jellicoe pronounced their opinion that there was "not a rope wrong aboard H.M.S. *Pinafore*," first produced in 1878.

Strange to say, Gilbert always declared that he was "quite unmusical," yet the rhythm of his verse is so strongly marked as to be almost music in itself. In this connection it is interesting to note that nearly all poets, with the exception of Shelley and Browning, were quite unmusical. Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson told me: "Gilbert said to me: 'One thing I learnt from my association with Arthur Sullivan—that I sang *God Save the King* all out of tune.'"

It is interesting to recall that the Savoy Theatre was the first to be lit (with some trepidation) by electricity in 1881, under the D'Oyly Carte Company. So little confidence had the management in this daring innovation that gas was laid on everywhere in case of accidents.

Gilbert, like all people of strong personality, had very decided likes and dislikes. He loved :

Children (as do so many childless men) and children adored him.

Writing witty letters, most of them illustrated.

Photographing—and that in the days of glass plates and fiendishly pinching tripods!

Conjuring: he bought many books from which to learn new tricks.

Dancing a Scotch reel.

Dressing-up for amateur theatricals: his favourite disguise was that of an Arab Chief.

Yachting.

The study of criminology.

Lawsuits: he was perpetually quarrelling, and litigation was a positive hobby of his.

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His chief antipathies—and on these he was always scathing—were :

Poses and poseurs.

Dramatic critics.

Professional politicians (what a smack he has at these !)

Jane Austen ; Rudyard Kipling ; Sir Henry Irving.

Gagging in his plays.

Slipshod and unbusinesslike people : perhaps his legal training made him especially intolerant of this tiresome section of the community.

Taking life in any form : he would not kill an insect, and the idea of the modern pheasant drive simply revolted him.

Like most gouty subjects he had a fiendish temper, which flared up on the smallest provocation. But the duration of these scenes was short, mercifully for his victim. (You remember the drawing in *Punch* of a man, surrounded by fragments of furniture, pictures, ornaments, etc., which he has wrecked during a fit of rage, saying to his wife : “ I know I have a temper, but, after all, it’s over in a minute ! ”)

By the time Gilbert was fifty-four years old he had made so much money that he was able to buy a countrified home, Grim’s Dyke, on Harrow Weald, and here he lived until his tragic death in 1911. Although he spent a good deal of money on beautifying the house, his personal tastes were Spartan and, like Gervase Elwes, he slept on an iron bedstead in an austere furnished room.

On a glorious May afternoon in 1911, Gilbert—who, by a strange irony, had once said to a friend : “ I should like to die upon a summer day in my own garden ”—lost his life by plunging into the bathing-pool at Grim’s Dyke in a gallant attempt to save a girl from drowning. His estate was valued for probate at £110,971. It is interesting to note, in this

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connection, that Sir Arthur Sullivan (who predeceased his partner by eleven years) left £54,527, and Mr. D'Oyly Carte left £240,817. By way of a contrast : Gilbert received £30 for his first play, whereas in 1871, he made over £40,000 in fees for *Pygmalion and Galatea*.

CHAPTER X

THE WALTZ KINGS

HERR EDUARD STRAUSS, youngest brother of the Austrian Waltz King, Johann Strauss the Second (to whom the world owes those deathless masterpieces of dance music, *An den Schönen blauen Donau*, *Künstler-leben* and *Wein, Weib und Gesang*), brought over his Viennese Band to the Inventions Exhibition in London in the year 1895, and there I saw him on July 9th.

On the programme he was styled: "Musical Director to the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Court." What a vision the appellation summons up of the brilliant Vienna which flourished under Francis Joseph!

I remember Eduard Strauss standing in front of his musicians, facing the audience, a wizened little man like a black monkey with a long, drooping nose and the sad, dark eyes of his race, his violin in his lean fingers, swaying as one possessed by the rhythm. He did not conduct. He *was* the waltz.

Now, there is only one hunter and it is Irish; there is only one roast-beef and that is English; there is only one waiter and he is Italian; there is only one snow and that is Swiss; there is only one waltz and it is Viennese.

There is something demoralizing about three-four time: it mounts to the head even as champagne. An admirer of the great Brahms once begged him to sign his name in her

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album. The Master wrote the opening bars of Johann Strauss's *Blue Danube* waltz and underneath these words, "Leider nicht von Johannes Brahms!" (Unfortunately, not by Johannes Brahms!) I take a malicious pleasure in quoting this story to those ignoramuses who assume the high-brow pose of sneering at "jazz" or syncopated music. Surely, the right point of view in æsthetics is that anything done as well as it can be done—no matter how humble the genre—is fine art and, therefore, worthy of admiration.

The founder of the Strauss Dynasty, Johann I, had three sons, Johann, Josef and Eduard, and the family between them composed about 1,000 dances, nearly all waltzes. In May, 1927, Johann Strauss III conducted at the Albert Hall a concert devoted entirely to the works of his family. I wonder what the young people in the audience, accustomed to "jazz" foxtrots, thought of it.

There is still money in the waltz: in May, 1927, the fact was disclosed in the Supreme Court at Vienna that the royalties paid upon the works of Johann Strauss II amounted to 208,000 Schilling, or considerably over £6,000 a year. Mr. Robert Blatchford, in his delightful little collection of essays, "As I lay a-thinking," has expressed the charm of the waltz once and for all: "No other dance gives one's felicity time to get happily under way. It is when the music and the lights, and the colour and the thronging dancers, and the floor and the perfume and the rhythm and the four winds and the seven seas and the everlasting hills, and youth and hope and glory and desire, and pride and beauty and remembered joys are all fused in a singing, sliding, throbbing ecstasy of rosy mist, and one has forgotten time and death and the King's taxes, that one realizes how life is life and that the waltz is *it*."

CHAPTER XI

DRESDEN MUSIC AND MORALS

MY polyglot education was attained by the simple expedient of keeping me in one country till I spoke its language like a native, and then moving me on to the next. Auntie either rented a tiny furnished flat or else we lived in a *pension*.

When Auntie spoke a foreign language she made up in courage for what she lacked in knowledge. I used to suffer tortures of childish shame listening to her in a shop ; her conversation would flow on and on, rather loud, and bristling with every possible mistake in syntax, grammar, inflection and accent. Nothing daunted, she would peg away, until the polite native behind the counter, with a perfectly wooden expression—how he kept a straight face was a marvel to me—understood what she meant ; and since, by sheer force of character and an inward conviction of the complete supremacy of the British race in general and the Scotch in particular, she always got what she wanted in the end, what did it matter how bad a linguist she was ? . . . “ And that’s why we are where we are ! ” as my father so rightily says of our Empire.

There is a freemasonry among those who studied in Dresden when young—and one thing at least we all gained from our stay there, whatever else we missed—a thorough knowledge of Wagner.

During my time in Dresden, the late ’nineties, the great

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mezzo-soprano interpreter of Wagner, Theresa Malten, though no longer in her prime, was still enchanting her audiences as Brünnhilde and Isolde. She may not have been a perfect exponent of *bel canto*—to tell the truth, her “change of gear” between the registers was sometimes too apparent, and she “shocked the glottis” (to quote Billy Merson’s song) more often than I like to think—but she had that indefinable quality which can neither be bought nor acquired—fascination, charm, call it what you will—to such a degree that she swept you clean off your feet and warped your critical judgment, and that is the only sort of artist worth hearing.

The Dresden Opera in those days was financed by the King of Saxony and rumour said it cost him three million marks (£150,000) a year. Whatever he spent on it, the fact remained that team-work on the stage, a first-rate orchestra and plenty of rehearsals made it the best opera in Europe, with Vienna as the only possible rival.

Stars there were sometimes in the cast but they did not eclipse the lesser luminaries, and the house was never sold out on the strength of one name, as happens only too often at Covent Garden and at the Metropolitan. One never asked: “Who is singing to-night?” but “What opera is on?”

In Germany as in Italy, opera is not an exotic importation: it is just as much a part of the daily life of the people as is their beer and their wine-of-the-country, therefore they enjoy it at reasonable prices. The dearest seats at Dresden cost about six marks (six shillings); the admirably organized trams stop at the door of the Opera House; and the performances are usually over by about 10 p.m., so that every reasonable person can get a long night’s rest.

We used to eat a sort of high tea before starting and then enjoy *Leberwurst* (liver sausage) sandwiches when we got

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home. As for evening-dress, none of the good Dresdeners bothered about such refinements and most of the audience wore their workaday clothes. In the high-up cheaper seats the good citizens ate various kinds of *Delikatessen* and oranges unaffectedly and audibly during the entr'actes. On hot nights the wafts of garlic-scented air were almost overpowering in the *Vierter Rang* (4th tier)—price about 2s. 6d.—where I habitually sat.

In Dresden, too, I went regularly to the theatre, and there is no quicker or more agreeable way of learning a foreign language. As a child I heard fully a score of comedies in German, some intentionally funny, others rather heavy in humour, a few adapted from the French.

One immortal performance of *Charley's Tante* (Charlie's Aunt) will remain in my memory till my dying day. The *Studenten* (undergraduates) wore peculiarly shaped "gents' straw boaters," tail-coats and lemon-coloured boots, clicked their heels together when greeting one another in the most approved German fashion and cried *Prosit!* when raising their glasses of beer. And I remember a performance of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* in which the chorus of Highlanders wore their sporrans at the back.

Those people who were in Dresden at this time, will remember a forlorn-looking old Scotchman who used to walk about the streets in a kilt until the police saw fit to arrest him for being insufficiently clad.

How the Saxons—a peaceful, easy-going, slow-witted race—hated and feared the Prussians! I have a vivid recollection of my white-haired old teacher peering fearfully outside the door of her sitting-room before she shut it fast, then whispering some disparagement of Kaiser Wilhelm. Seeing my puzzled expression, she explained: "One must be careful. . . . Even the walls have ears. . . . *Lèse-majesté*, you know." While

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I was in Dresden a wretched journalist was thrown into prison for publishing a caricature of the All-Highest adorned with donkey's ears.

One of the musical standing dishes in Dresden was the Joachim String Quartet, which played severely classical works by Beethoven and such old Masters. I sometimes wonder what they would have made of our complex modern music.

Joachim's violin always looked to me like a branch growing out of a tree. The old man moved less than any violinist I ever saw except Heifetz. (Is it really necessary to double up and duck and sway as most fiddlers do, I wonder ?) When some carping critic complained that Joachim played out of tune—the poor soul was close on sixty-five years old and growing deaf at the time—Herr Froberg, the second violin of the Dresden Opera Orchestra, rebuked him thus : “ When you are in a mighty cathedral do you look for cobwebs away up in the roof ? ”

Joseph Joachim was of Hungarian-Jewish descent. His precious violin has passed into the hands of his gifted niece, Mme. Adila Fachiri.

The last time I heard Joachim and his Quartet play was at Miss Weiss's school near Englefield Green, on November 24th, 1906, only a few months before he died. The flame had dimmed and the fire burnt low, but the Art and the Tradition remained.

One of the real thrills—rather a naughty one I felt—of my Dresden days was the gossip about Princess Louise. This daring lady's husband was Prince Friedrich August, nephew and eventual heir of King Albrecht and Queen Charlotte of Saxony, a handsome young officer, typically German in appearance, with blue eyes, regular features and a close-shaven blond head.

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Princess Louise of Saxony was the daughter of Ferdinand IV, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and in her veins ran an inflammable mixture of French, Italian and Habsburg blood. Her family was much addicted to Christian names, one of her nieces answering to no less than fifteen. In our tolerant London Society—did not a witty Edwardian say: “I really don’t mind *what* people do, so long as they don’t do it in the street and frighten the horses!”—it is difficult to realize the commotion caused by the advent of this tempestuous young woman at the narrow-minded little Court of Saxony.

In the spring of 1896, Her Highness scandalized the Court by taking up cycling—a smart Society craze in England at this time; she bought a lady’s machine and—oh! shocking!—a pair of bloomers, and pedalled energetically round the Grosser Garten (the Hyde Park of Dresden). A proper-minded gardener, in the act of watering the flower beds, espied his future Queen careering gaily down the Allee, and, in a fit of righteous disapproval, turned the hose full on to her. Within a few hours the news was in every mouth, the balance of opinion being on the side of the gardener. “Served her right, the fast creature!” . . . “What mad escapade will she next invent?” . . . “A so lost-to-shame female is indeed a disgrace to our country!” were some of the censorious remarks of the rigorously disciplined Dresdeners.

The headstrong Princess felt most bitterly her growing unpopularity both in and out of Court circles—she simply could not do right—and, badly-balanced creature of impulse that she was, she gradually lost all self-control, until matters culminated in the final tragedy of her flight and banishment. After many purple patches and chequered incidents, she married Signor Toselli, an Italian musician. This marriage also turned out unhappily.

The Duchess in “Alice in Wonderland” enunciated that

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great truth : " Everything's got a moral if only you can find it ;" and the moral of the ill-fated Princess Louise's tragic story is that it takes an exceptional woman, one gifted with an overwhelmingly strong personality, irresistible charm and outstanding brains to " get away with " complete originality and informality of conduct in this world. Unless you are, in effect, a sort of superwoman, you had much better stay inside the safe, though boring, boundaries of social behaviour defined by the English county families. Otherwise you will most certainly make a mess of your life.

By a strange irony of fate, Princess Louise's sister-in-law, the worthy Princess Mathilde, was her very antithesis : this hardly helped matters. Mathilde was a heavy-weight dowd of the best German brand. A blue-stocking above all things, she studied assiduously while the maid did her hair—and it looked it ! She was an amateur painter and covered acres of canvas with paint. She aspired to be a patroness of letters and wished to attract into her orbit any literary genius in the neighbourhood.

I was told a good deal about her by our mutual Italian teacher, a clever professor who taught Italian several times a week to the royal highbrow. Occasionally I was rebuked for my levity concerning Princess Mathilde's contour, weight, Wilkie Bardish coiffure and cook-like gowns ; it was impressed upon my flippant mind that the soul was everything ; outward appearances went for naught, and so forth. There and then it occurred to me how *chic*, not to say dazzlingly original, it would be to combine plenty of *Kultur* with a decorative appearance. It *can* be done. Somebody once wrote : " A woman may be anything from a cosmic force to a clothes-peg." Why not be both ?

CHAPTER XII

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IN November, 1897, my mother took me to Lucknow to stay with my cousin, Robert Pepys Cockerell, a rising young barrister, and on the 25th of that month I “came out” at a ball given by the United Service Club in the Chutter Munzil, a huge building which used to be the palace of the women of the Kings of Oudh before it became the British Club.

It may interest the shingled, shorn and kilted débutantes of to-day to hear that my coming-out dress of cream-coloured accordion-pleated silk swept the floor all round; that it boasted at least fifty hooks-and-eyes, counting those in the lining as well as in the outer shell; that underneath it I wore (as every self-respecting female did then) a voluminous petticoat, in addition to many other underclothes; that my sleeves stuck out from my thin arms like gigantic butterflies and that my waist measured exactly nineteen inches.

It will certainly amuse these same young ladies if I tell them of the talk (called by schoolboys, “jaw”) my father had with me on the eve of my début.

To get the full flavour of the situation it must be remembered that the redoubtable “Auntie” had kept my nose to the grindstone and my head in studies until I went to India; consequently I had about as much knowledge of the world, the flesh and the devil as the average fourteen-year-old of

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to-day ; that I was very good-looking ; and that the proportion of white men to white women in Indian Society then, was roughly eight to one, while there must have been at least one hundred young men to each British *débutante*. In order to make sure of booking a dance with a girl a man had either to ask her for it days before the ball, or else to hold up her carriage on its way thither in the hope that she still had one left.

A *débutante* is always a “dark horse” and it is impossible for a parent to tell whether she has her head screwed on tightly or not, so my father, dithering with anxiety, and feeling much as though he were letting loose an undischarged bomb in the ball-room of the Chutter Munzil, judged it wise to utter some wholesome warnings beforehand.

He told me that æon-old truth, that “men were deceivers ever” . . . that they kissed a girl one evening and boasted about it to their friends next day. . . . “Oh, yes ! she’s an easy little thing !” . . . that whenever a man paid a compliment I must bear in mind the humiliating fact, “He has worked off that same speech on dozens of women before you ;” that man was by nature a hunter, therefore a woman’s greatest charm for him was her unattainability (who ever enjoyed hitting a low-flying pheasant ?).

“Men bee of this condition, rather to desire those thynges which thei can not come by, than to esteem or value of that whiche both largely and liberallie is offerod unto them.”

Said I to my young self at the end of this disillusioning discourse, “So they’re like that, are they ?” and there and then decided on my line of conduct with the opposite sex. Now, no woman ever had so many men-friends—in the best sense of the word—as I have been privileged to have all through life, and they all stay so beautifully in their place that they never have to be put there.

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I was so thrilled by the prospect of this coming-out dance that just before dinner I “came out all over spots” on my chest. The local doctor was speedily summoned, but the rash had almost disappeared by the time he saw me. “Nothing but nervous excitement,” said he and went away.

The programme consisted of the following items : eleven Valses, danced at break-neck speed and highly destructive to my partners’ starched collars ; one Polka ; two “Iolanthes” (for the life of me I can’t remember what these were) ; one Lancers (extremely rowdy) ; and one “Galap” (as spelt by the native printer). Everybody had a programme, and there was none of that ghastly muddle I get into at modern balls, under the “missing four” system. Mental arithmetic was never my strong point.

Mindful of my father’s warnings of the previous day, my manner must have been a blend of positively regal dignity and arctic aloofness, for half-way through the evening one of my partners—he seemed very old to me : he was probably over thirty—a breezy Gunner-Major, suddenly remarked : “It’s no use your being so grand with *me* ; the last time I saw you, you danced and sang on the dinner-table in your nightie !” I blushed fiercely, remembering the Gilbert and Sullivan and nursery-rhyme stunts of my three-year-old days, and that was the end of my poker-like attitude towards this particular partner, at all events.

A strange feature at British dances in India was the *kala jugger* (black corner) : these were sitting-out places in rows, each arranged to accommodate one couple, each as dark as Erebus but by no means sound-proof. Those who, like Brer Rabbit, “lay low and said nuffin” could have plenty of fun listening to what was going on in the adjoining compartments.

I might mention here—though you may have guessed it from the account of my education—that the strictness of my

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upbringing was positively Early-Victorian, and it will strain the credulity of the girls of to-day when I tell them that I can hardly remember being alone with a man until I was engaged to be married, so severe was the chaperonage.

The little correspondence I had with young men was censored by a guardian or a parent before it was consigned to the post, and whenever a swain had the temerity to write to me his letter was liable to be inspected by those in authority over me.

There was an adamant rule—and this I have kept so far as possible all through life—never to accept a present from a man. I well remember, when I was eighteen, the fuss to obtain a special dispensation allowing me to accept a gold mascot which an admiring German officer wished to present to me; with the characteristic pertinacity of his race he won in the end.

At balls I was allowed a maximum of three dances with the same partner; my programme was “vetted” from time to time throughout the evening, and I shall never forget how I quaked when I rashly gave one “Extra,” as well as the rationed three dances, to a love-smitten subaltern who threatened to do away with himself unless he danced it with me.

If you sit down to think it out carefully, this entire system was evolved in order not to cheapen the girl and to make the chase on the part of the young man as arduous as possible, bearing in mind the fundamental truths that the male, in those days, at all events, was essentially a hunter and that human beings invariably long for the unattainable.

No alcohol passed my lips, save as an occasional baptismal or nuptial toast—a minute quantity politely sipped—and I held that those abandoned creatures who played cards for money-stakes or betted on a race-course were half-way down the road to perdition.

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I never set foot in a gambling Casino till I was over forty, and to this day I fail to see any amusement in sitting in a fetid atmosphere of about 75° Fahrenheit, giving away money to a wealthy Syndicate.

As for smoking: I have never had a cigarette in my mouth.

When I was young it was deemed indelicate to sit cross-legged or to show an ankle; nowadays women's skirts are above the knee . . . (there is only one thing uglier than the front of a knee and that is the back) . . . and when they cross their legs . . .

A Victorian bus-conductor was supposed to have said: "It's no treat to *me* to see a leg!" In the year of grace 1929 the entire male population can echo his words.

In my youth no well-bred person discussed diseases in company. Indeed, I remember the Dowager Lady Lonsdale (mother of the Earl of Lonsdale), when staying at Lowther Castle, saying to me in shocked tones: "Fancy those people mentioning cancer at the dinner-table! *We* were brought up never to talk about illnesses in public."

My reading was ruthlessly cut down to strictly "proper" books. Sometimes a novel had "passed the Censor" for me with the exception of, say, one passage. Then the offending pages were pinned together and I was put on my honour not to read them. I invented the name *une histoire épinglée* for such occasions, and it became from that day a family expression for anything *risqué*. My mother pinned together some pages in Georges Ohnet's "Maître de Forges," which she gave me to read when I was nineteen. Since my marriage I have searched the book through, and—alack for my blunted sensibilities!—can find no improper passages.

When the craze for ladies' bicycling began in the 'nineties—some shameless hussies going so far as to wear bloomers because they thought skirts were dangerous awheel—

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“Auntie” announced with some heat: “I would sooner see you in your grave than on a bicycle!” and I thought how right she was.

What would she have thought of the present young girls smoking cigarettes incessantly; drinking—not only alcohol with their meals, but cocktails on an empty stomach; using latchkeys; driving motor-cars without even a chauffeur on board to chaperon them; sitting cross-legged in skirts that are shorter than a Highlander’s kilt and riding to hounds astride?

The ways of ultra-modern youth may seem strange to us elders, but I always remember the moral of Arnold Bennett’s and Knoblock’s delightful play, *Milestones*, and try to keep an open mind about their odd behaviour.

As regards the balance of the sexes, it looks to me as though the business were reversed nowadays, so that it is the female who does most of the pursuing. Far too many are the occasions on which *she* foots the bill for the young man’s theatre-ticket, dinner at a restaurant or dance at a fashionable night-club; indeed, things have reached such a pitch by now that it is quite possible for a well-groomed young Briton who dances well to dine out every night of the year at the expense of his lady-friends.

The present state of things is caused by the appalling shortage of males in the British Isles since the Great War. There is at this moment a surplus of two million women in our country—a truly lamentable state of affairs—and, until the balance between the sexes is restored to the normal, we must view the existing conditions with as much equanimity as possible and hope for the best.

CHAPTER XIII

NEWMARKET

WHEN we read that King Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, reckoned a horse-race won at Olympus among his "three fearful felicities" (what were the other two, I wonder ?) we realize what a fascination this sport has had for mankind from the earliest ages.

Nowhere on the globe is racing so enjoyable as at Newmarket, that country of wide open spaces where horses are horses—there are two thousand thoroughbreds in training there to-day, and even the butcher's pony in that town develops a turn of speed unknown elsewhere—and the whole existence of that inferior biped, man, revolves round them.

My experience of Newmarket goes back for twenty-eight years, and as I cast back my mind a whole host of brilliant figures, some of them ghostly now, walk the historic Heath.

One of the most popular men in the East Anglia of those days was Colonel Harry McCalmont,* who hailed from the County Antrim. Starting his romantic career as an impecunious subaltern in the Scots Guards, he woke up one morning in his twenty-eighth year to find that his great-uncle had left him £3,000,000.

For several years after my marriage my husband and I

* Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Leslie Blundell McCalmont, C.B., M.P. (1861-1902).

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lived at Kirtling Tower (leased from Lord North), a lovely Tudor house near Harry McCalmont's large estate, Cheveley Park, which he bought from the Duke of Rutland. Right in the middle of the best game country in England, Cheveley offered enormous bags of pheasants, partridges, and hares. King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, was often a gun. To me, listening from Kirtling Tower, the shots sounded like miniature bombardments.

Mrs. Harry McCalmont inherited the good looks of her decorative father, Sir Henry de Bathe.

On the evening of November 30th, 1901, I went over to Cheveley to see some tableaux arranged by the young people of the house-party—also to play dance music for them later—and was much struck with the beauty of the hostess's daughter, Barbara Fanning, then a girl of about seventeen. She married Lord Vivian not long afterwards, and their daughter, Daphne, became the wife of Lord Weymouth in November, 1927.

One of the guests at Cheveley that evening was Mr. Robert Martin (cousin of Harry McCalmont), of Ross in the County Galway, better known as "Ballyhooley" Martin, who sat down at the piano and sang us his two famous ditties, "Ballyhooley" and "Killaloe." Tall and erect, he had just enough Irish brogue to be amusing, and wore a monocle which people said never came out. He was extremely witty, a good *raconteur* and a frequent contributor to the pages of the *Pink 'Un*.

His sister was that gifted authoress, Miss Violet Martin, who, in partnership with Miss Oenone Somerville, wrote far and away the best books ever penned on Irish life—"The Experiences of an Irish R.M.," "All on the Irish Shore," etc.

Harry McCalmont's name will go down to fame in the

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racings world as the owner of Isinglass, that grand animal which made for him the largest total ever won by a single horse, £57,185. In one year Isinglass won £31,498, in three races. In 1893 he took the Derby, the Two Thousand Guineas, the St. Leger and the Eclipse Stakes. Isinglass, like his sire, Isonomy, was beaten only once in his racing career. Isonomy won the Cambridgeshire in 1878. Isinglass had great staying qualities, but he was incorrigibly lazy by temperament, had to be hit hard by his jockey before he would hustle, and usually appeared beaten until the last moment of the race, what time his backers' hearts pounded against their ribs. I used to admire him at his daily walk up and down the picturesque beech-tree avenue, known as "The Duchess's Drive," which borders the Cheveley estate. His coat was a lovely deep brown that looked like bronze satin in the glint of the sun.

Harry McCalmont's end was mercifully sudden: on December 8th, 1902, he fell dead on the doorstep of his house, No. 11, St. James's Square.

I remember, too, that outstanding personality in the racing world of Victorian days, Captain James Octavius Machell (1837-1902), whose many sporting exploits are now wellnigh legendary. His father, a Yorkshire parson, put him into an infantry regiment, but the rôle of impoverished subaltern did not appeal to the dashing and ambitious youth, so he left the army at the age of twenty-seven and set up as manager of a large stable of racehorses at Bedford Lodge, Newmarket, with Jewitt as his trainer.

It is very rare for a man who trains flat-race horses to turn out a steeplechase winner, but Captain Machell succeeded with both. He trained Seaman, which won the Grand National in 1882, ridden by Lord Manners (nicknamed "Hoppy"), and his horse Regal, with Joe Cannon up, won

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the Grand National in 1876. He taught Zoedone, Prince Charles Kinsky's mare which won the Grand National in 1883, most of her fencing, and Kilwarlin, owned by Lord Rodney, won the St. Leger in 1887.

I don't remember Seaman's Grand National but it may be worth recalling the facts. Lord Manners had never ridden over the course, nor did he own a good steeplechaser. Yet he had the temerity to bet £10,000 to £100 that he would both own and ride the winner of the Grand National in 1882. Acting under the advice of Captain Machell he bought the Irish horse, Seaman, won his daring bet and achieved the distinction of being the only Peer who has ever ridden the winner of the Grand National.

The most famous story about Machell is of his bet with some fellow-officers that he could jump from the floor on to the mantelpiece and stay there. Money was freely staked against this apparent impossibility, but Machell won it all; for, as he sprang into the air, he turned round and alighted on the shelf with his back to the wall.

Another picturesque figure, rather like a glorified groom eternally chewing an invisible straw, was the 4th Marquess of Cholmondeley (1858-1923), Hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain, known to his intimates as "Rock." Lord Cholmondeley was one of the best judges of horse-flesh and one of the finest gentleman-jockeys of his day. He could hold his own riding races against such first-class amateurs as Arthur Coventry, "Roddy" Owen, Charles Kinsky and George Lambton. And he was the first person to school Father O'Flynn—in fact he made such a fine fencer of this horse that it won the Grand National in 1892. Some time in the 'eighties he bought a horse aptly named Screech Owl (by Wisdom out of Noisy) for twenty guineas and won six or seven races riding it himself.

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He told me that he had hunted with thirty packs of hounds in England alone. Is this not a record for one man ?

By way of contrast I see now in my mind's eye a figure not at all dashing but curiously impressive for all that. I mean Sir Ernest Cassel.

I am not old enough to have known the great Jewish financier in the early period of his remarkable career, but I met him long before the great tragedy in his life.

In 1878 young Cassel, who had just jumped from a clerk's job to a post of £5,000 a year, married a Gentile lady, Miss Maxwell, who lived only three years. Their daughter, Maud, became the wife of the good-looking politician, Lieutenant-Colonel Wilfrid Ashley ; and she was the one thing in Ernest Cassel's life. His whole affection centred in her ; all his hopes were built on her ; I truly believe that his money-making ambitions weighed naught in the scale against his absorbing love for this only child. Alas ! " He that hath . . . children, hath given hostages to fortune." She was stricken by tuberculosis, and then came the father's desperate fight for her life. She was taken from one climate to another—a house here and a villa there ; different treatments were tried ; various specialists were consulted ; money—what did money matter ?—was spent like water on every imaginable alleviation ; every whim was indulged ; every luxury was provided ; but she grew steadily worse, until in 1911 the blow fell. Dr. Felkin (then Head Physician of the Sanatorium in the New Forest) said to me in 1922 : " It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich patient to be cured of T.B."

Ernest Cassel was never the same man after her death ; he had lost the only thing that made his life worth living. The stricken man said to a friend of mine : " I have no object to go on living for now." From sheer habit and the strong racial instinct, however, he went on making more

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money and yet more money, finding—as all sensible people do—that work is the only panacea for sorrow. In helping to raise three State Loans for Mexico and a loan for China ; in financing the Swedish Railways, the Central London Tube Railway, the great Assuan Dam in Egypt, and goodness knows what other big schemes, he sought consolation or at least relief from grief.

The Assuan Dam on the River Nile is one of the greatest triumphs and one of the worst vandalisms ever made by British engineers—a triumph, because it consists of one million tons of solid granite barrage, and holds up 24,230 millions of litres of water ; a vandalism, because its construction involved the submerging of the glorious Temples of Philæ, held by many to be the loveliest architecture in the world. Read Pierre Loti's bitter indictment of the English for what he deemed an unforgivable crime against art. He could not appreciate the fact that our nation valued the well-being of millions of living human beings more highly than an interesting ruin, however beautiful.

Ernest Cassel first registered his racing colours in 1895, and in 1896 his friendship with King Edward VII began, a friendship all the closer for the fact that he looked after the royal finances, which inspired the clever nickname, "Windsor Cassel." Although he was eleven years younger than the King, the two men looked about the same age, and there was a strange general resemblance between them : they might have been first cousins.

Cassel rented Moulton Paddocks, conveniently near Newmarket, so did his racing most comfortably from there. In 1908, after thirteen years on the turf, he was elected to that august body, the Jockey Club.

The young Irish Adonis, Cecil Boyd-Rochfort, trained his horses, but with Ernest Cassel it was a case of "Lucky in

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finance : unlucky in racing," and, so far as I can recall, the only big prize he ever won was the Two Thousand Guineas with Handicapper. His horse, Cylgad, took the Newmarket Stakes, but broke down most unfortunately just before the Derby, which he stood a really good chance of winning.

When the Great War broke out Ernest Cassel, as a German-born subject, was in a very uncomfortable position. In 1902, the English—always so appreciative of aliens—had made him a Privy Councillor, but in 1915 they repented them of their generosity, and his right to be a P.C. was challenged in the Law Courts : it was, however, upheld, on the ground that, as a naturalized British subject, his election to this high assembly was quite regular.

Many grateful countries piled honours on the financier : the English decorated him with the G.C.B., the G.C.M.G., the G.C.V.O. and the P.C. ; the French made him a Commander of the Légion d'Honneur ; the Swedes gave him the Grand Cordon of the Polar Star and made him a Commander of the Royal Order of Wasa ; Egypt supplied the Grand Cordon of Osmanieh ; Japan decorated him with the Order of the Rising Sun (1st Class).

That other clever financier of German-Jewish origin, Sir Edgar Speyer, Bart., P.C., whom we took to our bosoms in the good old pre-war days, was not so lucky ; he was thrown, neck and crop, out of England after the war. I always admired the audacity of his telegraphic code address : " Spy, London."

When Ernest Cassel and I sat on a bench at Newmarket Races talking German together, I used to watch his heavy, Oriental mask with its sphinx-like unhappy expression ; pity him from the bottom of my heart ; and wonder how much cynical amusement he derived from the turn of fortune's wheel . . . making an obscure little German-Jew into one

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of the most powerful and most toadied men in England. His head was so tightly screwed on to his shoulders that he must have seen the humour of it.

Part of the year he lived with his devoted old sister (mother of the able Judge Advocate General, Sir Felix Cassel, Bart., K.C.) at Bournemouth, and on Sunday, April 22nd, 1917, I was invited to luncheon there. The butler handed Ernest Cassel a special dish, unfamiliar to me, which he ate with much gusto, while we had something else, and our hostess explained: "Ernest has pigs' trotters every Sunday of his life." . . . Very German but not *kosher*.

King Edward was godfather to Cassel's granddaughter, Edwina Ashley, who, in 1922, married Lord Louis Mountbatten, a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy and a son of the handsomest man of his time, Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg. Lady Louis Mountbatten is very pretty and always dresses in the latest fashion; at the moment she wears the shortest skirts of any woman in the United Kingdom, and I must own that the leg justifies the abbreviation.

I cannot include here all the remarkable figures that Newmarket brings crowding to my mind, or find space for a tenth of the sensations associated with the course. But I always remember that stimulating madman, Mr. M.

It is recorded that, after racing all day, this peculiar person once became greatly excited, and was seen at the "Rutland Arms" holding a luckless waiter's head by main force under the pump, pouring cold water on to it, and shouting: "*I'll teach you to back Blundell Maple's horses!*"

Once Mr. M. sent for the doctor, and when the poor man arrived he found his patient standing at the top of the stairs pointing a revolver at him, whereupon, realizing that discretion was the better part of valour, the visitor beat a hasty retreat. But best of all is a story of how at White's Club

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one day a member was reading peacefully, when he suddenly felt the cold steel of a revolver pressed against his temple and found M. at the other end, asking : " Have you finished with *The Times* ? "

The career of Sir John Blundell Maple,* to whose horses this engaging lunatic so strongly objected, was almost as astounding in its way as that of Sir Ernest Cassel. Coming from a modest home, he built up, by brains, hard work and honest dealing, the huge furniture firm which bears his name, and in which he took a legitimate pride to the end of his days.

His only child, Grace, married, in 1896, Baron von Eckhardstein, of the German Embassy, a gentleman of gargantuan appetite—even for a German—who had the reputation of being able to eat more at a sitting than any other man alive. To do him justice, it has since transpired that during the Great War he showed himself to be so pro-British as to incur the full blast of the Kaiser's wrath. This marriage was dissolved, and the Baroness, in 1910, married Archibald Weigall,† a keen sportsman with great charm of manner. Lady Weigall is a dynamo in petticoats and a first-class organizer, with a heart as well as a purse of gold. When she promises to work for an individual or for a charity you may bet your boots that she will see it through, and, what is more, see it through successfully.

Blundell Maple took a keen interest in racing and kept a fine stud of horses at Childwickbury in Hertfordshire. His two best wins were the Two Thousand Guineas with Kirkconnell and the One Thousand Guineas with Siffleuse.

One of the most familiar and heartening sights at New-

* Sir John Blundell Maple, Bart., M.P. (1845-1903).

† Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Archibald Weigall, K.C.M.G.

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market was the ever-smiling face of Leopold Rothschild,* affectionately known in sporting and financial circles as "Mr. Leo." His countenance wore such a perpetual beam that I used to wonder whether anybody had ever seen him in a bad humour.

In 1879, when Mr. Leo was only thirty-four, his horse Sir Bevys, a rank outsider at twenty to one, won the Derby, with George Fordham up, in a sea of mud. This was a heartening start to Mr. Leo's racing career.

Probably one of the happiest moments of his very jolly life was when he won the Derby in 1904, during a terrific thunderstorm, with St. Amant, which also won him the Two Thousand Guineas. A Rothschild win was always popular, and the crowd shouted itself hoarse whenever the familiar blue and yellow colours flashed first past the post.

Mr. Leo used to hunt the fox with the Whaddon Chase pack, and the stag with his brother's (Lord Rothschild's) Stag Hounds from his country home, Ascott, near Leighton Buzzard. Here he and his wife (*née* Perugia, from Austria) dispensed hospitality in princely fashion.

The following amusing story was told me by an impecunious Irish officer. He said: "Many years ago, when I was a youthful Captain with very little cash and a generous disposition, I invited a girl to dine with me at Blank's Restaurant, and ordered beforehand a modest meal befitting the state of my exchequer. The lady and I duly sat down to table, and, to my surprise and dismay, course after course, delicacy after delicacy—each of the most expensive kind—was put before us. Realizing that to pay for such a banquet was quite beyond me, and fearing an unpleasant scene before my guest at the finish, I could bear it no longer, so whispered to the head waiter: 'What does this mean? You know I

* Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, C.V.O. (1845-1917).

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ordered quite a different meal!!' He replied, with a reassuring smile: 'That's quite all right, Captain! You see, Mr. Leopold Rothschild is giving a big dinner here this evening and you've had what was left over.' I shall never cease to regret the fact that I heard this story after Mr. Leo's death: he would have enjoyed it more than anyone.

The Rothschilds have a family saying: "Never have anything to do with an unlucky man." This is not superstition: it is horse-sense. Nine times out of ten a man's so-called bad luck is brought about by his own stupidity.

George Holford* is always associated in my mind with King Edward, because he was Equerry-in-Waiting, and I used to have long talks with him between races, sitting in the Members' stand. Once at a chilly Autumn Meeting, I remember, he grew quite warm about the iniquity of a double-chin in a young woman; on the tragedy of a double-chin in an elderly one; and on the absolute necessity that double-chins should be averted by women of all ages. "A double-chin is an unforgivable crime," he cried. "Don't *you* ever get one!"

He was quite one of the handsomest men of his day, with his regular features, prematurely white hair, great height and elegant figure—the picture of a Life Guardsman. Always keen to keep in good condition, he made a practice of running home on foot, as fast as a carriage and pair, after dining out in London—a good insurance against a double-chin.

In the gay days when Edward VII was Prince of Wales, George Holford had the reputation of being a wonderful mesmerist: indeed, it was said that to prove his power, he

* Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George Holford, K.C.V.O., C.I.E., C.B.E. (1860–1927).

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willed a certain woman to leave her box on the opposite side of Covent Garden Opera House one evening and to walk all the way round to him.

Daisy Pless* told me of an amusing practical joke that was played on George Holford one evening when there was a large house-party at Sandringham. She asked him to hypnotize her; he made a few passes over her head and she immediately pretended to go off into a deep trance. After a while it was time to dress for dinner, but still Daisy slumbered. George Holford did everything he could to bring her round, but she lay there, immobile and unresponsive to all his efforts. At last, with dinner looming in the near future, he became frantic with anxiety and was just about to send for her maid when the supposed subject suddenly sat up and burst out laughing in his face.

