

UP THE STREAM OF TIME

*By the Same Author*

BARRIERS

ANNE OF THE MARSHLAND



THE AUTHOR, VISCOUNTESS BYNG OF VIMY

Lady Byng has been a wartime evacuee in Canada, during which period she wrote this book.

# UP THE STREAM OF TIME

BY

VISCOUNTESS BYNG OF VIMY

"Sweet memory! wafted by thy gentle gale,  
Oft up the stream of Time I turn my sail."

*The Pleasures of Memory*  
SAMUEL ROGERS

TORONTO  
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## FOREWORD

Some two years ago I jotted down a series of light sketches about Canadian scenes which I had known and loved during my various sojourns in the great land of "Our Lady of the Snows", that lovely but in some respects misleading title of Kipling's, which has led many untravelled Britons to imagine that we are forever snowbound here, and who are startled when one writes of the beauties of the flora and the glory of the gay-hued birds—almost all migratory, alas!—which abound in the summer days. I had intended to call these sketches "O lovely Land", because it is in very deed a lovely land; but when I showed these scribblings to various friends for criticism, they were unanimous in urging me to make them more personal in tone—to include things, places and people whom I had known in my long and in some ways, nomadic life. So I scrapped what I had written—incidentally helping the paper salvage campaign—and began the book now offered you.

It wasn't easy, because I had no diaries or notes of any kind to call upon, and only that fickle jade Memory with which to waft my sail up the stream of time. However, I set to work and here is the result in a volume dedicated in loving gratitude, to my numerous Canadian friends, both old and new, too many to name, who have during my latest and very prolonged sojourn among them, done everything in their power to lighten my banishment from home and make me happy, not only through their wonderful financial help—which can be repaid in due course—but still more by their kindly understanding. That is a thing which can never be repaid because it's one of those fragile but lovely emanations of the spirit and the heart for which I am eternally grateful. Therefore to them one and all comes my tribute of gratitude in the shape of these thumbnail sketches of episodes in my long life.

EVELYN BYNG OF VIMY.

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UP THE STREAM OF TIME

## CHAPTER I

In life's morning march, when my bosom was young.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

**M**ARTIAL wrote long ago that, "To be able to enjoy in memory your former life is to live twice over." True enough, though there is another quotation—I don't know whose—which says, "Memory is a crazy wench who throws her treasures out of the window and keeps her rubbish in the storeroom." I am painfully aware of that fact, because it's what memory invariably does to me. But, tricky or not, memory must help me to conjure up the remembrance of things long past, of people long dead, and events of long ago as well as of to-day. So I'll go far back—to January, 1870—when I was born.

I doubt if any prospective mother was more annoyed than mine on discovering she was to have a child. She detested children and made no bones about it, though she would tolerate them for a short time, provided they were pink and white, with golden hair, blue eyes, and didn't squall, blow bubbles, or commit any of the offences common to the young of the human race. Some women are born wives—others born mothers; mine belonged essentially to the first category, for she made my father an admirable wife, and certainly he was calculated to win a woman's love, for he was the dearest and most unselfish of men, extremely good-looking, too, which goes a long way with women, and especially with a Greek to whom beauty was a passion.

I once heard a woman say of my father, that if she was asked to show a foreigner a typical English aristocrat she would unhesitatingly pick out Dick Moreton, and I don't think she would have been far wrong. Anyhow, my mother

was well satisfied with her husband, who never looked at another woman, though many looked at him, but he always remained the perfect husband. My parents were only twenty-four and twenty-three when they discovered that a child was in the offing and, after the fashion of men—since they have no travail and labour—my father was enchanted—also, unlike my mother, he loved children. Since there was nothing to be done about things my mother set to work on a doctrine of pre-natal influences, willing herself to produce a fair-haired, blue-eyed boy, whom she would call Rupert, and, eventually, put into the Life Guards, who were her “beau ideal” of what men should be. She confided all this to Dr. Priestly, a famous gynaecologist of the day, and he promptly threw cold water on one, at least, of her dreams, by saying it was unlikely she would have a fair child because in the case of such contrasted marriages as hers, the southern, or eastern type, predominated over the northern. As to the sex of the child he, naturally, could make no prophecy. In due course I made my appearance—puny, hideous, with a thick crop of almost black hair, and alas! of the wrong sex. At one crushing blow, farewell to the name of Rupert—and the glory of a son in the Life Guards—farewell, too, to the perpetuation of my father’s blond good looks.

To crown my tactlessness I was violently sick over my grandmother’s velvet dress the moment she took me in her arms; so can you wonder if my tidy-minded mother exclaimed “Take it away!”? I must say I rather sympathize with her on that occasion. I also think she shared the feelings of a man who once said to me that handling a small baby reminded him of trying to pick up a lightly poached egg. To myself they resemble cats whose intestines liquefy in a horrible fashion when you handle them. However, my grandmother, having had experience of six children—of

whom only three lived to grow up—was an adept at handling infants and was so thrilled at the advent of her first—and as it eventually proved—only grandchild, that she forgave my physical lapses caused by a second-class infatuated from the outset to play me false. Not that she was the spoiling type of grandparent. Far from it! Greek matriarchs of her generation weren't given to that sort of thing. However, she loved me and I loved her from the moment I was old enough to appreciate her beauty and dynamic personality, though alas! she died when I was only ten. But I well remember that strikingly beautiful woman, with a man's brain and a woman's guile, and I can still picture her on household pay-days sitting in the Belgrave Square drawing-room with rolls of gold and silver neatly ranged on her desk, because she never could, or would, understand payment by cheque, so all her transactions were in hard cash. The first time after her death, when my uncle, Pandeli Ralli, gave Heath, the old coachman, a cheque, he looked at it suspiciously and said in an injured tone. "And what am I to do with this, Sir?" Never having received anything but money, he resented such an innovation. Heath was a great character and I remember him saying to me, "I don't hold with Shakespeare talking about 'the inconstant moon'. She's not inconstant, but comes back month after month up to time. A most punctual lady." Which, after all, was true. Another time when he and I were waiting for my grandmother outside a lovely old Jacobean country house he remarked, "Wonderful houses they built in those days. Quite Saracenic, isn't it?" What he meant I never found out.

As an instance of my poor mother's phobia against my offending dark hair, the following episode gave her friends a hearty laugh. When I was about three my hair had become a medium brown with a splash of copper in it, and

mother with a gleam of hope, I suppose, said to the nurse that she must do all she could to keep it light. So the latter promptly purchased a bottle of "Eau Blonde", applied it, and I rapidly developed into a startling blonde, whilst the golden hair, combined with my black eyebrows and dark eyes were—to say the least of it—striking, especially when, perched on a smart Shetland pony and led by an equally smart groom, I was taken into Rotten Row. I created quite a sensation there, as belonging more to the world of the circus than to that of the prim ladies and gentlemen who in those days tittupped up and down the Ladies' Mile. Indeed, such a freak was I that a man followed me home to see whence this apparition emanated and found himself, to his amusement, on the doorstep of my highly respectable South Audley Street home. Needless to say, after that my mother had the life chaffed out of her by friends, knowing, as they did, her horror of cosmetics in any form! So the "Eau Blonde" went down the drain—but I tremble to think what I must have looked like when the natural colour began to grow in again.

The first event of interest that I remember was a visit to my Greek relations in Marseilles, when I was about four years old. As my mother was the first Greek to marry an Englishman I was considered rather an oddity, and I strongly suspect it was with the idea of squashing this notion that I was taken on the visit of which I still have a vivid recollection. In those days if any of the relations said I was a pretty child—having my father's fair colouring with my mother's dark hair and eyes—she would place a hand over my already definite nose and say, "No—*that* spoils her." You can imagine the effect on a hyper-sensitive nature! It certainly didn't make for self-confidence and I was fiercely resentful of my appearance. However, as I pointed out to her later—for she always harped on the subject—she had an even



bigger nose than mine—she had married a man with a pronounced nose—so what could she expect? Surely she had asked for trouble. It was a blunt fact she hated.

I am glad the Marseilles trip took place, because nothing could ever resemble that odd ménage in the the big villa set in its charming garden, and containing within its walls at that time, my great-grandmother, my grandmother and her uncle, "L'Oncle Auguste Argenti". My great-grandmother, I remember, sat up grimly erect in a feather bed, her grey hair crowned by a "Point d'Alençon" lace cap, her strongly marked, rather masculine face recalling the wolf in Red Riding Hood, though she was most friendly towards me—but I fancy she resented the fact that her grand-daughter should have produced what must to her have seemed a mongrel. However, she talked to me in Greek, which I didn't understand—and in French, which I did, having from the start been brought up bi-lingually owing to Louise, my mother's fat sandy-haired maid from Lyons. As a matter of fact, I talked practically nothing but French with my mother until I was well in my teens, and I have been thankful for that grounding in a useful language.

L'Oncle Auguste was a dear old white-haired man, generally clad in a beautiful Indian Cashmere dressing-gown tied round his plump tummy with a cord, and armed with a stick to slaughter the harmless little lizards whom he detested. Apart from that one murderous characteristic he was the mildest and most courtly of men, and the prototype of Molière's "Malade Imaginaire" because no matter what ailment he heard of, he promptly declared he had got it—from housemaid's knee to cancer. Indeed, so careful was he about his health that, for a week or ten days before the family removed itself to a country house, ten miles outside of Marseilles, for the summer months, he insisted on a daily drive there and back to "s'acclimatiser", as he put

it. On one of those drives he took me—and how clearly that trip stamped itself on my infant mind, because the dear old boy regaled me with divine “marrons glacés” on the drive out and, when we arrived, Pierre, the gardener, topped that with fresh green figs. So you can imagine the state of my small inside by the end of the day! Many years later dear old L’Oncle Auguste, having cried “Wolf!” so often about his health, died quite alone, nobody believing he was seriously ill. He has always remained in my mind as a sweet old man who used to bow courteously to my father every morning, saying, “La Santé, bonne Monsieur Deek?” and then start off on his lizard hunt.

My great-grandmother was by no means as sweet, for she had a malicious habit of bullying my grandmother by saying tartly, “Tell me what they think in England so that I may think the opposite.” As my grandmother—Mrs. Thomas Ralli—was a tremendous Anglophile, who lived in London, it exasperated her, but she was far too well trained to argue with her mother; though meekness was hardly one of her characteristics, she being a forceful woman in everything she did or said, as I remember when she used to make me blow my nose. In the Greek households of those bygone days the mother was essentially the Matriarch—around whom everything revolved—and the tale of my grandparents’ marriage is an amusing illustration of that fact.

Somewhere about 1820, two close friends, Mesdames Argenti and Ralli, were living in Marseilles after escaping from the massacre of the population of Island of Chios by the Turks, who, during the absence at sea of the menfolk, swept down on the women and children, slaughtering, raping and carrying off to Turkey the most attractive among the young Greek women. But my two great-grandmothers got away, taking with them little Marie Argenti, who re-

membered having the gold rings torn out of her ears by Turkish soldiers. From such horrors the two women and the child sought refuge in the Greek colony at Marseilles, and, at the time of which I am writing, they decided that Marie Argenti, by then a lovely girl of fifteen, should marry Thomas Ralli, the Greek Consul in Constantinople, and one of the heads of Ralli Brothers, that great Indian merchant house created by his father and uncles. Thomas was in his mid-thirties, an almost unheard-of age for a Greek man to remain single and he was, I believe—though I never saw him—a worthy, but extremely dull, man. He was also a dutiful son, and when his mother wrote saying she had found him a wife and that he must come to Marseilles at once, he obeyed. Now, “at once” in those days was very different from “at once” in the twentieth century, when you hop into a plane and are in Marseilles in a question of hours; then, it entailed sailing leisurely for days down the Mediterranean, which Thomas did. Unfortunately, during the voyage smallpox developed among the crew and at Marseilles everybody was quarantined in the Chateau d’If, just off the mainland. Since Thomas only had a limited leave of absence from his Consular duties, one can imagine the anger of the match-makers at this thwarting of their plans. However, nothing daunted, they had Marie Argenti rowed in a boat past the Chateau d’If, whence Thomas, for the first time, saw his future bride. The moment the quarantine was lifted he landed—married her—and took her back to Constantinople, where five of her children were born, my mother amongst them, so that when my father wanted to annoy her, he called her a Turk, for the hereditary hatred of the Greeks against the Turks still smouldered in some Greek hearts. Can you wonder—after Chios!

However, in spite of Chios my grandmother soon became a queen in the Constantinople society of those days, for

the Turks admired her—perhaps they regretted that she escaped from the little rocky island, to marry dull Thomas Ralli, instead of adorning some rich Pasha's harem. But Marie Ralli was a restless soul—stretching out her hands to things beyond their grasp and, most insistently of all, did her hands stretch out towards England, which she had never seen at that time. She had meanwhile made friends with the English Ambassadress at Constantinople—Lady Stratford de Redclyffe—to whom she confided her ambitions; and that shrewd lady tried to dissuade her, saying—which was perfectly true then—that London society was a closely guarded preserve for the few who, by birth, held the key to its doors, that foreigners were not much better than aborigines in English eyes, that few English people spoke French, and none modern Greek—so where would Marie Ralli be? A stranger in a strange land of fogs, cold and bad cooking! But the forceful young woman wasn't to be diverted from her plans, and nothing could check her dream of conquering London as she had conquered Constantinople. I don't fancy the stodgy Thomas had any inclination to move from his comfortable house in Péra; but being as docile with his wife as he had been with his mother, they eventually went to London, where he took over the management of Ralli Brothers. Strange to say, in spite of Lady Stratford de Redclyffe's gloomy forecasts, Marie Ralli, having quickly learned a fair command of English, was soon established in the centre of all that was best in London society, knowing everybody, and becoming the close friend, amongst others, of Mr. Gladstone. Somebody once said years later to her son—Pandeli Ralli, my uncle—"What a lucky woman your mother is, and how happy she must be, for she has everything Fate can give—beauty, brains, wealth and a good social position." To which my uncle replied with a bitter laugh, "I think she's the most unhappy woman I

know." A startling answer, though true, for she was never satisfied with what she had, but always reaching out her lovely hands for unattainable moons. So far as I was concerned, however, I loved and admired her immensely and still cherish a certain hero-worship for a woman who was able to accomplish all that she accomplished in her sixty-two years of life. Having got all that she did out of England, can you wonder, therefore, if she was Anglophile and that old Madame Argenti's comment riled her?

During the next four years of my life I remember nothing, and presumably there was nothing of any importance to remember, till my father was appointed Comptroller to Lord Lorne and my mother Lady-in-Waiting to Princess Louise, on their coming out to Canada in November, 1878. We travelled on board the *Sarmatian*, the crack ship then of the Allan line, but what a cockleshell compared with the *Empress of Britain* and kindred vessels! And a cockleshell she seemed during the fifteen days of appalling storms which we met on the voyage, when I endured such terror and seasickness as I have never forgotten. I well remember wailing for them to "Stop the ship, please," believing in my abysmal ignorance of the sea that stopping the ship would stop the devastating motion that tortured me as I lay in my mother's cabin while the luggage glissaded back and forth, carrying with it my adored doll "Robert", a huge jointed French creature about two and a half feet high, with a mop of curly hair. I can still see "Robert", seated on the perambulating luggage, his hands clasping his head as though he, too, were in the agonies of sea-sickness like my mother, myself and Louise, who was alternately groaning and loudly praying to all the Saints, in the next cabin. Once the ship stopped, after a vast commotion on deck—not because my appeal was heard, but because of a man overboard who, poor fellow, was never seen again. A short time later more hurry-

ing and talking—this time outside the cabins. A baby had been born! So within a few hours the complement of souls on the *Sarmatian* had been completed, though I knew nothing of it then, since it was the era when the young were told that babies were found under gooseberry bushes, and there were no such things in mid-Atlantic.

Battered and beaten, we finally reached Halifax, where "Robert" was loudly cheered as Louise carried him along the quayside, for a Canadian crowd had never seen his like, since he came from a famous Paris toy-shop. "Robert" was a treasured possession for many years, even surviving my mother's periodical "Autos da fé", as she called her inroads upon my childhood's treasures. She was an orderly woman, tidiness her middle name, and with all the sternness of her forebears, so I was reared in that same fear of my elders which had characterized her own youth. She was inflexible over the question of "rubbish", as she called my pet possessions, and out they went, though I managed to rescue a few before the housemaids had put them in the dust-bin, when the maternal back was turned; but, alas, she had an abnormally accurate memory of what had been intended to go, and next time there was an "Auto da fé" out they went—and for good. However, "Robert" survived many of these upheavals, though in the end he went the same way as the rest, and I wept salt tears—though not before my mother—I was far too proud for that.

It's strange how clearly I remember our one year spent out here when I was eight. My mother hated the climate; hated the Canadian life of that period, lacking all the graces and amenities of that Victorian England to which she belonged to her dying day, and besides the Greek love of beauty, she had an equally passionate need of warmth, so a cold country repelled her. What a different Canada it was compared to the present day; no motors, of course—only

sleighs whose bells jingled musically on the crisp air, their occupants tucked up in buffalo and bear robes lined with gay colours. I sometimes wonder if the Canadian liking for bright colours isn't the outcome of that prolonged session of white during the winter months. Whatever the cause, it has a most pleasing effect in the landscape. I remember the sidewalks of those old days; made of wooden planking, they were death traps, many having fallen into disrepair from stress of weather, so that they tripped up the unwary. Not that I can say the present sidewalks of Ottawa are wholly above reproach; they slope perilously, have dreadful gaps which are an active danger to the pedestrian, and when I walk about the city, as I always do, I daren't lift my eyes from the ground, having more than once crashed full length on those uneven pavements. As a child those tosses didn't matter; one hadn't far to fall and one's bones weren't so brittle—but as a septuagenarian I quake daily at them.

For companions I had the son and daughter of Sir Francis and Lady de Winton, who lived at Rideau Cottage, he being at that time the Governor-General's secretary; and so to Rideau Cottage I went for daily lessons. There were also the Montizambert sisters who came to Government House to play, and others whom I dimly remember, when we used to toboggan on the big slide which was still standing, though derelict and unsafe, when I returned in 1921. There was as well a short, precipitous slide where the house containing the visitors' book is now placed, but being dangerous, because of its steepness, forbidden to us children, so, of course, we waited till the grown-ups were safely out of the way, and then flew down it on our small toboggans, till one luckless day I landed, head first, in a mass of newly drifted snow, from which I was ignominiously hauled out by the heels. That passing footman probably saved me from death by suffocation. But as I had managed to collect

a scraped nose and cut knees the disobedience was discovered, and it was the end of our fun on the little slide.

There were sedate Vice-Regal walks on Sunday afternoons during the winter, when in a solid phalanx, we sallied forth in sealskin coats, the women and children with their heads shrouded in white woollen mufflers called "clouds" and worn over our caps, a blessing to one's ears, though we must have looked funny trudging along, headed by Lord Lorne, talking in his high-pitched, nasal voice, with Princess Louise, young and beautiful, by his side. It was she who nicknamed me "Little Seal", because she said I was seal-coloured all over—eyes, hair, and coat. And was I full of importance as I trotted along with the grown-ups on those Sunday afternoons! Just old enough to realize, without knowing why, that Mr. Wilfrid Laurier and Mr. John A. Macdonald were important people, so I felt proud when they spoke to me. My mother fell at once for Laurier, whose manners and good French enchanted her; but my father preferred the less suave Macdonald, with his rugged face that reminded me of something hacked out of wood by an unskilled hand.

Government House was my home for a year then, as it was fated to be, for five years later on. I remembered it clearly as it was in 1878, cramped inside, monstrous outside, for the present façade didn't exist, though the Tent-room and ball-room already flanked the front door, which was a squat affair—more like a stable entrance than a Governor-General's residence. The main passage of the ground floor was practically unaltered, except for the new front, when we came out in '21, and I asked Lord Richard Neville, who was showing us round, not to say what rooms lay behind the doors so that I might test my memory. And I was right every time as to what they were, including the existence of a panel on the inner side of one door where Princess



Louise had painted a spray of apples, which still remains, and I am glad it has been preserved as a typical example of the art of that period.

The memory of some of the native flowers had also remained with me, because from my earliest days flowers were my passion, so I delighted in the blue columbines and the masses of pink roses at Cacouna, where I had been hastily packed off when there was an outbreak of scarlet fever in Government House. But, being an essentially tactless child in the matter of catching things, I only reached Cacouna in time to stage a bad bout of the ailment, in lodgings, kept by a funny old maiden lady with ringlets and a long-legged black-and-tan mongrel dog called "Taffy", with whom she would prance about for my edification. Why I remember the dog's name and not the old landlady's, I don't know, except that my husband, in later days, always declared I remembered people through their dogs much better than through themselves, for I had my father's love of animals and perhaps that's why they impressed themselves on my mind. Anyhow, it was the kindly old lady and not the prancing "Taffy" to whom I owed the columbines—and then I show the rank ingratitude of forgetting her name!

From Cacouna I rejoined my family at the Citadel in Quebec, and what could have been more thrilling to a child possessed of a vivid imagination, and an innate sense of drama, than living in a fortress, with the Union Jack floating above the King's Bastion? What a great moment it was when we first drove up through the tortuous road to the Chain Gate, round hairpin bends, to the beautifully arched, and tunnelled, entrance to the Citadel itself; and what a thrill to see that great view on to the St. Lawrence, which to this day gives me a catch in the throat when I see it afresh, with the Island of Orleans lying under a vivid blue sky in the bright sunshine of a summer day. The crowning

glory of that first visit came, for me, when we were confined to the Citadel owing to riots in the lower town, and I pictured all sorts of "alarums and excursions"—though I hadn't heard the expression then, and heaven knows what I expected! Probably an attack by Red Indians, feathered and painted as in the picture books. But nothing happened—so far as I remember—except that H.M.S. *Bellerophon*, at that time anchored in the river below, was retained in case of trouble. Not only was she there but, for the first time since the battle of the Plains of Abraham, a French battleship, the *Galissonière*, lay beside the Britisher under the shadow of the rock that is Quebec. Perhaps the fact that my father's family had always been sailors added to my admiration for the *Bellerophon*, a-glitter with polished brass and white paint, and I remember feasting my eyes on her as my father did, for he had the Ducie tradition of the sea in his blood and was destined for the Royal Navy, but, unfortunately, his health broke down and he got no further than the training ship, H.M.S. *Britannia*. Perhaps as things turned out it was as well, because by no stretch of imagination can I picture my mother—a most orderly fastidious creature—following a junior naval officer round sordid lodgings or the grimy noise of dockyards. Not at all her cup of tea! So it was best that such a fate wasn't demanded of her.

As I gazed at H.M.S. *Bellerophon* little did I think that more than sixty years later I should again stand on that terrace and look down, not on a gleaming white battleship, but on a dozen or more merchant ships painted dull grey, or camouflaged in sombre tones, waiting to sail in convoy across the submarine-infested waters of the Atlantic. No glamour, no white paint, no polished brass-work, but the same gallant spirit among the seamen of many nationalities, whose varied and grimy flags floated on the September

breeze awaiting the order, that came in the night, for them to glide noiselessly away on "their various occasions". That is only one of the countless changes which Quebec has watched from her rocky eminence in these passing years—and how many others that old city has seen since the days when Champlain set foot there! As I look at his statue now, in all the be-ribboned and be-feathered finery of his epoch, it makes me smile, for it would have been far more suitable to represent him in his seamen's boots and the rough clothes typical of such a hardy voyager; and surely as he gazes down from whatever Nirvana he inhabits, he must laugh at that foppish presentation of himself.

Many are the memories of the Quebec of my childhood before the "Battlefields Park"—horrible name!—had been coined, and it was simply "The Plains of Abraham"—scene of a historic conflict. The new-fangled name suggests some seaside resort, whereas the other was unique, and so to me it always remains "The Plains of Abraham". In the old days it was a rough piece of ground, not beautiful with shrubs and plants, but I played there and enjoyed it. My most vivid memory was of a great fire which burnt out most of a square. The ever-faithful Louise took me to see it while flames were still spurting up, and I clung to her fat hand and marvelled, rather frightened, at it all; yet somehow in none of my later visits did I ever locate the scene of that great conflagration, and it wasn't till 1942, when, walking with Mrs. Georges Vanier, we turned into the "Governor's Garden" from a narrow alley, leading off the Rue St. Louis, that it flashed across my mind, here was the place where I had seen the fire—and stood spellbound as a small child. As I looked at it I saw the proof, because on the north side the houses were essentially of the 1880's, just as those on the west side of the square belonged to the olden days. So I had found again, when I wasn't seeking it, what I had

passed by time and again, unrecognized. Memory had played me one of her fantastic tricks.

A haunting memory of those days was a black bear, chained to a barrel in the barrack square and I hated to see that tethered wild thing ranging backwards and forwards restlessly, as far as the chain allowed! My small heart ached for him as I longed to tell him this and comfort him. Where my "comforting" would have ended, in so far as I was concerned, doesn't stand thinking about. The soldiers used to ply him with soda-water or ginger-beer, which gave him fearful hiccoughs, or with the beer on which he got tight. Thank goodness, no bear is there nowadays, for my old friend's troubles ended long ago, when his spirit found freedom in Elysian forests among the sweet berries dear to his ursine soul.

But though the bear no longer exists to haunt one, there is another memory for me in the grievous blot on Canada's most historic city. Buildings in Lower Town, on the quays where luxury liners disembark their passengers, are hardly calculated to impress newcomers to the city; nor can anything be said in favour of the disgraceful hovels—there is no other word for such erections—which lie to the north, below the ridge crowned by vast grey ecclesiastical buildings on which tens of thousands of dollars must have been spent. Just below them lie these ghastly shacks built from rusty sheets of old metal, rotten timbers and other waste material whose only right place is the rubbish dump. Surely a portion of the thousands spent on the imposing ecclesiastical buildings might have been devoted to the housing of God's less fortunate servants? And in His eyes such an act would have been a worthy observance of the second great commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". Why should the civic dignitaries of the city not deal with the matter, as we did in London, where various boroughs issued

building loans which were taken up at a 3% dividend for the erection of good blocks of flats for working-people? It's a sound investment, to say nothing of the difference it brings in health and happiness to the poor who find themselves decently housed. Having been on the committee of one of these schemes in my own London borough I speak of what I know and saw with my own eyes.

Nor is Quebec the only offender. Montreal's slums were in our time—and I believe still are—a blot on Canada's wealthiest city. I remember when my husband, much to the anger of the slum landlords, visited these places to see matters for himself he took with him Sir Arthur Currie, a stalwart man and certainly not possessed of a queasy stomach—yet when he had been into one of these houses he went outside to vomit! What can one say of such conditions as those in Canada's oldest and certainly one of her most prosperous provinces!

## CHAPTER II

Society became my glittering bride,  
And airy hopes my children.

*The Excursion*  
WORDSWORTH

**A**N ONLY child's life isn't enviable, because when young you have no companions—when old, nobody with whom to relive the past; and, so far as my experience goes, only children are horribly spoilt, or horribly suppressed. I belonged to the last category, and it effectively bred in me an inferiority complex which has survived to the present day; and though the Spartan training was to the good, because it meant I never had any inflated ideas of my own importance for a ruthless world to deflate, it was far from pleasant at the time.

My mother had inherited her matriarchal tenets from her mother, grandmother and other forebears, and since there was nobody else to share them I got all that was coming to me, and I was twenty-five years old before I really stood up to her on a vital issue. Then, to my amazement, the small but imposingly maternal figure collapsed, for it had feet of clay and was merely a façade of strength. What a dumb-cluck I had been not to have seen through it! Although she had always shown that hard matriarchal side to me, yet there was a totally different side in an odd dependence on her husband, whom in most respects she dominated—not unkindly, for she adored him—perhaps because he was gentle, and what the country-folk call "Biddable". Anyhow, if she ruled in most ways, she was comically helpless in others, incapable of choosing her own clothes without his advice and that of faithful old Louise.

The purchase of a new hat alone demanded their combined assistance, yet those creations were always so completely alike that she had only to tell the modiste, "Make me a replica of my last hat, but in such-and-such a colour", and nobody would have been much the wiser, for they would have seen her in just the same headpiece, tee'd up in Victorian style, on top of the "Transformation" of black hair which she wore to her dying day. But the full measure of dependence on her adored "Dick" was borne in on me when, a couple of days after his death, the water rate demand arrived. She turned it round helplessly in her small hands and said appealingly to me, "What am I to do with this?" much as old Heath the coachman had asked the same question when confronted by his first cheque. I nearly laughed as I answered, "Pay it, my dear."

It was curious to see two such divergent aspects in one person and I could never make them dovetail into one another as they should have done. My mother, a typical Victorian, afraid of anything off the path of conventionality, along which she and her contemporaries padded like a flock of sheep, and I, who hated that sheep-like padding, wanted to pry round corners and wander down side roads—a fatal thing in those days, added to which it frightened and made her angry too, for she was set on my following her lead. Surely Providence must have smiled, many times, when he saw what a misfit we were as parent and child, for beyond sharing an intense love of beauty, we had not got a single characteristic in common. Since matters had gone so terribly wrong at the start, owing to my sex and colouring, she comforted herself for these lapses by devoting her energies, and those of the faithful Louise, in dressing me exquisitely, though no normally healthy child wants to be a mannequin for the display of smart frocks and hats which must not be damaged. I certainly wasn't

made that way, and I remember vividly an expensive grey felt hat trimmed with ostrich feathers which I did my best to ruin by rubbing it against the boles of dirty trees in a London square; but that accursed hat seemed immune from any damage and lasted a long time. There were neat collars, cuffs, and tight-fitting gloves among the many items of my get-up, which my mother's contemporaries thought the last word in "chic", but about which their children thought otherwise and led me an awful life, for children are cruel little animals to one another if there is anything of which they happen to disapprove. I hated my clothes as much as my mother hated seeing me rush about with other children in Hamilton Gardens, to return with a sweat-streaked, puce-coloured face, and my thick mane of hair looking like a haystack.

I might have found a way of escape and companionship had I been sent to boarding school, but no girl of one's own class ever went to such places at that time, so I was left to daily governesses who came to the South Audley Street house with its lovely Adams decorations, and the octagon schoolroom where I shed many bitter tears. The first of this procession that I remember was Mademoiselle Gombert; a faded Frenchwoman, well on in the sixties, with pale blue eyes and fair hair drawn back tightly over a domed forehead. She wore a big cameo brooch on her flat bosom and pear-shaped earrings containing small miniatures of her parents. Being hard up, she had made herself the fashionable "bustle" of those days out of a red flannel petticoat tied with white tape, which, if the weather was hot, she deposited under the schoolroom table to be donned again before going down to lunch. She was far too old and tired to cope with an active-minded child, or to do anything but drowse in the sunshine, had she been able to afford it, poor soul. Owing to her idiosyncrasies I commit-



ted my first social *faux pas* when a grim old princess, amused at my account of "la Gombert", drew me out and I, thrilled at holding the stage, expatiated on her and ended up shrilly with the climax, "AND she wore velvet boots," to which my listener remarked dryly, "So do I, my dear."

Gombert was followed by Mademoiselle Forkell, a beady-eyed, hard-mouthed Frenchwoman, and I only pray she has paid for the treatment by which she made my life unbearable. With all the sadist's unerring perception of their victim's vulnerable spot, she realized I was horribly sensitive and that ridicule cut me to the quick, so she made me carry, on our morning walks, whatever lesson book I had failed in most. It might be a fat history volume, or a thin one of arithmetic—that one was rarely missing, because I have always failed in anything to do with figures. There was also an unwieldy atlas, which made my arms ache. But the real core of my woes lay in the fact that like a silly fool, I believed her when she said everybody knew why I was thus loaded. That was the most subtle of her cruelties. To this day I sometimes dream that I am a small child again, twisting myself round the leg of the hall table in a vain attempt not to go out with the hated burden, I can feel, in my nightmare, the butler's hands disengaging me from the hall table, while Forkell looked on, a malicious gleam in her eyes, as she held the books ready to thrust under my arm once we were on the doorstep. Another diabolical punishment consisted in standing me on a high chair, placed in the schoolroom window, with a placard bearing in large black letters the legend "I am a bad and lazy girl", so that passers-by could see it. Fortunately, that punishment didn't last long because some of my parents' friends protested so vigorously that it was stopped. I don't think my mother knew of it till she was told, and I am quite certain my father didn't, for he would have put his foot

down. But the governesses always had my mother's ear, especially Forkell, and I was never given a chance to defend myself, so she was under the impression that I was, as Forkell declared, "La fille du diable". The only bright spot in the Forkell reign were the afternoons when I went with her to share her educational ministrations with Winifred Dallas-Yorke and her two cousins, Ronald and Harry Graham. Winnie was several years my senior, and eventually married the Duke of Portland, while Ronald became British Ambassador in Rome, and Harry was the author of those humorous books that have been widely read. In the Graham household Forkell's claws were clipped and she didn't nag or bully me, as in South Audley Street. Perhaps old Mrs. Graham, the grandmother of these three children, having been a governess herself, summed up the woman better than my parents did.

Forkell's reign ended when my mother decided that, as we always spoke French together, it was time to get me grounded in German, so she engaged a well-born Fraulein with impeccable references, who was kind to me and, though I loathe Germans from the bottom of my soul, I must exempt that particular member of a vile race. Her teaching may have been sketchy and perhaps I learnt details concerning life not wholly suited to my tender years, but at least I was at peace, till my mother, alas! discovered that Fraulein's "brother", whom we met in the Park, was her lover. So Fraulein vanished. There must have been other governesses after her, but I don't remember them, or even their names, though I have often wondered since of what practical use these estimable ladies were, because the education they gave in no way fitted one to meet the chances and changes of life. In the eighties and nineties life in England, for one's own class, was serene, static, and nobody dreamt it would ever change—so the governesses taught a



CANADIAN DAYS

The Moretons tobogganing during their year in Canada. Evelyn, now Lady Byng, is in the front. This photo was borrowed from the Archives, Ottawa.

smattering of geography, history, literature, classics and arithmetic, but the practical arts of sewing, cooking or domestic science were quite outside the curriculum, and all that was expected of these ladies was to produce a generation of nice young girls, fit to marry nice young men, and bear nice young babies. In any real emergency we should have been about as much use as a cat scratching on a marble floor. However, that's changed now, fortunately, and English girls are taking their part gamely in the life of to-day.

I was ten when my grandmother died. She had stood for much in my young eyes, and somehow we understood one another—so I mourned her truly. The following year my mother was appointed lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Albany—daughter of that grim old Princess of Waldeck who wore the velvet boots—and little did I realize then how much that appointment was destined to influence my life, both at that time and in years to come. At the moment it entailed my mother's being away in waiting every other month, during which I had my father to myself, and I was pleased because we spoke the same language, enjoyed the same things and had much in common. Unfortunately, within two and a half years of the Albany marriage the Duke died at Cannes, leaving his wife with one small girl—Princess Alice, now Countess of Athlone, and a posthumous son, born some months after his father's death, who eventually became Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. The twenty-two-year-old widow found herself alone in a big family and not an easy one for a stranger to deal with—because some were jealous of Queen Victoria's affection for the newcomer. So in this rather unhappy state of affairs she turned to my mother for help and found it in full measure, for my mother was an intensely loyal woman, and had, from the outset, given her love to the lady she served. They had been

mutually attracted to one another, for the Duchess was intelligent, repressed in childhood by a stern old mother, and beginning to blossom out under my mother's influence, listening to her lady-in-waiting's sharp tongue, enjoying her quick mind, while being half amused, half perplexed, at a worldliness which she met for the first time at close quarters—for my mother was one of the most worldly-minded women I ever met.

But, devoted though mother was to the Duchess, I think her greatest delight was close contact with a fair child who fulfilled all her ideals, for the Princess was a pretty, quick, intelligent little creature, and the only criticism I ever heard my mother make was, "It's such a pity the child's eyes aren't blue instead of brown." But that same child was a source of unadulterated pleasure to my mother—I having failed her so lamentably in all respects. Also, the little girl had a love of clothes which in those days I hadn't acquired, and there again I had fallen sadly from grace. I remember a summer day when we all went for a solemn drive in an open landau and the Duchess said to us, "Don't take any notice of Alice's new gloves." Away we went and then began a comedy which photographed itself vividly on my mind. The small hands, in a pair of new gloves, were much in evidence, spread out on the child's knees, while she shot surreptitious glances from one to the other to see if they had been noticed. But we all stared into the distance or talked of the weather, the scenery, and any subject which had no reference to gloves. Up and down, sideways, backwards and forwards went the small hands, till gradually the face grew angry in its expression, and at the end of the drive an outraged little figure clambered up the long steps to the portico at Claremont, her head defiantly high, though I think tears were not far off had she allowed herself to

give way to her mortification! It was a comic incident, but I think the Duchess might have given the child the small happiness of getting those treasured gloves admired—or at least noticed. How my mother would have rejoiced had I, at the age of six, been clothes-conscious enough to act as the Princess did that afternoon! Fortunately I wasn't given to jealousy or I might have suffered torments over my mother's adoration for Princess Alice. On the contrary, she was like a belated younger sister, with a gap of thirteen years in our ages which, oddly enough even then, seemed to make no difference. And ever since the love and intimacy have continued, for sixty years, surely an exemplification of Shakespeare's advice. "Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel." To both of us this friendship has been sweet and was largely instrumental in bringing me out to Canada in 1940, when I was too old, and not fit enough, for a real job at home. In those far-away days at Claremont, the Duchess, thinking my mother was unduly harsh, fought my battles zealously, and on the other hand my mother did the same with regard to the Princess—a comic situation, and one for which I was grateful to my kindly protagonist. This intimacy between the parents led to our spending much time together, either in our house, or at Claremont—the Duchess's home near Esher—and many a Christmas was spent there to be resumed—little as we guessed it then—in Ottawa, half a century later.

There was another contemporary of ours in those days who stood between us in age—Prince Alexander of Teck—at that time a round little roly-poly in sailor suits, who is now Princess Alice's devoted husband. With his two brothers, Prince Adolphus and Prince Francis, and their sister—now Queen Mary—they used to suffer, as I did, un-

der the lucubrations of a pompous old Canon in a very "select" chapel in Mayfair. I well remember an occasion when, during the service, the plump little boy—perhaps on purpose—dropped his prayer-book on the floor and was ordered by his mother, the Duchess of Teck, to pick it up. He flung himself dutifully on his knees and after having a grand time grovelling on the none-too-clean floor, to the detriment of the sailor suit, finally emerged waving the book in triumph, saying loudly, "I've got it," to the horror of the congregation of Victorian parents. He certainly scored, because having obeyed orders to retrieve the missing volume, nothing could be said. Oddly enough, when the Princess and I married neither of us were at the other's wedding, for when I married in 1902 she was living abroad, and when she married I was in India. A strange chance that after all the years of intimacy in childhood and girlhood we should have missed the leading events in our two lives.

About the time that my mother went to the Duchess of Albany, my father was appointed Assistant Marshal of Ceremonies to Queen Victoria, a post which entailed, among other things, shepherding the diplomats at Court functions and, since he had charming manners and spoke quite good French, it was a very suitable appointment. I remember at one drawing-room, a polite diplomat, having rapturously contemplated my father's legs in their white silk stockings, exclaimed, "Oh, les beaux mollets de Monsieur!" and in his enthusiasm over the "mollets" held up the whole "Corps Diplomatique"—to my father's horror. He kept his court appointment during the latter part of Queen Victoria's reign, through the days of King Edward, and into those of King George V, but by then he was getting very frail, and buried himself at Church Crookham, where he died in 1928 after many years of failing health.

I was seventeen when the doctors packed me off on a long sea voyage, for what ailment I don't remember, and I went away under the wing of my aunt, Lady Evelyn Moreton, my father's youngest sister, in the S.S. *Arawa*, of the Shaw Savill line, for this round-the-world trip, long before "pleasure cruises" had been dreamt of! The *Arawa* was a steady old tub, like a plump dowager, and since she carried no mails we sailed when the wind was favourable, to save coal, and it took five weeks to reach Capetown. I loved that trip through tropical seas, with ice-blue flying fish skimming the top of the water, and white-winged albatross, following on motionless pinions and watching for offal cast overboard. Then came Capetown with Table Mountain towering overhead, its streets filled with that heterogeneous mass of many coloured peoples, which still makes it a difficult country to govern, even for so masterly a hand as that of my good friend, Field Marshal Jan Smuts. It was hot that December day in Capetown, as we dropped some cargo and took on a fresh supply, and little did I think that, twice again in my life, I should see that lovely spot.

From South Africa we sailed to Hobart in Tasmania, where for the first time I saw the tree ferns in their native habitat and met my father's youngest brother, Matt Moreton, for Grandfather Ducie having had sixteen children—all by one wife, poor soul!—a percentage of the sons had to seek their living in the Dominions; so three went to Australia and one to Canada. Matt, like most of the hard-riding Moreton men, was a magnificent horseman, and soon made his mark "down under" in this respect. He had been there so long by the time we met him that he was the complete "Digger", rough and careless of appearances. My aunt was scandalized by the fact that he wore no braces, and a piece of cord held up his trousers—rather precariously, for he was



always hitching them up. Worst of all, he had no clothes in which to go with us and dine at Government House. That was the last straw to the mind of a Victorian like Evie and though I begged to go up-country with him, and see some of the wonderful things he talked about, she flatly refused, saying that since it was a phenomenally hot summer in Australia that year, and we were on a health trip, she was taking no chances. So Matt waved us farewell from the quay as we set sail for New Zealand, and alas! I never saw him again.

On our way to the Bluff, the southwest tip of South Island, we sat on deck discussing how much we could manage to see in the short space of time at our disposal before rejoining the *Arawa* in North Island, when a man seated near asked if he could help us, because New Zealand was his home. My poor aunt was torn between her need of advice and the impropriety of speaking to anybody, especially a man, who hadn't been properly introduced—but her need being greater than her sense of propriety, we trusted ourselves to the kindly guidance of Mr. Bathgate, a New Zealander by origin, a tea merchant in China by profession and thanks to him we saw everything it was possible to see in Dunedin and Christchurch, including one of the lovely lakes whose name I have now forgotten; and we stayed with his relations all the time. Then we slipped across the narrow strip of sea to Wellington, where rumour had it there was such a perennial wind you could tell a Wellingtonian because automatically, at every corner, his hand flew to his hat.

Then, homeward bound at last, we set our course for Cape Horn, where I regret to say, I disgraced myself when we celebrated Lord Valletort's birthday, for the Captain insisted on brewing some rum punch. Never having met

it before I thought it the nectar of the gods, and lapped it up till the Captain suddenly said in his broad Scotch tongue, "I'm thinking ye'd better have no more of that." Whether I was beginning to giggle, or whether I was acquiring a glassy eye that betrayed me to him, I have no idea, but his words jolted me into a realization that people's faces were oddly blurred, that the door of the saloon was a long way off—in fact, that I was completely and gloriously drunk! Such a thing had never happened to me before, but, fortunately, having realized my condition, I steered myself with the greatest care through the door and down to our cabin. By then, however, I was completely "soused" and began to giggle weakly till my aunt said, "Now, Evelyn, don't be silly; say your prayers and get into bed." I obeyed, but any prayers the Almighty heard from me that night must have been odd, for I scrambled into the upper berth—inadvertently, planting a wavering foot full on my aunt's face as I did so—and then hanging perilously out of my bunk, waved an unsteady hand, saying, "Goo-ni—goo-ni! Why don't you shay goo-ni?" till sleep swept down on my shameful condition, and my aunt buried her laughter in the bedclothes. That was the first—and up till now—the only occasion on which I have been drunk, and it was a long time before I heard the end of it.

After the Horn we stopped at Rio de Janeiro, and I shall never forget the short time we spent there, for we arrived on a pouring wet night, the whole wide bay aglitter with lights which fringed the shore—even in those days when lighting wasn't by electricity—and one saw the towering effect of thickly wooded hills, and the Sugarloaf Rock rising sheer out of the water. Morning broke in cloudless beauty, and we spent the day ashore, seeing all we could of that magical—but in those days thoroughly unsanitary

—place, and we left on the second night under the brilliant light of a full moon. For so short a visit we certainly had variety and I have often longed to revisit the spot where man has made, of a fever-ridden town, a paradise; but I haven't got there and never shall now, for my wandering days will be over once I return to my own home and garden.

We reached London late in April, and horror filled my mother's orderly soul when she saw me in imminent danger of bursting out of a disreputable old blue jersey, while I clutched in one hand a parrot cage, sewn up in canvas, containing a loudly swearing parrot; in the other an assortment of Solomon Islands weapons, sent by Matt to my father. I must certainly have been the complete pantomime sailor returning to the bosom of his family and not at all suited to the prim loveliness of South Audley Street. My mother, scandalized at such a sight, confined me to the house till my parlous clothing condition could be remedied, but my father—less perturbed by my appearance—was enchanted to have me home, no matter in what clothes, and knocked a considerable amount of fun out of this strange creature who had returned to him, full of nautical expressions and salty sayings, doubtless not of the most refined, but refreshing to his ears and reminiscent perhaps of the old *Britannia* days.

Having always had it impressed on me that I was a complete dud mentally and physically, the prospect of making my *début* in London society was terrifying; and I clearly remember that my mother's nearest approach to a compliment on my appearance was, "Well, if you aren't a ravishing beauty, thank goodness you do look a lady." This fact was endorsed shortly afterwards by a dirty, badly dressed man, who strode up to me defiantly in Sloane

Street—of all respectable spots—spat straight in my face and said, “Curse you for a damned aristocrat.” When I “came out” the dressing became even more wonderful, and what girl of eighteen fails to appreciate nice clothes? But I thought the first man who paid me an open compliment was pulling my leg and turned on him indignantly. He was so taken aback by my *naïvete*—a thing to which he was certainly not accustomed among his female friends—that he thought himself in love with me, while I most certainly fell wildly in love with him when at my first London ball we danced together the whole evening till my mother discovered to her horror that, although a very desirable “parti” in the marriage market, he had a shocking reputation. But oh! was he attractive? I never met any man with such a delightful voice and such charm. Nor was I singular in that respect, for half the married women in London fought over him like cats as he flitted from one to the other, fidelity not being one of his chief qualities.

So in the end I broke my heart pretty badly when the romance crashed after six months and my mother, from then onwards, kept an eagle eye on the least hint of flirtation, no matter how innocent, and was bent on picking my friends, both male and female. And what she selected, poor dear, from both sexes! I felt a prickling sensation down my spine when she said that “So-and-So” would be such a nice companion for me, because I knew it would be some cloying idiot minus humour, whom I should detest, and on whom I hadn’t the slightest intention of modelling myself, as my mother vainly hoped. It was the same where men were concerned—I shuddered at her choice!—and I well remember one youth who carried a small volume of Bacon’s *Essays* or something of the kind in his pockets, whom my mother considered “such a nice intelligent young man” and

admirably suited as a husband. Fortunately, I didn't agree, for to her horror many years later he had to leave the country, his morals being at variance with the laws of the land. Poor mother, what a viper she had tried to nourish in her innocent bosom—for innocent she was, in many respects, up to her death at eighty-two. I remember once in her later years when asked if she could recommend any good books to read and she answered "There was a quite well-written one called *Well of Loneliness*—but so dull—all about a little girl and a housemaid." Eventually when it was banned she shrugged her shoulders and said, "I really couldn't see any harm in it—it was just dull." Of such were many Victorians.

London society when I was plunged into it in the early nineties was in a transition state, between Victorian primness and an inclination to Renaissance bawdiness, but guarding its gates jealously against would-be intruders. I think Montague House, under the régime of the present Duke of Buccleuch's somewhat alarming grandmother, was the last stronghold to withstand the battering hordes of American and Jewish millionaires who swooped on London in King Edward's reign, when Society was beginning to slough off the skin of Victorianism and move tentatively towards freedom, much as a frightened bather tests the temperature of the sea with his toe before taking the final plunge. In those transition days there was much "face-saving", and if, publicly, adultery was frowned on, it was rampant enough in the *beau monde*—but under the rose. Nowadays any shading of the rose has ceased, "face-saving" is unknown and if one regrets the blatant promiscuity of modern ways, at least they miss that nauseating hypocrisy, laid like a veneer over such matters in my youth.

During those years my uncle, Pandeli Ralli, entertained lavishly both for me and for his own amusement. He was

a rich man—income tax being a farce, succession duties hardly showing above the horizon—and, since he enjoyed having people to his house, he gave endless dinners, concerts and balls, the latter for my benefit. He certainly knew how to entertain, did this fastidious Greek with the same passion for beauty that possessed my mother and myself; and he detested ugliness, particularly in women, and to get any of them, no matter how charming, into the house was almost impossible. He had, too, a “phobia” against black dresses, so woe betide even pretty women, if they came to Belgrave Square too often in that mournful colour. They were “gated” at once, for like many rich bachelors, he thought he could be a law unto himself, and I must say he managed pretty well in that direction.

Then there suddenly appeared on the scene a person who was to have the greatest influence in my uncle’s life—Kitchener, a Major in those days, whom he had met in Egypt, and whose praises he sung on his return. When Kitchener appeared in Belgrave Square, my parents and I didn’t like this hard-faced, cold-eyed man, with uncouth manners and lack of all social graces and it certainly was a strange friendship, for the two men had nothing in common except that both were egoists, and filled with a flaming hatred of the Mahdi. That hatred was the cornerstone of my uncle’s devotion to the rising soldier, for the hate dated back to the time when, as a Liberal politician, he had followed his leader, Gladstone, in voting against sending reinforcements to Gordon, beleaguered in Khartoum. After the disaster my uncle felt that, in a way, he had been guilty of Gordon’s death, and when an ill-fated punitive expedition was sent out under General Sir Herbert Stewart, a personal friend of my uncle’s, and he, too, was killed, it preyed so much on Pandeli Ralli’s mind that he severed his connection with the Liberal party and Gladstone. It was after that, when Kit-

chener rose above the horizon as the avenger of both men, that this bachelor, who had never found romance through women, developed a deep hero-worship for the hard-working, ruthless soldier.

Kitchener arrived in Belgrave Square, in the middle of a London season. He had already made his mark as a soldier but lacked all social *savoir faire*, so my uncle took him in hand. I must say he made an excellent job of trimming the claws and combing the mane of his tame lion, till he was a presentable drawing-room pet and learnt not to talk about "The Countess of Blank" or the "Marquis of Dash". It was quite amusing to watch the evolution of this strange man whom many people could and did admire, though very few could love, except my uncle, and I think nothing, at that time, would have pleased him (my uncle) more than to see us married. He certainly gave people cause to gossip, having ordered, from Hubert Herkomer, a portrait of Kitchener—now in the National Portrait Gallery—which in those days hung as a pendant to mine by the same artist in the Belgrave Square drawing-room! But Kitchener cared no more for me than I did for him, though perhaps it may have crossed his mind the marriage would have been satisfactory, because my uncle was making no secret of the fact that I was to be his heir. Anyhow, the climax came in 1898 when "K" had just returned from Egypt and the Press, as usual, out for a scoop, sent a reporter to Belgrave Square—tipped off, I suspect, by a certain lady in society, who made a bit, on the side, with "Social Notes" to certain papers—to ask whether Lord Kitchener was staying there. The footman who answered the door said he was. The second question was whether I had been there that day? I had, and the servant innocently said so. Then the crucial question—was I engaged to the famous soldier? To that the man could only say he really didn't know, which was enough for the news

## UP THE STREAM OF TIME

hound, who flew back to his office and the same evening I read in the papers that "K" and I were engaged! As I was already head over ears in love with Julian Byng my wrath knew no bounds, and though my uncle also was furious at the episode, and considerably embarrassed, he had asked for trouble by the indiscreet placing of those two portraits. If we had married, what an awful misfit it would have been!

When I look back on my uncle I often smile at his funny little ways and the traps he laid to see if I could be trusted with money, because money was his god, and he was always suspicious where it was concerned. After my marriage, when he knew we were, at the moment, specially hard pressed financially, instead of coming forward to our help, as he could easily have done, he said, "Why don't you borrow on your expectations?" I flew out like a wildcat and said I shouldn't dream of doing such a thing. He only grunted. However, I imagine it satisfied him, and this incident, together with various other small digs to try me out, and which I stupidly never tumbled to at the time, apparently decided him that I was no gambler or rash handler of money, and in the end he paid me the greatest tribute in his power by leaving me his possessions with no strings attached in the way of trustees or other tiresome appendages. I appreciated that action of his as the greatest compliment he ever paid me. In some ways I was sorry for him because, owing to his foreign birth and my grandmother's autocratic rule, he was not sent to a public school, he played no games, followed no sport, and was kept at home with tutors, a most unfair treatment for a boy whose home was in England. He was always conscious, in after years, of that disadvantage, though he was well educated, a fine linguist and had an amazingly good memory. He was bone lazy, though he could have written extremely well had he chosen



to work, but he didn't, since he had no financial problem. He spoke admirably, though minus humour which, alas for his happiness, he lacked completely. The only humorous thing I ever connect with him was one evening at his country house when the quotation, "Which Jews might kiss and infidels adore" came up, and he swung round on me and said, "What's that from?" I answered, "The Rape of the Lock", and he said how amusing the poem was, and hadn't I enjoyed reading it? My mother flared up saying, "Of course she hasn't." To which he retorted, "Have you?" My mother primly said "NO!" The word "rape" had completely misled her. He then read the immortal poem aloud to us.

My uncle had excellent taste in most things, and bought many pictures, bibelots, and so forth, which now belong to me—at least they did when I left home. He had a beautiful, though over-elaborate, Norman Shaw house in Surrey, commanding an unsurpassed view over the whole weald of Sussex but, like all the Greek houses I have ever known, it was so meticulously tidy that it looked forlornly uninhabited. Often when I look back I think how much he missed and, while having so much in life, at the same time getting, in a way, so little out of it all. I remember some of the rather stodgy, though ultra "smart" week-end parties at Alderbrook, his country house, when my mother wasn't available, I had to act as hostess from the age of eighteen. One party—not at all suited to my age—included in its numbers old Lady Cork, a terrifying dame with a tongue like a rapier; Lady Dorothy Neville, ditto; Henry James and G. W. Smalley, the well-known American writers. The last-named was the only one with whom I had any points of contact, and after that party we used to see one another quite often. He gave me a set of Emerson; which led my mother to call him, mockingly, my "literary beau". She felt that friendship quite safe!

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In spite of having a good time, London seasons began to pall, so it was quite a relief to me when the doctors said my father must live in the country, and my parents, in 1892, bought a house on the edge of the lovely heather-clad country between Winchfield and Fleet, some seven miles from Aldershot, that big acreage of land which the Prince Consort, in the teeth of bitter opposition by his enemies, had insisted on the Government's purchasing for a military training ground. He was wise and far-seeing, since it was perfectly adapted to the work in those days, though by the time we went to live near it Aldershot was already getting cramped, and Salisbury Plain or the Berkshire Downs were requisitioned when big manoeuvres were to take place.

As a country for breaking and training young horses, which I did in those days, I could have found nothing better than this lovely land, with its countless sandy tracks and woods, where nightingales sang, larks soared, and fragrant pine trees broke the undulating landscape. When I wasn't riding horses of my own I sometimes got a mount from friends, and once an officer in the First Life Guards, anxious to see if his second charger would carry a lady, put me "up" to test it. The beast was a seventeen-hand piece of black satin, with well-groomed coat, and I fancied myself perched there—rather like a fly on a haystack, as my father rudely remarked!—till, alas, the Life Guards came charging over Long Hill and, seeing his stable companions, my horse joined the party before I could change his course. So the nearest my luckless mother got to a son in the Life Guards was a daughter caught in the ranks of that regiment for a few hectic moments of a charge.

Another friend asked me to try out a little South African racing pony, and when it arrived I was startled at the terrible bit it came with and spoke to the groom about it, who shook his head and said, "Well, Miss, don't you try him in

anything else." So I obeyed and soon learnt the need for it because though the pony was a perfect hack, with lovely manners and paces, as long as he was alone, let another horse come near, and he was off like an arrow from a bow, thinking it his duty to race and nothing would stop him but that horribly cruel bit.

However, if I was lucky in never getting a spill when riding, I managed to engineer a first-class one with my long-suffering father. I was driving a big upstanding brute who was a diabolical shier, and one autumn evening in the dusk he took it into his brainless head to register alarm at a handful of children waving school satchels. In a moment we were upside down in a long, shallow pool of inky water and mud, the overflow from a farmyard—and I should think from the farmhouse as well. I was first on my feet, having been pitched clear on to the hedge, and fortunately the horse was pinned down with the broken shaft across his back. My father was nowhere to be seen and when I called out—thoroughly frightened by then—"Dads, where are you?" a muffled, but amused voice came back saying, "In this muck you've chosen to get into." Fortunately nobody was hurt, only the shaft broken and the groom's white "leathers" ruined. We all stank to high heaven as we proceeded to walk the two miles home, my luckless parent remarking that every dog in the district was coming out, post haste, as we passed, believing there was something luscious to roll in. He was a grand sport, was my father—but heaven knows what would have happened had it been my mother—she who was so terrified of horses, poor dear.

In those days we had as a neighbour an interesting historical figure in the ex-Empress Eugénie—widow of Napoleon III, and mother of the Prince Imperial who was killed in the Zulu war. She had a charming house at Farnborough, on the far side of Aldershot from us, and lived

there quietly with a handful of the faithful people who had helped her to escape from Paris. When I remember her she was already an old, but still beautiful woman, with almond-shaped eyes that could light up with fun, for she had a grand sense of humour and always reminded one of an actress who had played the part of a queen and saw any funny side there was to it all. And in that she was an interesting contrast to another ex-Empress I have met—Empress Zita of Austria, now living outside Quebec with her group of shy but charming daughters. The difference between the two ex-Empresses sprang probably from the fact that the one had only been a sovereign by a twist of fate—the other had been born to it and was less likely to see any humour in it. The Empress Eugénie made one laugh when she imitated an awkward French Princess who—the Empress declared—when doing “Cercle” at a function, used to conjugate the verb “to go”. She would say, to the first lady, “When are you going to the country, Madame?” To the next one, “And have you been to the country?” To the third, “Will you go to the country this season?” And so on down the assembled party. Another day as we looked at a house with a tree growing much too close to it the Empress said, with a grimace, “Pour moi, je déteste un arbre dans le nez,” and I fully agree for it is distinctly a case of matter in the wrong place.

Those things were in the Empress’s lighter vein, but I remember once, as she looked across from the terrace at her home, to the mausoleum where her husband and son were buried, she made a little tragic gesture with her hands and said, “Voilà toute ma vie.” There they lay, those two men who might have been great—far from their native land, while she lived on, longing to see them avenged. She never now spoke, as she had done in the days of her glory, about 1870, as “Ma guerre”, for since then she had lived through

bitter years of humiliation and loneliness, thanks to her husband's effete leadership; and to the faults of such men as Bazaine who had brought the Third Empire crashing to earth. She was old and frail when the last war broke out, but her thirst for revenge and a burning hatred of the Huns kept her alive till peace was signed once again in Versailles, and she saw her enemies humbled in the dust as forty-five years earlier she too had been humbled. Fortunately, she didn't live to see those same brutes rise again to challenge an outraged and ill-prepared world, for if she had seen some traitors to France in her time she would have seen far more of them now in 1939; the services the banks, the old families and the Government, whose financial interests and affiliations were with the traditional enemy. "Plus ça change—plus c'est la même chose," she might have said with truth, regarding her unhappy country. At least in England, if we sometimes have had deaf slackers, complacent loiterers and appeasers, we have never numbered traitors among our political leaders, nor, as in France, is there the same overpowering lust for money which rules every class in that country, and is an obsession even greater than with the proverbial Jew. We knew that money lust in the last war when French peasants tried to charge our men rent for trenches from which they were fighting for French soil, rendered bills for grass cropped along the roadside by our Army's horses and demanded money for water from the wells, frequently padlocked against our troops. Small wonder if the members of their Governments in these later days, seeing big money within reach, stretched forth their dirty grasping claws to Germany regardless of the price to be paid in blood and terror.

There were many guests who came to the Empress's house in those old days. I remember "Plon-Plon's" two attractive sons—Princes Victor and Louis Bonaparte, for

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whom the Empress hadn't much affection. She delighted in making them play hockey with the rest of us young people, while she chuckled when they got their shins hit, as they tagged digustedly across a muddy field, for they had no love of "le sport". The present Duke of Alba and his charming sister Dona Sol, on the other hand, used to join in the fun with keen zest, and a frequent onlooker at these performances was the popular Portuguese Ambassador, the Marquis de Soverall—aptly nicknamed "The Blue Monkey", and a host of others whom I have forgotten after so great a lapse of time.

During the early 1890's I had fallen into a run of amateur theatricals, but not without considerable heart-searchings on my mother's part and a good deal of jibbing at the idea of my playing what she called "Love Scenes"—in a tone of horror! But for the fact that most of the amateurs were people belonging to her own world, she would have refused her consent. Then a command came for me to play the part of a French woman at Osborne, for the amusement of Queen Victoria, and my mother couldn't kick against that—besides, she was flattered! So I went, and I remember her earnest warning as to the strength of the Queen's champagne (afraid perhaps of a repetition of the Cape Horn disaster!) Anyhow, I was careful to keep my glass well in front of me so that the servants couldn't replenish it without my knowledge.

What Gargantuan meals there were at the Osborne of those days! Two soups, two fish, two entrées, a joint, a bird, a sweet, a savoury, mounds of fruit for dessert, and those delicious little "Wieble" biscuits that I can always see the old Queen scrunching with her tiny, pointed teeth. Not only was there this colossal dinner, but at bedtime you found in your room a "collation", consisting of half a cold chicken with trimmings, and a bottle of wine—opened, of course.

How could anybody have wanted more food after that dinner? Nobody did and it all went down the greedy gullets of the "Pages" who took the place of footmen in the Victorian court. When King Edward succeeded this, among other extravagancies, was stopped, relics as they were of the Hanoverian epoch's gluttony. We were only a party of eight that first night at the Queen's dinner, and to my horror I caught her studying me through a pair of small opera glasses, because not having seen me since I was a child, she was curious to discover what I had developed into. But far worse lay ahead of me when, after the meal, I was led up, by the then Dowager Lady Errol, to take my place beside the Queen's chair. The redoubtable old Lady-in-Waiting considered all these theatricals as works of the devil, which hardly added to my comfort since I felt she was questioning whether or not I was a brand worth snatching from the burning, as the Queen said in her pleasant voice, "It's so good of your dear mother to let you come," which flabbergasted me. After all when your Sovereign commands, you just go, and I don't remember what sort of answer I stammered out.

However, that was the only time I felt afraid of her, for I got to love this wonderful little old lady with her chuckling laugh and keen sense of enjoyment who, though she attended almost every rehearsal, enjoyed the actual performances as keenly as though she hadn't seen it in the making! I remember her saying to me one day, when I was off the stage and beside her chair, "My dear, I wonder if you could not tell Alec Yorke that really his smoking jacket is much too short?" It certainly was, for he had a rotund figure with a most accentuated posterior which the offending coat revealed unblushingly, but I wasn't going to be a cat's-paw to deal with the abbreviated coat, and said quite frankly I

really couldn't obey, nor did I ever know if anybody else was given this role.

It was after rehearsal one day, that on leaving the stage, I found Charles Wyndham had been sitting in a dark corner watching things. I was thankful I hadn't known it sooner, but he wandered up to me and began to talk about theatre and finally asked if I had any idea of taking up the stage as a career? Because, if so, I might let him know. I was completely taken aback, and needless to say that conversation never reached my mother's ears, or good-bye to my chances of any more acting! Perhaps, had necessity arisen, the stage might have been my fate. Wyndham's presence was caused by the fact that he was to give a private performance of *David Garrick* in a few weeks' time and he had come down to make all arrangements. However, that performance never took place because after our second night news came that Prince Henry of Battenburg had died of fever on his homeward journey from Africa, and never again were there theatrical shows for the old Queen—everything of that sort was at an end. It was a sorrowful finale to a most interesting visit. When I was in my bedroom talking to my maid about packing, so that we could catch the afternoon boat to Southampton, the Duke of Connaught came to the door with a message from the Queen to thank me for the pleasure she had found in the play, and to hand me a little brooch as a souvenir. It was an amazing instance of kindness on the part of a woman who had been stricken to the heart by the loss of her favourite son-in-law.

Another bone of contention between my mother and myself was my desire to write, which sprang largely, I expect, from the loneliness of my childhood, when I filled my life with imaginary characters or events and felt the urge to get it all down on paper. But this also was "taboo" in those days; and as I look back on this series of petty frets and annoy-



ances I am amazed why I ever put up with them, for I think my mother was in very deed the queen of "tabooists", if one can coin such a word. I can only suppose it sprang from the fact that she was a foreigner, brought up with all the rigidity of the foreigner, and had therefore become a mass of inhibitions and restrictions already antiquated. If so, it wasn't her fault; but it "got my goat" badly in those days.

In the November of 1897, I first met my future husband at the house of Sir Reginald Talbot, then commanding the Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot. I had heard many things about "old Bungo" from his brother officers in the 10th Hussars, for they considered him a freak because he was bored with society and worked hard at his profession. It was only the fact that his General had asked him to dine which made him go that night, grudgingly enough, as he told me afterwards. He was, I knew, immensely popular, and had a pretty wit and unusual charm. So there it was, and we fell in love at first sight, though we didn't marry till 1902, since the South African War intervened. His ideas of a courtship were certainly calculated to puzzle any woman because, when we met of a morning out riding if he was free, the fun began—though it wasn't always fun to me because I was bewildered, as he was never the same two days running. Talk of women being mutable—he could have given points and a beating to any one of them! On Monday he would be in his most enchanting mood; Tuesday he would treat me as a pal and a man; Wednesday he would hardly remember that I existed; Thursday he would be icily polite; Friday he would thaw a little and by Saturday be back in Monday's delightful mood! What could anybody make of such vagaries?

To crown it all he left for the South African War without saying a word about any feelings for me beyond friendship, though afterwards he told me that twice during those pre-war days he had started to ride over to Crookham and say

that he loved me and wanted to know if I would wait for him; but he had turned back, afraid lest anything tragic should happen to him and I should be bound by our engagement. As I pointed out afterwards, it was a foolish performance, because ostensibly I had, in the eyes of my fellows, no right to be anxious, and I suffered accordingly—because my parents firmly believed that there “was nothing in it all”! Nor can one really blame them—but it certainly didn’t make life very easy for me during the war years. Fortunately, the modern youth is less scruple-ridden and says his say before he rides forth to war. Anyhow, the man I loved vanished into space in silence and I ate my heart out till he began to write, showing by slow degrees that he cared as much as I did and finally proposing by letter and asking me “if I didn’t mind” cabling a reply. Because the cable was sent from Aldershot and signed “Evelyn”—which happened to be the name of Field Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood, at that time a power in the Army—and I think owing to the signature and the somewhat peremptory wording “Yes please return immediately”, it was mistaken for a message from that distinguished soldier and given priority, being transmitted by every known process in those days. So, though the Light Horse were far out on the veldt it reached the recipient within eighteen hours of its despatch—a record at that time! Julian kept the framed telegram on his desk for the rest of his life and would say to people, “Look what a peremptory female I married!”

However, the main thing was that it brought him home with the minimum of delay, for he took it to Kitchener who granted him three months leave in which to get married, an almost unheard of graciousness on Kitchener’s part, since he hated to see his best men get married because he thought it spoilt their careers.

Back came Julian from South Africa, leaving a disconso-

late scallywag corps behind him, firmly convinced they wouldn't see him again. The South African Light Horse which my husband had raised and commanded, from the days of its inception at Rosebank Camp in Capetown, was a magnificent fighting unit, but as tough a gang as anybody could wish to see, and it was always a debatable point whether they or the Australians were the biggest horse thieves in the British Army. I believe the palm went to the Light Horse. I know that frequently at morning "Stables" Julian would see—but not comment on the fact—that there were more horses in the lines than on the previous day—but all being fair in love and war, a blind eye in a commanding officer was a great asset. If somebody else's outfit was a few horses short it wasn't his doing, and when indignant officers came down to the lines saying that a grey horse No. 1,000 was missing, there was nothing that corresponded either in number or colour to the missing horse. Though the searching officer might look with suspicion at a bay or black horse, No. 1,990, he couldn't claim it, having previously stated that his missing animal was grey.

Having lived from 1898 till 1902 with this queer outfit from all nations it was hardly surprising that my prospective husband returned with some odd habits and a strong American accent—for there were many of that nationality among his men—and I remember the first day when we sat in the Crookham drawing-room he casually flung the dregs of his teacup into the fire—to my mother's speechless horror. She stared at him in a stricken silence of which he was blissfully unconscious, and later said to me in a scandalized voice, "My dear child, he's a perfect savage! Will you ever be able to break him of such habits, do you think?" He didn't need much breaking once he found himself back in his customary environments, though I did discover that his ideas of things needed in a house were a trifle sketchy—

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for instance, it was quite a matter for debate as to whether or not curtains were needed in the drawing-room. He said no—I said yes. As a matter of fact throughout his soldiering life he had lived so long in barracks or mean lodgings that he had forgotten comfort, but in the end he understood and became almost as particular about the equipment of his home as I was.

### CHAPTER III

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would  
triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.

*Epilogue to Asolando*  
R. BROWNING

**WE MARRIED** on April 30th, 1902, thus escaping the unlucky wedding month of May, and started for Paris, which my husband had selected as the first pause on our honeymoon. Not that Paris was at all up his alley, he didn't like the French even then; he hated shops, and he wasn't the type to sit patiently in fashionable dressmakers' establishments during his wife's prolonged fittings, as I have seen some docile husbands do, docility not being his middle name. He also detested sight-seeing, but appreciated the view I showed him over Paris, looking across from St. Cloud to where the Sacré Coeur, crowning Montmartre, put a punctuation mark to the prospect. His French, serviceable enough, couldn't keep pace with that spoken on the stage, and therefore theatres weren't much use to him. But to Paris we went because it led to the field of Waterloo, where his grandfather George Byng (Field-Marshal, the Earl of Strafford) had held the Farm of Hougoumont on the day of the great battle. In the family that old gentleman went by the name of "Toes," having lost those appendages from frost-bite in the ill-fated Walcheren expedition. He had been one of Wellington's most trusted generals and it was considered part of my education, in Byng lore, to visit the scene of his final fight, so in Paris we stopped for a few

days. When we wandered into the Madeleine, Julian, bored with even a modicum of sight-seeing, suddenly asked in an all too audible voice, "How do we get to the Morgue from here?"

It was a conundrum I couldn't solve, the Morgue not having been one of the places my parents visited when they brought me to Paris. So out we stepped, and having asked a policeman for the direction, made for the Morgue. On its steps my husband said hesitatingly, "Are you coming in?"

"Well, you don't think I'm going to wait outside, do you?" I retorted, rather ruffled at his suggestion.

He was silent for a moment, then mumbled something about, "It's not always a pretty sight." Evidently he had belated qualms about the place to which he had brought me. However, in we went, and saw the bodies of three unfortunates taken out of the river, and lying on marble slabs like fish in a fishmonger's window. It wasn't particularly horrible, yet hardly what one would choose for an afternoon's entertainment, added to which it was the first time I had seen a corpse, and frankly I didn't enjoy it, though I wasn't going to say so. I often wonder if any other man ever took his bride to the Morgue on their honeymoon! I doubt it. Anyhow, they can't do so now because it's closed to the general public and only those seeking missing friends or relatives are admitted.

By the time I found my way into the Byng family both Lord and Lady Strafford had been dead a long time—much to my regret, for they would have interested me enormously, she being sweet, gentle, but very humorous, though completely under his domination; he, also intensely humorous, with a will of iron and archaic ideas of life. He married twice—fruitful vines in both cases—first, Agnes Paget, daughter of Lord Anglesey—secondly, my husband's mother, Harriet Cavendish, daughter of Lord Chesham, and

her husband's junior by many years. When the would-be bridegroom told his friend Billy Chesham that he wanted to marry his daughter he was turned down flat, for Chesham knew him as a man approaching middle age, with a fierce temper, extravagant habits—racing both horses and yachts, and keeping open house in London and the country, while nothing but the best was good enough for him. He already had six children and there was no money with which to make any settlement on a second wife and her possible offspring. However, the refusal didn't stop the determined suitor and he startled his friends by cutting out at one fell swoop all his extravagances. Away went yachts and horses—away went the luxuries and hospitality, a rigid economy became the order of the day at Wrotham Park and St. James's Square, and a Spartan existence began. It was cheeseparing to the limit, and, though the food was good, because most of it came from the farms, it wasn't lavish, and the host prided himself on his economical carving of all game and meat. Creature comforts there were none; the children's clothes were of the fewest and plainest, so that number thirteen—young Julian—hardly ever had a new suit, but wore his brother's cast-offs, including their boots—which didn't begin to fit him, with the result that all his life he suffered from his feet. As a result of all this economy, "Lord S"—as his children called him—left the second family better provided for than the first, naturally to the indignation of the latter, and it certainly spoke volumes for his force of character.

Lord Strafford had seven sons, of whom five went into the Army, their father hoping, no doubt, some of them would follow in the glorious path marked by "Old Toes", their grandfather. Henry was put into the Grenadier Guards, Charles into the 1st Life Guards, Lionel into the Blues, Alfred—who died young—into the 7th Hussars, and Julian

eventually into the 10th Royal Hussars. Of the non-soldiers there were only Lord Enfield, a rather colourless M.P., and Francis—commonly called “Prayers”, who was in the Church, to which he was totally unsuited—who, having inherited his father’s love of racing, spent every penny on the turf regardless of the fact that he had a big family, a small income, was Chaplain to the House of Commons and rector of St. Peter’s, Cranleigh Gardens. Lord Strafford was already finding that his soldier sons kept running into debt and costing a good deal over and above their allowances, and when “Prayers” also dropped money on racing he flatly refused to pay up. The congregation, mainly composed of elderly ladies who doted on him, collected a big sum for the purpose of paying off the racing debts, thus saving “Prayers” from the scandal of bankruptcy and being deprived of his benefice. Unfortunately, that money, instead of paying the debts, went the same way as the rest, so “the man of God”, was retired from an active cure of souls, though he was still in great demand as a preacher, having a sonorous voice and much dramatic talent in reading the Bible; indeed, when he read the funeral service over his father, there wasn’t a dry eye in the family Mausoleum. Alas, when they emerged, red-nosed and red-eyed, a telegraph boy was waiting outside the Mausoleum and handed their reverend brother a wire giving the results of the 3.30 race at Alexandra Park. A sad anti-climax!

I was regaled at different times by stories of “Lord S”, both by Julian and his sisters, though I have forgotten many of them; but some remain in my mind. Here is one to give an idea of what an old Tartar he must have been. One Christmas Day, the private chaplain being ill, a shy, strange curate was sent to take the service, who knew nothing regarding the autocrat who reigned at Wrotham. He gave out: “The proper psalms appointed for this morn-



ing's service are the 19th, the 54th and the 85th." Whereupon a stentorian voice shouted "WRONG!", and the frightened curate catching himself up, hastily gave the correct numbers, "The 19th, the 45th and the 85th." All would have been well had he left it at that, but during luncheon he said nervously to his host, "I was much astonished at your lordship's being so familiar with the numbers of the psalms for this morning's service."

The master of the house glowered at him and burst out, "Good God, man, don't you know that the 19th, the 45th and the 85th were the regiments forming Pennyfather's Brigade in Maitland's Division at Waterloo?"

Later, Wrotham caught fire one summer afternoon, and though the old man knew all about it, he flatly refused to leave the library, though the upper floors were already crackling merrily and villagers streamed across the park to see if they could help. Looking out of his window he saw them, rang furiously for the butler and when that factotum appeared, flustered and scared, his master asked angrily, "What the——are those people doing in my park?" When the men answered that they had come to help extinguish the fire the irate old gentleman shouted, "Send them away at once. Go and trounce the rascals soundly!" as though they were the "villeins" of a feudal generation to which by rights he himself belonged. Having issued this order, he still refused to budge from his room, and it was only after endless coaxing that his youngest daughter got him to safety in the garden, just as the roof crashed in, so that he escaped death by a few minutes!

Lord Strafford was a first-class classical scholar and it was from him that Julian probably inherited his love of reading, though classics weren't in his line—they seldom go with soldiering, I think. He had, too, an admirable sense of humour—though from what I have gathered of a some-

what sardonic type; whilst his wife, with quite as keen a gift of humour, was of the more genial kind. I well remember Julian's telling me once when he had been infuriated by something "Lord S" had said or done, and having inveighed against him to his mother, he was met by the gentle reminder, "But, remember, dear boy, he IS your father." To which Julian, with, I fear, ribald impudence, retorted, "Well, I've only got your word for that." That mother and son must have been an amusing pair. I know how devoted they were—and I always regret not having met her. I believe Julian was the only one of the family who ever dared stand up to his father, and perhaps it was this fearlessness which led the stern old Tartar to like him more than the rest of his offspring and certainly he was the son who never caused him any trouble except by his distaste for learning when at Eton. But how proud the old man would have been had he lived to see what a career his Benjamin carved for himself and how closely he followed in the footsteps of "Toes".

It was no doubt in the natural order of things that "Lord S" should have inherited some of the stubborn characteristics of his famous ancestor, Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, beheaded by Charles I, whom he—like many others—served only too well. "Old Thorough" had just such a determined nature as most of the Byngs, though four centuries were to elapse before, both in physical resemblance, as well as in character, Thomas Wentworth was to reappear in a descendant. I have never seen such an astounding likeness as there was between my husband and this forebear of his, for in every portrait it was most striking; especially in the magnificent Vandyke belonging to the Duke of Portland; and when, as often happened while staying at Welbeck, Julian sat at dinner under the portrait, it gave one an almost uncanny feeling that Thomas

Wentworth was sitting there in person. No other member of the Byng family that I ever saw bore the least resemblance to the Jacobean, except my husband.

I think his sons were something of a disappointment to my father-in-law, because none of them showed any aptitude except Alfred, who was considered the brainy one of the family and—I imagine—rather like Julian but, unfortunately, he died in the early days of his soldiering. Meanwhile, the youngest of the family went to Eton like the others, and didn't distinguish himself there, being a late developer and quite content to remain in the lowest form. His only claim to fame was when he swapped his own Latin Grammar and Lionel's best trousers, to an itinerant hawker, for a pair of ferrets and a pineapple! But all the time the military spirit was simmering in the boy, though he knew that Lord Strafford was absolutely set against putting another son into the army to "run amok" financially. However, Fate took a hand in the matter and at a Jockey Club dinner the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) offered "Lord S" a commission in the 10th Royal Hussars for his youngest boy. Since such an offer couldn't very well be turned down, it was accepted, though I feel sure there was no end of a hullabaloo in the home circle over it, Julian having been intended, in a vague sort of way for "business", though in what form remained quite uncertain, Lord Strafford not considering in his proud old heart that business was a fit life for any gentleman. Anyhow, the decision was taken out of his hands, and in 1882 his youngest son became a subaltern in what was, in those days, the most expensive and smartest Cavalry regiment in the British Army, where six hundred pounds a year was considered the minimum allowance for any boy—though most of the young officers had at least double that from wealthy fathers, who had already served in the same regiment.



*Portrait by P. de Lazlo.*

**FIELD-MARSHAL VISCOUNT BYNG OF VIMY**

Who commanded the Canadian Corps in France at the  
taking of Vimy Ridge, April 9th, 1917.

Governor-General of Canada 1921-26.

So in went poor young "Bungo", as he was nicknamed, on a pittance of two hundred a year, and to his credit be it said he never exceeded it or ran into debt. Being a keen soldier, he devoted himself entirely to his profession, avoiding the social side of life, which bored him; he had never attended a London ball till after we married (except State balls, which only interested him because of the foreign uniforms to be seen there). His life was spent with books or on the barrack square and the polo ground—though had it not been for the generosity of his brother officers he couldn't have hunted or played polo. Fortunately, he was a fine horseman and horsemaster, with light hands and a nice seat and infinite patience, so he made Tournament ponies out of the rough "Tats" he bought cheaply in India and sold eventually at four or five times their original cost. He joined his regiment at Lucknow in days when living in India was cheap, and got plenty of enjoyment out of his life on two hundred a year and a subaltern's pay, and on the way home the regiment was taken ashore to join in the Egyptian campaign of 1884, so that he had the good fortune to see active service early, at El-Teb, his first battle. The officers on each side of him in the cavalry charge were killed, though he escaped all injury, just as in the Boer War, seventeen years later, when he led his South African Light Horse into their first battle at Colenso, where a bullet took the heel off his boot and another passed through his Stetson hat. He certainly bore a charmed life on both occasions.

Not only was the ordinary way of life in the 10th expensive, but their Colonel-in-Chief, the Prince of Wales, liked to pay them periodical visits in barracks, partly to amuse himself, partly to see his son, the Duke of Clarence, a subaltern in the regiment. The Prince liked to play at being a soldier. He would sit in the orderly room, signing

papers, issuing orders and following all the usual routine of a commanding officer. However, such visits entailed considerable trouble and expense, because the regiment had to hire Maple's best bedroom and sitting-room suites for their guest, besides all the other upheavals that a royal visit of that kind entailed, while the guest, quite unconscious of all that was done in this direction, would say to Julian, "You know, Bungo, I love coming here and roughing it with all you fellows." At which Julian would grin as he thought of the expensively hired Maple suites and best bedding that softened the rigours of a barrack-room.

Another, but by no means as welcome a royal guest, was Prince William of Prussia—later William II. Periodically this insufferable young man inflicted himself on his English relations, and when they could bear it no longer, he was shunted off to the 10th Hussars by his uncle, the Prince of Wales; and well can I hear that fat chuckling laugh of his when he did this, knowing full well that Julian—at that time adjutant—would put up with no nonsense from the uninvited guest. Nor did he. Prince William met with neither Maple suites nor beds, but was treated like any ordinary junior officer visiting a regiment, and Julian seized the opportunity of putting him through riding school. In later years he used to say laughingly that he was the only officer in the British Army who had "put the Kaiser through the hoops". About this time the Prince of Wales offered Julian the post of equerry to the Duke of Clarence, an offer which he turned down politely but firmly, saying that, though he appreciated the compliment, he hadn't the primary instincts of the courtier, which, thank goodness, was perfectly true; also, he wanted to take his profession seriously. To his credit be it said the Prince never held that refusal against Julian.

Needless to say, with such a big gap in the ages between

the elder and younger members of the Strafford children, people were frequently at sea as to who was who among the crowd, which led at times to comic misunderstandings. For instance, once when Julian found himself in the train going to London from Wrotham, a fellow-traveller said: "I travelled up with your father the other morning. The old gentleman seemed very well, but complained bitterly of the cold here."

Julian knew his half-brother Henry had been mistaken for "Lord S", said with his most innocent smile: "Really, that's most interesting, for my father's been dead over twenty years, and if he was complaining so much about the cold here I'm afraid it leaves no doubt as to where the poor old man must be now."

Once, when the late Lord Londonderry sat next to me at dinner, he said, "Now, will you please straighten out, for my benefit, that puzzling family you've married into?"

I did so, and when I had enumerated them all he looked at me with a grin and said, "Good God! what a foal-getter the old man was!" A summary which would have appealed to Lord Strafford had he heard it!

No matter how well two people who marry may think they know one another at the start, only the daily contact of married life can reveal all the unsuspected depths and shallows below the surface, and, though I knew my husband had an excellent brain, I found he had an amazingly versatile one, having read widely and thought deeply, so that his mind was like a highly polished surface reflecting a thousand unsuspected lights and colours. Up to the very last years of our life together I discovered some fresh aspect, some quaint angle or unexpected knowledge regarding subjects on which, so far as I knew, he had never touched, and it was all handled so lightly, humorously and simply, that there wasn't the least shadow of priggishness

in it. For his reading he chose history, science, philosophy, and the Bible, which he knew extremely well and practically all good material was grist that came to his mill in the way of reading, except poetry and fiction. Of the latter I don't think he had read anything except Surtees, whom he delighted to quote, and *Pickwick Papers*. But he tackled my two novels, out of a sense of politeness, as I said to him, though he told me he had read one of them far into the night, his curiosity having been roused concerning the denouement. So I wagged my tail in pride!

Realizing, as I did, the catholicity of my husband's interests, I had no fear, should he leave the Army, that he would ever join that pathetic host of lost souls—ex-soldiers with no interest outside their profession. He would never be at a loose end for a job, for there would be plenty open to a man of his ability. I remember after the tumultuous reception afforded the victorious Etonian Generals, following the first Great War, when Julian had addressed the boys, a group of senior scholars wanted to approach the Governing Body with the request that he should be the next "Head", a post at that time about to become vacant. How we laughed at the thought of him in such a position, when he had been the worst "Skug" of his time there! But had the seemingly preposterous idea ever materialized he would have had a great following, because he could sweep people into his orbit. Not that he was a conscious spell-binder, being far too modest to make such an attempt, or even think of so doing. His magnetism sprang, I imagine, from that singleness of purpose which affected all who were brought in contact with him, and who realized that his pursuit of any object was activated by the highest motives, that he would pursue it through thick and thin, as a good hound follows a scent. His unfaltering determination inspired confidence, but, since every quality bears within



itself the germ of its corresponding defect, that determination developed at times into obstinacy—the middle name of all the Byngs—as I had cause to realize, though as a rule if one managed him carefully he could be brought to listen.

When we first married, most of his friends, of course, were soldiers, but he was ready to adopt any of mine, provided they weren't fools, and he formed abiding friendships with such people as Owen Seaman, Charles Graves, and the then members of Punch's "Round Table". He delighted in Kipling and Barrie and fell into step with such painters as Sergeant and de Laszlo, who was commissioned at the time of our marriage to paint his portrait to replace the one of Kitchener which in old days had flanked the Belgrave Square fireplace opposite mine. Certainly the most outstanding of de Laszlo's pictures was the second one he painted of my husband in his Field-Marshal's uniform, which hung at Thorpe, and I pray may still be there when I return.

Perhaps one of the greatest compliments ever paid Julian after the last war was his nomination to membership of the Athenaeum Club under the "honoris causa" rule admitting men who had excelled in some walk of life. He was chosen from the Army, though most of those selected, as a rule, and also the majority of its members—belonged to the world of science, letters, philosophy or medicine, while the hierarchy of the Church figured so largely among the members, that Julian declared when Convocation assembled in London the nail-scissors at the Athenaeum had to be chained to the lavatory wall to prevent their being slipped into the Bishops' aprons! He pulled the professorial and ecclesiastical legs of his fellow-members, and I often questioned what they must have thought of this ribald member dropped into their rather pompous society, who made up utter-

ly absurd—but never unkind—tales about them and their foibles, and who was never pompous, as so many of them were inclined to be. As a matter of fact, they rather reminded one of the nice type of friendly dog which would rather be teased than ignored, as they gathered round him to be mercilessly chaffed. Despite his statement concerning bishops, one of his chief cronies was Archbishop Davidson, that great statesman and prelate who had married us in St. Paul's, Knightsbridge. Dick Sheppard, the famous vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, was another ecclesiastic whom he loved, both in and out of the pulpit, till he went off the rails with his unbalanced peace ideas. There were countless others at the Athenaeum, and in all walks of life too numerous to mention, who hold happy memories of that great talent for friendship which belonged to my husband, and the keen gift of humour inherited from his parents.

Quite early in our life I discovered—what I hadn't suspected before—his guileless belief in the integrity of his fellow-men, springing, as it did, from the uprightness of his nature, so that to suspect others never crossed his mind, because he was incapable of meanness himself. Having once given his trust to anybody, it was an unretractable gift, so far as he was concerned and I swiftly realized that my role in life would be to act as the secret Cerberus to his trustfulness, if he was to be saved from the danger of unscrupulous people. Such simplicity was startling in a man of forty; but he had lived so much amongst men of his own moral calibre and had been so absorbed in his profession and in books that there was much of the innocence of the child in him. He was widely tolerant and almost foolishly blind, till I began to convince him that women's intuitions were sometimes safer than his own pronounced over-confidence in his fellows. It was a bit of a problem, for he started with a scornful mistrust of the dragonfly

feminine mentality, by which they reach their objective in a single dart, whilst men plod thither through a morass of logical conclusions and laborious deductions, often reaching the selfsame spot too late to avert some disaster. He used to wrinkle his forehead like a puzzled puppy, as I always thought, and would look pained if my reactions to some individual under discussion were unfavourable; his blue eyes would take on quite a hurt expression at any disillusionment, whose existence he put down, at first, to feminine prejudice. After I had proved more than once the truth of such intuitions he began to say, "Well, perhaps there's something in that queer trick of yours," as though I was a conjuror pulling a rabbit out of a hat, and from that time he discussed everything and everybody with me, so that I was in on the ground floor of all that happened to him. We often wrangled quite hotly over things in that respect and I was always on the watch, though that didn't mean I was always able to counter his ideas, alas! I knew he had on various occasions been deceived by men less scrupulously honest than himself, as for instance in the South African Light Horse when a brother officer, jealous of his popularity tried to undermine him. Fortunately, a less idealistic member of that amazing outfit put him wise to matters, and saved what might otherwise have been a disaster to himself and to the regiment he commanded.

There were various instances of which I had heard in his past life or which came under my own notice after our marriage, and before he acquired the habit of talking things over with me. But I have never forgotten or forgiven an episode nine years before his death, when a man he trusted played him a most sorry trick. Julian had for some time been worried about a question affecting others beside himself and we had discussed it from every angle, though by no means seeing eye to eye about the matter. In the end he

came to me, saying jubilantly that his worries were at an end, owing to a solemn promise given him. He was quite ruffled when I refused to share his confidence and asked if he had secured this precious promise in writing to which he replied indignantly that he wouldn't dream of asking such a thing, since it would be tantamount to mistrusting his friend's word, and he called me a "suspicious old Greek", which he did when I was mistrustful. However, it was too late to alter matters and I waited uneasily till the time was ripe for implementing this promise. When not only was it broken but denied, as I had foreseen it would be, I was sorely tempted to say "I told you so", but the wound dealt him had gone too deep for such recriminations, and I held my peace, though thinking how wise Madame Roland was when she wrote "Plus je vois les hommes j'admire les chiens." She realized, as many of us come to do through bitter experiences in life that whatever the faults of the canine race it lacks the Judas-complex that betrays with a smile and which is the meanest of human sins. Though at the time Julian—with what to me was far too Christian a spirit—sunk personal enmity, he was deeply wounded at finding how he had misplaced his trust. And his disgust was roused—as I never saw it before or since—when, some years later, the same individual approached him in a friend's house with the tearful plea that it had "all been a misunderstanding!" This attempt in exculpation revolted Julian's honesty and he said to me bitterly, "Your judgment was right—mine was quite wrong that time."

It would have been hard to find a less wordly-minded, less ambitious man, or one more utterly lacking in every form of snobbishness, for that failing found no foothold in him, and the great of the earth were no more to him than the humblest. He was as much at ease with a king as a dust-man, and I think equally appreciated by both. His sense

of humour was too keen to like pomposity, and we had many a laugh together over official occasions, though quite appreciating the fact that, as Governor-General, it was part of the job, especially in the big Eastern cities.

There always remained in Julian—as I think in all really great men—something of the mischievousness of a boy. He delighted in escaping from the tutelage and supervision of his staff, and I remember an occasion when he managed to sneak off the train while we were in the West, parked in a remote siding and ready to pull on next morning for a “show” in some neighbouring town. As he strode over the prairie, there wasn’t another soul in sight except an elderly farmer in an equally elderly buggy, who stopped, and they began to talk. Gathering that the man on foot was a stranger the farmer said, “Guess you’ve come in for the Governor-General’s visit in town to-morrow?”

My husband said he had and the farmer asked whether he knew “Old Byng”, to which Julian answered, “Yes.”

“Umph,” grunted the farmer “What’s the —— like?”

“Oh, not so bad on the whole.”

“High hat?”

“I don’t think so. But why not come and see for yourself at the reception?”

A grunt from the old man. Then grudgingly, as he moved on “Well, I guess I may as well go and see the old son of a ——. My lad served under him and said he was a damned good fighter.”

Next day at the reception he duly appeared, and when he came up, rather taken aback, to shake hands with us, Julian said, “Well, is the old —— so bad after all?” They had a good laugh over it and the farmer slapped him hard on the shoulder, for Julian had made a firm friend.

You could scarcely have found a more dissimilar pair than ourselves, yet I doubt if you would have found a

happier; and the thirty-three years of our married life hold no regrets for me, except that I wish I could have lived nearer to his fine way of life and his great qualities. Temperamentally, and in our tastes, we were totally unlike. In temper he was sulky, when roused to anger; I was like a hot flame, flaring up savagely, but not lasting long as a rule, though I used to tell him when we quarrelled, that I should have to practise sulking in order to compete with him; but I never succeeded. Scenery appealed immensely to me, but not to him, except for the grandeur of the Rockies or the wide sweep of the prairies, and on the "Bald Headed" he would draw in a lungful of air and say, "Ah—here one can breathe." Eventually I found why scenery left him cold, for though I knew he was colour blind, I hadn't realized to what extent till one day as we were travelling he asked me what "the masses of blue flowers" were which we had been passing? I was puzzled, because blue is not abundant in the North American flora, so I told him to point them out next time he saw them, and he did. They were the Fireweed! There is a lot of blue pigment in their rosy-purple, and that was what he saw! I then put him through a variety of tests with different bits of colour, until I found that all greens and reds were to him different tones of what we know as brown. No wonder, therefore, that scenery lost its charm and the flaming glory of the Canadian fall had no magic for him.

Another difference between us lay in the fact that he was by nature a hermit, preferring what he called his "sticky old rut", and I was gregarious, especially in my youth, though with advancing years I am more content to keep to myself—and anyhow I never liked to have my company dished up to me on a platter as my mother used to try and do. Pageantry bored him to tears, and I loved a "Show". He was an excellent games player—I played no

games and had no game sense, the result, I suppose, of a solitary childhood. He was a keen sportsman, while to me a gun was fraught with hideous possibilities, and if he came near me with one in his hand I always asked anxiously whether it was loaded, to which he would say maliciously, "Up to the muzzle and will go off at any moment!"

He had unending patience. I was impatient, irritable, and often in a hurry, so that he would wave an admonitory finger up and down at me, saying, "No panic—above all—no panic," which was excellent for me, no doubt, but exasperating when it came to a question of catching trains, for he had a trick of running them fine, whereas I went to the other extreme, generally catching the previous one, and after the five years of Canada, where he had his own train and everything waited on his good pleasure, it took quite a bit of training to make him remember that trains, like time and tide, wait for no man in England.

However, we had many mutual links, and one of them was a love of animals, especially horses and dogs. I remember when his spaniel bitch produced a litter and the poor pups got distemper in its worst form within a week of their birth, he was so upset that he packed three of them into the breast of his pyjama jacket and took them to bed with him, hoping that human warmth would save their lives. Alas, they all died during the night. That was an instance of that tender kindness, which as a rule one associates with a woman rather than a man, which made him so lovable.