His London home, Dorchester House in Park Lane, an Italian Renaissance *palazzo*, designed by the architect Lewis Vulliamy (1791–1871) for Robert Stayner Holford (George's father) in the early 'fifties, was a museum, picture gallery and treasure house combined. Mr. R. S. Holford must have been a collector of rare judgment and great catholicity of taste, for the house was packed with such a variety of beautiful things that it was almost impossible to take them all in. There were magnificent paintings by Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, Ruysdael, Van Dyck and (my favourite) a tiny, jewel-like *Madonna Enthroned* by Pesellino; fabulously valuable illuminated manuscripts dating from the 12th century upwards; ancient Greek vases, some made in 600 B.C.; tapestries; furniture, mostly Italian Renaissance; porcelain; majolica; sculptures by that great but unrecognized Englishman, Alfred Stevens, and—as if this were not enough—one of the finest private libraries in existence, with Caxtons, Aldines

* Princess of Pless.

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and Elzevirs, first editions of Izaak Walton's "The Compleat Angler," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," and Swift's "Gulliver's Travels."

On December 6th, 1927, the day's total at Sotheby's sale of books from the Holford Library amounted to £16,015. The top price was fetched by a copy of Dante's *La Divina Commedia* printed at Florence in 1481, with the complete set of nineteen engravings attributed to Baccio Baldini after the designs of Botticelli. *Che combinazione!*—Dante illustrated by Botticelli! At £3,950 this precious book fell to Quaritch, with the Rosenbach Company (for once) as runners-up. Dr. Rosenbach rose hurriedly from his bed early that morning to telephone two commissions from New York—in one case successfully—for he succeeded in securing the fine copy on vellum of F. de Columna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, printed by Aldo, at Venice, in 1499. It is said that Mr. Robert Holford paid only £120 for this rare book in 1840: Dr. Rosenbach had to pay £3,000 for it.

It was a romantic turn of fortune which enabled Robert Holford to become such a patron of the arts, for he grew rich chiefly through the finding of some bullion buried by an uncle in the Isle of Wight during the threat of Napoleonic invasion.

His ample means also allowed him to indulge to the full his passion for landscape-gardening at Westonbirt, the Holford family estate in the Cotswolds, in the centre of the Duke of Beaufort's Hunt. It was here that Sir George Holford cultivated the famous orchids which won so many prizes up and down the country. He used to declare enthusiastically that he made money out of his orchids, and I only hoped it was so. Westonbirt was sold after his death and is now a girls' school.

Dorchester House was the United States Embassy from

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1905 till 1913, during which period Mr. and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid leased it from George Holford, and I remember what a glorious setting it made for the wedding reception, in 1908, of the American Ambassador's only daughter, Miss Jean Whitelaw Reid, and "Johnnie" Ward* (son of the 1st Earl of Dudley), Equerry to King Edward.

There is always shooting enough and to spare in the country round Newmarket, and a reasonably good shot can get his fill of partridge-driving from September 1st till February 1st.

On October 25th, 1901, my diary says: "Shoot at Duke of Cambridge's, Six Mile Bottom. Guns: Admiral FitzGeorge, Colonel FitzGeorge, George Lambton, Herbert de la Rue, Claude. Bag: two hundred and one partridges, ten pheasants, forty-three hares. Weather fine and cold."

At this time the Duke of Cambridge was getting on for eighty-three and somewhat infirm, yet his keenness was so great that he was wheeled about in a Bath-chair to see as much as possible of the shooting. Born in 1819, the same year as his cousin, Queen Victoria, whom he outlived by three years, this wonderful old man served in the Crimean War—had his horse shot under him at the Battle of Inkerman—and was Commander-in-Chief of the British Army from 1856 to 1895. He soldiered altogether for fifty-eight years.

Admiral (later Sir Adolphus) FitzGeorge and Colonel (later Sir Augustus) FitzGeorge were the two sons of his marriage with Mrs. FitzGeorge. Sir Augustus was close upon eighty years old when I last saw him at Monte Carlo, and he was still enjoying life like a two-year-old, thanks to his unfailing interest in life and sympathy with the young.

In 1901 there was a handful of women at Newmarket compared with the vast hordes that go racing there to-day.

* Major The Honble. Sir John Hubert Ward, K.C.V.O.

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The two handsomest of those times I held to be Lady Essex and Lady de Trafford. Lady Essex was Miss Adèle Grant from New York, and married the 7th Earl of Essex as his second wife in 1893. She had a delicate, original beauty—very large, dark eyes and a pale, flower-like face—and dressed to perfection, as do most of her countrywomen.

Years afterwards, during the Great War, I met her brother, Mr. Grant, when he lived at Rottingdean, near Brighton. He was just such another exquisite in his get-up; never before or since have I beheld patent-leather boots of such dazzling shininess. It made my feet ache to look at them.

Lady de Trafford, nicknamed "V. de T." was a Miss Franklin, and married Sir Humphrey de Trafford, third Baronet, in 1886. She was tall and slim, with tiny well-cut features and coal-black hair. I always admired her taste in dress, for, instead of slavishly following the transient fashions of the day, she found an individual style and stuck to it till the day of her death.

Another striking figure, who had been a beauty in her day, though always too stumpy for me to admire, was Lady Londonderry—Theresa, wife of the 6th Marquess and daughter of the 19th Earl of Shrewsbury. She carried her spine—short though it was—a shade straighter than anyone else on the Heath, and this regal carriage, combined with a Vere-de-Vere profile, an autocratic manner and her husband's high office, made her a commanding personality. As for racing, George Lambton said of her that "she knew as much and more about a horse than most men."

When I first went to Newmarket the leader of the ultra-smart racing set there was that wonderful old woman, the Duchess of Devonshire. She began life as the daughter of Graf von Alten, of Hanover; her first husband was William Drogo, 7th Duke of Manchester, who left her a widow in

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1890 ; two years later she married Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire (1833-1908), nicknamed "Harty," one of the most prominent and most frequently caricatured statesmen of the Victorian era. It falls to the lot of few women to marry one Duke ; two seem almost more than a due ration.

The Duke of Devonshire represented a type, daily growing rarer, of the high-minded, incorruptible English aristocrat who went into politics as a matter of principle and gave up most of his life to working for the good of his country. Born to vast properties, a high position and great wealth, the Cavendishes made a habit of marrying heiresses ; he had no axe to grind, and the British public pinned their faith to his spotless integrity.

Men who knew him well have told me : " One might easily have mistaken him for a stupid man and most of the time he seemed half-asleep ; but appearances were deceitful, and his judgment was so sound that he would say something, after coming out of an apparently deep slumber, just twice as sensible as any of the wide-awake fellows in the room could have thought of."

The punning motto of the Cavendish family is *Cavendo tutus* (Secure by caution), a sentiment singularly appropriate to His Grace.

Lord Beaconsfield, that arch-coiner of phrases, said of him : " Harty-Tarty . . . is sensible, dullish and gentleman-like." Well, are not these precisely the qualities that have made the British Empire ?

In the 'seventies the Marquess of Hartington (as he then was) kept a fairly large racing stable with the brothers Bloss at Newmarket. In 1876, his horse, Monaco, won the Goodwood Stewards' Cup. In 1877, his filly, Belphebe, won the Thousand Guineas ; Morion won the Royal Hunt Cup at Ascot

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in 1890; Marvel carried off the Stewards' Cup at Goodwood twice; and Dieudonné won the Middle Park Plate in 1897.

When I saw the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire at Newmarket, on the day Mr. Whitney's Watershed won the Cambridgeshire (October 30th, 1901), their united ages amounted to something like one hundred and forty years. It was a chilly, windy day—such as the Autumn Meetings often provide—and I watched the old gentleman tenderly tucking a thick rug round his Duchess as she sat on a bench near the Jockey Club Stand. She looked very frail, but her features were as handsome as ever, and it was patent to all beholders that she must have been a tearing beauty in her youth. Never did I see a man so expressionless as the Duke, his face sphinx-like and unchanging. What a poker-player! thought I to myself.

It is always a little hard on the other fellow to be "under the shadow of a mighty name," and no doubt there were moments when Frankie Rhodes* suffered eclipse by his great brother, Cecil. Still, he was a man of such personal charm that I feel he got certain things out of life which were missed by the Colossus of Rhodesia.

Their father was a Hertfordshire parson, held to be somewhat eccentric, who begat nine sons. He wanted all the nine to be clergymen, but two died in infancy; four went into the Army; and three took ship to the Colonies.

Frankie went through Eton and then blossomed out as an officer in the 1st Dragoons. He led a comparatively peaceful life until he was over forty, and then his adventures began. He was sentenced to death (and later reprieved) for his share in the abortive Jameson Raid of 1895-96; he fought

* Colonel F. W. Rhodes, C.B., D.S.O. (1851-1905).

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and was wounded in the Uganda Rebellion of 1898 ; and went through the siege of Ladysmith in 1900.

An amusing instance of the temperamental contrast between Cecil Rhodes and Kitchener is provided by the following incident, quoted from Mr. J. G. McDonald's book, " Rhodes, a Life " :

" On receiving the news of the taking of Omdurman on 6th September, 1898, Rhodes cabled to Kitchener, ' Glad you beat the Khalifa. We have just finished our elections and result promises to be a tie. I hear Frank is wounded. They certainly should now restore his commission. His heart is set on it. My telegraph will shortly be at south end of Tanganyika. If you don't look sharp, in spite of your victory, I shall reach Uganda before you ' "

To which Kitchener, with characteristic brevity, replied from Omdurman twenty days later :

" Thanks. Frank well. Reinstated. My southern station Sobat. Hurry up."

In 1902 Cecil died and left the Dalham Hall estate, near Newmarket, to Frankie for his life. The will, as we all know now, was an amazing document. Cecil left a total sum of £6,000,000, nearly all to public service, including one hundred and seventy-five Rhodes Scholarships for British, Colonial and American students at Oxford University.

When it was Frankie's turn to make his last testament, he banged on the table and shouted : " No more imperial wills for *me* ! "

On November 8th, 1903, he brought over to tea with

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me at Kirtling Tower the beautiful Lady Clonmel and Mr. George Lambton, the gentleman-trainer from Newmarket.

The next day my husband and I went to Dalham for a shoot. The weather was raw and wet, so Mrs. Edgar Lubbock,* who acted as hostess, took me over the house. She showed me the pathetic bedroom, designed with such detailed care but never seen by poor Cecil. His great hero had always been Napoleon, so the room was decorated and furnished in the grandiose Empire style, with the Imperial cypher and the bee (Napoleon's favourite symbol of industry) embroidered on every possible object—even to the blotting pad. So much for human hopes !

Frankie had a great way with him in managing the fair sex. His method was the infallible one of flattering every woman into the conviction that he thought her—and her only—the loveliest and the most charming of her kind. His favourite mode of address (which, of course, we all thoroughly enjoyed) was “ Divine creachah ! ” What matter that he had said these exact words to one thousand and three other ladies ? Away with the cynical thought ! Somebody once drew a fanciful picture of a negress—fuzzy hair, thick lips and all—with Frankie apostrophizing her, from sheer habit : “ Divine creachah ! ”

He died of that deadly tropical disease, blackwater fever, at the early age of fifty-four at Groote Schuur, Cecil Rhodes's country home near Cape Town, leaving many friends to regret his cheery personality.

Another landmark in the racing world was the popular Irishman, Lord Marcus Beresford (son of the 4th Marquess of Waterford), who managed King Edward's thoroughbreds for thirty-two years and afterwards those of King George.

Good-looking and full of tactful charm, he always said

* Now widow of 2nd Baron Kesteven.

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the right thing at the right moment with the ready wit of his race. Yet he was capable of administering a timely rebuke when it was needed. The Club toady had been a source of considerable annoyance and when at last he asked, officiously, "Whose tobacco do you smoke, Lord Marcus?" His Lordship snapped: "My own."

Lord Marcus was a good boxer, which useful accomplishment stood him in good stead on several occasions when his Irish blood was up. A fine race rider, both on the flat and across country, he did especially well on two steeplechasers called Bella and Chimneysweep. But the most useful animal he ever owned was a versatile mare called Caramel (by Canary out of Integrity), which won him twenty-seven out of eighty-five races over all sorts of courses and distances, from Aldershot to Newmarket.

Nobody at Newmarket looked happier than, and very few as happy as King Edward. It was an understood thing that at Newmarket meetings, untrammelled by the rigid etiquette which held elsewhere, he was enjoying a complete holiday from the cares of Court and State: accordingly he went about among the crowd, unmobbed and apparently unnoticed, while only his personal friends saluted him. His hearty, guttural laugh was heard oftener at Newmarket than anywhere else, so we believe, and one could see him obviously enjoying a good story and a good smoke, if not a good wager.

He dearly loved a fine cigar. Several times I saw him ask for one from Mr. Arthur Wagg, of the Stock Exchange, when his own supply ran short.

On the day King Edward died his horse Witch of the Air (by Robert le Diable out of Vane) won the Spring Two-Year-Old Plate at Kempton Park, and His Majesty heard the news just before he became unconscious.

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During his career on the turf King Edward won a total of £146,128 in stakes.

I cannot touch upon Newmarket without paying a tribute to the memory of Mr. Joseph Pickersgill, of Leeds, that prince of bookies, with a white-bearded face like an Apostle's and a very similar reputation.

My bets are few and far between, but on those rare occasions I invariably wagered my modest half-sovereign with the benign old gentleman, murmuring as I did so, "Here is my contribution to the Galway Blazers:" an allusion to the fact that Joe Pickersgill paid all the expenses of his son's Master-ship of the Galway Foxhounds on condition that the young man never betted on a race.

How could a bookmaker ever be foolish enough to buy race-horses? Human-beings are proverbially inconsistent, and Joe Pickersgill was no exception to the rule. The best horse to carry his colours was Robbie Burns, but that happened before my day. With what mingled feelings must an owner-cum-bookie watch his animal run!

Joe Pickersgill was a truly charitable man, and the poor of Leeds were not forgotten either during or after his lifetime.

Warren de la Rue, a familiar figure at the Newmarket Races for many years, was what the French so aptly term an *original*. He indulged in many manias, all harmless and some most useful to mankind.

When I first knew him as a neighbour at Newmarket, in 1901, he had such a horror of that new-fangled and perilous invention, the motor-car, that he forbade any petrol-driven vehicle to go up his front-drive; whenever I motored over to Chippenham Cottage (a misleading name for such a luxurious abode) I was, therefore, constrained to pull up ingloriously at the tradesmen's entrance, and to walk by

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devious routes through those complicated regions best described by house-agents as "offices."

Warren's swarthy face was always set like a Chinaman's mask, and it was impossible to guess from his expression whether he was amused or bored, a fact which made him a very baffling companion. Probably he was devoid of a sense of humour—witness his printed notice in the ladies' bathroom: "If the water is not hot, send for me.—Warren de la Rue."

He had a passion for detail, and there existed a map of every room in the house, with the correct position of each piece of furniture marked thereon, so woe-betide the house-maid who misplaced a chair or a table by so much as a foot.

His celebrated partridge-shoots were a triumph of organization: everything went like clockwork, and when, at the close of the day, his carriage passed over a certain point on the front-drive, an alarm-bell was automatically rung in the house to warn the butler to prepare tea for the guns.

Some of his manias were very sensible and labour-saving; for instance, he bought for his front-hall the first automatic postage-stamp machine I ever saw, thereby saving his staff the trouble of perpetually buying stamps for careless guests. The Perfect Guest should always bring plenty of his own postage-stamps with him: he does not worry his host's servants to go to the nearest village to buy him umbrellas or hats or underclothes, then why, in the name of Fortune, add to the labours of what is probably an overworked staff, during a week of high pressure, by worrying them to procure stamps?

Warren used to own race-horses somewhere in the dim Victorian days, until the best animal in his stable was doped

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by a *piqure* in the crowded paddock at Ascot. This disgusted him so much that from that moment he gave up the sport.

His chief craze was hygiene, and his whole life was systematized and scheduled as strictly as though he were following a *régime* in a Sanatorium.

A certain amount of daily exercise was laid down on his chart, and he was an extraordinary sight when he walked along his measured and asphalted road at Chippenham Cottage, every twenty yards on the route marked like a tape-measure, muffled to the eyes in successive strata of Jaeger underclothes, two sweaters, one shawl and an outer crust of aquascutum (he gave me this inventory), the perspiration steaming heavenward, and his valet following faithfully ten paces behind, laden with assorted medicinal tabloids "in case" . . . (to quote the "Young Visitors").

Warren was very sensitive to cold, and used to sit playing Bridge at his club with a thick woollen rug over his knees, and bicycle-clips on his trousers to keep out the draught.

One habit of his which never failed to frighten me was the way he would sit in front of a blazing fire on a cold day with his bald head—it looked exactly like an egg—bent downwards as near to the flames as was possible, short of being roasted. It was a wonder that he did not induce apoplexy by this strange trick.

He always kept a first-rate French chef to cook marvellous meals for his guests, while he himself sat quietly masticating so many times (according to rule) his extremely plain "nursery food" consistently with his dietetic theories. Personally, I always feel that it casts a gloom over the feast for the guests to be eating rich dishes while the host chews boiled mutton and tapioca pudding.

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Warren hated untidiness, so in the hall of Chippenham Cottage was a series of pigeon-holes, each one labelled with the name of a guest. Either you, of your own volition, put away your handbag, knitting, spectacles, cigarette-case, or other impedimenta in the compartment labelled with your name, or, if you were so untidy as to leave about in a sitting-room any such article, a well-trained servant would pounce upon it and put it away for you. Why do not more order-loving hosts install such an excellent system in their country-houses ?

One of the most amusing men among the rather solemn race-goers at Newmarket was Lord Herbert Vane-Tempest,* son of the 5th Marquess of Londonderry, always full of fun and vitality, with a rather Rabelaisian wit, unexpected in one who came from Ulster. He was usually to be seen surrounded by a little knot of friends, all in fits of laughter. A very prim and proper peeress, sitting next to me in the Members' Stand, was watching him obviously telling some of his best stories. "Dear, dear !" she said to me, "Lord Bertie is as naughty as ever. . . . I do wish I could hear what he's saying !"

He never married, probably because he loved either one woman not enough or many women too well, and in 1921 he was killed in a Welsh railway accident.

One of the best-known Newmarket figures of the Victorian era was Mr. Montagu Tharp, known to his many friends as Monty. He owned Chippenham Park, a large estate with wonderful pheasant and partridge shooting near Newmarket ; also the piece of land called the Limekiln Gallops, which carries with its proprietorship the right to be an honorary member of the Jockey Club. When he died the whole property passed to his widow, who is, therefore, the only

* 1862-1921.

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woman with the privileges enjoyed by a member of the Jockey Club.

Monty Tharp won great fame in his day as a *raconteur*, and it was said that his art in telling naughty stories was so great that even the ladies did not appear so shocked as they ought to have been.

At his funeral in 1899 somebody blundered, and the entire procession was half-way to the Chippenham Churchyard before it was noticed that the coffin had been left behind at the house. As his friends said, remembering the old gentleman's strong sense of humour: "*How* Monty would have laughed!"

Anna Bella, daughter of Arthur Lyttelton Annesley, of Arley Castle in Staffordshire, and kinswoman of Earl Annesley and Viscount Valentia, was born in the early 'forties and married Montagu Tharp in 1868.

The Chippenham Estate is in one of the best partridge and pheasant districts in England, and King Edward VII stayed there many times for the wonderful shoots, both before and after he ascended the throne.

Perhaps the most sensational of all these occasions was the partridge-drive of October 15, 1887. The Prince of Wales (as he was then) announced that he "could be out for only two or three hours," after which he must catch a train up to London. The head-keeper was thus put on his mettle, and placed the chief tenants of the Chippenham Estate on horseback at the corners of the drives, the better to make the partridges fly over the heads of the guns.

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Here is a copy of the Game Card (as punctuated) :

CHIPPENHAM PARK.

15th October, 1887.

PARTRIDGE DRIVING.

Guns.	Part- ridges,	Hares,	Pheas- ants.
*RIP H.R.H. The Prince of Wales	75 ¹	30	6
RIP The Marquess of Lon- donderry			
RIP The Earl of Cadogan			
RIP Hon. Tyrwhitt Wilson			
RIP Col. Hon. Oliver Montagu			
RIP Mr. W. G. Craven			
RIP Capt. J. O. Machell			
RIP Col. Stanley Clarke			
RIP Mr. Montagu Tharp			

Very windy with heavy showers all day.

First drive at 11 o'clock.

Luncheon at 1.30.

First drive after luncheon at 2.45.

At 4 o'clock the Prince of Wales and four of the
guns left for London.

A pied-partridge† was shot among the number.

† This pied-partridge (a freak of nature) was shot by Capt. J. O. Machell,
who took it to be stuffed by Howlett, by the express wish of H.R.H.

* Some pious hand has of recent years inserted the letters RIP
opposite the names.

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This is a copy of the letter of thanks* written by the Prince of Wales from Sir Thomas Fermor-Hesketh's place in Northamptonshire three days later :

Easton Neston,
Towcester.

October 18th.

MY DEAR THARP,

Many thanks for writing to tell me the total of our bag on Saturday. It was certainly the best day's partridge driving I have ever had, and everything so well arranged that I was very sorry I was obliged to leave before the day was over.

Let me again thank you and Mrs. Tharp for your kind hospitality and assure you how thoroughly I enjoyed my stay at Chippenham.

Believe me,

Sincerely yours,

ALBERT EDWARD.

There remains to this day on the landing outside the bedroom always occupied by the Prince of Wales (King Edward VII) a long settee on which the valet had orders to lay out in a row all his Royal master's tweed caps, one to match each shooting suit. One morning H.R.H. came unexpectedly out of his bedroom door on to the landing and caught his mischievous hostess in the act of trying on several of these articles of headgear.

On October 28th, 1893, the Prince of Wales planted in the Park at Chippenham a tree which has flourished ever since. The Kaiser also planted one, but it has withered away. This has happened to so many trees of the Kaiser's planting that I sometimes wonder whether the gardeners do

* Printed by gracious permission of H.M. King George.

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not give Wilhelm's tree a little dose of something or other to discourage it from going on living !

Mrs. Tharp was an enthusiastic photographer, even in those far-off days when amateurs used glass-plates as heavy as lead and tripods that maliciously pinched your fingers ; so she took a large group of most of the Chippenham house-parties. The result of her industry makes a most interesting record of the guests over a period of many years, especially since she interleaved in her albums all the newspaper-cuttings, menus, programmes, etc., appropriate to the occasion.

There is one (to us moderns) amusing group dated October 23rd, 1894 ; in it are the Prince of Wales (Edward VII), the Marchese Montagliari, Sir George Holford and Mr. Monty Tharp (all with beards except George Holford), the Marchesa Montagliari (*née* Fuller, one of the beauties of her day), and Lady Sophia Macnamara, dressed in a severely-cut coat and skirt, with a thoroughly mannish waist-coat, smoking a cigar given her by the Prince of Wales, yet looking far less offensive than our present-day Eton-cropped hermaphroditic horrors. The ladies have wasp-like waists with bulges above and below the line, and their hats are " tee'd up " on the tops of their highly-erected hair.

On October 17th, the Game Book shows that the guns were the Prince of Wales (Edward VII), the Duke of York (George V), Prince Adolphus of Teck, nicknamed " Dolly," Sir Charles Cust, Captain Sir Seymour Fortescue, Equerry-in-Waiting, who attended King Edward during seventeen years when he shot, raced, yachted, etc., Captain J. O. Machell and Mr. Daniel Cooper ; and that these gentlemen between them accounted for 652 partridges, 20 pheasants and 57 hares.

On October 29th, 1901, there fell to nine guns :

Pheasants	Partridges	Hares	Rabbits	Various	Total
1,049	10	258	24	8	1,349

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On November 1st and 2nd, 1912, the guns were H.M. King Edward VII, the Earl of Ilchester, the Earl of Iveagh, Lord Herbert Vane-Tempest, Lord Annaly, Sir Hedworth Meux, the Honble. Harry Stonor, Sir Charles Cust and Sir Ernest Cassel, and the bags were :

1912	Pheasants	Partridges	Hares	Rabbits	Total
Nov. 1st	190	1,204	199	14	1,607
Nov. 2nd	1,446	133	327	131	2,037

King Edward was essentially a temperamental and, therefore, uncertain shot. Sir Sidney Lee records of the monarch : " He had an exceptional knack of killing birds behind him at an angle which most people find very difficult."

King George is in the first flight and very keen on the sport. He may be ranked among the first six best shots in England, with star-performers like Sir Harry Stonor, Sir Cuthbert Quilter and the rest.

Lord Walsingham made a record bag for one gun of 1,070 grouse in Yorkshire in September, 1888.

King Edward greatly enjoyed a game of roulette after dinner, and would exhort his hostess when she assumed the rôle of croupier, " R-r-r-ake it in ! R-r-r-ake it in ! " with the characteristic royal " R."

He always asked for short dinners ; indeed, it is to him that we owe the break-away from the interminable Victorian repasts which were the fashion before he instituted this reform.

Here are some menus to show what these Victorian meals were like :

On September 10th, 1877, Mr. and Mrs. Montagu Tharp lunched with the Prince and Princess of Wales on board the Royal Yacht *Osborne*, the Empress Eugénie and her son the Prince Imperial being among the company.

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MENU.*

DÉJEUNER.

Brunoise à la Royale.
Côtelettes de Mouton panées.
Kari de Poulet à l'Indienne.
Filet de Bœuf Jardinière.
Mayonnaise de Volaille.
Petits Homards à la Tartare.
Perdreux rôtis.
Légumes.
Riz Glacé à l'Impératrice.
Pommes à la Dauphine.
10 septembre, 1877.

Here is a dinner of which Mrs. Tharp partook at Marlborough House as the guest of the Prince of Wales on May 31st, 1893 :

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE.

MENU.

POTAGES.

Tortue clair. Crème de Pois à la St. Germain.

POISSONS.

Whitebait Naturel et à la Diable.
Tronçons de Truites à l'Andalouse.

ENTRÉES.

Côtelettes de Volailles à la Maréchale.
Chauds-froids d'Ortolans à la Lucullus.

RELEVÉS.

Hanche de Venaison, Sauce Aigre Douce.
Selle d'Agneau à la Nivernaise.
Sorbets au Champagne.

* The following appear exactly as printed.

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RÔTS.

Poussins rôtis sur Canapés. Salade de Romaine à la Française.

LÉGUMES.

Asperges en Branches. Sauce Mousseuse.

ENTREMETS.

Petites Timbales aux Cerises à la Jubilé.

Soufflés Glacés Printanier.

Petites Pâtisseries Assorties.

Casolettes de Caviare à la Jockey Club.

Melons Glacés à la Victoria.

Petites Gauffrettes.

31 mai, 1893.

Here is a description of the Court dress—the train of which was cut out on my Aunt Nina's grand piano at 17, Eaton Place—worn by Mrs. Tharp, in 1869 :

DRAWING ROOM.

Mrs. Montagu Tharp, [presented] on her marriage, by the Countess of Mount-Charles.

Train and corsage of the richest fleur de peche poulte de soie, trimmed with fine white Brussels point and bouillons of tulle ; tunic of same lace, over a petticoat of white tulle illusion.

Head-dress, tulle veil of fleur de peche and ostrich plume ; ornaments, diamonds and pearls.

In the 'sixties Mrs. Tharp went to Belgium to visit her old friend, S.A. Princesse Edouard de Ligne (daughter of Sir David Thurlow Cunynghame and granddaughter of John, 1st Earl Clanwilliam).

One night the house-party, seized by the spirit of adventure, went out to the stables, mounted a horse apiece and proceeded to ride straight across-country by moonlight.

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This escapade reminds me of the set of old coloured prints so often seen in hunting-boxes depicting the young "bloods" of the day, clad in white night-shirts, riding over the Leicestershire fences by the light of the moon.

Mme Adelina Patti, the great soprano, was a friend of Mrs. Tharp, and the following letter* from the *diva* is pasted into an album at Chippenham :

Carissima mia !

We are so *sorry* not to be able to accept your kind invitation. I assure you we feel quite put out about it. However, hoping to be more fortunate on another occasion

Believe me with a fond kiss and best thanks

Your devoted friend

Adelina de Caux.

Wednesday June 11th 1873.

The notepaper is surmounted by the coronet of the Marquis de Caux (her husband) and an elaborately-coloured monogram consisting of a green "A," a red "P," and a gold "C."

Very amusing is that well-known figure in the racing-world of both England and Ireland, Lady McCalmont, widow of the "Gin'ral" Sir Hugh McCalmont, and mother of Dermot, of Abbeylands in the County Antrim. When I asked her at the Houghton Meeting in 1927 : "How did you fare during the Rebellion ?" she replied, with her rich brogue : "They fired over me bed all day and under me bed all night, and between the two I escaped . . ." pause . . . "and" (vehemently) "I wouldn't live in *this* country if ye *paid* me !"

* Printed by kind permission of Baron Rolf Cederström.

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Lady de Bathe, better known as Mrs. Langtry,* owned for some years a racing-box at Newmarket, called by the somewhat grandiose name of Regal Lodge, whence she raced under the *nom de guerre* of "Mr. Jersey."

She had the good luck to win the Cesarewitch twice, once in 1897 with an Australian horse, Merman (by Grand Flâneur out of Seaweed), and again in 1908 with Yentoi (a son of Santoi). Merman also won for her the Goodwood Cup in 1899, the Goodwood Stakes, the Jockey Club Stakes at Newmarket in 1898, and the Ascot Gold Cup in 1900. A useful animal. Her horse, Milford, won the Coventry Stakes at Ascot and the July Stakes at Newmarket; and Brayhead took the Liverpool Cup. Mr. Richard Marsh trained most of her horses at Egerton Lodge. Her mare, Lady Rosebery, won several Liverpool Cups and the Jockey Club Cup in 1893.

My father remembers in the 'seventies seeing ladies so far forget their Society manners as to clamber on to chairs in their keenness to see "the Jersey Lily" over the heads of the other guests. Wherever she appeared she created a hysterical sensation of the kind which nowadays only a cinema or a lawn-tennis star can equal.

After her retirement from the turf she made her villa at Monte Carlo her headquarters. There she spent the evening of her eventful life, enjoying her lovely garden in the Riviera sunshine.

I cannot leave Newmarket without reference to one great figure who will always be associated with it—I mean Lord Rosebery.

One of the most memorable pre-war social gatherings I ever saw was the ball he gave at Mentmore on January 29th, 1903, to celebrate the coming of age of his elder son, Lord Dalmeny. The magnificent house, a huge pile crammed with

* Born 1852; died 1929, daughter of Dean of Jersey.

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Rothschild-bought works of art, formed a sumptuous setting that evening for the brave and the fair, chiefly hunting folk of the Whaddon Chase.

Our distinguished host was gracious enough to cast an admiring eye on me (at that time I was a fairly recent importation into English Society, and, therefore, a novelty), and I passed the whole evening in his entrancing company. He was kind enough, when it transpired how keenly I admired beautiful old furniture, to take me on a personally conducted tour and give himself endless trouble explaining the finest pieces in his collection, dragging a hugely heavy sofa aside in his keenness to show me the exquisite centre-design on a priceless Aubusson carpet. When we reached a massive eighteenth-century French cabinet in the gallery, he tugged at one of the big drawers, anxious that I should appreciate the inlay of the wood, whereupon out fell a pair of "gent's pants" (as the underwear catalogues have it). We both dissolved in laughter, while he cried: "What in the world are Harry's drawers doing here?"

Then he escorted me to the gallery, where we stood looking over the railing at the throng of dancing guests below. He said to me: "Look at that crowd! Every one of them will go out hunting to-morrow morning, and nearly all of them will hate it. I believe that three-quarters of the people who hunt simply *loathe* it, but they haven't the pluck to stay at home."

We discussed at length *The Admirable Crichton*, a play then drawing crowded houses in London, and I could see that he was tremendously impressed by the whole idea and the general philosophy of Sir James Barrie's ingenious comedy.

At the elaborate meal which went by the name of supper we were waited on by innumerable flunkeys—powdered hair, plush waistcoats and all—and as I gazed, munching a delicious

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caille à la vendangère the while, at the luxury of our surroundings, Lord Rosebery said in solemn tones: "What I *really* enjoy is the simple life." I looked him straight in the eye, and cried: "You humbug!"

At this date he was at the height of his powers as a writer, if not as a politician, and *what* an artist he was in the wielding of English prose! Time and time again I read aloud to myself his little books on "Pitt" (1889) and "Lord Randolph Churchill" (1906), for the sheer physical joy of the style.

Lord Rosebery looked preposterously youthful for his age, which was at the time fifty-six.

CHAPTER XIV

HIGH FINANCE

ON 3rd October, 1902, my husband and I went over from Kirtling Tower to stay with Mr. and Mrs. Gerard Lee Bevan at Eccles Hall, in Norfolk, for a partridge-shoot. The guns were Lord Alfred Fitzroy (now Duke of Grafton), Mr. Hanbury, Mr. Phillips, my husband and our host.

By the end of my first evening there I realized what a curiously complex creature Gerard Bevan was. He was a rigid teetotaller; he never smoked (how we laughed when he was appointed Tobacco Comptroller in the War!); he loved music with every fibre of his being; he craved for beautiful furniture and æsthetic surroundings—even his office in the City was full of Museum pieces; he was a fierce worker, intensely ambitious to make a huge success in business; and one of the best driven-game shots in England.

He told me: "After we married I said to my wife: 'Up to the present I have never hunted, nor fished, nor shot; I should like to do one of these things really well, so choose which you think would be the best and I'll learn it.'" Shooting was picked, and off went Gerry Bevan in cold blood and all seriousness to a shooting-school, whence he emerged the neat performer I saw in 1902.

October 4th was a fine, albeit cold day, so Mrs. Bevan and I lunched out in a field with the guns. Now, she was of a

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Spartan turn of mind and did not believe in being waited on at every turn—witness the passage in her book, “The Home and the War” (1918), which runs: “They (the mediæval English) . . . in the brave days of old (were) without ‘central heating,’ anthracite stoves, electric power, hot water at all hours of the day and night, and other similar signs of decadence, with its over-estimation of comfort and luxury.” Accordingly, after the meal she turned to me and announced: “Now we must pack up the things.” I began collecting dirty knives (always repulsive objects), in a sort of bouquet, whereupon she seized one from me and, plunging it up to the hilt into the soil at our feet, flourished a clean blade before me, exclaiming: “*That’s* the way to clean them before you put them away!” And ever since that day I have told picnickers of this most practical method. . . I say, advisedly, told others about it, for cleaning greasy utensils will never be one of my hobbies.

On July 8th, 1921, I went to stay with the Bevans for the week-end, during a delicious heat-wave, at Littlecote, near Newbury, a glorious Tudor place which they were renting at the time.

Littlecote was finished in 1515, shortly after bluff and burly King Henry VIII ascended the throne, and was thus built at the highest point of English architecture, sharing this honour with such illustrious contemporaries as Levens Hall, in Westmorland; Knole, in Kent; Audley End, in Essex; Blickling Hall, in Norfolk; and Hampton Court Palace. Littlecote was visited by many royalties: Henry VIII; Queen Elizabeth (surely she holds the record for country-house visiting?); James I and Anne of Denmark; Charles II, the Merry Monarch of the melancholy expression, and Catherine; James II (while Duke of York); and William, Prince of Orange.

One week-end was all too short a time to allow of my taking

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in more than a few of the entrancingly beautiful things at Littlecote, but I still remember many. Perhaps the most extraordinary piece of furniture I ever saw was the massive oak table, thirty feet long, in the baronial Hall. I have always had a penchant for early refectory tables, and this gorgeous specimen fairly took my breath away. In the midst of my awe, however, I said to my host: "It reminds me of Mrs. Potash's deathless line: 'Andt ve got a dining-room vere you seat thirty-nine people. . . . Godt forbidt!'"

On the wall of the Hall hangs a pair of huge horns of a prehistoric Irish elk, dug out of the bog, reckoned to be at least two thousand years old. These great beasts, now extinct, stood as high as twelve feet at the shoulder and their horns ran to ten feet in span.

Gerard Bevan's chief joy was his collection of Oriental china, housed in the Long Gallery (aptly named, for it is one hundred and twenty feet from end to end), with fine oak-panelled walls as a becoming background for the exquisite colourings of the porcelain. Surely the Chinese and the Persians remain the two most consummate colourists in the world of art?

On the Sunday of my stay I spent several entrancing hours in the Long Gallery, while my enthusiastic host showed me the principal pieces and expounded learnedly their history and æsthetic merits. He had the born collector's tender way of handling each piece as though he loved every inch of it.

One feature of Littlecote gave me the go-by, and that was the Ghost; but, then, I never would see a spook! Ever since 1589, the Littlecote Ghost has wandered about the house o' nights bearing a crying baby in his arms. He was—or, it might be more polite to say, is—a gentleman called William Darrell, justly nicknamed by his disapproving neighbours "Wild Darrell" because of his loose behaviour. One night

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he threw his illegitimate new-born baby boy on to a fire and roasted the hapless mite to death. When he was brought up for trial before Lord Chief Justice Popham, that astute representative of Tudor law and order let him off—with a caution (so to speak)—on condition that he should bequeath Littlecote to his judge. And this is the true story of how Littlecote came into the possession of the Popham family.

Mrs. Bevan had a real affection for me, and she was a woman who did not like many people. One morning during my visit she came early into my bedroom bearing a selection of summer hats and said: "I bought these while I was in Paris recently, and now I can't bear the sight of myself in any of them. *Do* choose. I should love to give you one." It was such a kind offer that I could not dream of refusing it, so sat up in bed and tried them all on in a gale of giggles. Just you try on hats with night attire and see if you don't look comic! In the end I chose a very pretty model, trimmed chastely with water-lilies, and it was much admired for two consecutive summers.

It was obvious at this time that Gerard Bevan was terribly worried and that his nerves were in a state of high tension. He walked up and down the lawn with me for a long spell, talking excitedly about his difficulties in the post-war slump. There are times when all a man wants is a sympathetic audience consisting of one female, and that a silent one; this I tried to be. "I'm up against it," he cried. . . . "This ghastly slump . . . but I won't give in. . . . I must pull it off in the end!"

On Monday morning, before leaving for London, I gave him a serious warning; told him that, although I was not a doctor, I could plainly see all the signs and tokens of an imminent nervous-breakdown. "Why don't you take a pull before it's too late?" I advised. "Cut out all business and

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vegetate here for a month. What does money matter compared with health ? ” Alas ! How easy it is for onlookers to give advice about the game ! G.B., white and drawn, replied : “ Of course, you’re right—dead right—but I can’t take my hand off the plough.”