Another bond of union was shyness, for we were both cursed with it. I from the inferiority complex caused by my upbringing; he, I imagine, had inherited it from his mother, who must have been a most self-effacing, gentle woman. Anyhow, it existed in both of us and if one thing more than another devastated us it was making speeches, which in

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Canada it is the fate of the Governor-General and his wife to make—and preferably long ones! But that we barred from the start, for as Julian used to declare, if you can't say what you want to in ten minutes it's not worth saying; and so far as possible he stuck to that, realizing how infinitely better it is to stop while your audience is wanting more, than to maunder on when they are sated with the sound of your voice. But short or long, speech-making was a torment to us both. In him the fear attacked his hands, which he always clasped tightly behind his back so that nobody could see how they shook. With me the fear went to my knees, and, had they been visible, they would have looked as unsteady as those of the poor old cab horses of my childhood who staggered wearily along the London streets. To this day I have never conquered my dread of speech-making, though I am less unhappy if there are footlights between myself and my audience; and the "Mike" doesn't frighten me. Once at Ottawa when I got detained in reaching the Chateau Laurier for a broadcast and only hurled myself into the room with two minutes to spare before going on the air, I was quite unconcerned! I think it's the rows of faces which give me the jitters and makes speaking, even to a handful of listeners, such a hideous ordeal.

Another link between us lay in the fact that we were both deeply emotional, though only those who knew him as well as I did would have guessed how often, under an outward calm, a storm of emotion was seething within him that nothing save his iron self-control kept hidden. There were occasions when even that broke, as it did when several thousand ex-Servicemen, assembled in the Toronto Exhibition grounds a few weeks after our arrival, gave him such a delirious welcome that tears sprang to his eyes and dripped on his cheeks before he could stop them.

No biography of my husband has been written, and I



fear now, alas, none will be. In the past it had been arranged between myself and John Buchan that we should write it together more or less; but Julian died just before the latter left for Canada, and though he thought of writing the book whilst out there, he realized that for obvious reasons it wouldn't be possible. Then he tried every art of persuasion, by word of mouth and by letter, to induce me to do so, but I didn't feel like tackling it. John would have done it admirably, as I had all the data ready for him, from—and including—the South African War, kept in five big volumes of press-cuttings, letters, et cetera. Besides, John knew and loved him; indeed, my husband's photograph stood on his desk throughout his term at Government House—perhaps he felt it was an inspiration, or that it might help him should he need it. For myself, the writing of such a book seemed impossible, because I feel that a wife's biography of her husband doesn't carry the weight it should, readers having a preconceived notion that she is biased and will tell only the rosy side of things. There may be some truth in that, but so far as I am concerned I believe that the more you love a person the more clearly you see their faults as well as their virtues, perhaps because the former hurt you infinitely more, striking as they do at the very core of your being. Anyhow, this book is neither a biography of my husband nor my own autobiography, but a random collection of thumbnail sketches concerning things, people and places, from angles which may throw a glimmer of light on a man who led a cleaner life than anybody I ever knew. For that very reason I chose the 15th Psalm for his funeral service, since he was essentially the man who led an uncorrupt life, doing the thing which was right and speaking the truth from his heart; using no deceit in his tongue nor doing evil to a fellow-man no matter under what provocation; not slandering others; above all never setting himself up but being lowly in his own eyes,

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and when swearing to his neighbour never disappointing him even though it were to his own hindrance.

To the many who knew him, in various parts of the world and in many walks of life, especially in the Canada he loved, his going was a real sorrow; but they, like myself, can but feel thankful he was spared the present war, from which the toll of the years would have debarred his active participation, and that inactivity would have been intolerable to him, knowing as he would have done that it is the greatest and holiest Crusade Britain has ever been called upon to fight.

## CHAPTER IV

The martial airs of England,  
Encircle still the earth.

*The Martial Airs of England*  
AMELIA B. EDWARDS.

WHEN our short honeymoon ended, we sailed for South Africa because, though peace was so obviously hanging in the balance that Julian nearly applied for an extension of leave, a letter to me from Kitchener, received in Paris, and wishing us luck, said I must look on the short leave as a compliment because he couldn't spare "Bungo" any longer. So away we went, and two days before reaching Capetown a homeward-bound ship signalled that peace had been signed at Vereenigen. It seems strange now to realize that at that time there was no radio and war news dribbled in slowly instead of, as in the present time with hour-by-hour reports from the battlefields. (I am never sure if these are an advantage, or a dislocation of one's life!)

For three weeks we stayed at the Lord Nelson Hotel, having found a telegram saying we were to remain in Capetown till "K" came down country. Those three weeks showed me for how much my husband stood in the eyes of his Light Horse, many of whom had drifted to Capetown, where I saw the most amazing amalgamation of nations, classes and ages. There was a tiny sprinkling of Englishmen one knew at home, but the rest were composed of Americans, Irishmen, Scotsmen, South African millionaires, diamond miners, farmers and men with no occupations, just out for the chance of a fight and, also, a few jailbirds among them. One of the latter was charming and a great friend of Julian's, but had the unfortunate habit of putting other people's names

on cheques. Bar that slight mental aberration he was an excellent companion, though alas! when finally demobilized he resumed his old vocation, because years afterwards we heard from him in jail once again.

The Light Horse were what could be called "rough diamonds" but a magnificent fighting outfit—though I remember my husband telling me that the first time he took them into action, at Colenso, he didn't dare look back to see if they were behind him as he crawled on his stomach up Spion Cop. Then the sound of little stones clattering downhill told him they were following him, as they followed him faithfully through the war. Colenso was a tough proposition for men who had, in many cases, never been in action before, but they faced it grandly.

The majority of the demobilized Light Horse came in droves to see their commander in Capetown, lining up along the corridors to catch him as he emerged from his bath when, draped in a bath-towel and a dressing-gown, he held a leveé in the passage. And on Adderly Street we were always being invited to go into "pubs" for a drink! I saw then that he stood for something infinitely more than the ordinary commanding officer to the men, for he had created out of an untrained mob of totally unrelated types the most efficient fighting unit. It was this knowledge that told me when, many years later, he was offered the command of the Canadian Corps, he would be the right man for the job. It often makes me smile when I think that I have had to run the gauntlet of the men of the Light Horse and later of the "Byng Boys"; but, fortunately, I was accepted in both cases and so far as Canadians are concerned you are never left in much doubt as to your status, being either a "Good Guy" or a "Stuffed Shirt". They are absolutely frank, and if they like you they are your firm and loyal friends for life. If they don't—well, you had better "scram", because life won't be

easy for you. It's a form of frankness that if refreshing is a trifle startling to strangers.

Of all the odd people who passed through the Light Horse during the earlier part of its existence the oddest was my husband's galloper—a young carrotty-headed ex-Hussar subaltern, snub-nosed, impish, brave to the point of foolhardiness, but certain of delivering the goods—a youth named Winston Churchill, whose fate was to be, twenty-two years later (as secretary of State for the Colonies), to offer Julian the Governor-Generalship of Canada! He gave us a dinner before we sailed for the Dominion and said to me with a chuckle, "Well, I don't think anybody ever cursed me as heartily as 'Bungo' did in the Light Horse days!" No doubt he deserved the cursing, for discipline never appealed to him; but I remember during his political eclipse, when he was a voice crying in the wilderness, Julian said, "We haven't seen the last of Winston. Wait till this country is in a jam and wants a strong man to lead—then watch out." I wish he could have lived long enough to see his former galloper fighting side by side with the men against whom they both fought together years ago—that most gallant of our Empire statesmen, Jan Smuts.

When Kitchener arrived at Capetown we got our marching orders, to go home by the earliest possible boat and thence to India, where Julian was to take over command of the 10th Hussars, who were at that time on the sea bound for the East. The *City of Vienna*, a transport, happened to be the first available ship and in her we sailed, to find she was one of Ralli Brothers' cargo ships; but, being minus cargo, she proved herself the world's worst roller, and we wallowed and lurched home like a drunken sailor into Southampton Water. A horrible trip!

A few weeks in England—just long enough to collect tropical kit—and off to Mhow, a station in the Central Prov-

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inces, an uninviting spot, with a distant hint of blue hills on the horizon, and for neighbour the native state of Indore—ruled at that time by an unpleasant Rajah with sadistic tendencies who had a playful knack of incarcerating people he disliked in cells beside hungry tigers only divided from them by a gimcrack partition which sometimes collapsed under the tiger's onslaught. It wasn't a pretty state of affairs and his subjects had appealed for his removal, so the Mhow garrison was ordered to do the job. I watched them start, guns, cavalry and infantry—an imposing company—down the dusty road, and my heart sank, because it wasn't certain what might happen. Fortunately, Holkar decided that discretion was the better part of valour; and a few days later they all returned, and I took up my rôle as the Colonel's wife, in looking after the women and children in barracks.

I wouldn't have believed it possible that grown women could have been so foolish as many of them were about their own and their children's health; but I suppose since the majority had probably never been anywhere beyond small country towns or the London shops where they had served behind the counter, it was understandable. Anyhow, there was any amount of illness in married quarters and my hands were full especially as among the brides, babies arrived by the dozen, and I, not to be outdone, tried to follow suit. Unfortunately, thanks to miscarriages and the incompetence of local doctors, in those days, our hopes were permanently frustrated.

We had both wanted children—though as I told Julian—in strictly rationed numbers, not in the hordes his father had begotten. I would have loved children of my own, though I have never known the urge to sweep down on every child I see, as some women do, to the consternation of their victims, who have my deepest sympathy, for I can imagine how alarming it is to a small child when some

totally strange female overwhelms it with kisses. Why shouldn't a child's dignity be respected as much as a grown-up's? You don't dash at a strange woman in the street and kiss her. Why do it to some unfortunate child pinned down in a perambulator and unable to escape? Children in the bulk scare me, because I never know the right approach, having had nothing to do with them, and also if I ventured any advance it was frequently met by howls. I never understood why I had such a shattering effect on the young of the human race because animals gravitate to me of their own free will. However, while staying with the mother of a large family accustomed as they were to red-headed Percys or fair-haired Lennoxes, one little girl confided to her mother that, "I began by being afraid of Lady Byng—but it's all right now because I've realized it's not her fault, it's her eyebrows." So out of the mouths of babes and sucklings did revelation come to me that my thick black eyebrows were the cause of alarm in the young. Nowadays that same small girl is a young married woman and I don't suppose she ever knew how grateful I was for that solving of a problem which had puzzled and vexed me.

India was a disappointment—certainly in Mhow, where there was no trace of "The Gorgeous East". Everything was sand-coloured and drab except the blinding sunshine and the shimmering heat haze, which appealed to me. I wanted to garden but, unlike children, snakes always seemed to dog my footsteps! If I moved a flower-pot, out wriggled one of these brutes; and they are a source of terror which sends me leaping into the air, or running for my life, no matter how harmless they may be, for I hate things with too many, or too few legs, and their wriggling progress sends cold water down my spine as mice send it down many other peoples' spines. I used to ask the gardener, "Saamp hi?" before venturing out, and he would shake his head, "Saamp ne

hi." But the moment I shifted a pot there the brute was lying in wait for me! Months later when I went camping with the Barnes' and was going to sleep in a tent for the first time, I said nervously as we drove out in the tonga, "Do you see many snakes in camp?" and my host laughed, "Oh, never—or hardly ever." But the moment we arrived up came his wife holding a dead snake by the tail, saying, "Oh, look what we found in Mrs. Byng's tent! A Russell's viper!" My feelings were better imagined than described, and more than ever I felt I was a magnet for the accursed reptiles. Major Barnes laughed and said, "What a liar you must think me—but this is the first time I have ever seen one of those brutes in any camp." I was heartily scared and took every possible precaution during the rest of my time, both in camp and everywhere in India; but fortunately, we had no more snake scares during the three camping weeks.

I thought cantonment life was pretty dreary, for none of the other married officers in the regiment had brought their wives out at that time, because they wanted to sample it all first, so I had no congenial companions as there wasn't a soul in Mhow with whom I had any links. They didn't know my friends and way of life—I didn't know theirs—so we merely wasted time exchanging cards.

And there I made my first mistake, for I thought if a servant held out a tray to me when I called at a house, it meant a card was to be deposited there. So I did this, murmuring, "Thank the Lord!" to myself, and passed on gaily, till one day as I was going to do the same thing a surprised voice said from behind a curtained window, "But aren't you coming in?" Which I did, and found that the tray meant the memsahib was at home and the box on the gate, which I hadn't noticed, meant she was out. Fortunately, I told this lady what had happened and word flew round the place



that I hadn't intended any rudeness to the touchy ladies; so all was well.

However, we accidentally committed another *faux pas* that winter, when we felt it incumbent on us to give a small dinner of eight. The cook did well, the people talked a great deal, and we were quite pleased with our first attempt to entertain our neighbours. The next morning, however, I received a note from a major's wife who, with her husband, had been among the guests, saying she wanted to see me at once. Round I went, thinking perhaps she was ill. Not a bit of it. Her health was excellent, but not her temper, for she took me sternly to task about the previous night, saying her husband was three months' senior to Major Blank, therefore it was she who should have been taken in by my husband. She added stiffly, "Of course, I saw you didn't understand about precedence, but I may tell you that many another lady would have walked out of the house." In our innocence we had sent Mrs. Blank in with my husband because she was the older of the two ladies. Though I apologized with due humility to the outraged female, when I got home and told my husband we laughed till we cried.

Though in the early mornings my husband and I went for a ride if possible, he was always busy, leaving me to my own devices till lunch-time. He was soldiering in the mornings and in the afternoons he played polo or cricket—there was no golf available so far as I remember. I am a bad hand at watching games, so I stayed at home if it was polo because I hated seeing the ponies get knocked about. Cricket I used to go and see, chiefly because I got real amusement out of the regimental pet, a lovely little Blackbuck, inherited from the preceding cavalry regiment. He was a lively creature with, I am sure, a keen sense of humour, for he would attach himself to some player and stay close to his side all day. My husband was often

## UP THE STREAM OF TIME

treated to this honour because he always had a friendly pat and word for the little beast and then the fun began, for if he was out in the deep field and started to run at top speed after the ball, beside him went the Blackbuck, loping gracefully along, careful not to out-distance him, and the contrast between the easy canter of the graceful animal and my husband—not a good runner at any time, straining every nerve to get up speed, made the latter look like a furniture removal van beside his companion. But far worse were the occasions when some special friend of the Blackbuck was bowling, because it would stand well behind him till, as with some tremendous contortion he prepared to deliver a tremendous overhand ball, the buck would leap forward and administer a friendly prod in the hindside with his horns. This wrecked the bowling so that at last the Blackbuck was confined to barracks when a cricket match was the order of the day.

I had my own pet in "Monny", the mongoose, who was much less aggressive, though horribly inquisitive. He would open the inkpot, poke his sharp nose in, then sneeze ink everywhere; and once when a rather peppery general came to stay and made his bearers deposit a huge box of papers beside his chair at the writing-table he was scared out of his life when the whole of the contents began to heave wildly. I suppose he thought he was "seeing things" till "Monny's" ferrety face emerged. There wasn't an ounce of vice in the little creature, but he did delight in scaring the servants if he could get into the compound, where he would tear through their houses and leave the dwellers all squealing and scared like a lot of children. He would pounce on my ayah's bare feet—not that he bit, but he knew it frightened her—and having scrambled over them would rush up my dress on to my shoulder and look down derisively at her. He slept in a basket next to my bed, unless he snug-

gled up with me; and if I went and sat on Julian's bed while he drank his early morning tea "Monny" would stage a fit of sham jealousy, darting under the bed-clothes, clutching Julian's feet in his paws as though he knew that was a thing Julian couldn't bear. It certainly sent him leaping out of the bed, after which "Monny's" wicked face would appear from under the sheet saying as plainly as if he could speak, "That's what you get for playing about with my own Memsahib." Of course I wasted endless time playing with the creature, "Snakes" being the favourite game. This consisted of my pattering my fingers on the floor, whereupon "Monny" would fling himself on top of my hand, growling and squeaking as if engaged in a furious battle. Though holding tightly with claws and teeth he was never rough, never bit or scratched, because he knew if he did so the game would end with a smacking. I don't think I ever had such an enchanting pet as "Monny"; but, alas, he was killed, during my absence at Simla, by some wretched dogs who got into the compound. I cried my heart out when the news came, while Julian was inconsolable, and though we had a second "Monny" he wasn't a patch on the original one.

During our first winter Lord Curzon held his great Delhi Durbar, for which half London society came out, and "K" invited us to go to his camp. I was enchanted, but Julian flatly refused to go. He hated shows of any kind, was content with his work, and didn't see why I should go. Indeed, he was quite grumpy when I said I would like to do so. Wasn't I happy? Wasn't I busy? Wasn't I content with his company? And so forth, and so on, in a cross and aggrieved voice. So, being very much in love and very much under his thumb in those days, I foolishly gave in—and never ceased regretting my imbecility, for I should have done everything in the utmost comfort and seen a pageant con-

sidered even in India, that land of pageants, a superlative one, because it was run by Curzon—a born stage-manager—to whose pompous soul such things were the breath of life. However, when one is young and in love one does silly things.

Our time in India was curtailed owing to a smash at polo in which Julian broke and dislocated his right elbow. Once again the inefficiency of the doctors came to light, for although one of them had him under chloroform immediately in the hospital, he never discovered the break but hauled at the dislocation, making such an unholy mess of things that we had to go home, where a competent surgeon excised the joint and lectured on it at the College of Surgeons as, "The olecrenon of a male adult of forty", instead of "Byng's Bottled Bones" which, according to Julian was its correct designation. He kept the bottle and its contents in his cupboard the rest of his life, and proudly displayed it to any surgeon who came to see him. But nobody will ever know the torments he endured till he had, by sheer force of will and determination, made a useful arm out of it, shortened though it was by four inches, and what he could do with it was always an amazement to doctors who had never seen such a result before. But it was a case of "Blood, sweat and tears" for him, poor dear.

Though India didn't appeal to me as seen from cantonments, in Mhow I had a wonderful time when the Barnes' took me camping, and I would like to repeat that experience, just as I would like to see again the beauty of the Taj Mahal, gleaming like a great pearl at the far end of the canal-like sheet of water leading to it from the red sandstone arch of the Agra fort. There was Lucknow, too, its ruins wreathed in flowering creepers—concerning which I remember the famous Anglo-Indian, Sir Alfred Lyall, saying to me, "Yes, my dear—very lovely to you, but to me

there are too many wreaths on that coffin. I knew it in its stark days." On the trip with Major Barnes the Resident at the native state of Dhar and his French wife, we rode for three weeks through jungle country, all quite new and enchanting so far as I was concerned. We changed camp every day, and to me there was always an odd thrill to see the Union Jack run up as we arrived, no matter in what remote piece of jungle.

I was taken on a tiger hunt, clambering up into what seemed a most rickety "Machan" placed in the fork of a tree, while the beaters drove the tiger towards us. I never knew such a deathly stillness as there was over the jungle when the tiger came stealing through; not an animal stirred, not a bird chirped; it was a silence that seemed to beat about your ears, till the square-shaped evil head with its amber eyes and the long striped body glided into range. I hated the moment when it lay dead below me, even though it had been marked down as a "man-eater", for which reason the natives had begged for its destruction. But it was so beautiful, such a work of art in camouflage that one regretted its end, as millions of flies buzzed round it, while high in the sky the kites shrilled and circled till they could swoop down to feast on the flesh once the skin was removed.

We visited forts and palaces belonging to small Rajahs, seeing their performing elephants and horses, eating—or pretending to eat—the most revolting food seasoned with assafoetida that nearly made one sick on the spot. We were treated to nautches, which we watched as we sat garlanded with great wreaths of fragrant frangipani and jessamine, a welcome antidote to the reek of heated humanity from the dancers. It was a grand trip and off the beaten path, so that I was refreshed in mind and body when I returned

to take up again the daily round of cantonment life in Mhow.

Then I was packed off to Simla for the summer. What a beautiful spot it was. Walking round Summerhill to gaze at the vast jagged line of the distant, snow-crowned Himalayas, or to look away on the other side at the Plains far below, where light clouds seemed to float like argosies of fairy ships on the blue of the distant atmosphere (an illusion all right, because really what lay below were the scorched and torrid plains on which men wilted under the blinding heat).

We had a temporary excitement on the return journey in the *Persia*, for she ran aground in the Canal and put herself across the whole waterway so that all other traffic within range was immobilized. The air must have been blue with curses during the six or seven hours we blocked things, for her bows were fixed in the sandy bank. I had a small green parrot in its cage in my cabin and when we ran aground with a bump that nearly knocked him off his perch, he cocked his head and said squeakily, "What the hell's that?" I'm sure parrots know what they say, and he just expressed his feelings.

Another event—important to ourselves—was the friendship that sprang up between my husband and Edgar Horne, at that time President of the Prudential Assurance Company, inaugurated by his father long ago, and that friendship led to our going every autumn to his place at Stiffkey on the Norfolk coast for partridge shooting from 1904 till 1913.

Back home again we followed the drum in endless moves from place to place, because my husband was much too promising a young soldier to be left anywhere for long. He had a brilliant record at the Staff College and his success with the South African Light Horse had added to his stand-

ing, so it meant innumerable changes of home; which is trying, because carpets and curtains never fit, things you value get broken or lost in the moves, and the actual moving is very exhausting, since men—with the best will in the world—are very little help on those occasions. So I soon learnt to pack Julian out of the way and stay alone to cope with the removal man bringing in a spate of furniture, which always came in the wrong order of precedence, like the Major's lady at Mhow.

We had eleven moves in thirteen years, and the last one was as far afield as Cairo. Can you wonder if I was sick of them, especially having inherited my father's love of gardening, so that wherever my foot found even a temporary resting-place there I started a garden of some kind? The creative urge has many advantages, but equally many disadvantages, to a soldier's wife, for once it grips you, heaven help you, and you question whether it's a curse or a joy. I had it in two aspects—gardening and writing—and both demand a static existence and peace. Anyhow, the trail of my gardening efforts lay far and wide over places in England, India, Egypt and Canada, where I tried at Government House to create a very small rock garden, because I hoped my neighbours would realize that they could get more amusement out of something of that kind than out of sweating over the mowing of a small grass plot all summer through. The little garden is a poor thing, because where I needed rock slabs I had to put up with boulders, and where a northwest aspect was best, I had to content myself with a fiercely hot southern one. However, it was an amusement to anybody cut off from their home.

But my dream of a real garden lay down the vista of the years, for when we returned from India we were sent to Netheravon, an entrancing village, tucked under the Wiltshire Downs, beside the rippling little Avon River, full of

trout. And thereby hangs a tale when on one summer's afternoon I went with "Scatters" Wilson to try and get a trout for dinner, because the Duke of Connaught was due to stay with us, and inspect the Cavalry School my husband was then creating. "Scatters" hooked a fish—a beauty—but his line got tangled in overhanging willows, and I saw my dinner vanishing, so, forgetting all about the distinguished guest, I leapt into the weeds beside the stream, fell with a flop into the river, but on top of the struggling fish. Then, soaked to the skin, I realized that at this very time I should, by rights, have been sedately waiting to greet our visitor and his staff. However, the fates were kind, for he was late, so I managed to rush back to the house, change into dry clothes and join my husband at the front door just as the cars drove up. Julian looked at me questioningly, for I was scarlet in the face and far too breathless to gasp out my story. Anyhow, the situation had been saved by the skin of my teeth, and how the Duke laughed when the fish appeared at dinner and he heard about its capture!

Alas, we had all too short a time in Netheravon, because the troops being under canvas they moved into barracks at Borden Camp and whatever the place may have developed into now, in 1904 it was the most horrible spot I have seen. It was October when we got there, to find a sea of mud, all the houses, including our own, wringing wet, with water running down the interior walls, and my rheumatism dates from then. Talk of pioneering in Canada! That closely resembled it, and I have the greatest sympathy with the people who endure such a form of life! Our house rejoiced in the euphonious name of "Hogmere Lodge", and people accused me of having bestowed that graceless title upon it. But I wasn't guilty; it was the War Office who had done so, with more sense of humour than I had ever known it possessed, though probably it wasn't humour at all, but



simply because some cottage or hovel of that name had stood on the site when the Government bought the land. Fortunately, our purgatory there was of short duration, as my husband was moved to Canterbury to command the 2nd Cavalry Brigade.

What a welcome change it was from the hideousness of embryonic Borden to the staid beauty of Canterbury and its glorious cathedral! However, we didn't live in the town because my husband disliked its low-lying situation and consequent dampness, especially as we had been surfeited with damp at Borden. We rented a house at Bridge—a quiet village on the high ground leading from Canterbury to Folkstone and Dover—a beautiful spot, with its wide rolling downland dotted with the woods—"hangars", as they call them there—oast-houses and hop-gardens. Our lovely eighteenth century house nestled under the Downs beside a small stream, and was set in a small old-fashioned garden. We spent two happy years there before being transferred to Anglesey House at Aldershot, where we had first met in 1897. Once again we rode over that familiar land of Julian's strange courtship. We heard the larks and the nightingales singing, and, being near Crookham, I saw a good deal of my parents. It was a good time for two years, followed by a short spell on half-pay till the East Anglian Territorial Division, which was to be my husband's next job, should become vacant. It was that which took us to Dunmow in Essex, to a pleasant house on the outskirts of that sleepy old town, scene of the famous "Dunmow Flich", with its annual "trial" of couples who, if they could prove that for a year and a day they had lived harmoniously without a single quarrel were given a flich of the excellent locally cured bacon.

During this eighteen months of half-pay, Julian threw himself into the Boy Scout movement, then just coming

fully into its own. Like everything else he did, he was soon absorbed by it, and when the coronation of King George V came, he had some four hundred Scouts and Cubs under his control, and was determined to get most of his crowd to the famous Windsor Rally—and he did. We went to stay at the Castle with Princess Alice and Lord Athlone, while the Scouts were camped in the great Park around the Castle. What a thrill for those boys! Because, although Essex is contiguous to London, there were, even in those days, big tracts of it still untouched by the railways, so that many of the boys had not only never been in a train, but had never seen one! Can you imagine what it meant to these country lads to find themselves suddenly transported to the shadow of Windsor Castle, with its wealth of historic associations and its wonderful situation above the placid Thames? I don't think any of them ever forgot that day, especially as we managed to get them shown over various parts of the Castle, and they saw the King and Queen at close quarters. A few years later all those elder Scouts and their leaders fought in France and Flanders, and several were decorated.

One way and another we knew a great number of people, and, needless to say, with Julian's power to charm we were invited to countless places for shooting parties, week-ends, and so on. But nothing would induce him to go, much to my regret, for while I was young I loved staying with friends and seeing fresh things and people. Once or twice, after infinite trouble I induced him to accept invitations; but I was always punished by his putting on such a face of misery when we travelled to the places that I realized it was best to accept the fact he was, as I told him, a "hermit crab"; and so I would make some perfectly futile excuse for refusing invitations when I was longing to say, "He's just sticking his toes in the ground and no power on

earth or in heaven can move him." How surprised our potential hosts would have been! He would, however, go gladly to houses where he had been in the habit of staying in other days, and seeing the same small circle of people; and I remember once in his later years when he was making up some of our own shooting parties he said regretfully, "I wish I could lay my hands on somebody fresh to put in." Then I took my revenge and answered, "Well, if you won't go anywhere, how can you meet fresh people or find new ones to ask here?" A fact he couldn't deny but didn't wish to acknowledge.

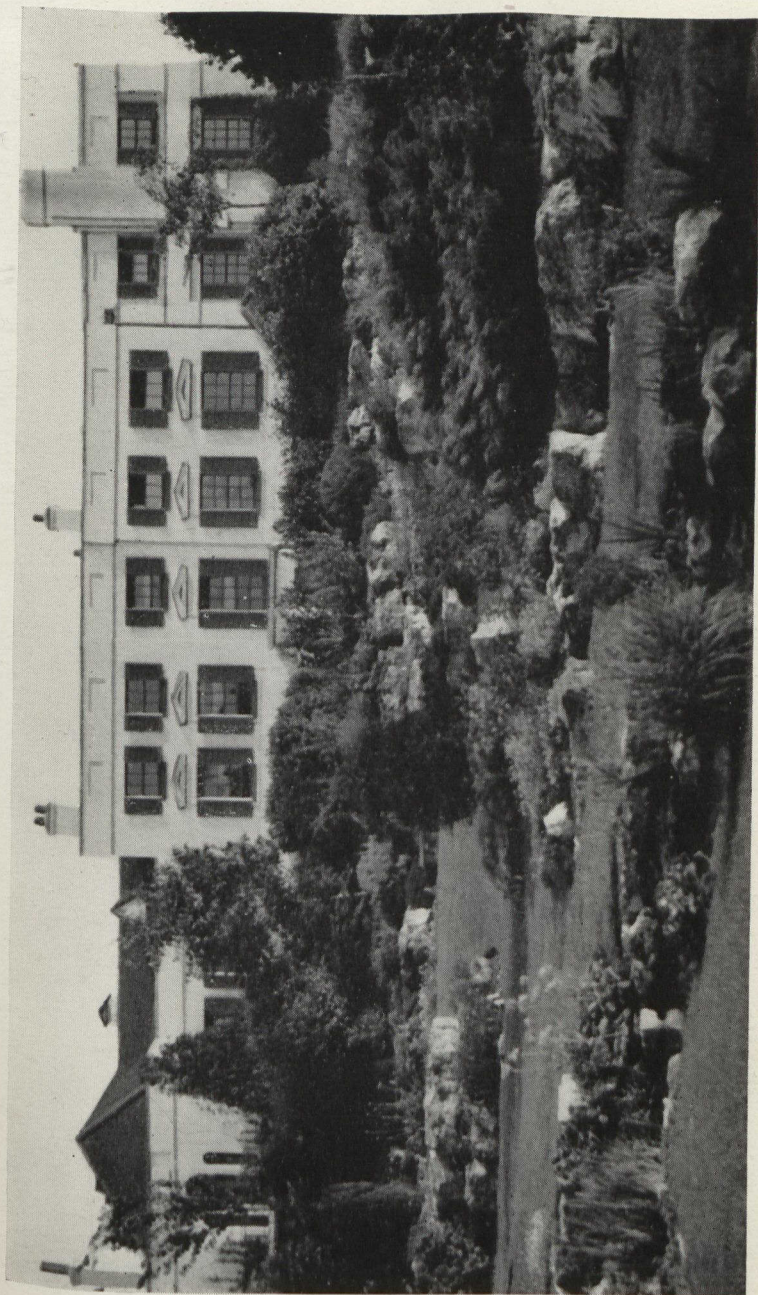
At Dunmow, for the first time since he joined the 10th Royal Hussars, my husband savoured the pleasures of a comfortable home and some leisure. He was free to come and go as he pleased, and we had stumbled into a literary and artistic circle which had gathered in that secluded spot. It was a welcome change to us both, for there were Mr. Gwynne, at that time editor of the *Morning Post*, and Mr. Blumenfeld of the *Daily Express*, who became a great friend, for he had humour and was an honest man in journalism, having many a row with the proprietor of his paper on questions of ethics which he often disliked. There was Bensusan, who wrote so charmingly about the quaint Essex country where he had settled; Stacpoole of *Blue Lagoon* fame—an odd dreamy creature, as one would have expected him to be; and H. G. Wells—dynamic, vitriolic, self-satisfied, who, my husband said, talked through his hat.

Outside the literary circle was our landlady, the famous and beautiful Lady Warwick, by then grown quite stout, though her features remained lovely and her desire to charm every man was as strong as ever. I remember once when she had, as she thought, bewitched my husband, he said as he walked away, "What took the woman to stand

in that silly attitude?" I laughed, having watched the performance as she placed herself with one hand on the top of a wicket gate, her beautiful head thrown back at its best angle; she gazed into Julian's eyes, and thought she had him fascinated. Such waste of time, for when I told him he laughed and said he couldn't tolerate "well-fed ewes who aped skittish lambs".

From the gentle peace of Dunmow we went to Cairo for my husband to take over command of the troops there, but arriving in late September, 1912, we found that the British Government had let itself be outwitted by the French, who had bought the former General's house behind their backs, for their representative on the Suez Canal Board. So we were homeless. It was a typical performance on both sides, but vastly inconvenient for us. And what a search it was! Of course houses were at a premium—they always are when you want them, just as they are always a glut in the market when you want to sell—so there we were, trying to find a house where we could do the heavy entertaining expected of us in that post.

But during our search Lord Kitchener very kindly put us up, and that visit was full of amusement to me when I saw the fear he inspired in his staff—even in Sir Ronald Storrs, a man not easily subjugated by anybody, but even he walked delicately with his master. I remember the first evening at dinner when "K" had made some statement which I knew was wrong, and I said so openly, I saw the horror on all the faces when, instead of the earth swallowing me for such a breach of discipline the host laughed and accepted the correction. There was the daily performance when we migrated onto the deep verandah for coffee after lunch and Lord Kitchener and the male dove in its cage had an argument as to whether or not the bird was master in its own nest and should sit where it pleased. Time after



THORPE HALL, ESSEX

The author's home in England, with a view of the rock garden she made.

time Kitchener—gently but firmly—picked the scolding bundle of feathers off the nest and deposited it on the floor of the cage. Each time the dove returned to the nest with defiant “coos”, its head cocked belligerently on one side as if to say, “To hell with your interference in my affairs!” This comic episode showed the man’s overmastering need to impose his will even in so trivial a matter as to whether or not a dove should sit on its own nest in its own cage. But in the end the bird was the conqueror, because his master couldn’t spend the rest of the day battling over such a matter, and when Kitchener left it would settle itself on the nest, preen the ruffled feathers and, tucking its head under its wing, go to sleep.

As there was no lady in Kitchener’s house to do the honours it fell to me to do so whenever he wished for a woman at the head of his table, and in that way I saw a good deal of him and perhaps was of some help, for though I never had any warmth of feeling towards him, he had been kind when we were homeless in the early Cairo days, and I was glad to do my bit in this way. I remember once when the late Duke of Norfolk was coming to stay with him and I knew he wouldn’t remember that the second day of the Duke’s visit was Ash Wednesday I said, “Don’t forget to order fish for that day—it’s a fast day, and your guest won’t eat meat.” He thanked me for the reminder, then said—brightening visibly—“And I’ll order the same for Friday, for that’s Good Friday.” He was so proud of his knowledge that I couldn’t help laughing, as I answered that he had done what was never intended by the Church, cut Lent by thirty days. Certainly his knowledge of religious festivals and fasts was limited. On one occasion at Dunmow as we came out of church after morning service he turned to my husband and said meditatively: “You know, Bungo, when I hear that response ‘Because there is none

other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God,' I rather wonder where we generals come in. Don't you?"

Kitchener was a strange and certainly not a lovable man, an odd mixture of greatness and petty meanness, and I never forgave his treatment of Julian over the evacuation of Suvla Bay. Earlier on in that disastrous affair at the Dardanelles Kitchener went out to see "the lay of the land" and consult with the Generals commanding there—among them my husband. The latter stressed the necessity for evacuation, with his troops decimated by sickness and privations, but Kitchener disagreed, quoting an astounding figure for probable casualties, should such a thing be attempted. To which Julian replied that if allowed to work it according to a plan of his own, he firmly believed it could be managed with a minimum of casualties. He wrote to me about the disagreement, adding that since it was the Byng tradition to be beheaded or shot—this in reference to his ancestor the Admiral, shot for the whitewashing of politicians, and Strafford, beheaded by an ungrateful King—I had better be prepared for disaster, because as he wrote, if he failed Kitchener would have his blood, and if he succeeded he would never be forgiven for having been right.

As everybody knows he pulled off the evacuation without the loss even of a mule, thanks to brilliantly conceived booby traps of various kinds—automatically fired rifles and all the noises as of an attack—which kept the scared Turks in their trenches, and when they emerged next morning it was to find emptiness on all sides because the English had stolen away to safety in the night. Basil Brooke told me how Julian insisted on hanging onto the beaches himself till the very end in order not to miss the gadgets and tricks he had engineered, and which he enjoyed like a small boy at a firework show! But as he foretold, he got no word of

thanks from Kitchener and even when he returned to England the Field Marshal never sent for him but saw to it that the episode was well thrust into the background, despite the laudatory comments of General Munroe on the subject. But "K" had been proven wrong and he lacked the magnanimity to say so, which was typical of that petty streak in his nature. On the other hand, General Liman von Sanders wrote eventually of the feat as "a masterpiece in the strategy of retreat". It seemed that a German could give praise where it was due, but not so a stubborn Englishman who had guessed wrong.

Neither Julian nor I ever met Kitchener again, for shortly afterwards he set sail for Russia and so passed out of our lives into the strangely shrouded mystery of the *Hampshire's* fate. He took with him one of the most devoted of his friends, Fitzgerald — "Fitz" who was indeed the friend "faithful unto death" and a great loss to the Army and those many people who loved and admired him. For Kitchener himself I think that passing was good. He was ageing apace at that time and for a man of his vigour and forcefulness to have hung on into a dim old age as a "had been" — nothing could have been more intolerable. As it was he passed out in the raging fury of a North Sea gale, surrounded by mystery and drama that has had few equals, and which was suited to his strange personality.



## CHAPTER V

... The Land of Egypt, where we sat by the fleshpots ...

EXODUS xvi:3

NOT content, in the old days, with entertaining in London, one winter when my uncle took my parents and myself to Cairo on account of my father's health, he decided to give a ball there, and I was enchanted when he issued invitations for a fancy dress ball, to which even the redoubtable Lord Cromer—in those days Sir Evelyn Baring—came, but not in fancy dress! In the middle of the ball an Arab woman in her shrouding black veil rushed into the room, pursued by irate members of Baring's entourage, and flung herself onto the chief, squealing amorous and indecent remarks in his ear (fortunately, in her own language), while the luckless victim, red and angry, struggled to free himself from the feminine encumbrance and his staff tugged in vain at her. The more they tugged the tighter she clasped "L'Ours", as he was nicknamed, and the more angry he became. Finally, she was torn from him, and dropping her draperies revealed the mischievous little countenance of "Jackie" Gorst, a member of his own staff.

It was a gay and amusing winter, that long ago winter of 1888, and though we didn't go up the river, we often drove out to the Pyramids under the half-grown rows of Lebbek trees, planted on the occasion of the Empress Eugénie's visit for the opening of the Suez Canal, and which, when I returned twenty-two years later, had developed into a fine avenue. But in those latter days when I was back in Cairo things were moving apace, for troublous times were brewing in Europe and had their repercussions in that

gateway of the East where intrigue was always rife; and I watched with curiosity the comings and goings of people to the side door of the German Legation, which abutted on our house. The Chief of the Cairo Police came at my invitation one day to watch and, I believe, he picked up quite a lot of information from what he saw through my lace curtains. To what use it was finally put, I don't know, as I had left before any action could be taken in the matter.

I have always regretted that our four years in Cairo were cut by half, because there was much to interest and attract one in life out there in those years, before it had adopted too many European ways and customs and shed its natural charm. But the East moves slowly, the Oriental takes time to adjust himself to fresh conditions and things outwardly were not vastly different in 1912 to what I had seen in 1888. There was the same dirt, the same repulsive cruelty to animals, against which in these later years I battled so fiercely that Julian predicted I should end with a knife in my back from some angry donkey boy. Anyhow, I did succeed in getting an annual show organized for the beasts of burden, with good money prizes, which helped to ameliorate the conditions of the donkeys and luckless ponies (poor devils!) in the arabeahs, and I believe the show still continues under the S.P.C.A.

There were, of course, many more treasures in the Museums when I was there the second time—recovered from the Valley containing the tombs of the Kings,—but architecturally the Cairo of the later date hadn't changed except for new houses in the Kasr el Doubara built to suit white people. In the native quarters there was the lovely Ibn Tulun mosque, though at that time in sore need of repairs to its rose-red walls and domes; Saladin's great mosque crowned the Citadel hill, as it still does, its needle-

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like spires cutting across the dun-coloured Mokkatam Hills behind it and the Sphinx with its sneering smile lay before the Pyramids, threatened periodically by engulfment in the desert sands which battered like an angry sea against it when the kham-seen blew. In 1912 the great paws were deeply buried—now they are clear and add to the majesty of that strange enigmatical figure.

I found the same big-sailed boats on the Nile, heeling over under a stiff breeze, or lying motionless on the water, while the crews lounged amid bales of merchandise or stacks of golden wheat which crowded the decks. To those brown-coloured men, like bronze statues as they lay full length in the sun, idleness was of no account, since their motto was, as always, "To-morrow is also a day", so "Malaish" if to-day is an idle one. There were still the same cavalcades of camels outlined against a sunset sky, as they trailed along the high canal banks; one saw flocks of brown and white sheep or goats herded by spindle-shanked boys playing mournful tunes on reed pipes, just as their forefathers had played them in the days of the Pharaohs, while time and again one met the familiar group of the man, the woman and child, with the patiently drooping ass—The Flight into Egypt come to life. Outside the city, in the desert, palm-shaded oases sheltered the tomb of some holy man, its rounded dome gleaming like a pearl in the broken light, while Arabs paused to pray in the unabashed fashion in which the Oriental prays at the prescribed hours. The groaning of Sakkia wheels filled the air, drawing up water—the lifeblood of that sandy, thirsty land, and teams of munching oxen slowly paced in an everlasting circle, as they turned the wheel that ground the corn as it had been ground thousands of years before Christ came to the earth for the redemption of an ungrateful world.

Nothing fundamental had changed, I found, in the twenty-

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four years between my visits. But now, I believe, a new Cairo is impinging on the old, with wide streets, and skyscrapers, so that much of the charm of antiquity has been sponged off the face of the land.

Though Cairo was full of interest, it was up the river I went whenever I could escape—to Luxor and Karnak, with their strange green sunsets, illuminating the river, bathing the great Valley of the Kings in an unbelievable loveliness, so that even the grim outlines of Deir el-Bakhri's great bastion were softened. Deir el-Bakhri, where the spirits of the ancients must surely wander, since their bodies have been torn from tombs which they built with such infinite care in order they might never be disturbed. Not only do they wander, but they must also curse—as many believe they do—this rifling of their treasures in the name of Science. And yet, good has come out of this desecration, since without the digging there would have been no restoration by Legrain of the magnificent Hypostyle Hall at Karnak, or the reconstituting of Sekmet's black statue in its small dark temple, lit by a narrow hole in the roof through which a filter of light strikes the figure of a woman crowned by the head of a ravening beast. Who but that consummate artist, Legrain, could have accomplished these wonderful things? Legrain, who must have dwelt in Karnak, worshipped the river god, prostrated himself before the Pharaoh and watched the dancing girls in that temple which he was reconstructing then. Once as we sat in the unfinished Hypostyle Hall I asked him how much he remembered of the old days and he shot me a swift glance.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"What I said—how much do you remember clearly of it all?"

"Who can tell?" And nothing more could I get out of him, though I always believed his knowledge of the glories

of those days was a memory of them as they had been, and as he was reconstructing them. The blue-clad workmen too had been with him before, chanting as they still did, the same old songs of the days of the Pharaohs, and they had a queer faith in him, saying that so long as he lived the evil spirit of Sekmet would remain prisoned in the statue he had recreated. Though I disliked much of that rifling of the tombs it was impossible not to feel the thrill of it all.

We often visited the Quibells—a charming Scotch couple working on a big Coptic burial ground at Sakkara and it was on the occasion of one of our visits that I saw my husband's dignity completely shattered—and by a donkey at that! The Quibells had sent down a couple of their overfed, underworked beasts to meet us, at the station of quaint little Memphis, lying in its palm groves and where, at the station, the Cairo train had dropped us. There was a huge and evil-looking white donkey for Julian, and for me a meek little she-ass who suffered from an inferiority complex, not only on account of her diminutive size, but because some spiteful fellow-donkey had bitten off the greater part of her tail, which emphasized her meagre appearance, so that she always kept in the background. When we started off that day she was as firmly resolved as ever to play the "patient Griselda" and dawdled along, despite my efforts to get her going, till Julian, seeing how she loitered, turned round on the back of his handsome white mount, whose great ears kept flapping and twitching impatiently, and called out to me, "Here, come on, wake up that fool of yours!" He had halted for me to join him, and was still half turned round in his saddle when, the instant my animal's nose came level with the white donkey's girths the brute gave a snort of fury and shot into space—head up, nose out. Off flew Julian's helmet, and, seated as he was half turned in the saddle, he was more nearly

flung into the dust than I have ever seen anybody who escaped that ignominy. Nothing would stop that galloping beast, no matter how much Julian tried, cursing loudly. He might as well have been tugging at the Sphinx for all the effect it had, till the brute stopped as abruptly as he had started, nearly shooting my husband over his head. It was quite evident the donkey held the Oriental tenets that the female of the species was something so inferior that it could never approach his magnificent person! So we rode up to the Quibells' house in single file.

If most things hadn't changed outwardly between my two sojourns in Cairo there was a great, if silent upheaval, in progress in the feminine revolt against the veil, that badge of subordination. Some of the wealthy and more advanced Pashas had married French or Greek women who naturally refused to be veiled, though as a matter of fact the veil of those days—except for the fellaheen women—was a most becoming gauze affair, loosely wound over the head and adding considerably to the beauty of dark eyes. But it was unthinkable that girls who had been educated abroad, as many had at that time, should wear the veil or be shut away from men. It didn't make sense. In Turkey, Attaturk—that wise man of the East—had abolished the veil in Constantinople; but Cairo, less advanced in its views, had not quite decided as to its course of action, so each person acted according to his own convictions, which led to tragedies, into one of which I chanced to be drawn when I made friends with Djidji, the lovely daughter of a Pasha who had sent her to be educated in Switzerland.

Djidji had only returned a short time before our meeting, and was still stunned at her father's unexpected announcement that in future she was to wear the veil and conform to all restrictions that accompany the lives of harem women. She was a pretty, light-hearted girl, a born flirt, full of

spirits, and thoroughly Europeanized after her schooling, also extremely intelligent. When her father saw all this it slowly dawned on him that he had made a terrible mistake in sending her abroad, so he kept the two younger girls in Egypt because, as he said regretfully to me, he had no intention of being cruel to them or Djidji. He offered no objection to her frequenting our house, where she met members of my husband's staff and any other men who happened to be there. The moment she arrived away went the veil, flung in a crumpled heap on my bed, and she was the gayest of the party. But many a time she cried her heart out to me about Egyptians whom her father wanted her to marry, declaring that she would never marry any man of her own race and that her beau ideal of a husband would be an Englishman. Poor little Djidji! I often felt she was like the Prophet's coffin, suspended between heaven and earth—neither veiled nor freed from restrictions. There was the mark of tragedy on her already in those days, and after the war an Austrian officer to whom she had become engaged, maddened by jealousy, shot her dead at a big concert. That was the disastrous end of one girl brought up during the transition stages of emancipation.

This particular Pasha was the mudir of a big village, where an annual fair was held—famous throughout Lower Egypt—and he kindly invited me to go and stay there for it. So I went to their harem and met his wife. It was interesting to live for a few days in a purely native household; not that the modern harem contains any of the Odalisques that Sir Edwin Long, the English artist, loved to paint in the eighties; for the modern harem is merely the woman's side of the home, where no strange man penetrates. Its hostess in this case was a good-looking, gentle woman, stout and amazingly untidy, who never dressed till tea-time, and the rest of the day padded about in heelless slippers and a loose

dressing-gown fastened across her bosom by a diamond brooch, while her hair suggested a sparrow's nest in which a big family had been reared. In spite of all that sloppiness she remained a great lady and her daughters had inherited her charm and beauty. But when the Pasha and I were driving to the fair and the carriage got jammed in the crowd, I saw the Oriental in him, as he leapt to his feet, seized the coachman's whip and laid about him, yelling like a maniac at the cowering crowd of men, women and children. It wasn't a pretty or dignified display of authority.