Some months later I was horrified to read in the newspapers flaring headlines : “ Disappearance of G. L. Bevan,” “ City Equitable Fraud,” etc., etc. There comes a snapping-point for all of us and poor Bevan had reached his. He was a financial genius, but the big slump was too much, even for him. It was found that he had mixed up all the assets of the three big allied concerns, the City Equitable Fire Insurance Co., the Greater British Assurance Co., and the City of London Insurance Co. to such an extent that no human being save himself could make head or tail of the accounts.

Sir Richard Muir, Public Prosecutor, described Whitaker Wright as “ a man who had been hounded to death for having failed,” and much the same might be said of Bevan. So long as shareholders sit fatly, drawing enormous dividends (a City man told me that in days gone by Bevan had made as much as 200 per cent. profits for his followers) they never dream of questioning the probity of the concern, or the manner in which their high harvest is made . . . oh dear me, no ! But once let the show sag, they are all out like a pack of ravening wolves to drag down their quarry.

Bevan lost his nerve and with it his head, and bolted to the Continent. It always seems to me that our friends do not need us when they are on the crest of the wave, but rather when they go down into the trough. After reading of the flight I rammed my hat on to my head and hurried to the Bevans’ house in Upper Grosvenor Street, in case there was anything to be done for his wife. The front-door was opened

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with extreme caution and the toe of a boot, to the extent of one inch, through which aperture I assured the nervous footman of my identity and of my friendly intentions. "It's the Press, Madam," he apologized; "something awful it's been here!" I said soothingly: "I quite understand, and you are right to put your toe against the door. Here's my card: you shut the door and go and ask Mrs. Bevan whether she'll see me. I think she will." After a few minutes the footman, wreathed in smiles of relief, took me in to Mrs. Bevan's morning-room. I was her first caller. She is a very brave and capable woman, so I feel sure that her valiant spirit has surmounted the tragedy in her life.

Since that day I have often wondered how many of the "friends," who had accepted hospitality—partridge-driving in Norfolk; *musicales* at Upper Grosvenor Street, with such artists as Yvette Guilbert and Marie Hall to entertain the guests; dances, dinners and theatre parties; week-ends at Littlecote—from the Bevans while they were prosperous, went to visit Mrs. Bevan in her affliction?

CHAPTER XV

FOX HUNTING

. the Chase, the sport of kings, image of war, without its guilt.

W. SOMERVILLE (1675-1742).

FROM 1907 onwards I hunted with the Pytchley, Bicester, Grafton and Warwickshire Hounds, getting an occasional day with the Cottesmore and Quorn while staying with Lord Lonsdale at Barley Thorpe.

It is said that every woman has one man in her life, and certainly every rider has one horse. The horse in *my* life was an Irish hunter called Old Times (sired by Gay Reveller, the dam a half-bred mare), bought in Athlone on August 15th, 1907, from an Artillery officer, Captain Peebles.

Old Times had the most highly developed brain of any horse I ever saw outside a circus, and my theory was that this exceptional intelligence was the result of his having been treated more like a pet dog than a horse.

For instance, Captain Peebles rarely tied him up in the Athlone Barracks ; the door of his loose-box was left open part of the day, and he was wont to wander about the big Barrack Square just like a dog, petted and caressed by everyone he met. It was an incongruous sight to watch my small children making this big, powerful animal play "Hi, lost!" like a retriever, with a lump of sugar among the straw in his loose-box. One child would cover up Old Times's eyes while

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the other hid the sugar under the straw; then the word was given, and the dear old horse would snuffle around until he found the titbit.

The children could pinch and stroke and cuddle him in play, and even climb up one of his legs, like monkeys swarming up a pole.

When he was out at grass in the summer-time he would come to me across the field when I called to him, and I could take him for a walk along the road without a halter, provided I put my arm round his neck occasionally, so that he realized I was feeling sentimental.

People used to tease me about him, and say: "Why don't you take him indoors, and teach him to sit up and beg?" and I am convinced that, if a basket large enough to contain him could have been made, I could have trained him to lie in it during meals in the dining-room—opposite my two deer-hounds, two Aberdeens and a Jack Russell terrier—so thoroughly domesticated and affectionate was this adorable animal.

He looked the typical hunter of the old-fashioned sporting prints, somewhat thick-set, with the hogged mane and docked tail of those days, up to a great deal more than my weight of about eight and a half stone, yet a veritable easy-chair in his paces. The fences just happened under him: I never felt that he had made a conscious effort to jump them.

For some time I hunted him with the Pytchley, Bicester, Grafton and Warwickshire Hounds, in the big snaffle to which he had always been accustomed in Ireland, and he went faultlessly in it. His mouth and his manners were so perfect, and he knew so much more about hunting than most of the Field that I barely touched his mouth all day, bearing in mind the axiom: "Always remember that the bigger fool of the two is on top." Nevertheless, people came up to me

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repeatedly with anxious faces and warned me: "That watering-bridle may be all very well in your country, but in England it is risky not to hunt in a double-bridle." To this I would reply—in the mode of Socrates: "Have you ever seen Old Times put a foot wrong?" "No, but all the same there never was a horse that went well in a snaffle that did not go better in a double-bridle," they chanted. At last I realized that, in order to obtain peace in my time, it would be best for me to conform to the English idea. Accordingly a sort of miniature double-bridle was bought for Old Times, in which that wise animal went just the same because I barely touched that either. The English are absolutely right in theory, but once in a blue moon you get a hunter like Old Times who would have gone just the same with a strand of silk in his mouth.

There was a story told of this horse in Ireland that one day out hunting he jumped, by an unfortunate mischance, into a gravel pit, yet even then he never fell, but landed on all four feet.

When, in 1914, he became too old to hunt any more and was pensioned off, a ram grazing in the same field became his inseparable companion, and could never bear to be out of his sight. Even when the stud-groom exercised Old Times along the Northamptonshire roads, the faithful ram trotted alongside, much to the amusement of the neighbourhood. I have some photographs of this odd pair of friends—one is of the ram keeping as close as possible to the horse's leg at exercise, and the second is of the two in a field, gazing affectionately at each other. When in course of time the old horse had to be destroyed the ram fretted for a short while and then died—I like to think of a broken heart.

One of my peculiarities is to enjoy jumping in cold blood, and it was great fun to ride Old Times round a copy of the

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Olympia Horse Show jumping-course, constructed by the local carpenter, and put up on the flattest field in the district. All I had to do was to sit on Old Times's back ; reins were superfluous, and, as for suggestions on my part, anything of the sort would have been an insult to his intelligence.

A horse only jumps for one of two reasons—either because he enjoys it, or because he is a great gentleman : Old Times thoroughly enjoyed it.

Rowland Ward mounted a hoof for me as a relic, and the inscription reads as follows :

“ Old Times,”
a perfect hunter.
Never refused and never fell.
Hunted with the Pytchley 1907-1912.
He taught me to hunt,
Ethel Beddington.

To me it is a matter of great pride that Geoffrey Brooke—now Colonel commanding the 16th Lancers, and a star-performer at Olympia Horse Show—and I, learnt to jump on the same pony.

In the 'nineties I stayed at Canterbury with his mother, Mrs. Guy Wyndham, and one morning Geoffrey hoisted me on to the back of the children's diminutive pony, an experienced and long-suffering animal, which had initiated many beginners. It knew that its job was to jump the hurdle, but, unfortunately for me, it considered that its job was finished once the jump was over, so it stopped dead on landing. The inevitable happened, and, as Geoffrey put it : “ She shot neatly over the pony's head, and landed on her two feet, with the reins in one hand, exactly like a circus-rider ! ”

What a glorious country to gallop over is that Pytchley Hunt ! . . . A sea of grass, each fence more or less like the

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last, the take-off sound and very few surprises with the landing. Given a fast and big-jumping hunter, surely any fool can ride-to-hounds in the shires ? It seems to me that the countries which need brains of the highest type are those obscure and much-despised packs wherein plough-land, red-brick villas, allotments, wooden stiles, crabbed and hairy little banks, nasty blind ditches and patches of marsh, abound.

Colonel Charles Seymour, Master of the West Norfolk Foxhounds, tells a good story of a lady from the shires who came over to hunt in his country for the first time ; she was lost to sight for a long while during an excellent run, and, when at last she caught up with the hunt, Colonel Seymour asked her : " Where have you been all this time ? " she replied : " Oh ! I came to some plough ! "

In September, 1909, there came to stay with us at our Pytchley hunting-box, Fox Hill, near West Haddon, in Northamptonshire, the Marchese Calabrini, Master of Horse to the King of Italy.

Calabrini had an Irish grandmother and an obsession for horses—perhaps a natural sequence. It was a great grief to him that his Royal Master had not been designed by Providence to bestride a horse. " It is a disaster ! . . . His Majesty likes automobiles and discusses *Fiats* instead of horses. Imagine it ! " was his cry.

The Royal legs were so short that the seat in the saddle was necessarily precarious, and poor Calabrini went through many anxious hours training a charger till it was absolutely reliable for State occasions.

" It is nervous work and a terrible responsibility for me," he said. " If the animal so much as cocks one ear, off comes the King ! and then, who is blamed ? Calabrini, naturally. To break in a horse for His Majesty I have paper bags burst under its nose ; men fire off crackers, squibs and popguns all

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round it ; handkerchiefs of every imaginable hue are fluttered and flicked in its face ; it is pinched and pulled and tickled and squeezed until it is really crowd-proof and can be trusted to stand like a rock and to walk like an automaton." Had Calabrini lived a few more years perhaps he could have saved himself all that strain by buying the best horse in our splendid Mounted Police Force.

When I went on a motoring-cum-yachting trip in Italy with Shelagh Westminster (first wife of the 2nd Duke) in October, 1910, we went to see Calabrini on his native heath, and the dear little man gave us a regular circus with all the King's horses, carriages and men, in the Royal Riding School at Rome, only too pleased to have a really appreciative audience.

He had a parlour-trick which never failed to convulse British and Italians alike—an imitation of an Englishman singing an Italian song and one of an Italian singing an English song. It was a truly delicious performance.

One morning during Calabrini's visit to Fox Hill, we all rose at 3.30 a.m., gulped down hot *café au lait* from a thermos to stop the teeth chattering in our heads, and rode out into the pitch-black night on horses that must have thought us crazy. (The sagacious beasts were probably right.)

"This," I explained to Calabrini, "is that overrated amusement called cubbing." He was so thrilled with the Pytchley pack and Frank Freeman, the Huntsman, and the sea of grass surrounding us for miles, that I had my reward for all discomforts in watching his ecstatic face.

He was a very "white" little man. He told me (we always spoke Italian together): "Roman Smart Society makes fun of me—thinks I am dowdy and despises me because I am faithful to my wife."

"Ah!" said I. "It's not for nothing that you had an

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Irish grandmother!" and then waxed eloquent on one of my favourite theses—the utter fallacy of the truly *bourgeois* belief that vicious people are necessarily amusing, or, taking it the other way round, that respectable folk are automatically dull-witted. For my sins I occasionally run across really wicked people, and they are nearly all of them crashing bores, whereas most of the amusing men and women I know are perfectly clean-living, wholesome human-beings.

The hunting-priest in Ireland and the hunting-parson in England will soon become legendary figures, like St. Patrick and St. George. Father Carney, of Moate, stands out in my mind as the Irish and the Rev. Cecil Legard, of Cottesbrooke, as the English prototype.

Old Legard looked and dressed to perfection the part of the sportsman in an eighteenth-century print—bird's-eye neck-cloth, stock and all. Yet it was not all a pose, for no man of his day knew more about foxhounds, and he was asked to judge at hunt puppy shows all over the country.

Harry Bourke (brother of the 6th Earl of Mayo, who was assassinated in 1872, in the Andaman Islands, while Viceroy of India) rented Fawsley Park from Sir Charles Knightley for the hunting seasons of 1908 and 1909.

I rank old Harry among the dozen most amusing men and also as one of the finest *raconteurs* of Irish stories—both for quality and quantity—I ever met. To tell any story well is a rare gift, but to tell an Irish story well is rarer still—indeed very few Irish people can do it.

He was a huge man, John Bullish in appearance, and rode heavy, common-looking hunters that were up to his great weight.

He could remember the great Lord Beaconsfield tottering about on the arm of his faithful "Monty" Corry (Lord Rowton)—his greasy curls plastered on his forehead, his

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clothing eccentric, his appearance exotic—a dandy to the end.

Mrs. Harry Bourke, a Lambart of Beau Parc in the County Meath, was an attractive and eccentric woman. She kept a tame hare in a cage for some years (to my mind a cruel thing to do), and, when Harry died at a ripe old age, she plunged, with the wretched hare, into deepest mourning and tied large bows of black *crêpe* round its neck as well as on its cage.

A real type of the Heavy Brigade was old General Brabazon,* commonly known as “Bwab,” a tall, handsome Irishman from the County Mayo who had broken the hearts of countless fair ladies in his youth.

When I knew him he was getting on for seventy years old, yet the charm held, for he had the irresistible gift of making you think you were the only person in the world while he was with you.

He served in the 10th Hussars—that swagger regiment of whom it was boasted “The Tenth don’t dance!”—and up till the end he looked to the life the *beau sabreur* of cavalry. A keen soldier, he fought in the Ashanti, Afghan, Soudan and Nile campaigns, and finished his military career with a command of Imperial Yeomanry in the South African War in 1900.

Those two veterans, Harry Chaplin† and General “Bwab,” shared a hunting-box at Brixworth, near the Pytchley Kennels, for several hunting seasons before the Great War, and a grand old pair they made.

Harry Chaplin was the embodiment of the old-fashioned English country-gentleman, as straight as a die and as solid mentally as he was bodily. Though nearly seventy years old and riding at least eighteen stone, he was a magnificent

* The late Major-General Sir John Brabazon, K.C.B., C.V.O.

† Viscount Chaplin, P.C. (1841-1923).

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horseman and as keen to thrust to the front as any of the younger riders. It was nothing short of a miracle to me that his monocle always remained firmly fixed in his eye: he would gallop and jump, yea—and even fall—yet it never moved.

In his old age he became somewhat unwieldy, and it was a rare job to get him on to his horse. I once saw him climbing up a housemaid's step-ladder to reach the saddle, which struck me as a highly sensible proceeding.

When I was staying with Lord and Lady Lonsdale at Barley Thorpe in March, 1908, Harry Chaplin was one of the house-party. On the Sunday morning everybody was down to breakfast except the "Squire." "You'll see," said my neighbour, "in a few minutes the old chap will come into the room, looking exactly like F. C. Gould's caricatures of him as an elephant in the *Westminster Gazette*; shuffle across to the sideboard, peer through his eyeglass into one hot dish after the other, and then eat his way through the lot." And, sure enough, the prophecy came true, down to the last detail.

Born in 1841, he belonged essentially to the spacious days of Queen Victoria, when a sovereign sterling was worth twenty shillings, and the word "Bolshevism" was still in the womb of time. His father, the Rev. H. Chaplin, a fox-hunting parson, died when the boy was eight years old, and at seventeen he lost his mother, so by the time young Harry went up to Oxford he had succeeded to his uncle's immense fortune and was already his own master.

At Christ Church he was caught wearing hunting-kit under his surplice at a Cathedral service, which offence provoked the classic rebuke from Dean Liddell: "As far as I can gather, you seem to regard Christ Church as a hunting-box."

The love-story of Harry Chaplin's youth was as

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romantic as any film-plot, and I will perhaps be forgiven for repeating it.

Pursued by the match-making mothers in Society as a *parti* with looks and a considerable rent-roll, he fell in love, in the year 1864, with the lovely Lady Florence Paget, only daughter of the second Marquess of Anglesey, and one of the reigning beauties of the Season. She was so tiny that her nickname was the "Pocket Venus," and her exquisite figure showed to especial advantage on horseback.

They became formally engaged; congratulations and presents poured in upon them: invitations to the wedding were issued: the young Squire prepared Blankney (his country-place in Yorkshire) for his bride-to-be, and the little lady tried on her wedding-dress only a few hours before she jilted her betrothed with dramatic suddenness by walking through Marshall and Snelgrove's shop from the Vine Street entrance to the Oxford Street door, whence she eloped in a four-wheeler with that dissolute and irresponsible rake, the 4th Marquess of Hastings.

Retributive justice worked in the case of this unstable woman, however; she was miserably unhappy with her husband, who was ruined when Harry Chaplin's horse Hermit won the Derby in a blinding snowstorm in 1867, and it may truly be said of her that she spent her life in one long regret over her fatal mistake.

At the age of twenty-seven Harry Chaplin was elected Tory Member for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire, and became successively President of the Board of Agriculture—was there ever a man more popular with the farmers?—and President of the Local Government Board, and finished an honourable, if limited, political career in the Upper Chamber as Viscount Chaplin.

Harry Chaplin was a bit of a gourmand and habitually

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overtaxed his long-suffering digestion, somewhat to the alarm of his family. One evening during a ball supper at the Duchess of S.'s house, his partner exclaimed, gazing at the exquisite Grinling Gibbons overmantel: "Isn't the carving wonderful?" to which Harry Chaplin—his head well over his plate—replied: "Yes, and the cooking's first-rate too!"

His daughter, the present Marchioness of Londonderry, tells us in her Memoir of the Squire of Blankney: "He admitted at the close of his life that Providence intended him to be a huntsman rather than a statesman."

He died on May 29th, 1923, aged eighty-two years, having—to quote his daughter's words—"achieved the complete sum of happiness;" and the British nation realized that with him went a type such as we shall never see again.

One of the most beloved men in the Army and the hunting-field of his day was Lord Chesham (the 3rd Baron), nicknamed, for obvious reasons, "Fatty."

His military career was full of variety. He served in the Coldstream Guards, the 10th Hussars and the 16th Lancers, finishing as Inspector-General of the Imperial Yeomanry in the South African War.

Always *persona grata* at Court, he was made Master of the Royal Buckhounds (an office which entailed the invidious task of superintending the applications for the Royal Enclosure at Ascot Races), and Lord of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII).

In 1877, he married a daughter of the 1st Duke of Westminster, a lady gifted with the family charm of the Grosvenors.

When he hunted with the Pytchley he endeared himself to everyone in the country—as was his habit wherever he went—and I shall never forget the gloom that was cast over the field on November 9th, 1907, when he broke his neck jumping a small fence near the Daventry reservoir. On our

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stud-groom fell the sad task of helping to convey the body home, and, even then, he could hardly believe that life was really extinct.

By the roadside, close to the spot where Lord Chesham was killed, a simple monument was erected to his memory, bearing the inscription: "I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show any human being, let me do it now. Let me not neglect or defer it, for I shall not pass this way again." And he had lived up to these words.

One of my closest friends in Northamptonshire, in spite of the disparity of ages and the contrast in temperaments, was Blanche, wife of the 2nd Lord Ludlow. Her first husband was the 7th Lord Howard de Walden.

Very often when I meet an Anglo-Saxon or Scotch person for the first time I sense between that individual and myself a wall which has to be broken down; in some cases the wall is very thick, in others weaker, but demolished it must be.

At our first encounter, Lady Ludlow looked down her aristocratic nose, held her spine a shade straighter than before—all the rigidity of the poker with none of its warmth—put on what I call a "smell-face" and looked at me through a pair of lorgnettes. Now, all these symptoms of apparent superciliousness betoken shyness, self-consciousness—call it what you will—so, knowing that in reality *she* was terrified of *me*, I grinned disarmingly at her and said: "I've just had my appendix cut out and must not get on a horse for some months to come, so you and I will have to console one another, while all the rest of Northamptonshire talk hunting-shop."

Down came the wall; we discovered that her sister Mrs. Harry Fortescue and my mother had sung many duets together in their youth, and from that moment we were firm friends.

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Lord Ludlow was educated at Eton and Balliol, but you would never have suspected him of either. A heavy-weight, of the sort that rode even heavier than he weighed, he bought (chiefly from Messrs. Drage, of Chapel Brampton) very expensive, highly-bred hunters with big bone and perfect reputations.

He was cursed by nature with uncontrollable gusts of temper—perhaps a nerve specialist would have called his attacks of fury “brain-storms”—during which he said all manner of things that he clean forgot an hour afterwards. One Sunday morning in January, 1911, when I was staying with them at Lamport Hall, I went round the stables with Ludlow. Some trifle annoyed him; he went into a fit of rage, cursed every man within sight and gave notice to the stud-groom and the rest of the stable servants *en bloc*. When I got back to the house I told Blanche Ludlow of this cataclysmic disturbance, aghast at the idea of trying to replace all those servants in a week, but she said, with characteristically unruffled calm: “My dear, don’t worry! By luncheon-time he will have forgotten every word he said, and, as for the servants—they never pay any attention to his tempers.”

One of my greatest treats was to be driven to a Pytchley meet by Ludlow on his coach; here again, he only bought the best horses, and his spanking team was a great hobby with him.

Like many other highly-strung and undisciplined people, he frequently lost his temper out hunting and said rude things which required an apology later. One day during a run with the Pytchley, I jumped a fence while he was talking to friends some yards distant; half-way across the next field I heard the thud-thud of a horse’s hoofs behind me, and Ludlow, very heavy, hot and bothered, galloped alongside, shouting angrily against the wind: “You naughty little lady! You took my turn!” To be quite fair, this was mild language from His

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Lordship ; however, I was not going to stand it, so I screamed back : “ Don’t talk nonsense ! I’m not naughty ; and I’m not little, and I’m not . . . ” here I paused just in time, caught his wrathful eye and burst out laughing. The next thing was a guffaw from Ludlow : “ O you Irish ! You’re hopeless ! ”

His death was dramatic. One day he cursed the gardener for not having put up a certain stretch of rabbit-netting in the Park, so, while he was out riding, the man hastily repaired the omission. Ludlow, cantering home in the dusk, forgot that the wire fence would be there, failed to see it and rode straight into it ; over went the horse, and poor Ludlow broke his neck on the spot.

Since time immemorial there has been a great sympathy between the Irish and the Hungarian races, love of horses being their chief bond of union.

The first time I met Count Charles Kinsky, of mixed Bohemian and Hungarian stock, was on November 20th, 1911. The Pytchley met at Cransley, and we had a good run of fifty minutes over plough, in fine, cold weather. Kinsky and I rode together part of the long way back, and out of sheer mischief I talked nothing but German. After some minutes he looked at me in a puzzled way and asked : “ From what part of Germany do you come ? ” I laughed and confessed : “ Ich bin keine Deutschin : bin Irländerin ” (I’m not German : I’m Irish) ; and quick as lightning came his retort : “ Aber beinah’ dasselbe ! ” (Well, it’s almost the same thing !) Now, it must be borne in mind that there was no love lost between the Hungarians and the Germans, so he said this to pay me out for having pulled his leg.

Knowing what a long ride we had before us, I made him tell me from A to Z the story of how he won the Grand National in 1883 on Zoedone. She was a chestnut mare by

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Oswestry, built on faultless lines, 15.3 in height and very near the ground. She began her jumping career in the hunting-stable of Mr. Edward Clayton (commonly called "Uncle" Clayton) in Rutlandshire. I remember when I was staying at Barley Thorpe, Lord Lonsdale pointing out old "Uncle" to me with the Cottesmore as one of the greatest living authorities on the biting of horses. He was also a supreme artist at galloping a hunter very fast without apparent effort, and it was not until other riders tried to catch up with him that they realized what a pace his horse was going.

Charles Kinsky realized what a beautiful jumper Zoedone was ; she had already finished third in a Grand National, with Captain "Doggie" Smith up, so he straightway bought her, full of hope and ambition to ride her to victory in the big race in 1883. His faith in the mare was fully justified, for she fenced faultlessly all the way round the course, led the field from start to finish, and won the race by ten lengths.

"Till I die," said he at the end of this glorious epic, "till I die I shall never forget the sensation of looking round towards the end and seeing . . . incredibly . . . the next horse far, far behind me."

Charles Kinsky was the eldest son of Prince Ferdinand Kinsky and Marie, Princess of Liechtenstein, thus uniting in his person two of the greatest families in Bohemia and Austro-Hungary. His titles and orders had a highly romantic sound : Knight of the Golden Fleece ; the Spanish Order of Carlos III ; the Russian Wladimir Order ; Knight of the Austrian Order of Leopold ; Privy Councillor ; Chamberlain to the Emperor of Austria ; Hereditary Member of the Austrian House of Lords ; President of the Austrian Jockey Club ; Honorary Member of the English Jockey Club.

He always said that the happiest days of his life were those

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he spent in hunting with the Meath and the Pytchley. From 1911 till just before the Great War, he shared a hunting-box with Mr. George Lambton near Market Harborough. What wonderful riders they were, those two! . . . "to witch the world with noble horsemanship." But you realized the difference between their styles when they rode to hounds. Charles Kinsky was brave to the point of recklessness, whereas George Lambton had the Olympian calm and quiet judgment that show the perfectly finished rider.

Kinsky's hunters were the admiration of the Pytchley country—a country where good horses were the rule and not the exception—and we all grieved for him when Armageddon broke loose and they were taken for the British Army.

He fell sick soon after the Armistice, and died, at the age of sixty-one, of grief (I shall always believe) for the smashing-up of the British sporting life he had loved so dearly.

On Sunday, January 10th, 1909, as I was working peacefully at my album, the butler flung open the drawing-room door of Helidon House (near Daventry) and announced: "Mr. Ralph Cartwright; Mr. Charles Thompson; Mr. Sievier and Master Sievier."

Before we proceed with the business which brought them to me, I will say a few words about this trio of celebrities. Ralph Cartwright, of Edgcote, near Banbury, a lovely Tudor manor-house, was a well-known rider with the Bicester Hounds.

Charles Thompson, nicknamed "Bonnety Bob" because his mother at one time had owned a hat shop, was one of the bravest riders of his day both in the hunting-field and the show-ring. He had broken nearly every bone in his body, with the result that his limbs were all set at different angles. No horse was too wild for him; no fence was too big. A hard-bitten sportsman if ever there was one. His sister married in

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1895 the 6th Earl of Shannon, of Castle Martyr, Co. Cork, and the present Earl is "Bonnety Bob's" nephew.

Robert Standish Sievier was at this time rising fifty and already somewhat heavy in build. His career was nothing if not variegated : at nineteen he fought in the Kaffir, Zulu and Basuto Wars ; next he tried his luck for a short spell on the stage ; then he succumbed to the lure of the turf and became an owner-trainer. Determined to do the thing properly, he bought Sceptre, a yearling filly by King Edward VII's Derby-winner, Persimmon, out of Ornament, for ten thousand guineas at auction, and she rewarded him for his courage by winning the One Thousand Guineas, the Two Thousand Guineas, the Oaks and the St. Leger. He bought, also as a yearling, Duke of Westminster, for five thousand guineas ; sold him as an unbeaten two-year-old for twenty-two thousand guineas to Mr. George Faber, and then proceeded to beat him with Sceptre the first time he ran for his new owner.

It is perhaps as founder of the *Winning Post* that Sievier will go down to fame. This orange-coloured weekly was started by him in 1904 and for some years had a large sale. In each number there appeared an article entitled "Celebrities in Glass Houses" (an ominous title for those of a guilty conscience), which was a short—and in some cases—sharp sketch of one person. This feature caused much trepidation among the notorieties of the day, especially those who could least bear Sievier's searchlight.

To return to my narrative of a peaceful Sabbath-day. Seeing me featuring "To what am I indebted for the honour of this visit ?" Ralph Cartwright explained : "We heard that your tenancy will be up at the end of this season. Mr. Sievier wants a hunting-box for next season, so I brought him over to have a look at the house, if you don't mind." Now, my code is that the outgoing tenant should do all in his

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power to relet a house for its absent owner : I therefore made myself as pleasant as possible to my visitors.

Sievier *père* announced that he was suffering from a very severe cold (that was palpable, poor man !) and that he firmly believed in whisky as the finest cure. I agreed : “ Yes ; I’ve heard that before,” and promptly rang for the decanter. Then we chatted—and we chatted—and time went on—until at last I suggested politely : “ Shall I ring for the housemaid to show you over ? ” But no : it seemed that the party was not in the mood for it. After all, you know what you feel like with a heavy cold in the head.

I asked, tentatively—with one eye on the clock and the other on my next meal—“ What about having a look at the stables ? ”—the weather was fine and mild—and inside five minutes I found myself trying to sell to Sievier a hunter which suited neither my husband nor myself ; but the deal did not come off. When at length the visitors reluctantly departed, it was not before I had (A) exhorted Sievier *père* to have the adenoids of Sievier *fils* removed without delay (my sharp maternal eye detected that the youth was a mouth-breather) ; (B) administered a parting dose of cold-cure to the sufferer.

As the trio and the boy drove away my parting words were : “ And now, Mr. Sievier, the least you can do is to give me a lovely page in the *Winning Post* ! ” Alas for human ambitions ! So far as I see, and my Press-cutting Agency’s activities reveal, there has been no mention of me—either as a hostess of rare charm or as a coryza specialist—from that day to this in the orange-coloured weekly.

In all my hunting I have had only one bad fall. That was on March 5th, 1913, when there was a huge meet of the Pytchley Hounds at Crick, a fashionable spot in the cream of the popular Wednesday country.

The torrential rain of some days past had made the heavy

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Midland clay of that region into a sort of binding treacle, slippery as a toboggan-slide on the surface and soft as butter to sink into. Our stud-groom muttered warningly, as he tightened the girths on the impatient St. Patrick (my three-quarter-thoroughbred Irish hunter): "The going's very deep to-day, Mum," to which I replied, vaguely: "Yes: there'll be lots of grief." But the prospect did not disturb me, for man is so built that he thinks when he goes hunting that though lesser mortals may conceivably take tosses, he is gloriously immune.

The word went round: "There must be nigh on six hundred people out to-day," and, indeed, they seemed to me like six thousand when the vast Field squeezed through the gates on the way to the first covert.

Hounds found a fox and a grand run began. The last thing I remember was galloping across a large field, then, suddenly, a blank. Time stood still for a space. Next, out of darkness came a familiar voice with a strong American accent. "Gosh! that wuz a narra shave! I thought her neck was broken." . . . More nothingness . . . then the same voice, encouragingly, still from a thousand miles away: "Put your arms round our necks and we'll carry you up to the road!"

At this point I realized that we were progressing slowly towards the road, and my poor, benumbed brain, struggling to work efficiently in the blackness, began to think: "So I've had a fall and I am still fairly dotty; now I've heard that many people suffering from concussion become so *gaga* that they cannot remember (A) who they are, (B) where their car was to wait. I, on the contrary—though as near unconscious as makes no matter—will remain both executive and intelligent, and will show these two kind gentlemen, round whose necks I am so affectionately clinging—in a

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minute or two I shall doubtless remember whose is that familiar American voice—how bright I really feel in spite of appearances.”

I therefore began to repeat, just like a gramophone record turned on again and again : “ I’m Mrs. Claude Beddington and the car is at Crick.” The American voice, soothingly : “ Yes, yes : we know that.” My little recitation went on : “ I’m Mrs. Claude Beddington and I left the car at Crick.” . . . “ Say ! don’t worry about anything : jes’ lean on us and don’t talk.”

However, I continued my chant, thinking with much cunning : “ At all events these men will never be able to say of me, ‘ The poor soul was absolutely idiotic when we picked her up.’ ” Another curtain fell . . . the clock stopped once more and with it all the struggle to maintain my standard of efficiency.

At length, after what seemed an eternity, I awoke from my long slumber to find myself alone, lying on a very hard sofa in the huge library of a perfectly strange house. Here I remained quite happily for a while, without an ache or a pain, gradually “ coming to,” until an unknown lady came into the room, explained that I was in Lord Henley’s house, Watford Court, helped me into an anonymous car and sent me home.

Half-way back it dawned upon me, for the first time since my accident, that I might have sustained some injuries. I then caught sight of a swelling which looked like a golf-ball on my right thumb.

“ . . . Wonder whether that means no more piano ? ” shot like a pang through my bemused brain. They say that the first thought of a woman after an accident is : “ Am I disfigured for life ? ” but this never occurred to me till I got home and gazed in the mirror at what I was pleased

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to call my face. What portions of it were not obscured by mud and blood had turned black and blue, like a stained-glass window : one eye had closed completely and the other looked very dissipated.

The children's nurse sent off a groom post-haste for the local doctor, who seemed incredulous—small blame to him—when I declared that I had not so much as a headache. He warned me that, however thick my skull, there was such a thing as delayed shock, and left me to eat and sleep for at least three days by the sole illumination of a night-light.

This is how Mr. Loney, the kindly American who picked me up, and who met his death so tragically in the sinking of the *Lusitania*, described my accident : “She was galloping hell for leather . . . the going was very deep . . . the horse put its foot into a hole and couldn't save itself at that pace . . . did a regular somersault . . . she pitched on her head just clear of him, so he didn't roll on her. When I got up to her she was black in the face, nearly asphyxiated by the mud in her nostrils . . . her nose was bleeding . . . well, ye know, ordinárilly she's a vurry pretty woman, but on *that* occasion she looked *pahsitively plain* ! ”

So many ladies took tosses that day that some wag christened it : “The day of the Fallen Women.”

CHAPTER XVI

MASTERS OF HOUNDS

BAD language in the hunting-field is the prerogative of all Masters of Hounds, and so long as they show good sport, none of us mind it. The Master with the richest vocabulary of his day in all England was that splendid sportsman of the old school, the 18th Lord Willoughby de Broke of Compton Verney, who reigned over the Warwickshire Hounds from 1876 till 1900.

One day out hunting a stranger incurred his wrath, and, according to his wont, he cursed the luckless fellow for several minutes without repeating himself once. The victim remained calm and silent, waited for His Lordship to come to a full stop, and then said : “ Yes, yes : that’s not too bad, but I’ve been hunting in the Meath, and after John Watson *you* sound to me like the twittering of a sparrow ! ”

Another time a young farmer came out on a dun-coloured hunter—we call it a “ shan bui ” in Ireland. When the pair caught the Master’s eye, he roared, “ Hi ! you there on the cow ! Open this gate, will you ? ”

He married Miss Smith-Barry from the County Cork, and their son was Master of the Warwickshire Hounds from 1900 onwards. Far from being a hunting maniac with no ideas in his head beyond a horse and a hound, the 19th Lord Willoughby took a deep interest in politics—he was elected Conservative Member for Rugby in 1895, and fought

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on the side of the "Die-Hards" against the Parliament Bill—as well as in literature and the serious drama.

He had a typical actor's face, clean-shaven, intelligent and mobile of feature, and his mordant wit and sly sense of humour peeped out at times. I chortled over the cuts, thrusts and parries between him and Mr. Winston Churchill in their speeches at the Newspaper Press Fund Dinner in 1923, and our Chairman, the Prince of Wales, laughed as heartily as any of us. It is surely one of the finest features in the English political world that men who disagree on all points in their public life may tilt at each other with perfect good humour and chaff one another unmercifully in private. No bones are broken in the process and there is no ill-feeling between the parties. Is this big-mindedness the result of our Public School system of education, which teaches very little out of books but everything that makes a gentleman?

Whenever I wanted to show to a foreigner the ideal picture for seat, hands, figure and general appearance on a horse of a man riding to hounds, I pointed out Lord Annaly—not without an extra thrill of pride in the fact that he was Irish.

Luke, 3rd Lord Annaly, was Master of the Pytchley Hounds from 1902 till 1914, and his Huntsman was that marvel Frank Freeman, the two making an ideal combination.

Frank Freeman lived and breathed for the Pytchley Hounds and their hunting. A typical story is told of his devotion to his job. One evening after a blank day with the Pytchley, the Master went to the Kennels, found Freeman deeply depressed and even more laconic than usual, and asked him: "How is that new First Whip getting on?" Freeman replied: "Well, m' Lord, I don't think much of him: I heard him *whistling* in the Kennels this evening!"

Freeman rode with a much shorter stirrup than the other British men-to-hounds of his day, more like the Continental

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horse-show crack-riders, and his seat was a loose one, so that he parted company with his horse fairly frequently. He had that rare gift of making his horses gallop fast with no appearance of undue hustle; in fact, even when he was going at full speed he appeared to the casual observer to be lolloping along. When Freeman was on a horse, the animal looked grateful to him for riding it.

Freeman had a unique advantage over most other celebrated Huntsmen in that he was appointed to the Pytchley Pack at the early age of thirty-two, while he was still at the top of his form, with all his riding life before him and his nerve unimpaired. There have been, and still are other great Huntsmen, but many of them started the job as elderly men, possessed of much experience—let us acknowledge—but lacking that indefinable quality of youth which gave Freeman his peculiar dash.

Lord Annaly said to me: “No man can ride really hard over the Pytchley country for more than five consecutive years: at the end of that time his nerve is bound to go.”

He was one of the handsomest men of his time and broke many hearts in his day. His home, Holdenby Hall, immortalized in Whyte-Melville's poems, is a picturesque Tudor building of that almost apricot-coloured Northamptonshire stone, friable and delicate for wear, but beautiful to look upon.

Lord Annaly, Freeman and the Whips wore dark red hunting coats of a much nicer hue than the conventional pillar-box scarlet. The white collar of the Pytchley Hunt is a much-coveted distinction, which the Master has the right to bestow on a select few, such as landowners and especially favoured visitors to the county—both men and ladies.

The family of Annaly enjoys the honoured friendship of our Royalties. Not only was the 3rd Lord Annaly

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Lord of the Bedchamber to the then Prince of Wales, and later Permanent Lord-in-Waiting to King George V., but his son, the present peer, and his pretty wife (daughter of the 6th Earl Spencer) are among the most intimate friends of the Duke and Duchess of York.

In November, 1912 and 1913, I stayed with Captain and Mrs. Tommy Burns-Hartopp at Dalby Hall, near Melton Mowbray, for the opening meet of the Quorn; in pre-war days a heartening sight such as only England could produce, the men in their hunting-pink and the ladies riding side-saddle—the only way, to my mind, for a lady to sit on a horse. My gorge rises when I see these modern females riding astride, looking like a cross between a groom and the principal boy in a pantomime.

Tommy (whose real name is James) Burns-Hartopp succeeded Lord Lonsdale as Master of the Quorn Hounds from 1898 till 1905, when a severe hunting accident put him out of action for a while. Endowed with an excellent memory and an acute sense of the comic, his reminiscences of the Melton Country over a period of many years would fill a good-sized volume: unfortunately for the reading public, however, the most amusing incidents are precisely those which we cannot print.

He says: "In my experience of hunting, women are divided into two classes: those who say, 'Whoa, pet! Whoa, pet!' and those who cry, 'Let me come!'"

His surname was originally Burns (a fact which accounts for his Scottish accent), and he took the name of Hartopp on his marriage, in 1894, to Miss Florence Hartopp, of Dalby Hall. They have two daughters, who worthily uphold the sporting traditions of the family. Even as children they looked after and hunted a pack of bassets. I am glad to think that the odds were usually on the hare.

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Tommy Burns-Hartopp is about six feet five inches in height and makes a splendid landmark at a crowded race-meeting. He must have looked a fine figure of a man in the uniform of the Royal Horse Guards Blue! His wife—a perfect picture with her snow-white hair and bright blue eyes—is, by way of contrast, minute.