A sense of humour—at least as we understand it—isn't an Arab characteristic, but our faithful Kavas, Mohammed, had it in no small degree. I remember a disastrous occasion when I was showing a prim English spinster round the town, Mohammed had, unfortunately, conceived a dislike for the poor lady, and guessing, perhaps, that I was bored with her, he tried to cheer matters as we drove along and met the familiar big procession with a palanquin in the centre, surrounded by a troupe of musicians, and all the rest of the outfit, he turned round from the box seat of the carriage, pointed at it and said, with a beaming smile, "Circumsseesin Processshin." My companion grew scarlet. But that wasn't enough for him and before I noticed where he was taking us we were into the Red Light district, and once again from the box seat came information:

"This bad woman's street. See them on balconies?" And there they sat, in all their blatant sin, exchanging lewd jests with Mohammed—fortunately in his own language. I knew by the gleam in his black eyes that he was having the time of his life, so that I found it hard not to laugh when I saw my companion's outraged face.

Mohammed also had a keen perception about people and once he gave me a summary of some of the Generals' wives—whom he had served. "Lady A," he said, "lovely womans



—great lady too. Mrs. B, good kind womans—not lady though,” and finally, “Mrs. C.”—this with a contemptuous shrug of his broad shoulders—“No good—always making friends with wrong sort of Pashas.”

Poor Mohammed! He died many years ago, and the last time I saw him he had escorted me to the ship on which I was sailing for home in 1914. Somehow he had sensed, as I had, that I shouldn't return, and three times, after saying good-bye, he dashed back to me with tears streaming down his black face, wailing, “I know Sitt not come back—Oh, I know Sitt not come back!” Nor did I, and as a matter of fact, long before sailing an odd conviction had possessed me that I was turning my back forever on Egypt, and I had made all my plans for the sale of such things as I shouldn't want at home. Kitchener was rather puzzled by this conviction and tried to chaff me out of it, saying—which was quite true—that we had close on three more years of the appointment to run; but nothing could shake that queer intuition, and at last he asked whether he too would not come back and, though I was less certain about him, I doubted if he would. Nor did he, as it turned out.

Poor Mohammed! Besides his sense of humour, he was terribly sensitive, and confided to me how deeply he hated his Kavas's uniform of baggy blue trousers, short, gold-embroidered zouave jacket, red cummerbund, and fez set on his tightly curled black hair. “It making me look like monkey,” he said, and added that off duty he wore European clothes, and in them he certainly was less simian in appearance, but less picturesque.

I went to England in May, 1914, leaving my husband to follow in September on leave, for “K” and all the political heads of departments left in early June and my husband was to be monarch of all he surveyed. So when war broke out it fell to him to be the political, as well as the military

head of affairs, and to intern those suspects already under supervision—among them many of the visitors to the German Legation whom the Chief of Police and I had watched from my sitting-room window. Long after the war Julian and I were greeted effusively by a bowing German, a Cairo internee of those days, who was running a first-class restaurant in Sloane Square in 1919, and no doubt spying and preparing then for the present war. Another spy was the manager of the Winter Palace Hotel at Luxor, a typical heel-clicking, hand-kissing German cavalry officer, whom I detested from the start. What became of him after his period of internment I don't know and I certainly don't care. He was the real "blond beast".

If the faithful Mohammed was an efficient showman round some of Cairo's scenes there was another to whom my husband and I owed a debt of gratitude for showing us hidden corners and places where Western folk never penetrated. He was an insignificant-looking effendi who was teaching us Arabic, and incidentally was one of our best Intelligence agents, and what he didn't know about Cairo and its underground life wasn't worth knowing. He loved taking us about and we must have looked a comic trio trailing around together, he being not much over four and a half feet in height and most unkempt in dress. I believe during the summer he appeared for the daily walks clad in a loud suit of pyjamas! In winter, fortunately, his dress consisted of an antique frock coat—green with age—a startlingly bright tie and a tarbouch. But the summer rig-out made even Julian so uncomfortable when they went for their daily walk that he took his lesson in the seclusion of his own house.

However, the little effendi was a wizard at interesting one in the life of the people and through him I saw a native wedding in one of the poorer parts of the town, where I was the

guest of the bride's mother, and I well remember that evening in a pokey little house up a narrow alley hung with flags, above tiers of benches, where the bridegroom's friends lounged eating, drinking and singing on this, the final night of the festivities and the one on which the man and his bride were to meet for the first time. The bridegroom was a nice-looking young waiter from one of the hotels, but I shall never forget the poor little bride sitting in a small bedroom whose chief pieces of furniture consisted of a bed and a huge early Victorian wardrobe, the pride of the family's heart. In front of it sat the child—for she was no more—undersized, ugly, with hunted-looking black eyes; dressed in a cheap white silk frock, her hands tightly clasped in cotton gloves, while a horde of fat, oily women ran in and out of the room chattering, giggling and telling highly spiced tales of their own wedding nights. They crowded round me offering sticky sweetmeats that I had to eat, fingering my clothes, patting me on the back, and exuding a reek of unwashed humanity that nauseated me. And all the time the poor little bride sat—motionless and terrified—knowing that the man is within his rights, should the bride not be up to his standards, to refuse to take her, and such a disgrace is eternally stamped on her. It must have been an awful prospect for so plain a child as this, with her wizened face, if, when her husband lifted the veil, he should turn on his heel and leave the house.

So I wasn't sorry to leave that room with its brooding sense of fear and pass into another, filled with more big oleaginous women. The centre of the floor was cleared for the inevitable "Danse du ventre" without which no wedding ceremony is complete, and though I have seen many such dances I never saw so revolting a performance as the one in that house in one of the mean streets of Cairo. The dance is obscene enough when the dancer is young, with a

slender figure, but when it was—as on this occasion—the performance of a gross, middle-aged woman with a big stomach and pendulous bosoms, it was revolting beyond words, and having bestowed the expected backsheesh, I made my escape into the fresh night air.

My second experience of an Oriental wedding was that of the Khedive-Abbas Hilmi's lovely daughter to a young Pasha from Constantinople, and the scene was laid in the ballroom of the Abdin Palace, where the bride, a lovely girl, crowned with a diamond tiara, sat on a raised dais under a canopy of pale pink tulle spangled with silver stars. All round the room sat the wives of English officials and Egyptian dignitaries, waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom, and, just before his entrance, a long veil was thrown over the bride, shrouding her from head to foot. When the good-looking young man entered this room full of women, all the oldest and ugliest of the Egyptian guests hid behind their fans in coy affectation; not that he had eyes for any of them, as he passed behind the screen to make his final prayer before mounting the steps of the dais, lifting his bride's veil and then leading her away while a band in the garden played Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet". The nuptial dance on this occasion was a charming ballet, after which the Khedivah Mère rose, pelting dancers and guests alike with tiny gold coins, for which everybody scrambled, regardless of their exalted positions.

She was a great woman, that Khedivah Mère. And how she despised her son, making no bones about it! She wasn't far wrong in her estimate, either, for he was intriguing with the Germans till put safely out of harm's way. I remember his wife—originally a harem slave, for the old Khedivah stuck to the tradition of giving him a healthy woman likely to provide him with a son. I have painful memories of official visits paid to that luckless young Khedivah at the

Shubra Palace, in a ghastly room of Pompeian red with magenta furniture, where she sat mute, unable to speak anything but Arabic and one had to talk to her through a French lady-in-waiting. I don't know to which of the party the entertainment was the most agonizing—that poor scared ex-slave, or we Europeans. I should think it was pretty well fifty-fifty.

I had a bad moment at the time of those wedding festivities when I was—as usual—acting hostess for Kitchener. While dressing for dinner I said to my husband that I hoped the Turkish Prime Minister, who had accompanied young Ferid from Constantinople, wouldn't know I was half Greek, because at that time the Greco-Turkish war was raging and the latter weren't faring too well. Alas, when "K" brought the venerable and handsome old gentleman up to me and said, "Voilà Madame Byng qui parle parfaitement Français", my partner answered with a low bow, "Toutes les Grecs fonts çela." Tableau! However, he was too courteous and too much a man of the world to let this fact hamper our relations at dinner, and I found him a charming neighbour.

During our last winter in Cairo I had helped in organizing a big charity show of which the chief feature was a series of tableaux and among them a set representing "The Eve of the Battle Ball" given by the Duchess of Richmond in Brussels on the eve of Quatrebras. The pictures were quite fine and most of the men were played by officers of the 2nd Gordon Highlanders at that time quartered in Cairo. But I remember having a most unpleasant feeling as I watched them, and a woman I knew out there who was a very strong psychic said to me afterwards, "I could hardly sit through it, because I knew that in less than a year every one of those men would be dead." And she was right, because the battalion was cut to pieces in the first months of the war.

One of these same officers had a most engaging pet, in

the shape of a Gibbon ape—one of those skinny black monkeys with preternaturally long arms and heavy white eyebrows set in a little coal-black face. "Gibby" was most engaging but rather a limb of Satan. I remember once when he leapt up, at Mena House Hotel, into a strange woman's bedroom and seizing her powder puff perched himself on the window ledge and powdered his inky face in a complete imitation of a woman's actions. Like all his tribe, "Gibby" never forgot an injury and once he took his revenge on an extremely tiresome French boy who had teased him. When the child—aged, I suppose, about seven—was standing facing his father "Gibby" crept up behind him, and dug his teeth into the boy's bottom. The father didn't see what was happening and when the child screamed loudly was furious and shook him, saying repeatedly, "Mais tais toi imbecile qu' est ce que tu veut?" "Gibby" clung on till somebody pried him loose, when he fled into a tree uttering the Gibbon's hiccougging malicious laugh as he surveyed the scene below.

When my husband and I parted that April we expected to meet again in another two months and a half at Thorpe, but in that short interval war swept down on us. As soon as it broke out I moved heaven and earth to get back to Cairo, and I remember on that fateful August Bank Holiday chasing all over London to find some way of getting a passage back. I saw Kitchener in Belgrave Square during those hectic days when he, too, didn't know what his fate was to be, for the Government was divided over the matter and chaos reigned everywhere, till at the eleventh hour, when he was actually on his way to the station to re-embark for Cairo, he received orders to remain in London, which he did, and so Egypt saw him no more. He told me then to stay at home because Julian was being brought back to take command of the 3rd Cavalry Division. So I went away to Thorpe and

tried to possess my soul in patience while the retreat from Mons and all the other hideous events of those early days of the last war crashed about us. Then my husband returned and we spent a few short weeks together, mostly at Salisbury, for his division was at Ludgershall, and I often look back with a shudder at those days in that lovely old town, where years before I had stayed for manoeuvres on the Plain. The suspense of waiting for orders was shattering. They came—we parted—he for France, I for London and Thorpe.

## CHAPTER VI

The purple testament of bleeding war.

*King Richard II.*  
SHAKESPEARE.

SO WAR swept down and disintegrated our lives and that of millions of others. It was our first separation and hit us hard, though fortunately we each had our jobs to keep us busy. Mine was a thirty-two-bed hospital in my own house, for the first year of the war, till the War Office decided that small hospitals weren't a paying concern and we were ordered to close, which I did regretfully. But at least mine and other hospitals of the same calibre had filled one of those temporary gaps caused by the usual unpreparedness for war which has always characterized British and most other Governments, except that of the Germans, to whom war is the "summum bonum" of their lives. They were always ready for any eventuality and made no such mistakes. My uncle suggested that I should go and live with him in Belgrave Square, but, as I frankly told him, he was such a confirmed pessimist that to live with him would have sent me clean off my head. Kitchener also found him impossible, and secured Lady Wantage's lovely house in Carlton House Gardens as his headquarters; so my uncle, rather than be alone—for he, like my mother, had a horror of solitude—turned his house into an Officers' Convalescent Home run in conjunction with Sister Agnes' admirable Officers' Hospital in Grosvenor Place, where she did valiant service from the South African War to the beginning of the present one, ruling everybody and everything with an iron hand.

I did various dull jobs after closing the hospital, mainly on the agricultural side, in Essex, and in my spare time



planned what I meant to do in the Thorpe garden when peace came. At one moment I was on the point of going to Montreuil on a little job my husband had heard of, before the C-in-C clamped down on officers' wives coming to live in France.

Then Julian was suddenly ordered at two days' notice to go to the Dardanelles, and when I received his telegram giving me the bitter news I felt as if his death warrant had been signed, for at that time no place was more hopeless, strategically and from the point of view of health, for the men were dying like flies on those hideous beaches, in the water-logged trenches; and every horror was rampant. My only consolation was the knowledge that he had with him two of his A.D.C.s who would do their best for him. One was Sir Basil Brooke—now Prime Minister of Northern Ireland—and the other Lord Titchfield, now Duke of Portland. At least they would help him and stand by him, I knew; and so they did for, horrified at the conditions there, they waited till one day when he was up the front line and then set to work to improve matters. Somehow—goodness alone knows how—they managed to “scrounge” some glass which they fitted into the windows of his dugout and, like a couple of children who have prepared a pleasant surprise for “Father”, they waited for his return, confident they would be praised for such good work. Unfortunately, they missed seeing him come back, and the first intimation they got was the sound of crashing glass, and they saw their commanding officer breaking up their handiwork with the little swagger stick he always carried. (Basil now owns this and it has a gold band on it bearing the name of all the places where they served together through the war.) Crash, bang, went the glass, followed by loud swearing; and reaching them at last, with an infuriated face he asked who the — had done this — thing? So they owned up, feeling pretty

sheepish, only to be told that the next time they had better mind their own d——d business and understand that, as the men didn't have glazed windows he wouldn't, etc., etc. It was one of those moments amusing to look back on but maddening at the time.

I also had to contend with some of the same kind of thing when—big man as he was—he degenerated into the amusing mood of a spoilt child. I remember once such a thing occurred at Ottawa, when on a bitterly cold night I had a fire lighted in his bedroom. He had made the servants turn off the radiators permanently there, it was freezing hard, and the room was like a cold storage plant. Dinner was announced, but no sign of him—till finally he came down looking like a thundercloud and when I asked what had kept him upstairs he said, "Putting out that darned fire you lit." He had, I discovered, poured jug after jug of water on the offending fire till the fireplace was a swamp, and the smell of extinguished coals quite unbearable. I wasn't spoken to for several days after that as he pondered over his "wrongs". Anything that he thought was "Soft" had that effect on him and, poor dear, he really was quite unreasonable in these matters.

In wartime Julian lived as nearly as possible like the rank and file, much to the misery of his staff. He wouldn't have a good Mess, and I remember Basil's description of occasions when going round inspecting he would pull up the car on the roadside to eat a light lunch. If a solitary soldier came trudging along, Julian would beckon to him and hand over most of the food, after having a friendly chat with him, while the hungry A.D.C. watched his lunch vanishing down the road, and all the comfort he got was the remark that he could make up for it at dinner! Small comfort too, because the food at 3rd Army Headquarters—or any H.Q. of Julian's—was unspeakably bad. Long afterwards, King George

told me that he and Queen Mary were completely poisoned when they lunched with him, for, as he described it, "Bungo didn't live—he pigged—in France!" And I can quite believe it, though at home he liked things to be well done—a sort of "For the honour of the house" feeling, I suppose.

However, in France he enjoyed pâtés de foie gras in crusts which came to him every winter from Mrs. Lewis, the well-known owner of the Cavendish Hotel in Jermyn Street, whom I had known in the early days of her career, long before she became famous and when she was a young and pretty cook, for a short time, with my mother. She was one of the kindest and most generous people I ever met—whatever her faults and failings may have been—and I often think of the way in which she let young officers stay at the Cavendish and never sent them bills, though I am afraid her kindness was frequently abused; but when I told her one day that she was foolishly generous she shrugged her shoulders, and with a twinkle in her intelligent dark eyes said, "Ah, well, poor brats, perhaps they won't come back from the war, so I like to feel they're having a good time while they are here." And they did! Much to my amusement, in Nassau in 1943 I heard the new Bishop—Dr. Spence Burton—speaking about Mrs. Lewis and saying how much he liked her, and so I asked how it came that he went to the Cavendish—it wasn't my idea of a clerical hostel. He said that as a small boy his parents—rich Americans—had always stayed there, until one day some officious busy-body said they thought Brown's Hotel was more suitable. But the Bishop had kept a warm corner in his heart for kindly "Rosa" and still wrote to her periodically.

I have known many Bishops in my time, but never a more human one than Bishop Burton, and I shall never forget the stir he caused on his first Easter Sunday in Nassau Cathedral when he looked round from the pulpit with his

twinkling smile and said, "You can't think how 'washed-out' you look to me after my Haitian congregation." Horror filled the Nassauvian souls and they were dreadfully ruffled. Another memory of him was when playing an amusing game of acting proverbs or quotations and he had to do, "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched". He squatted on the floor in his purple cassock, pretending to pull out an egg—hastily pushing it back and clucking softly to himself. He was full of fun; and how he struggled, once, to keep a women's meeting in order, as he stood, vainly tinkling his little bell, above the clatter of female tongues all talking at once. And when I asked him how it happened that he—an American—was Bishop in an Anglican See he shrugged his shoulders and said with a grin, "Well, I'm puzzled myself sometimes, as to whether I'm an over-age destroyer under Lend-Lease, or a Bundle for Britain." Whatever he may be he will always have innumerable friends and faithful followers because of his simplicity and humanity.

Julian's Spartan principles weren't confined only to food; in the war he imposed on himself the same restrictions in the matter of leave and because the private soldier had very little leave he took the same, and I only saw him five times during all those four years. Once was immediately after the first battle of Ypres, when I crossed by the "Leave Boat" to Boulogne in a howling November gale, which I shall never forget, or my arrival on the quay at Boulogne, in pitch darkness and pouring rain, as I stumbled over railway lines to the grubby, blacked-out hotel where he had engaged rooms, to find no sign of, or from, him. The four hours I spent waiting were grim, before he came at last and we snatched a few hours' happiness, though they were shadowed by all he told me as to the seriousness of conditions at the front. Our next meeting was the following summer when we went to Paris Plage for three days, arriving in an ambulance, to the

blank horror of the proprietor, who wasn't accustomed to see a British general step out of such a conveyance. However, it was our only chance of getting there, because Julian's army car had broken down, so we "lorry-hopped"—or, more correctly, I suppose—"ambulance-hopped" to our destination.

I didn't recross the Channel after that till June, 1917, when I accompanied Princess Alice on a visit to the King and Queen of the Belgians at La Panne—the small strip of Belgium still remaining to them. It was a wonderful week, and I am always glad I saw that great couple at such close quarters, minus all the poms and ceremonies of palaces. They were real people—human and humorous, keen and fearless. Everybody knows King Albert's fine physique, essentially the kingly type as one dreams kings should be—tall, blonde, handsome, what people are apt to term "every inch a King"—and the description fitted him exactly. She, on the other hand, was small, frail-looking and, though not actually pretty, with such an expressive little face that you forgot the lack when she talked and laughed—for laugh we did in those two ugly little villas on the long ridges of dunes with their waves of bare sand sparsely dotted with Marram Grass or a few stunted bushes—dunes that not so many years later were to become famous in the great epic of Dunkirk. But in those days they were comparatively quiet, close though they were to the front line from which one heard the ceaseless sounds of battle. There was only the "crump" of falling shells, and the whine of others passing overhead to land with a "whomph" in the shallow sea that crept up the shelving beaches.

There were always ambulances driving up from the front line to the hospital at La Panne, where the Queen did admirable work, and I remember a badly wounded English soldier, not knowing who she was, saying to me one day

when I was there with her, "I like that Belgian kid—she's so gentle." So she was, gentle, compassionate but with the courage of a man housed in that fragile body, and one wondered how she had ever stood up to the grim flight from Brussels in the early days when her brother-in-law, Rupprecht of Bavaria, was leading the troops that invaded Belgium. I think that was one of the unforgivable brutalities of the Kaiser, to send Rupprecht—out of all the generals he had—to pursue the woman whose favourite sister he had married years before. But one knows nowadays that this was the sort of calculated sadism typical of the German mentality, for there is a leopard which will never change its spots no matter what fate may await it. But, in spite of everything, Queen Elizabeth had kept her sense of fun and we were quite a gay party in those villas in spite of the black days of the summer months of 1917. One saw too what a stern side there was to King Albert, who ruled his eldest son—the present King—with an almost too-iron hand, for the boy was so young, so inexperienced to have been thrust, long before his time, into the horrors of war that I often think must have left an indelible scar on his mind.

One day we went to the top of Mount Kemmel and watched the Germans shelling Ypres, away in the distance, and according to what building they hit there rose a cloud of either pinkish dust (from a brick house) or white (from a stone one)—and overhead all that afternoon the birds sang and the sky was alive with planes.

Another day some of the Staff took me out to Poperinghe, after learning there had been no shelling that morning. I wanted to go because I had heard that on the far side of the town some of our 10th Hussars were buried, but I failed to find the graves, if they were there. It was an interesting drive as we tore along at the breakneck speed habitual to the King and his chauffeurs, regardless of shelled roads, so

that one rolled and bumped about in the car, till we slowed suddenly to a crawl on a road camouflaged with nets, because if dust was stirred up there the enemy started shelling at once. So we crept along into Poperinghe itself, where the lovely old "Spanish Houses" with their beautiful gables were still intact, though in the latter part of the war they were destroyed, as I saw in 1919.

I remember, too, seeing at that time one of the earliest tanks—such as my husband used in the battle for Cambrai, where they had startled the Germans in a battle which might easily have been one of the most decisive of the war had he been able to do it when he conceived it first, in the summer. But Haig refused at that time and sent him in when November had come and when—being committed to Passchendael—they were short of reserves; though had he been given these and allowed to push on, Julian always believed he could have driven right into Cambria and cracked the whole line. He had the foresight and imagination which could see far ahead, gifts that not all generals possessed, and I used to wonder if two Scotch grandmothers—a Gordon and a Mackenzie—made him a bit "fey" at times.

Though many people came and went to the La Panne villas in that June week, Julian never came, though the King sent him a special invitation to do so. I hadn't said a word to my lord and master that I was going to Belgium, because I guessed there would be a song and dance, as he might think it risky, and when he heard, from the King's invitation and my covering letter, that I was there, I received a furious reply, saying nothing would induce him to come to La Panne. It was exasperating to know he was so near, in some ways, but sticking his toes in out of sheer cussedness! But it was very like him. When we bade our hosts farewell at the end of the visit it was with the promise that when they re-

entered Brussels, the Princess and I were to be there, though that seemed far away in the future then.

Yet within sixteen months we were back, though we passed through many grim days in between. I remember my husband wrote to me in March, 1918, "The attack has come. If we hold the line we win the war," which was the whole letter because he had many more important things to do than write to me when that awful thrust came which drove the neighbouring army back while his managed to hold, and his prophecy was true enough. Within a fortnight after the "Cease Fire" rang out for the final time over France and Flanders, the Princess and I crossed the Channel again—this time in a Destroyer, and landed at Dunkirk whence we drove by car to Bruges and spent a night. The next morning the Naval Officer in command took us in one of those slender motor launches all round the harbour at Zeebrugge—past the sunken British ships of the famous St. George's Day battle of 1915, when from my home at Thorpe I had heard the roaring of the guns and seen the great flashes in the sky, not knowing what was afoot. We saw the hole in the Mole blown by our ships, and the sliding platform of the German gun that our airmen had so much difficulty in locating, because the gun slipped underground after firing. At Bruges we were joined by Lord Athlone and the present King, at that time Prince Albert, who had come to represent his father at the entry into Brussels.

There was an almost uncanny silence over the land in those days, as if the world was stunned by all that had happened and had ended with such dramatic abruptness after four years' ceaseless noise and horror. The second night we spent at Ghent and early in the morning of the following day drove on into Brussels. It was a sunny autumn day, with sharp frost in the air, the flat landscape clear-cut against a cold and cloudless horizon. The long straight roads, typical



of the country, were full of peasants returning to their homes or to what remained of them, with all their worldly goods stacked on small carts, probably with "Grand'mère" perched insecurely on the top. They trudged along the roads silently for the most part, as if too dazed by all that happened even to rejoice. There were streams of released British prisoners of war—gaunt, penniless men—flung adrift by the Germans, totally indifferent as to what happened to them, because at that time chaos reigned and there were no hostels or other accommodation ready for them, and they were grateful for any money we could give them to help them on their way towards the England for which they longed.

When we reached it, Brussels was a city ablaze with flags—their own and those of the Allies—long hidden from German eyes and now floating gallantly in the sun. On all sides bells were pealing forth their gladness, faces were alight, as we passed to the Parliament Buildings where the Sovereigns were to be received. A window in the building had been reserved for the Princess and we sat there to wait for the great moment that was to come. The "Place" before the Parliament Buildings was packed with people, a surging sea of excitement, waiting, waiting—every ear cocked for the first sound of that great roar of cheers which announced the approach of the procession, headed by the King—a magnificent figure on his white horse—and the Queen riding beside him, followed by Prince Leopold and all the representatives of the Allies heading a long line of marching soldiers, their bayonets wreathed, in many cases, with flowers and gleaming like a stream of molten silver as the sun caught them. It was an indescribable moment of emotion. Cheers, tears, shouting, marching feet, tramp, tramp, tramping down that long street, far away out of sight to the accompaniment of a babel of sound. For me there was, once again, the regret

that my husband wasn't among the crowd of conquering soldiers, but once more, though bidden to be present, he refused to move from his headquarters. His hatred of pageants even extended to this immortal moment. He just sat tight in his own headquarters. Not only did he refuse to come, but he was extremely angry at my having gone and I got an awful wiggling afterwards, just as I did over the La Panne visit. However, neither scolding affected me much, because by then I was no longer so foolish as I had been in India when I missed the Curzon Durbar; for I had learnt not to give him the chance of vetoing a thing I had set my heart on!

After the scene at the Parliament Buildings, we passed on to the Palace through deliriously excited crowds, and at the Palace there might have been no war, for the servants wore their state liveries, the main staircase was a cascade of orchids, such as I have never seen before or since, and upstairs a table was laid for over a hundred of the generals and other bigwigs. The King said to me, in his slow speech, with a twinkle in his eyes, "Too bad your unfriendly husband wouldn't come—but I know him!" For some time I found myself, much to my discomfiture, the only woman present, till Princess Alice appeared saying that the Queen, thoroughly exhausted, poor soul, had gone to bed. No wonder, after such a moving climax!

We spent several days in Brussels, attending the Thanksgiving Mass at Ste. Gudule, in a city gay with the banners of those ancient guilds for which it is famous. We lived in a small house from which every scrap of metal, such as door-handles, and so forth, had been looted, and the back garden was piled high with empty wine bottles, for the Huns had used the house as a Luftwaffe H.Q., and had done themselves well. Telephones and telegraphs weren't operating, everything was unprocurable, and by the time we wanted

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to leave there was a scarcity of gasoline, and though Princess Alice, Lord Athlone and I were scheduled to leave on a certain day, when it came, no means of moving were available, so far as gasoline was concerned. It was the more exasperating because the Princess and I, by dint of plain bullying had persuaded Lord Athlone to go back via the Menin Road, through Ypres, to Dunkirk. At first he fought it, but two persistent women were stronger than one luckless man, so we got our way, but there was a big "But" in it, for by the time we had scrounged some gasoline and one of the King's lorries for our baggage, it was four on a November afternoon—dark and foggy, while a sharp frost having set in, the *pavés* were not in very good shape as we went along preceded by the lorry, in which three or four released British prisoners had begged a ride. And providential it was we had them, for between the wet *pavés* and the uneven going, the lorry would skid off the road and out would jump the men to shove it back. Then it was our turn to skid and be shoved on again, and thus it was pitch dark before we had gone far. Also, by some ill chance, we lost the way and found ourselves at a place called Chrysanthene, where we tangled with American Army transport on a bridge. What a mess-up it was! And Lord Athlone kept muttering something about women who wanted to do silly things, etc. But we two didn't care and sniggered at one another behind his back, for we were in the right direction—more or less. It was a good deal less, as a matter of fact, though we finally reached Courtrai in a fog which made further driving impossible, and found a hôtel where the only sound piece of glass wasn't in the windows, but consisted of a bowl of melancholy gold-fish on a round marble table in the hall. I never saw anything more ludicrous than those luckless fish slowly swimming around, half frozen, in that temple of the winds; nor shall I ever forget the cold of the beds, where it

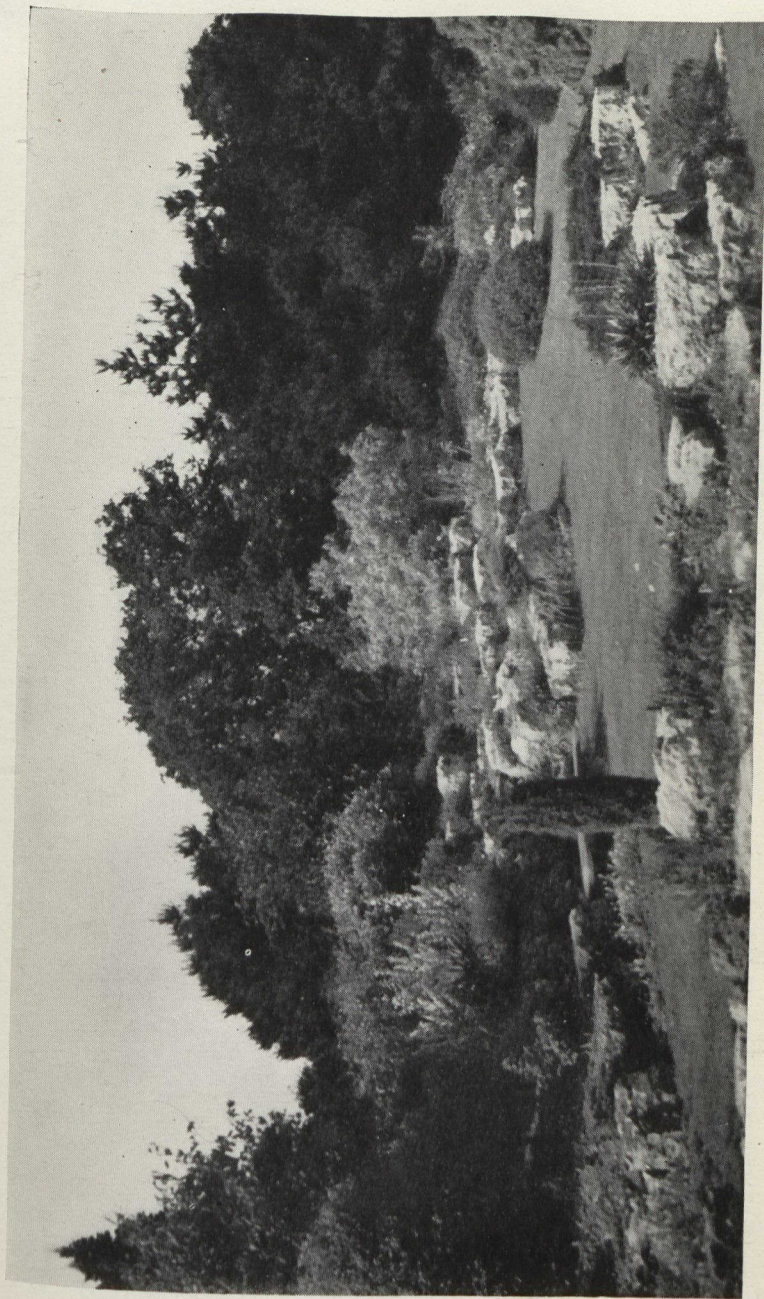
was impossible to keep warm, for the pillows were like lumps of ice and the moment you shifted your face the cold of the pillows struck home like a knife. It was the worst night of my life for cold and discomfort, and why none of us caught our deaths, I don't know, as we were certainly asking for trouble.

The next morning we started early, and I was glad that we had insisted on making that trip over the famous battle zone before anything had been touched, for nothing could have given one a more complete understanding of what the war had been like on those Flanders fields, with the cold grey mist hanging low over a morass of sticky mud, roads wrecked by shelling, gaunt trees, blasted by gunfire standing stark against the November sky, horses' skeletons, broken guns, lorries, and all the other debris of war stretched on every side; and over it all that sombre pall of fog well fitted, as a ceiling, to such a scene of desolation. There wasn't a living soul about, only some crows, flapping along like things of ill-omen, as we reached Ypres, which we had seen last time in the distance on a sunny July evening from the top of Mount Kemmel, being shelled by the Huns—Ypres, with its shattered Cloth Hall and all its other desolate ruins of beautiful buildings, a hideous monument to the ravages of war. There was no great Menin Gate then to mark the unnamed dead who had held that torn piece of land; it was the immediate aftermath of war stripped of glamour—stark, hideous, but appallingly grand.

Eighteen months later I returned with my husband to visit his battlefields, from Ypres to the Somme, and we stood on the Summit of Mont St. Eloi, so that he could show me the strategic value of the Vimy; we climbed the ridge itself, to gaze down on Lens and the flat country beyond. Nothing had been touched on Vimy Ridge then; it was littered with broken rifles and all the wreckage of war, while

bulrushes grew in shell-holes, larks sang in the clear air, and in the distance farmers tilled their fields, believing, as we all did in those days, that the peace had been won as well as the war. What a disillusionment awaited us, we didn't suspect. It was a wonderful trip, as we sought spots that were familiar to him, such as his old dugout near Hell Fire Corner, which strangely enough was untouched. We visited Albert, and his headquarters under the shadow of the Virgin's statue hanging precariously overhead; Bapaume—or what remained of it—and endless villages reduced to heaps of rubble, so that even the curés whom we met weren't always certain of the precise spot where their churches had stood. I have forgotten the names of many places to which we went, but I remember Monchy-le-Preux, a little hill where Julian's own regiment, the 10th Royal Hussars, had suffered heavy casualties and we paused there for a silent moment among the untouched debris of that tragic spot. Then there was Bourlon Wood where, if only he had been given adequate reserves, he could have pushed through to Cambrai and smashed the German line. There were corners where he had watched his Canadians pass by, and a hundred other places with varying memories for him, and I think the trip conjured up for him some of the happier memories of the war, as nothing else could have done, while on me they left an indelible impression of its horrors.

I didn't revisit France after that till the Government of Canada invited me to the unveiling of the great memorial on the top of Vimy Ridge. My husband had died by then, though I know he was with us in spirit on that spot, of which he once said—I think in Calgary—"There they stood on Vimy Ridge that 9th day of April, 1917, men from Quebec shoulder to shoulder with men from Ontario; men from the Maritimes with men from British Columbia; and there was forged a nation, tempered by the fires of sacrifice and ham-



ROCK GARDEN AT THORPE  
Another view of the rock garden.

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mered on the anvil of high adventure." And high adventure it was for the great Corps he had the honour to command. But little did he think, when he spoke those words, that within a quarter of a century the sons of those men would be bearing the torch their hands are now too old to hold, and bearing it as grandly as their fathers did in days gone by.

## CHAPTER VII

One can be wise without pomp and without envy.

SENECA.

WE HAD learnt to love East Anglia through the medium of Stiffkey, the little village beside a stretch of sea marsh, pink and lavender in summer with thrift and statice—crimsoned in autumn by samphire. To Stiffkey we went for partridge-shooting with the Edgar Hornes who lived in an old house built by Roger Bacon, brother of Sir Francis. Very little had been done throughout the centuries to the Old Hall and much of it was in ruins, but what remained was beautiful, with its rose-red walls, high rooms and mullioned windows. Between the beauty and antiquity of the house and the compelling charm of the marshes, stretching for nearly eight miles along the bulge of the Norfolk coast south of King's Lynn, we fell for East Anglia, though that was long before I ever heard of Thorpe-le-Soken or dreamt of living on the east coast. But the spell of Stiffkey had gripped us, and we felt if we could find just that same sort of rolling country with sixty-or-seventy-acre fields tumbling lazily to the sea and laden with crops of golden grain, flaming yellow mustard or fat roots, we could end our days in peace there. Stiffkey, thank goodness, was unknown, to most people, who raced through it on their way to fashionable Cromer farther south, but it was suddenly thrust into publicity by the eccentricities of its rector which culminated in an ecclesiastical *cause célèbre* that echoed through England some years ago. Not only was the rector the central figure in that affair, but, unable to restrain his passion for cheap dramatization, he seated himself in a barrel in a sideshow at a fair, and finally furnished a meal



for the circus tiger, under the delusion perhaps that he was a second Daniel. But the tiger lacked the good manners of Daniel's lions, and the rector was, in his own eyes anyhow "a saint truly sacrificed". With memories of Stiffkey in our minds I was told when homeward bound for the summer of 1913 to go and look for a possible home "somewhere in East Anglia". And I went, rejoicing at the prospect of settling down.

Far and wide I ranged, by car, over Norfolk and Suffolk, only to find there was nothing within our means in those fashionable counties, so I fell back on Essex, that Cinderella of East Anglia. We still had the Dunmow house, in Essex, and it was from there that I wandered back and forth on my quest, to land one July afternoon in the sleepy village of Thorpe-le-Soken basking in a sun shining as brilliantly as it does in Canada, for East Anglia possesses that same clarity of atmosphere. Beyond the village I passed through a battered wooden gate, hanging drunkenly on a single hinge which whined a protest at being used, and found myself in a small park with the remains of a fine oak avenue, though age had taken its toll of the trees. Past the little park was what the lying estate agent had described in his advertisement as, "A stately Georgian mansion standing in spacious gardens, with magnificent timber and a fine sheet of ornamental water." Not a word was true, except the timber—and that certainly was magnificent. Great oaks which must have been saplings when the Romans occupied Colchester; tall pines, chestnuts, and limes—their tasselled blossoms exuding a sticky fragrance whence a chorus of honey-drunk-en bees made itself heard. Later I found the ancestors of those same bees had dwelt for countless generations in a hollow oak tree, and periodical swarms emerged, generally when one was ready for church on Sunday morning, and with nobody to lend a hand, so that I, in my "Sunday best"

had to batter on a tin to induce them to enter an inverted box, till such time as they could be finally hived. However, all that was long after the July day when I first set eyes on the derelict square, white house that screamed for a coat of paint or plaster.

"The spacious garden" was a jungle of untrimmed laurels, a sea of nettles and docks, while the "ornamental water", a 2½-acre lake, was so thickly covered with slimy green weed that you could hardly tell where the grass ended and the water began. Indeed, my dog fell in, emerging outraged at such an accident. However, there were possibilities in it all; a certain graciousness in the well-proportioned rooms, typical of early Georgian houses, and the land rolled gently on all sides. As to situation, it fulfilled most of my husband's requirements, for it was, as he had decreed, near a good golf course; within a few miles of the open North Sea and a mile and a half from a miniature reproduction of Stiffkey's lovely marsh, alive with wild fowl and with the same haunting sense of strange happenings in days long past that characterized its sister farther north. There were deep creeks in which the water gurgled and sucked as the tide flooded in from all sides so that it was hard to tell whether it was coming or going when you looked at the eddying water, and though the Landermere marsh wasn't a patch on Stiffkey, it had its own charm. What with one thing and another, I was drawn to the place and sorry for its derelict state.

I found that the property, plus a big farm, was going up for auction within a week so I had to think quickly, and finally made an absurdly small offer for the house, two hundred acres of land and three tumble-down cottages. This the owners accepted gladly, because they feared the poor condition of house and garden might prejudice the sale of the rest of the estate. Anyhow, there I was—owner of a future home, which had stood empty for five years, been

neglected for fifty, and been owned by the same family for over a hundred and seventy years. Why nobody saw the possibilities of the place passed my understanding, because they just hit one in the face. As I looked round it seemed as if the place was begging me to buy it, and the rosy-faced caretaker suddenly said, "I do wish you'd buy the place, Madam, it does so want to be made something of—" as though she too sensed the cry of the old house. She fussed round and hospitably gave me tea, nor was that the last cup of tea I had from Mrs. Bradbrooke's hand, for she and her husband remained with us till he died, a short time after my husband in 1935, and his widow has passed away since I have been in Canada. Bradbrooke was the best type of old-fashioned farm labourer, speaking the Essex dialect, using such Essex expressions as "smother" for fog, "the chase" for the drive up to a house, and always saying "up at yours" and "down at mine". He was one of a family of eleven whom their parents had raised on the weekly wage of twelve shillings. How it was done, goodness alone knows, but strong and healthy the old man was up to the last, and twelve shillings a week less than a century ago was the usual labourer's wage in East Anglia.

Though Thorpe fulfilled my husband's requirements, I began to question what he would think of its derelict condition, and tried to comfort myself by thinking, "Well, he's got two good golf courses within three miles—he can reach London in an hour and ten minutes, though it is over seventy miles distant." Later on he described our Thorpe station as reminiscent of the divorce court, because it was the junction for Frinton and Walton-on-the-Naze on the one hand and Clacton on the other, so that the down trains split up—which was the divorce—and the up trains reversed the performance, which was "the restitution of conjugal rights". This excellent service seemed odd in a small wayside station,

deep in the country, but since many "daily breaders", as we call "commuters", lived in those seaside places, the arrangements were made for them. And were they arrogant, those "commuters", towards us humbler travellers, if we dared put our noses round the door of compartments where they played bridge, ate vast breakfasts, and, homeward bound, had the most fantastic meals I ever saw, a combination of tea and supper calculated, I should think, to cause the most awful indigestion, since tea, beer, whiskey and soda were all consumed! However, they looked on themselves as the lords of creation, did those city men on the quick trains, much to our amusement. Anyhow, their existence made for an admirable service, which was one of the things Julian had desired.

But against that had to be placed the fact that the place was pretty derelict, though structurally sound, and I must say, except to the eye which saw its possibilities, it must have appeared a bit of a proposition. I wondered if his imagination would stretch that far—and prayed that it might—as I looked at what I had let him in for. By the time he came on leave it had in legal parlance been "duly signed, sealed and delivered", and there was no going back on the fact that here was our future home.

I took him over by car from Dunmow the day after his arrival, early in September, when—thank goodness!—the place was looking very lovely under the clear autumn sun, and a cloudless sky. He looked round silently—then nodded his head and remarked in his quiet way, "Yes—I like it. Quite nice when it's been tidied up and—front row of stalls for the German invasion." That startled me, with Germany already grumbling away across the Channel, so I asked what he meant, and found that he knew this part of the country quite well, having years ago been over it on a "Staff Ride", acting as the attacking force. He outlined his scheme for a big raid on the salt marshes which, if successful, would be

the prelude to a full-scale invasion. If a failure, it would be written off as a valuable experiment. As a matter of fact, after the last war we found eventually that his plan was precisely that of the German High Command, all ready to be put into operation at the suitable moment, which, fortunately, didn't materialize.

Small wonder if in 1914, eleven months after this illuminating conversation, his words came back to me as the rumbling guns sounded from Flanders, the thud of distant explosions and the booming of ships' guns far out at sea made the windows chatter; sounds which were to be the plainsong of my life for four long years. I naturally kept quiet as to what I knew, and the villagers only woke, with typical East Anglia slowness, to the possibility of danger, when certain military precautions were ordered—precautions that were as nothing, compared to those of to-day. In 1914 we had Zeppelins and other planes overhead, and in 1918, a few miles away, I watched with Louis Raemaker, the famous cartoonist, in the dawn of a lovely summer's morning, an enemy plane hurtle in flames to the ground. I shall never forget the savage howl that rose from the camp, in one of our fields, at the sight—it was the satisfied roar of a dangerous animal, and I didn't blame them. I, too, would have roared triumphantly had I possessed a loud enough voice.

In August 1914 I converted the house into a thirty-bed hospital, which I ran for just over a year, when the Government decided that small hospitals were not a paying proposition, so it was closed. I began, in the interval of various war jobs, to dream dreams as to what manner of garden I was going to create out of my wilderness when peace came.

I also had time to enquire into the past history of our home, and learnt that there had been a Thorpe Hall, on approximately the same site, since 1170, though most of the

present house—except the cellars, which are much older—dated back to early Georgian days. It had been added to and altered by various people, including ourselves, and we discovered, in the dining-room, that one wall was made of “daub and wattle”, a form of construction used at least five hundred years ago, a mixture of hard clay, binding together bundles of willow and other branches. This was considered one of the soundest methods of building, and, indeed, some cottages on the property are of the same medium and far sounder than many modern buildings. We also found, leading from the house, into what is now a big-rock-and-water garden, a hollowed elm drain, such as those used by the Romans during their occupation of Camulodunum, as the town of Colchester was then called, and which were still in use, but only by special license, in the days of Queen Elizabeth. This old drain still conveys the surplus water from the house-well into the garden, but now, instead of being hidden underground, its lower end lies open to view. Another relic was a granite boulder, worn smooth by time, and bearing the same marks of having been used to sharpen arrows or spear-heads that I had seen round one of the oldest church foundation stones on the Yorkshire wolds.

In the Record Offices in London there was a document, dated somewhere in the early fourteenth century, which gave a list of the contents of “The Hall” and the stock belonging to it. I forget how it runs, but remember that the furnishing of “The Hall” was sparse, though the stock was plentiful, ending up with “one old cat, two kittens”. So Thorpe’s history goes far back in time, including the days when Boadicea fought over its rolling countryside. Speaking of Boadicea reminds me of a friend, who served with the Canadian Corps, and stayed with us, and to whom Julian had talked during the morning about the prowess of Boadicea, so that after lunch when he asked the Canadian

where he would like to go for a walk the answer came pat, "Over the fields where old Boady drove her car." How we laughed at the irreverent description of one of England's Saxon heroines which conjured up a vision of the lady bumping over the rough ground in some battered old jalopy!

If in those early days, which Churchill has called, only too truly, "the period of exhaustion between wars", I had dreamt that our wanderings and work were at an end and we were going to settle down to a Darby-and-Joan existence, I was sorely mistaken. Hardly had my husband hung up his hat at Thorpe before the Government asked him to handle the United Services Canteen Fund—a sum between eight and nine million sterling, which was the surplus from the wartime canteens. It was no sinecure, but entailed much hard work at a time when he needed a rest badly. However, he wouldn't refuse, though I was sorry to see him—tired as he was—plunge straight into this work, because there were difficulties, petty jealousies, and the inevitable "panhandlers" hanging about. But the Government had made a wise choice, I think, for no senior officer commanded greater confidence among the men than Julian Byng. They knew him as being scrupulously honest, above all political pull and chicaneries, and immovably determined to see that every penny was profitably spent for the good of the returned men, who promptly christened it "The Byng Millions", and by that name it was far better known in those days than by its official title of "The United Services Canteen Fund".

When taking on this job my husband made two stipulations: (a) there was to be no political or governmental interference of any kind, which was wise, for had the fund once become the football of politicians its effectiveness would have been wrecked: (b) he refused to accept any

pay for his work because he said that since the money had come out of the pockets of Servicemen, to them every penny should return—and so it did, in many different ways. A large sum was invested to secure a good annual income for those committees of the Salvation Army which dealt with ex-Servicemen, the Comrades of the Great War, the Discharged and Disabled Sailors' and Soldiers' Associations, the Soldiers and Sailors Families' Association, and many others.

Sums were allocated to smaller charities, in one of which I have always been interested—namely, the Disabled Soldier Embroiderers, which taught severely disabled men to do fine embroidery in their own homes. A committee of expert needlewomen trained the men, giving them the best designs and colours, taken from old work, so that nowadays their *Petit-Point* is just as good as any museum piece, and they have also made all the stoles, altar frontals and other articles used in the Memorial Chapel at Ypres; besides sheriffs' banners for English counties, and a host of lovely things which find a ready market in the shop run by The Friends of the Cross at Ebury Street, or at the annual sale held in private houses. It's amazing how neat-fingered men can become under tuition, and how enormously this quiet, soothing work built up their morale by proving that with the help of their pensions they could still be self-supporting.

One of our helpers was Ernest Thesiger, the well-known actor, who is a first-rate embroiderer and about whom the following true story was told. When as a private he lay wounded in a hospital, a General inspected the men, and pausing, said condescendingly as he saw the tangled silks on his bed, "Well, my man, what did you do in civil life?"

The devil of mischief entered into Thesiger and he answered in the mincing voice so often heard on the stage, "Well, sir, I did a little acting and some needlework," whereupon the General snorted indignantly and passed down the



ward, blissfully unconscious how neatly his leg had been pulled.

The "Byng Millions" presented as difficult a team to handle as the Light Horse had done years ago, since the members of the various committees were composed of men from every walk of life and every class, some of whom were suspicious of one another and brought that suspicion into their new job. Infinite tact and patience were essential in combating this and my husband brought those same qualities of conciliation to handling it, and when he gave the Fund over to his successor, Lord Loch, at the time the call to Canada came, it was a homogeneous entity, of "all for one and one for all". When the British Legion materialized the Fund was amalgamated with all the other Service organizations. The best scheme of the "Byng Millions" was perhaps the creation of Heatherwood—a sanatorium for ex-Service-men's tubercular children, and since it was endowed by the Fund, it should remain as a lasting memorial of their efforts.

We were both delighted at the idea of Canada, because my husband knew he had been asked for by the men who had known and served under him in the Corps he loved so dearly, and from which Douglas Haig had twice tried to remove him to take command of an army. Julian had managed, somehow, to evade the attempts, until finally, as he wrote me, the "dreaded blow has fallen", and this time there was no means of escape because the order was a peremptory one to hand over the Canadian Corps within three days and take over Allenby's 3rd Army. The shortness of the time allotted was fortunate, because it saved heartrending farewells, both for my husband and his men who hated parting from one another. There was no time for anything of the kind and he slipped away as quietly as possible, unable to face the good-byes. Now, in 1921, he was once again to be reunited with the men he had led, and I never saw him

happier than when Churchill offered him the post of Governor-General. For myself, the job gave me for the first time in our married life an opportunity of really sharing with him the responsibilities and work of his new task, because the wife of a Governor-General can do much to make or mar the regime—just as a gubernatorial staff can do the same. Added to my happiness at feeling I could help my husband I had memories of the country and its flowers in 1878-9, not only the wild pink roses and blue columbines of Cacouna, but trilliums spangling the woodland, and below the big toboggan slide at Government House a small wood with blue hepaticas—but alas! these had all vanished when I looked for them.

Trilliums brought the strangest coincidence into my life, for one early spring afternoon in 1916 I went with a friend to Kew Gardens—a favourite haunt of mine, as a getaway from London streets—and we had stopped in front of the mound below the Temple, where trilliums danced in the breeze. I said how much they reminded me of Canada, and a lady standing near swung round quickly, saying, "Canada's my home." Her face lit up as she added, "Do you know it?" I explained that I hadn't been there since 1878, and, looking me over, she laughed, "You must have been quite a baby, surely?" I told her my age at that time, and also that my parents had taken me out when they were on Lord Lorne's staff. She said suddenly, "Are you by any chance Mrs. Richard Moreton's daughter?" I said yes, and she told me that as a young girl she went to her first ball at Government House, and feeling faint was taken to my mother's room, and remembered a small child asleep in a little bed. I had been the child then, of course. She was Mrs. Alan Cassels of Toronto, and it was to her summer home on Lake Simcoe that I went, shortly after our arrival in Canada, and saw for the first time those enchanting little plants that car-

pet Canada's woodlands from coast to coast. Our first meeting was quite the oddest coincidence that has ever come into my life and I only regretted then that I couldn't tell her—what was equally strange, and which I had heard that very morning—that my husband was to command the men from her country. But it was still a strict secret.

On July 21st, 1921, we stepped aboard the *Empress of France* to embark on a great adventure. For we weren't going to Canada as unknown people; Julian's name was already a household word throughout the Dominion and there were thousands of men who had seen, met and talked with him. Nobody was more approachable than he, nobody could make his way into men's hearts as he did with his honesty, his fearlessness and his friendliness and he came to Canada, not so much as the appointee of either the British or Canadian Governments, but at the openly expressed wishes of the men who had fought with him round Ypres and on the slopes of Vimy. He had chosen a name associated for all time with Canadian heroism. We knew a warm welcome was awaiting us, and realized to the full that it was up to us to prove that it was deserved and that he must not disappoint the soldiers who had pinned their faith on him as their commander in the field, and now as the representative of their Sovereign. We both felt it strongly when on August 12th we faced an immense crowd gathered round the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa. It was a mass of wildly cheering ex-Servicemen into which my husband walked, in the scorching heat that melted the asphalt so that it clung to one's high heels and reduced Julian's cocked hat to a pulpy rag by the time we drove up to Rideau Hall—the Governor-General's residence, where I had been as a child and where on that memorable day I was to take up the reins as its mistress for the next five years.

There were many pleasant sides to the Governor-Gen-

eral's existence. Life was made easy in all ways; travelling was a luxurious delight. What a contrast to banging down long lines of cars to a meal, being bruised all colours of the rainbow in transit, and almost cut in half by maliciously-minded heavy doors! How I missed it all when I returned again to Canada in 1940! No baths, no comfortable beds, no armchairs—because in wartime trains have cut down on parlour cars, so one travels in an ordinary coach in which you find undisciplined children rampaging about, and one's silk stockings—or their all-too-costly and fragile imitations—are besmeared by filthy, chocolate-sticky fingers. It made me realize more than ever the luxurious comfort of vice-regal travelling—not that I hadn't fully realized and appreciated it in days gone by!

Any interesting people who visited Canada come to roost, sooner or later, under the roof of Government House, which made life amusing, though very few came in our regime, because it was still too near the end of the war, and people lacked the cash to travel. Also they wanted to sit in their own homes at peace, and savour its delights. Nowadays Prime Ministers and Presidents skip from hemisphere to hemisphere at a moment's notice, and probably after the war it will mean nothing to fly to Canada for a long weekend, which will do much towards bringing the two countries into closer contact.

But, as in all things, official or otherwise, there was a reverse side which my husband voiced rather sadly one day when we had been in Canada nearly two years. "You know," he said regretfully, "the worst of it all is that after five years we shall leave here without having made any friends." However, he cheered up when I suggested that he was unduly gloomy because, though we couldn't "play favourites" at the present time, we were sowing the seeds of friendships which would ripen once we were home again and free to see

whosoever we chose, and as often as we chose. He chirped up, and eventually found that this was true, though unfortunately Canadians were in many cases so discreet that we frequently didn't know of their presence in England till they had gone back, and we missed seeing them. I fancy there was a vague feeling among many of them that "once a Governor-General always a Governor-General", and therefore not to be approached! Which was foolish, because when you leave an official position, no matter how exalted it may be, you slough off its advantages and disadvantages just as a snake sloughs off its skin, and again become your everyday self. I know no spectacle more lamentable than the ex-bigwig and especially his wife "vice-regalling" on the sofa, with amiable condescension, ineffable graciousness, or pompous superiority to all within their radius, and when I have seen such a performance I have questioned whether it was tragic or farcical, for it shows a disastrous lack of humour and a complete inability to appraise the true value of pomps and ceremonies.

Not that I would wish to see such ceremonies abolished. Could anything be more magnificent than the coronation of England's Sovereign in Westminster Abbey, with its archaic ceremonial, phraseology, music and stately processions? Pomps and ceremonies are part and parcel of monarchy and essential to that "divinity which doth hedge a king"—so let them continue, for they stand for much in the national life.

There are other occasions of pomp such as a Naval Review when battleship, cruisers, destroyers and submarines lie on a silvery sea, every flag from their lockers fluttering in the breeze. Or again that stately ceremony of the Trooping of the Colour when, backed by the beauty of the Horse Guards Buildings, the Foot Guards, with that precision which has made them world-famous, move in slow time to

marches which have, for generations, played the Colours on and off parade. Or the beauty of aircraft at a military review flying wing-tip to wing-tip, dipping in salute—at one moment engines of death and destruction, at the next silver birds in the blue empyrean where they belong.

All these things stand for too much to be lightly discarded, because they bring colour and beauty into life; and if we can also add a touch of romance, then in very deed we have got all that is best. I remember, during the Coronation festivities in 1936, the enthusiasm with which London took the Canadian Mounted Police to its heart, cheering them to the echo whenever they appeared, in the splendour of their scarlet coats, big hats, and admirably cut pantaloons. I gave a little party for the men, and no sooner had the first bus-load been deposited on the pavement, than the news flew round the neighbourhood, and by the time they left there was a large crowd to greet them with enchanted shouts, because the "Mounties" stood for romance in their sight. They always "got their man", no matter how stern the chase or how wild the country they traversed. They stood for law and order among Indians and Esquimos in the great Northland; and they conjured up to the untravelled Britisher visions of an unknown country, the glories of the Rockies, the illimitable vastness of the Prairies, the spell-binding magic of the Arctic's frozen grandeur and midnight sun. These things they had never seen, but the Mounted Police brought them to the minds of London's men, women and children with a thrill. No wonder they cheered wildly at this blend of reality and fantasy. So never let us give up pomp and shows, but let Parliaments throughout the Empire open to the noise of guns, the crash of bands and all those attributes which pertain to kingship and its representatives. But once that representative has stepped off his temporary pedestal let him put all this behind him, re-

member that the honour and glory never belonged to him as an individual, but only as the representative of the Sovereign, and let him slip back into his own niche in life, glad to feel that he has done his best to serve his King and country.

I loved our years at Rideau Hall, though I am not the type which likes having its wings clipped by inhibitions, as clipped they always are in high positions; so I was quite ready, when the time came, to step off the pedestal of gubernatorial grandeurs, having also learnt that such pedestals are insecure places, admirable targets for the envious or ill-disposed. To me one of the worst inhibitions of those past days was the inability to accept hospitality from one's neighbours. I quite saw the need for this ruling from England, because there the King only dined in peers' houses, and in Canada there could be no such line of demarcation as to why you could dine with A and B but not with C and D, who were equally nice. Unfortunately, too, during our regime none of the Cabinet Ministers entertained—though with them we could have dined—nor was there the Diplomatic Corps which now exists and adds so much to the social life of Ottawa, and to whose houses the Governor-General can go, and on neutral ground, meet people whom he mightn't contact otherwise. That has made a great difference in the life of the inhabitants of Government House, for no matter how excellent your cook may be there are moments when you do crave for fresh fields and pastures new in the culinary line.

However, that was a minor restriction really and I was never bored at Ottawa because there was always a job to be done and much entertaining, which I liked. I was delighted to find, when I returned again, that among other things the fancy dress ball of my last birthday in Canada was still remembered and also the absurd musical comedy

“Oriental Ottawa”, written by my husband and acted by members of the staff and certain of our Ottawa friends, though at the time nobody, not even the actors (except Mr. Fred Pereira, who directed and produced it), knew who the author was. I was credited with it at first, nobody guessing that my husband had a great talent for patter and light verse, and it wasn’t till weeks after it was given that the truth came out. It was excellent entertainment, and though Mr. Pereira had to cut a good many lines as being too mocking—nobody was hurt by it. I attended rehearsals and felt that “Mrs. John Bassett” deserved a medal for her self-sacrifice in allowing herself to be made up as a hideous, toothless woman. Willis O’Connor was a nightmare caricature of an Englishman, and Eva Sandford, a belle of the Harem in a pair of full and gorgeous brocaded trousers. (These—fortunately at the dress rehearsal—fell in a heap round her feet, to the accompaniment of a shrill squeal from the housemaid who looked after her, and cried out, “There, I knew that elastic wouldn’t hold!”) We always had a fancy dress party about Christmas time, for children between certain ages, and how popular those parties were is proved by the fact that in the present day some stalwart young man will come up to me and say, “I remember going to one of your parties as Cupid, and what fun we had!” It’s good to know that they have happy memories of those days just as one has oneself.

But the crowning glory of all the entertaining was the annual Vimy Dinner of two hundred in the ballroom. And what a backache and footache was my fate that day!—it took me five hours to arrange the flowers for all the tables which accommodated the guests who came from the length and breadth of Canada. Unfortunately, the numbers had to be limited through lack of space, though we managed to include all the men who had played leading parts in the



Corps. Anyway, it was a riotous night, for they were all young again in spirit, as the pipers marched up and down the passages led by "Sandy" Urquhart, flushed and starry-eyed with excitement, and there were short—very short—speeches from my husband and Sir Arthur Currie, and a glorious reunion between officers who seldom met at any other time throughout the year. I don't think anybody got more joy out of "Vimy Night" than my husband, to be again among his old officers who were enjoying the hospitality he delighted to give them as his "thank you" for the way they had served him. Behind a small door I used to listen to the speeches and on the final "Vimy Night" came in, like a child for dessert, because on that occasion the motor-car presented by the Corps to my husband, and his portrait that they were giving me, had to be accepted. That evening is graven on my memory as one of the most harrowing of my life, because with all the gaiety of the dinner there was the shadow that here was the final reunion. There would be no more "Vimy Nights" at Government House, because once again we had come to the parting of the ways. I remember Arthur Currie rising to propose our health—with tears in his eyes—as he stumbled through what he had meant to say. Then my husband had to respond, but he was far worse than Sir Arthur, utterly speechless as the whole room rose up, a cheering, shouting crowd. It was hopeless to pretend we weren't stirred to the depths of our souls, so we just gave up pretending and quite frankly let the tears roll down till the tension was relieved by migrating to the front door where the car stood with its silver Beaver mascot on the bonnet and inside a fragrant mass of crimson roses.

The building of the car had its tale of affection, too, for when Willis came to tell me, in secret, that the Corps wanted to give us a car and were suggesting a Rolls Royce, I said I thought Julian would prefer a Canadian one, so a

Buick was decided on and put in hand at the McLaughlin Works. When the men, most of them old soldiers, heard about it, they wanted to do it free of pay as their offering, but that wasn't possible, the money having all been subscribed. But the men put in many a little added piece of workmanship free, and the story touched us as an evidence of what they felt for their old Corps Commander. Many years that car served us faithfully, and the silver Beaver, clasping his maple leaf, has been on every succeeding car and is, I hope, now reposing safely at my bank in London, till such time as he flaunts himself once again on a car in "England's green and pleasant land."

## CHAPTER VIII

O Canada ! Where pines and maples grow,  
Great prairies spread and lordly rivers flow.

JUSTICE R. S. WEIR.

**D**ESPITE the beauty of Canadian winters I could never get used to them. They were so endless; there were so many false starts in thaws that only led to icier roads and deferred the prospect of smelling the good earth and seeing young grass sprouting in the light of the clean sunshine; while time and again the little frozen streams failed to burst their bonds and race down the Rockcliffe slopes, to where the Ottawa River groaned and creaked in its efforts to break the harsh bondage of winter. One missed bird songs, because at home so many of our birds aren't migrants, and therefore at all times of the year there are the fluting notes of blackbirds and thrushes, the cheery song of the little robin redbreast and the clear pipe of cheeky wrens to break even the dullest winter days. But in Canada bird notes come late in the season and one has to possess one's soul in patience, and that, alas, isn't my longest suit. I realized, too, how essentially Canadian winters belonged to the young, who can join in pastimes that are beyond middle-aged people, though Julian and I tried to skate—with woe-ful results, for I never got beyond the stage of pushing a chair round the rink, whilst enduring torment from aching shins, and he got far enough to plod round unsupported, but rather unhappily, till one day he sat down on the ice so violently that he jarred himself from head to foot and remarked sourly, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." That was the end of our efforts in the direction of winter sports and we joyfully gave away our skates.

Winter was the busiest time at Rideau Hall, with entertaining, while the House was in session. Soon after our arrival my husband inaugurated small parties for M.P.s, who dined informally with himself and a few other men, and in this way he entertained members, many of whom did not own evening dress, for, as he wisely said, why should they be denied the hospitality of Rideau Hall by such a minor thing as lack of the "wedding raiment"? These small dinners, of from twelve to fourteen, were much appreciated by all concerned, and by nobody more than the host, who met his guests informally and gained, at first hand, knowledge of conditions in far-flung corners of the Dominion better than by any other means. I know how keen he was for these dinners to be continued by his successors, but they weren't.

One thing I missed sorely in Canada was the theatre, for Canadians aren't theatre-minded even in the big centres and in our time when good English companies brought London successes to Ottawa or other towns they were so poorly supported that they soon ceased coming, because neither they, nor their backers, could afford to lose money in such attempts. To me the lack of good plays was a grievous loss, and since my return this time, I have only seen one first-class play—or indeed, one of any kind—in Robert Sherwood's grim tragedy *There Shall Be No Night*, which I had the good fortune to catch in Ottawa and also in Victoria.

But if plays were denied me, there was ice hockey, and woe betide any member of the staff who tried to make engagements for a Saturday night during the hockey season, when I went regularly to "root" for the "Senators", with such fine players on the team as Gerrard, Nighbour, the Bouchers, Clancy and Denneny, to name but a few in those long-past days, who gave me many happy evenings during our five years at Rideau Hall. The only blemish to that sport was the childish mentality among a section of the

crowd which would vent its annoyance, on umpires or players, by showering the rink with rubbish, stopping the game and also—when coins were thrown—endangering players. There is a curious trait about Canadians, who will shout themselves hoarse at hockey or other games but remain completely mute when watching a military parade. Why? I have often seen, in these later days, soldiers proceeding to and from Parliament Hill for some ceremony, and though crowds will line the streets never a cheep do you get out of them, and one would think they were witnessing a funeral instead of the passing by of their own fighting men. And yet Canadians can cheer lustily, as I heard on the day we arrived at Ottawa when there was a vast mass of ex-Servicemen round Parliament Hill, and also when a few weeks later we went to the Exhibition Grounds at the Toronto Fair, where men of the old corps gave Julian an uproarious welcome that touched him deeply. Why then has the modern Canadian lost this gift of expressing himself?

Another joy in winter was the wealth of flowers produced in the Rideau Hall greenhouses. But, best of all, where flowers were concerned, was the time when the snow had finally departed and I could escape to the woods and find the wildlings. How lovely it was then to see the sheets of blue, yellow and white violets, the swaying beauty of lemon-coloured bellworts, the coarse-foliaged arbutus hiding its fragrant shell-pink blossoms in loamy woodlands; the bunchberries' creamy bracts, forerunners of those gay clusters of scarlet berries in autumn. There were the myriads of creeping plants which carpet the woods from coast to coast, according to their whims, in those early spring days before mosquitoes and black flies make the forests places of torment from which one is excluded, and before the summer days when we set forth on those long tours which took us to the West.

How I loved those journeys across the country, whose beauty varied so; the land of bare grim rocks, fir forests and endless lakes, which lie between Ottawa and Winnipeg and lead up to the grain fields of the Prairies; the lush grass of the cattle country; and the rolling sweep of the foothills beyond Calgary, backed by the majesty of snowcapped mountains in fold after fold of grandeur! I shall never see the Rockies without a quickening of my pulses and a lump in my throat, and when I crossed them on the last day of 1943 they moved me as deeply as on my first trip in July, 1922, with the Bow River rushing down in aquamarine-coloured rapids.

On this latest trip I met two British naval officers, Commander Pelly and Lieut. Owensmith, of the Fleet Air Arm, who were in my coach. Neither of them had been West before and I don't know which of us enjoyed it most—they at the astounding beauty seen for the first time—or I on my eleventh trip, at finding congenial spirits who wanted things pointed out to them. Unfortunately, we reached Calgary four hours late, and added to that the weather was thick in the mountains—clouds laden with snow obscured the valleys, though the mountain-tops stood out veiled in an unearthly blue mist, which I had never seen at any other time. It was getting dark by the time we reached Field, so we missed the Kicking Horse Pass, as the last night of the old year closed down on us with threatening storm, and but for the efforts of the enterprising young sailor we should have spent a dreary New Year's Eve. However, Lieut. Owensmith had ransacked Calgary for paper hats, crackers, paper streamers, and when dinner-time came he stood at the door of the diner with Miss Clark, a charming little C.W.A.A.C. officer, dishing out his absurd hats to each arrival. There weren't many people left on the train after Calgary, chiefly privates from different regiments, some airmen, a handful

of bright girls in the Forces going home for a bit of leave, a middle-aged couple who at first were a trifle uncertain as to the propriety of wearing the caps, three or four French-Canadian privates, going with the other men to Commando training at Vernon, my Scotch maid and myself. The French-Canadians viewed the proceedings with suspicion at first, but gradually they began to join in and when after dinner we foregathered in the Observation Car, hung with paper streamers, our self-appointed stage manager started everybody singing. The French—thoroughly thawed by then—roared “Alouette” at the tops of their voices, followed by songs of the last war and many older ones, till the year faded out in blinding snow and we went to bed having, thanks to the initiative of this English sailor, seen the New Year in cheerfully. Well did he deserve the gratitude he got when he was “chaired” round the swaying Observation Car; and if England continues to send out such types as this there will be no need to fear for the continuance of those precious bonds of friendship between the Old Country and other members of the Commonwealth which are essential to the well-being of both.

In days gone by we often lived on our train two and even three months at a time, but as cities were of necessity our goal for receptions, speeches and so forth, it meant an all-too fleeting glimpse of the countryside, where I longed to plunge into mysterious green forests, climb rugged mountains, or loaf beside jade and sapphire lakes framed in sombre cedars and silver-stemmed birches. Figuratively speaking, I was always holding out hungry hands to such enchanting but unattainable paradises, far from those beaten tracks, which I detested as cordially as in my childhood, and that same dislike simmers in me still; but now, with the piling up of the years, though the spirit is willing, the flesh lacks the strength to adventure far.

## UP THE STREAM OF TIME

Between 1921-26, however, I was young enough to wander afield, to ride and walk in search of beauties that appealed to me, and I camped in the Jasper district—in those days far less inhabited than now—sleeping on a fir bed made by an excellent guide. I watched the beavers at work and all the other wild beasts that roamed, though less confidently than they do now, in that beautiful park set aside for their safety. I remember the first night in camp when my maid, Vaughan, a prim and nervous spinster, thought she would take a walk on her own, while I was supping, away from camp, with Agnes Laut. When I returned it was to be met with the startling announcement that Miss Vaughan had disappeared. I was worried, knowing she would be scared stiff in the woods where we had our camp, for she had no bush sense, would never look back, nor mark down anything as a landmark. It was quite dark when I returned and I yelled myself hoarse, but with no response. We lit a big fire on the shore of the lake to guide her, but still nothing happened, until finally the distant splash of oars, and a man's voice called out that he was bringing her home. She had strayed right away till she fetched up at his cabin, petrified with cold and fright, so that her teeth were still chattering in her head, poor dear. When he landed her I packed her off to bed with a stiff drink of hot whiskey, to sleep off her adventure. Poor faithful Vaughan! She never really liked the wilds and after that if she ventured beyond the immediate camp it was always at my heels or at those of the guide, for she had learnt her lesson. She had been so keen to try the adventure that I brought her along, instead of leaving her comfortably on the train as I had intended doing. Many a time at night she would jump up convinced that bears, or heaven knows what other wild beasts, were trying to get into the tent, and when she actually saw one, prowling round in full daylight, she fled into the tent and refused



to come out, though it was only a half-grown little chap, much too intent on snuffling round the refuse heap to trouble about her or anything else.

I remember, too, an occasion when I had been lent Mrs. Fleck's house on Rock Lake—at that time well removed from other dwellings—and Willis O'Connor and I went there with a handful of servants, among them the head kitchenmaid from Government House. We were dropped at the little wooden siding by a train, bound for Algonquin Park, and as we walked through the woods to the house I saw the kitchenmaid—rather a posh young female, belonging essentially to towns, busily lipsticking her mouth, till a loon let loose its maniacal laugh. She dropped the lipstick, shrieked loudly enough to drown the voice of the loon, and streaked back to the siding, believing, no doubt, that the devil had come to claim her guilty soul. It took a long time to persuade her, in the words of a popular song of those days, that

Down in the forest something stirred,  
It was only the song of a bird.

There were other happy moments spent in the wilds, that linger in my mind. Once when we stayed with Mr. Bruce—then Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia—at his home in the Windemere Valley, he took me on a three-day visit to Paradise Mine, up Toby Creek, which he had owned for many years. It was a wonderful trip but for the drive up, over an extremely narrow road, with a series of hairpin turns only negotiable by driving the nose of the lorry smack into the bank, then backing, so far as the narrow space permitted without falling into eternity; and repeating the manoeuvre, each time with a slightly different angle of impact, till, with a final fierce wrench, the driver swung round the corner. It was hardly my idea of a pleasant afternoon's drive. Nor

was I cheered when I saw a wrecked car suspended on a tree half-way down the mountain, and was told it had got out of control, crashing into the tree where it now hung. One man had been killed, the other lay all night with a broken leg till the lorry driver found him next morning. I determined then that I would walk the five miles down when we returned—and I did!

However, the setting of Paradise Mine fully lived up to the name, for I never saw a lovelier spot. Stillness brooded over it, except when the miners came or went to their labours underground; and after that the only sounds were of birds, or mountain marmots seated at the entrance to their burrows and talking to one another through the medium of a ventriloquism so perfect that it out-vies Edgar Bergen, for it was impossible to tell whence came the voices which kept up an incessant little chatter. But since nobody disturbed them they weren't really shy and I found one could watch them at close quarters without causing undue disturbance.

At first glance, the hillside, bathed in the clarity of high altitudes, seemed to have been dusted over with snow, owing to the feathery akenes of *Anemone Occidentalis*, rising above a carpet of mountain plants which clung close to the ground. There were patches of golden drabas, heather, columbines and many others, but I made a straight line for the anemones, thinking that at last I should get a fine selection of seeds. They weren't even approaching ripeness, however, and I learnt it was impossible to get them, because the marmots kept such a sharp look-out that the moment the seeds were ready the little beasts did all the harvesting, using them as linings for their burrows to guard against the cold of winter. (Years later I had a particularly fine type of *Anemone Pulsatilla* at Thorpe, which I watched anxiously waiting for the seed heads to ripen, and one evening I saw

that in two days, at latest, they would be ready to collect. The next morning every head had gone—neatly cut off with a knife, as I thought. I flew round asking questions and suspecting one man who had an unholy passion for “tidying up” regardless of what seeds were marked for saving. But he was innocent and it wasn’t till a week later that I found a dead mouse in a trap, with a head of the anemone firmly held in its jaws! So it wasn’t only the Canadian marmots who used anemone seeds to line their nests!)

It was during the same stay with Mr. Bruce that I found the “Chatterbox Orchid” at Fairmount Hot Springs, then his property and fortunately unknown to trippers. The quaint little orchids with their small blossoms certainly earns the name, for they do suggest old women’s faces as they nod and dance on their long, stiff stems. The plant was growing profusely beside the hot spring itself, in a carpet of that dwarf maidenhair fern, which is less hardy than the *Adiantum pedatum* of the East, whose fronds turn a lovely silver in the early autumn. I collected a good supply of both orchid and fern, which are now multiplying happily at Thorpe.

There was another refuge of mine on the lower St. Lawrence, “Le Fleuve”, as the *Habitant* calls it, since to him no other river exists, for he has never heard of the Peace, the Mackenzie, the Fraser or the Thompson. Why should he, uneducated as he still is? “Le Fleuve” means much to him, for it brings food in the shape of salmon, eels, Tommy-cod and delicious smelts; fuel for winter in driftwood carried on its swift current; and in peacetime it conveys to his door American tourists who buy his wife’s and daughters’ handiwork of hooked rugs and woven material, or his own simple carvings in white wood. “Le Fleuve” is his fairy godmother, as he tills his long narrow fields, whose protecting fences make the countryside look like an antique

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embroidery with brown stitching dividing it into evenly patterned sections. He knows all the moods of that great waterway, which glides along sometimes with the sluggish laziness of some hypochondriac to whom the thrust of an ebbing or flowing tide seems too great an effort; at another time it whips itself into a Bacchanalian orgy of white-capped waves that rushes and swirls, battering the long curving shore, casting up on it relics of long-past wrecks, which time and tides have torn asunder, releasing their contents. "Le Fleuve" can smile or scowl almost as much as the open sea to which it is hastening; and the *Habitant* knows eerie tales which cling to it, having heard them from his father and grandfather, as they on their side heard them far-away down the centuries, when the "Conteur" passed them on, beginning with his invitation to all and sundry:

Cric, crac, girls and boys,  
Parlons, parlee, parlow  
The whole thing if you want to know  
(Pass the spittoon to Fiddle Joe).  
Sac-a-tabì, sac-a-tabac,  
All who are deaf will please draw near.

Then would follow such tales as that of the Dripping Indian, first seen two hundred years ago by a party of fishermen on a moonlit night near the Sault au Recollets, but who made no response when they hailed him, as he crouched over a fire burning on the ground. He was the ghost of a Huron Indian who, having murdered Père Nicolas Viel by drowning in 1672, was caught by the devil when drying himself before a fire and condemned to sit forever in front of a fire which gave out no heat, whilst from his dripping body no water ever fell to the ground.

The "Chasse Galerie" dealt with Black Magic, only to be worked by those who never attended confession, like Titange the boatman who wanted to get from Québec to Three

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Rivers for a Christmas dance, and invited several friends, among them "Fiddle Joe" because he could chant the incantation:

Satan our master fair  
Heave us up in the air,  
Wing, wang, wong,  
Drive us along  
On the night's dark wing.

But nothing happened and Titange, infuriated at his failure, proceeded to smash the canoe with his axe till, coming to the bows, the axe turned in his grasp and cut the sinews of his arm, because "Fiddle Joe" had pinned a picture of the Christ Child on the bows. So Titange was left with a crippled hand, unable any longer to ply his trade.

"La Corriveau" was a real figure, murderess and poisoner, hanged somewhere in the sixteenth century, in an iron cage at the four roads of St. Joseph, near Pointe Lévis, and she, it was said, used to pursue her victims—cage and all—across the stretch of water leading to the Isle of Orleans, called at that time "The Isle of Sorcerers", perhaps after her misdeeds.

In that same neighbourhood was the floating head of Peter Soulard, the boastful ferryman who declared no weather could beat him. In punishment he drowned with his boatload of passengers, and sometimes the Phantom Head of Soulard floats in the river on foggy nights, while those who see it die within the year.

The Lorelei legend has its counterpart in the dreaded Indian witch "Matshi Skuoëu", who comes gliding down a moonbeam, wreathed with iris blooms, and lures her victims to their death with her music. There are many other tales too numerous to give here.

On me "Le Fleuve" has always cast a binding spell by its vastness, its beauty, and its archaic atmosphere. I love the

houses along its shore, with their steeply pitched roofs that take an upward turn; and the bare fields outlined by rail fences; the hamlets dominated by disproportionately large churches, for whose construction the luckless *Habitant* has to pay with the sweat of his brow as he bends over his fields, only raising his head from tilling the soil to bend it again in those over-mastering churches. But the churches have a great artistic value on the rolling landscape, since they transform it into the background of some early Primitif, and one instinctively looks for the sweet-faced Virgin and child in the crystal-clear air. As one enters the narrower spaces of "Le Fleuve" after the ocean crossing, it's to be greeted by a haunting fragrance, compounded of moist forests, of pines, poplars, alders, newly cut lumber, and the heady perfume of white clover, which combine to form that essence which is forever Canada, to the home-returning Canadian, and to the stranger entering its gates.

Grand Métis, lying at a point where the river is thirty-five miles wide, has been one of my havens of refuge, and I am always amused at the little village with its white painted houses sprinkled over the bluff that dominates the great waterway. I have seen grander sunsets on that stretch of curving shore than anywhere else in the world, I think. Wild, stormy, blazing in crimson, gold, and orange and green, they stain the sky, while an unearthly stillness reigns, though the rocks are crowded with gulls and cormorants. The latter's long necks outstretched against the sky line suggest the crenellated battlements of some fairy fortress. Over it all broods that silence in which ducks quack *sotto voce*, as if fearful of breaking its peace, the low cry of loons comes moaningly landwards; while the faint tinkle of the Métis River as it hastens impatiently seaward falls on the ear. The sunsets glory flames arrogantly for a final moment when the Western sky spreads forth a fleecy bed of clouds for the



FANCY DRESS BALL AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE, JANUARY 11, 1926  
Group of "Catherine of Russia and her court".

*Left to right:* Mrs. Arthur Sladen; Mrs. H. Snow; Lady Byng; Miss Eva Sandford;  
Mrs. H. Willis O'Connor

sun's escape from the pursuing globe of a full moon, rising apace in the eastern sky. One realizes at that moment the full meaning of "The peace which passeth all understanding". At night comes the glory of Northern Lights sweeping ethereally across the sky, their rose and emerald tones staining the inshore waters of the great river. But these are forerunners of winter when snow will blanket the land, ice mute the chattering Métis River, leaving a thin skin on the edges of "Le Fleuve" itself, though the main channel of steel-grey waters will not halt but hastens seawards, indifferent to winter's chill hand, for "Le Fleuve" bows to no conqueror.

But escapes to solitudes were short-lived during our sojourn here in the past, and it was the tours which brought me spells of delight. Out of these, two remain most clearly in my memory. The first was to Dawson City in 1922, when we travelled ten days by boat and train from Victoria, over places which had made history in the days of the Gold Rush. In 1922 the dwellers in that Northland were still prisoners from autumn till early summer, or only able to travel by dog-team over frozen wastes through the short winter days, and by night when the Aurora Borealis spread forth its glory and the howls of marauding wolves didn't add to the pleasures of traversing those snowy wastes. Most people had perforce to "stay in" till the break-up came, for which they looked and on which gamblers betted, waiting eagerly for the first booming that told the ice was breaking on the river, and that all the "groaning and travailing" attendant on the birth of spring in those distant latitudes was making itself heard at last.

In 1922 Dawson and the Arctic were not accessible, as they are now by aeroplane, as Mr. Macdonald tells in his delightful book *Down North*, when he flew from Edmonton to Aklavik, Dawson, and back, in twelve days. What a contrast to Mrs. George Black's description in *My Seventy*



Years of her "mushing" over the trail; or the story *Klondike Mike* (Michael Mahoney, a penniless pioneer, now a prosperous haulage merchant in Ottawa). Those two books, among others, tell of days in the North Country, and, much though I like flying, I don't feel I want to do that trip by plane because one would miss seeing many things.

We went by boat from Victoria to Prince Rupert, after which for many a day the smell of the salmon cannery lingered in my nose, though I believe that's all changed now. From Prince Rupert we went through the Wrangell Narrows, only negotiable for ships in foggy weather by means of the siren and its answering echo from surrounding rocks. Luckily it was a beautiful day when we passed through to Juneau, the capital of Alaska, where the American Governor kindly drove us round to see the totem poles, and other relics that thrill the tourists, and incidentally he gave us an excellent dinner before we continued our journey, through a series of lovely islands, past the live and dead Taku glaciers lying side by side. I realized then how a dead glacier loses its colour and beauty just as a dead person does.

After the islands we came to Skagway and thence by train towards Dawson, though that objective lay many miles away, as the pioneers learnt to their cost. I was glad that the narrow-gauge line only permitted of slow progress by the puffing little train, because it gave one time to appreciate what the Chillcoot Pass, Dead Horse Gulch and all those other ghost-ridden places had meant during the Gold Rush. "Gold is where you find it", as the prospector says, knowing by bitter experience that it is as uncertain in its habitat as a woman in her varying moods, so that many a heartache and disappointment has followed a promising start to find man's greatest lure. Hundreds paid with their lives on that cruel trail where disorder, injustice, crime were rife; but on the other hand, endurance, heroism and unselfishness also

set their mark here and there on the road, where countless beasts of burden—unsustained by their masters' hopes of wealth—struggled and died, so that my heart went out more to the memory of the mules, horses and dogs, whose whitened bones were scattered over Dead Horse Gulch and other portions of that grim Calvary, than to the men buoyed up with hopes, who of their own free will, had ventured on that Will-o'-the-Wisp hunt into the unknown.

It was a wonderful journey up to Bennett—once a great rest camp, though when we reached it 'twas an uninhabited, sun-drenched spot—beside Lake Bennett's deceptively calm waters. They are deceptive because near the lake the wild rapids of Miles Canyon race in a thirty-mile-an-hour current between frowning rocks, and the Squaw Rapids Whirlpool swirl below the flumes of the Whitehorse River, to empty itself more than a thousand miles northwards in the wastes of the ocean. Bennett has seen countless tragedies, as the temporary resting-place for over thirty thousand men and a handful of venturesome women. But in our time it had an air of brooding peace as I listened to the tragic tale of a miner who, coming down from the Yukon with a rich "poke" of gold, was caught in the raging rapids, losing all his possessions. He stubbornly set his face northwards again and returned a second time, with the same result, but on a third attempt to conquer the malignancy of the river gods, the same fate befell him and he blew out his brains. Who can blame him?—for there is an end even to the most determined optimism.

It seemed incredible that this lonely spot could ever have been a rest camp at which thousands paused to buy or build boats—to haggle, fight, and try to outwit one another. What a babel of tongues from all lands had then torn the peaceful air! But in our time one found hardly a trace of human habitation, except the skeleton of a wooden church,

or the blackened stones of an outdoor cooking-place where rough meals had been eaten by men pressing on recklessly to a country whose wealth had been a clarion call in their ears. But as I thought of all these people, my day-dreaming was broken by hearing Tommy Erskine say, meditatively, as he kicked the shin-bone of some big animal, "Why do we never have marrow bones at Government House?" The remark brought me back to earth with a bump.

Carcross was our next stop, on Lake Tagish; then Whitehorse, where the railway ended on the summit of land where the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes floated side by side, while a Mounted Policeman, speaking an unbelievable number of languages, coped with the hordes of foreigners, who in those days, still crossed the frontier between the Yukon and Alaskan Territories. America made a good buy when she acquired the latter. Yet who at the time could have foreseen that in 1943 the Alaska Highway would leap into being as a great route linking the extreme West to the extreme East of the globe, and proving how small, given the combination of men and modern machinery, is this world where we struggle for the things that are precious to us, as the pioneers and prospectors struggled for gold in the days gone by?

From Whitehorse we travelled in a flat-bottomed stern-wheeler which chugged its way leisurely up the river, pausing to collect fuel from piled-up cordwood on the banks. Once we stopped at an unscheduled point to deposit a couple of prospectors, loaded with their equipment, in a place bare of all human habitation, and as we left them on that sandy shore, backed by endless mountains, one realized more than ever the vastness of that country. There was something sinister in leaving these two men alone in that immensity and I often wondered what happened to them—where they went; what sort of life they led; whether

they turned back to civilization, died in the wilderness, or were caught in the spell of the land of which Robert Service wrote:\*

It's the great, big, broad land 'way up yonder,  
 It's the forests where silence has lease;  
 It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,  
 It's the stillness that fills me with peace.

We reached a gaily beflagged Dawson on a hot August afternoon, to be greeted by a crowd of people, by Mounted Police, "Old-timers" carrying their banners, and innumerable, scratching Huskies. The sight of the Police took one's thoughts back to the days when Captain Constantine and Sergeant Brown were the forerunners of an absurdly small force which maintained law and order in a world of lawless men and women, and when that handful of men made for themselves an immortal place in the history of the North-West. But Dawson was quiet enough when we arrived; its glamour had faded with its lawlessness, though there remained landmarks of the past, where thousands had seethed in the unpaved streets, lined with wooden shacks, shops and liquor stores. Some of these still existed then. Mr. Macdonald speaks of them when he was there two years ago, and as I read his *Down North* I knew that on him, as on myself, the North had cast its magic spell. Why does it thrust itself so deeply into one's heart, giving one a strange nostalgia for that land of adventure, success and tragedy? Is it the vast uninhabited wilds? The mountains and forests, the lush flower-decked meadowland, the wide rivers and raging rapids? Or is it some emanation from the spirit of the "Old-timers" which haunts the scene? Some of them were still living when we went there, for they were bound to the land by those same intangible bonds. They spoke of the

\*From "The Spell of the Yukon" in *Complete Poems*, and quoted by kind permission of the publishers, The Ryerson Press, Toronto, Canada.

riotous days, when lumber sold at four hundred dollars per thousand feet, flour at three hundred dollars a sack, and writing-paper, so porous as to be almost unusable, at fifty cents a sheet, while land fetched a thousand dollars a foot in an embryonic town which never reached maturity and over whose remnants Ichabod was now writ large.

“Placer mining” was still in progress in our day, and we watched the water jets that tore mountains apart, driving the dirt into flumes where the ore settled in the “riffles” and the residue was shot into hideous slag heaps which defiled and scarred the banks of the Yukon River. Bonanza, Eldorado and all the other famous names were still there, and we wandered about among them, panning for gold beside a creek, walking or driving through that wild, lovely land where man seemed an anachronism.

The town gave us a ball, where I danced with “Sourdoughs” and Mounted Police, some of whom had ridden in hundreds of miles from their lonely outposts to welcome us. On them too lay that spell of the North, far from the clatter of cities; and nowadays I often find, on talking to older men on duty round the Houses of Parliament in Ottawa or at Government House, that they still hanker for the wilds whence they were probably dragged by wives to whom its solitude was intolerable.

We visited “Old-timers” round the Dawson country who lived in tiny one-room shacks; and I learnt how the law of the Yukon decrees that help must go to those past work who still cling to the country, content to bask in the sun of the nightless summer days, knowing want will never come to them, because out of all game shot a percentage comes to them; wood will be piled outside their home for winter fuel; vegetables and baskets of sweet wild raspberries make their appearance when ripe. They have no worries, because it’s the law of the Yukon that those who have laboured should

be cared for. On the other hand, it was no slackers' paradise, because a slacker found short shrift there, and if he wouldn't work he couldn't eat. He was bluntly notified that his passage was taken on an outward-bound ship and he must quit or starve—which was practical politics.

But the old "Sourdough" was safe, until the day came when some neighbour got no response to his knock on the door. A body lay in the bunk whence the spirit had returned to the God who gave it, and the husk remained in that land from which he had never "gone out" when the ice broke in the springtime. Perhaps the woman whose faded photograph (taken in old-fashioned clothes) pinned above his built-in bunk, knew why he had never returned to civilization. There were few possessions in the shack: the pan he had used in the creeks when he hunted for gold and which was to be laid at the feet of the woman who had failed to wait for him; a worn-down pick and shovel; and the few pots and pans needed for his simple cooking. Those were all the "estate" he left. But if the Yukon had denied him gold it had brought him fellowship, kindness and the heritage of a great land which had harboured him for many years, and whose earth would lie lightly on his coffin.

The other tour which has lived clearly in my memory was made the following year. Everything had been planned for a visit to the Maritimes but between the planning and the tour, a bad strike broke out in Sydney, N.S., and the Ottawa Government—getting the wind up, after the fashion of Governments—decreed that we must cut out that part of our tour. They hadn't realized that my husband had a mind of his own and, once he had undertaken to do a thing, or keep a promise, he never reneged "come hell and high water". So he turned down their objections with the plain statement that he was going to Sydney. Then they suggested, perhaps with an idea of still stopping him,

that, of course "Her Excellency couldn't go". He answered that it depended entirely on what I decided. Naturally I said I was going—why not? There was much head-shaking in political circles and they disapproved still more when Julian announced that he wished to have no police protection during our stay there. To them this seemed rank madness. But my husband was wiser than they, so we went.

Having visited the other places on the schedule we reached Sydney on a hot summer's day, to find a seething mob milling on the platform onto which we stepped, as cheers rang out. Everybody crowded round us laughing, shouting, welcoming us warm-heartedly till a way was cleared to the waiting cars by the leaders of the strike, and we drove off to the town hall for the usual reception, speeches and lunch—just as we should have done in any other town when on tour. After the meal we were taken round by the managers of the works—who didn't seem much pleased at doing so, to judge by their rather gloomy faces as crowds mustered everywhere, friendly crowds. Before returning to the train the workers asked if we would be their guests at a reception in the public gardens that night and we accepted. More horror from the officials! But it was, they decided, our funeral, not theirs—if there was to be a funeral at all. I shall never forget that reception of thousands, mostly ex-soldiers and their wives and families, of whom not one of them would have allowed anything to harm us. How many handshakes we gave and received that night I never knew—but our hands and arms ached by the time we were escorted back to the train, to find a bodyguard of the strikers—because they knew there were no police!

How right my husband had been in his judgment! Had we allowed the presence of police it would have looked as though we didn't trust the people in Sydney, and they were quick to respond to the trust placed in them. When we left

next day it was from the same seething crowd, singing "Will ye no come back again?" From what little I glimpsed of conditions there, in those days, my sympathy was entirely with the men, for I never saw a more wretched lot of hovels or a more complete lack of any attempt at social service for the employees though, I believe all that has changed since those long-ago days.

The only trip on which I didn't accompany my husband was his visit to Aklavik, a different proposition then to now, with present-day means of transport, for he had to sail down the Peace and Mackenzie Rivers, to Aklavik, a trip which was supposed to be too rough for me, though I shall always regret I didn't insist on going. It would have been a great experience to attend a formal reception at 2 a.m.—in broad daylight, of course—when the official seats were the lids of sewing-machine boxes and the "refreshments" hot blubber served in a "loving-cup" consisting of a tin article of private domestic use, left by a whaler captain as a parting gift! My husband told me of the simple life led by the Esquimos, whose faith was uncomplicated by dogmas or ritual and consisted in saying Christ was the best man who had ever lived and that it was good to emulate him. So long as a baby was a helpless piece of humanity it was everybody's job to help it, but the moment it was old enough to twist a rope, or do any work, it took its place in the scheme of things. They were anxious to hear about the King, an unknown quantity to them, whose greatness could only be brought home to them by explaining that he owned more ships than all the whalers they had ever seen added together. They were hospitable, generous, friendly, and sent me a fine white fox pelt. But how I wished I had gone there!

Of course at some places we had comic episodes, generally provided by the local dogs, most of whom—especially the worst mongrels—were called "Byng", or "Bungo"; and



during outdoor receptions, thinking it was all staged for their benefit, and to show their appreciation they promptly started the most awful fights. Agitated female voices used to ring out in shrill cries of "Byng! Byng! You wicked boy—come here at once!" All the notice my husband's battling namesake took was to increase the volume of noise and fury, till the fighting pair rolled between the legs of the guard of honour, who surreptitiously landed kicks at them, and anguished yelps rose above the growlings and snarlings while some shy and perspiring mayor tried to make himself heard in an oration on my husband's prowess as a soldier. When the dog-owners came past to shake hands, they would say apologetically, "I'm so sorry dear little Byng was naughty, but you see he's a great fighter and that's why we called him after you." Other outdoor receptions were enlivened by physical indiscretions on the part of the dogs, which covered their luckless owners with shame, and reduced us to suppressed convulsions of laughter. Anyhow, the dogs added a welcome note of unrehearsed humour to solemn occasions.

After one ceremony I was the victim of a startling headline in the local paper. It happened to be an early, rather chilly, spring day, when my husband unveiled a war memorial, and a child opened the ceremony by presenting me with a bouquet and then went back to its mother. Seeing the little girl wore only a light-weight frock without any wrap, I signalled her to come back to me, which she did, and I wrapped my coon coat round us both till the end of the ceremony. Next morning the local paper carried in huge letters the headline, "Suffer little children to come unto me", and since I don't pretend to have a great love for, or understanding of children, you can imagine what capital the staff made out of that!

Another episode occurred when visiting two small and

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remote towns within a mile of one another. Nothing would induce them to make it a joint affair, so we had to pass from one to the other, and how we were to do this had evidently been a bone of contention. Town A had a fire engine and two white horses; town B had a hearse and two black horses plus an antiquated landau, the only horse-drawn vehicle available. That led to more discussion—to put it mildly!—till they decided to pool their resources. The hearse horses, rather rusty blacks, were put between traces of the landau, the white fire-engine horses in the lead, and to satisfy the two Jehus they were both put on the box, each driving his own team. Away we went, a long snake-like procession in the summer sunshine, headed by the local band, the ex-Servicemen, and so forth, while behind the carriage came Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, the “City Fathers” in cars, and the rest of the outfit. All went well till we realized there was a violent argument raging between our drivers, which terminated in the abrupt halting of the carriage, so that everybody behind us telescoped with everybody else, while the band and ex-Servicemen got a good start. Then we saw the cause of the trouble. One of the coachmen had been chewing tobacco and the time had come for him to spit, and had he not stopped we should have had it full in the face. However, he did stop, spat vigorously and harmlessly over the side, then whipped the horses into a smart trot in order to overtake the advance guard; which meant that those behind us had to come along breathlessly at the double in order not to lose touch. I often wonder who said what to who, when we had left the district!