The most picturesque figure in the sporting world of our day, now that Lord Ribblesdale is dead, is Hugh, 5th Earl of Lonsdale. Supreme in the world of horses and hunting, he is the idol of the British sporting crowd, and, in the event of a revolution in this country, his head would remain on his shoulders when all his fellow-peers had been decapitated.

English on his father's side (he is the son of the 3rd Earl of Lonsdale) and Irish on his mother's (she was a Caulfield from the County Roscommon), he has inherited both the Anglo-Saxon capacity for organization and the Celtic imagination.

His romantic title of Hereditary Admiral of the Coasts of Cumberland and Westmorland gives him the right to fly the White Ensign of the Royal Yacht Squadron. Another mediæval-sounding title of his is Lord Warden of the West Marches. He owns large properties in Cumberland, including coal-mines at Whitehaven, a seaport which was actually shelled by a German submarine in 1916. This was an ungracious gesture on the part of the Germans considering what a close friendship there had been between Lord Lonsdale and the Kaiser.

Lord Lonsdale was one of the finest horsemen of his generation. He had all the attributes which go to make a first-rate rider to hounds: perfect hands, good judgment, great courage, an uncanny eye for a country and a thorough understanding of horses, hounds and foxes.

He expounded to me his theory about scent, that most



Photo : Hailey, Newmarket

THE EARL OF LONSDALE ON HIS HUNTER, "MARBLE"

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perplexing, unaccountable thing, which has baffled followers of the fox since the beginning of time. (By the way, there are still just a few mysteries left unsolved even in this super-scientific age: (1) no naval architect can foretell whether his ship will be steady or not; (2) nobody knows what produces good acoustics in a room; (3) there lives not the expert who can prophesy correctly the success or failure of a play.) Lord Lonsdale's theory is this: that the scent is *always* there, but that it varies in level from the ground—at times floating low down, in which case only the hounds get it; at other times rising so high that it may be above the heads of the riders.

There is an old Spanish proverb which says: "The fox knows much, but more he that catcheth him." Lord Lonsdale knows more.

As original on horseback as off it, he has a seat quite unlike that of any other man: he rides with the longest stirrup ever seen in modern times, so long that his legs are almost straight. He reminds me of that magnificent bronze sculpture in Venice of the Italian General, Bartolomeo Colleoni (1400-1475)—surely the finest equestrian statue in the world.

When some of the feebler spirits (such as myself) ride, the old English saying might apply: "The horse thinks one thing, and he that rides him another." Not so with Lord Lonsdale; he and his mount are all-of-a-piece.

From 1893 till 1898 he was Master of the Quorn Hounds, with the renowned Tom Firr as his Huntsman, and set a standard of magnificence during his reign which few, if any, who followed him could keep up. The Master and Firr and the Whips wore the special dark red coats affected by the Lowther family, and all rode long-tailed, hog-maned, thoroughbred chestnut hunters of unblemished reputation and fabulous value.

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During the Great War Lord Lonsdale took on the Mastership of the Cottesmore Hounds for a while, and thereby tided them over a trying time.

To the number of Lord Lonsdale's adventurous exploits there is no end, but one daring feat in particular has always captivated me. While out hunting near Great Dalby in Leicestershire, his horse jumped a double flight of posts-and-rails with a quickset fence in between. The ground covered by the animal in its leap measured thirty-eight feet six inches in length. Some admiring friends gave him a picture of this prodigious jump and it was hung in Barley Thorpe.

I have often stayed with Lord and Lady Lonsdale at Barley Thorpe in Rutlandshire, and met many interesting fox-hunting folk while there. Austin Mackenzie, late Master of the Old Berkeley and the North Pytchley, one of the best judges living of a hound ; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mildmay (now Lord and Lady Mildmay of Flete) ; Lord and Lady Castle-reagh (now Marquess and Marchioness of Londonderry) ; Lady Ethel Wickham (sister of Lady Lonsdale) ; Lord Algernon Gordon-Lennox (son of the 6th Duke of Richmond), an immaculately tailored old beau, and his pretty flaxen-haired daughter, Ivy (now Marchioness of Titchfield) ; Lord Cholmondeley, nicknamed "Rock" (father of the present peer) ; Lord Dalmeny (elder son of Lord Rosebery) and his first wife (*née* Grosvenor) ; Major (now Sir Joseph) Laycock and his wife (granddaughter of the 2nd Earl of Listowel) ; Lord Herbert Vane-Tempest (son of the 5th Marquess of Londonderry) ; the Honourable Lancelot Lowther (younger brother of Lord Lonsdale) and his wife (*née* Sheffield) ; Lord Willoughby d'Eresby (now Earl of Ancaster) and his handsome American wife, who would make a splendid model for a picture of Cleopatra ; Harry Chaplin (later Viscount

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Chaplin) ; Colonel Brocklehurst (later Lord Ranksborough), a very good-looking man and a picture on a horse ; and Mary, Lady Gerard (*née* Milner), a fine rider and a marvel at schooling young hunters. I well remember her coming out one morning with the Cottesmore Hounds on a green four-year-old which sidled crab-wise along the road. She had an ugly seat on a horse, bunched up in the saddle, apparently crooked, yet she was a real artist with marvellous hands.

I said to her : “ If I asked you to pick the two best hunting countries in England, which would you choose ? ” She replied : “ A Warwickshire Thursday and a Quorn Friday.”

She had a curious habit of speaking in a very low voice, almost a whisper, which gave you the impression that she was telling you important State secrets.

When the Great War broke out Lord Curzon of Kedleston took the King of the Belgians’ children, and Lord Lonsdale housed His Majesty’s horses and carriages. These I saw in February, 1915, at Barley Thorpe, where, needless to say, they were completely eclipsed by my host’s splendid turn-outs.

His carriages and motors are all painted a brilliant canary-yellow which comes from China : it is the colour of the Imperial Dynasty and you can see it in some Oriental china. Nothing more harsh than a silk handkerchief may be used to polish these gleaming equipages.

All the animals on Lord Lonsdale’s estates must conform to his family colour (there is a mullet or on his Arms), so the horses and mules are chestnuts ; the spaniels are liver-coloured ; the retrievers are golden ; the cats are sandy ; the cattle are Red-Polls ; the pigs are Tamworths ; the fowls are Buff-Orpingtons ; he has canaries in his study ; and even His Lordship’s whiskers are the correct colour.

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In February, 1910, Lord Algy Gordon-Lennox and I went out from Barley Thorpe to watch Lady Lonsdale hunting her own pack of black-and-tan beagles. She has all the sporting instincts of the Gordons (she is a sister of the present Marquess of Huntly), and, despite the handicap of indifferent health, her pluck has enabled her to enjoy a large measure of outdoor pursuits.

Once while I was staying at Barley Thorpe, Lady Lonsdale had occasion to go up to London for the day, so bade me act as her proxy and receive two men guests, due to arrive by train that afternoon. "The one that looks like Mephistopheles is Sir Blank Dash," were her parting words. To my discomfiture both the gentlemen bore a distinct resemblance to the Devil, so I had to disentangle them later.

In March, 1915, I stayed with Lord and Lady North at their beautiful Elizabethan home, Wroxton Abbey, near Banbury in Oxfordshire. It is hard to believe that dear old Lord North (11th Baron) was born so long ago as 1836 (the year before Queen Victoria succeeded to the throne), for he is as hale, hearty and jolly as many a man of half his age—more power to him !

He belongs to the type of sporting country-gentleman which will soon be as extinct as the Dodo, thanks to the Great War, crushing taxation and modern conditions generally—the type of Harry Chaplin, the 18th Lord Willoughby de Broke, the present Earl of Lonsdale and such products of the Victorian age.

Lady North's father, Commander Howe Cockerell, R.N., was a cousin of the handsome Frederick Pepys Cockerell, who married my beautiful aunt, Mary Mulock. Lady North's sister, Theresa, married the 19th Earl of Shrewsbury and became the mother of the Marchioness of Londonderry and Viscountess Helmsley (Muriel). All these Cockerell ladies

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were executive and masterful-minded, with very strong personalities.

One morning during my stay Lord North paraded his Basset Hounds on the lawn in front of Wroxton Abbey, and the sight was one of those sporting pictures which only England can produce. On October 5th, 1927, this Grand Old Man of the hunting field celebrated his ninety-first birthday by following his Basset Hounds in a small car ; his only regret being that a hunting accident when he was eighty-one prevented him from riding after the pack.

CHAPTER XVII

I SIT FOR MY PORTRAIT

ONE of the most interesting men in London to-day is that great connoisseur, dealer and patron of the arts, Sir Joseph Duveen.

The Duveen family is of Dutch descent, and the story of the origin of their dealings in antiques is a real romance of commerce. In 1860 Sir Joseph Duveen's father, Joseph Joel Duveen, sent his son Henry, aged twelve years, from their humble home in Holland to the United States in charge of two carpet-bags filled with Delft blue china. The boy landed in Boston, and, young as he was, soon found a market for his wares, which were speedily bought by local architects anxious to adorn the interiors of the new houses they were constructing. Indeed, the contents of young Henry's two carpet-bags were sold so soon that he wrote a letter (he could not afford a cablegram) to his papa, three-quarters in Dutch and one-quarter in English, asking for more china to be sent out to him from Amsterdam immediately. "I think," wrote the prophetic youth, "there is some big business to be done here." This historical document is in the family archives.

The Delft vases from the two original carpet-bags cost Duveen *père* 5s. apiece, and young Henry sold them to the Bostonians at from £3 to £4 each. Now, finance is not the strong point of the Celt, but even I can grasp the fact that the

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Duveens were making a clear profit of between 1100 and 1500 per cent. on these transactions.

The vast possibilities of dealing in antiques were thus borne in upon the Duveen family, and they first began business in a big way when they bought the celebrated Magniac collection of old furniture in 1890, when the owner failed financially.

If only those foolish *poseurs* who worship the antique merely because it is antique, who fill their houses with worm-eaten junk, creaking chairs on which nobody dares to sit, fragmentary commodes whose drawers do not draw, spotted mirrors whose surface no longer mirrors, tottering tables that overbalance on the smallest provocation—if only these misguided collectors of so-called museum-pieces could hear Sir Joseph Duveen, the king of art-dealers, hold forth on this subject, they would suffer a severe shock. “Three-quarters of the old things in the world at this moment ought to be burnt!” he cries. “Be content with a copy of a fine antique chair or table, provided (1) it is a first-rate piece of work; (2) you have not paid the price of an original. Why martyrize yourself and suffer tortures of discomfort in a hard, high-backed chair merely because it is of the correct period? On the contrary, buy the most luxuriously padded armchair that Tottenham Court Road can produce, cover it with a beautiful material that will harmonize with your room, and lean back in real comfort while you read the evening newspaper.”

In days gone by, the Duveens lived at Hampstead, and the male members of the family drove daily to business past a certain antique furniture shop, on their way to the firm's showrooms in Bond Street.

One day Joe and his brother, in a mischievous mood, hatched a plot against their uncle; they took one of the most valuable china vases from their Bond Street collection to the

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proprietrress of this antique shop, arranged that she should place it in a conspicuous position in the window, where their uncle could not fail to see it on his way to the West End, primed her with instructions that when he came in—as he surely would—to ask its price, she was to answer: “Ten pounds,” and then awaited developments.

Everything came to pass as they had planned; the uncle’s eagle eye spotted the beautiful vase as he drove along, he got out of his cab, went into the shop, asked the price of the vase, was told £10, and that same evening attacked his nephews with gusto. “Well, really! How you boys can drive to Bond Street every day and miss a lovely piece like that! Where are your eyes? Why! it’s one of the finest Oriental vases I ever saw,” and so on. History does not relate what the uncle said when his nephews ultimately confessed their leg-pull.

It’s a wise dealer knows his own wares.

On April 14th, 1905, Joe Duveen showed me round old Mr. Pierpont Morgan’s home at the corner of Prince’s Gate, (now the American Embassy), where was housed in an all-too-cramped space the world-famous collection of pictures, tapestries and miniatures. There were the panels painted by Fragonard for Mme du Barry, price £250,000; the “Colonna Madonna” by Raphael, price £100,000; Gainsborough’s portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire, price £30,000; the Mazarin Tapestries, price £100,000; the “Golden Gospels,” given by the Pope to Henry VIII; and drawers upon drawers crammed with priceless miniatures.

Once upon a time a Duveen went to some seaside town in England to find a furnished house for his children’s summer holidays. In one of the houses he inspected he noticed five perfect Sèvres china vases on the drawing-room mantelpiece, told the owner that he would like to buy the house and its

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contents outright, put through the deal, and subsequently sold the Sèvres set at a huge figure to a millionaire collector.

People with judgment and courage like that deserve every penny they make. The general public has no pluck, cannot "take its own line," to use a fox-hunting expression, and waits for the Duveens of this world to "give it a lead." Sir Joseph declares—and he is right: "If I put in my Fifth Avenue show window a priceless bronze, labelled 50 dollars, not a soul would so much as inquire about it."

One of Joseph Duveen's greatest patrons was Henry Edwards Huntington, who owned an unrivalled collection of 60 pictures of the British School, 59 of which were sold to him by Duveen. Among these treasures were Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the "Tragic Muse"; Gainsborough's "The Cottage Door"; Sir Thomas Lawrence's "Pinkie," bought at a Michelham sale in 1926 by Duveen for £77,000, and Gainsborough's "Blue Boy," bought from the Duke of Westminster in 1921 for £150,000. Ninety thousand people went to see this picture when it was exhibited at the National Gallery for some weeks before its departure for America. Sir Charles Holmes, Director of the National Gallery, wrote in pencil on the back of it, *Au revoir!* One day Duveen asked Mr. Huntington: "Why don't you have a catalogue de luxe made of your collection?" Mr. Huntington fought shy of the idea, so Duveen, with characteristic generosity, said: "Very well, then! I will have one made at my own expense." This exquisite catalogue cost £2,500 to produce, and the reproductions of the pictures are so beautifully engraved that they are worthy of being framed and hung upon the wall as works of art. The owner took 250 and Duveen 250 copies of this catalogue, one of which I am proud to own.

H. E. Huntington's career was one of the meteoric sort

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which dazzle simple souls like myself. Born in New York State in 1850, he began business life as a village ironmonger ; then he became a lumberman in Virginia ; later he tried his hand at railways, and built at Los Angeles the finest system of tramways—urban and inter-urban—in the United States ; he also made a huge fortune out of real estate.

Money always seems to come to those who already have mounds of it : his uncle, old Colis P. Huntington, left him £2,000,000, and his second wife (who was his uncle's widow) was worth £5,000,000, so between the two of them they had over £10,000,000 on which to scrape along.

Luckily for his countrymen, Henry E. Huntington loved beautiful things. Besides his famous picture gallery, he owned one of the finest collections in the world of rare books and original manuscripts. Dr. Rosenbach had *carte blanche* to buy for him, and we all know what that gentleman can bid up to when he is let loose at a big book-sale. Huntington bought celebrated libraries *en bloc*, both in America and in England. Altogether he owned 100,000 rare volumes, including 25 Caxtons ; several first editions of Shakespeare ; the Ellesmere manuscript of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" ; and a Gutenberg Bible, which cost him 50,000 dollars.

His library was valued at about £2,000,000 and his pictures at about £1,000,000. All these, together with his wonder house, "San Marino," near Pasadena, in California (designed and decorated by Sir Charles Allom), became the property of the United States on his death in 1927. He did everything on a big scale. In his gardens there were 15,000 specimens of cacti and a huge canyon full of azaleas and rhododendrons, with an elaborate system of overhead pipes for keeping the air at the requisite moisture.

In July, 1908, Joseph Duveen gave me a real treat when he showed me, at Bond Street, the celebrated Kann collection,

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which the firm of Duveen had recently bought for £1,000,000 at Mr. Kann's death. Kann was a millionaire Jew, resident in Paris, who all his life had bought only the finest works of art of all periods and all styles. The result was that his superb collection, housed in a palatial house he owned in Paris, became of world-wide renown, and when the old man died, all the big art dealers of Europe fought madly to buy it up.

Perhaps the gem of the collection was the famous Ghirlandaio (1449-1494) profile portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni, on which we have all been brought up, so to speak. The illustrated catalogue of the collection, published in several languages, cost the Duveen firm several thousands of pounds. Mr. Joe very kindly presented me with a copy, which is an artistic joy to me.

Sir Joseph Duveen's munificent gift of a wing to the Tate (wittily called the *Tête-à-tête*) Gallery is well known. He is the Mæcenas of pictorial art in England to-day.

The first time I ever saw Sargent was in the Nineteen-hundreds at a big dinner-party given at their Bryanston Square house by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wagg, a hospitable couple generally reputed to have one of the best chefs in London.

I confided in the gentleman who took me in to dinner—in those pre-war days we always went downstairs in couples, arm-in-arm—"I'm all of a-twitter to see the great Sargent, and I *do* hope we shall be up at his end of the table to hear him talk!" "Watch him eat is what you'll do this evening, more likely!" said my partner, damping my youthful enthusiasm. "He can put away more food at a sitting than any man in London." And I must regretfully admit the correctness of this prophecy, for my idol ate during the best part of two hours (dinners were lengthy in those days)

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with a steadiness and a concentration such as I never before or since saw equalled at a meal.

Later on in the evening I played the piano and he was most appreciative in his remarks. Music was a real passion with him, and it has been said that he himself was no mean performer on the piano.

Apparently, he had a gracious way with him of presenting, as a token of his gratitude, a portrait of the musician to one who had given him pleasure. I have seen wonderfully drawn charcoal heads by him of Gervase Elwes, that incomparable tenor-singer of Bach; of Percy Grainger, the Australian pianist with a head of hair like a yellow prize chrysanthemum; and of Mrs. George Batten, all of them artists he greatly admired.

In March, 1914, I arranged by letter and telephone that John Sargent should draw a charcoal head of me. I asked him whether he would like to come to see me at Seymour Street previous to the sitting, so that he should get to know my face beforehand; the answer (as they say in the House of Commons) was in the negative, and he explained how greatly he preferred not to behold his subject until the sitting. . . . "As you walk into my studio I make up my mind how I see you."

Feeling very strongly as I do on the subject of "dated" clothes in a portrait, I donned on this occasion a velvet classically draped evening dress (by Ospovat); Sargent looked at it, his head on one side, and said: "Very nice, but I think I'll leave out the dress entirely and just put in your row of pearls. You see the mere fact of your wearing a necklace indicates a fully clothed condition."

I condoled with him at the start that he should have to do a portrait of me in "black and white"—my colouring being my salient characteristic—and he said: "I am going to try



John L. Langdon

1914

MRS. CLAUDE BEDDINGTON

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my best to suggest your colouring in this portrait.” Only recently I came upon two of my guests, who had just seen the Sargent head, arguing heatedly at the front door, the one declaring that it was a coloured portrait, and the other denying it. I only wish that Sargent were alive to-day to hear this compliment to his art.

For years before I met Sargent I had heard alarming legends of his forbidding and fierce manner with the ladies : they said he was a confirmed misogynist ; that he was rude to his fair sitters ; that at times he even—like Georgie Porgie in the nursery-rhyme—made them cry, and so forth. Now, little as I can fathom women, I make claim to understand men through and through, and Sargent’s psychology I diagnosed thus : he was a shy man (*farouche* is the subtle French word for what I mean), and dreaded a flirtatious female as a hydrophobic dog dreads water ; thus, as I walked into the studio and shook hands, he realized in a flash (men have a sixth sense in this matter) that he need have no fear—flirtation being the fourth dimension to me—and from that moment all went well.

He was just like a schoolboy—keen, simple, vital, and modest as only great geniuses are. I was overwhelmed when he asked for *my* criticism of the portrait at intervals all through the sitting. He even said I must tell him whether he was to draw me with my mouth open or shut. I replied : “ *Shut*, for the love of goodness, because my friends all declare I never stop talking ! ”

Discussing various racial types—Irish, Jewish, and so forth—he waxed lyrical on one of his favourite sitters, Lady Rocksavage (*née* Sassoon), now Marchioness of Cholmondeley. . . . “ Sybil,” cried he, waving his right arm enthusiastically, “ Sybil is *lovely* : some days she is *positively green* ! ”

Whenever he thought my muscles ached from sitting still,

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he exhorted me to move about the studio, while he turned on his latest Spanish gramophone records for my special delectation. I really believe he loved music as much as he did painting.

I timed him over this charcoal head, and it took him exactly two and three-quarter hours from start to finish. With the charcoal in his right and a long French roll (the sort they sell by the yard in France) in his left hand, he would dash on some lines with the charcoal, rub out with the French roll, occasionally retreat to the far end of the studio and then almost run at the portrait.

I asked him why he had absolutely given up all oil portraits, and he explained how sick and tired he became of painting people. "Portraits must be a perpetual compromise with one's artistic conscience," said he. "The husband comes along and says: 'But, Mr. Sargent, my wife does *not* squint!'—or the fond mother implores: 'Can't you make my daughter's nose just a *leetle* more Grecian?' I simply couldn't bear it any longer, so I made a vow to stick to landscapes: landscapes can't argue with me! The only oil portraits I paint nowadays are wedding-presents, so, if you'll arrange to get married a second time, I'll give you one!"

Punch once published a delightful satire on Sargent's retiring disposition. It was a drawing of a gate outside a studio in Chelsea, and the caption ran: "No bottles. No circulars. No hawkers. No portraits. J.S.S."

While I was sitting to him, he asked: "May I tell you an Irish story?" (The tactful creature realized what acute torture it is to hear a story, which depends almost entirely on the subtlety of the brogue, massacred by a person who cannot speak with the right accent.) I said: "Because you're such a great artist . . . go ahead!"

Here is the story. An Englishman's car had a puncture

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hard by an Irish cottage. The rain was coming down (as usual) and the Englishman got very wet while he was putting on a spare wheel. The Irish peasant, with the traditional hospitality and good manners of the race, welcomed the traveller into his humble home, dried the wet clothing before his turf fire, plied his guest with hot tea and so forth. After a while the motorist asked, tentatively, "Would your wife mind if I smoked a cigarette?" "She would not," was his host's reply. "She's bin dead these fifteen yeers."

Encouraged by the success of this yarn, Sargent immediately capped it with another. "What poetic language your peasants use! An Irish friend told me that his cook, Biddy, bewailing the tribulations resulting from a burst boiler, cried: 'The Masther has me heart-shcalded askin' for his shavin' wather . . . the young leddies does be callin' for their baths. . . . I declare to God there's not as much wather in the house as would baptize a fairy!'"

Like H. B. Irving, Sargent took a deep interest in that gloomy subject, criminology, and was holding in his hand Voltaire's book, "*Les Lois Criminelles*," when the servant found him dead in bed.

In spite of hordes of admirers and would-be lionizers, Sargent remained to the last morose in company and awkward in a crowd; he was by nature an "unclubbable" man. I always felt that he was only at his ease—and therefore at his best—when alone with you, or perhaps in a room with only two or three people.

Sargent took infinite pains over a portrait, and sometimes had over thirty sittings before he was satisfied with the result. An illustration of the trouble he took over details is the fact that he once did fourteen finished studies of a single hand, so as to find what position would be the best for the portrait.

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On visiting the enormous exhibition of Sargent's works at Burlington House in 1926, I had two great surprises: (1) that he had covered so much canvas with paint; (2) that nearly all his portraits of women looked ridiculously *démodé* because of their "dated" clothes.

Some people say that Sargent is only a fashionable craze, but as yet there seems to be no sign of any slump in the value of his work. At the most sensational sale at Christie's on July 24th, 1925, 237 oil paintings and drawings by Sargent fetched the fantastic total of over £180,000. The psychology of a crowd is quite different from that of an individual, and people at this sale seemed to lose their heads, making the prices soar to unimagined realms.

Contemporary artists say that Sargent's oil paintings have already considerably deteriorated, because some of the paint—the brown in particular—has perished. It seems that—unlike the painters of olden times, who were meticulously careful with their materials—Sargent bought tubes quite indiscriminately from itinerant vendors who hawked their wares round the Chelsea studios.

Sir Charles Holmes, in his book, "Old Masters and Modern Art," says: ("Sargent's) rapid brush-work called for liquidity in the pigment. This liquidity he obtained with linseed oil, and, as all painters know, linseed oil if used too profusely tends to crack in drying . . . we need not wonder if a part of Sargent's work is already losing its primal freshness."

Another artist to whom I have sat was Laszló.

Philip Alexius Laszló de Lombos, born at Buda-Pesth in 1869, was always the pet of Royalties. He could easily write a book entitled "Monarchs I have known," and has had bestowed upon him enough diplomas, medals and orders to paper the side of a room.

He married in 1900 Miss Lucy Guinness, an Irishwoman

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with flame-coloured hair, and they have a fine family of five sons.

In March, 1915, I began making arrangements to sit for my portrait to Laszló. Unlike Sargent, he said that he would greatly like to come to see me before starting to paint me, so he spent an afternoon at Seymour Street listening to me playing the piano, absorbing the atmosphere of the *cinque cento* room, and discussing what clothes I should wear in the portrait.

In the end he decided on a picturesque cloak of old-gold velvet bordered with dark fur, dateless in style, like most of my garments.

Sitting to Laszló is great fun ; he has a tremendous sense of humour ; knows countless German stories, which, told with his quaint Hungarian accent, sound, perhaps, even more amusing than they would otherwise do ; and does imitations of well-known people which reduce me to a state of pulp.

One of his best impersonations was that of a certain pre-war millionaire Society "climber"—of the type that is the same height standing up as sitting down—arriving in her Covent Garden Opera box. She was painfully short-sighted and had to peer through a tortoise-shell lorgnette whenever she wanted to see beyond her nose. In Laszló's hand his paint-brush became a lorgnette and his palette turned into an opera programme. This lady was habitually wreathed in yards of pearls, and Laszló used to stumble over imaginary ropes of pearls while stepping into the imaginary box.

I had, too, a sitting to Orpen, though the portrait was never finished.

Sir William Orpen looks like a diminutive Irish jockey, and (while in my company) the accent is on the Irish.

When it was arranged, in July, 1915, that he should paint me, he said, in a despairing voice : " You'll *not* ask me to do you against a black background, *will* you ? " He had recently

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created a sensation at the Royal Academy with a marvellous full-length portrait of Lady Headfort standing against an ink-black background, since when his life had been made a burden by a procession of women all clamouring for their portraits with black backgrounds. I replied (much to his relief): "With my black hair? Never! You shall paint me against a silver background."

Orpen may have spent vast sums on "gaspers," but he certainly did not help to swell the profits of match-manufacturers, for he lit one "gasper" from the butt-end of the last, in an endless chain all day long.

He had, I found, an odd way of lighting his sitters. There was a mirror behind the subject's head, so that both sides of the face were illuminated—the very antithesis of Rembrandt's method, with its strong *chiaroscuro*.

I did not sit to him again. Soon after this he was taken up by Sir John Cowans, dressed in a khaki uniform, sent to paint soldiers and other celebrities in France and given the rank of a Major.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ROMANCE OF JOHN McCORMACK

WHILE I was staying with my parents at Ballycumber, King's County, in the summer of 1905, my mother said to me: "I hear the foreman of the Athlone Woollen Mills has a son with a lovely tenor voice; will you hear him sing, and then we can see what can be done for the boy?"

To this I replied: "A tenor voice off *this* bog? . . . Never! A boy with good hands on a horse, yes—but a singer? Don't you believe it!"

However, we finally arranged that the youth should come over to Ballycumber on August 12th for an audition. Now, it is manifestly impossible to judge a voice if you are accompanying it on the piano, so my mother played for him, whilst I sat at the farthest end of the room. Never shall I forget the thrill John McCormack's voice gave me that day, with its natural Italian colouring and true tenor quality. (Caruso's voice always sounded to me like a pushed-up baritone.)

It is difficult to convince Italians that McCormack has no Latin blood in his veins, and, truly, I can hardly blame them for their fixed conviction, since his voice just reeks of Italy, and his sensitive Irish ear has helped him to acquire an excellent Italian accent.

My executive mother, realizing that we had found a real Derby winner, so to speak, then set to work, and it was largely

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owing to her enthusiastic efforts at the start that McCormack was able to go to Milan to study with the great singing teacher, Sabatini. After some months of tuition, Sabatini said to his pupil: "Giovanni, you need not stay with me any longer; all you have to do now is to go out and make your fortune. With that voice the world is yours!"

In May, 1903, McCormack created a sensation when he won the Open Competition for tenors at the Feis Ceoil (National Irish Festival) in Dublin; but this was by no means his first appearance in public, for he told me: "My first paid engagement was in Sligo in 1900, while still at College, and I received the magnificent fee of five shillings." On this occasion he was fifteen years old.

In 1906 he was sacked from the cast of *The Vicar of Wakefield* by David Bispham, the baritone.

In 1907 Oscar Hammerstein, the German-Jewish-American operatic *impresario*, said that he had "no use for the young tenor" and suggested McCormack "should try Vaudeville" (the American word for music-hall).

In the spring of 1907 McCormack's *impresario* went to Mr. Pat Malone (manager for George Edwardes, of the Gaiety Theatre) to ask him to hear the young Irish tenor. Mr. Malone gave McCormack an audition and said: "There is no job for him with us, but I will put his name on our list."

A fortnight later a tenor in one of George Edwardes's productions fell ill, whereupon a telephone message came through to the *impresario* asking him to send along his young Irishman. The reply was: "Sorry! John McCormack is not available because he is making his *début* as Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana* to-night." It can be imagined what were George Edwardes's feelings later, when McCormack shot up to the topmost heights of musical fame, sang to greater

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capacity in America than any other artist—not excluding Caruso—and earned the biggest fortune ever made in his profession !

In 1907 and 1908 Mr. and Mrs. McCormack lived at a picturesque, old-world country house, “New Copse,” in Surrey, and there entertained week-end parties, including great singers like Vanni Marcoux (to my mind the king of diction on the operatic stage), Sammarco and Scotti.

McCormack, always keen about exercise, played a great deal of lawn tennis, also hand-ball, which may be described as the Irish equivalent of fives. Another favourite recreation was “putting the shot,” a weight of 16 lbs.

One of the charms of these week-end house-parties was that all the guests were free to do as they liked. Breakfast began at 10 a.m. ; luncheon was missed out, and at 3 p.m. a sumptuous tea was served—on the lawn in fine weather ; dinner, accompanied by the choicest wines (of which John is a real connoisseur) was eaten at 7.30 p.m., and then music was made, the like of which had never been heard in the Surrey Hills.

Queen Alexandra was a frequent visitor at Lady de Grey's house at Kingston-on-Thames, and nothing delighted Her Majesty more than to hear McCormack sing on the many informal occasions arranged there by the artistic hostess. In every instance Lady de Grey, with her usual thoughtfulness, sent her motor to Netherhall Gardens in Hampstead to fetch McCormack and to send him home again. He thus had the honour of singing to Queen Alexandra every summer from 1908 to 1914.

At his house in Netherhall Gardens, McCormack arranged a cocktail bar up at one end of the billiard room, and took especial pleasure in mixing the cocktails himself.

He had some wonderful pieces of furniture in this house,

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including a very fine bookcase left to him by his devoted friend and admirer, Sir John Murray-Scott, the Chairman of the Wallace Collection. From the first moment when these two men met, the closest friendship continued between them right up till Sir John's death. During his last tedious illness whenever he felt at a low ebb, he would beg McCormack to sing to him, and always declared : " John McCormack is my best physician and his voice comforts me more than all my doctors put together ! "

When McCormack sold the house in Netherhall Gardens with most of its contents, in 1919, Lord Inverforth bought one of the Steinway pianos, which had a highly decorative case, for five hundred guineas.

For some years past, McCormack has bought fine works of art. His best pictures, he says, are : *Portrait of a Man*, by Franz Hals ; *La Lettre*, by Greuze (this was formerly in Alfred Rothschild's collection) ; *The Clavering Children*, by Romney ; *Portrait of Mme Helleu*, by Sargent ; and *The Countess of Grafton*, by Gainsborough. " My most important piece of sculpture," he tells me, " is *Roméo et Juliette*, by Rodin."

Luckily for the music-lovers in the world, McCormack and Kreisler are firm friends, and a large number of exquisite gramophone duets for tenor and violin have been recorded by them as a result of their partnership.

McCormack—in common with almost every other singer of the day—disliked intensely a certain elderly *diva*. One night his wife and I went on to the stage at Covent Garden at the end of an opera in which John and this lady had been singing impassioned love-songs, both singly and together. Said John to me : " D'ye know that I was in me perambulator when that woman made her debut ? . . . an' while we have our arms round one another an' singin' love-duets, says

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she to me: 'John, I wish ye was in hell!' . . . Says I: 'I wouldn't mind the way *you* weren't there!'"

McCormack is one of the few men who have received from the United States the great distinction of the American Legion of Honour. He also has the French *Légion d'Honneur*, but perhaps the distinctions he prizes most highly are those conferred upon him by the Pope. He is a Knight Commander of St. Gregory; a Knight Commander of the Holy Sepulchre, a very rare papal distinction; and a Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

In his young days he was engaged by Mrs. Eckstein (a true lover of music) to sing at a wonderful *musical* she gave at her house, 18, Park Lane. I remember that the incomparable Yvette Guilbert was another delight in the programme that evening. McCormack began with the usual Italian *arias*, and then at the finish he sang—as only he can sing them—a group of Irish ballads, "My Snowy-Breasted Pearl," and the like. The audience waxed enthusiastic, and at this point I overheard a tiara-ed lady in front of me exclaim to her neighbour: "*How* well he imitates the brogue!"

When McCormack was twenty-one he married the love of his boyhood, Miss Lily Foley, an Irish girl with the typical blue-grey eyes and black hair of her race. Having no money wherewith to buy an engagement ring for his betrothed, he took a ring from the finger of his prospective father-in-law and gave it to Miss Lily. And now there's no money in the world would buy that ring from Mrs. John McCormack. She's a wonderful little woman in many ways, and—Glory be!—her husband appreciates her.

Not long before their marriage she was singing at the St. Louis Exhibition in the United States, when the place took fire. Realizing that the situation was fraught with peril, she kept her head and bravely went on singing as though

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there were no danger, thus averting a panic and a possible stampede. The authorities were so grateful that they presented her with a ring to commemorate their appreciation of her plucky behaviour.

The home life of the McCormacks is something to be envied : never was there a more devoted married couple nor a happier father and mother than they—indeed John always took the whole family about with him, on world-tours an' all. In 1926 he rented Moore Abbey, a fine estate in the County Kildare, from Lord Drogheda, and this they make their home.

Their son, Cyril, is a first-class shot, and, surprising to relate, has a lovely high baritone voice. In March, 1927, at one of the delightful musical parties given by Herbert Hughes (the gifted Irish composer and musical critic) and his charming little wife at the William de Morgan Studio in Chelsea, John McCormack asked me : " Would you like to hear that boy of mine sing ? " " Don't tell me that Cyril has got a voice ! " I exclaimed. " 'Deed he has . . . lovely quality . . . of course, quite untrained ; an', what's more, Gwen " (his daughter) " is a *coloratura* soprano and can sing up and down the scale, just like a bird. Now I'll get ahold of Cyril." He went across to the far end of the room, and I watched what was dumb-show to me. John asked Cyril if he would sing. Cyril declined forcibly, featuring panic at the bare notion of such a thing. (The room was full of professionals.) John took a pocket-book from his waistcoat and drew therefrom a £5 note. Still Cyril refused. Then John added a second " fiver " to the bribe, and young Cyril agreed to sing.

The boy was nineteen years old, and it brought back to my mind the memory of the first time I heard his father sing at Ballycumber at much the same age.

Cyril went to the piano, and, being too shy to face the

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audience, stood with his back to them and sang "Annie Laurie" quite deliciously. When he came to the *portamento* octave upwards on the word "la-ay" (in the phrase "I would lay me doon and dee") his father's face was a study, and with a wink at me, he said, "The same old thrick, eh?" When I remembered John's first fee of one guinea for a whole performance as a trained singer, it seemed that Cyril was doing very well to get a "tenner" for one song.

At this same party was Constance Collier, the famous actress. John told me: "'Twas Constance first took me in hand for stage-department. When I was a young fella I used to come on to the concert-platform loike this"—here he lumbered across the room like a bear walking on its hind legs—"but she taught me to hold me spine straight and me head up, and I've been grateful to her ever since."

I am delighted to think that he has "made good" under his own name. One of my pet subjects—on which I make impassioned speeches (if given half a chance)—is the preposterous craze for foreign artists in this country. It is so silly to make up your mind that a foreign musician must necessarily be superior to a British one. Of course, there are good and bad artists of all nationalities.

Here is a letter written to me by John when he was twenty-one years old, at a time when I was struggling to persuade the musical big-wigs to hear him.

12A, Torrington Square.

26/9/06.

Dear Mrs. Beddington,

I thank you so much for your kind letters and for being so good as to write to Tosti again on my behalf.

I have just written to him asking him to make an appointment to hear me.

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You will be glad to hear that I am getting on very well here in London.

Madame Liza Lehmann heard me and immediately engaged me for her opera, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, with David Bispham as barytone, and this week I am to be heard by Mr. Harry Higgins of Covent Garden, in view of a prospective engagement.

Thanking you for all your kindly interest and that you will "put in a kind word for me when you can,"

I remain

Yours truly

J. F. McCormack.

In the United States John McCormack gets ten thousand dollars (£2,000) each time he broadcasts (which works out at about £70 per minute, or £5 per note), but the British Broadcasting Corporation decline to pay him such a monster fee. He takes more money out of "His Master's Voice" Company in royalties on his gramophone records than does any other artist.

McCormack's kink for languages is uncanny. During his early training in Italy he picked up Italian with a perfect accent, and when he first sang *Lieder* in Germany, the natives found it hard to believe that he was not a German.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME BRILLIANT CELTS

IT was difficult to believe in the theory of the "compensating balance" when you considered George Wyndham, for he seemed to be the darling of the gods, and you felt sure that all the good fairies must have attended his christening. He had birth, beauty, brains, culture, charm, health, vitality, enough money never to have financial worries, and a "Peter Pan" personality to the very end. Whether he rode to hounds, or translated a Ronsard Sonnet, or applauded a red-nosed comedian, the same boyish zest ran through it all.

George Wyndham was born in 1863. On his father's side he was the great-grandson of the eccentric 3rd and last Earl of Egremont, while his mother was the granddaughter of the Irish rebel, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and the lovely Mlle Pamela de Genlis. He served in the Coldstream Guards till, at the age of twenty-four, he left the Army and began his political career as Private Secretary to Mr. Arthur Balfour, a life-long friend of the family.

In 1889 he married the lovely and saint-like Sibell, Lady Grosvenor (mother of the present Duke of Westminster), and the son of this decorative couple was quite the most beautiful boy I ever saw, with perfect Du Maurieresque features, black hair and grey eyes. Percy fought in the Great War with the Coldstream Guards, and was killed at Landrecies in 1914. I am glad to think that his father died before this.

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During the Boer War George Wyndham was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War, and, as an instance of his ready Celtic wit, I will quote the following incident in the House of Commons. In May, 1900, George, having replied to a question regarding the total of British forces in South Africa, the younger Redmond asked bumptiously: "Can the Honourable Gentleman tell us how many Boers there are?" "I certainly know of one," George murmured with his sweet smile in the direction of the questioner.

At thirty-nine he was already a Cabinet Minister. From 1900 till 1905 he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, during which time his greatest political achievement came about—the passing of the Irish Land Purchase Act.

Unfortunately for his own career, he got mixed up in a Devolution Scheme with Sir Anthony Macdonnell, Lord Dunraven and Lord Dudley (the then Viceroy of Ireland), was broken for it by the Orange Party and badly let down by Mr. Arthur Balfour. I saw a great difference in him after this tragedy and I don't think he ever got over it.

The Christmas of 1910 I spent at Eaton Hall with the then Duchess of Westminster, and George Wyndham was the life and soul of the party. There was a "tame" orchestra staying in the house for the week, and one evening I goaded them into playing Irish jigs, which inspired George to dance a wild impromptu solo "breakdown," to the loud applause of an appreciative audience.

He was kind enough to like my piano-playing, and I dined with him and his devoted old mother, Mrs. Percy Wyndham, at 44, Belgrave Square, twice during his last spring in England. Since the sole object of my going there was that he should listen to my playing, he did not invite any other guest: accordingly our meal on both occasions was *à trois*.

Knowing how *exigent* he would be once we left the dining-

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room, and that my only chance of hearing his wonderful talk was during dinner, I put all the necessary flies over him (to use dry-fly-fishing terms) during the meal, and a rare treat was the result. From long experience I knew that I only had to make a statement such as "To write perfect English one really ought to use a proportion of eighty per cent. Saxon-derived words to twenty per cent. Norman," to evoke a long and passionate discourse on the fallacy of my theory. Shakespeare would be flung at me in chunks. "Listen to this: 'The multitudinous seas incarnadine' . . . there are two Norman words to one Saxon—can you beat it?" And off he would go.

George had shown me Clouds a few weeks before, and made me promise to choose a Steinway grand piano for the house as soon as he returned from a brief visit to Paris. "But, wait till I come back," said he. Alas! I never saw him again.

In my mind's-eye remains a last vision on April 22nd, 1913, of his wavy, white hair, glistening like snow in the light of the Belgrave Square lamp-post, while he tucked the motor-rug round me and bade me a laughing farewell. "Don't forget the piano for Clouds!" cried he, as he shut the door of the car, and I waved good-bye to one of the most vivid and entrancing personalities that ever came into my life.

He died in Paris a few weeks after this at the early age of fifty, and they carried his mortal remains into the Chapel at his beloved Clouds, the last stone of which was completed just in time for his burial.

To Lady Gregory I owe much thanks, and my readers, perhaps, a grudge, in that she was the first person who put into my head the idea of writing a book.

We met at one of Sarah Macnaughtan's delightful Bohemian parties, in July, 1911, and towards the end of the

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evening I sat, both figuratively and actually, on a stool at Lady Gregory's feet and exclaimed: "I would give an eye-tooth to write a book!" She replied: "Well, why don't you?" And I said: "Because I know nothing whatever about the craft." Lady G. said: "That won't matter; just write as you talk."

Lady Gregory is the Egeria of the Irish Renaissance in Literature: to her the world owes perhaps the greatest flowering of beautiful English since Shakespeare and the other Elizabethan giants. Without her inspiration there would have been no Yeats, no Synge. And the world of literature would have been the poorer for their loss.

While I was sitting for my portrait to John Sargent, he told me about a conversation he once had with Synge. Sargent asked him: "Tell me, Synge, how did you get that gorgeous language you write?" Synge replied: "I put me ear to the crack in the flure." Now, what Synge meant was that he listened from his room in an inn on the Aran Islands (a wild spot on the extreme left-hand corner of the map of Europe) to the natives conversing in their own Irish tongue; he then turned it into English, and thus came by his magnificent style, with the special lilt that was the legacy of the Erse.

Lady Gregory was born a Persse of the County Galway, and knows her Ireland through and through. A grateful country ought to erect a statue of her during her lifetime (what the devil good is a monument to us after we're dead?), if only as an appreciative token of her sponsorship of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Well, maybe the Abbey Theatre is, after all, the finest monument to her great work.

Some years ago I saw her two plays, *Spreading the News* and *The Workhouse Ward*, acted by peasants at a remote spot in Western Ireland in a reclaimed cattle barn, faintly

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reminiscent of its late tenants. That was the real thing, and no mistake about it! The actors fairly wallowed in their parts, and—oh, joy!—had, for obvious reasons, no difficulty with their brogues, while the audience screamed itself hoarse with appreciation of every point and sally.

I never knew Mrs. Cornwallis-West until she was an elderly woman and had lost her great beauty, yet her personality was so vital and she still had such a youthful flash in her eye that it was difficult to realize her true age.

Never did a more impulsive, warm-hearted daughter of Erin step off her native bog on to English soil than when the exquisite Mary Fitzpatrick, daughter of an Irish parson and granddaughter of the Marquess of Headfort, was wooed as a girl of sixteen and won from the schoolroom in impetuous fashion by William Cornwallis-West, Lord of the Manor of Ruthin Castle in Wales, and of Newlands Manor in Hampshire.

I first met her on January 27th, 1905, at the Chief Secretary's Lodge in Dublin, at the time when George Wyndham and his gracious wife, Sibell, Lady Grosvenor, were there.

Mrs. Cornwallis-West's daughter, Shelagh, had married Lady Grosvenor's son, the present Duke of Westminster, and George Wyndham's brother, Guy, was the husband of Mrs. Cornwallis-West's sister, Minnie; thus, Mrs. Cornwallis-West was the mother-in-law of Lady Grosvenor's son as well as the sister-in-law of Lady Grosvenor's husband.

Mrs. C.W.'s behaviour on this occasion was highly characteristic: she stared hard at me when I left, put one hand on my shoulder, and said: "Good-bye! Keep that face!"

Herself a devoted and self-sacrificing mother, she was ever thoughtful and compassionate with the griefs of others. One day, while I was staying at Newlands Manor, she disappeared during the whole morning in her dogcart, returning at luncheon-time with her face disfigured by weeping and a

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pathetic little golden curl in her handbag. She knew a young wife who had recently been divorced and was therefore (according to our iniquitous English law) debarred for life from seeing her child. Mrs. West heard that this baby was staying in Hampshire and drove many miles that day to cut off a lock of its hair for the mother.

Her kindness of heart was at times somewhat embarrassing for the family and the household. It sufficed for her to notice at her dressmaker's that the skirt-hand looked run-down after influenza, and she would take that woman down to Newlands for rest and change of air, and spare neither time nor trouble in building up the patient's health.

Her zeal for championing unfortunate women was so great that I verily believe she would have appointed unmarried mothers as domestics all through her establishment had not the family proved adamant on this point.

One day I came upon Colonel West (for whom life held many such shocks) taking cover behind a shrubbery, puce in the face, and he asked me in a wrathful whisper who-to-God was the strange female walking about on the lawn? I replied: "That's an anæmic palmist"; then led him gently and by a devious route back to the house. On such occasions Mrs. West would exhort me: "*Do* go and calm down Wallis! He's good-Godding somewhere in the garden."

Colonel West was a typical, old-fashioned early-Victorian country gentleman, not very clever perhaps, but as straight as a die. Most of his life was spent in serving his country to the best of his ability, by working for Local Councils, Territorials, political ideals and a thousand and one country matters, all tedious, thankless and unremunerative tasks. In his family life he was a devoted husband and father, a perfect host and a chivalrous friend. In all the years I knew him I never heard him say one unkind or disparaging

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thing about a woman. His personality reminded me of Thackeray's beautifully drawn character of "Colonel Newcome."

One day I said to a friend: "Would you like to drive over to Newlands to-morrow afternoon to meet Mrs. Cornwallis-West? I promise you will be vastly amused." The lady answered: "D'you know I don't think I should care to meet a Spoilt Beauty like her; after all, she has had the whole world at her feet, and her head must have been thoroughly turned by all that adulation." In the end, however, she consented to my plan, and when we duly arrived at Newlands we went to Mrs. West's boudoir. Here we found the Spoilt Beauty kneeling on a housemaid's mat in front of the hearth, her hands encased in a pair of grimy chamois gloves and black smudges on her flushed face, fiercely scrubbing the brass fender. She glanced at us with half-an-eye as we came into the room; muttered: "The housemaid said *she* couldn't get rid of these stains!" took a fresh helping of Bluebell polish, spat professionally on the brass and renewed her labours.

I heard no more from the visitor about pampered professional beauties with swollen heads!

Was there ever a woman who cared less for appearance than Mrs. Cornwallis-West? One evening her top-knot of false curls (so fashionable in Edwardian days) entangled itself on the hook in the roof of Shelagh Westminster's* electric landaulette when these two ladies arrived at Covent Garden Opera House. The ducal footman, equal to any occasion, carefully disentangled it, and handed it with all formality to Mrs. West, who rammed it on to her head as best she could, enjoying the contretemps as much as any of the onlookers, and ejaculating: "Absalom was more unlucky!"

Extremely vivacious, talkative and highly-strung, she could

* Now wife of Captain Fitzpatrick Lewis.

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not bear to be silent for long, and on one occasion, finding herself boxed up with a total stranger on a long railway-journey, she burst out, after ten minutes of decorous quiet : " I'm the mother-in-law of the Duke of Westminster and Lady Randolph Churchill—for God's sake talk to me ! "

Never shall I forget the christening of the infant Lord FitzHarris, son and heir of Lord and Lady Malmesbury, at Heron Court, near Christchurch, on January 19th, 1908.

Colonel and Mrs. West and I drove over from Newlands Manor to attend a big luncheon given in honour of the baby. In the centre of the table was an imposing beaker, apparently of gold, of great height and elaborate design, presented to the infant by his Godfather, the Kaiser. It may here be recorded that when war with Germany was declared, Lord Malmesbury had this gift melted down, when it was found to be made of lead, or some such base metal, with a thin veneer of gold on the outside.

The German Ambassador, Count Wolff-Metternich (quite the most crashing bore I ever met), represented his Imperial Master at this festivity, and, so absorbed was he either in his food or in his customary state of hazy abstraction, that he completely forgot to propose the baby's health. An agonizing pause ensued, but Mrs. West was thoroughly competent to deal with the situation with an aside to me : " I'm going to prod the old fool with a fork and see if *that'll* wake him up ! " I just had time to see her hand disappear beneath the tablecloth, and to hear her whisper fiercely : " Get up and make your speech ! " when Metternich suddenly shot up from his chair and gave the toast for which we had all been waiting.

In her youth Mrs. West was what we call in Ireland, " terrible wild," and many are the legends of her high-spirited and daring jokes.

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King Edward, then Prince of Wales, often stayed with the Wests for shooting, and one evening he and the other guns, returning to Ruthin Castle after a day with the pheasants, were much intrigued to see a curiously shaped white object fluttering from the flagstaff at the top of the Tower. Closer inspection revealed the fact that this new pennon was in reality a pair of the host's drawers which the mischievous little lady had fastened there.

Her energy was boundless, and, even as a middle-aged woman, she performed physical feats which many a young person might have envied. When I was staying at Ruthin Castle in June, 1907, Mrs. West must have been at least fifty years of age, yet one evening, as we were going down to dinner, she suddenly wrapped her skirt tightly round her and toboganned down the whole flight of oak stairs "on herself" (as we children used so delicately to say). This stunt of hers was new to me, and as I stood transfixed with astonishment watching her speedy descent, the Duke of Westminster exclaimed to me: "Not many mothers-in-law like her!" and I agreed with him.

Had she lived in more modern times I am convinced that she could have made a fortune as a landscape-gardener. Her eye for colour and her ingenuity in creating loveliness in the most unlikely places amounted to positive genius. Both in the Ruthin and Newlands gardens everything she touched she beautified, at each corner you turned the prospect seemed more lovely than the last.

Some of my happiest times were during the visits of Princess Daisy of Pless (elder daughter of Colonel and Mrs. West), who seemed to me the very incarnation of the Princess

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in the fairy-stories, with her golden hair, forget-me-not blue eyes, pink and white skin and two captivating dimples.

Daisy Cornwallis-West was born in 1873 and married, at the age of eighteen, Prince Hans Heinrich XV of Pless, head of one of the most important and wealthiest families in all Germany. Before 1914 he was reputed to be worth something between £10,000,000 and £12,000,000, and a friend of mine, who went to stay with him recently, told me that he is richer than ever since Germany won the Great War.

At Schloss Fürstenstein, his huge mediæval castle perched up on a rocky height in Silesia, he and Daisy lived like royalties. They had scores of horses for riding, driving and sleighing, and a Master-of-the-Horse to look after the stables. Entertaining was done on a grandiose scale, and Kaiser Wilhelm was a frequent guest. He liked Daisy Pless and used to say of her : " Sie ist ein guter Kerl " (She's a real good fellow).

Her two boys and my two children played together on the beach at Milford-on-Sea during the summer of 1906, and it was a constant source of annoyance to Daisy that her children's complexions remained lily-white no matter how long they were exposed to the blazing sun, whereas my offspring turned a rich mahogany after a couple of days at the seaside. The princely nurse was heavily chidden for this lack of sunburn in her charges, until I pacified Daisy with a theory that some fair people have extra-thick skins which can never turn brown.

One fine day in July, 1905, a party of us, including Daisy Pless, Shelagh Westminster, Lord Rocksavage* and Count Metternich,† sallied forth to bathe at Milford-on-Sea. This coast is none too safe at certain times, so we promised Colonel West (to obviate any necessity for "good-Godding" on his part) that none of the ladies would go into the sea without

* Now Marquess of Cholmondeley.

† The then German Ambassador.

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a rope. There ensued the amusing spectacle of the German Ambassador and myself seated on the beach, he with the Princess on the end of his rope and I with the Duchess on mine, while these two ladies disported themselves in the water : it reminded me of playing a salmon on the end of a line.

CHAPTER XX

YEATS AND SHAW

OUR Irish poet, W. B. Yeats, used to create a small sensation among the lovely ladies at my Seymour Street parties, with whom he was a cult.

We had a demonstration beehive, covered in with glass, so that all the inhabitants and the whole process of honey-making could be watched in comfort. One evening in 1916 Yeats stood and gazed at the bees, surrounded by all of us—we wondering what the Master would say, and, after a space, he murmured: “Those are the greatest Prussians of them all!”

Since those days Yeats has taken unto himself a Castle in the County Galway, a wife and a Senatorship, so London only sees him at rare intervals.

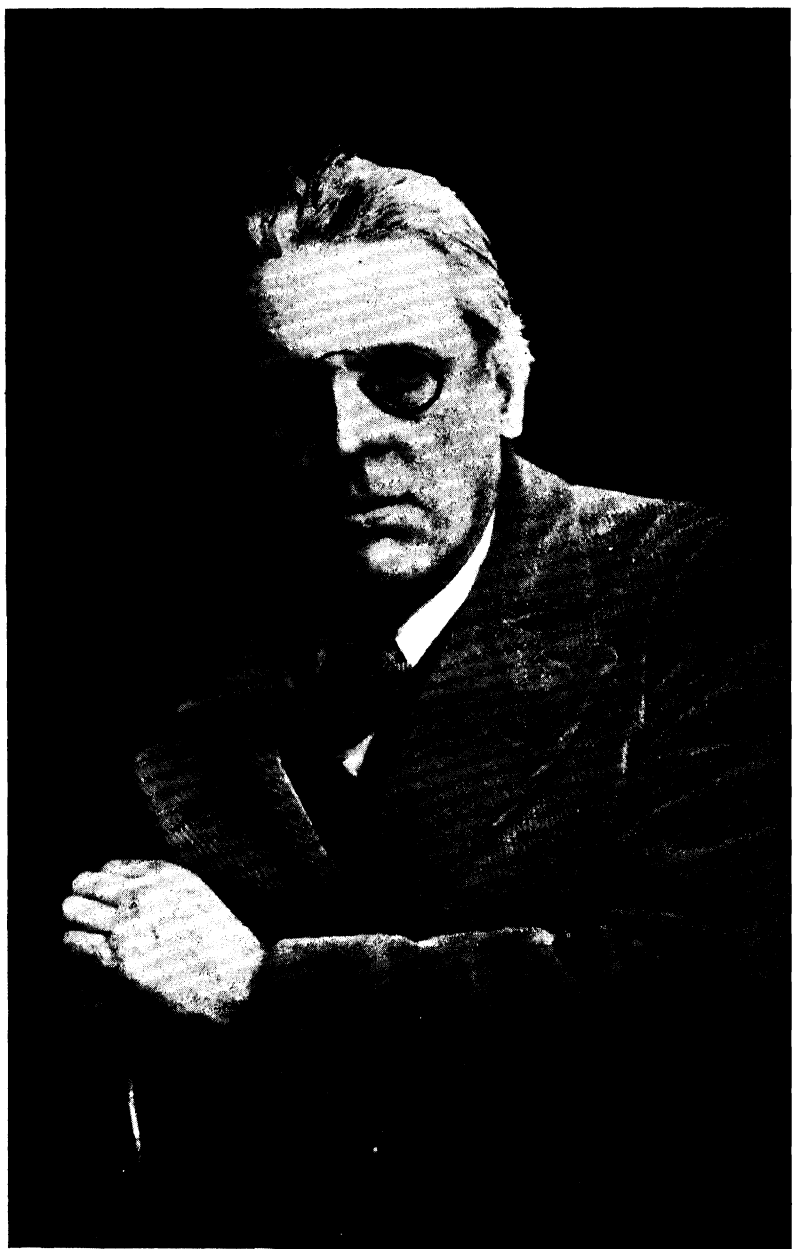
Here is a letter from him:

82, Merrion Square,
Dublin.

February 9, 1924.

Dear Mrs. Beddington,

I am ashamed to have left your letter of November 29th so long unanswered, but it came after I had started for Stockholm, and after I returned I delayed till I had been photographed, and now I send you the photograph that you ask for. It was very kind of you to write



W. B. YEATS

Photo : Lafayette

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your congratulations. Yes, certainly I remember your bees, and that horrible story you told me about the white spider, which has become one of my symbols of iniquity. I cannot develop it further as it would give my secretary a nightmare.

Feb. 10.

It did give my sec. nightmare—she is my wife and came downstairs a wreck as a result. I meant white spiders that came out of the ground like Bolsheviks and devoured the sick bees.

Yrs.

W. B. Yeats.

It is not every poet that looks the part, but you could never mistake Yeats for anything else. Tall and thin, with dark, lank locks, a tragic expression and a single eye-glass on a black ribbon pendant, he is the personification of Celtic Twilight.

To my everlasting regret I have never heard him discourse: but those favoured beings who have listened to him holding forth for hours on end tell me that he is an entrancing talker.

The first time I met Bernard Shaw was at a Charity Concert organized by Sir Alfred Scott-Gatty, Garter King-at-Arms, at Welwyn on June 11th, 1918. As usual, I played the piano, and, since it was a very hot, sunny day, I wore a large drooping picture hat. After the entertainment we all went over to the Scott-Gattys' country house, Wendover Lodge, for refreshments and conversation, and my host introduced Bernard Shaw to me. He said: "Speaking as a man I admired your hat, but, speaking as a stage-manager, I

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disapproved most strongly of it, for it completely hid your face on the platform."

We discussed Diana Watts, that graceful exponent of Greek physical culture, and various other systems, and G.B.S. said: "That fella Sandow was once very keen that I should undergo a course with him: he promised me that if I would carry out his system he would make me strong enough to support a grand piano or an elephant on me chest. I told him that was the *last* thing in the world I wanted, and poor Sandow seemed annoyed by my lack of enthusiasm."

Like many of my compatriots, G.B.S. is a much misunderstood man. I heard a lady say: "That man ought to be well sat on by somebody! What do *you* think? I said to him: 'Oh, Mr. Shaw! why *ever* don't you go over to the States and do a lecture-tour there? You would make a fortune out of it; I know the Americans are simply *dying* to hear you!' And Mr. Shaw replied: 'I am constantly being asked to lecture in America, but the reason I don't go there is that I'm frightened the Americans will insist as soon as I land on making me President of the United States!' Just think, the conceit of the creature!"

Now, when we Irish make a truly outrageous statement (such as this), we make it because we never expect to be believed.

G.B.S. detests music with his meals—and rightly so. Once he called to the leader of the Tzigane band, which was making the usual deafening and distracting noises in a restaurant: "Could you play something if I asked you to?" "But certainly, Monsieur." "Well, would you play either poker or dominoes—whichever you like—until I have finished my dinner?"

On another occasion the hostess of a musical party asked him: "What do you think of the violinist?" to which

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Shaw replied: "He reminds me of Paderewski." The bewildered lady said: "But Paderewski's not a *violinist*!" "Neither is this gentleman," said Shaw.

Shaw at a rehearsal in the theatre is one long joy. A clever actor told me: "We all think him the greatest living producer. . . . Of his own plays, I mean." Then, with a grin, "God knows what he'd do with Shakespeare!"

Once Shaw was rehearsing a play in which one of the actors had to say: "I don't know." G.B.S. made him repeat this line over and over again, with every sort of intonation and expression, but it was not right. At last Shaw called out: "Look here! Are you a married man?" "Yes." "Well, then, you ought to know by this time how to say 'I don't know'!"

A certain young actress, who had doubtless hoped for something more important, was given a "walking-on" part in *Saint Joan*. She begged Mr. Shaw to grace her album with his autograph, so he wrote in it the following (let us hope) consolatory quotation from Milton: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

A member of the cast told me: "While Shaw was rehearsing *Saint Joan* he hardly ever interrupted, but occasionally, during an interval, he acted the part of St. Joan, to show exactly what he wanted, and dammit! he did it better than Sybil Thorndike!"

Mr. Shaw would have us all believe him to be a cynical, cruel character—does he not grow a beard of Mephistophelean cut in order to cultivate this illusion in the Public?—but his beard is the only devilish thing about him. Those who know him in his private life soon see through the pose and discover that he spends a large part of his life in doing kind things to less fortunate human-beings. (How angry he will be if his Press-Cutting Agency sends him this paragraph!)

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An actor told me : " When Shaw was producing a play one winter, the electric stove was borrowed from the box-office and put in the front row of the stalls, where he always sits at rehearsals. It had not been there long before the thought struck him that perhaps somebody else was being deprived of its warmth on his account, whereupon—like the kindly soul he is—he begged that it should be returned to the box-office."

Patrick Murphy, the clever journalist of the *Evening News* (who married my cousin, Pamela Dames-Longworth), had an amusing experience with Shaw. He went to No. 10, Adelphi Terrace, rang the bell and asked for an interview with the Great Man. Needless to say, according to immemorial procedure, this was refused, and, like all his predecessors, he stood gazing at the prickly-hedgehog-like contraption of long metal spikes erected at the foot of the stairs to keep out invaders, while the servant delivered a further message : " Mr. *Patrick Murphy* would like to see Mr. Shaw." The next thing was that G.B.S. burst out of the room laughing and saying : " I've heard of a man being called Patrick and I've heard of a man being called Murphy, but never did I think there was a man living who had *both* those names ! Come in ! "

Some fifty odd years ago Bernard Shaw worked as a cashier in an Irish land-agent's office at an annual salary of £48 ; it is also on record that the total sum earned by his pen during the first nine years of his literary efforts was £6. To-day he makes a huge income—probably more than any other dramatist—out of the royalties from his plays.

" I am bored by holidays, luxury and money," he has announced. That is because he can get all three. It is only the unattainable that has a charm for us foolish human-beings.

CHAPTER XXI

INTERNATIONAL HORSE SHOW

THE first Lord Redesdale (1837–1916), better known to his generation as Bartie Mitford, was so decorative that his looks hit you in the eye, so to speak. With his mass of wavy, snow-white hair, perfect profile, faultless figure, and gentian-blue eyes, he created such a sensation when he gave away his niece, Nellie Hozier, at her marriage to Bertram Romilly, that—to use her own words—“everybody in the church gazed at Uncle Bartie, and no one paid the smallest attention to the poor little bride!”

Lord Redesdale was a many-sided man, with so many gifts that some of them could well have been spared for another less rich mind. He was a most artistic landscape-gardener—we owe to him the ornamental gardens in Hyde Park, and he laid out the garden at Buckingham Palace for King Edward VII, whose intimate friendship he enjoyed; he wrote several interesting books; and he spoke half a dozen languages—including Japanese—and French as I have heard it spoken by only three other British subjects—Kerr-Seymour, Cecil Higgins and Dorothy, Lady Kennard (*née* Barclay). In point of fact, his French was so perfect in form and diction that Commander Féline, who came to London in command of the French Officers at Olympia Horse Show, said to me: “Nous autres français—nous avons honte de parler notre langue devant Lord Redesdale!”

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He bred and won prizes with Shire horses, and once showed me with great pride a sample of bone as it ought to be.

He was that rare blend of a country gentleman, a diplomat, a courtier, and a scholar. It is to be feared that the exigencies of modern life will make his type more and more rare as time goes on.

Lord Redesdale had been in Japan as a secretary in the Diplomatic Service in 1866 and in 1906. He was chosen to accompany Prince Arthur of Connaught on his trip to Japan, to present the Order of the Garter to the Mikado. He said to me: "I am one of the very few men who has lived in four centuries. On my first visit the country was in the same state of civilization as it had been ever since the beginning of the Tokugawa regime. During the forty years' interval the Japanese had accomplished what Europe took four hundred years to do."

He had many amusing stories illustrating the difference in ideas and manners between East and West. A Japanese gentleman watched Redesdale pour milk into his tea with something like horror. "You would not put cream in your claret!" he said.

Lord Redesdale told me that he, with Sir Ernest Cassel, was doing all he could to promote the *entente* between Germany and England. Alas for such dreams! They crashed about his ears in August, 1914, and he lived to mourn his splendid eldest son, Clem, killed in action with the 10th Hussars.

On May 11th, 1912, I dined with Lord and Lady Redesdale to meet Siegfried Wagner, son of the great

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Richard Wagner, who came over to London for a couple of nights to conduct his big concert at the Albert Hall.

Although Siegfried bore a strong outward resemblance to his august father, he was completely devoid of charm, and we were all very disappointed with him both as a man and as a musician. Everybody tried to be tactful that evening, and I never mentioned the name of Richard Wagner, thinking poor Siegfried must simply loathe being treated as the son of the great genius, instead of as a genius himself.

He insisted on talking faulty and guttural English, giving as his reason that he had been brought up by English nurses, and told me that when he was a boy his father had hesitated whether he was to become an architect or a musician. I choked over my plate, and hastily prevented myself from showing the regret I felt at Richard's ultimate choice.

Siegfried was full of wrath with the over-enterprising journalists of the day, whose shameless raids on Wahnfried (the Wagner family home at Bayreuth) it seemed impossible to prevent. No celebrities were safe from these reporters' marauding instincts; indeed, the Wagner family lived in daily dread of their private correspondence being filched from the villa, to be used as "copy" in a *chronique scandaleuse*. In order to protect themselves as much as possible against such a risk, they devised a code system of names for all their acquaintances, and made it a rule never to speak or write of anyone by his or her real name. Thus, should any of the family papers be looted, they would be valueless from a publicity point of view.

Siegfried Wagner's wife is a handsome and altogether admirable lady, who was a Miss Williams and came from

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Eastbourne. She has lived so much in Germany that she speaks English with a German accent.

In April, 1927, I went to Queen's Hall to hear His Master's Voice Gramophone Company make a record of Siegfried conducting his illustrious father's *Siegfried Idylle*, that exquisite concert-gem composed by Richard Wagner in honour of young Siegfried's birth, and presented to his mother, Frau Cosima Wagner, to celebrate the occasion. In order to get the acoustics perfect the interior of Queen's Hall was hung with huge sheets of white material stuffed with seaweed, these being the substitutes for the clothes of the absent audience. If the extra tone were not mopped up in this manner, the reverberation would be tremendous and the record would sound horribly hollow on the gramophone.

Recording is a rather tedious process, for wax after wax is made and played over until the musical director is satisfied. This entails long waits between each test. Mrs. Siegfried and I slipped farther and farther down in our stalls in the auditorium. At last, during a pause, Siegfried turned round, espied us and exclaimed to the orchestra at large: "Look at my wife and her friendt, shleeping in de shtalls!". . . which was a libel. Those seats are too hard for anything approaching slumber.

Siegfried conducts like nobody on earth. He stands immobile, save for his right arm, which beats time exactly as a child is taught to do at school. When I see him conduct I am reminded of the story of the performing dog at the music-hall. It sat at the piano, apparently playing on the instrument; suddenly a mischievous person in the audience shouted "Rats!!" whereupon the dog leapt from its stool and rushed away . . . but the piano went on playing. Now I have a feeling that if Siegfried

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suddenly quitted the rostrum the orchestra would go on playing.

On June 24th, 1912, I sat next the Khedive Abbas Hilmy at a dinner party given by Lord and Lady Redesdale, during Olympia Horse Show week.

He seemed very light-skinned for an Oriental, and his grey eyes twinkled with fun : in fact, he was so boyish and simple in manner that I found it difficult to drag in many *Votre Altesses* or *Monseigneurs* during the course of the evening ; however, I kept him amused—whether respectfully or not—and he giggled infectiously throughout the meal.

He watched my glass carefully, and at dessert asked me in a subdued tone whether I ever drank anything alcoholic. I said : “ No, never,” whereat he beamed, and told me how pleased he was to see somebody a teetotaller, because his religion forbade him to drink alcohol. When the other ladies lit their cigarettes, and he noticed that I did not smoke, he again told me how pleased he was, because he did not smoke, and confided to me in an undertone that he could not bear to see a lady with a cigarette in her mouth.

His English was rather poor, so we prattled in French all the time.

H.H. Abbas Hilmy Pasha, G.C.M.G., G.C.B., G.C.V.O., was born in 1874 and was sent to school at Lausanne and Vienna. He became Khedive of Egypt at the early age of eighteen, was always strongly anti-British (in spite of all the highfalutin decorations heaped upon him by our Government), and joined hands with Germany when the Great War broke out. This was more than even long-suffering England could stand, so he was deposed in 1914 and a British Protectorate was established in his place.

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His greatest interests in life were his model farms at Koubbech, near Cairo, and Montaza, near Alexandria, where, he said : “ I have cattle and horses that would win prizes at any big agricultural show in England.”

The other guests at dinner that evening were Lord Lincolnshire (the 1st Marquess, then Lord Privy Seal) ; the Hon. David and Mrs. David Mitford (now Lord and Lady Redesdale) ; and Lady Helen Mitford (now Lady Helen Brocklebank).

In attendance on the Khedive was Major J. K. Watson, who had already done eight years of this bear-leading, and seemed quite fond of his charge. “ J.K.,” as he was called throughout Egypt, always looked the ultra-smart soldier of the stage—small, dapper and erect. He was one of Kitchener’s pets until he chose to marry, from which day K. of K. dropped him like a hot potato.

The name of Kitchener cropped up during our conversation at dinner, whereupon the Khedive’s lip curled with disdain and he said : “ I suppose Lord Kitchener comes of—how do you say—peasant Irish stock ? ” Now the psychology behind this remark is not far to seek, for was not His Highness a confirmed intriguer, and had he not many times incurred the wrath of Kitchener—over the Fashoda incident, for example, not to mention the occasion on which he had thought fit, after reviewing Kitchener’s Egyptian troops, to censure them in highly disparaging terms ? Abbas did not relish, any more than the rest of the world, being trounced by Kitchener.

Lord Kitchener was a keen collector of antiques, particularly blue Oriental china and rugs.

The Sultan Hussein of Egypt owned a magnificent Persian carpet of glorious colouring, with the royal cipher woven in each corner. One day the head man of the palace noticed

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that it was considerably the worse for wear, so, his royal master being away from home at the time, he foolishly sent it to Paris to be repaired, instead of to a Cairo bazaar expert. When, in due course, the carpet arrived from France at the custom-house, the head man was so frightened by the excessively heavy duty fee necessary to clear it, that he did not dare tell the Sultan about the matter. Now the law there is that, if an article is not cleared from the custom-house by the end of six months, it is sold. At the expiration of the allotted time the carpet was bought for a paltry sum by a Cairo merchant, who sold it to Kitchener for £60. I should have loved to have been a fly on the wall when Sultan Hussein recognized his beautiful carpet next time he visited the British Residency !

Lord Kitchener had a real dramatic instinct and rarely let drop his rôle of the strong, silent man. An officer told me of an extraordinary incident which he witnessed during the time when K. was Chief of Staff in the South African War. A native driving a team of mules past Kitchener, flung out his long whip-thong to touch up the leaders and accidentally lassoed the great soldier round the neck. "And there he stood like a statue, never changing his expression by a hair's breadth while an aide-de-camp unwound the thong."

It was with the Redesdales, too, that I first met Sir Robert Baden-Powell, at a dinner party at Cheniston House on November 4th, 1911.

My dear old host, who always spoiled me, seated me next to the lion of the evening, and I was deeply interested to know the man who has evolved what is, to my mind, the greatest ethical system the world has ever seen—not excepting Christianity. The influence of the Boy Scout movement will be so universal and so far-reaching in the ages to come (it is

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only in its infancy to-day) that our minds cannot grasp the results it will have in the history of mankind.

Baden-Powell told me that he says to himself every morning of his life: "I shall only live two years from to-day, so how much good work can I do in that time?" It reminded me of George Meredith's beautiful lines:

And if I taste oblivion of a day
So shorten I the stature of my soul.

B.P. is ambidextrous, and has trained his brain to such a pitch that he can draw two pictures simultaneously with a pencil in each hand. He is a brilliant actor in amateur theatricals, and there is a legend in India that he once successfully impersonated a rich Italian nobleman for several weeks during a Simla season, was pursued by ambitious mothers of marriageable daughters, entertained right and left, and so forth, then—tableau!—the impostor was unmasked.

In India, where he served with the 13th Hussars, he was a fine sportsman and won the coveted blue-ribbon of the pig-sticking world, the Kadir Cup. As for fighting, he seems to have been in the thick of every war we have waged, both small and great, since 1888. He is spare of figure, and I sometimes wonder how he manages to wear all his medals at once.

On June 11th, 1914—two months before the Great War broke out—we met again at dinner at Lord Redesdale's London house and afterwards went on to Olympia Horse Show. The evening stands out in my memory because Sir Robert and I laughed so helplessly over the children's pony-driving class. The ring was filled with very small serious-faced children in diminutive vehicles driving wee ponies, which trotted round on the tan as fast as a typewriter clicks. The tiniest of all—it was about the size of a St. Bernard dog—seized with a fit

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of naughtiness, suddenly left the track and rushed, like a broody hen, into a large bed of hydrangeas. Two solemn liveried attendants then approached the delinquent: one lifted the pony bodily, and the other the child and the carriage, out of the floral decorations and replaced them on the tan.

CHAPTER XXII

WAR ENTERTAINERS

THERE was no more miserable woman than myself in the length and breadth of the British Isles during the first weeks of the Great War.

With envy I saw other women blossom out into khaki uniforms in the W.A.A.C.s, W.R.A.F.s, W.R.E.N.s, Women's Emergency Corps and Y.W.C.A. I heard of their making shells at Woolwich; cutting up sandwiches for soldiers at railway-station voluntary canteens; packing pyjamas by the gross for the troops abroad; understudying charwomen in hospitals for the wounded; working in the Secret Service; censoring correspondence for the Government; growing vegetables; grooming remounts for the War Office; milking cows; superintending farms; girl-guiding; organizing hospitals in their own country homes; and doing the thousand things whereby my sex so splendidly helped to compensate for the man-shortage in this country.

All this made me feel completely *désœuvrée*, and I brooded over the problem of finding a suitable and useful job which would allow of my staying at home with my two children, aged eight and two years respectively.

Discussing the matter in some perplexity, a friend said to me: "Well, whatever line you decide to take, don't be a fool and spoil your hands scrubbing floors when a charwoman would

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do the job far better ; keep 'em for the piano and make use of your musical gifts."

On the heels of this wholesome advice came a message from a generous lady who had dedicated her beautiful house in Mayfair to wounded officers : would I go round one afternoon to play to the patients ? I jumped at the idea of being really useful ; went to the hospital ; amused the patients (including the first blinded officer of the war—so brave and so pathetic) for an hour or more ; found, to my joy, that my efforts were appreciated out of all proportion to their merits ; and from that day began my real war-work. I had found my niche.

I cultivated a repertoire of over a hundred popular ditties, mostly with rattling good choruses which the wounded Tommies (always more vocal than their officers) sang as lustily as their bodily condition permitted. (It was early borne in upon me that the average Briton loves to hear his voice—both in the bath and out of it. And—mark you—this discovery was made long before Lord Beaverbrook initiated Community Singing as a new advertising stunt.)

It's all nonsense to say that the British don't like music. They do. How often was I told : "The two things a wounded man loves best are cigarettes and music."

Gradually, as my engagements multiplied, I was privileged to know more and more artists—"straight," comic, in fact of every imaginable sort, including conjurers. Next it was found that I was a useful accompanist. Then I realized that I had the power to act as an *impresario* for organizing entertainments, either to amuse the wounded or to coax money for war-charities from the ever-generous British Public.

My cast for a hospital concert usually consisted of five professional artists ; for example : a violinist, a musical comedy

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woman singer ; a comic man ; a " straight " baritone ; a conjurer ; and myself to play the piano accompaniments and to fill up gaps with Irish stories.

Or : an actor to recite ; a soprano ; a violoncellist ; a music-hall male singer ; a *danseuse* ; and myself.

It was a principle of mine to avoid hospitals that were already pets of Society ladies, but instead to specialize in neglected remote and unfashionable spots, from Bermondsey to Balham, from Smithfield to Stepney.

The good results of such entertainments on the morale of the wounded were beyond all belief, breaking as they did the deadly monotony of day after day with the same four walls to stare at.

At the Star and Garter Hospital for paralysed soldiers at Richmond one day in 1917, after that fine violinist, Jelly d'Aranyi (niece of the great Joachim), had played, as only she can play, some intoxicating Hungarian dances, a nurse came up to us in a great state of excitement and said : " Isn't it wonderful ? That boy over there . . . he's never moved since he was hit through the spine . . . until just now. He began to jerk his arms while Miss d'Aranyi was playing ! I could scarcely believe my eyes ! " I don't know about believing my eyes, but I could scarcely see out of them for a few seconds, and the same hope shot through all three of us : " Perhaps there's a chance for him now ? " Dear Jelly was an envied woman that day.

On May 23rd, 1918, I took an all-star cast, including Johnston Forbes-Robertson and his charming wife, Gertrude Elliot, to the Town Hall at Northampton for a big war charity entertainment.