An episode of a different type happened to us on, I think, the Arrow Lakes. We were scheduled to do a show at a very small place there and, as usual dressed in our best, on a dry hot day we foregathered on the deck of the steamer which was our temporary home, rather bemoaning the fact that we

couldn't go for a walk in the cool of the evening instead of stewing at a reception. The small settlement for which we were making lay round a wooded promontory jutting into the lake and the Captain sounded a formidable blast on his siren to appraise the inhabitants of our august approach. Round the corner we swung, to find a completely bare stretch of sand, except for an old, old man sitting on a log and smoking a pipe, while a few dogs flew barking furiously to the water's edge at this disturbance of their siesta. It was rather startling, as we had settled long ago—at the request of the local reeve—to visit this spot, so an A.D.C. was sent ashore to tackle the barking dogs and “the oldest inhabitant”, who hadn't stirred on our approach, but continued smoking his pipe. Back came the emissary convulsed with laughter and leaving the old man still peacefully smoking. He had simply jerked his pipe towards the distance and said that everybody was fighting a fire up in the forest out of sight! Evidently in the excitement of the fire our visit had been wiped off the tablets of their minds. Anyhow, we were delighted and I don't think any of us ever made a quicker change of clothes from best bib and tucker into “ratecatcher”, and we went for a lovely walk, though pestered by flies and mosquitoes. But that was the only complete “flop” in all our trips on thousands of miles. I believe if my memory serves me right we covered by boat and train well over a hundred thousand miles in our five years of office.

Unfortunately, we only paid the Maritimes one visit, though everything was ready for a second tour, in the summer of 1926, but as there was an election pending the Government vetoed our going. All the more do I regret it nowadays, when I should like to see the Annapolis Valley in full bloom; but as an evacuee, travelling is impossible, except when the necessity for seeking refuge from the rigours of winter in Ottawa arises. So I shall never again see the

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great rock at Percé, the huge tides of Fundy, or the stern beauty of the Gaspé Peninsula, which I remember in summer sunshine twenty-one years ago.

## CHAPTER IX

The book of Life begins with a man and a woman in a garden.

*A Woman of No Importance.*

OSCAR WILDE.

AND SO time slipped by till 1926 dawned and the end of our five years in that city of towers and spires, trees and noble rivers was in sight. In the spring a suggestion was afloat that my husband should take on a completely fresh term of office after a rest in England. It was a compliment, but as Julian said to me, "Nothing doing, for we are both tired and couldn't pull our weight, as we have tried to do so far. Besides, politicians change their minds, and if that happened we should be in the soup." He was wise, as events soon showed. We certainly were tired, and I was hungry for my home, my garden and all the household gods dear to every woman's soul, and yet sad at the thought of parting from a land and a people whom we had learnt to love. Besides, it entailed breaking up happy memories of a staff which in spite of changes and fluctuations had always been a wonderfully united and happy family at Government House; so that was another wrench.

What a good lot they had been, as we looked back on them—starting with Oswald Balfour, inherited from the Devonshires, who, though a very sick man when we arrived, carried on gallantly till he went to take up a business career in the United States. Since then he has bought a tiny house on the Thorpe marsh, so he is still near at hand, though he has seen little of his home during the war, having gone back to the War Office.

There was Charlie Price-Davis, promptly nicknamed "Grandma" because of his primness, till Billy Scott and

Ronnie Stanyforth bullied him out of it. Billy was a headache to many Ottawa ladies who were never sure when he was in earnest or when he was pulling their legs; and I am afraid it was most often the latter, for he had the pawky Scotch humour which spared nobody.

We had brought out with us at the start two young Guardsmen, Tommy Erskine, who found himself a Canadian wife, and my husband's step-great-nephew, Billy Joliffe. It would have been hard to find a greater contrast than those two, though they were close friends, for Tommy saw the funny side of things and could laugh heartily at himself. Billy had too much sense of personal dignity to do so, and I remember once as we walked into a big hall for a civic lunch, with Billy heading the procession, a girl's shrill voice suddenly rang out, "Say—that's some Candy Kid!" His face went scarlet and he was furiously angry, instead of being flattered that his golden curls and pink and white skin had so thrilled a stranger! On the other hand, when a far worse mishap happened to Tommy, nobody laughed at it more whole-heartedly than he did. This also happened on tour, when we were being shown round a new building of which the city was proud, and Tommy headed the procession. As we reached a flight of stone stairs he caught his spurs in the topmost step and shot down, in a sitting position, to the landing below, where we expected to see an inert mass. Not a bit—there he stood, grinning broadly, and dusting off his immaculate overalls. Then turning to descend the next flight he repeated the performance, landing on the ground floor with such a clatter of spurs and sword that it sounded as if a kitchen range had broken loose. By then we were all helpless with laughter except the "City Fathers" who kept grave faces. Was it dignity? Or did they think the liquor on the Governor-General's train was specially potent!

Another A.D.C. in the person of "Wooley" Gordon, used to play the pipes—not too tunefully—in the garden after dark. And there was Colonel Humphrey Snow, Comptroller during the latter part of our time, with his extravagant but excellent taste, who remained with the Willingdons, having the time of his life with all the changes at Government House and the Citadel. And there were others—transients one might call them—who either didn't quite fit, or were recalled to their regiments.

Among Canadians was Pierre Archambault ("Archie"), a quiet, unobtrusive person, now a Brigadier, and one of those silent people who one always felt would be thoroughly dependable in a tight corner. He was newly married and now has a son serving in the R.C.A.F. The best story about "Archie" was the occasion when my husband was giving one of his small men's dinners to M.P.s, and as there was a preponderance of Frenchmen "Archie" was included to help things along. However, he sat completely mute throughout the meal, except when he was heard to say, "Pass the salt, pleees," to a neighbour from Quebec!

Another French couple was George Vanier with his beautiful wife, also a bride, who served us faithfully and well, and whom we often saw in London till he went as High Commissioner to Paris, where they both had narrow escapes from German bombs before they got out of the country. Three years ago they were back in Quebec, where George was commanding the troops, and they threw themselves heart and soul into the difficult task of teaching their fellow-countrymen what the war meant, and above all what it demanded of them. Nobody could have been better suited to that task than George and Pauline, especially after the experiences they could tell about escaping from France. From there, back they went to England, then to "somewhere in

North Africa", and now he is Ambassador to France and will, I know, make a success of yet another difficult job.

The private secretary, Pat Hodgson, who followed us out during the first winter, having heard so much about the Canadian cold, arrived half dead, after travelling from Halifax in an over-heated train (air-conditioning hadn't then come into being), as he had dressed himself in underwear of much the same texture as that from which a numnah to put under a horse's saddle is made. The genesis of the friendship between my husband and this most true friend dated back to late in 1917 when 3rd Army Headquarters were at Albert. There at the battered house near the church appeared a small, nervous man, by occupation a clerk in the House of Lords, who was to replace, for a few days only, a Staff Officer who had gone sick. The newcomer had never seen his chief. On the morning of his arrival, and when about to take in a trayful of papers, the senior A.D.C., Basil Brooke, not meaning to scare him, said, "By the way, you'd better watch your step, the Chief's a bit crusty this morning." It put the lid on things for the already frightened stranger and, when he opened the door of the G.O.C.'s office, a fierce gust of wind, blowing through windows out of which all the glass had long been blasted, caught the contents of the tray and shot them like a snowstorm into the room ahead of him. Rushing forward in trembling agitation, as Pat picked up one piece of paper he dropped six, and was scrambling all over the floor, until a voice from the writing-table said dryly, "Must you?" Far too scared to look up and see the twinkle in the blue eyes that surveyed him over a pair of spectacles, or the humorous smile twitching the mouth of his new General, Pat fled in dismay, his clowning act unintentional but so excellent that it would have brought down the house on any music-hall stage, though



perhaps hardly calculated to impress the G.O.C. with his new staff officer, had it not made him laugh heartily.

From this seemingly inauspicious start there grew up the closest friendship, which continued till my husband's death. Pat not only remained with 3rd Army Headquarters till peace came, but accompanied his general to the "Byng Millions" job, and finally to Canada. Had there been a niche for him at Scotland Yard he would have gone there, too, I'm sure, for he was the most faithful friend; and when Julian died Pat rushed down to me at Thorpe by the first available train and gave me all the help and comfort in his power. He loved Canada and Canadians, and in London was always at hand to make lonely Canadian boys on their first trip to England feel happy; and now he keeps the link welded by working for the Canadian Red Cross. More than anybody else he was a source of amusement to us by reason of his fearful absent-mindedness. He would trot about muttering inaudibly to himself, frequently landing in most ludicrous situations. One of these was a night on the train, when he had stayed up late doing some job, and came floundering—as he always floundered—down the corridor. But why he mistook Eva's cabin for his own, since they were on opposite sides of the train, nobody could have said. But he did, bursting in, dropping onto the bed—and incidentally into her middle—before turning up the light; then, seeing what he had done, flying out with a cry of "Oh, my God!" As she told him next day, she didn't mind his sudden intrusion, but what she did resent was the cry of horror when he saw her.

That was only one of the endless occasions on which Pat gave us a hearty laugh for, in addition, he was an excellent mimic, and would sometimes perch one of my hats on his head and imitate me receiving a bouquet from a child. He would vamp delightfully on the piano, slipping in a couple

of chords, from the most frivolous to the most classical music; and he played the piano when my husband's step-great-nieces, Mary and Elizabeth Byng, taught him to dance, because he declared it was intolerable at the balls we gave, either to sit on the dais and have a series of ladies brought up to talk to, or to wander round like a forlorn ghost. So the dancing lessons started. Whether in his youngest son's childhood Lord Strafford had economized, by denying him dancing lessons, or whether—which was possible—Julian had hated them and been mulish about learning, I don't know—anyhow, at fifty he had no more idea of dancing than an elephant. I can see him now being pushed and pulled round by myself and the two girls, gyrating slowly with his jaw stuck out, and a tense expression on his face as he counted aloud, "One, two AND three; One, two AND three," till at last he mastered the waltz. He had, of course, to dance with officials' wives and they, like their husbands, weren't the most expert performers. I once heard him say plaintively to Willis, "Next time, for heaven's sake, bring me a partner who won't stand on both my feet at the same time. I've got corns and I'm a pretty poor dancer, but dash it all, even Nijinsky couldn't dance if a woman stood on both his feet at once!"

Then there was Willis O'Connor who dated from the start till the end of our term. As soon as Churchill offered Julian the post he told me that in his opinion a Canadian on the permanent staff of the G.G. was essential—somebody who knew conditions and people, especially in Ottawa, and who would see that we didn't ask mortal enemies to the same party or seat them side by side at dinner. He added that he knew the right man in Arthur Currie's trusted A.D.C. during the war. So Willis came to Thorpe, where I saw him for the first time, plump, urbane and with such an aura of kindness and simplicity that I took to him at

once. When he heard what Julian had in mind he was rather taken aback and, as always in moments of perplexity or shyness, rubbed his round chin vigorously, then said he would do his best, to which he got the reply:

"That's all right, Willis—I know your best and it's good enough for me."

Whereupon Willis blushed bashfully and after a pause stammered: "But, say, Sir, I was wanting to get married."

This took my husband aback, he having forgotten that, as he and others had done after the Boer war, so the young men of the latest war were also hurrying into matrimony. So he said, rather testily:

"Oh, well, go and get it over as soon as possible, so that you're ready for us in Canada." Which, as I told him, suggested a visit to the dentist rather than an entry into the bliss of matrimony. However, Willis saw the humour of it and when we landed at Quebec there he was, waiting on the quay, as proud as a dog with two tails. Next day when we reached Ottawa he produced a pretty and rather shy young wife for inspection. So we had three honeymoon couples on the staff. (It sometimes seems unbelievable to me that both Willis' children are now serving overseas in the Air Force—so swiftly has the time slipped by.)

One thing was certain, Julian had made no mistake in choosing Willis, for he could and did, put us wise to everybody in Ottawa; and not only that, but he had countless friends all over the Dominion so that he had his hand on the pulse of matters from Prince Edward Island to British Columbia, which was an inestimable help to a Governor-General. This was especially so in our case because, though we came out under Mr. Meighen's régime, within a very short space of time there was an election which brought in the Liberals. Having more or less mastered "Who was Who" in the Conservative cabinet, one now had to do the

same with its successor and I—having always shunned and detested politics as my husband did—found that a complicated task. However, Willis put us wise, and we soon made some good friends in the new Cabinet. Especially do I look back with affection on the George Grahams, Dr. and Mrs. King, the Fieldings and that tough fighting old “Mick”, Senator Charles Murphy who for ages had eschewed Government House till he and I got to grips over the Canadian flora, which we both loved. Through those days of getting upsides with a wholly new Cabinet, Willis was invaluable to us both, for he had no political bias, then or now—no personal axe to grind.

Through twenty-four years Willis has been not only the *Fidus Achates* of succeeding Governors-General, but the guide, philosopher and friend of the young men who have followed one another on the staffs at Government House. There he was always ready to help even those who, self-opinionated, fancied themselves capable of paddling their own canoes through Canadian affairs and when the canoe upset, as it sometimes did, it was Willis who set it afloat again. It has not always been a bed of roses for him, with foolish boys making muddles, or others—jealous of his position—trying to undermine him by methods suggestive of moles working in a garden patch. But those who know him, as I do, realize that all these years he has only had one aim in life—to make the Governor-General of the day the centre of interest to Canadians. For that purpose he has worked sedulously, and when he finally retires there will be innumerable friends to wish him luck and pray that he may have long years of happiness in the well-earned peace of Byng House, where he can “cultivate his garden” and—with his comfortable chuckle—tell his grandchildren, and perhaps his great-grandchildren, of all that he has seen and

done, laughed at, or wept over, in his years of faithful service at Government House.

With the memory of so much true service from the staff and affection from Canadian friends, was it to be wondered if our hearts were sad, when in September, 1926, we sailed down the St. Lawrence between banks ablaze with the first kiss of autumn?

But we had one happy and tangible relic of those days, for Eva Sandford stood beside us. She came out in 1924, to spend the last two years as my secretary-lady-in-waiting, but, like Pat, she stayed on, so that when I left home in 1940 we were still living together; and I can say with truth, that we have never had a single disagreement in all that time. Strange that she, like Pat, only supposed to be with us for a limited time, should have been the one to remain. All my gratitude and affection have gone out to her for the comradeship and help she has given me and will, I hope, give me again, when we are once more under the Thorpe roof, at peace, and anchored there for the years of life that may still remain to me.

When we got home in 1926 I really set to work on the garden, left in a deplorably incomplete state five years earlier. It was a tough job, for the old saying, "One year's seeds, seven years' weeds", is only too true, and there was far more than that amount of time to be made up in the garden; added to which remaking a derelict garden is infinitely worse than starting from scratch with untilled soil. My husband being no gardener, was completely at a loss to understand the upheavals he saw everywhere, and when a friend asked him how things were progressing, he said dubiously, "Well, I don't quite know, except that what was isn't—and what is, won't be." Not a bad summary for somebody who had not seen a garden in the making, and it was certainly difficult for him to understand that, as in a

major operation things begin in a mess and end in restoration.

Fortunately, I had at that time as head gardener an expert in the building of rock gardens, and since that was how I intended to use the ground on the northwest side of the house, we were of one mind and work progressed favourably, although poor Julian sadly surveyed such churned-up mud and yawning chasms, especially after rain. He saw tall, three-legged sheers for hoisting rocks into position and immense rock slabs imported from Kentish quarries—because there were no rocks nearer at hand—and one day, after contemplating it all, he said ruefully, “It reminds me of Flanders at its worst.” No doubt it did, and I am glad he lived to see results, when the soil had been packed into pockets between the rocks or smoothed into gentle slopes, while the dead twigs—as they seemed to him then—developed into a foaming mass of bloom in spring, and tiny plants tucked into the pockets between rocks were a blaze of vivid colour. Then he used to take his friends round the place, pointing out things to them and saying with pride, “Good, isn’t it? And all home-made by my wife!”—much as if it was a cake.

A good many of the Canadian plants found their home in that part of the garden, because the situation was to their liking; but I can’t help smiling when non-gardening Canadians say to me, “And how is your Canadian garden doing?” as if a space was roped off marked, “Canadians only”. How could plants from such a vast land as this, with widely varying climatic and horticultural conditons grow in the same place? At Thorpe, Canadians have to be good mixers, because they rub shoulders with neighbours from various lands. I have a piece of woodland, fortunately, and there go the woodlanders from here, such as Jack-in-the-Pulpit, about whom I found this little verse:

## UP THE STREAM OF TIME

Green is his surplice, green are his bands;  
In his queer green pulpit the little priest stands.

CLARA SMITH

Now *he* likes coolness and shade but Bouncing Bet, on the other hand, seeks the hot banks of the highways, for:

Bouncing Bet is a runaway  
You cannot keep her at home,  
No matter how you hedge her in  
She always tries to roam.\*

L. YOUNG CORRETHERS

And so she does in Canada, in company with Black-eyed Susans, Joe-Pye Weed, Kansas Gay Feather, with its rose-purple spikes, and the endless asters and goldenrod which fringe the Prairie wheat-fields and if let run riot become a pest, though a lovely one, till autumn puts an end to their gay lives. At Thorpe, Canadian lilies grow beside their cousins from China and Japan—while the ground near them has a carpeting of those frail white, pink and terra-cotta-coloured oxalis which hail from South Africa. North American Houstonians are chumming with bushes of the Bottlebrush from Australia, while Canadian woodlanders have for bedfellows English lilies-of-the-valley, snowdrops and pale primroses. So taking only those few plants, the garden represents a miniature comity of nations such as we hope to see thriving harmoniously after the war in Europe when the peace is won—a real peace, this time.

That lovely Canadian *Aquilegia Canadensis*, has had a chequered career in the past for Tradescant, the noted botanist, sent seeds of it to his cousin, who was head gardener to Charles I. In the course of time, as happens all too often with plants, the true strain was lost, and what was listed in England, before I came to Canada, as *Aquilegia Canadensis*, was not in the least like the native plant either in bloom

\*From *These Blooming Friends*, published by E. F. Wilson, San Diego, Cal.

or foliage, so I was glad to reintroduce the genuine article once again.

It's amazing how plants can carry one back "up the stream of time", and how much dearer are those which one has collected than those bought from a nurseryman. I always look with deep affection on these results of my wanderings, because they conjure up people, episodes and places where they were found—happy days in the open country, or the silent depths of forests, beside lakes where tall cedars grow and poplars gossip sibilantly. The pink of "lamb's kill" always brings to my mind those vast stretches of muskeg with groups of tamarack, or railway banks decked with blueberries, whose frost-kissed foliage gleams blood-red round the berries that have the bloom of grapes upon them; while here and there in the swampy spots rise the queer "sidesaddle plants" with their open sacks ready to engulf the unwary insects attracted to them. The muskeg, tiresome though it may be for railway construction, has a beauty of its own, and I love the slender grace of the high-bush cranberries which like to keep their feet moist in the spongy moss and peat soil, and the big leaves of the skunk cabbage whose scent I have the low taste to rather like—taking me back, as it does, to the low-lying swamps of British Columbia. The Eastern orchids—the lovely moccasin plant, almost impossible to transplant and which I have lost long ago; the rare beauty of *Cypripedium reginae*, which rears its proud head in deep woods and swampy land, where it only thrives if the soil contains the fungus essential to its wellbeing. What lovely glimpses I have had of those plants, as they stand out against sheltering cedars beside some lovely lake, where the cry of the loons steals across the peace; the turquoise beauty of a jay's wing flashes across one's vision; the red-headed woodpecker goes tap,



tap, tap on a dead log, while a squirrel scolds from a tree at strangers within his preserves.

All the tiny creeping plants of the woodlands that clothe Canadian forests from east to west bring back memories of days in the Laurentians, when the slender spikes of the mauve orchises thrust through the grass, the maiden-hair fern spreads itself till autumn frost turns it silver. The tough leathery foliage and pale fragrant blooms of the trailing arbutus in spring speak of Deep River, a hundred and forty miles up the Ottawa, where there is only the Fraser's wooden house on the water's edge, and backed by three hundred miles of forest where deer, bears, wolves and beaver make their home and porcupines scuffle along on the dry leaves. The trilliums recall woodland fringes and open fields, while the Dutchman's breeches, snuggling between rocks, came from Mousseau and Meach Lake, within a short drive of Ottawa. As for the violets—yellow, white and blue, they are Canada, by and large, and the pale lemon-coloured bellworts recall days in Rockcliffe, while the blue camas speaks of Vancouver Island, as do the copper-stemmed arbutus trees from the Malahat Pass. South Africa lives again for me in the many-coloured spikes of *Watsonias* collected in Cape Province, and *oxalis* from Sunday's River also in my garden.

But if I run on like this I shall end in making this chapter sound like a nurseryman's catalogue concerning which somebody once said, "Hope will never die so long as nurserymen publish catalogues." Which is true enough, only those catalogues are often delusions and snares to the uninitiated in garden lore, who are carried sky-high by the sight of rock gardens ablaze with plants that are listed as easy—and are not. The novice gloats over herbaceous borders gorged with every conceivable plant, all flowering at the same time—which they don't do in life! And so he licks his lips at what he expects to show his neighbours, till he

learns, by bitter experience, that most of the plants *succeed* one another and aren't simultaneous and that a foreground of iris is not out at the same time as sunflowers and hollyhocks, but has become by then dull masses of wilting foliage. Anyhow, till he has learnt his lesson through experience, he has gorgeous dreams and that's better than nothing. Making the garden after 1926 was an enchanting job, because then I could still do my share of active work. Now, alas, that's a thing of the past and I shall only potter around and contemplate the result of bygone years.

From March, 1928, to August 1929, was a bleak time, for I lost my father, my uncle and my mother in that short space of time. The death of my uncle meant that I inherited his fortune, so Julian was able to develop a first-class shoot out of our own land, and what he rented from the neighbouring farmers, while I spread myself in the garden. And in Canadian parlance I "rode high, wide and handsome" for the first time in my life! And was it fun? To create a thing you have dreamt of all your life is perhaps the best thing that can happen to you—even if you are getting old, and we were happier, I think, than at any other time in our married life, because there were no money worries, and we were home.

Two years after our return from Canada, Julian was asked to take on the Commissionership of the Metropolitan Police Force, which had rather fallen from grace owing to a streak of bad men who had to be eliminated before their influence should spread like a cancer through that grand body. As in the case of the "Byng Millions", the Government wanted a fearless man, untainted with politics, and whole-souled in the job—so once again they turned to my husband. He was very much in two minds about taking it on, for he was tired, not young, and very happy in his retirement. I have always blamed myself bitterly for urging him to take it on but per-

haps he would have done so anyhow, because there were so many high influences working on him to do it and after thinking it over he agreed. However, there, as in the case of the "Millions", he made his own terms. It was to be no party appointment—but as acceptable to the Labour Opposition as to the Conservative Government. Nor was it to be turned into a political football, and he would entertain no political pull or monkeying about with appointments in the Force. Under those conditions he told Baldwin he would take it. The latter interviewed Ramsay MacDonald—at that time leader of the Opposition, telling him the conditions demanded, and MacDonald received the news with delight—apparently—assuring Baldwin that there would be nothing but approval from his party who knew Julian's ability, integrity, etc. So all was settled until Baldwin rose to make the announcement to the House. What were Julian's feelings and ours when Ramsay MacDonald leapt up and denounced the appointment. Could anything have been more typical of playing party politics?

But there was a humorous side to the affair in the fact that not a single Labour member could find—hunt he ever so hard—even a pebble to throw at Julian, and I suppose his fault lay in having been born a gentleman. Evidently the the Labourites were of the same kidney as the man who had cursed me in Sloane Street as a "damned aristocrat"! As for the very lame excuse that there shouldn't be a soldier at the head of a civilian force, it was "eye-wash" of the feeblest type because other soldiers had already filled the post without any dire disaster befalling the Police Force.

However, Julian having said he would take the post stuck to it, but when shortly afterwards, the Labour party came into power he—egged on by me—tendered his resignation on the plea that they had not liked his appointment and therefore he would resign. The welkin rang with their howls,

and they implored him to remain, which he did, not to save them from a most unpleasant shock at the outset of their rule, but because of the men in the Police whom he had got to know and like, as they knew and liked him. Anyhow, Clynes had the sense to back him most loyally and left him to carry on his job unmolested.

It was interesting to see how quickly the police responded to Julian's friendly approach. The first few weeks, when we walked together from the Bryanston Square house to Scotland Yard, we were met with the regulation salute and the blank official face. Gradually a smile was added to the salute, because we always smiled at them, and very soon we walked through a series of beaming good-mornings, which was pleasant. When he eventually fell ill I was always being stopped by police all over London, who asked how he was. Incidentally, there was many a policeman in our kitchen—welcomed by the household, of course, in traditional style—who learned we had arranged that when the men on duty round that district were too far away from any place in which to pass their short periods of needed rest, they could come to our house and get a cup of something hot in winter or a soft drink in summer.

I remember the comic tales some of the men had to tell about idiotic people—I regret to say mostly women. One dear old body signed to a policeman to cross the road and come to her, which he did, thinking she was in trouble of some kind; but when he reached her she held out her hand and said coyly. "You know I just HAD to speak to you because the number on your collar is that of my favourite hymn!" An instance of the crass stupidity of some people with which the police have to cope and yet keep their temper was the frequency with which they would go up to the officer on duty outside the Houses of Parliament and ask the time. The constable usually jerked his head or pointed to Big

Ben—it was too much to expect anything else from these sorely tried men. I have often wondered at their patience, too, when they “nursemaid” school children across the roads; the children skip and jig round the poor man and bombard him with questions, like all members of the human young with the everlasting WHY? It’s more than enough for an ordinary person’s patience and I wonder how many “Whys?” get flung at the heads of these temporary nursemaids.

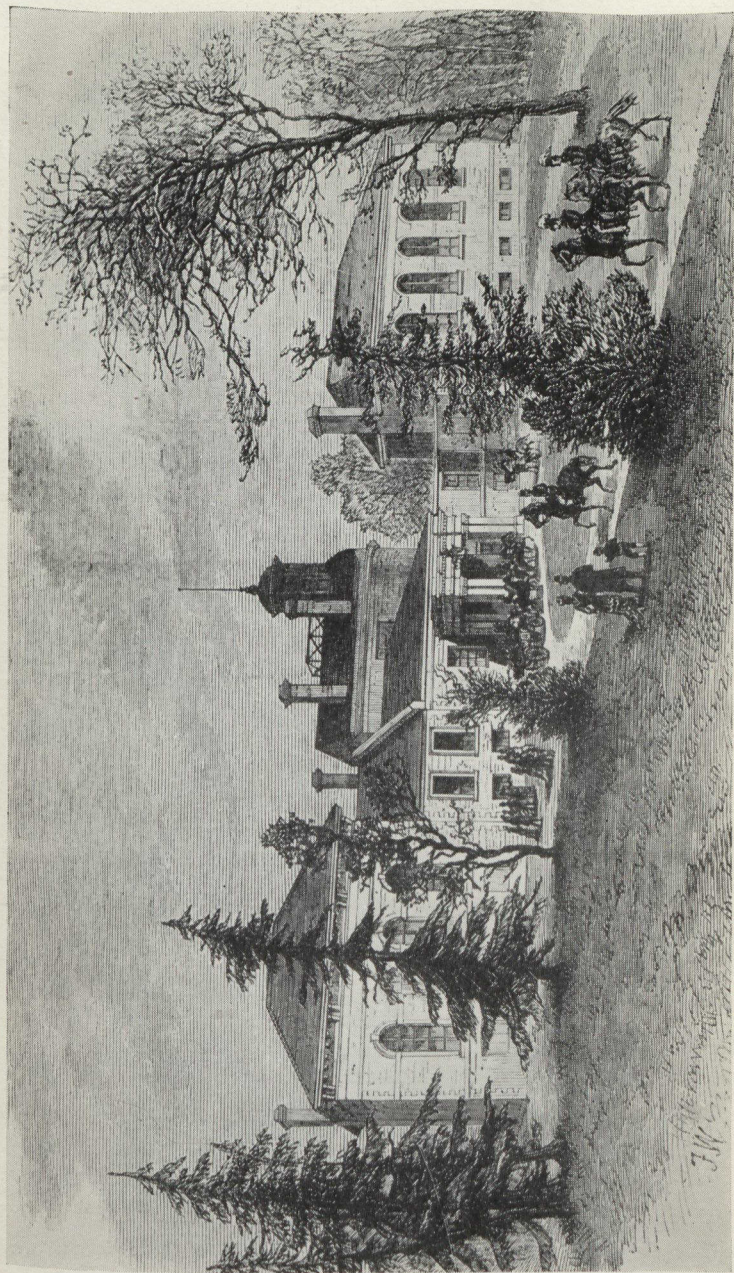
The courage of these men in nasty corners is amazing, for they aren’t armed, as in the Western Hemisphere; I sometimes think they should be, though there is much for and against the custom. Still, in “rough houses” more than one tough in London has a gun on him, even with all the restrictions about licenses, and it’s hard on the London “Bobby” to be defenceless under such circumstances. They have a grand sense of humour which is their salvation many a time and they are kindly to animals. I remember the occasion when a Mallard duck, having hatched her brood in St. James’s Park, decided that the Buckingham Palace garden would be better for them. Off she set to the Mall, and elected to cross by the Queen Victoria Memorial at the busiest time of the day. The constable on point duty, seeing her, immediately held up the traffic and walked solemnly across beside her and the toddling family of fluff balls, to the gates of the Palace, where he handed her over to the constable on duty there, who in his turn passed her through the big wooden doors into the garden. All traffic stopped, people leant out of their cars and everybody watched the performance to its end, while a press photographer who chanced to be “snooping round for a scoop” got an excellent picture of the performance. I wondered in what other country in the world a policeman would hold up the traffic and escort a duck and her family to their destination?

Scotland Yard, alas, led to disaster for us because it was during his work there that Julian fell ill, and I am bound to say it was largely the family obstinacy which turned what might have been a common cold into bronchial pneumonia. He insisted on shooting, one bitter November day, and returned frozen. He would take no precautions and by Tuesday, when we were going back to London, he was really ill, with a fearful cough and a high temperature, though he refused to have it taken. I begged him to go to bed and not to Scotland Yard. Nothing doing—go he would! And as soon as he reached his office, Dr. Cassidy—his own doctor as well as M.O. at the Metropolitan Police at that time—was raging at me on the telephone for letting him go there. I explained that neither Eva Sandford, Sir John Anderson, who was staying with us at the time, nor I had been able to stop him. A sharp voice rang down the telephone: "I'll stop him, all right. When he gets home this afternoon there will be a nurse at Bryanston Square and she'll see to it that he stays in bed!" Dr. Cassidy was as good as his word and the nurse appeared. Poor woman, I don't think she ever had a more ungracious welcome from any patient before, but she firmly put him to bed and there he remained till after Christmas. It was a ghastly time, and more than once we didn't think he would pull through; but good doctoring and good nursing succeeded, though his health was permanently broken by that and by heart trouble—of which there had never been any sign till the summer of 1926—so that for the few remaining years of his life we were forced to wander from place to place in order to avoid the cold.

In January 1929 I was anxious to get Julian aboard ship as soon as possible, because I knew what a tonic the sea always was to him. Directly he was fit to move we got him on board the *Carnarvon Castle* bound for South Africa. And

what a party we were that time—all going out to look after him! His nurse, his faithful valet, Orchin—as good as a second nurse—having had training for the R.A.M.C. during the last war; a doctor friend of Cassidy's, who was taking the trip on his own, but undertook to look after Julian; Eva Sandford, who had nursed all through the last war; my maid Vaughan and myself. The little nurse had “always wanted to travel” as she told me eagerly and was all agog at the prospect. I can see her now, carefully arranging the medicine bottles in the little racks in his cabin. As it was blowing hard I said it would be better to keep them in the drawer—but was stopped by the hideous face that Julian made at me from his berth, and when she left the cabin he said, “Let her put the beastly things out, because I know they'll get smashed, and the sooner they're out of the way the sooner I shall get well.” So I said no more, but I was too old a hand not to know pretty well what weather lay ahead, as we set out in the teeth of a gale. The moment we got into the open sea there was “green water” over the upper bridge and the ship was a cork on the water. Promptly the nurse vanished, then Orchin fled, after a gallant effort to get around the doctor looked in—very green about the gills—and beat a hasty retreat. I survived only long enough to get to bed, leaving Eva and Julian talking together.

Things were worse next morning, when I crawled feebly into his cabin to see how he was. I found him sitting up in bed, grinning with delight, because not a medicine bottle remained intact and the place smelt like a chemist's shop! The sight of eggs and bacon were the last straw to me, as Julian sat holding on to the plate so that its contents shouldn't slide into his bed, and I fled just in time. So out of all the party detailed to look after him, only Eva survived! However, the captain confessed that it was the worst gale even he had ever experienced, and it accompanied us



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, OTTAWA, DOMINION OF CANADA  
The residence of H.R.H. Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne.



UP THE STREAM OF TIME

right through the Bay of Biscay. What offended me most was when the travelling doctor at last managed to reach my cabin and stood in the doorway remarking, "My heavens, if I was as sick as you are I'd never set foot on a ship!" Considering that he had been equally sick and was pea-green in colour, I thought it was an outrageous case of the pot calling the kettle black, and I said so in no uncertain terms.

## CHAPTER X

I journey'd fur, I journey'd fas'; I glad I foun' de pl'ace at las'.

*Nights with Uncle Remus*

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

**M**Y HUSBAND'S declaration that once the medicines vanished he would pick up seemed justified, and he certainly did make a wonderful recovery on that nightmare journey, as he always did take a fresh lease of life the moment one got him on the sea. One after another, we who were supposed to look after him crept back to life, and by the time we were out of the Bay and nearing Madeira were beginning to look more like ourselves and less like unripe limes. A person who was spry all the way was General Smuts, whom I met as soon as I emerged, because he and Julian had lost no time in becoming friends, though the last time they were within measurable distance they had been chasing one another inimically across the Veldt. But on the *Carnarvon Castle* they foregathered, for who could help liking Jan Smuts? There was something refreshing about this slimly built man with blue eyes and a neat honey-coloured beard, which gave his face a fine oval. There was so much more of the soldier than of the politician about him that he inspired confidence, though one knew "Slim Jan" for an astute man in politics. He looked one straight in the face fearlessly, he had a quick, incisive manner, while a sense of cleanliness of mind and body radiated from him. Like my husband he had the same mental alertness and versatility, being a scholar, a first-class soldier, a widely read man and a fine botanist. As a companion I know nobody I like better to be with—but he was exhausting when he took one for a walk round the deck! It wasn't a walk, but a gallop, which

I stood up to till one day, near the Equator, when I succumbed—the blood roaring in my head, my heart thumping tempestuously. So I made an excuse to go and see how Julian was and left my companion alone. Spying Eva, he pounced on her, and jerking his head in the direction of my vanishing figure, said with a laugh, "She shed me, so now you come along." And she did, but being considerably younger, made the grade.

We went straight to Westbrooke, a few miles outside Capetown, and the Athlone's country house, for he was Governor-General at that time. It was good to be with them after the tribulations of the earlier part of the journey, and we would have stayed longer—as they hospitably wanted us to do. But Julian was still too much of an invalid to stand the coming and going inevitable in any official residence—the banging of doors by young people, and the clatter they inevitably made coming in late at night, so I accepted the kind invitation of Sir Lionel and Lady Phillips to go to their place, some twenty miles from the sprawling mass that Capetown had now become. I had known the Phillips when they owned a lovely house within a drive of my old Hampshire home, so they weren't strangers, when we went to them at Vergelegen, that lovely place set in a lush valley with the background of the Hottentot Holland Mountains, indigo and purple under the clear African sky.

It was a long, rambling white house with picturesque Dutch gables and a red-tiled roof, built in the early eighteenth century by Adrian Van-de-Stel, son of the famous Adrian Van-de-Stel, Governor of the Dutch East Indies, and Governor of the Cape. Adrian protected himself against black men, prowling lions and predatory parties of baboons (which abounded in those days), by setting a high wall round his home and he had also planted, opposite the house itself, a row of camphor tree saplings, which two and a half

centuries later were gargantuan trees whose bursting leaf buds gleamed crimson in the light and left a delicious scent of camphor on one's hands if touched. The Phillips had added a big swimming-pool to the garden, surrounded it by yet another wall, so that it was always delightfully hot there and the fig trees were loaded with ripe fruit, whose crimson seeds shewing through the slits in the skin were an irresistible temptation to the greedy—and greedy I was, for there is nothing so delicious as a ripe fig gathered from a sun-baked wall.

Another addition by Sir Lionel was the big library-cum-music-room where he could shut himself up with his books or play Bach fugues on the organ he had installed. He and my husband would sit together and talk by the hour, while I listened to "Li Fi's" thrilling and true tales of early days on the Rand when he was beginning to make his fortune. Looking at his frail physique I often wondered how he had ever stood the rough life, the racket, chicaneries and recklessness of that time which recalled the days of the Yukon. But frail as he looked he must have been wiry, because though shot at, and badly wounded in middle age on the streets of Johannesburg, he pulled through; but undoubtedly the wound shortened his life by many years. Why anybody should have tried to kill him, goodness knows, for there never was a more open-handed, kind-hearted soul than Lionel Phillips, or a less obtrusive one, and many a man owed his start in life to the quiet individual whose left hand never knew what his right did, and who had always dreamt of living once again in England, his homeland. But his wife could never settle anywhere, so back they came to South Africa, selling Tilney Hall at a heavy loss, and establishing themselves in Johannesburg, where once again, for she had excellent taste, she beautified another big house till she tired of that and sold it too, at heavy loss, which ap-

preciably diminished the Phillips' fortune by the time they went to Vergelegen. I could never understand why she wanted to return to South Africa, for though of Boer parentage, her language about the race was of the most vitriolic quality. I think her restlessness was congenital, springing from the fact that her forebears had trekked across the veldt in ox-wagons so that the instinct to wander was born in her, till she came to Vergelegen; but I saw ominous signs that she was beginning to feel the old urge again, and feared she would uproot dear little Sir Lionel. Fortunately she didn't and he died peacefully a few years ago in that lovely spot.

There was very little coming and going of visitors at Vergelegen whilst we were there, but I remember when an over-dressed London lady came to lunch; on being taken into the library she draped herself alluringly—as she thought—against the book-shelves and stroking the nearest volumes with her bright red-coloured nails, murmured, “Ah, books, dear, dear, friends!—an effort quite wasted on the two men sitting there, for I saw our host's eyes twinkle mischievously, and Julian said to me afterwards, with a snort of disdain, “What a damned ass!” So she might have saved herself the effort to fascinate.

Only at six in the morning was there any noise at Vergelegen, but then it was Bedlam, with the advent of a flock of guinea fowl—at all times the biggest fools in the bird world—who swept into the garden with shrill screechings. They acted as the trumpet call of “Réveille” on our hostess, who slept next to me, and up she leapt, shouting to the dogs and rushing into the garden, so that further sleep was out of the question. Fortunately, Julian was established in a separate house and the matutinal babel only reached him faintly. How I hated those birds with their mean little faces and Agag-like gait, as they nipped off every shoot above ground! Why Lady Phillips liked them passed my under-

standing, for she was fond of her garden; but those destructive birds were cosseted and spoilt, as they pattered about looking for all the world like some mincing "Miss" out of a Jane Austen novel. Whenever I was alone I used to chase them away, for I never hated any birds as I hated them.

We spent five peaceful weeks with the Phillips, and then Julian and Eva went by boat to Port Elizabeth to stay at Addo, a tiny settlement on Sunday River, some two hundred miles distant, where the old M.O. of South African Light Horse days, Dr. Rogers, had a citrus farm which we had sworn, by all our gods, to visit when he met us at Capetown. I jumped at the chance of seeing something of the country and escaping another sea voyage, so I left Julian safe in the hands of Eva and Orchin and made for the open road myself. If I am torn from my home and its interests I detest staying put in one place and need to be footloose, to "go places", and see all there is to be seen. And I felt there was much to see and enjoy in South Africa; for I shall never believe that the Garden of Eden was situated in the East—it must, Bible or no Bible—have been in South Africa that our first parents trotted about in happy nakedness till they had eaten—to their cost and ours—of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. It's a country which has everything man can desire: an abundance of fruit; flowers that deck the land as jewels deck a beautiful woman; a perfect year-round climate; and if, at present, its distance from England is a deterrent to people as settlers, once peace comes and aeroplanes eat up the mileage, I feel many Britishers will seek a new home there, for as Douglas Jerrold wrote of Australia, "Earth here is so kind, that just tickle her with a hoe and she laughs with a harvest."

Away my maid Vaughan and I went in our hired "Tin Lizzie" with its coloured chauffeur, who proved himself an excellent man. The first day we ran down into the Knysna

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Forest, green and beautiful, where Arum lilies filled every pool and stream. After that we traversed stretches of open land, gay with spikes of *Watsonias* in varying hues; bushes of *Proteas* (some of the rarer sorts, fortunately being protected by law from ruthless pickers); and the Silver Leaf trees (*Leucodendrons*), looking like fairy queens sheathed in shimmering silver as the breeze set them quivering. We spent a night at George, an enchanting pleasure resort at the foot of the Outiniquas Mountains and facing a lagoon-like arm of the sea.

Next day we climbed a mountain range, whose name has slipped my memory, though the thunderstorm that caught us on the top hasn't; for I am no hero in a thunderstorm, and on that occasion I remembered only too clearly my husband's tale of how, in the Boer war, he had seen a flash of forked lightning dart zig-zag down the length of a gun team, killing alternate men and horse in its hideous passage. It was a memory hardly calculated to cheer me when this wild storm caught us, high in the bare mountains, and though I have often seen tropical rain I never saw anything to equal what fell in that blinding sheet. It was impossible to drive through it, so that we had to shelter under the lee of some huge boulders, while I crouched panting and miserable in the car, till the storm passed away in the distance.

When we started downwards, it was through slippery mud that sent the car's wheels spinning and skidding on the steep grade, till we reached flat ground again, and found the road had been transformed into a spate of muddy water carrying along uprooted bushes and other débris, while a light bridge which had spanned a small stream no longer existed and the stream itself was a torrent. This entailed a wide detour and made us many hours late, so that we only reached our destination—I rather think it was Oudtshoorn—a small

town with a little hotel after sunset, to find that what should have been a small stream was a raging river. The bridge across it was still standing, though much shaken, and the villagers called out from the opposite bank that they didn't know if it would bear the car. (Not a cheering prospect, because on our side of the water there was no human habitation of any kind for many hundreds of miles, and we were pretty tired after the experience on the mountain-top.) After a great deal of shouting back and forth, above the roar of the river, the chauffeur announced that he thought, if we walked across and carried the baggage, he could make it with the empty car. Since there was no alternative we trudged ankle-deep in water over to the village, escorted by the mixed and friendly assembly of coloured, parti-coloured and white people, to the hotel, where the owners were vainly trying to mop up six inches of water that slopped round the ground-floor rooms, trickled down the walls and fell with sharp tinkling sounds into buckets placed to receive what was coming through the roof.

I was sorry for the English couple who owned the place, because as they said sadly, this was the first rain in the district for five years, and, of course, it came just when they had that rare thing—guests. However, fortunately the beds were dry, and they managed to produce quite a good dinner out of tins, because it was impossible to light the kitchen stove. I dined with a pleasant young man, Mr. de Villiers, who was marooned there on a tour of the country, and met my first "Bush Baby", an adorable little nocturnal beast, with huge round eyes and tiny hands that clung appealingly to one's fingers.

But the luckless Vaughan shunned dinner, feeling sick, for she was the world's worst traveller—seasick, trainsick, motorsick, and had planes been in general use then, I know she would have added them to her list of sicknesses. Years



before she came to me because—like the little hospital nurse—she “wanted to travel”. Well, she certainly did travel—poor soul!—though I’m not sure how much gratification she got from it, for in reality she was only suited to sit in an immaculately tidy room, with a cat and a canary. The nickname “Aunt Matilda” which Julian, with his usual happy knack of hitting things off, promptly gave her, clung to her forever. She looked “Aunt Matilda” to the life, and was never called anything else by those who knew her well enough. She was a typical spinster with a thin body, a good-looking hatchet face and the sorrowful expression of being “put upon” at all times, which she wasn’t because she had a talent for being waited on, hand and foot, by other people. But she trailed round the world at my heels, gave me twenty years of devoted service and I endured her inability to stand up to any journey, because I was fond of her and such devotion as hers is a thing to be cherished. But on that occasion my feelings were not of the cherishing order, for she was audibly sick right through the night, in the small room we shared. Luckily, she was better next day so we resumed our journey, for had we been obliged to stay on there was no means of communicating with Addo to say we were safe and it was only “Aunt Matilda’s” vomiting that delayed us, and I knew Julian would worry if we didn’t appear.

As a matter of fact when, late that night, we did reach our destination I found a good deal of anxiety reigning lest we had been caught by the storm in some inaccessible mountains, or in open country with the roads washed away, for the same storm had struck Addo also with a violent smack. The rain, however, had brought countless flowers into bloom, the fields were carpeted with the frail pink, white and terracotta-coloured oxalis which I sent to Thorpe, while the Jacarandas were in full glory, and the scent of orange blossom hung in the moist warm atmosphere of Addo, a

primitive little settlement, set on the bank of Sunday River.

Addo had known many vicissitudes since the days when a speculator advertised it far and wide as a gold mine, certain to bring vast wealth. For many years its light, sandy soil had swallowed money, till irrigation was put through, and by the time we saw it prosperity was assured at last, though many an earlier settler had sunk his all there, and left in despair, owing to those specious tales to which men are only too willing to listen. But "Bodge" was fortunately one of those who, having some capital behind him, managed to hold on, and now he was "on velvet" with a profitable farm and a charming house. Poor old "Bodge"! The moment war broke out in 1914 he rushed over to England and tried to join up again, game for anything, though considerably older than my husband; but to his grief the authorities turned him down and back he went to his golden oranges, many of which he used to send us, so that we shared the sunshine of Sunday River, year after year, till his death.

All would have been well for our visit except that I managed to break my wrist and we were away from everything needed for such a mishap, "Bodge" having long ago given up practising. He had been one of the foremost surgeons in South Africa, but when this accident happened he was minus everything needed for a setting—no splints, nothing except a few old bandages. However, he was far too good a surgeon to make mistakes and with the aid of some stiff cardboard and slips of wood he made a perfect job of the fracture. I remember the firm gentleness of his touch when almost at once he started light manipulation of the break, and by the time I went to Capetown for an X-ray the set was pronounced faultless so that I have never, thus far, had the least ill effects from the accident, thanks to that dear old friend's skill and kindness.

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From Sunday River, with its distant range of hills in the "Elephant Country" we went back to Capetown itself (the Athlones having returned to Government House) and I scoured the neighbourhood with Princess Alice, seeing all I could. There was Kirstenbosch, the famous Botanical Gardens, with the flora of the country admirably shown: drifts of heaths climbing the kloofs of Table Mountain; cleverly displayed succulents—which personally don't appeal to me, because the smaller ones suggest some growth removed from a human body and one has to search diligently for them in a welter of stones, except when they are studded with their little fringed blooms of pink, red and yellow. Near the Botanical Gardens lay an enchanting place bought for the Bishops of Capetown, where in our time Mrs. Carter, that past mistress in garden-making, had created a thing of beauty with both native and imported plants, which I hope her successors are keeping up, for it would be a crime should the Bishopsthorpe garden fall on evil days. I drove about the country, and time slipped by till late spring when we returned home again, and I was able to cope with the fruits of my South African trip.