Compelled by curiosity, Sir Mervyn Manningham-Buller went to the back of the hall and mingled with the audience. There he overheard this gem :

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Lady, reading programme: "'Oo's this yere Gertrude Elliot?"

Her Friend: "Must be the daughter of that there George Eliot."

Forbes-Robertson's advice to me for speaking in public was: "Hit the consonants hard. Your vowels will take care of themselves."

Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson has, to my ear, the most beautiful speaking voice on the stage, or off it for that matter; whenever he greets me he stretches out both his hands and says: "You *dear* woman!" with such a touching intonation that a lump forms in my throat, and I wish to goodness I were half as nice as he believes me to be!

His wife told me that the tone of his voice made her cry every time they acted together in a sad play, which is perhaps a greater tribute—coming from his lawful spouse—than from somebody outside his family.

J.F.R. said to me, talking of holding your audience: "While you are gripping them it feels as though there were a rope stretched taut between you and them: if the rope sags, it means that you have lost your hold, and you must tighten it up again."

He was angelic during the war, and allowed me to drag him all over England as one of the principal "stars" at my charity performances. On these occasions he invariably gave the two speeches of Shakespeare, "All the world's a stage," and "To be or not to be," and you felt that here was English spoken as it ought to be—by a Scot. It was a marvel to watch him come on to a stage at three o'clock on a fine afternoon, clad in an ordinary day suit, without extraneous help of any sort, such as scenery or properties, and "get away with it" by sheer force of personality.

Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson told me a delightful story

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about Sir James Barrie. While an all-star cast was rehearsing the first performance of his mysterious play, *Shall We Join the Ladies?* in which suspicion of murder is cast on every character in turn, to the complete bewilderment of actors and audience alike, Barrie took Charles Hawtrey into a corner and whispered to him: "I say, old fellow, don't on any account give me away, but *you* did the murder!" Then he led Nelson Keys to one side and murmured in his ear: "Don't tell a soul in the cast, but *you* did the murder!" With Puck-like mischief did J.M.B. thus contrive to make every one of the performers believe that he or she was the guilty one, whereupon they each and all led one another severally and respectively into corners and confided: "I say, don't give it away to a soul, but Barrie has just told me quite confidentially that *I* did the murder!" . . . Tableau! . . . It was a typical Barrie "leg-pull."

Ivor Novello looks so preposterously young for his age that it is difficult for me to realize that he was twenty-two years old when I first met him at Sir Ian and Lady Hamilton's parties for wounded Anzac Tommies at No. 1, Hyde Park Gardens, in 1915.

It is always a source of inward satisfaction to the backer of horses to "spot" a winner on his own judgment long before the race, and I own to a similar glow of self-congratulation when I contemplate the sensational success of Ivor. His cry when he saw me come into a party in New York in 1922, "*You* always believed in me!" was the reward for my loyal admiration of his wonderful gifts ever since I first knew him.

One day in 1916 he came to Seymour Street looking white and dazed. He said: "I've left my manuscript of *Theodore and Co.* in a taxi and it can't be found anywhere." I asked: "But surely your name and address were on it?" "No." (Oh! these artists!) It was never traced. Ivor set his teeth,

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shut himself up for several weeks in a cottage in the country and rewrote the entire music of *Theodore and Co.* by heart.

Ivor Novello and Noel Coward may be bracketed as the two wonder-youths of our day, each with a bewildering variety of gifts. Ivor is a composer—he published his first song at the age of fifteen, and his *Keep the Home Fires Burning* kept *his* home fires burning to some purpose; a pianist—I have heard him play by heart Debussy's *L'après-midi d'un faune*, and it takes some doing; a dramatist—*The Rat* (written in partnership with Constance Collier) was a great success; and a film-star—at the moment he is the idol of the London cinema-going public. I am not a film-fan, but I cannot help thinking that *The Call of the Blood*, with Ivor as the hero, must be one of the loveliest pictures ever shown upon the screen.

His most wonderful virtue—a rare one in any walk of life—is that he never says an unkind word about anybody, and is excellent company withal, thus proving that it is not necessary to be cattish in order to be amusing.

In the spring of 1916, Lady Greville conceived the novel idea of a charity-matinée in which each item was done by professionals and amateurs, fifty-fifty. Thus Shelagh (first wife of the present Duke of Westminster) played with the French droll, Léon Morton, the Early Victorian scene out of a current revue; and that ever-kind actress, Alice Delysia, coached her in her part.

Melville Gideon crooned deliciously various verses about Honolulu—its habits, climate and general charm—with a chorus of what are commonly called “Society Ladies,” clad in straw skirts with bead sporrans.

G. P. Huntley was cast for a duologue with Lady Rothermere (wife of the great newspaper proprietor), and excelled himself. He stood in a class by himself as an actor. He was the embodiment of the Haw! Haw! Bai Jove! Savile-row-

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tailored, all-the-best-clubs, immaculate, monocled, asinine, aristocratic half-wit-man-about-town. Former generations dubbed this type "blood," "masher," "swell," "chappie," "nut"; but, whatever the label, the article remains the same, and G. P. Huntley was the apotheosis of it. The only other actor I have ever seen to approach him as a "silly ass" on the stage is Hugh Wakefield, and this is paying a great compliment to the younger man.

The Americans adored G.P., both on the stage and on the film—witness the fact that he crossed the Atlantic sixty-six times—because to them he represented a typical Englishman. They called him a "champion dude" (pronounced "dood"), and the more imbecile he seemed the louder was the applause.

I shall always think of him in Mr. Harry Grattan's amusing sketch, *Buying a Gun*. How fatuous! How inane! "A varnished vacuum" (as George Meredith said of some brainless person), and what an artist! Never by one hair's breadth did he overdo it.

Once I asked him: "Aren't you Irish?" and he replied: "I was born in the County Cork and christened Patrick; I love racing; so what more do you want?" He owned several race-horses, and, what is more, won with them.

On September 21st, 1927, he died, a comparatively young man, in a nursing-home in London, and the theatrical world lost a very lovable Bohemian.

The stuffed cockatoo still adorns a corner of the stage at the Winter Garden Theatre—that "immortal bird" to which G.P. addressed his remark: "Are you a boy or a girl? Oh! well—you've been alone so long . . . I expect you've forgotten!"

There is in the violin-playing of Albert Sammons an ethereal, other-worldly quality and a mastery of technique, which rightly place him as our foremost British violinist.

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When leading a string quartet he gives it a silvery tone quite different from any other quartet ever heard. One of his pupils told me his theory is that nearly all the tone comes from the fingers of the left hand on the strings and not from the bowing, as most people believe.

During the war Sammons blew down a clarinet in the Grenadier Guards' Band, and tells many amusing stories about his experiences.

We all know the strict Army regulations about short hair ; one morning Sammons, whose hair had grown perhaps half an inch over the correct length, was seen by a Sergeant-Major, who waxed wroth over this unseemly length, used eloquent language and finished with : " in fact you look like a b——y fiddler ! "

At the finish of one of his provincial concerts, he asked the audience to name their preference for an *encore*, whereupon a man stepped up to the platform, said : " Please play this tune," and hummed the same note eight times running. It seemed odd that any piece should begin with eight of the same notes, all consecutive, but suddenly Sammons realized it was meant to be the *Cavalleria Rusticana* Intermezzo.

After a successful performance of a string quartet, a *nouveau-riche*, with more money than music, said to the leader : " And now that you're doing so well, I suppose you'll increase your number ? "

On October 14th, 1926, Sammons brought his little girl to " nursery tea " at Seymour Street after he had played the strenuous Beethoven *Concerto* at Queen's Hall. In the schoolroom he espied my children's toy-violin, put it up to his shoulder and produced therefrom a tone such as few amateurs can coax out of their full-size instruments. " I can't find all the notes I want," he laughed, " otherwise I might have a shot at the *Concerto* ! "

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Like most really great artists, he is the soul of modesty and dearly loves a bit of fooling. At one of my Seymour Street parties, after having enchanted the audience earlier in the evening by his exquisite playing in string-quartets, he suddenly did an imitation of a slightly inebriated fiddler playing Gounod's *Faust* waltz most vilely out of tune outside a public-house. Needless to say, pennies were thrown from all sides.

Sammons must have been nigh on thirty years old when I first met him, but so young did he look that I asked the hostess, much to his amusement: "Where did that boy study the violin?"

In September, 1925, I took him to play at a concert organized by me in the Tudor Long Gallery of Blickling Hall, in Norfolk, then tenanted by Mrs. Hoffmann, of the United States. Several numbers were contributed to the programme by Lord Coke—himself no mean amateur violinist—and lastly the two of them played a Dvořák duet. Just before this began Lord Coke whispered to me (I was announcing all the items): "Just for fun, say *Lord* Sammons and *Mr.* Coke will play a violin duet by Dvořák!" This I did, with a perfectly serious face, needless to say. Several people came up to me after the concert was over, said how much they had enjoyed it, and then added, confidentially: "You know, you made a mistake about the names when you announced that last thing!" . . . much to the joy of the instigator.

The personality of the greatest living exponent of old classic ballet dancing, Mme Adeline Genée, is as fragrant as a whiff of lavender, and she and her art are the very antithesis of these exotic hothouse blooms, the Russian-born dancers.

The first time I had the honour of playing the piano for her to dance to (in lieu of the orchestra) at a Charity Matinée in June, 1918, I found, to my horror, that, when the curtain went up on her turn, the piano and I were in full view

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of the audience ! Thinking that the stage-manager had made a hideous mistake, my face must have worn a wild expression for a few seconds : then Genée caught my eye, smiled encouragingly and gave the signal to begin. When her dance was over, and the curtain had at length fallen after innumerable recalls, she came across to me, embraced me, and said : “ *I arranged that the piano should be well on the stage, because I wanted the audience to see you !* ”

It was written in the book of Fate that this fairy-like creature from Denmark should be a dancer. First and foremost she was born with the dancer's foot, i.e., an abnormally high arched instep ; secondly, dancing ran in the family, for her uncle, Alexander Genée, was a dancer (he studied with Petitpa and Johanson) and her aunt, Antonia Genée, was also a dancer (she studied with Mlle Granzow in Buda-Pesth).

Uncle Alexander began to teach the tiny Adeline when she was eight years old, and she never learnt from anybody else. Her first engagement was as solo-dancer at the Royal Theatre in Munich. Later she signed a contract to dance for six weeks, beginning on November 17th, 1897, at the Empire Theatre in London, and she remained there as *prima ballerina* for ten years. This was in the days when men like George Edwardes spent £10,000 (the equivalent to-day of £30,000) on one ballet at the Empire.

She said to me : “ Before I came to England I was very doubtful whether I should like it, but the curious thing was that the moment I stepped off the train on to the London platform I felt at home immediately.”

For five years she danced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York under the management of Messrs. Klaw and Erlanger.

During an Australian tour she had an amusing experience at Melbourne. One evening, owing to some contretemps,

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the trunks containing the dresses of the members of the ballet did not arrive at the theatre in time for the performance. Accordingly notices were posted up announcing the fact that there would be no ballet that evening because of this untoward happening. One gentleman who had bought two seats for the show put in a claim for compensation, giving as his reason : " I had my wife's hair dressed for the occasion."

" A dancer must be prepared to make many sacrifices for the sake of art," says Mme Genée. " No skating, no ball-room dancing, no riding, no swimming ! "

Since her retirement from the stage in 1914, she has continued to take an active interest in dancing, and is President of the Association of Operatic Dancing in Great Britain. On her committee are Mme Tamar Karsavina (the beautiful Russian *danseuse*) and Miss Phyllis Bedells (our finest British *ballerina*), so who shall say that it is not a representative one ?

Adeline Genée married Mr. Frank Isitt, and they live in a countrified part of Regent's Park, removed from London dirt and noise, with a lovely view of trees, lawns and flower-beds from their windows.

Lady Churston, now Mrs. Wessel, was before her first marriage Miss Jessie Smithers, and, like Violet Loraine and Margaret Cooper, began her professional career as a serious artist, having been thoroughly well grounded at the Royal College of Music.

It so chanced that Paul Rubens (the composer) saw her sing somewhere, realized straightway her possibilities in musical comedy and arranged an interview for her with George Edwardes, who was then managing Daly's Theatre. The audition was typical of " The Guv'nor." He listened—scribbling on a blotting-pad the while—to Miss Smithers's sweet voice (she trying her very hardest), and, when she had

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finished, he looked up and said : " Now let's see your legs ! " (It should be borne in mind that in those Edwardian days skirts trailed upon the ground.)

She was engaged to play in *The Little Michus*, music by the French composer, André Messager, at Daly's Theatre, and made a hit in the piece under the stage-name of Denise Orme.

At this time the kind-hearted Alfred Rothschild constituted himself her strict financial guardian and banked part of her salary each week for her, fearing that such a lovely and inexperienced young creature might not know how to handle money to the best advantage.

With all her attractions, it was not likely that she should remain Miss Smithers for long, and, sure enough, in 1907 she left the stage for good and married Major John Yarde-Buller (now 3rd Baron Churston), of the Scots Guards. Their eldest daughter, Joan, married in 1927, while still in her teens, the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Guinness, a young man who rejoices in the original, if not unique, name of Loel. Since the bulk of his papa's fortune is made in Pittsburg, young Loel and his bride will be obliged, for business reasons, to spend some of their time there.

" Jo " Churston was once greatly amused by an incident at a country house where she was staying. Her hostess brought the visitors' book, and, while finding the correct place for her signature, hurriedly turned over a back page—not, however, before " Jo " had time to see the line, " Actresses will happen in the best regulated families."

She is a fine musician, as I said before, but her most fascinating stunt is her playing a violin *obbligato* to her own singing. Many are the charity matinées and hospital concerts at which I have had the pleasure of playing her accompaniments, and this number always brought down the house. It

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is all-too-rare that a musician should be beautiful to the eye as well as to the ear, but Lady Churston is both.

In Nelson Keys—that pocket edition of a comedian—we have one of the subtlest and cleverest artists on the British revue stage. Exquisitely *soigné*, immaculately groomed, and faultlessly tailored, he is essentially English, and I doubt whether his peculiar subtle sense of comedy would be appreciated in any other country but his own.

At one performance, while he was on the stage in his irreproachable evening dress-clothes, he heard a well-known actress's mother say: "Well! I never knew they made them costumes so small!"

I take off my hat to a comedian who can make his audience laugh for something like three hours, and never say an improper thing the whole time. This Nelson Keys can do. No race but the British could publish a comic journal every week for nearly a century without one improper joke in it—*Punch* . . . and "that is why we are where we are."

There is only one word for Nelson Keys's imitations, and that is "uncanny": he does not *imitate* his victim—he *becomes* that man for the moment.

The average Society hostess knows naught (why should she?) of the lives of singers, actors and such hard-working artists, so whenever I take one of these "stars" to a party I ply them with nourishment as soon as they arrive at the house, knowing that their last meal was at the ghastly hour of 6.30 p.m., and that they have been singing or acting ever since.

On one such occasion I was feeding Nelson Keys in the dining-room at a friend's party, prior to the rush of guests from upstairs, with no audience but the two servants in charge of the supper. We spoke of some very decrepit old gentleman we both knew, and I said: "I wonder what you and I will look like when *we* are very old?" In a flash Nelson Keys

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shrank before my eyes into a wizened little dotard : his teeth disappeared, leaving his mumbling gums ; his back curved into a question mark ; his lids dropped over a pair of dull, unseeing eyes ; and he proceeded to shuffle round the room, supporting his faltering steps with one hand on the supper table, muttering senile remarks the while. It was a *tour de force*. (What those two Belgravian servants thought of us we shall never know.)

When I accompany Nelson Keys on the piano I become so weak with laughter—in spite of enjoying only a back view of him—that I collapse into a sort of crumpled heap, and my fingers virtually cease to work : on these occasions, N.K. causes vast amusement by hoisting me up in my seat with encouraging remarks, such as : “ Go on ! Go on ! ”

Speaking of sincerity *versus* artificiality on the stage, somebody once asked Nelson Keys : “ What’s wrong with the theatre these days ? ” and he replied : “ There’s too much of this acting creeping in.”

At one of Ivor Novello’s wonderful parties in his flat in Aldwych, Nelson Keys overheard a certain stage beauty, who was beginning to show symptoms of swelled-head, say : “ There’s the little man who sometimes acts.” Whereupon, swift as lightning, came his riposte : “ There’s the woman who never does ! ”

Sir James Barrie’s description of this little genius is perhaps the happiest and certainly the most highly condensed : “ Here we have the Dramatic Profession in a nutshell ! ”

Mme Cécile Sartoris, niece of Sir Charles Hallé and sister of Maurice Noufflard (the gifted teacher of singing), was manager for Mme Réjane in the year 1915, when that incomparable artist acted for six weeks at the Coliseum in London and for two weeks in Manchester, returning to France with a net profit of £3,000 as the result of her visit to England.

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Whenever Réjane came to London she engaged a suite at the Carlton Hotel, where the head chef was enjoined to cook her two favourite dishes : cold salmon and a particularly liquid rice pudding—globules floating in a sea of greasy boiled milk—of the kind so dreaded by all British children.

Perhaps the most emotional incident in all Réjane's career was that memorable Charity Matinée at Queen's Hall when, after a great deal of coaxing and persuasion by Isidore de Lara, she consented to recite the Belgian poet Cammaerts's thrilling verses, "Carillons," set to stirring music by Elgar, and the orchestra conducted by Henry Wood.

Réjane, who to the end of her days suffered tortures of nervousness before going on to the stage, leant over her hands on a table in the artists' room, repeating to Cécile Sartoris in agonized tones : "Je ne *peux* pas ! Je me sens si mal ! Cela n'ira jamais !" etc.

At last she walked, trembling, on to the platform, her sallow face looking all the sallower against its setting of dead black dress and hat, and when she finished there arose such a storm of enthusiasm as the dear old Queen's Hall never heard before . . . not a dry eye among the audience . . . everybody swept clean off their feet.

It then fell to the lot of Lady Diana Manners to present a casket to Réjane ; that lovely Society Beauty, shaking from head to foot (this was partly explained by the fact that she developed measles the next morning), handed the tribute amidst an impressive silence to the great actress, and so ended a truly memorable scene.

When Cécile Sartoris's son was seven years old he suffered from nettlerash, that most distressing of childish maladies, with the result that the poor mite could not sleep. Réjane used to sit night after night on the edge of his bed, acting different bits from her *répertoire* to make the time seem less

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tedious to the little sufferer, and when she ceased his querulous voice would cry: "Encore quelque chose! Jouez encore quelque chose, s'il vous plaît!"

In those days Mme Sartoris could not afford the luxury of a nurse for her little boy, so he went everywhere with his mother, and attended all the rehearsals as well as most of the performances of Réjane's plays, which he knew backwards, needless to say.

At one performance of *Madame Sans-Gêne* he was all alone in the stage box, and when, at the end of the last act, Réjane, looking towards the corner of the stage, said the lines: "Je ne peux pas sortir par là, car j'ai un ami . . ." Master Sartoris's emotions got too many for him: he stood up in the *loge* and cried proudly to the audience, "L'ami, c'est moi!"

Jules Delacre is a Belgian actor with a sense of humour to the last degree. During the war I gave parties to which came artists of every species and all nationalities (save German). One evening Nelson Keys had excelled himself giving imitations of all the well-known Society people of the day arriving at *Ciro's*—in those days the only important nightclub in London—finishing up, in response to a cry from one of the audience of "Now do yourself, Bunch!" with a brilliant burlesque of his own shy manner, the fiddling with his tie and the fixed grin. Jules Delacre was one of the many artists in the room watching this *tour de force*, and when it was over he could control his enthusiasm no longer, but rushed up to Keys, kissed him on both cheeks and cried: "C'est mon âme-sœur!"

Discussing the Swiss landscape, he said, "Quand le bon Dieu a créé la Suisse il a pris pour modèle les cartes-postales *coloriées*," which is a truly witty description of that impossibly blue sky, more than white snow,

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exaggeratedly green grass and generally overdone characteristics of Switzerland.

It was with a feeling of awe, mixed with reverence for his artistic gifts, that I first met Sir Alfred Scott-Gatty at his country house near Welwyn in Hertfordshire.

As a child I had sung second to my mother's soprano in his delightfully melodious "Plantation Songs," and loved every note of them. Also I know very nearly by heart those exquisite books for children, "Jackanapes" and "The Story of a Short Life," written by his equally gifted sister, Mrs. Juliana Horatia Ewing (1841-1885). Even her Christian names were picturesque. My copies of these two works, with charming illustrations by Randolph Caldecott, I have treasured to this day, somewhat the worse for wear after all those years, and I can never open them without a queer pang of the old emotion. What style! And what atmosphere she had!

The family teemed with talent. Margaret Gatty (1809-1873), mother of Sir Alfred and of Mrs. Ewing, wrote "Parables from Nature" and edited *Aunt Judy's Magazine*.

Garter's brother, Charles Scott-Gatty, embraced the Catholic religion and collected archaic church chants. He was an intimate friend of George Wyndham and wrote a deeply interesting book about that brilliant creature after his tragic death.

Garter's elder son, Major Charles Scott-Gatty, who died while acting as Adjutant to the Hertfordshire Regiment during the Great War, wrote musical plays and songs, besides making good on the London Stock Exchange.

Sir Alfred Scott-Gatty, K.C.V.O., was born in 1847, the son of a Yorkshire parson, and nearly went on the stage in

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his youth. He actually signed a touring contract with the great Italian *tragédienne*, Ristori,* but was saved in time from this (to Early Victorians) degradation by a wealthy cousin, Dr. Charles Gatty, LL.D., of Felbridge Place, Sussex, with excellent results, as his subsequent career witnessed.

He went into the Heralds' College, one of the many Government Offices of England, and became successively Rouge-Dragon Poursuivant, York Herald and Garter Principal-King-at-Arms. (I prefer the older designation.)

He very kindly gave me a photograph of himself in full fig, as he was dressed at King George's Coronation: it is a beautiful uniform, and people who saw him there say that he was one of the most striking figures present at that gorgeous ceremony.

How well the British do pageants! No other race can come near them for organization, detail, dramatic sense and taste for the picturesque, excepting, perhaps, the Italians, who once in a blue moon put up a resplendent show at the Vatican.

Were I asked to write out a list of the six most amusing men I have met in the course of a long and interesting life, A. J. Scott-Gatty would be among them. His gift of mimicry alone would suffice to make him an entertainer above price, but added to this he is a born *raconteur*. In a house-party he is like bottled sunshine, and you may depend on him to make a party "go."

"Son of the Garter and the Suspender" (as he describes himself), he has a *répertoire* of Cockney stories that is inimitable and inexhaustible.

Here are a few he told me. . . . "I know he was drunk, 'cause I found 'im sitting in the middle of Trafalgar Square, listenin'-in with 'is truss."

* 1822-1906.

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London girl to a country friend : " These 'ere Zellepin hair-raids are somethink awful : it's a whizz and a bang and ye're 'urled into maternity ! "

On Armistice night, November 11th, 1918, A. J. Scott-Gatty was the one bright spot at the " Ritz " : he seized a crutch from a wounded officer, and in his hands it became successively in dumb pantomime a billiard-cue, an alpenstock, a gun, a conductor's *bâton* and a fishing-rod.

Jack Scott-Gatty has had much experience as an actor, having been with Beerbohm Tree, H. B. Irving, Cyril Maude, Gerald Du Maurier and Forbes-Robertson.

He told me : " My aunt, Juliana Horatia Ewing, took most of the incidents in Jackanapes's boyhood from my childish escapades at Ecclesfield Vicarage in Yorkshire, where I was born. I had the red-haired pony, Robin, and it was I who was sick over the tombstone in Ecclesfield Churchyard after chewing tobacco underneath the table at a mothers' meeting."

At my All-Star Charity Concert in Northampton on May 23rd, 1918, I put him on the stage to tell stories to the huge audience and he got no less than four curtains. Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson turned to me and said, " I should think that was the record for a *raconteur*."

CHAPTER XXIII

MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL

THE first time I met Mrs. Patrick Campbell—it was at a supper-party at Lord Churston's Knightsbridge house on February 12th, 1917—she gazed awhile at my head and then announced, drawing out the deep stop in her wonderful voice: “The *only* thing in the cosmos that *really* matters is to have a natural wave.”

Earlier in the evening we had been to see her act in her husband's (George Cornwallis-West) war-play at the Coliseum. At supper were Ernest Thesiger, of the exotic profile, who recited faultlessly—like the master of diction he is—the Rupert Brooke poem with the surprise in its tail; and Nelson Keys, most subtle of comedians.

Nothing would satisfy Mrs. Patrick Campbell but that little “Bunch” should do an imitation of her. When he had finished she clutched my arm and said very intensely—just like an imitation of herself—“I *don't* speak like that, *do* I?” Whereat we all laughed, the victim included.

Nothing rouses her ire more than the fact that the British Public calls her “Mrs. Pat.” For some absurd reason the very sound of this foreshortened nickname upsets her sensitive ear and she stoutly refuses to answer to it. Well, whatever we choose to call her, she remains a great artist, and, what is more, one of the most amusing conversationalists in the United Kingdom. It seems incongruous that the greatest

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tragic actress of her day should be able to keep a whole house-party in a state of helpless laughter from Friday till Monday, but I have seen her do it. She glares at me when I say : " You are one of the finest *comédiennes* in the world," but it is true. The Duse was, likewise, a great tragic and a great comic actress.

Beatrice Stella Campbell's father was an Englishman, Mr. John Tanner, and her mother was the daughter of an Italian, Count Romanini.

In her book, " My Life and Some Letters," she records her first engagement on the stage by Frank Green's Company in a play called *Bachelors*, which opened on November 20th, 1888, at the Alexandra Theatre in Liverpool ; her salary was £2 10s. a week, the " actress to find her own dresses." It's a hard life. After this she toured with Ben Greet's Company for two years ; then she acted at the Adelphi Theatre in London from 1891 till the spring of 1893.

I suppose that rarely in the history of the theatre has there been such a sensation as Mrs. Campbell's first performance of Paula in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* on May 28th, 1893, at the St. James's Theatre, under the management of George Alexander. Alexander had the courage to engage her—a comparatively unknown actress—at a salary of £15 a week to play the part of Pinero's heroine, and he reaped his reward, for, from the moment the first curtain fell, there was a wild furore. She then and there became the rage and went on from one triumph to another.

As a 15th birthday treat for Lady Ursula Grosvenor,* I produced at her mother's Lancaster Gate house on May 25th, 1917, Violet Loraine, George Robey, Nelson Keys and Ivor Novello, and we had a most amusing after-dinner programme consisting mostly of impromptu turns.

* Now Lady Ursula Filmer-Sankey, elder daughter of 2nd Duke of Westminster.



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Mrs. Patrick Campbell (who was, of course, a sister-in-law of the hostess) was one of the guests, and when I saw her confabulating with George Robey in a corner, I foresaw some fun. Sure enough, soon afterwards they performed in dumb show—dumb save for Mrs. P.C.'s occasional piercing shrieks—a short but lurid drama with Robey as a ruthless hypnotizer and the lady as his terrorized victim. It may safely be said that this was the first, last and only occasion on which Mrs. P.C. and George Robey appeared in the same piece!

In January, 1921, Lady Churston (Denise Orme) organized a charity entertainment in aid of some deserving cause in the Badminton country, and I joined her *troupe* as accompanist. We were farmed out—as it were—some with the Duke of Beaufort* and his gracious lady at Badminton, and some with Lady Sybil Codrington† at The Old Hundred, near Tormarton.

The cast for our two performances at Chipping Sodbury consisted of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who recited; Lady Carbery (formerly Miss José Metcalfe, from Australia) and Captain Bruce Macleod, of Cadboll, who danced; Lady Churston, who sang and played the fiddle; and Mrs. Edmund Sebag-Montefiore (Alice O'Brien), who sang.

During a pause in the programme, and while the curtain was up, Lady Sybil Codrington, elderly and weighty, walked—with a complete absence of self-consciousness—across the stage with a drum, placed it in readiness for the next item and then swept off. Mrs. Campbell watched this intently, and said to me: "What courage these laymen have! . . . The way she marched on and off, just as though it were an everyday event. . . . When I think of how we artists tremble

* 9th Duke of Beaufort, b. 1847, d. 1924.

† Daughter of 1st Earl of Lonsborough.

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with reverence and anguish before we dare to step on to those hallowed boards ! ”

It was wonderful to see the way Mrs. Patrick Campbell gripped her audience—nearly all hunting or agricultural folks. As for me—cold shivers coursed up and down my spine when she said the little poem, “ Butterflies.”

She ought to have a school of elocution and teach the Young Idea how to speak English. As for her voice—when I hear her say poetry it puts me in mind of some instrument, the violoncello perhaps. The woman uses her voice just as a musician bows on a string : no other actress gives me quite the same sensation. Sarah Bernhardt’s *Voix d’or* was gorgeous in quality, but had not so many notes in it.

Incidentally, Mrs. P.C. plays the piano and the harpsichord in a really musicianly way, a fact which is hardly surprising when you know that as a girl she took a scholarship at the Guildhall School of Music.

The Duke of Beaufort was of vast weight and girth in his old age, and had to be wheeled about in a bath-chair. He belonged to an age that is past, and I am glad to have lived in it. Master of the Badminton Hunt since 1896, he first hunted the family pack (as one always felt it to be) when he was twenty-one years old. On my left hand at the after-concert supper-table sat his only son, the young Lord Worcester—“ Master ” they call him—who is generally held to be the finest amateur huntsman of to-day. *Bon chien chasse de race*, and he is a worthy descendant of the Beaufort blood.

Up till his last illness the old Duke faithfully followed the hunt in a Ford car, which always looked top-heavy, so shallow was it to hold such a huge bulk. I told him : “ For two pins that Ford of yours is so agile it could run

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across country and take the fences in grand style, I verily believe!"

The Duchess of Beaufort (now the Dowager) is my beau-ideal of a Great Lady; gracious in manner, thoughtful for the comfort of everyone around her, wholly unpretentious, perfectly natural, and, to crown all, she is a real picture to look at, with her exquisite white hair and finely cut features. She was born a Miss Harford, of Olddown, Almondsbury, in Gloucestershire, and her first husband was a Dutchman by blood, Baron Carlo de Tuyll.

Never can I forget Mrs. Patrick Campbell standing in the saloon at Badminton, gazing up at the huge Vandyke equestrian portrait over the mantelpiece, her odious little insect-like toy-dog clasped to her breast, intoning in her best tragical tones to the Duchess: "*What* a pity that Vandyke is not living now, so that he could have painted my *darling* little Fluffy-puffy-wuffykins!!"

When she stays in a country house, accompanied by the so-called dog, she signs in the visitors' book first her own name and then underneath it a large oval ink-blot surrounded by sprouting hairs, which (a) represents her pet's autograph, and (b) proves that she has no illusions about its appearance, at all events.

At The Old Hundred Lady Sybil Codrington kept a pair of tame doves in a wicker cage. Mrs. Patrick Campbell watched the birds for a while and then announced: "I'm sure they want to make a nest to lay eggs in: they fidget about all the time. I know what's the matter with them. I shall go out and get them some twigs and straw." We all derided her for such a far-fetched theory, but, regardless of our scepticism, she dashed out into the wild, wet night, and returned with a little bundle of sticks, etc., which she stuffed into the cage with her blessing. We thought no more about the

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matter until next morning, when two freshly-laid eggs were discovered in the cage. Ensued triumph of the "I-told-you-so!" order for Mrs. Campbell and a complete climb-down on our part.

On January 6th, there was a meet of the Badminton Hounds in the neighbourhood to which everybody except myself went; I, alas! stayed indoors to scotch a heavy cold. It was a bitter disappointment to miss such a chance.

On the morning of January 7th, Frankie de Tuyll (son of the Duchess of Beaufort by her first husband) drove me over to Sodbury to see his beautiful old Tudor house, then in a state of modernizing and redecorating. He has very good taste and I envy him such an attractive home.

We then lunched at Badminton with his mother, and a small house-party, and, before I finally left for London, Frankie took me round as much of the vast pile as it was possible to see in the limited time. When we reached the State-Spare-Bedroom—the sort that is kept for Kings' and Queens' visits to Badminton—I gasped: "Never before have I seen lacquer!" In the room was a whole suite of lacquered Chinese Chippendale of the finest workmanship, and every whit as brilliant in colour as when it was made in the middle of the eighteenth century. The bed was a work of art, with a large dragon rampant at each corner of the canopy. "You would need to lead a sober life to open your eyes on those alarming beasts in the morning," was my reflection. A few months afterwards this superb set was sold for an enormous sum, a very wise action on the part of the family.

In May, 1921, I organized an All-Star Charity entertainment (in aid of a Sussex hospital) at Horsham. My cast

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included Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Lady Churston (Denise Orme), Peter Gawthorne and Cyril Maude, and we all stayed the week-end at Knepp Castle with Sir Merrik and Lady Burrell.*

After dinner one evening I, as *impresario*, gazed round upon the talent in the room and remarked: "*What* material for charades!" No sooner said than done, and Mrs. Pat, with her Puckish spirit, chose a word for all of them to act which the audience was too polite to say when it was guessed! (The clue in a cross-word puzzle would be "modern convenience.")

Every morning at Knepp Castle, Mrs. Pat held a *levée* in her room, and I have a vision of her sitting up in a huge four-poster bed—her Irish-Italiente hair looking blacker than ever against the whiteness of the pillow—holding us all by her brilliant talk and convulsing us with her *enfant terrible* remarks.

Somebody said that an artist had arranged an audition; whereupon Mrs. Patrick Campbell fulminated: "*What* is this word '*audition*'? *What* in the world does it mean? I hear it constantly used nowadays: *we* never said it when *I* was young." She is probably right—she knows a lot about words—for the Oxford Dictionary gives the meaning of "audition" as "the faculty of hearing," whereas in modern musical parlance it is commonly used to denote a trial.

In December, 1927, Mrs. Patrick Campbell said to me: "I've already been three times to see Ernest Truex in *Good morning, Bill!* and I am going again to-night. He's *wonderful*: you know he's got my method."

It is not given to many to get the last word with Mrs. Patrick Campbell; still, it has been done. On one occasion

* *Née* Miss Porter-Porter; now Mrs. Richard Hermon.

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she was taken in to dinner by an inoffensive little American, on whom she suddenly turned her lustrous orbs with the question: "Which would you sooner . . . love passionately or be passionately loved?" He took a deep breath and replied: "I'd rather be a canary."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE IRVINGS, BOURCHIER AND ELLEN TERRY

IT is very rare for the son of a great man to make a name for himself in the same profession as his illustrious father, but H. B. Irving was one of the few exceptions to the rule. It must have needed great moral courage for him to tread in the footsteps of such a sire as Sir Henry, but he did so aspire, and what is more he reached his goal.

With all his affectation and pose, inherited and assumed, he could be simple and sweet when he liked, and especially so at my Seymour Street evening parties, when he used to give us all great joy by reciting W. S. Gilbert's "Bab Ballads." The result of this stunt of his is that I never think of H.B. as Hamlet (and he was a very fine Hamlet too), but always his name conjures up his rich voice saying: "And Somers ate the oysters—oysters always made him sick!"

H. B. Irving was born in 1870 and christened Brodribb after his father, Sir Henry's real surname (the Irving was assumed). He was educated at Marlborough and New College, Oxford, where it is said that he made his first performance on the stage with the O.U.D.S., that nursery of histrionic talent, becoming a professional actor when he was twenty-one years old. Later he suddenly deserted the stage, studied law for three years and was called to the Bar. However, acting was strong in his blood, and he returned to the profession in 1894. At the age of twenty-six he married

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the beautiful Miss Dorothea Baird, famous for her performance of *Trilby*, and she was his leading lady for some years.

I saw H.B. in many plays, but the rôle which made the deepest impression on me was that of Crichton, the butler, in Barrie's inimitable *The Admirable Crichton*.

His great hobby was the study of criminology (what a morbid pastime!), and he spent most of his leisure poring over books on this gruesome subject. He even wrote several himself.

In appearance he was extraordinarily like his father, though Sir Henry was built on a much larger scale. His hands were noticeably fine, very artistic in shape, with long, pointed fingers.

At one of my parties somebody wanted Melsa (the violinist) to play the César Franck Sonata. He said: "I doubt whether I can remember it: it's ages since I played it last and I haven't got the music with me." Lady Churston jumped up from her chair and said: "Let's have a go at it! I know the piano part by heart." So, just for fun, Melsa and she embarked on this grand sonata, and "Jo" Churston's musical memory is so phenomenal that, in addition to playing the large work by heart, she actually prompted Melsa a couple of times when he hesitated. Only a trained musician can realize what a feat this was. H.B. was sitting next to me and said at the finish, in his "precious" way: "Have we not listened to something rather wonderful?" I replied, brimful of enthusiasm: "We certainly have . . . and, what's more, I very much doubt whether anybody will believe us when we tell this tale in days to come!"

H.B. died at the early age of forty-nine, and the stage lost one of its most dignified personalities.

Laurence Irving* was the second son of Sir Henry Irving,

* 1871-1914.

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and in some ways a finer actor than either his illustrious father or his brother, H.B. He certainly was less of a *poseur*.

One of the vast company of Old Bensonians, he made his first appearance on the stage in Benson's Shakespearean Co. when he was twenty-two years old.

I shall never forget his grim acting as the Japanese student, Takeramo, in Lengyel's sensational play *Typhoon*, at the Haymarket Theatre in May, 1913. Many people held this rôle to be his high-water-mark. At the end of the play my husband (who had known him as a small boy) and I went behind the scenes to congratulate him, and he was his most charming self. We said good-bye and left him in his dressing-room; but, hardly had we walked a few yards down the passage, when he followed us and said good-bye all over again. That was the last time we saw him. Both he and his devoted wife, Mabel Hackney, went down, clasped in each other's arms, on the *Empress of Ireland* in the St. Lawrence River in Canada on May 29th, 1914.

Arthur Bouchier* was fifty years old when the Great War broke out, but did everything in his power to help his country. He went on constant night-duty as a special constable—"rose to be a sergeant," as he put it—and I, as one among many, had reason to be grateful to him for his unfailing help in War Charity entertainments. During his life he was instrumental in raising over £30,000 for theatrical and war charities.

He was born in 1864, the son of a Captain in the 8th Hussars, and went in due course to Eton and to Christ Church, Oxford. While at the University he persuaded Professor Jowett to let him found the O.U.D.S. (Oxford University Dramatic Society) and to build a theatre there. They must have made a strange contrast, the burly, bass-voiced Bouchier and little Jowett with his squeaky utterance. Thus it came

* B. 1864, d. 1927.

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about that Bouchier, starting as an Oxford amateur actor, discovered his true *métier*.

Whenever I think of Bouchier I have a vision of him as Henry VIII in the production of Beerbohm Tree in 1910 at His Majesty's Theatre. Never was an actor cast by nature for the rôle of Bluff Hal (I speak of that monarch's outward appearance and not of his Mormon proclivities), so perfectly as A.B., real beard and all; and never was a more artistically correct production than Percy Macquoid's put on the stage. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had always been his special loves, so he revelled in every detail of the gorgeous scenery, costumes and architecture, encouraged to do his utmost by the ever-generous and lavishly-inclined Master of His Majesty's Theatre. Tree was an unforgettable Cardinal Wolsey : intriguing, ambitious and sly ; an imposing figure, towering over all the other men, trailing his brilliant scarlet robe as he sniffed disdainfully at an orange, as though to counteract the disagreeable smell of the common herd around him. Violet Vanbrugh, tall and gaunt, made a tragic Queen Katherine of Aragon ; Henry Ainley, of the sonorous voice, played the Duke of Buckingham ; and a slip of a girl called Laura Cowie, wide-eyed and red-mouthed, made her first big hit as that saucy wench, Anne Bullen.

Arthur Bouchier came to nursery-luncheon with me and my three children on August 16th, 1915, at Newquay in Cornwall, while on tour there, and, suddenly, in the middle of the meal, he was inspired to declaim in his best Shakespearean manner King Henry V's magnificent speech before the Battle of Agincourt :

He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is nam'd,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

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We few, we happy few, we band of brothers ;

And gentlemen in England, now abed,
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here ;
And hold their manhoods cheap, while any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

The last four lines may be dedicated to *embusqués* adown the ages. Personally I should have imagined that it required a greater nerve to stay out of the war than to go into it.

The children stopped munching ; the governesses down-tooled knives and forks ; and I thought to myself, as the gorgeous English rolled out : “ Why don't they give us Shakespeare—just *said* to us—with a few shillings' worth of black velvet curtains as scenery, and no action, for aught I care . . . the words are enough ! ” It's difficult to see your plate for the next course when your eyes are full of tears.

Bourchier was very proud of being the last of the old school of actor-managers ; in fact, the only actor-manager left in London who owned his theatre and worked it without a syndicate or a financial backing. The running of the Strand Theatre, a long lease of which he took over in 1919, was virtually done by his wife, the lovely Kyrle Bellew of the Titian-red hair and magnolia-petal complexion, whom he married in 1918. Those who know say that this lady is a wonderful organizer with a first-class business head screwed very tightly on to her fair shoulders. More power to her !

The last time I saw A.B. was only a few months before he went to South Africa in February, 1927, on what was to be his last journey. I told him that I was writing my reminiscences and chaffed him : “ You're in the book, you know ! ” He said, quite seriously : “ Will you show me what you've

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written about me before it's published?" I laughed. "Guilty conscience? Of course I will! You shall read it when you come home."

He must have had a premonition of death, for, before sailing, he sent to the Theatrical Correspondent of the *Daily Mail* a detailed account of his life and work, marked "for reference in the event of my death while abroad." When, on September 14th, the cablegram announcing his death at Johannesburg arrived in London, this statement was used by the newspaper as his obituary notice.

Here is one of his letters :

16, Davies Street,
Berkeley Square,
W.1.
Sept: 23rd, 1918.

My dear Mrs. Beddington,

With pleasure I send you an assortment of 'A.B.'
—Unfortunately I have not very many of OLD BILL.

Fancy Guy being 6 ft. and at Eton—Well! Well!
Well! Well! You are indeed a female PETER PAN!

Yrs Snly

Arthur Bouchier.

And "Mrs. Peter Pan" he called me to the end of the chapter.

How is it possible for my poor pen—and, indeed, any pen—to set down on paper the charm of Ellen Terry?*

The only scribe who could attempt it was Shakespeare, and he must have foreseen her when he wrote: "A star danced, and under that star I was born."

Some years ago Lady Randolph Churchill and I worked

* B. 1848, d. 1928.

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like Trojans to build up the shaky fortunes of the "Pioneer Players," (a society for producing non-commercial plays), and on October 17th, 1916, a big committee meeting was held at Ellen Terry's house in King's Road, Chelsea. At the head of the table sat "Herself," by virtue of her position as Chairman, a large pair of tortoiseshell-spectacles on her beautiful Terry nose, the notes of her speech in huge block letters (for the failing sight of her deep blue eyes) on a sheet of paper before her, and—believe me—I could not look at anybody else in the room. There were women there a quarter of her age; some of them were good-looking, all were clever and accomplished, a few wore smart Paris frocks; but the woman at the head of the table gripped me by the force of her personality; it was as though she pulled my eyes on strings towards her. I can see her now, somewhat flurried by the ordeal of her speech, licking her lips every other minute, a nervous trick she had. Now, when you watched Ellen Terry lick her lips you thought that to lick your lips was surely one of the most marvellous accomplishments in the world!

Those of us who—for our sins—struggled with the organization of Charity Matinée's invariably tried to coax Ellen Terry into a box at the performance, knowing, as we did full well, that the mere sight of her there would rouse the adoring London audience to as much loyal frenzy of applause as could any of the performers on the stage.

Of later years her memory was apt to fail, and we had a ludicrous adventure together one pouring wet day after a matinée-performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Drury Lane. The rain came down "like stair-rods" all day, and, by the time I escorted her on my arm out of the theatre into my car there was in the street a very fair imitation of a water-spout overhead and a lake underfoot. No sooner had I

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ensconced her in the car than she looked at me with that beaming smile (the sort "that 'ud wheedle a kettle off a hob") and said, with a gurgle of laughter: "*Isn't* it funny, dearest? I *can't* remember where I'm living!" She could only offer two clues: (1) That she was *not* staying at her own flat; (2) that she must pass through something that looked like a churchyard with railings to reach the door. But, between us, the chauffeur and I took her to the right place, and that was that!

Sir Charles Biron tells a delightful story of his youth. Somewhere in the dim and distant 'seventies he went to the play, opened his programme and experienced the usual sinking of the heart when he read a notice: "Owing to the indisposition of Miss So-and-so, her part will be played by Miss Ellen Terry." How disappointing to have paid to see Miss So-and-so and to be obliged to put up with an obscure understudy! On came Ellen, then a slip of a thing, and young Biron lost his heart to her straightway. Did not every male immediately fall in love with that radiant vision? Has not Sir James Barrie told us that the youths of those days used to couch their proposals in the following words: "Since I cannot get Ellen Terry, please, I should like to marry you."

One lovely day in August, 1926, I spent with Dame Ellen Terry at her fifteenth-century half-timbered farmhouse, near Tenterden in Kent, one of the most picturesque homes that an artistic mind could imagine, and a fit setting for her romantic personality.

When I arrived I took off my hat—as is my wont on every possible occasion—and Ellen Terry exclaimed approvingly: "That's right! I would have begged you to take off your hat anyway; I wanted to see the hair." Then, looking at my black plaits, she apostrophized the company: "Ah!

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If only I had had hair like that, I could have made a success of Lady Macbeth!" (It may here be mentioned that she always felt this rôle was a failure.)

Phyllis Neilson-Terry told me that Ellen Terry, discussing with her the character of Macbeth, said: "He was a bloody man" . . . in a gentle voice . . . "in the Shakespearean sense, dear; of course, only in the Shakespearean sense!"

Much chaff do I endure on the subject of my handbag, a capacious receptacle some thirteen inches long, which inspires such witticisms as: "Where is your next case?" "Are you going to stay the night?" and such-like. For once it was entirely dwarfed by the famous Ellen Terry bag, immortalized by Sir James Barrie. She pounced on my bag with mischievous glee, and said: "*How* jealous yours must be when it sees mine!"

Always a bad hand at remembering names, she cunningly avoided the necessity of saying mine by such artifices as: "Give"—pause—"this charming lady some more green peas"; or "We must show"—pause—"this lovely creature the garden."

Her own niece, Phyllis Neilson-Terry, once spoke to her at a party, and turning to go away, heard E.T. ask in a piercing whisper: "*Who* was that?"

Asked how she came to possess this beautiful old home, she told me: "Irving used to take me for long drives on Sundays, and on one of these occasions we were bowling along the road when I saw this old farmhouse, and said to him: 'Oh! How I should love to own that!' Irving replied: 'Well, why not?' Then I simpered: 'One might as well wish for the moon'—and then Irving bought the house for me."

"You *must* know Ted Craig—that's my son: he's such a dear. When he was a little boy he was terribly greedy, so one Christmas Eve I gave him a lecture on behaviour at table,

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and how he must not grab at the cake, and how he ought to moderate his transports when he saw a favourite dish, and how he must give himself a small helping, etc. On Christmas Day a huge plum-pudding was handed to Ted first, as the youngest present, whereupon, mindful of my injunctions, he said, modestly : ‘ Only half.’ ”

Ellen Terry was born on February 27th, 1848 ; so on this day she was just seventy-eight and a half years old ; if the rest of us poor mortals could look half as attractive as she did and be one quarter as entertaining as she was, we should be lucky !

She had an amusing habit—delicious humbug that she was—of making herself out to be completely dilapidated (what the Irish call “ an illigant wreck ”), the better to engender sympathy, no doubt, and repeated with unction : “ It’s too dreadful, my dear ! I can’t see ; I can’t hear ; and I’m quite dotty ! ” In the middle of our delicious luncheon she exclaimed : “ Did you ever see such a dark nasturtium as that ? ”—pointing to a vase at least four feet away.

Her devoted lady-companion had warned me that Ellen Terry must on no account eat cheese. When it was handed round she took a piece ; I then whispered across the table to the companion : “ Shall I take it off her plate when she’s not looking ? ” Whereupon, to my horror, E.T. thundered : “ *Who* said I must not eat cheese ? I love cheese, and I *will* eat cheese, and nobody shall prevent me ! ” And eat cheese she did.

She said to me : “ And you came all the way from London in a ”—pause—“ what *is* that thing called ? ” . . . Someone suggested “ motor.” . . . “ Yes, that’s it, a motor. I never can remember that word. Well, where’s your coachman ? ” Nothing would satisfy her short of seeing him herself. So we

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eventually found my chauffeur, to whom she said, with her devastating smile: "Now, Mister Coachman, mind you ask for anything you want. You won't get it, but ask for it all the same!" Small wonder that everybody fell under her spell!

She was seventy-eight years old when she attended the first night of Henry Ainley's production of *Much Ado about Nothing* in the summer of 1926. Her devoted henchman, Sir Albert Seymour, who took the place of a son to her, said to Lady Wyndham: "Did you notice that Ainley cut the lines, 'For others say thou dost deserve and I believe it better than . . .?'" Lady Wyndham replied: "Yes; so Ellen Terry just told me." What about that for quickness of perception? Yet I can still hear her chanting: "My dear, it's too dreadful! I'm blind, I'm deaf, and I'm dotty!"

Like all the other artists I ever knew, she vowed there was no audience in the world like the British for warmth and loyalty. As for herself, I venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that the two women of my epoch most beloved by the English-speaking people were Queen Alexandra and Dame Ellen Terry.

In her bedroom was a beautiful photograph of Eleanore Duse, always the object of her deepest admiration. Although the two actresses were poles apart in personality—La Duse breathing tragedy and Ellen Terry radiating sunshine—they surely had this feature in common, the absolute sincerity of their art. Sarah Bernhardt was a great artist, but she always made me feel conscious of the fact that she was *acting*.

Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson quoted to me as an instance of the supreme art of the Duse a scene where she meets unexpectedly many years afterwards a man who had treated her infamously when she was a girl. Forbes-Robertson said: "When this man came into the room Duse turned

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ashen-grey and looked as though she were on the verge of fainting : then a flush slowly spread all the way up her neck and face right into the roots of her hair as the blood gradually resumed its normal flow." An actress who could perform this apparent miracle every evening must surely have experienced all the mental agony of the real thing in order to get this physical reaction.

Ellen Terry was chosen to represent the Dramatic Profession at the presentation of Princess Mary's wedding gift in 1922, and was, therefore, commanded by Their Majesties to the evening ceremony at Buckingham Palace. Sir Albert Seymour enthused his tailor into beating all previous records for swiftness by making a pair of Court knee-breeches in the space of six hours so that he might escort Ellen Terry to this historical function. To use his own words: "She loved every minute of it, and no *débutante* could have enjoyed herself more. Queen Alexandra spoke most graciously to her and said to me: 'Take great care of her!'"

When we spoke at luncheon of how Sarah Bernhardt had lost her golden voice in her old age (how painful were her cracked tones in *Daniel*!), Ellen Terry announced to the table at large: "*My* voice still carries as far as ever it did, and do you know why? . . . because I never drink with my meals."

At one time she took to smoking cigarettes, a caprice which lasted only a short while. On one occasion at Brighton Sir Albert Seymour and Edith Craig, her gifted daughter, set out to find her while she was playing Portia on the Palace Pier. (Oh! apt alliteration!) "There is Mother's smoke!" cried Edie suddenly, pointing to a thin spiral mounting into the air from the Pier. Could anything be more incongruous than the idea of Portia puffing at a cigarette between the acts of the *Merchant of Venice*?

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It seems to me that Edith Craig has never had due acknowledgment of her work in stage *décor*. For sheer beauty of imagination, colouring and lighting, it would be hard to surpass her exquisite setting of the scene in Claudel's *Vision of Marie*, produced by the Pioneer Players.

A friend who had known Ellen Terry for some forty years said of her : " She never thinks or says an unkind thing of anyone," so who shall say, in the face of such a tribute, that she did not richly deserve to be called the Queen of Hearts as well as of the British Stage ?

When I was leaving, she suddenly said very earnestly : " I *do* hope you've married a nice boy ? I can't bear the idea of a beautiful woman married to a man much older than herself ! " It was afterwards explained to me that she had a horror of old people and loved to be surrounded by youth.

CHAPTER XXV

THE WAR LORDS

FIELD-MARSHAL EARL ROBERTS was a life-long friend of my mother and her family. He fought on the Ridge at Delhi alongside my great-uncles, Henry Norman (subsequently a Field-Marshal and Governor of Chelsea Hospital) and George Chesney (author of "The Battle of Dorking" and Governor of Cooper's Hill Engineering College), and was likewise devoted to my third great-uncle, Mortimer Durand.

Lord Roberts had a captivating charm and a personality that carried all before it; he was physically quite insignificant, of tiny stature and unassuming presence, yet there emanated from him some indefinable loveliness which attracted men, women and children alike. Perhaps the secret was his gift for making you believe while he was with you that you were the only person in the wide world who really mattered.

His outstanding quality was his modesty: even at the zenith of his fame, when he had had enough success—he was a proverbially "lucky" soldier—to turn the head of a smaller-minded mortal, his manner still retained the diffident I'm-sure-you-know-as-much-if-not-more-about-it-than-I-do charm of a rather shy subaltern.

He shared with our Royal Family that born and never-to-be-acquired gift of remembering names and faces and



FIELD-MARSHAL SIR HENRY WYLIE NORMAN,
G.C.M.G., G.C.B., C.I.E.
Chelsea Hospital

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relations. Can there be any more subtle flattery for us humbler mortals than to be told that a Great Personage remembers our good-looking father when he was young and dangerous, or the romantic marriage of a beautiful, if wayward aunt?

During the latter years of Lord Roberts's life, as in the case of all old people, his mind dwelt more upon his youth than upon recent events. Forgetting the gap between our ages, he would talk to me at great length about the old days of the Indian Mutiny and about my great-uncles, until he perceived a vague look in my eye—these distinguished ancestors of mine being more or less legendary to one of my generation—when he would apologize with courtly grace, and say sadly: "The great disadvantage, to my mind, of living to a great age is that all my contemporaries are dead. I am the last one left . . . the last of that lot."

In 1906 he showed me over his house, Englemere, at Ascot near the racecourse, bought from Lord Ribblesdale, where were housed all the accumulated treasures and trophies of his long and honourable career.

One of his most prized possessions was the picture, painted by Charles Furse, of his beloved white Arab charger—the animal he rode in the big processions. He said to me with pride: "This is the only horse in the world that ever wore the Kabul medal with four clasps and the Star of Kandahar."

When he took me into the dining-room to see the portrait of his only son Freddy, who died heroically defending the guns at Colenso in 1899 and was awarded a posthumous V.C. for his gallantry, I stood and choked. My mother sent a letter of condolence to the stricken father, and, in spite of the harassing strain he was under at the time as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, he wrote her a most touching

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personal letter in reply. . . . And that is what I call "Behaviour."

On September 25th, 1913, I was staying at Broomhill, in Northamptonshire, with Sir Mervyn and Lady Manningham-Buller (a daughter of the popular 3rd Baron Chesham), and we all three rode out—myself on a hireling—to follow the manœuvres.

Early in the morning I fell in with Lord Roberts, who rode about briskly all day, despite his eighty-one years, attended by Major Paley as aide-de-camp. The dear old Field-Marshal graciously gave me permission to ride close behind him ; consequently I saw the proceedings to the best possible advantage.

The weather was piping hot, the sun blazed unwinking all day from a molten sky, and after a couple of hours, while a large group of riders—including Lord Roberts, Major Paley, Colonel Jack Seely, Winston Churchill and Lord Ludlow—was watching the manœuvres from the top of a high hill, my horse, overheated and thoroughly bored by this time with the whole show, suddenly lay down, wiped me off the saddle on to the grass and began to roll. Ludlow, who was next to me, shouted : " Beat him well ! " but I was so helpless with laughter that it was all I could do to hold on to my reins and whip, so Ludlow quickly leapt off his own horse and lambasted my disappointed mount into standing up once more. A few minutes afterwards I told Lord Roberts : " You have missed the comic turn of the day ! " For, like the great little gentleman he was, he vowed he had not seen it.

The big fight of the day took place near Sharman's Hill, and I remember chaffing a very hot, very thirsty Tony Markham (Coldstream Guards)—since killed in the Great War—as he toiled past me with his skeleton regiment.

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Shelagh Westminster (first wife of the 2nd Duke) followed the manœuvres that day, mounted on a Spanish steed with a weird contraption in its mouth which she said was the bit of the country. She always had such wonderful hands on a horse that I don't suppose it would have made much difference if she had ridden it with a complete *batterie de cuisine* between its jaws.

King George and Queen Mary were also interested spectators, so it was a real gala day for the troops.

The faces of the foreign military attachés were inscrutable as the sphinx, but, in the light of subsequent events, I take it that the officer representing Germany must have wondered at the diminutive proportions of our "Contemptible Little Army" that day.

The intrepid "Goughy" (now General Sir Hubert Gough) fought in several dashing actions and was repeatedly taken prisoner by the "enemy."

At one moment during the afternoon I was sitting on the brow of a hill to rest my horse, when up the slope came the familiar form of an old Pytchley friend, General Horne. Unthinkingly, I greeted him: "Hullo! What are *you* doing here?" To which ingenuous question the dear man replied, with the characteristic modesty of the great: "I'm looking after some Artillery." He was Chief-Inspector of Artillery in England at the time!

Because of my personal devotion to Lord Roberts, and *not* because I believed for one moment in the possibility of war with Germany, I laboured cheerfully in the cause of the "National Army," Lord Roberts's pet scheme. To his eternal honour be it recorded that after the Great War broke out he never once said: "I told you so!" though it is obvious that if only England had taken his sage advice and organized this "National Army," the Germans would never have

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dared to risk a European War. Wild horses will not drag from me their names, but several distinguished generals and other officers of what the Irish call "the upperosity" used to mock at me for my championship of Lord Roberts and his "National Army." One man (a General commanding a Division, who should have known better) even went so far as to utter these scathing words in April, 1914: "How can you, an intelligent and sensible woman, listen to the senile nonsense of that blithering old man?"

I was under a binding promise to Lord Roberts that I would let him know whenever my mother came over from Ireland to Seymour Street, and on each of her visits the old gentleman duly arrived for a couple of hours' chat.

The last time I saw him was on February 9th, 1914 (he was then in his eighty-third year), and I well remember him stumping fiercely up and down the slippery polished floor of my drawing-room, looking like a bantam-cock with every hackle on end, while he fulminated: "The sooner Germany starts war the better . . . it's bound to come. . . . I only hope to God that it will be in my time. . . . We're not prepared for it *now*, but, if it comes later on, we shall be still less ready for it!" . . . Five months and twenty-three days from that date England declared war on Germany.

On November 13th, 1914, he went out to the front and caught a chill while inspecting his adoring Indian troops. At eight o'clock on the following evening the little man with the heart of a lion and the tenderness of a woman died peacefully within sound of the guns—meet ending to a splendid soldier's life.

* * * * *

Sir John Cowans* will go down to fame as the greatest

* General Sir J. S. Cowans, G.C.M.G., G.C.B., M.V.O.; b. 1862; d. 1921.

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Quartermaster-General since Moses. He was a born organizer, with a vast capacity for detail and a gluttony for hard work.

When I asked a fellow-officer of his in the Rifle Brigade, "What is the special secret of Jack Cowans's work?" he explained it thus: "I think it is his *tidy mind*. Supposing you let him loose in an office that was knee-deep in a chaos of letters, files, books, accounts, etc., etc., Jack would emerge at the end of some hours having tidied and classified and docketed every single thing in that office."

Surely people who are untidy in their habits must—necessarily—have muddled minds? After all, you create your room around you, just as a silkworm spins its cocoon. I should never expect clear-thinking or efficient organization from a person with an untidy room, any more than I would appoint a surgeon with soiled hands to perform an operation.

Whenever things go wrong in the world, England is called upon to do all the dirty work. On February 23rd, 1915, Sir John Cowans, in addition to supplying 220,000 pairs of boots in one week to Kitchener's Army and our troops abroad, sent 2,000,000 pairs of boots to the French Army.

In August, 1914, I was in Ireland and witnessed the extraordinary wave of friendship towards England during the first few weeks of the Great War among the hitherto frankly disloyal Irish peasantry, who, to do them justice, had been brought up from birth to look upon the English as their hereditary foes. Village bands strove to find the score of *God Save the King*, a tune debarred for obvious reasons from the Irish *répertoire*; Ulstermen and Nationalists embraced one another openly and unashamedly in the streets, united for the first time in history by the bond of a common enemy; recruiting-offices were chock-a-block with men offering

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themselves to fight (and what, in Heaven's name, is the Irishman's favourite pastime ?) . . . then there came a check. England missed her chance when she refused John Redmond's generous offer of an Irish Army . . . and next a message came to me that recruiting was held up because the Southerners wanted a special badge on their caps under which to fight. "Ulster," they claimed with perfect justice, "has *her* badge, the Red Hand, so why should not *we* have some distinctive token ? "

Now, I had told the Irish Redmond Loyalist Party that they were to imagine I was uncoloured by prejudices—political, racial, or religious—and to use me as and when the opportunity should occur. Accordingly, when this request for a badge reached me, I made an appointment to see Sir John Cowans (easily the most accessible Member of the Army Council) at the War Office on a day in October, 1914. Knowing how punctual is my nature, and how much I disliked being kept waiting, he always arranged that one of his myrmidons met me at the entrance and escorted me straight up to his room.

I used to say beforehand : " You know I am a very busy woman, and I can only give you fifteen minutes this time ! " thereby reversing the usual procedure. During all the years I knew him, he was never quite sure when I was making fun or when I was serious. Most of my appointments at the War Office were at 4 p.m. Consequently that august building is always associated in my mind with an avalanche of boy scouts bearing tea-trays in every direction. When I arrived in Jack Cowans's room I said (knowing his habits) : "*Please* don't let me interrupt your tea !" and he exclaimed : "TEA ? ! ? !" throwing a world of sarcasm and disdain into that monosyllable.

I then implored him to put this matter of a badge to Lord

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Kitchener, whom he saw daily, and to lay stress upon the fact that a great deal depended on it. Some days later I received the following reply from Sir John Cowans: "I will promise a 'PIG' if you will agree to a Union Jack collar or bow on its tail.—Yrs. J.S.C."

Now, the secret of wielding power over a man is to know that man's weak spot and to play upon it. The vulnerable point in the Irish peasantry is their national sentimentality. If the War Office in general, and Lord Kitchener in particular, had been gifted with a little more imagination, and had played upon this foolish (if you like to call it so) nationality-mania, and given the South a harp to wear on their caps, and allowed them enough Irish pipers to turn the Germans' musical brains (who knows but that whole regiments of Huns would have surrendered sooner than listen to that noise?), and ordered thousands of yards of saffron-coloured kilts, it would have been a sound investment for the British taxpayer, and there would have been fewer "corner-boys" and perhaps no "Easter Week" in 1916.

Some weeks later I got another "S.O.S." from the Irish side; this time the grievance was that there were not enough priests to give absolution to Roman Catholic soldiers. (Should they not have this before going into action, and be killed, their souls cannot be saved.) On December 4th, 1914, I again went to see Sir John Cowans at the War Office, and to beg that more priests should be appointed to the Irish regiments. It is a pleasure to record that this measure was immediately carried out.

Jack Cowans reminded me much of another great worker, Joseph Chamberlain, in his complete disregard of dietetic principles, fresh air and exercise. Like Joseph Chamberlain, he enjoyed up till the day of his fatal illness rich food and good wine; smoked big cigars; was shut up in stuffy rooms during

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most of the twenty-four hours ; and never bothered about regular exercise.

He had an extraordinary charm for both men and women. To analyse attraction such as his is always difficult, but his many friends will surely agree that in his delightful personality the two chief ingredients were his bubbling zest of life, giving an impression of eternal youth, and the fact that he was so "human."

The following letter* to me will show this quality :

War Office,

7/1/15

My Dear,

Please see enclosed *which I trust you* never to mention *and return*.

I have arranged kind treatment and hope *you* will now take over command. I wish I was one of your subalterns ! instead of being an ivy-clad ruin !

Yours

J.S.C.

Everyone of us suffers from the defects of our qualities, so any mistakes made by Cowans were caused by his innate kindness of heart, his keen anxiety to help his friends, and his wish to please by all the means in his power.

When I reproached him for having given a job worth £800 a year to a man who had been notorious as the worst Commanding Officer ever known to history (absolutely honest but totally inefficient in the Army), Cowans replied with a shame-faced grin : " But he can't do any *harm* there ! "

When it is remembered that about £2,000,000 worth of

* Printed by permission of Colonel Peel.

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contracts per day passed through his hands as Quarter-master-General in the Great War, the fact that he died penniless, leaving his widow, the daughter of a Yorkshire clergyman, the Rev. J. E. Coulsden, very badly off, speaks volumes for his absolute financial integrity.

From the time that Cowans joined the Rifle Brigade in 1881, he (as his brother officers said) "never heard a shot fired in anger." Every time a war was on he was kept at Headquarters, organizing and administering.

It was amusing and instructive to hear his criticism of Lord Kitchener (while Secretary for War), who also had a great name for organization. In the winter of 1914 Cowans said to me: "Just imagine it! K. insists on opening all his envelopes. . . . Such waste of time and energy. . . . It's his mania for keeping every detail in his own hands. Those methods were all right, perhaps, in small campaigns like Egypt and South Africa; but, if he wants to tackle *this* job successfully, he will have to decentralize." Did not somebody once lay down the axiom: "Never do a job that an underling can do as well as yourself?"

They say that the onlooker sees most of the game. I have looked on for many years at the chasing of men by women, and I never saw but one man who was as hard pursued as Jack Cowans. How many of you gentlemen would play the Joseph rôle in their place?

When on April 25th, 1921, I saw the funeral of our great Quartermaster-General at Westminster Cathedral, with all the picturesque pomp, complicated ceremony and minute detail of the Roman Catholic Church, I could not but help thinking, in the midst of my tears: "*How* Jack would have appreciated this wonderful organization!"

One of the greatest disillusionments of my life was my

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first meeting with Lord Ypres.* For years I had heard of his irresistible charm—he was commonly held to be fatal to all my sex—and I knew of so many men who had also come under the spell of his personality, that when I saw a stumpy, plain, rather dull, disgruntled old man, I was woefully disappointed. In fairness to him it must be owned that he was seventy-three years old at this time : still, you expect “ animal magnitude ” (as a modern Mrs. Malaprop called it) to last a lifetime and to remain undimmed by age.

He used to treat me—doubtless because I was Irish—to long and heated tirades against the English, against whom he bore a special grudge. “ Nothing would induce me to stay in England longer than I am absolutely obliged. . . . They treated me disgracefully and I’ll never forget it. . . . You know, I spend most of my time in my rooms at the Crillon in Paris. I like the French, and they’re always nice to me.”

I wonder how many Field-M Marshals have been “ snotties ” in their youth ? Lord Ypres went into the Royal Navy at fourteen and served as a naval cadet and a midshipman for four years. Then he changed into the Army, beginning with the 8th Hussars.

My friend, General Blank, told me the following incident : “ At three o’clock on the hot afternoon of Sunday, August 23rd, 1914, I went into the Mairie at Bavai ; the sunshine was streaming into the room through blindless windows, and seated at the Council table of M. le Maire were the British Commander-in-Chief (Sir John French), Sir Archibald Murray, Sir William Robertson and General (afterwards Sir Henry) Wilson. Tired out and overcome by the heat, a French officer was dozing in the only shady corner of the room. The Generals had just heard of the fall of Namur, also that the

* Field-Marshal 1st Earl of Ypres, O.M., K.P., K.C.M.G., G.C.B., G.C.V.O. ; b. 1852 ; d. 1925.

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French Army had retired from the line of the Sambre, past Maubeuge, to the neighbourhood of Rocroi. Sir John French struck the table with his fist as I entered the room and exclaimed: 'By God! We've backed the wrong horse! We've backed the wrong horse!' I often wonder what would have become of Sir John French's Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour if that French officer had not been quite so fast asleep."

When Mr. Selfridge asked me, in April, 1924: "Would you like to come to dinner to meet Lloyd George?" I accepted with alacrity, delighted to know the meteoric politician whose rise and fall created a sensation such as few men in the world's history have compassed.

I cast my mind back to a discussion at Bletchley Park in the year 1901, in which someone asked: "Who is there coming on in the House of Commons that shows real ability?" Herbert Leon replied: "I've had my eye for some time on a little Welsh solicitor called Lloyd George—the member for Carnarvon. He's as clever as a cartload of monkeys. You'll see . . . he'll make his mark."

Then I recollected the 1909 "Limehouse" period, when the fiery little man went about making bitterly impassioned speeches, with "Tax the land!" as his slogan; stirring up class-hatred, and getting himself so disliked by the High Gentry that an otherwise saintly old lady confided in me the pious wish: "If *only* Lloyd George could have a really bad motor accident . . . no pain, you know . . . but just . . . be removed!"

Next the Great War, in which, with all his mistakes of judgment, he surely played a great part—with his "push and go"; his infectious vitality; his unquenchable optimism and his gift for kindling hope in the breasts of less resilient men during the blackest hours of the titanic struggle.

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And then, in 1922, the crash. Down he toppled from the pedestal—the man who for several years had been easily the most important personality in the world—and suddenly disappeared into comparative obscurity.

As we sat down to dinner that April evening at Lansdowne House, I remarked what a striking likeness there was between my host and Mr. Lloyd George—they are of much the same height and build, and each has silvery hair, worn very long. “ I expect you two are often taken for one another ? ” I said ; which remark led to much chaff anent possibilities, complications and so forth.

The only other guest was Clare Sheridan, the sculptress and authoress.

L.G.’s charm is largely due to the same technique as that of the Irish variety. In the middle of dinner he laid down his knife and fork, leant across the table and asked me—à propos of some subject on which I was wholly ignorant—“ And what do *you* think of it, Mrs. Beddington ? ” Can there be anything more flattering than to be asked by a very clever man your opinion on a question of which you know nothing ?

Three months later I was asked by a committee to persuade Lloyd George to come on to a platform and make a speech in support of a certain opera scheme. Always anxious to oblige, I went down to the House of Commons and was there received by L.G.’s secretary, Mr. Sylvester, a red-headed and sympathetic young man with horn spectacles, who explained that his chief was unavoidably and regrettably detained by a deputation of Nonconformists, and would I wait ? Accordingly I sat down beside Mr. Sylvester on the hard bench (no doubt the authorities at Westminster do well to make these seats as uncomfortable as possible ; otherwise there would be still more visitors to harass M.P.s), and we had a long

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and interesting conversation, during the course of which it transpired that L.G. had told the young man everything about that dinner at Lansdowne House—jokes and all. His memory for details was always phenomenal and has stood him in good stead on many a critical occasion.

A certain officer told me this tale of the war :

“ On my way home on leave from France in 1916 I had just sat down in a Pullman car on the Folkestone train when Mr. Lloyd George (then Minister of Munitions), accompanied by a Staff Officer from the War Office, entered the carriage. L.G. asked who I was, and sent the Staff Officer to me with a message inviting me to his private compartment. L.G. was always anxious to hear things at first-hand, and conversation all the way up to London embraced many subjects, mainly to do with munitions of war.

‘ And what,’ asked L.G., ‘ do you people think of the Stokes Mortar ? ’

I acknowledge that I waxed enthusiastic. I had gone through the painful trials of many unsuccessful bomb-throwers, culminating in the gigantic india-rubber catapult, which last invention had on one occasion nearly cost the lives of an entire Brigade Staff. I assured Mr. Lloyd George that the Stokes Mortar had revolutionized trench warfare.

‘ Well,’ said he, ‘ I am responsible for it : it’s an interesting story and I’ll tell it to you.

‘ A few months ago I was in my office in London when the card of an agricultural implement maker of Reading was brought in to me. I always made a practice of interviewing personally everyone whom I thought might be of use to the Ministry of Munitions. Mr. Stokes—for it was he—explained his invention, and I was so taken with his idea that I then and there ordered my car and drove with him to Reading. It took a very short time for him to convince me that this was a really

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valuable discovery. I promised Mr. Stokes that he would hear from me shortly, and went back to London. On the following morning I saw Lord Kitchener, told him of my experience at Reading, and finished by saying : And if I only had £10,000 I would put it into Stokes Mortar this very afternoon.

‘ I can give you £20,000,’ said K.

‘ What do you mean ? ’ I asked.

‘ Let me explain,’ replied K. ‘ You know that I have ordered 3,000,000 rifles to be made and have directed that all existing factories be increased to deal with this large output. Well, last week a gentleman wanted to see me : I granted him an interview, and he asked me whether this were true.’

‘ Yes,’ said I.

‘ Now,’ he said, ‘ I can supply you with those 3,000,000 rifles, Mausers, in first-class condition, at Buenos Aires, ready for shipment, price £2 10s. per rifle, also plenty of ammunition for them.’

‘ Capital ! ’ said I, ‘ I’ll take them all : deliver as soon as possible and leave your name and address with my secretary.’

‘ As he walked towards the door I called him back. ‘ This is a big order,’ said I, ‘ and I must have a guarantee of good faith ; there will be no deal unless £20,000 is lodged at the Bank of England to the credit of the Minister of War by noon of Thursday next. Good morning ! ’

‘ Well,’ said K., ‘ the £20,000 was duly lodged, and you can have it.’

‘ But,’ asked Mr. Lloyd George, ‘ what about the rifles ? ’

‘ Rifles ? ’ said K. ‘ There *were* no rifles, but they are now being turned out at Enfield according to plan, and you have had a good story plus £20,000 ! ’

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As our train drew into Victoria Station L.G. exclaimed :
' I shall not be content until we have a line of guns stretching axle to axle from the Somme to the sea and plenty of shells for them ! ' ”

We all know that he attained his ambition.

On August 23rd, 1926, I had the honour of sitting at luncheon next to “ Papa ” Joffre,* after he had unveiled the Memorial to the 16th (Irish) Division at Guillemont in the Somme.

Joseph Jacques Césaire (a prophetic name) Joffre was born in 1852, one of the eleven children of a cooper in the Pyrenees, and began his military career as a Sapper.

Each race is apt to make the big mistake of generalizing,† and one of the greatest misconceptions of the English is their fixed belief that all Latins are talkative, sparkling, scintillating bundles of fireworks. Joffre is a living example of a heavy, imperturbable, slow-thinking, unimaginative Frenchman ; in short, he is exactly what the Latins wrongly imagine all Englishmen to be.

The unveiling ceremony had exhausted us all a good deal, chiefly owing to the unconscionably long speech delivered by the Bishop of Amiens while the blazing sunshine beat down upon our heads—indeed, one of the smartly turned-out Gendarmerie horses lay down in the middle of the torrent of eloquence, to the envy of everybody present.

At luncheon I looked with reverence at the “ Man of the Marne,” old and tired, benign, simple and dignified, with seven silver stars on his sleeve ; four rows of oak-leaves on his cap (the insignia of a Field-Marshal of France), and the English Order of Merit on his breast. I remarked that a corner had been chipped off this cross, but he said : “ I

* Maréchal Joffre, O.M., Hon. G.C.B. ; b. 1852.

† “ Glittering and sounding generalities.”—Rufus Choate.

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value it too much to part with it to get it mended, so I shall wear it like this until the end."

We sat together in splendid isolation at the table for a while, with several Generals waiting on us, pressing one dish after another upon us. "Papa" Joffre noticed that I—like himself—drank neither alcohol nor coffee. "But why this abstinence at your age? It's time enough to deny yourself such things when you are seventy-four years old, like me!"

He spoke admiringly of "the wonderful discipline of the English troops: it is in their temperament, no doubt?"

There was a word of high praise for Sir Henry Wilson: "That was a man who understood us . . . so sympathetic . . . and what a brilliant brain! . . . Tell me: how is it that there were so many Irish Generals in the War?" I explained that fighting was "in our temperament."

"Yes; I always got on with the British Army. . . . General Blank? He always did what I told him" (this quite modestly).

I asked: "In that ghastly strain of the war did you not suffer terribly from anxiety—apprehension?" He replied: "Not at all. I am far more nervous about France *now* than I ever was during the worst of the conflict. My poor country! She would be quite all right without her politicians."

Discussing the sudden change to blue sky and warm sunshine of the morning, I began to explain to the dear old man that I was a sort of weather mascot; that it always turned fine for me at the psychological moment, just as it did for Queen Victoria. (Did not the expression "Queen's weather" become a byword in England?) I got as far as: "Vous savez, Monsieur le Maréchal, je ressemble à la Reine Victoria . . ." when he interrupted me with a sweet smile: "Mais pas de figure, Madame!"

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Sir William Hickie (the Irish General who had organized the unveiling) arranged for the Marshal to write a telegram about the auspicious occasion to King George. As usual, no pencil but mine was forthcoming, so I handed it to Joffre. Later he pocketed it with a gallant : “ You permit me to keep a souvenir, Madame ? ” Ah ! These Latins !

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FAIRY-TALE QUEEN

IT seems hardly fair that one woman should unite in her personality radiant physical beauty, great mental gifts, a business-like capacity of which any Scot would be glad, "drive" equal to a Wall Street American's, impeccable and highly original taste in clothes, Machiavellian gifts of statesmanship, radiant health of body, and—last but not least—that elusive quality, which, for want of a better name, we call charm.