The following winter we chose Jamaica, because people said it was a certain cure for bronchial troubles. Once again Vaughan and I endured the Hades of a sea voyage, this time in a banana boat, where we met Captain and Mrs. Stewart, the charming owners of Shaw Park Hotel above Ocho Rios.

We spent four months at the hotel. Four weeks may be quite endurable in a continuous state of "drip", but four months was far too long and I was thankful when we boarded a Dutch cargo boat for California. As she only carried eight passengers and we were a party of five we weren't harassed by a crowd. The *Drechtdujke* was typical of the race to which she belonged, matronly, slow, and best of all,

steady as a rock; and we wandered leisurely away to Colon at the entrance to the Panama Canal.

Arriving there, I had a rude shock; for believing that nobody would dream of looking for us aboard a cargo ship, I took life easily and on the morning we were due at Colon didn't bother to get up early—as I generally did when getting into harbour—till, to my horror, as I looked out of my window on the upper deck I spied somebody carrying a huge bouquet of flowers which I realized, only too well, must be intended for me. I flung myself into some clothes, and ran on deck to be met by the representative of the I.O.D.E. in Colon who, with warm greetings, had brought me this lovely bouquet. During an exchange of compliments and thanks I saw Orchin making hideous faces at me round a corner and when I reached him he said, in an injured tone, that the Salvation Army representative had got into Julian's cabin and could I do anything about it? His tone might have applied to a cockroach and knowing how Julian hated early morning guests, I went post-haste and found my husband sitting on his bed, undressed, unshaved, unwashed and by no means best pleased at having been run to ground by this well-meaning stranger. It was hard luck on him, I must say, before eight in the morning, to be pinned down like this, and his expression was of the grimmest as I came in. I managed to detach the guest and then heard there were some American Army officers on deck asking for us, and found two young men sent, very civilly, by the General commanding, to ask if there was anything we would like to do, or see, during our few hours in the place. So I arranged that they should bring a car at eleven and take us round. By that time a flock of journalists turned up and I had to say that Julian wasn't well enough to see them. Finally I crawled down below, hot, hungry and tired, to get

a bite of breakfast, swearing to myself that never again would I be caught napping at any port, no matter at what time of day or night we arrived, no matter in what sort of ship we might be travelling, since a famous husband may be, and is, a source of intense pride and joy to his wife, but he carries certain disadvantages that aren't of his or his wife's making.

Our drive round the Canal zone was extremely interesting, and we saw the marvels accomplished by the Americans in eliminating malarial mosquitoes and making the place healthy. We changed, too, from our Dutch ship to one of the lovely Grace Line boats which ply from New York through the Canal to Los Angeles and San Francisco. And what a contrast she was to our old Dutch friend with the friendly but perspiring dining-room steward "Pete" who would stammer, "ppppee sssssoup MMMadam," and whom I once caught sight of, in a mirror, mopping his face with the same napkin he used on the cutlery, which was a bit of a shock! On the Grace Line everything was most beautifully done; linen of the finest quality, table appointments perfect. The only thing I didn't quite like was the absence of male dining-room stewards, replaced as they were by an army of pretty young women, who waited admirably; but at the first port where we stopped I was startled when they were pushed into the life-boats and made to practise rowing for, in case of need, they would have had to handle the life-boats. I never saw such a comic exhibition of what not to do with oars or a boat! The only males on board, beside the seamen, were some amiable little Filipino bedroom-stewards; but I don't imagine their nautical knowledge was much greater than that of the pretty stewardesses. However, I suppose ships on a coastwise run are fairly safe from serious disasters—I hope so anyhow.

What a contrast the Panama was to the Suez Canal, with nothing but desert and mirage, lines of camels on the horizon, and lounging Arabs! Here the Canal lay, in wide lagoons leading into narrow cuts, where alligators basking in the sun and on the shelving banks watched with malignant eyes as the ship stole through. There were great lakes with tropical vegetation under a cloudless sky and the series of locks through which we glided in complete silence. That was what startled one—the efficient silence of our passage—which was elucidated when we were taken up into one of the control towers and saw how everything was handled electrically without a sound. It was almost uncanny to rise up and up in silence in the locks, and then glide out of them in equal silence. The final locks we passed through after dark, with the blazing light of endless lamps, and under a full moon which added to the magic of the scene. We only saw the glitter of Panama's lights in the night, as we turned northwards to negotiate eventually the Gulf of Tuhantepec where, owing to some queer formation in the mountains which makes a funnel for the wind, the sea is never calm. Needless to say my husband, when Vaughan and I succumbed, re-christened it the "Gulf of I-Want-To-Cat". And we did! However, the agony was short-lived, but it is an unpleasant and mean stretch of water off the Mexican coast, because the rest of the Pacific was completely calm at that time, with fat turtles floating along on their way to the breeding beaches, so one was unprepared for this sudden upheaval.

We came eventually to Los Angeles and thence to Pasadena, where we stayed in one of the best hotels in the world, The Huntingdon. What peace it was after our wanderings! For instance, on Sunday nights, when after dinner there was a first-rate string quartette who made music

in the big lounge (its series of windows giving onto the distant lights of Los Angeles, and the beam of the airport), Steve Royce, the manager of the hotel, had all lights in the lounge lowered to a pleasant gloaming, because he said that people, like canaries, made less noise in the dark. His psychology was right, for people certainly did talk less in the pleasant darkness. If they wanted to chatter, rather than hear the good music, a bell-boy would politely suggest they went to another room—so that all we who did enjoy the music, were able to do so in peace. Steve Royce is not only a great hotel-keeper but one of the kindest people I ever met, as I found on the occasion of our second visit when my husband was taken seriously ill there. I shall never forget how kind "Steve" was, and I regretted that he never came to England so that I didn't see him until by chance I stumbled across him at the Waldorf in New York two years ago when I was staying there with friends, on my return flight from Nassau to Canada.

It was from California in the spring of 1932 that we set foot once again in Canada as the guests of "R.B." (Lord Bennett), then in power, who kindly put his private car at our disposal. And what a trip it was across the Dominion, which we had neither of us expected to see again. The Bessboroughs had lent us Willis O'Connor, so that with him and Eva, it was just like old times, and not only that, but at every station where we stopped came crowds of the old "Byng Boys", many of whom had come in from outlying farms to greet their former Commander and shake his hand again. Nothing could have been more heartening to him than this spontaneous tribute of affection and loyalty and he was radiant—though often very tired—on a trip reminiscent of past years.

We spent a few days at Victoria, with its unbelievably gor-

geous view over the Olympics and Mount Baker's jagged range, and we crossed again the Malahat Pass, that superlative drive. It was too early in the year for the dogwood, but the broom was beginning to gild the slopes in cascades of glory. Journeying from Victoria to Jasper with its blue-green lakes and frowning mountains fringing the wide Athabasca valley, I rose at dawn to see Mt. Robson and was rewarded with an unforgettable view of that great mountain towering above dense pine forests black in the breaking day, the upper sky flushed with rose and without a trace of the clouds that generally mask the top of Robson, as it rose clear-cut against the sky; while over the shoulder of a lesser mountain, as though tarrying to greet the coming day, swung the silver crescent of a waning moon. As long as I live the memory of that dawn will dwell in my memory as one of my loveliest experiences.

From the glories of Jasper we slid once again over the gluey black mud of the bare Prairies, for it was a late spring. We were still greeted everywhere by the faithful old "Byng Boys" to whom the passage of time had made no difference in their love. At Winnipeg we spent a few days with the Harold Aikens—to give Julian a rest before reaching Ottawa—and it was like coming home to step off the private car at the familiar Union Station (where a crowd of "Redcaps", known of old, had congregated). There stood many faithful friends, headed by "R.B.", who as I alighted from the train greeted me with a kiss—which so thrilled the Press that they produced a poem beginning "Osculatory Dick" of which we never heard the end from those who knew us. It was good to be back again and walk down the platform, "R.B.'s" arm tucked into mine, and know that the welcome we received was genuine and hearty.

And so to Government House over precisely the same



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bumps beside the Sussex Street bridges, that we had known of old and I was destined to find again in 1940, and which I suppose will remain till such time as those dreadful old bridges and the hideous buildings beside them are swept away and the lovely Rideau River is seen as it should be, minus obstructions. As we drove through the well-known gates Julian slipped his arm through mine, and said in a whisper, "Good to be back, isn't it?" And so it was, if only for a few days, to be spent with the hospitable Bessboroughs, before we departed to the Curries at Montreal, where the two old warriors swapped reminiscences—for the last time—because before many years had elapsed both had "shuffled off this mortal coil".

We boarded the steady old *Montclare* and so home once more to Thorpe and its gardens, carrying with us happy memories which Julian loved to recall.

## CHAPTER XI

Did you voyage all unspoken, small and lonely?  
Or with fame, the happy fortune of the few?  
So you win the Golden Harbour, in the old way;  
There's the old sea welcome waiting there for you.

*The Old Way*

CAPT. RONALD HOPWOOD, R.N.

I SHALL always remember the morning of October 9th, 1932, when Julian came into my room with the greatest look of content on his face I had ever seen. His eyes were those of the dreamer whose dream had unexpectedly materialized, as indeed it had, for he handed me a charming letter from the Secretary of State for War—Lord Hailsham—which told him he had been promoted Field-Marshal, and he said quietly, “My life’s dream has come true,” for a Field-Marshal’s baton was the only ambition he had ever cherished, though never saying much about it. From his earliest days he wanted it above anything else, and it had been unfairly withheld, owing to a sticky Secretary of State for War—a hide-bound civilian and dyed-in-the-wool politician, whose vision never got any farther than catching votes at elections or the Speaker’s eye in the House of Commons, who had decreed in his temporary omniscience that no retired general was to be given the rank of Field-Marshal. He never took into account that my husband had voluntarily retired after the last war because he thought it the fair thing to do in order to leave the way clear for younger men. So Julian had to wait till the closing years of his life before this coveted reward came to him. Lord Hailsham’s letter said it was long overdue, and afterwards he used to call Julian “My Field-Marshal”. I think he was as pleased about it as we were.

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It was good to see my husband's happiness in this fulfilment of the dream that had been with him from the day when he first donned the smart 10th Royal Hussar uniform under the shadow of the creeper-clad ruins of Lucknow in 1881—and how far he had gone since those days! I believe that nothing would have induced him to sit a second time to de Lazlo for his portrait had it not been that he was to be painted complete with baton! The artist threw all his great talent into the picture, which he rightly considered one of his best achievements, and it hangs—or did hang—on the Thorpe walls, an everlasting joy to me.

In the winter of 1931-32 we tried the Riviera in order to escape the necessity of a long sea voyage, but I don't know which of us hated it most. There were people whom we had avoided at home, but couldn't escape in that narrow strip of land; the climate was treacherous; the mistral played every unholy trick it could think up, and the much-vaunted gardens were a fraud from the word "go", except in a few cases. Beyond native shrubs such as various *Mimosas*, the effects were attained by plants thrust into the earth in pots, and, though you expect that at a Chelsea Show, which, after all, is a gigantic nurseryman's shop window, you can't tolerate it in what are supposed to be genuine gardens. There were a few exceptions such as "La Mortola", Sir Cecil Hanbury's world-famed place; Major Warr's garden of interesting plants, under the height of Roquebrune; and Madame Balzan's artistically designed paradise, where there was an almost over-opulence of spring bulbs; also Mr. Somerset Maugham's enchanting piece of land well laid out on the slopes of Cap Ferrat. What has happened to all these places, I wonder? "La Mortola", being on Italian soil, no doubt remains undamaged so far, but what of those in France? Are they fortifications? Have they been the pleas-

ant retreats of sadistic Huns, plotting every conceivable foulness, or have they been destroyed with the iconoclastic lust that marks the accursed Herrenvolk?

But for us the winter in that place was an abomination on which we turned our backs, vowing "Never again", and next year we went to California, where we had many friends, for it was a spot with a more varied selection of people in a small space than anywhere else. There one had the "Cal Tec" people, a host of brilliant scholars and professors; the Pasadenians, kindly and hospitable; and that strange cosmopolis, Hollywood; while scenically, Pasadena is lovely, backed by the Sierra Madre range, Mount Wilson towering six thousand feet overhead, and Mt. San Antonio, familiarly called "Mt. Baldy", rearing its crest against a clear sky. On Pasadena's palm-bordered roads, motors flew past loaded with skis—because in a short drive you could spend a day on snow-covered slopes and return to sleep among Eucalyptus and pepper trees, or fragrant citrus groves framed in hedges of scarlet geraniums. What more could you desire?

How beautiful it must have been before man sprawled himself over the land fringing the sea, and created that amorphous mass of buildings which comprises Los Angeles, San Pedro, Glendale, Burbank, and the port of Wilmington, thirty miles away! Architecturally, Pasadena afforded a bewildering assortment of styles and an architect suddenly dropped there would wonder if he was suffering from a nightmare. Not that all the houses are ugly, but their juxtaposition makes for a complete disharmony when you see an imitation Canadian shack, with water-worn boulders set in smooth cement, jostling the copy of an English manor house, or a red brick erection that recalls Suburbia at its worst. Only one suitable style exists for California—the adobe-built house—low, simple, sun-flooded, and which be-

longs essentially to a country impregnated as it is with the Spanish influence. These were the houses that delighted one with their plain walls, colour-washed a creamy buff, or an attractive pink, with a dash of ochre to give it warmth, and one glimpsed, through an arched doorway or wrought iron gates, a patio gay with flowers around a fountain set in tiles so blue that it seemed as if a patch of sky had dropped there.

Southern California has remained Spanish in its human types, its atmosphere and in such names as Santa Anita, Santa Barbara, El Monte, Los Files, San Juan Capistrano, and Figueroa, with a lilt that conjures up visions of dark-eyed *Senoritas*, their black hair piled on tortoise-shell combs and a flirting fan held in hands adept in its language. Pasadena carries an imprint too, of the past when "Mission" bells rang out on the clear air and the faithful gathered to pray, though for many years now it has become the playground of wealthy Americans seeking a good winter climate and the enjoyment of gardens as varied as the houses to which they belong. Some were meticulously manicured and barbered lawns which stretched in smug satisfaction to the sidewalk; others gay with flowers, hedged with myrtles, whose rose-coloured foliage tips glow in the light, while the great *Solandra*, the "Copo de Oro", swung on walls, and roses rambled everywhere.

The gardeners were as varied as everything else, ranging from square-jawed, gum-chewing Americans, to grim Scotchmen whose hearts remained in their native land; blond Scandinavians; flat-faced Chinamen, and, in those days, slant-eyed Japs, all of whom went to work in amazingly derelict cars, devoid of paint, their mudguards lost long ago in some collision, horsehair protruding from rents in the seats and on the front bumper a rusty mowing machine tied with string,

while shears, long-handled pruners and rakes were secured to the bare sides of the car and ladders protruded fore and aft to the danger of other traffic. The back was piled with rolls of matting, brooms, water-cans and all the impedimenta of the jobbing gardener's trade, while cars a shade less dilapidated, labelled "Tree Doctor" in big white letters, threaded their way through limousines and sports models driven by immaculate chauffeurs or smartly dressed owners. Not only did you meet these strange-looking conveyances but you might bump into a film outfit "shooting" a scene on some quiet road. You met people in strange garments knocking at doors, disappearing into a house, or a perfect menagerie of animals wending its way to a "location". You were never bored on the roads round Pasadena ten years ago, though perhaps it has changed since then and Hollywood keeps within its own boundaries and "locations" on the hills that shelter it.

The masses of fruit and vegetables piled high under awnings on the roadsides made a picture which enchanted me, and as to the blazing mass of colour on flower stalls, I just stood and stared till dragged away by an impatient husband. Navel oranges sold then at 15 to 25 cents per seven dozen, because they, and Avocado pears, were a glut in the market. For the first time in my life I appreciated the poinsettias in all their scarlet glory growing in fields for the market.

You could certainly take your pick of society around Pasadena, and once you plunged into Hollywood you were in a world apart. Fantastic is the only word for the picture industry. It was interesting, though disillusioning in some respects, when one saw the big tanks in which "battleships" were battered by heavy seas and it rather detracted from stirring scenes on the screen, and explained too why lovely screen stars, rescued from shipwrecks, could stand on desert

islands, their "perms" unruffled and their garments bone dry—but I suppose it would be sacrilege if Hedy Lemarr, for instance, looked bedraggled. There is, however, very often quite an amount of real danger to players, even with "stand-ins" who double for them. Surely, too, nothing could be more wearing than those endless repetitions, greater and more exasperating than those in any stage play rehearsal; and it passes one's understanding how actors can stand it when at the crucial moment the cry of "cut" echoes through the studio, and back they go to the beginning. The hours are long, the glare of the lamps exhausting and a heavy strain on the nervous system, which makes the stardom of many, a short-lived triumph. No place in the world can have seen so many successes, failures and bitter heartbreaks as this birthplace of the picture industry. Nor could you find a more varied lot of workers in a more varied lot of trades than there. The storerooms were an education: stacked with genuine antiques, cut-glass chandeliers in unbelievable numbers; costumes ranging almost from the fig leaves of Adam and Eve to dresses of Victorian amplitude, or the modern boyish silhouette.

Stars at their zenith draw fantastic salaries, but taxation takes a good percentage; and Hollywood itself knows to a nicety how much to mulct the payrolls in "subscriptions" and other matters. The stars have to keep up a certain amount of appearance, because of popular ideas about them and their way of life, so in the long run, unless they are good business people—which very few artists are—there isn't a vast amount to go clear into their pockets or for long, because the affection of the public is a fickle thing, and only while a woman's beauty lasts does she remain in top flight, unless she is a great artist. Otherwise, it's the shelf, so no-

body should grudge them what they make in the heyday of their ephemeral period of success.

We met interesting and charming people at Hollywood. Anita Loos, of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* fame; Zoe Aikens, busy with scenarios; James Cagney, at the time playing "Bottom" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Joe E. Brown, of the vast mouth and genial smile; Harold Lloyd, working on a film that entailed a flock of mice running in and out of his pockets; Paul Cavanaugh, playing opposite Mae West, with whom we had tea—an occasion on which, as I pushed open the door of the studio, a small monkey leapt onto my chest and hotly resented being dislodged by its keeper, nor did I like parting with the enchanting little gibberer. There were Mary Ellis and Doris Kenyon, both of whom I saw afterwards in London; Carl Brisson, Pat O'Brien and Dolores del Rio, to name those who come first to mind; and two years ago I was delighted to meet again Michael Curtiz, Cagney, Tobias and Dennis Morgan at Uplands, working on *Captains of the Clouds*. But it's nearly ten years since I was in the Hollywood studios and many stars have come and gone since then. The person for whom we both fell was Mary Pickford, still enchanting and pretty then, for hers was the charm of a warm and kindly nature. I wish we could have accepted her invitation to stay with her next time we went to California, but, alas, there was no "next time".

There were amusing episodes during our visits to different studios and I shall never forget when a big producer who had entertained us most hospitably at lunch said to my husband, "Say, Lord Byng, I'd like you to meet a lovely bunch of bright boys." They were a bit of a shock after that description, being certainly not "lovely" in our acceptance of the term, nor boys in any acceptance of that term, but a group of Jews in turtleneck sweaters and gaudy sweaters,



their hair needing a cut, their chins looking like porcupines—and they had totally disregarded Mr. Cecil de Mille's weekly radio injunction to use Lux Toilet Soap. On Monday nights when I listen to those plays and hear his enconiums on Lux there rises before my mind's eyes that "lovely bunch of bright boys" and my husband's blank amazement when he first saw them.

We met Mr. de Mille with Herbert Wilcoxon at that time, making a film about Richard I, and to whom we talked in front of an excellent reproduction of Windsor Castle, which made me wonder why, in many cases, more care isn't taken to avoid blatant errors. I remember a private view we were given of a big military picture in which there were some astounding flaws. For instance, a regiment was shown riding up the Khyber Pass in close formation, with no scouts, or advance-guard—in the middle of a war! The V.C. won by a dead man was pinned on the horse's saddle cloth; and so far as I remember the Colonel went pigsticking in full uniform plus medals! It was after seeing this picture that a crest-fallen ex-cavalry officer approached my husband and said that, though imported to supervise the local technical details, the screen Moguls wouldn't listen to a word he said. There was a lovely tale, I don't know whether true, that while *Henry VIII* was being filmed somebody suggested a passionate love scene between Anne of Cleves and Holbein, when he was painting her picture for the King, and it was with great difficulty they were persuaded to abandon such an unhistorical discrepancy. Of course, this tale may not be true, but with all the queer things one sees on the screen it may be, though I can't vouch for it. When they depict an English hunting scene with eucalyptus trees towering in full leaf over a land covered with wild flowers, and the undercurrent of California's stridulating crickets, it does make one

smile a bit. In that charming film *Mrs. Miniver*, which was closer to reality than most, when the old station-master wins the prize with his rose, there were on the same table huge mop-headed chrysanthemums which by no magic of gardening could possibly have been in bloom at that time of year! It's a small thing, but surely there are people who could put producers wise to these silly slips?

Walking round old sets at Hollywood you passed from a steep Italian village street with a background of snow-capped Alps, into a mid-Western shack town of the '80s, with horse-drawn trams, shoddy bars and hotels of doubtful reputation. Round the next corner you ran into the façade of Nôtre Dame from Lon Chaney's grand rendering of *The Hunchback*, and one had to pinch oneself to remember one was awake and not living in some fantastic dream.

We saw a good deal of George Arliss at that time rehearsing *Richelieu*, and I remember his anguish when hoisted onto the back of a sleepy, pink-eyed old horse for a close-up, as he said, plaintively, "How do I stop the beast?" Though told, he was so dubious of success that they arranged, when, the horse was in the exact position before the camera, for two men, lying flat on the ground, to gently catch its fetlocks and bring it to a halt. The scheme worked, and off got the unwilling rider with a sigh of relief, for he infinitely preferred the dignity of his high-backed chair and the cat *Richelieu* always fondled. The live cat, with cat-like independence, would rarely play up, but found the cerise-coloured robes a good place on which to go sound asleep.

The spell of Hollywood perhaps leads one to do things one wouldn't dream of doing at home, as, for instance, when Eva Sandford and I had "a night out", going from The Huntingdon to Beverley Hills for a light meal with that delightful singer Jeanette Macdonald, and then with her, to

Grauman's Chinese theatre for a private showing of her film, just made at the time, *Naughty Marietta*. Then back to the Beverley Hills house for supper and finally home to The Huntington. As we drove along Sunset Boulevard through the clear spring night, with far below us the twinkling lights and blazing colours of Los Angeles and its attendant cities, and overhead a full moon, I feasted my eyes on its beauty and said to Eva that we must have covered a good deal of ground that evening. On totalling it up we found we should, on reaching the hotel once again, have driven ninety miles! When in England would one have ever dreamed of going that distance to see a film?

The animal actors were a revelation for their intelligence and training. I remember a beautiful collie "on location" in the hills behind Hollywood, whom I saw lying outside the sound van. When I spoke to it, I was met with a growl and snarl, till the man inside the van said it could go to me, which it did promptly, holding out a friendly paw as a human being would hold out a hand. Tom Mix's "Tony" was no less unfriendly when we came to the half-door of his loose-box, and he flew at us, teeth bared, eyes flashing defiance, till the old negro groom joining us said, "You comin' right in, Missee, he not bad." But I must say I was scared till I followed the man in—and instantly "Tony" was nuzzling my pockets for sugar and rubbing his head against my shoulders. The animals are trained to scare strangers because there are brutes who will steal or poison them out of spite. That collie was acting in a film in which he had to carry a message from a white man to say he was wounded by Indians, and during his journey the dog, shot by an arrow, had to drag the arrow out of his shoulder and continue to deliver his message. What an endless amount of patience and training that must have entailed! Certainly

such training could only be done by kindness, and it was good to feel and see that real affection existed between trainer and dog out there.

Quite a different side of life was made free to us by the "Cal Tec" folk, and the delightful astronomer from Mount Wilson, Edwin Hubble and his charming wife, who became our close friends, and have stayed with us at Thorpe. Now they are marooned in some very "hush-hush" job, far from their nice little San Marino house opposite the one inhabited by Clinton Judy, professor in history at the University, who, as he should do, lives in a library lined with books. Books are lying on most of the chairs as well so that a resting-place was hard to find! Fortunately, Edwin Hubble never "talked shop", so I was able to hide from him the scandalous fact that I couldn't have picked out Orion or any other constellation except the Plough, which I knew at home, for in my lamentable education astronomy played no part. If by chance this book reaches him, he will know how grossly uneducated I am, and can twit me about it when he, Grace and I, are together again once more, on what will certainly be a welcome day. Also at San Marino were Max and Beatrice Farrand, she a first-rate garden designer, in a country where it's badly needed, now that Americans are becoming "garden-conscious". He was curator at that time of the famous Huntingdon Museum, which a railway magnate left to the United States—a truly great legacy, with its priceless manuscripts and some of England's finest pictures, whose owners were forced to sell in hard days.

Before we went to California that last time I wrote to Lester Rowntree, the well-known collector of native plants and seeds, with whom I had dealt in the past, saying I would like to see his garden. I got a cordial letter back,

telling me that there was no garden worth seeing in Carmel, and that the writer was mine "sincerely, Lester Rowntree. P.S. I am a woman," which encouraged me to suggest a meeting to discuss a possible trip together. I got a slightly evasive reply, though agreeing that we should meet. We did so on a Sunday, when I had got back from church all "dolloed up", and found waiting for me in the sitting-room a small, untidy woman, her face wizened and puckered from the Californian light, and burnt a deep mahogany from its sun. I wondered how anything so frail-looking had ever accomplished the plant hunts which, I knew, meant much hardship and endurance. And she, looking me over, told me afterwards that when she saw me, trim and smart, she felt, "This woman won't do on my trips." She said, then, that she never took companions with her, because the only time she had done so it was with disastrous results, since the good lady had no idea of roughing it and expected "Home Comforts" in Lester's broken-down old car, and the luxuries of the Ritz in any chance abiding-place, whereas there was never a settled sleeping-place ahead, but just any dump one struck at dusk or dark; so they had parted and Lester vowed "Never again". However, we took to one another and she realized that I really did care more for seeing flowers than for comforts and she agreed to take me along when spring was further advanced, and the wild flowers at the zenith.

The longed-for day came at last when she picked me up at the hotel and I shall never forget old Paddy's (the door-man), face of horror at the car, which nobody could have called respectable or tidy, for Lester was a poor packer. It contained a welter of things up to the very roof. There were big presses for collected specimens; a library of battered horticultural books; sweaters she had forgotten till the last

moment; a shovel, a spade, several trowels; and on top of all went my small "grip" and a couple of old coats, because we were driving into higher altitudes, as well as across the Mohave desert; and a variety of clothes was needed, since spring was as changeable in California as elsewhere. We started off, leaving Eva and Julian waving farewells from the hotel door, and shaking with laughter at the car and its contents, also wondering where we should land and how. Fortunately, Julian was accustomed, after thirty-three years of married life, to my vagaries, so he took things of this kind in his stride, and felt that some time, somehow, I would reappear on the horizon of his life; though I couldn't tell him where we should be at any given time because I didn't know, any more than Lester did, since all depended on road conditions, the things we wanted to see and, above all the vagaries of the ancient car. It was successor to one in which she had had a narrow escape in the Tehachapi Mountains when she drove round a corner into a fallen boulder before she could stop. (Fortunately she had jumped free before the car crashed into a ravine upside down.) I must say she was not my idea of a good driver, so far as keeping an eye on the road was concerned, because she would get so excited at the glimpse of a specially fine stand of flowers that she would stare at them till I cursed her and said I would watch for flowers, if she would do the same by the road! It was necessary that one of us should do this because few of the surfaces were macadamized or easy to negotiate, being at all manner of altitudes and angles, as we took different places in our stride. There was, for instance, the wilderness of the Mohave Desert, where the fierceness of the sun, even in April, scorched one's lips; or, again, beside that strange Salton Lake, far below sea level and so saline that it was heavily fringed with salt.

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Of the many lovely sights during that trip, I think the most breath-taking was along the Grapevine Road towards Bakersfield. Though I thought we had seen some pretty good examples of flowers already, they faded into insignificance when in front of us there appeared a narrow opening between steep rocks, blasted for the passage of the road. Below it lay a scene of such beauty that it caught one with a gasp of emotion. I had never dreamt of such an amazing sight as eight miles by four, stretching as far as the eye could reach, in a solid mass of varied colour. Orange and yellow *Escholtizias*, golden *Amsinckias*, curled like shepherd's crooks, lupins in every shade, rising above a carpet of dwarf plants that formed a groundwork of colour; while on the mountain slopes appeared splashes of the most startling scarlet set against grey-brown rocks. No Elysian fields could approach the glory of that view, seen through a faint haze, so that I could have sworn it was a vast sea, with silver ships in the distance where the heat shimmered. We gazed speechless at it, and half an hour later slowly glided through it and smelt the heady fragrance of the big bloomed white *Oenotheras* which helped to form the carpet. I realized, too, that what had seemed to me silver ships in the distance were prosaic silvered oil drums! But they added their quota to the enchantment of that astounding view from the top of the Grapevine. Perhaps some scientist could explain why *Escholtizias* on the distant mountain-sides showed scarlet, when they were precisely the same species of flowers which, at a lower level were orange and yellow. We clambered up to verify the fact of their colour transformation, and the moment we approached they showed in their true hue. I would like an explanation of that strange phenomenon if I could get it.

We covered over twelve hundred miles on that trip. Up

into the Tehachapi Mountains, among the strange "Joshua Trees", with arms uplifted as if in supplication; down the lovely Antelope Valley; into the Little San Bernadino Mountains; and away to the fruitful Coachella Valley, where the date palms yield two to five hundred pounds of fruit per annum—a paying crop! We watched grey horned toads, sunning themselves and unafraid of our presence, on hot rocks in a sea of flowers; we saw the Colorado Desert and the famous Palm Springs resort; we heard the voices of the quail crying, "Ohio, Ohio, Ohio," and what sent me flying—the crisp warning of a rattlesnake. We clambered—in the car—over impossible places in search of spots Lester wanted me to see, and once, wanting to show me a place where a certain *Calochortus* abounded, she sailed through a gate marked "Keep out", as we tried to find White River. It was a nasty road—or the remains of it—that we travelled, winter floods having washed it out, leaving huge boulders and deep ruts over and round which the poor old car bumped and groaned its way, till we finally landed at a stream called "Posy Creek", in exactly the opposite direction to White River! It was great fun, except that when we reached the place darkness was beginning to gather, and we were many miles from any village where we could spend the night; we were tired and rather battered, so that by the time we did reach our destination we were thoroughly bad-tempered. In some cases the grade on these mountain roads was so steep that from the front seat of the car you saw nothing except the tip of the bonnet upthrust like a huge tip-tilted nose against the sky. There were blind corners ahead, round which one prayed there was a road and not a landslide, so that I sympathized with the child who, on one such road, clung to its mother and wailed, "Oh, Mummy, why did God make the mountains so near the road?"





The marvellous sheets of lupins, with a ground work of innumerable other flowers growing near Bakersfield, California.

It was after such a drive as this that we dropped into the civilization of Santa Maria, to spend the night at my friend's (Frank Macoy) enchanting Inn. We strolled into the Automobile Association office, where Lester, out of mischief, after studying the map asked blandly, "What's this road like?" pointing to our recent course, and the woman in charge said, "Oh, don't dream of trying that, it's washed out and quite impassable." (As we knew, having just come down it!)

We stopped to visit the "Petrified Forest", an amazing geological phenomenon where huge Sequoias lay prone, and according to scientific computations, had lain there six million years, overwhelmed by some upheaval with an infiltration of silica which had converted them into ice-cold mummies laid in a grove of Manzanitas and Madrones, who waved in mourning grace over their fallen neighbours.

We wandered through flat stretches of blossom, out of which we emerged with our boots golden from pollen. Once in a desolate deserted spot we saw a grave with a small headstone recording the fact that here lay J. Lang, an "Old-timer" who, turning Christian Scientist in his declining years, had become a nomad, roaming over the land, till his body was found, with a request scrawled on a piece of paper, that he should be buried, with his feet pointing towards "Lost Horse Mine"—a rough scar on the nearby mountains. Heaven knows what hopes and dreams he had built on that mine in the heyday of his life, when the desert land had caught him in its toils, as the Yukon catches the "Sourdough". Presently we turned northwards to Berkeley and spent a night in the University, where Dr. Goodspeed, another of my old horticultural friends, showed us his efforts to establish a native garden on the slopes of the hills above him.

From there we went to Ukiah to visit the bulb grounds

of the famous Carl Purdy, and landed in a snowstorm, when crossing Mount St. Helena, the place where R. L. Stevenson wrote the *Silverado Squatters*, and Jack London had died after writing, *The Valley of the Moon*. What an ideal spot for writers to bury themselves in, far from the intrusion of human beings! Of course, when we got to the high ground and really bad weather, the windshield wiper struck work, so we had continually to pause and wipe off the freezing sleet which blotted out the view. But after Ukiah we turned south again and on a wide high road which we struck, at an angle from a lane, we met an endless stream of cars and, after waiting for some time, decided to cut in when there was a momentary gap. Every car was packed with people, and as we proceeded other cars overtook us, and angry faces glowered at us, till we realized finally that we had inadvertently got caught in a huge Mexican funeral procession, so we hastily sought refuge down the first side road we saw. Hardly had we got away on that and onto another main road, than we were sandwiched into a travelling circus with clowns, elephants, ponies, etc., and, owing to the narrowness of the road, there we had to stay, travelling slowly in a snakelike procession, headed by a band in an open scarlet car. What part the onlookers thought we were playing in that party, goodness knows, but we remained in its ranks, helpless with laughter, till it turned off the road at last to park itself between a couple of cemeteries.

Soon after that we paused for a few days at Lester's home at Carmel, on a steep slope of high ground with a glimpse of the Pacific Ocean far below, and from there followed the lovely Seventeen Mile drive south, stopping to watch the ludicrous and rather human courting of the female seals and the roaring of the bulls round "Seal Rock". We went as far

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south as San Diego, where the Mexican border turned us back to Pasadena, and I landed again at The Huntingdon after a thrilling and unforgettable trip in an enchanted land, seeing flowers in such abundance and variety as I had never dreamed of. It was a delightful fortnight that I have often wished I could repeat, but anyhow I have seen and revelled in it all, and have memories of it and of little Lester, with her gallant courage and enterprise that carries her far afield in the old car or else with a "Burro" to carry her dunnage—I know from her hazy ideas of packing that the poor donkey must often find the load it is expected to carry on its back swinging round under its belly!

But those gay, crazy days were overshadowed when Julian suffered a stroke. It was a mild one and he pulled through it quickly, but after we left Pasadena we had to travel by a far southern route up to Washington in order to avoid the high altitudes of the Grand Canyon. He seemed almost himself again and enjoyed a meeting with President Roosevelt, thanks to whose kindness the car we were on was switched from line to line, so that my husband should be saved the exertion of frequent changes. I often wish those two men could have seen more of one another, because they had, I feel, much in common.

Finally we sailed in the *Berengaria* for home, reaching England at the end of May, that loveliest month of all the year, when the early green is still fresh, bird songs fill the air and the promise of good things pervades the world. I remember so well those calm happy days after our return, when he and I were alone at Thorpe, wandering round the garden in the golden sunshine, little dreaming what a sinister cloud hung over us. He was daily improving in health, it seemed, till a sudden illness developed, necessitating an emergency operation, and in two days everything was over.

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But that time is too bitter to write of—it lies too near the core of one's being—and I remember those grim days through a mist of misery, when we finally laid him to rest in the village churchyard overlooking the North Sea and the marshes he had loved. Though I know when he passed over “all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side”, to us who were left there remained a silence and a void that could never be filled.

## CHAPTER XII

The cry of the Little Peoples goes up to God in vain,  
For the world is given over to the cruel sons of Cain.

*The Cry of the Little Peoples*

R. LE GALLIENNE

**B**ETWEEN 1934 and 1939 many things happened besides those rumblings of war in Europe, which a succession of Prime Ministers chose to ignore, making the slogan for Whitehall, "All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds" though they knew it was false, and refusing to open their eyes to the truth or listen to the warnings from their underground sources of information. So they kept the public in shameful ignorance as to the true state of affairs. I can't help feeling that had the people been told the truth frankly they would have rallied to their leaders after the habit of the Britisher when his back is to the wall, and we might have been spared the ignominy of Munich with its hysterical cry of "Peace in our time", or "peace with honour" which it certainly wasn't, uttered by an honest but overwrought man whose nerves were at breaking point. One can't therefore wholly blame him, and at least we owe him a year's respite in which some of his predecessors' neglect was remedied. But after Munich, British prestige was at a lower ebb than ever in its whole long history, and during those hideous days which we struggled through, as best we could, while Germany mocked, the rest of Europe sneered at us. France, with her "old families", her dishonest politicians and money-grabbing financiers was preparing to sell out to the traditional enemy at whatever moment he demanded such action.

But apart from European matters, at home there was cause

for deep anxiety. King George was ageing apace, as those of us who were near him during the Jubilee celebrations realized sorrowfully, and, as a matter of fact, that was practically his last public appearance. Aware of this disturbing fact, there was much heart-searching about the company kept by his eldest son, though for a long time the middle and working-classes heard nothing of it. Then my gardener brought me a newspaper sent him by a friend in the States, which made no bones about matters. Bland couldn't believe it, and was horrified that such things should be written of the heir to the throne. All too soon after that, the facts permeated to all grades of society and disgust filled the public, for the example set by King George and Queen Mary had placed the prestige of the Crown higher than ever before, and at that height it was essential to maintain it in the turbulent world conditions. But how could that be done by a young and stubborn man with no sense of responsibility, and surrounded by sycophants who assured him that his charm would weather any storm—win him anything he desired? He would listen to no sane advice, hear no word against the people with whom he mixed. And eventually how many of them stood by him when the storm broke? Hardly one! They fled like rats from a doomed ship; and perhaps the worst part of his punishment was that when friends were most needed he found few on whom to call. Not that all the misdeeds and evils of those days were entirely his fault; for there was an ugly heritage from The Regent (afterwards George IV) and his undesirable brothers. Here was a young Prince who, late in developing, had by force of circumstances been thrust too early into the limelight of a hysterical popularity, and an adulation which needed a sounder mind than his to sort the grain from the chaff—a thing he was never able to do. Alas, few Princes or Kings can do this, owing to the

handicapping circumstances of their environment and the small circle in which Fate confines them.

In January, 1936, King George V died and during each quarter hour of that night, like the sound of a passing bell there came from the quiet room at Sandringham a touching and simply worded message that his life was drawing peacefully to its close. Nobody in England, I believe, went to bed till the final announcement that an honest hard-working life had come to an end. Real sorrow shrouded the land and Empire, and never was there a more dramatic or touching sight than during those cold winter days when hour after hour, from dawn to dark, the nation passed silently past the bier resting in Stephen's Great Hall of Westminster. They came in real affection to pay their final tribute to a man whose kindness and simplicity had won for him more love and respect than the flaunting deeds of many greater kings have done, for his was a victory of the soul and spirit which even the humblest could understand and appreciate. I often look back to the moment when I had the privilege of standing in the dim-lit spaciousness of that empty Hall, on the evening when the King's body had just been placed there and I looked down from the narrow gallery toward that silent space under the wooden roof, where the purple-draped bier stood, without a soul in sight except the silent, rigid figures of four Guardsmen—one at each corner. I thought then of the story Julian had told me when he and the King talked alone together, not long after the latter's illness, and my husband said that the anxiety of the people then, must have shown him how much he was beloved. The King, turning his blue eyes to Julian with that faintly puzzled expression which they sometimes held, said, meditatively, that he wondered why they cared for him so much? A difficult question to answer, but I think my husband found the



right one, when he said, "Because you didn't go rushing off to the battlefields, but stayed at home and saw the war through with your people". That was the keynote of his life, he "saw things through with his people", and for that they respected and loved him, even as they love the successor who has followed his father's example in the present war.

While King George V's body lay in Westminster Hall the world was questioning, with growing uneasiness, regarding the attitude of the new sovereign. There was bitter feeling at the fashion in which, a few weeks earlier, he had curtailed his Christmas visit to Sandringham to return to the crowd he lived among, regardless of his parents' wishes. Egotism was paramount, his mood that of sullen stubbornness—always one of his worst faults—and this was not of good augury for the future. After his accession came months in which his duties as King were neglected, folly was heaped on folly, dignity was flung to the winds, under the evil influences surrounding him. They were tragic months, not only for the individual, but for the country and the Empire, which had a sense of being "let down" by one whom it had loved to the point of adoration. Matters went so far that there were people who regretted that the abortive attempt on the King's life on Constitution Hill had failed, because they felt it would have been better had he passed out then, when his faults would have been condoned.

However, things didn't solve themselves in that fashion and we reached the hour when Stanley Baldwin somewhat retrieved his past faults, by his treatment of the Abdication crisis. His handling was superb. He was kind but relentlessly firm, leaving the King under no illusions, and shewing him that no subterfuges could attain the object he desired, or the gratification of those ambitious dreams of the woman under whose spell he had fallen. He was both friend and judge

throughout the short winter days during which there was a sense of palpitating anxiety over London, where the drama was being played out. Never up till then, perhaps, had a stranger sense of tragedy hung over us all, and when ill-advised Fascist friends of the King sent loud-speaker vans through the streets yelling, "We want Edward," they yelled to empty air, and the public, with the common sense that characterizes it in times of stress, ignored it as a vulgar performance. In most other countries there would have been revolution or anarchy, but the horse-sense of the Englishman prevailed and he waited—rather breathlessly—till the curtain rang down on an uninspiring radio outburst from the abdicating monarch, made in the hour before he vanished into the Channel fog and out of the hearts of thousands who had once idolized him.

And so we turned to the new King who had inherited his father's high moral standards and ideals of duty—a new King who made no attempts at spell-binding as his elder brother had done, but who stood four-square for all that was honest, clean and right, with a helpmate who would face with him all that might betide—for they could have no doubts as to the possibilities of what Fate held in leash unless some miracle could avert it. The following summer came the Coronation with all its traditional pomp—its archaic symbolisms and ritual against a background of blue hangings that veiled the grim grey Abbey walls and threw into relief the blaze of jewels, the crimson of the peers' robes, and uniforms of every kind in a scene of unequalled beauty. Watching all these pomps and ceremonies which have come down to us through the ages in the anointing of our sovereigns, it seemed to me fitting that a King should come to his crowning in the full flower of his youth, with undimmed enthusiasms, as this King did—little though he had ever desired such

a burden, because he knew there was no respite for a Sovereign, from the moment he mounts the steps of the throne till the day when Death, a mightier King, relieves him of his labours and of the loneliness which kingship entails. At that juncture we needed a man with the strength of youth to carry the jewelled crown which can also be a crown of thorns; a young arm to sustain the Sword of State, symbol of the eternal battle for right over might, and to hold firmly the dove-crowned sceptre which speaks of a just and honourable peace for his people. Youth, with its eagerness to act, tempered by the will to heed the advice of riper experience; those were the essentials of modern kingship for which we looked.

That day in the Abbey we were hopeful of finding such a combination, for the young sovereigns were honest of purpose and conscious of perils ahead. And since those days we have seen how admirably they have played their part in the agonies of England through the grim war years. They chose the first available moment in which to visit Canada and the United States, a visit fraught with great repercussions, by bringing into the purview of Canadians, not a mere abstract of sovereignty, but the physical presence of a simple-minded, home-loving couple, so that when war broke within a few weeks of that visit there had been forged a new and personal link between king and people which drew them together, not only as ruler and subjects, but in a communion of the spirit and of human understanding.

During the years between Julian's death and the war, Eva Sandford and I lived at Thorpe, spending the winters in Bryanston Square. For after the prolonged strain of my husband's failing health, our journeyings, and the blow of his death, I wanted the soothing peace of my garden where there was still much to be done, and where I was beginning

to reap the reward of my labours, because they had acquired a certain reputation as the home of plants from many lands. I had the satisfaction, on the Whit-Sundays of 1938 and 1939, of seeing a crowd, on each occasion, of three thousand people, visiting the place, when it was opened in aid of the Gardeners' Benevolent Association. It had never crossed my mind the first year to expect such numbers, though the opening had been widely advertised, and if given a fine day—which we had—I hoped for a good "gate"; but I was amazed when I saw the crowds streaming steadily down from the car park, where I had stationed my faithful chauffeur, single-handed. Poor Messenger! He was driven nearly demented, coping with more than six hundred cars and weighted down with the money for the parking. The next year I secured two experts from the Automobile Association to help him handle the job. It was curious to see how such a crowd could scatter in a big garden, never becoming unwieldy, and doing no serious damage, for I policed the place with my garden staff, since I regret—as a gardener—to confess that some of the keenest gardeners are apt to help themselves to things unless watched, and experience learnt from friends, whose gardens had been rifled in this way, had put me wise, so I took no chances! But all was well at Thorpe, except that the grass was trodden into bare patches here and there, and we gathered up a harvest of matches, cigarette cartons and the rest of the refuse which humanity scatters around on its "day out". But to see this mass of people enjoying my handiwork was a proud and happy moment. I only regretted Julian wasn't there, for he, who had been appreciative of results, once he had overcome his bewilderment at the mess, would have purred with satisfaction.

During those years I resumed my former activities on the

Rural District Council, Women's Institute and fortnightly meetings on "B" Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society, which was both interesting and instructive, dealing, as it did, with new plants from foreign countries. But none of these "ploys" had any bearing on war, should it come, and when in 1938 the Women's Voluntary Society came into being I joined up, because it offered a wide scope of work for women, no longer young, and there was plenty to be done.

Though not very well at the time, I never dreamt in the spring of 1940 two men could play a scurvy trick on me, when my London doctor, Dr. Spira, suddenly swooped down on Thorpe, at the request of his country colleague. He came on the pretext of spending a quiet week-end—which he sometimes did when he wanted a rest—and I was quite unsuspecting of any mean tricks when he appeared, though I was in bed at the time. Then he announced that he had an ambulance at the door and I was returning with him to the Empire Nursing Home in London. I was furious when shoved into that abominable ambulance and carted off to London, protesting as loudly as a broody hen torn from its nest. (At least I felt that I scored by being abominably sick on that detestable drive, thus making Dr. Spira, I hoped, thoroughly uncomfortable!) For close on three weeks I was "under observation"—which suggested to my mind a malarial mosquito or a dangerous criminal—while I was subjected to all the indignities of which nurses and doctors are capable, and goodness knows their name is Legion!

To crown it all, France fell, Holland and Belgium were invaded, and at any moment the same fate might befall England. It was a nightmare, and added to it was the ignominy of being trapped in a hospital, away from my home and my people, who were probably going to find themselves in the front line of invasion. It was only because I raised

Cain that they released me, on the firm understanding that I was to lead an invalid's existence at home. However, I felt that at least I should be home, if invasion came—so I went. But it was hateful to lie about and do nothing, when the W.V.S. were working double tides, and I saw all my jobs swept from me. Nothing could have been more humiliating, though I realized I was incapable of anything at that time except to laze in the garden.