The first time I was privileged to meet her was during the summer of 1898 at a German water-cure town called Schwalbach. She was then Crown Princess of Roumania, and drank the nauseous water from the *Brunnen* (spring) at the regulation hours. My sister and I were fascinated by this exquisite apparition, and soon developed the habit of going to the spring to gaze upon her while she took her draught. After a few days of this silent worshipping on the part of one very dark and one very fair girl (my sister and I are a contrast in type such as only Ireland can produce in the same family), the Crown Princess was graciously pleased to talk with us and she even gave my little sister her photograph, duly signed.

When, in 1919, I reminded Her Majesty of that summer at Schwalbach, she vowed she remembered me, and so

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phenomenal are the royal memories that I was tempted to believe her.

During the summer holidays and heat-wave of 1921 my three children and I stayed at a small village called St. Enogat, on the coast of Brittany. In the neighbourhood were staying the Queen of Roumania and Princess Ileana, then a grave little girl of some twelve years, the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess Cyril of Russia with their children, and the Infante Alonso and the Infanta Beatrice of Spain, with their three fine little boys. These three ladies are the daughters of the Duke of Edinburgh (second son of Queen Victoria), later Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1844-1900), a true lover of music and a keen amateur violinist, who was always ready to place his talent at the disposal of a deserving cause. The Duke of Edinburgh married in 1874 the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna (1853-1920), only daughter of the Czar Alexander II, an heiress who owned fabulously valuable jewels as well as landed property.

They spent the first years of their married life at Eastwell Park, near Ashford, in Kent, a fine country place, which they rented from Lord Gerard, and it was here, on October 29th, 1875, that the future Queen of Roumania was born.

When I stayed as a small child with my aunt, Mrs. Alfred Austin, at Swinford Old Manor, within a few miles of Eastwell Park, I remember hearing with bated breath that the Duchess of Edinburgh and her Russian ladies-in-waiting habitually smoked cigarettes.

When Princess Marie was eighteen years old she married the Crown Prince Ferdinand, later King of Roumania, who died after a tedious and painful illness in 1927. He was a simple, upright man, fond of sport and an outdoor life, with all the tastes of what we call "a country gentleman."

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Neither Queen Marie, nor the Grand Duchess, nor the Infanta Beatrice had anybody in waiting during these summer holidays at Dinard, nor (may I mention in the same breath ?) had I a nursery-governess to help me with my offspring, so we all met on the common ground of motherhood, and could compare notes in the evening as to which child had splashed us in its bath, or tried to drown itself in the sea, or overeaten itself at the *pâtisserie*, etc.

I should imagine that this summer of 1921 must have been quite one of the happiest and most peaceful in the troublous lives of these three august ladies: the complete absence of Court etiquette, the simple outdoor life with a minimum of clothing (which consisted most days of a bathing-dress and a string of pearls), the companionship of a few devoted friends, and the best of golf close at hand, all combined to make a delightfully informal holiday for them.

Lord Greville (who comes off the same bog as myself in Ireland) and his lovely wife, a blue-eyed, golden-haired beauty, stayed that summer in a villa at St. Briac, and their drawing-room was the rendezvous for all our diversions—nursery-teas, parlour-games, *musicales*, supper-parties, fancy-dress dances, and the like.

One little incident serves to illustrate what upheavals we have seen in our day, and the strange turning of the Wheel of Fate. We were all sitting over a big spread of nursery-tea at Lady Greville's villa—the Royalties and their children and the rest of us—when I was constrained to remark on the enormous size of the Grand Duchess Cyril's pearls—they looked to me as large as grapes. Little Princess Ileana looked up from her plate, and, still munching bread and jam, said: "Oh! they're not nearly as big as Auntie Nancy's!" For one second I was completely at sea, wondering what British or Russian or German Royalty answered to the name



All success to you.

Marie

Photo : "Julietta," Bucarest

H.M. QUEEN MARIE OF ROUMANIA

THE FAIRY-TALE QUEEN

of Nancy, and then in a flash my brain registered . . . Mrs. Leeds! I caught an answering twinkle in the Queen's Victorian-blue eye; we all indulged in a gale of laughter, and the Grand Duchess said: "Ileana is quite right. Nancy Leeds's pearls *are* larger than mine."

The conversation turned on those dread days in 1916 when Falkenhayn and his German hordes were overrunning Roumania, Bucharest was bombed, and the royal family forced to flee to Jassy. Little Princess Ileana, still munching, said: ". . . And we were very, very hungry. . . . Oh! how pleased I was when one day I saw a plate of ham!"

The Grand Duchess Cyril told me of an illuminating remark made by one of her little girls. Somebody at table said: "I see in the newspaper that Mrs. So-and-so is dead." Whereupon the child looked up from her plate and asked: "Who shot her?" That young creature in her short life had never heard of anything but murders, executions, violence and brutality of all sorts; the idea of a person dying peacefully in bed never occurred to her.

Queen Marie carries about everywhere with her in a hand-bag a super fountain-pen of absolutely Brobdingnagian proportions, with which she is always graciously ready to sign her name. The nib itself must be nearly one-eighth of an inch wide, and the resultant signature is characteristically masterful.

One of her pet dreams is to make Bucharest into a second Paris, and to this end she works like a galley-slave, scheming, toiling, pulling wires, interviewing various trade experts, textile authorities, dressmakers, and so on. An important business-man once said to me: "The Queen of Roumania is the best commercial traveller I ever met."

Queen Marie's English is wellnigh faultless. (Has she not spoken it since babyhood? And is not her nickname in

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the family "Missie" ?) However, occasionally—very occasionally—she makes a mistake, whether intentionally or not my readers can decide.

Mrs. X., a very proper, elderly friend of mine, was staying at the royal residence while engaged upon certain work for the Queen in Roumania ; in this work she had enlisted the aid of a venerable Professor from Bucharest. One day, while both Mrs. X. and this gentleman were lunching with a large company at the royal table, my friend was flabbergasted to hear Her Majesty say before the whole assembly : " That is Mrs. X., who cohabits with Professor Z." This pulverizing remark was followed by gales of laughter and explanations that, of course, " co-operates " was the word intended.

There's nothing like asking the people at the top when you want the best information. I spoke to the Queen about certain Roumanians we meet in England and America who call themselves " Princes " and " Princesses "—yea, even unto " Their Highnesses." She laughed and said : " There are no Princes and Princesses in Roumania except those of the royal family ; it's the same as in England."

It is a perennial source of amazement, not unmixed with irritation, to me that the British and the Americans are so supine in accepting these bogus titles, whether assumed by Dagoes, Egyptians, or even Chinese. And—what is more—why do their respective diplomatic representatives in London and Washington countenance the fraud ?

I sometimes wonder whether the outside world has any idea of the heroic part played by Queen Marie in the disastrous war waged by her country from August 27th, 1916, against the Austro-Hungarian and German forces. Regardless of risk to herself, even refusing to wear a mask, she visited the sick and dying in the gruesome typhus and cholera camps,

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picking her way through corpses and horrors which beggar all description. When remonstrated with, she replied : " I have no fear. . . . When God no longer needs me to look after my poor soldiers, I shall be taken, but not till then." Was it any wonder that her people idolized her ?

CHAPTER XXVII

MY ADVENTURE IN OPERA

WHEN I lunched with Lady de Grey* on April 28th, 1903, and heard her amusing discourse on the disputes among the singers at Covent Garden Opera House . . . “Last year Mme Cosa stormed the place down and swore that she would never, never sing with Caruso again because his breath smelt of garlic! . . .” I little thought that eighteen years later it would be my turn to work for a season there.

But so it befell. In February, 1921, the directors of the Carl Rosa Opera Company begged me to interest myself, in every respect save financially, in their autumn season at Covent Garden. This was during one of the worst financial slumps England has ever suffered—the logical result of the Great War. When the public is feeling poor, the first item it cuts down is art; consequently the musicians in this country were almost starving.

All operatic organizations in the British Isles, save the Carl Rosa, had foundered on the rocks of finance, so there remained this one company still functioning with some financial help from Mr. Alfred Van Noorden. His wife said to me: “Other men spend money on race-horses or yachts: my husband’s hobby is financing opera.”

* Later Marchioness of Ripon.

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My first reason for consenting to "mother" this autumn season at Covent Garden was that I knew how many mouths it would feed. Perhaps the stalls and boxes imagine that an opera company consists of some singers, an orchestra, a few conductors, a prompter and a manager. An operatic company is not a cast; it's a small village. It employs—besides the actual artists—an army of stage carpenters, electricians, painters, mechanics, scene-shifters, charwomen, plumbers, dressmakers, wigmakers, printers, typists, ushers, programme sellers, cloakroom attendants, box-office clerks, door-porters.

My second reason was that, constitutionally and temperamentally, I love to stand up for the under-dog; I enjoy fighting for lost causes; I admire a horse that wins the Grand National carrying top-weight.

I knew well what a struggle this company would have, giving opera at cheap prices, yet aiming to pull through the season without a crushing loss, and that was enough for me. I said "yes"—on two conditions: (A) that I could work on both sides of the curtain, i.e., "ginger up" the performances as well as sell seats in the auditorium; (B) that I might engage a Press-publicity agent (Mr. B. A. Meyer). We must all realize, sooner or later, that without proper advertisement the best efforts are as naught.

Who was it that said: "The Irish forget nothing; the English remember nothing?" In 1921 the war was still too recent for this country to be flooded with German, Austrian and Hungarian artists; besides, the Carl Rosa always was, and still is an all-British company.

Gradually, very gradually, the inhabitants of these islands are waking up to the fact that to be a fine artist it is not necessary to have a name like Vladimir Popowsky, or Donnerwetter Finkelstein, or Cascara Sagrada. But most people still bow to the old fetish of Continental superiority. Elsie

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Janis, the clever American actress, told me : "One of your English critics was nicely caught when he wrote about a young girl in one of my shows who had to say some lines in French : 'Mlle Germaine gave a gem of a performance. Only a Latin could possibly have acted in this exquisitely subtle way' (or words to that effect). Her name was Jemima Smith (or something like it) ; she hailed from Upper Tooting (or somewhere near it) ; and I coached her entirely."

In America a highly-gifted young musician, labouring under the disadvantage of the birth-name Stokes, elected to call himself Stokowsky, and with that romantically Slav touch about him, became the foremost conductor of the day. If it were not so tragic it would be frightfully funny. All honour to those brave souls—Thomas Beecham, John McCormack, and the like—who have made international reputations for themselves without working under an alias.

Surely we have no need as a nation to be ashamed of such all-British artists as Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Henry Wood, Sir Edward Elgar, John Ireland, Albert Sammons, George Reeves, "Melba" (real name Mitchell), Florence "Austral" (real name Fawaz), Kirkby Lunn, Gervase Elwes, John Coates, Hyslop, Edward Johnson, John McCormack, "Piccaver" (real name Pickover), Percy Heming, Norman Allin, Phyllis Bedells, "Anton Dolin" (real name Patrick Healy).

One of the finds of this season, risen from the ranks of the chorus, was Eva Turner, dramatic soprano, a Lancashire lass and a pupil of the Royal Academy of Music in London, who, since 1921, has electrified opera audiences in Italy and South America. Seemingly, the Italians and the Argentines have no prejudice against singers with British names.

In order to persuade people to book boxes and stalls beforehand (*abonnieren*, as we used to say in Dresden) I gave half a

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dozen evening parties during the London Season, inviting all those friends whom I considered to be potential clients.

At each party some well-known authority—Mr. Edwin Evans or Mr. Eugene Goossens, for instance—gave the guests a short lecture on opera, illustrated at intervals with musical excerpts by a Carl Rosa team of singers; a soprano, a contralto, a tenor, a baritone and a bass. In this pleasant manner the rich learnt their Wagner *Motifs* and straightway a new world was opened up before them. One lady, trembling with enthusiasm, confided in me after a *Ring* evening: “D’you know? I never understood before what it was all about!” And I believed her.

Taking, perhaps, an unfair advantage of my position as their hostess, I had on the landing outside the drawing-room a huge ground-plan of the seating accommodation of Covent Garden Opera House, and, as the guests went down to supper, I wheedled: “Now, what places will you take for the season? And how many times a week?”

Amusing incidents during this season occurred in plenty. At one performance of *Tannhäuser* I saw, to my horror, that one of the stage trumpeters was wearing *pince-nez* which caught the reflection of the footlights and shone (it seemed to me) like arc-lamps. What would the critics say? I tore to the telephone and got through to the stage director: “Hullo! Hullo!! D’you know that one of the trumpeters has a pair of eye-glasses on?—EYE-GLASSES in the early thirteenth century!” I wailed. Back came the reply: “But he can’t see the music without them.” “Then,” I retorted, with a magnificent disregard of Wagner’s score, “he mustn’t blow!”

Another time, in *Aida*, my hawk-like vision spotted a row of (Egyptian) stage-trumpeters all wearing their own stout walking boots. Once more unto the telephone and “Hullo!

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Hullo!! The trumpeters have got on their ordinary boots . . . *black lace boots* before Christ!" I moaned. "Tst! Tst!" from the harassed man at the other end: "It's too bad; they've evidently scamped changing somehow and got past the dresser." Such are the tribulations of those who slave in the cause of Grand Opera.

One evening an agitated subscriber dashed at me and cried: "I've just seen a woman in a box drinking stout out of a bottle! Isn't it appalling?" I remained calm in the face of even such a catastrophe as this and murmured: "Ichabod! Ichabod! 'Gone are the days of tiaras and top-notes'" (this a quotation from Edwin Evans). "After all, she's paid for her box, hasn't she? and so long as she supports opera we mustn't mind what her table-manners are like."

After I had worked for eight months before the opening night and attended every performance (except on Saturdays) of this 1921 Autumn Season, it may be imagined that the employees at Covent Garden got to know me fairly well. The following season I drove up to the front entrance to see an opera given by a company in which I had no artistic interest, and the uniformed boy who opened the door of my car greeted me with a grin of genuine welcome and "Good evening, Mum! I *do* like to see the old faces!" Which I took as a compliment.

During this season we occasionally arranged what the Germans call a *Gast-Nacht*, i.e., a performance with one imported Star, so that the whole level of the Opera Season should be raised, and the box-office profit accordingly.

One of our guest stars was that splendid baritone, Dinh Gilly, Algerian by birth and Parisian by education, who sang Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca* on October 27th, 1921. His performance electrified the audience, and rarely has Covent

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Garden Opera House seen wilder enthusiasm than at the finish.

I went round, in my usual rôle of amateur *impresario*, to congratulate him on his triumph, and to carry him off, before he had recovered sufficient consciousness to refuse, to a supper party given by Dr. Horsford (the well-known throat specialist) in Harley Street. When I told him how deeply he had thrilled us all as Scarpia, he smiled his acknowledgment of the compliment, and said: "You know, I had a terrible experience on the stage this evening; just before my big scene my trouser button go . . . pftt . . . like that . . . right across the stage, and I sing my *aria* with one hand here all the time" (placing it at his waist). "Then, when *la Tosca* kill me I put the four candles like that, I keep one eye on my trousers all the time!"

At Dr. Horsford's party everyone set upon poor Dinh Gilly to sing to them—this in spite of the fact that he had only just come off the stage at Covent Garden—and, at last, with great good humour he sat down to the piano, declining all offers of accompaniment, amateur or otherwise, and sang to us for quite half an hour. His method of accompaniment was nothing if not original: it consisted of following faithfully every note he sang with two octaves on the piano, one in each hand! All through my musical life my ears have been tortured with wrong notes, hammered out by successive singers, who laboured under the delusion that they could accompany themselves, so this highly accurate system of Dinh Gilly came as a distinct relief.

What a lesson he was that evening from the vocal point of view to those preposterous singers who cry: "I cannot possibly sing in a drawing-room, because I am used to big concert halls and opera houses!" The consummate artist, like Dinh Gilly, can so modulate his voice that at one

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moment he is flooding Covent Garden or the Scala with a big volume of tone, and the next he is "cooing like any sucking dove" in your, or my drawing-room, with a ceiling only a couple of feet above his head, admiring guests sitting almost under his nose and an atmosphere you could cut with a knife.

One night during the Covent Garden British Opera Season in 1921, Dinh Gilly sat with me in my box during a performance of *Tannhäuser*. He talked under his breath most of the time, half to himself and half to me, and it was the only occasion on which I have not been annoyed by such behaviour during an opera.

There was once an Opera Box hostess who chattered incessantly throughout the performance, greatly to the annoyance of her guest, a real music lover. When they parted the hostess said: "Will you come to my box next Thursday for *Lohengrin*?" He replied grimly: "Thank you, yes; I haven't heard you in *Lohengrin*!"

Dinh Gilly was coaching *Tannhäuser* from my box, and, old hand as he is at the game of Opera, it was an illuminating experience for me to hear his whispered remarks. For instance, when Wolfram von Eschenbach was on the stage, D.G. murmured, "Too fussy . . . he moves too much . . . he ought to stay very quiet . . . like a figure in a Gothic stained glass window. . . ." Later on another incident on the stage moved him to exclaim: "*Là, là!* no Catholic would do that!"

There was a young dramatic soprano called Eva Turner taking the part of Elizabeth, whose voice was so fine that D.G. was full of its praises, and exhorted me: "Go on striving for British singers; the material is here, but what these singers need is coaching by some Continental artist who is steeped in the traditions of Grand Opera."

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We ought to realize the cardinal fact that all Grand Opera is as exotic to the British stage as an orchid is to a Kentish garden. In exactly the same degree, Gilbert and Sullivan's immortal works are racy of our soil, and essentially British : can you conceive what an Italian Operatic Company at the Scala in Milan would make of them ? Imagination boggles at the mere idea !

Next time an Argentine, or a Portuguese, or a Greek visitor to London shows pained surprise at the fact that Covent Garden Opera House is closed, tell him, with some pride in your voice, that *our* national Operas are Gilbert and Sullivan's works and the *Beggar's Opera*, but that we occasionally—with extreme gallantry and disregard of the shareholders' pockets—produce at a dead loss a six weeks' run of Continental Grand Opera during the London Season.

Gilly, sympathizing with me in what uphill work it was to produce opera in England and what a terrible gauntlet of criticism our artists had to run, said : “ Yes ; it is always very easy to find fault, and, generally, it is the people who cannot themselves sing a note who are the hardest to please. When somebody like that starts to run down this singer and the other singer, I say to him : ‘ Come with me, my friend ’ ; and I take him by the hand ; and I lead him on to the stage ; and I make him stand just behind the footlights and I say : ‘ Now ! what would it feel like to have to fill that auditorium ? ’ Believe me, he is never quite so *difficile* after that experience.”

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MAN TIME FORGOT

ONE of the best things the brilliant Mr. Max Beerbohm ever drew was his caricature of old Father Time, with beard and scythe complete, saying to the Duke of Connaught—slight, dapper and erect—“ Dear me ! I’d quite forgotten you ! ”

When I last saw the Duke in his delightful villa at St. Jean-Cap-Ferrat I found it impossible to believe that the faultless figure—not an ounce of spare flesh anywhere—soldierly bearing and fresh complexion belonged to a man of nearly eighty.

The Riviera is a perfect holiday ground for the Duke’s old age, a holiday thoroughly earned after his strenuous life of more than forty years in the Army, and public work such as our hard-working royal family carry through so splendidly.

The garden at the Villa Les Bruyères is his chief joy these days, every inch of it having been made, as it were, by him. This is far more interesting than inheriting or buying a garden made by somebody else, for you have all the thrill of invention and all the pride of the creator in his work.

Many an amusing evening have I spent at the Villa as the guest of H.R.H. Major Levett, his charming equerry, always egged me on to tell Irish stories, and the Duke would then be inspired to reminiscences of his comical experiences in my country.

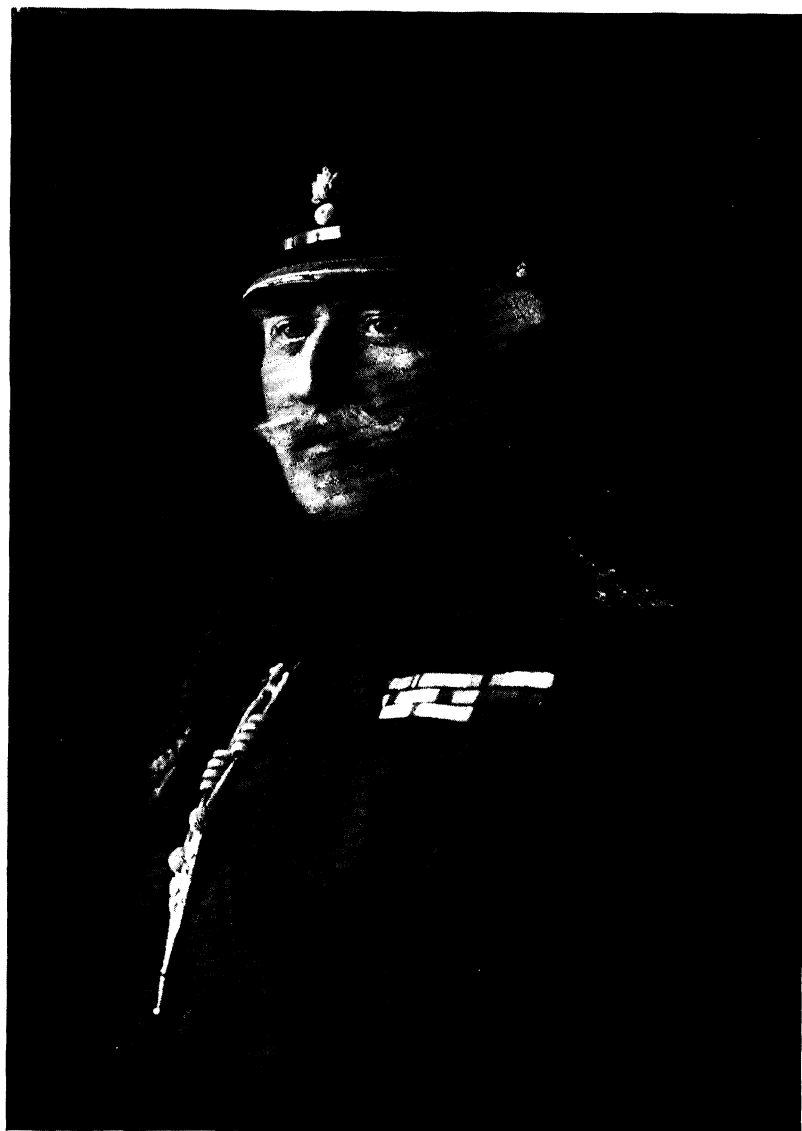


Photo : A. Corbett

Bithun, - 1424 -

FIELD-MARSHAL H.R.H. THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT
AND STRATHEARN, K.G., K.T., K.P., ETC.

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While going by train on a tour of inspection one very mild and muggy day, he was most annoyed to find several foot-warmer tins in his already stuffy compartment, and thoroughly scolded the porter who put them there. The man grinned at him and said : " Arrah ! Don't mind thim, yer Honour ! They're as cowl'd as shtones ! "

On another railway journey H.R.H. stepped into a compartment so filthy that both he and his staff soundly rated the guard for its disgusting condition. That worthy merely replied, as one who would soothe a fractious child : " Sure ! It'll be all right *next* time ! "

One of the Duke's best yarns is about an Irish Fusilier holding forth in the barracks at Aldershot on the night of a big review of the troops by Queen Victoria on Laffan's Plain :

" . . . Thin the Queen she turrrns round an' she asks the Juke of Connaught : ' An', me Lorrd Juke, what rigimint might this be ? ' An' the Juke, he says : ' Thim's the Manchester's, yer Majesty.' Thin anoder rigimint marches past, an' the Queen she turrrns round an' she asks the Juke : ' An', me Lorrd Juke, what rigimint might this be ? ' An' the Juke, he says : ' Thim's the Buffs, yer Majesty.' Thin anoder rigimint marches past, an' the Queen she turrrns round an' she asks the Juke : ' An', me Lorrd Juke, what rigimint might this be ? ' An' the Juke he says : ' Thim's the Irish Fusiliers, yer Majesty.' ' Bloody Warr ! ' says the Queen."

The third son of Queen Victoria, the Duke of Connaught was born in 1850, got his training at Woolwich, and began his military career as a Sapper Lieutenant in 1868. His popularity, both in the Army and out of it, is immense. You feel that he is very simple and very genuine ; and he has the gratifying family gift—a gift beyond all price—for remembering faces and people.

In Ireland, where he was appointed Commander-in-Chief

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in 1900, they loved him—and the dear knows, they are hard to please!—and in Canada, where he was Governor-General from 1911 to 1916, they still speak of him with real affection.

Like his brother, King Edward, he has an infallible memory for detail, combined with the sight of a hawk, and can spot an incorrectly-dressed officer a mile away.

One of H.R.H.'s greatest virtues (in my humble eyes) is his punctuality. As they say below stairs: "It's a fair treat." "Punctuality . . . is the politeness of Kings. It is also the duty of gentlemen," wrote Samuel Smiles (1812-1904) in "Self-Help."

All my life I have suffered—as only those unfortunate souls who like exactitude can suffer—from the unpunctuality of those around me. Often I have said: "There are only two things in the world which make me lose my otherwise even temper: one is to be kept waiting, and the other is to see smokers throw their cigarette ash on to my drawing-room floor." Both these vices, I cannot help feeling, are the sign of the "hairy heel," and the absurd legend that tobacco ash is good for a valuable Persian rug is just as infantile as the nursery maxim: "Hold a guinea-pig up by its tail and its eyes will drop out."

Once, and once only—the telephone having detained me—I was six minutes late for an appointment with the Duke of Connaught. When I arrived at the door, he was standing on the steps, with his watch in his hand and a reproving expression on his face. "Six minutes late," he said, and I could have sunk into the ground. I knew exactly how he felt; still I murmured: "It really is an irony of fate that this should happen to *me*, of all people, Sir." And there we left it.

In one respect, and in one respect only, do I envy our royal family, and that is their privilege of motoring smoothly

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along streets cleared by the police for their uninterrupted passage. God knows I am not by nature a snob (except in so far as Mr. Lonsdale's witty definition holds good : " one who accepts invitations which others would like to receive "), but I did enjoy bowling along in the Duke's huge chocolate-coloured Daimler from London to Bagshot one sunny day in July, 1924. It is so nice not to have to check and change gear every few yards along the London streets.

CHAPTER XXIX

LORD CURZON, GEORGE ROBEY AND THE POPE

ON January 20th, 1925, during my visit to my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Collie, at the Château St. Michel at Cannes, we were all three invited by the Hereditary Princess Charlotte of Monaco to a party at the fairy-like royal palace, perched so picturesquely on the top of the rock at Monte Carlo.

The evening's entertainment began with a banquet—I use this word advisedly—at which Lord Curzon was my neighbour. We had never met before. While he swallowed his soup (a course I always miss, because it spoils a good dinner) there flashed through my mind all the current stories about his overbearing ways, his snobbish magnificence, his pedantic style, his ponderous humour, his general unpopularity, and so on. Thought I to myself: “The only way to tackle a man of this type is to disarm him thoroughly at the start. . . . Here goes!” and I turned round on him: “Lord Curzon, there are so many amusing things you are supposed to have said. I sometimes wonder how many of them are authentic.”

He said: “Tell me one and we’ll see.”

I then repeated a most witty play upon words (*à propos* of the marriage of a certain fashionable young lady) generally attributed to him. With a grin he admitted: “No; *I* never said that, but *you* can have it!” Now this went straight to my heart, and from that moment we “made

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friends," as the children say ; in fact, we both chattered and laughed through the rest of the meal.

He gazed at my head and forthwith delivered a panegyric on the beauty of long hair in a woman ; " besides," he wound up, " the letting down of a woman's hair is her token of surrender." Next he praised my centre-parting (called in French *la coiffure à la Vierge*), and lastly my sweeping skirt. Knowing that the royal apartments were vast, with high ceilings and gigantic mantelpieces, I had put on a clinging *quattro-cento* Juliet picture-dress, made of a lovely Italian brocade with love-in-the-mist blue and gold and silver colouring, which, Lord Curzon said, " made the ultra-fashionable frocks in the room look very out of place." I was inwardly much amused with the admiration inspired by this old " museum-piece " of mine, for it was made in the year 1917, whereas the other ladies wore skin-tight, knee-high, brand-new gowns which had probably arrived from Paris by aeroplane that afternoon.

The palace of Monaco is redolent of musical comedy ; at any moment, you feel, Lily Elsie might enter and do song and dance with George Graves.

Half-way through the meal Lord Curzon looked at the imposing attendants standing round the table and said, with a glint in his eye : " I suppose most of these magnificent men are major-domos ? "

I answered : " They're almost as grand as Gunter's waiters, so perhaps you're right."

We spoke of India, and he asked : " Did you know both my wives ? " which was so colloquial that I found myself replying in the same informal vein : " No ; only the Duggan one."

His unaccustomed jollity evidently attracted the attention of the other staid guests, for, when the ladies rose from

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the table, Mme Jacques Balsan (better known as Consuelo, Duchess of Marlborough) walked out of the room beside me, remarking, in her gentle, plaintive way : " What fun you had at dinner ! I suppose you've known Lord Curzon all your life ? " and when I replied : " I met him for the first time this evening," she looked very puzzled and murmured : " I never saw him like that before . . . what did you do to him ? "

The next move was to the huge Royal Box at the Monte Carlo Opera House, where Diagheleff was presenting Russian ballets. This Opera is subsidized by the reigning family of Monaco, consequently everything there is lavishly staged.

In the long interval we enjoyed a sumptuous supper, served in the anteroom at the back of the Royal Box. . . . " Here are the major-domos again ! " was an aside from Lord Curzon. . . . It was pathetic to see him trying to ease his racked body by keeping up one leg on his foot-rest—the celebrated foot-rest which accompanied him everywhere.

When I thought of how the man was in his sixty-seventh year ; how hard he had worked as a scholar, a writer, a traveller and a statesman ; how he was never out of pain from the time he left Eton—he lived all his waking hours in a metal jacket—I was reminded of W. E. Henley's glorious lines :

My head is bloody but unbowed

I am the master of my fate :

I am the captain of my soul.

That was the one and only time I met him, for a few weeks afterwards he was taken ill with his last and fatal illness, and went home to London to die. A great Public Servant.

No doubt it surprises the Great Public to be told that all comic actors have a serious side ? This is the Law of Balance, underlying the entire Universe.

Consider George Robey. On the stage he is the very

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embodiment of the comic . . . he has only to raise, by so much as a fraction, one of those famous eyebrows, and the whole audience rocks . . . yet, in private life he is a highly-cultured, widely-read, deep-thinking man, with a fine taste in Oriental porcelain, a collection of violins beautifully made by himself, a real knowledge of the German language and of Wagner Opera (he studied engineering in Dresden), and a great interest in philosophy, international politics, and county cricket.

During the war George Robey greatly endeared himself to the Tommies, not only by amusing the wounded in hospital, but also by seeing off the leave-train at Victoria Station, on that platform of agonized good-byes, where he cracked jokes with the men, plied them with "gaspers," and then cheered up their tearful womenfolk, left behind to watch the casualty lists.

One day George Robey, after a tumultuous nursery-luncheon at Seymour Street, read aloud to me several touching letters from the widows of some of these soldiers. . . . "Bill and me never forgot your kindness to us when you was seeing the boys off at Victoria, and how you tried to keep our spirits up. Now that poor Bill is killed I wanted to write to you to thank you, God bless you for all you done to help us poor people" . . . Now, I always maintain that things happen to me which would never happen to anyone else, and when I cried over these pathetic little documents, I found I had no handkerchief, so Robey lent me his. (It would only happen to me that the greatest living comic should reduce me to tears, and then lend me his handkerchief wherewith to mop my face!)

Whenever I go to see George Robey at the theatre, he makes a butt of me, and I don't mind it in the least. At one performance of the *Bing Boys*—of immortal memory—

ALL THAT I HAVE MET

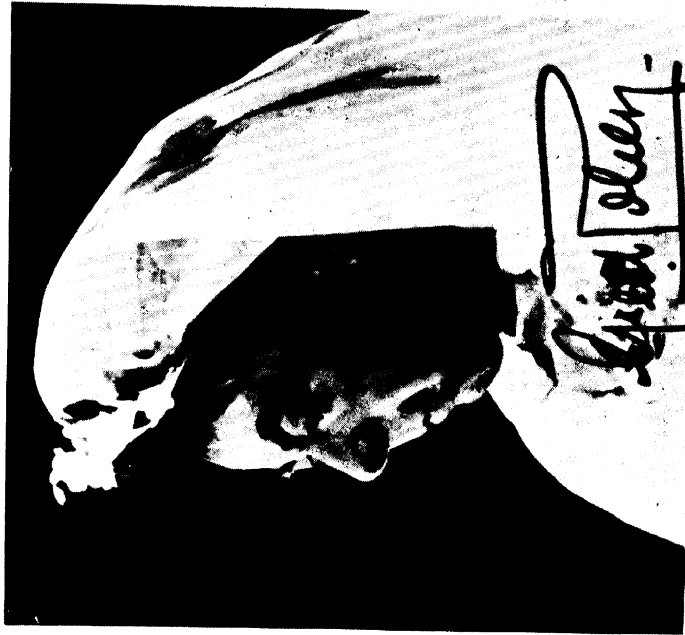
I suddenly noticed that the two seats next to me had been vacated by the former occupants (no doubt "squared" beforehand by G.R.), and, barely had I thought to myself, "Now I'm for it!" when, sure enough, Robey pranced along the gang-plank down the middle of the auditorium, plumped himself into the seat next to me, and conversed affably about Newmarket, Ireland, etc., for what seemed to me an eternity, but in reality perhaps only a couple of minutes.

As a rule, when he first espies me among the audience, he comes to the front of the stage, gazes, horror-struck, at my face, and exclaims in impeccable German: "Ach! Ermintrud! da bist du doch wieder! Na! So was hab' ich noch nie in meinem Leben gesehen!"

Once at a *matinée* performance, he arranged with the limelight man to turn that blinding beam on to me, while the rest of the house remained in absolute darkness. Robey pointed at me like a teasing schoolboy, and said to the audience with malicious glee: "Look at her! She can't get away! She can't turn off the light! I thought you'd like to see her, because I'm going to have tea with her afterwards."

The children's great joy was that George Robey should come to nursery-luncheon, and, from the moment he entered the house, complete demoralization set in; the servants were so convulsed that they could barely hand round the dishes; the children straightway got out of hand in hysterical giggles, and he gave the dogs all the things they were not supposed to ask for at table.

Robey is a first-rate conjurer, and performs one most surprising trick; you help yourself to a banana which looks outwardly like any other banana, but, just as you peel the skin, twelve tiny cut-up sections, all of equal size, fall on to your plate. The skin of the banana has absolutely no mark on it, so how is this trick done?



GEORGE ROBEY.

GEORGE ROBEY, c.v.o.

Photo : Hana, London

we should in
 it as well
 I pointed to
him
 by his own hand.

LORD CURZON, GEORGE ROBET AND THE POPE

You have not really lived till you have seen George Robey conduct a full Queen's Hall orchestra. This spectacle I had the privilege of witnessing on October 28th, 1918, at a most diverting concert in aid of the Red Cross Funds, organized by Mr. (now Sir Landon) Ronald.

In all seriousness did G.R. wield the baton in the *Pizzicato* movement from Delibes' popular Suite de Ballet *Sylvia*. His *rubatos*—as one punning critic (who shall be forgiven) wrote, "Robeyato"—were greatly daring, in fact his whole interpretation can best be described as highly original. The self-control of the orchestra filled me with admiration for the British race; they played under him just as though he had been Nikisch or Sir Henry Wood, which, of course, made the thing much more comical.

The whole concert was a riot of fun. Landon collected the following cast to perform in Richard Blagrove's *Toy Symphony*. (Read it through carefully and try to visualize each artist at his or her respective instrument.)

Nightingales	{ Irene Scharrer Myra Hess Muriel Foster
Triangle	Benno Moiseivitch
Cuckoos	{ Mmes Albani Ada Crossley Carrie Tubb
Cymbals	Sir Edward Elgar, O.M.
Rattles	{ Sir Frederick Bridge Sir Frederic Cowen
Castanets	{ Hayden Coffin Mark Hambourg

The Nightingales wisely wore mackintoshes adown which streamed the water from their whistles.

Moiseivitch's nerve-racking part consisted of "mostly

ALL THAT I HAVE MET

rests," and it must have been one long anxiety waiting for his entry.

George Robey made enormous sums for war charities of every sort. At one Coliseum matinée alone he cleared £14,000.

In my diary on March 17th, 1905, I find the following entry: "3 p.m. went to the Vatican and had an audience with the Pope.* Took $\frac{1}{2}$ gross rosaries to be blessed."

This needs an explanation. Mindful (though a "black Protestant" myself) of the devoutly-minded Catholic population of my home-town, Ballycumber—did not a Pope once say: "Ireland is the only country left to me"?—I had that morning bought six dozen rosaries to be blessed by His Holiness and distributed among our pious villagers. By the way, those who did not receive the "beads," and thought they had a right to them, set about the recipients with the usual results. . . . "To such a pitch of evil could religion prompt," as Lucretius observes.

Now to visit the Pope all ladies must wear a black dress, and, instead of a hat, a black veil upon the head. Together with a large company of pilgrims, we toiled up innumerable steps at the Vatican, and were ushered into a large room where the beadles ranged us in a circle. I draped the seventy-two rosaries over one hand. There was a short wait, and then in came His Holiness Pope Pius X; Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Jesus Christ; successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles; Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church; Patriarch of the West; Primate of Italy; Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province; Sovereign of the Temporal Dominions of the Holy Roman Church; and Patriarch of Venice.

I saw a stocky, stooping little man, with a round, simple,

* Pius X.; b. 1835; d. 1914.

LORD CURZON, GEORGE ROBET AND THE POPE

peasant face of unhealthy pallor, dressed in a long white robe with a big jewelled cross on his breast and wearing square-toed red shoes. He went slowly and a thought wearily round the room, stopping a few seconds at each person. When he stood over me and murmured a blessing over my garland of rosaries, I bent my head low and saw the huge papal ring on his finger.

At this time Pius X was seventy years old, but he might have been seventeen or seven hundred for all the life or expression there was in his face. Giuseppe Sarto, son of the postmaster of Riese, looked neither happy nor healthy in his high estate.

Outside his prison, near the Porta del Popolo, lived in a couple of rooms his two aged and devoted sisters, who had left their village in the Venetian plains so as to be within sight of their brother's windows. They did all their own housework, and the greatest pleasure in their lives was to knit a pair of socks for Giuseppe. Several times a week they had especial permission to visit him for a short while at seven o'clock of an evening. The Romans told me: "His Holiness would give much to have his sisters to sup with him occasionally; but the Papal etiquette—so strong, you know!—forbids it." What an existence!

He died—of a broken heart, they say—a few days after the Great War broke out. In the crypt of St. Peter's, close to the fisherman who was the first head of the Church of Rome, lies the peasant Pope; and on his tomb are the words:

PIUS PAPA X
PAUPER ET DIVES
MITIS ET HUMILIS CORDE
(Poor and rich,
Gentle and humble of heart.)

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