Those were the grimmest days which England at that time had ever endured. But somehow I realized that when things are at their most catastrophic, Providence in its mercy provides a mental carapace which to a small degree deadens the violence of the shocks one has to endure. I had experienced it in the last war, also in times of personal anguish, and it came to me again in 1940 when traitors sold France to the enemy and placed her Allies in dire peril, while the French people waved their arms yelling "Nous sommes trahis". We at home sat back with clenched fists, waiting the turn of events, and knowing what a scurvy trick the French had played us, though we didn't shout about it. English people don't shout, thank God! For myself, the drama of Dunkirk was all the more vivid, knowing as I did those long dunes, bare of shelter, with shallow water that prevented boats getting close enough inshore to save our men. Day and night the picture grew more horrible, till the astounding news came that most of our men were saved, though minus the equipment so essential to our denuded condition. Never surely were the prayers of millions so swiftly answered by a miracle as at Dunkirk. I remember seeing some of the men who landed at Harwich; and their exhaustion, their grim faces, but their undaunted resolve to get back at the enemy, were branded on my mind for all time.

With my activities cut to zero nothing remained but to

provide help for the minesweepers based at Harwich, a few miles away through the rolling East Anglian country. In peacetime I always enjoyed going to that sleepy little port with its queer Dickensian flavour, its narrow, crooked streets which in some cases could only accommodate a single line of traffic; its old houses with lovely panelling behind their simple exteriors and, in the case of my solicitor's office, a square bow-window that overhung the street, and out of which I always felt Mr. Pickwick's beaming face might appear, gazing into the street where sleepy cats lounged, or sailors rolled down to the quayside to gossip with some old "salt" leaning against a bollard and spitting meditatively on the cobblestones at his feet. I know no other place, except King's Lynn, which has such a flavour of bygone days as Harwich, its shop windows rosy with shrimps and red lobsters which are the stock-in-trade of the little town. There is an "ancient and fishlike smell" about it all that remains in one's nostrils long after one has left its sleepy centre, and reached the harvest fields sloping down to the river Stour, which is the boundary between Suffolk and Essex.

But the part of Harwich to which I travelled at that time, with the vegetables, and "comforts" for the minesweepers, was a different proposition. The big balloon barrage hung overhead, like distressed elephants, tugging at their cables, and everything was alive on Parkeston Quay, where in peacetime the Harwich-Hook-of-Holland liners received and disgorged their passengers. The quay was littered with salvage from broken ships such as the *Gipsy* which, early on, had been caught by one of the first "magnetic mines" as she was steaming out from Harwich. Everything of use was stripped from her and laid out on Parkeston Quay, among ships' boats with their sides stove in, or their bows missing from some disaster. There were endless pieces of mechanism

which meant nothing to the landlubber, but could be re-used to advantage. It was from this quay, after the last war, that the Admiral in Command had taken us to see the surrendered U-boats lying up the Stour, tied together like bundles of cigars, and in this war again sleepy old Harwich was awake.

I used to join the Naval Chaplain, Pat Stewart, to walk down the quay where the minesweepers lay in the lazy slick-slock of the tide, as though impatient to be off on "their lawful occasions" hunting the North Seas, for mines. Our job was to collect the men from the boats due to sail, because they were the first to be served with vegetables. Their crews would scramble ashore to the converted stable where the supplies awaited them, and most of them made straight for the buckets of cut flowers I had gathered out of the garden, plunging their weather-beaten faces into the mass of sweet-scented things and saying, "Please, Miss, can we have a bunch for the mess table? They remind me of home and the Missus!" So they picked out what they wanted, careful not to damage the rest, and laid the small bouquets aside till they had collected their vegetables and "comforts". Then off they went to their odd assortment of little ships, gingerly handling the flowers that reminded them of "home and the Missus".

They were rough, simple men—not young in many cases—who never grumbled, and if one met a sweat-streaked grimy man just ashore from a "sweep" and asked what had happened, he would grin, if they had sunk a mine, or say, "Nothin' much. Fritzie tried to bomb us and the old man copped a splinter." It all came in the day's work, just as hauling in the herrings in the past had done, so why grouse about it? They were a cheery crowd, ready to exchange



quip for quip, and I thought to myself that here I had finally got a job to see me through, till I was quite fit again.

But I dreamt wrong, and my work was cut short by the decision to come to Canada. However, I have had some slight consolation in knowing that, thanks to the ceaseless work of Bland, my admirable head gardener, the same supplies and even more, have gone weekly, free of cost, to those men at Harwich ever since, and not a single week so far, has he failed to have the stuff ready when the Naval lorry called for it; though, from having a staff of twelve under him in the old days, he now only has two, both of them unfit for service. How he manages to do it short-handed as he is (besides being a policeman at night when raids are on in the district), passes my understanding. There are many such men in England, carrying on in obscurity, without glamour or excitement, year after year ever since 1939, and all honour to them. I often wonder what sort of garden I shall find when I get home, for naturally it's impossible to keep up the floral side, even with such a tiger for work as Bland and his helpers, and I foresee much leeway to be made up, though nothing matters provided the minesweepers get their supplies and I manage to get home again some day.

It was at Harwich that I met a vast variety of mongrels, for most boats had pets of some kind, rabbits or canaries, for whom the outside leaves of lettuces and cabbages were kept. Cats, there were, too, and above all those amazing dogs. The worst of them was a thing on legs like a greyhound, with the body of a wire-haired fox terrier, terminating in a curly pug's tail; one ear pricked insolently, the other dropped, and when I asked a man what "it" was, he answered with pride, "That's Patricia, and she was all through Dunkirk," which made me feel ashamed at having thought her such a nightmare. Nor was she the only one who survived Dunkirk,

for many a poor derelict had swum out towards the rescuing boats in maddened fear, and our men, exhausted and battling for their own lives, yet found time to gather up these luckless mongrels and bring them to safety. When the dogs arrived at home ports the S.P.C.A., paid for their quarantine period, and many of them are now treasured links between wives, children and "Daddy", serving somewhere overseas.

One day I was invited to tea on a minesweeper because the skipper wanted, he said, to show me some return for what I had been doing for his men. So I plunged into the depths of a little squat trawler, where the fish storage space had been converted into a small cabin, with loaded rifles in racks ready for use, and the owner dispensed the strongest tea I had ever tasted. It was quite black and the spoon could have stood upright in the leaves that filled the pot. He was a grand type, that skipper, not young, and in pre-war days he had owned fishing boats which brought him in between a thousand and fifteen hundred pounds per annum in profits; but when war came he packed up his house in the north, sent his wife to live with her parents, and brought his trawlers to Harwich to sign on "for the duration". That was the spirit of the fishermen on the North and East Coasts, those unsung heroes who manned the little ships which helped to keep the sea lanes clear of mines round the fortress of Britain during those grim days of what some people were apt to call the "phoney war".

Since that afternoon on the *Lord Melchett* I have seen a very different form of minesweeper at Toronto—the *Golden Fleece*, just completed in Canada and handed over to her British crew. There she lay, a sleek greyhound of the seas, with every conceivable gadget to destroy submarines, to lay mines or sweep them up; and I thought of the little old

trawlers I had left beside Parkeston Quay four years ago. What a change had come in the weapons and in the methods of that dangerous trade since those days! I was amused, when talking to Lieutenant Commander Davies from Wales, to hear from him that Harwich, which he knew well, was one of the most coveted minesweeper bases, because of the excellent supply of vegetables the men got! So I asked him to visit Bland next time he was there, and see where some, anyhow, of that much-appreciated supply grew.

In 1940 Harwich had one thrilling day for a submarine based there, and overdue, suddenly contacted her base. She had a great record, the crew were popular in port, and when she was sighted, limping in, it was too much for local feelings. Though there were stringent rules against sounding sirens, blowing whistles and all other "noises" kept in reserve for air-raid warnings, when this little grey shape appeared, every siren, every whistle, everything that could be used to make a noise, was brought into play, and pandemonium reigned as she came slowly in, the men standing on her narrow deck startled and touched at the reception. Inland trains hearing the hubbub took "air-raid action"; people ran to shelters, work in fields stopped, not knowing that it was all because a battered little warrior was coming to her home station once again. The Admiral in command, remembering no doubt the occasion when Nelson used his blind eye, remained deaf to the clamour, and it was a grand homecoming for the little ship. But it was never allowed to happen again, though many a submarine since then has come homing to Harwich during the long years of war.

But my most vivid memory of the place was connected with two people who did magnificent work there, the young Naval Chaplain, Pat Stewart, and his mother, who, between them, organized a distributing centre for everything that the neighbourhood could raise, by fair means or foul—and, be-

lieve me, we had no scruples in "scrounging" everything we could. A section of the old stables on the quay was arranged as a storeroom piled with "comforts"—books, magazines, etc.; and Pat had managed by some magic touch to transform another stable into one of the loveliest little chapels I ever saw, with its rough cobblestone floor on which at first chairs and benches leant against each other like tombstones in a neglected churchyard, till the cobblestones were cemented over. An altar stood against "Mary Blue" hangings, its big cross with a light glowing above it flanked by vases filled with flowers, and the little place had a serenity often missing in cathedrals, perhaps because so much loving care had gone to its creation, perhaps too, because it carried one's mind back to another stable in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, when the star shone above the birthplace of the Christ child. Whatever the cause, I knew no place where it was easier to slough off one's worries and to pray, because of that sense of contact with things unseen and not belonging to this world. And here that young, eager man loved and laboured for his fellows, as many a priest had done before, and many a priest will do again, if he has the right spirit. Though Pat held three services each Sunday, many were turned away from lack of space—and that was reward enough for him for all he had done in the place. The last time I was in Harwich, a few days before I left for Canada, and said good-bye to that hard-working mother and son, they waved me a cheery farewell from the quay. I heard from him now and again as to how things were progressing, then came an ecstatic letter saying he was aboard H.M.S. *Hood*, thrilled at the wonders of the ship. That letter reached me in Vancouver, the day she was sunk. But Pat Stewart's memorial remains in that stable-chapel on the quayside of Harwich, with the East Anglian country rolling gently down behind it to the river Stour.

## CHAPTER XIII

Rus in urbe.

MARTIAL

**A**FTER Dunkirk raids started around Thorpe, not on a big scale, but craters were blown in fields, windows were broken, and when one was in the garden if planes came overhead one looked up to see whether they were "theirs or ours", and if the former one went indoors. Then night-raiding began in biggish formations, which was a nuisance, because nights spent in the cellar weren't helpful when one was under the weather physically, and I hated climbing to bed again in the clear-washed loveliness of a summer's dawn that echoed to the sirens screaming "All clear". I would have stayed in bed when the warnings sounded, but having a household one had to set the example of going to ground, though sometimes I felt that at my age a bomb would have been a good solution, provided it made a decent job of killing instead of maiming one, when one would be a burden to oneself and others.

Many of my people, both in house and garden, were joining up of course, and the parents of the younger ones clamoured for their offspring's return because they didn't like East Anglia. Well, perhaps it wasn't exactly salubrious. Added to this I began to realize that the Government didn't relish old and useless people like myself being in a danger zone, and also were casting covetous eyes on my house as likely to be useful to themselves, and eventually it was taken for troops, with the usual consequences of dirt and damage. Finally I wrote to Sir John Anderson, then Home Secretary, asking his advice. Take a small house somewhere inland?

Live with my maid at my London Club, as I no longer owned a town house; or go to Canada where the Athlones, the O'Connors and other friends were urging me to come? And I hoped he would plump for the inland house, but he said "Canada" in no uncertain tone. Having told him I would abide by his decision I was trapped, though I was too old to bear transplanting with equanimity, for how long or how short a period nobody could say though, like a fool, and many others of the same calibre, I had an idea that a year or eighteen months would see it through. How could we ever have indulged in such idiotically wishful thinking? The war—so far as many things were concerned—had hardly started then.

Fortunately there was too little time between the decision as to my plans, and my departure, for very clear thinking, and my energies were devoted to closing up the house. Time to think came when I was on board the *Duchess of Atholl*, and lying for two days and nights in the Mersey, off Liverpool, waiting till a marauding submarine outside had been liquidated; and I remember seeing a destroyer creep gingerly into port with a great slit—that looked like a shark's mouth—in her bows, just above the water line. During those waiting days, if I had been able to do so, I think I would have gone ashore and back to Thorpe—homesick as I already was. But there was no getting ashore from that ship lying in mid-stream, so I remained, and was at least spared the anguish of watching England's shores fade in the distance, because it was only when I woke at the sound of the engines turning slowly over at midnight that I realized we had started, and, burying my face in the pillow, I cried my heart out.

We set our course North, and was it cold! So bitterly cold that even in a heavy fur coat one shivered, and the gloom of the blacked-out ship, crowded with a mixed cargo of people,

was depressing. We had a section of passengers who in an emergency would not have been easy to handle, but an imposing party of Admirals and senior naval officers on board gave one a certain feeling of security—should necessity arise. We suffered, too, from crowds of rowdy boys—British, I regret to say—who, having nobody over them, behaved atrociously, and there was no peace in any corner of the ship. Icebergs as well as submarines had to be looked for, since it was the migratory season for the former and they cropped up on all sides, but submarines left us unmolested, though we ran into the customary fogs off “The Banks”. Hateful though fog is in peace, it’s infinitely worse in war when you lie completely mute, since sirens and hooters would betray a ship’s position to the enemy, and I confess that I found lying in that shrouding whiteness without a sound except the lapping of the sea against the hull was a most unpleasant sensation.

Then one afternoon, after we had lain to for hours, at intervals, the fog suddenly lifted and there, close at hand, rose the Belle Isle lighthouse, with a magnificent emerald green “berg” parked on its doorstep. From there we crept up the St. Lawrence through shifting veils of fog, but safe from U-boats, which hadn’t penetrated so far afield then, and I began to hunger for the familiar, haunting smell of forests—moist soil, pines, poplars, and newly-cut lumber which blend into an essence that is Canada’s special perfume. It reached me at sunrise when we got into narrower waters and I drank it in appreciatively, that scent of a land I loved next to England. We steamed past Quebec, sun-flooded on its grey rock, crowned by the Citadel, and with the innumerable spires of its churches piercing the background of blue sky. Three Rivers at night was ablaze with factory lights, which reflected in the waters formed a golden waterfall; and how we

crowded to look at the lights which we had lost sight of at home for over a year at that time! It was fairyland to us to see those flaming lights, in contrast to the Cimmerian darkness of our own cities and the shrouded gloom of a countryside waiting for the scream of falling bombs. We spent two Sundays on board and it was hardly edifying to see that on the first Sunday the saloon held a packed congregation, on the second it was only sparsely filled. Apparently the cry for protection in submarine-infested waters of the ocean was a greater draw than an act of thanksgiving for safe emergence into the beautiful river. One thought of the old question, "Where are the nine?" They were markedly absent from the service that second Sunday!

So I found myself back for the fourth time in Canada, when on August 1st we reached Montreal, where Willis O'Connor beamed up at me as the heavy rain teemed down on the roof of the docks—aftermath of a thunderstorm which had broken a heat wave. Instead of shivering I sweltered as we took the afternoon train for Ottawa to face this strange "homecoming" to familiar surroundings, minus the comforts of Government House and the joys of free, luxurious travel, and as a penniless evacuee, dependent on the charity of my friends.

Not till I returned once more to Ottawa did I realize how little I knew the city. I had no idea whither different streets led—and in many cases I was shamefully ignorant of their names, because in the old days one drove down from Government House, not taking much heed of roads, and, having done one's job, drove back. Added to that I have never—in my most prosperous days—been an ardent shopper, because when I went to buy anything it was with the knowledge of what I wanted and I never browsed at every counter. I have never cared for walking in streets, except in London



or Paris, where I love to "window-shop", because there are things worth looking at, and a great variety to be seen. My Ottawa peregrinations in the past were confined to Rockcliffe, then a peaceful woodland, full of birds, the angry cursing of squirrels at any intrusion on their privacy, and above all, wild flowers everywhere. But my husband preferred going farther afield in his walks, and many a groan went up from members of his Staff, who were dragged through the less sweet-scented purlieus of Ottawa. There was, so they declared, no newly started "fill-in" that Julian didn't discover and hang over; no grimy corner he didn't have a genius in ferreting out and making it the object of one of those dreaded walks. Having himself a dulled sense of smell, he escaped the malodorous atmosphere of refuse dumps, where smouldering filth sent up clouds of acrid smoke, and he always declared his companions were too fussy, and would tell them, "If you want a real stink, try a dead Kaffir after twenty-four hours in the sun. That's something to chat about." Even he, apparently, had realized that in South Africa.

Anyhow, I had always escaped those aromatic walks and therefore didn't know Ottawa, when I found myself dumped down in the Roxborough Apartments during the late spring of 1941, after spending a winter in the West. I began to learn my way about, but I'm stupid in towns, though in the bush or the open country I remember landmarks easily, for there seem to be so many; but streets are all much alike to me and I get befuddled and lost in them. In course of time, however, I learnt my way round Ottawa and discovered By-Ward market, which was a source of delight in spite of the fact that it was framed by buildings, old without the redeeming feature of being picturesque, except for the grey walls and green roofs of the Chateau

Laurier Hotel, which made it so reminiscent of the market scene in *Faust* that one expected to meet Mephistopheles in his scarlet raiment or Marguerite with her flaxen plaits. But in their place was a milling crowd of modern buyers, armed with bags or baskets and wearing the determined expression of the confirmed shopper, as they threaded a perilous path through crowds of children shoving trolleys, and whose shrill French was incomprehensible to all outside the ranks of the *Habitants*. In By-Ward market the French element was predominant, because most of the produce came from Gatineau Valley farms, and farmer's plump wives crouched, spider-like, behind their merchandise under tarpaulins spread over the stalls which held an enchanting wealth of colour. The vegetables, seen from the artist's point of view, had beauty, in the ruby of beets, the snowy white and tender green of leeks or lettuces, the orange-red of carrots, cauliflowers reminiscent of Victorian bouquets with their surrounding leaves and tightly bunched centres; broccoli iridescent in blues and greens, while the purple and ruby of red cabbage wasn't to be scorned, and the glow of rhubarb proved a delight. Sleek mushrooms, in their off-white coats, added their quota to the picture as the year slipped by.

Of course the flowers drew one, from the first pale blue violets gathered in moist corners of the Gatineau woods; trilliums torn from the meadows where they had danced, were held now, frail and drooping in jam jars. These were the overture to the orchestra of beauty that the stalls had to offer before summer had played its full score, and in late October Everlastings, tightly bunched in cornucopias of white paper, were ready for laying on the family graves at "La Toussaint".

And the fruit! What an abundance to see and smell!

Warmly scented peaches, golden and rose, under a veiling of red muslin which enhanced their beauty. Apples like shining-faced country girls; deep purple plums with a soft grey bloom upon them. But, best of all, in autumn, the heady fragrance of grapes—pale jade treasures piled up in baskets, while the lathes upholding the protecting tarpaulins glowed with the flamboyance of long sprays of bittersweet from the hedgerows, and overhead elm leaves fluttered to the ground to form a rustling golden carpet.

Certainly the market added its quota to the pleasant sights of Ottawa and helped maintain that peaceful and simple atmosphere which has belonged to it, since over a century ago Colonel By built the locks and Canal to link up the Rideau and Ottawa rivers and the first lumbermen swooped down on the Ottawa Valley where bears and Indians, moose and deer had ranged at will, till the forests were made to yield up their wealth to the felling axes, and the Chaudière Falls were harnessed to the use of men.

I have a feeling—also a hope—that no matter how much Ottawa may spread in size, no matter what Embassies, etc., may find an anchorage here, throughout the ages that lie ahead it will still retain that friendly, homely atmosphere of the Canadian “Small Town” and still be “Rus in urbe”.

But what improvements I found, architecturally, in Ottawa this time! The Russell Theatre and its neighbours had made way for Elgin Street’s double roadway; well-spaced trees, and green verges, leading to the Memorial and the square—dubbed “Hell’s Half Acre” by those who have to negotiate it. There are a few blots still on Elgin Street, especially a derelict house on the corner of Slater, with its frayed shingles and shuttered windows, while a Manitoba maple leaning against the wall at one corner makes it look like a drunken beggar with a patch over one eye. But on the credit side

there stands the new main Post Office, though with such an odd set-back to its upper stories, that a rude Cockney would say somebody had "dotted it one on the dial". But not even a ribald Cockney would dare laugh at its grey stone "Pride of Lions" who at some angles remind me of the leonine brow and tawny mane of Mr. Brockington, Canada's great orator, except that he twinkles with humour, whereas the lions superciliously survey passers-by with an expression which recalls that dreadful advertisement, "You must Perspire, but you needn't Offend", for the stone beasts stare down at everybody as though they grossly offended their olfactory organs.

The Confederation Buildings and Supreme Court are good, especially when the peculiarly greasy brand of Ottawa's smoke will have toned down the whiteness of the latter and brought it into line with its neighbours. But I wish that Providence might strike those spindly masts in front of the building with His lightnings, because they seem so disproportionate. There are other good new buildings, such as the Banks of Canada and Montreal, and the American Chancellery, combining dignity and lightness in its construction; and the Lord Elgin continuing the French tradition of the Chateau Laurier.

But there remains much still to do in the post-war period which—for the first time in five years—we dare begin to think of. Post-war days are words that carry my mind to the same period in 1921-26, when many of the younger men, who served under Julian, used to complain bitterly of the dilatoriness of governments, or the chicaneries of politicians. He always gave them the same advice:

"Don't grumble. Go into politics and clean up the mess you complain of. You are what politics need—young, keen, untainted men, and it's your duty to remodel things."

But there always came the same reply, "Nothing doing—politics are too dirty." And none ventured into the Augean stable with a clean broom.

Julian's advice was given without any political bias, since he never, throughout his whole life, had any party affiliations. But he had pinned his hopes on the younger men to make their influence felt on the country which he loved almost as much as they did. Yet promising though some of them appeared at the time, they weren't of the "square timbers" from which leaders are formed. And now once again there looms on the horizon another post-war period with its problems, difficulties and, above all, its opportunities, and this time the "square timbers" must be found among the younger men who have fought and endured, who will step forward to lead their country in the days of peace. Politics the world over needs the ardour of youth and the courage of men with politically untainted ideals, and the zest to bring to fruition dreams which failed the last time. Let that not happen again in Canada, because there is room, and indeed a crying need, for the young and clean-handed men in politics and in the Church at this time. So youth should grasp the opportunities which both careers offer and of which my husband dreamt in days gone by.

Though knowing nothing of High Finance—indeed figures, including telephone numbers, have always been a sealed book to my limited intelligence—I often feel that we old and useless people who left our homeland, because we were useless to it, should have been allowed enough, out of our own incomes, to keep body and soul together during our banishment, because we were a drain on the goodness of Canadians.\* In most cases the recipients of so much kindness were grateful; but there was a percentage who

\*Since writing the above, the British Government is allowing us to have £20 per month.—Author.

shamelessly abused it, whose manners were lamentable, their tongues unpardonably rude and who thereby harmed Imperial relations, because "the evil that men do lives after them". Most of that unpleasant section has departed now, but their memory rankles. There were others, however, who more than pulled their weight, who worked without complaint for their children and themselves, as they had never been trained to work in all their lives, and to them be all honour and I trust their memory will serve to remove from Canadian palates the taste of some other evacuees.

Personally, I can never find adequate expression for the generosity and kindness I have met from friends—old and new—Canadian and American—who have helped me through the humiliation of being a dependent on charity—even though of a temporary nature. But if one has been brought up to "owe no man anything", the situation isn't pleasant. I was both furious and amused when one of those "unco guid" females whose tongues are frequently uncontrolled, announced that she "knew" I was being kept in luxury by the Canadian Government, and with the implication that people's taxes were wasted in this direction. Let me assure her, and any others who are so omniscient about my affairs, that the Canadian Government never has, and never will, stir a finger for me in any way, and I am no more to them than any other evacuee who has sought a temporary home in Canada, and that I exist solely through the kindness of personal friends.

After securing a flat in the Roxborough for myself and Miss Somerville, my maid, there began a hunt for inexpensive eating-places, because the Roxborough tariff was quite beyond an evacuee's means. I sampled various places—finding that lunch counters were impossible, since the stools seemed bent on decanting one on the floor, and I no longer

had the agility to cope with such skittishness on their part; and finally I settled on the Chateau Laurier cafeteria, where the chairs were stabilized and the food within my means. I have had much entertainment out of it, and one charming compliment, paid me when the first time I went there and the cashier greeted me with such a beaming smile that I thought she knew me. The second time I went she said, "I hope you didn't mind my speaking to you the other day, but you reminded me so much of Lady Byng, whom we all liked, that I felt I had to speak."

I have watched many comic scenes at the cafeteria. I remember a tall Englishwoman of the type that French papers used to depict as "l'Anglaise en voyage", overflowing with veils, and accompanied by a gaunt husband, who got into the middle of the queue passing down the food counter. I found myself between husband and wife as she cried out, in an ultra-English voice, "Oh, Henry, isn't this TOO amusing?" as though we were performing seals. Neither she nor "Henry" had plates, and as she was effectually blocking the traffic I said politely that if she didn't want lunch would she kindly let us pass. To which she exclaimed in an anguished tone. "Oh, but we DO want lunch!"

So I suggested she should get a tray. However, I didn't see her again, and I imagine she and "Henry" thought better of joining our performing troupe.

Then there was a fat and very hot female who once shared my table, bringing a tray that was alarmingly full of food. When she started her meal I recalled a description of a dog and its dinner, "Eager anticipation—lively hope—a gulp—and the wrong side of happiness," for she gulped her soup with a loud obligato of suction and attacked the meat as if it was a mortal enemy. But I could face no more and

left before she reached the dessert stage, though I can imagine how that went down.

There was on another occasion a table companion who, having made a hearty meal, said regretfully, "How wise you were to choose cold food. Mine was hardly tepid!" Then she added with a friendly smile, "Well, I'll go home now and have a really good hot dinner." I did rather wonder how the one she had just eaten ranked. Was it merely an aperitif?

Our main meal being fixed, there remained supper to cope with, and neither Somerville nor I had any practical knowledge of cooking, for, to my shame be it said, I had never so much as boiled an egg up till then. However, we made a shot at it, thanks to cookery books—laid on the bed in her room, and to which we flew during our operations, at the imminent risk of collisions between ourselves—the electric grid and "Whistling Willie", the kettle who notified his willingness to help when at the boil. It was fun really, and a useful experience for whatever may lie ahead of us at Thorpe in shortage of help. My fellow novice treated me with utter scorn—having made scones in her Glasgow home, which gave her priority in the culinary art. I wasn't even allowed to wash up, for I was accused of "making a mess" of the bathroom floor—an utter libel, because I frequently washed up my own dishes, et cetera, when she was out and she was none the wiser! However, by degrees I was no longer looked on as a moron, but was entrusted with making sauces and minor jobs in our "kitchen", which consisted of one end of the narrow passage and Somerville's bedroom—about eight by ten. Before long we were turning out quite edible Soufflés, Shepherds' Pie, Toad-in-the-Hole, and my *chef d'oeuvres*, curries. Not only that, but Somerville managed in the summer of '43 to make forty pounds



of jelly from black currant, crabapple, red currant and raspberry, all of which was a saving financially and far nicer than what we bought. Variety certainly adds spice to existence and I've had it during my life, in one way and another.

The food problem being solved, I looked round for some war jobs, still within my physical capacities. As a Blood Donor I was turned down for age, and canteen work was beyond my lumbago-ridden back. So I drifted to the Superfluity Shop, where I have found some delightful friends, besides being initiated into what might be called the art of shopping to the benefit of the shopper. In the early days of the "Sup" everybody was trustful, unconscious of the need to keep a sharp eye on some of our customers and their methods. We never suspected there could be people base enough to defraud a charitable institution—which the Superfluity Shop is. However, before long we learnt the efficacy of a hole in a glove through which a carefully moistened finger acted as an eraser on price tickets, or figures written on china, by eliminating the dollar mark, while leaving the cents intact. Nor had we then "tumbled to" the occasional customer's technique of substituting the tag off a cheap garment onto a more expensive one. That ranked among the higher class of deceptions and entailed an accomplice, who distracted the attention of the sales lady while the transfer was completed, after which the purchaser would amble up to the desk and say innocently, that she would take the article on her arm. It really was a sporting performance, and quite safe provided they avoided the original sales lady, who by that time was deep in conversation with the accomplice. The dice, you see, were well loaded in favour of the skilful shopper. Later on we had to put up a notice saying that only one garment might be



One of the "snooty" lions at the Post Office, Ottawa.

taken at a time into what—out of politeness—was called the “fitting room”, really a cubby hole so small that it wasn’t easy to turn round in it without crashing your elbows. It was marvellous what disappearing acts happened there in the matter of dresses. It’s all been a game to pit our brains against the sprinkling that we got of “experienced shoppers”!

I myself am not a sales lady, except under stress of business at sale times, but I work in the Pricing Room where, at my own request, the less interesting jobs of sorting hundreds of buttons or polishing silver are reserved for me, as being suited to the old. There need never be a dull moment in the Pricing Room, because you are snowed under with contributions which range in a single afternoon from Chesterfields or dining-room tables to baby’s diapers—but I must confess I have sometimes uttered a devout prayer that I may never see a box of mixed buttons again!

But here I want to pay tribute to the heads of that shop, which under Mrs. Graham Towers’ direction has contributed magnificently to the Red Cross funds. The ladies have worked indefatigably, through storm and stress, silly bickerings and other disheartening frets, and have made of their labours a most outstanding success. The Shop really has done a grand job with a hard-working and devoted volunteer staff of ladies, among whom I have many good and valued friends. Over a hundred thousand dollars have been turned over from that organization to war charities in its four years’ existence and it has been the Mecca of many evacuees to whom it was a boon. Also it’s an amusing place, for our customers are a very mixed bag. Some charming, some not coming quite in that category.

My second job landed me in the desk of the Women’s Active Service Club on Metcalfe Street, where another grand

piece of work has been done in meeting a much-felt need for girls of non-commissioned ranks in all three services, who have found in that pleasantly furnished club a relief from the noise of barracks or the discomfort of lodgings in this over-crowded city. The girls are most appreciative in their gratitude and at the desk I get to know quite a few of them, often from outlying places which I happen to have seen in old days. Their faces light and they are keen to talk of their home towns because, like myself, they too are homesick, and so we have a bond of union.

However, these mild jobs fade into oblivion when Poppy Day approaches, because then really hard work starts in the Canadian Legion Headquarters at Trafalgar House. There are radio scripts to write and deliver; publicity, well in advance, to be arranged; and for the final three weeks life is one hectic rush in the big room full of clattering typewriters, clattering female tongues, clanging telephones (which I am beginning to find hard to hear in the general hubbub) and innumerable conundrums that arise, which Mrs. Bernard Alexandor—fortunately inheriting the ability from her mother, the late Mrs. Freiman—deals with competently, and also sees to it that everybody sticks to her own last. By the end of Poppy Day exhaustion has set in on us all—though nothing matters so long as we can count on raking in large sums of money to pay the debt that we civilians owe to the serving men. So far we have had three bumper years, and we hope to continue on the up-grade.

It has interested me to notice out here—as at home—how much of the war work is done by the same comparatively small number of people, and it exemplifies the fact that the busier a person is the more time they seem to find in which to do work, and certainly Ottawa has a group of women of

outstanding ability in organization of whom she can be proud.

Though Ottawa affords many lovely sights in the course of the year, I have, as a rule, sought refuge during the winter in a less harsh climate—twice in British Columbia and once in Nassau. I am not tempted to return to the latter, for to my mind it has few recommendations beyond the unbelievable beauty of its peacock-hued sea, splashed with wine-coloured shadows, the prodigality of pink Oleanders, Bougainvilleas, and my old Californian friend, "Copo de Oro", draping the walls. But heaven save me from the "Bouquet d'Afrique" exuded by the coloured people, their cacophonous laughter and uppishness!—an outcome of the mishandled riot a few years ago. Dirt and squalor impinges on the prosperous but grubby Bay Street, where merchants have made big fortunes out of the terrific prices charged to tourists.

However, if I disliked Nassau, at least it gave me an introduction to air travel, for one was forced to cross by plane from Miami to Nassau. Long ago in Cairo a French aviator in the early days of flying was anxious to give me my "Baptême de l'air" as he called it, so I consulted Julian, who answered drily, "Well, my dear, you don't like heights any more than I do. You hate speed, and you detest noise. I shouldn't go if I were you." I didn't, but since those early days planes have changed out of all knowledge and when I planned the Nassau trip I knew I had to do the last lap by air and was curious as to how I should like it. All was well. I found no sense of speed, no feeling of looking down from a dizzying height and the noise, though tiring if for long, was quite endurable. With the memory of a perfectly hideous train journey from Ottawa to Miami I told Somerville that I meant to fly back, to which she remarked tersely, "You're mad!" However, I did the flight and am, I believe,

still fairly sane. Also I have come to the conclusion that in a country of this size flying is the only possible means of travelling in comfort and without fatigue, for you can board a plane at 6 a.m. in Vancouver and land at Ottawa at midnight that same night. What a contrast to four days and nights of being battered in a train! You can fly from Ottawa to Toronto in an hour and a quarter instead of spending six to seven hours in a crowded train. The only disadvantage is being grounded by weather or priorities. I would gladly fly the Atlantic on my journey home, to escape the misery of ship life and sea-sickness, because—so far—I am not air-sick, though I have had some pretty bumpy trips. And what a joy it would be to get home in so short a time!

But Ottawa was my theme when I digressed into flying, and it's to Ottawa that my mind turns, set as it is at the junction of three rivers. Could anything be lovelier than the Rideau, that gentle nymph wandering through lush meadows to fall in a straight curtain of water—whence it gains its name—into the waiting arms of the Ottawa, at a point where that big river has ceased to foam and rage at the degradation offered its Chaudière Falls in being harnessed to the use of man? The Ottawa, of course, is the sovereign among the rivers, by its size, its beauty and its swift current that rushes along to where round the Island of Montreal, it joins its big brother, the St. Lawrence, and surges towards the open wastes of the Atlantic. The year round, below the city the Ottawa River is beautiful, under sun or snow; when thunderclouds roll out of the Laurentians and the waters are a sullen steel colour, while the logs in their great booms lie pallid from the scorching of the summer sun, waiting to be towed by fussy little tugs down the river, bordered with the grace of poplars and willows, to where the greedy maws of paper mills await their advent.

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Last, but not by any means least in beauty, is the Gatineau, that laughing child of the Laurentians, dancing in endless little whispering rapids round rocks which halt the tide of logs, where in spring, lumbermen in their bright clothes tread catlike against a background of woods whence the epithalamium of courting frogs sounds the knell of "sugaring" and the death of the long months of winter's harsh grip.

It's a marvellous setting for any city, and Nature seems to demand that man should make the best of what, in her bounty, she has provided. By degrees man is doing this, and some day Ottawa will take her place among the loveliest cities of the world. At present her best profile, I think, is seen from the Inter-Provincial Bridge—if you can forget its ugliness of structure and look instead at an autumn sky reddened by a frosty sunset which stains the river crimson, as the Parliament Buildings tower above it with countless lighted windows that wink a mischievous farewell to the dying day, and the illuminated faces of the clock look like the round eye of a watchful owl. Across that Giant's Staircase of Colonel By's locks, the turrets and green roofs of the Chateau Laurier Hotel suggest Disney's castle in his "Snow-White" film, and from thence stretches the undulating chain of lights on Rideau Street, like a loosely strung necklace of brilliants, following the gradient of a street which ends, as most of Ottawa's streets end, in a feathery veil of foliage. A lovely evening scene! And by daylight one can also stand entranced on the bridge over the canal watching the distant hills which some days loom high and imposing—on others seem mere rolling stretches, etched against the sky. But they are at their best when lit by a flaming fall into red, gold and copper, combining to form an unforgettable beauty.

For all these things Ottawa will always have a place in

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my heart, and also because it holds so many of my very good friends; and I hope that no matter what lies ahead in expansion and beautifying, the city will always keep within its tree-shaded limits, descendants of the Perley's, Booth's, Fauquiers, Blackburns, Gillies, Frasers and other pioneers, thanks to whose energy Bytown sprang into being as the lumber centre, which was its origin. The history of those families is bound up indissolubly with the history of Ottawa, and they should remain for all time in this city situated, so graciously, at a point where three great rivers meet.



## CHAPTER XIV

The sounding cataract  
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,  
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
Their colours and their forms, were then to me  
An appetite; a feeling and a love.

*Tintern Abbey.*

W. WORDSWORTH

IT WASN'T until December, 1940, that I saw Western Canada in its winter dress, all our tours having been made in summer, and I was curious to see how it would strike one, when everything was so different. The answer came swiftly—the mountains were infinitely more beautiful under a heavy fall of fresh snow which hung white fringes on telegraph lines, placed jaunty caps on every fencepost and tree stump, turned tall fir trees into crinolined Georgian ladies, and their lesser neighbours into penguins with unduly elongated flippers that swept the ground. It was far more wonderful than in the rich green of summer, for snow softened the jagged mountain-sides, and their glistening summits towered against an azure sky.

But the Prairies were a different story. The unutterable loneliness of that dead-white surface which hid the untidy surroundings of farms seemed to bite into one's soul, conjuring up pictures of pioneers who had braved these solitudes which cost many women their reason and many mothers and babies their lives in childbirth, owing to the impossibility of summoning medical aid. Even after the last war, when we visited soldier settlers in their new homes, life was hard enough for them because at that time there were no radios, no telephones, no cheap cars, and only wide-

ly spaced dirt roads, most of them impassable, except during summer.

It must have been a terrible experience for young women, gregarious by nature, coming from snug English villages, where they could see their friends, make their simple purchases, or "do" a picture at the neighbouring town. What a contrast to this isolation and to living in clapboard houses set down in what must have seemed to them the centre of a vacuum. Only those who know the great Prairies can appreciate what it meant to these young women, before the authorities had begun to plant those quick-growing poplars which have now brought a sense of homeliness to the immensity which frightened the newcomers, as immensity frightens those who have never seen it. One knew how they must have shuddered, when in the long winter nights the coyotes howled on their hunting expeditions, or the bark of a wandering fox broke the silence, while the unearthly beauty of Northern Lights swept across the darkness of the sky. They were so ignorant of the "Golden West", having only seen coloured photographs of old-established farms, with miles of waving grain, cattle knee-deep in lush grass and fruit trees laden with spring blossoms. Lovely pictures, but as misleading to the inexperienced settler as the nurserymen's catalogues are to the inexperienced gardener. No wonder when they faced the grimmer realities of their new life they were frightened, though many of them made good, despite heart-breaking disappointments, which could have been avoided had forethought been given to the matter.

Already many thousands of Canadian soldiers in this war have married English girls, and though all of them won't be settlers on the land, a certain proportion may become farmers and before these young wives come out, they should be taught what to expect, not by some clever theorist with a spate of words which will pass them by, but through the me-

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dium of a Canadian farmer's wife who has come through it all in the hard way, and can make clear the difficulties, as well as the advantages that lie in the future. On this side of the Atlantic a completely new scheme is needed—not a rehash of the old one—if success is to follow, instead of the tragedies which brought disaster to some of those who came out filled with high hopes and an eager desire to make good in the country which seemed full of promise for them.

I landed at Victoria in the opening days of 1941, and found it as usual the Sleeping Beauty awaiting the Prince, and murmuring complacently of the war, "It can't happen here." Or when news was bad, "England always loses the first but wins the last battle." Such commentaries had already exasperated me in the East, till I reminded myself that it was the natural outcome of living three—and in the West six—thousand miles away from war, so that people weren't to blame for lacking the full comprehension of it all. Not that Canada was unmindful or slacking in any way. Industry was humming in the East, lavish gifts were pouring into the Old Country both in money and food; while there was a wide response to the appeal for the housing of evacuees. No—Canadians weren't to blame for not realizing it as we did in England, where a strip of sea no wider than that between Vancouver Island and Port Angelus separated us from its impact. Bombs had brought houses crashing on men, women and children in Coventry, London, Portsmouth, and many other places over that small Island, which had once been—

This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands.

*King Richard II*  
SHAKESPEARE.

But all that has changed now in England. Hitler spoke the truth when he said, "There are no more islands." He might have added "Oceans have shrunk in an equal ratio," for the Atlantic and Pacific have dwindled under the advent of submarines which can creep in-shore and bombard a coast; battleships from twelve or fifteen miles can shell any unsuspecting land, while beyond the horizon aircraft carriers can release their great birds with deadly effect. All this has shown that in every country the world over it can happen any "here"—anywhere.

But in 1940 the peoples of the Western Hemisphere were still complacently ignorant of such potential danger till Pearl Harbor swept like a flame across their consciousness. It HAD happened here! And so the post-war world, that had wallowed in complacency while Germany stoked her armament furnaces before the smoke had fully cleared from the battlefields of her defeat, was awakened to realities. But during the intervening years money was lavished on building palaces to house that futile infant to which Woodrow Wilson acted as midwife—the League of Nations—till his own country disowned it and him. Nation after nation dropped out of the League, as maggots drop out of an overripe plum, till the League itself dropped out. The next steps were those foolish visits paid by politicians, and some private people with more money than brains, who accepted the hospitality of Goëring, that back-slapping sadist whose hospitality was a mask; while Hitler—tongue in cheek—fooled travelling politicians to the top of their bent and they returned to their own backyards to cackle about the "good German people" and kindred poppycock that revolted one.

At that time German children, to preserve their health, were farmed out in Norway and other countries so that the little darlings of these "good German people" should be well nourished and have everything of the best. This they did,

and when war broke out again these brats, grown to man's estate, reappeared on the doorsteps of their foster-parents as robust and hardened Nazis with an intimate knowledge of the country which had sheltered and fed them in the years of peace. And their gratitude was shown in "good German" fashion by raping, murdering and robbing their former benefactors. These were the charming sons of those "good Germans" who thus showed their gratitude for all they had received in typical German fashion. It was "good Germans" who placed Hitler in power—"good Germans" who applauded him to the skies when his armies of sadistic devils swept over Europe plundering, murdering and torturing right and left. It is the "good Germans" no doubt who to-day are plotting for the next war, unless the Allies see to it that their plans are thwarted. Good Germans! As a friend said to me after the last war, "the only 'good German' is a dead one." But already one hears sappy prelates in England and mealy-mouthed appeasers pleading for leniency towards the Germans in tones that make one sick. How dare they ask such people as the Greeks, Poles, Dutch, Norwegians or Russians to be lenient to such wild beasts? It's not possible to expect them to turn the other cheek when the end comes. That's a fine Christian credo I quite agree, but a counsel of perfection that none of those crucified nations should be asked to accept. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is more suited to what has happened in these past years.

With Pearl Harbor much of the world's complacency was shattered—as one hoped, for good—but unfortunately it is beginning to emerge now through the medium of wishful thinkers who bleat that "Victory is in the bag" or "Victory is round the corner" without taking into consideration what that corner will cost in bloody fighting and tragic casualty lists. The leaders—military and political—have made no

such prophecies—how then can people of lesser calibre and lesser knowledge lift their voice and risk bringing back again that atmosphere of complacency which might lead to a slackening of the war effort—or, when we are still fighting on in the months to come—to a spirit of defeatism which is as dangerous as the complacency from which it springs?

However, I must stop playing the role of Cassandra by inveighing against those things which make me see red, and turn again to pleasanter matters. And what could be pleasanter than British Columbia and Victoria, where I landed on the first day of 1944 to find that at last the war had wakened the Sleeping Beauty in her enchanted land. C.P.R. steamers wore a drab dress of battleship grey instead of their customary white. A.R.P. cards appeared in some windows and in others notification that stirrup pumps were in residence. "Flat tops" manoeuvred on the skyline. Battleships' guns made houses shake, as Thorpe had shaken in the last war, and from Esquimalt rose the ceaseless hammering of riveters in Yarrow's yards. Victoria's slumbering streets were alive with airmen, sailors and a sprinkling of soldiers, though most of the latter had been moved to the mainland. Stocks in the shops were low, buses so crammed that at rush hours one had to strap-hang. War had at last impinged on the Victorian way of life, and one was glad it had done so.

Though "glamour" is a word all too reminiscent of Hollywood, glamour is the only word that fits the Southern tip of Vancouver Island, where it is rife in gardens, beflowered the year round, with big double mauve stocks which weather the winter in some mysterious way, and shed their fragrance on the air, above a carpet of snowdrops, wall-flowers, forget-me-nots or daffodils sharing their border, all of which is a floral anachronism. But the native flora was what I loved, gallant and unscathed by salt air and sharp

winds—Easter lilies, purple dodecatheons, blue camass, and tall buttercups looking as if every petal had been varnished to reflect the sun's rays. Dwarf plants pushed through the short turf, tiny lupins spread a blue lace veil over the ground and mats of pink Valerian, dotted with small deep blue delphinium, while golden violets smiled as serenely in the full sun as they did in clearings of the Sooke woods, where a man stepping among the trees off the highway can be lost from human ken, in the density of pines and firs. There is the beauty of the woods through which at intervals, between bronze and copper-tinted stems of *Arbutus*, come glimpses of *Victoria* basking in the sunshine, or the indigo of the Olympics set against the tender blue of the sky.

Deep in the woods the tiny *Calypso* grows in loose moss, its root habit so slight that when careless people pick it they destroy the bulb, and the frail blossoms are thrust into jam-jars and offered for sale on the roadside. Unless something is done quickly to protect this plant, it runs the risk of becoming extinct, because it refuses to grow in cultivation. Now that the B.C. Government has cast a protecting hand over the dogwood, surely it might extend that hand to this tiny orchid? The wonders of the Canadian flora are worth guarding, and it strikes me as completely futile to put up notices about "preserving" the wild flowers if sterner steps aren't taken against their despoilers and if the press doesn't announce, as it did last spring, that those who wish to pick wild flowers can do so at Uplands. Besides the flowers there were the trees; those great Garry oaks, gnarled, grotesque, centuries old and found only within a twenty-mile radius of Victoria, and so suggestive of some elfin woodland that I caught myself listening for Puck's mocking voice saying "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" as he perched on those contorted branches. *Arbutus Menziesii* brought unbelievable tones of copper and bronze colours in its boles, and

shining foliage with clusters of lily-of-the-valley-like blooms followed by red berries; and best of all the lace-like grace of the dogwoods, their creamy bracts outlined against a cloudless sky. Despite the ruthless hacking by civic employees of the flowering cherry trees bordering many roads, they still drip the beauty of pink blooms on the sidewalks, and one wondered at the courage with which these small trees survived the butchery they endured.

There is bird life, too, round Victoria. On the sea, ducks ride the waves; mallard, harlequins, widgeon, butterballs, wood ducks, red billed scooters, grebe in variety, and screaming hordes of gulls, who after an indecently noisy courtship, withdraw to more secluded spots for breeding. At Uplands—the only place where it exists in Canada—lives the little English skylark who sings a duet with the native meadowlark. Many times I have watched my tiny countryman—a musical note in the sky—trilling his joyous song which carries one back to the fields at home. Strangely enough this bird has never moved from the spot where its forebears were set down years ago—not even the couple of miles to Oak Bay—and those who wish to hear him must journey to Uplands. The quail add their quota to bird life, busy little people racing along the roads calling, Oh Hi Ho—Oh Hi Ho”, their tiny top-knots flopping over their noses when they run, like the insecurely tilted modern hat perched on the heads of females chasing the fleeting bus. I had a number of these birds in England, and found they did no harm in the garden, though I would gladly have sacrificed a few plants to keep them; but alas, in course of time they migrated.

Three years ago, before gas rationing, friends drove me about the Island. With Myfanwy Campbell I spent a few blissful days at Sproat Lake beyond Alberni. We started at eight on a May day, loitered over the Malahat Pass alight



with dogwood and arbutus blossom and a sheet of golden broom and fragrant gorse, while far below glimmered the blue inlets of the Pacific. The mountains round Vancouver stood up in all their glory and the Mill Bay ferry looked no bigger than a cigar, though it conveyed a dozen motors at a time. There was Finlayson Inlet basking in the sun, the setting for *Commandos Strike at Dawn* because the country resembled Norway; so up came technicians and their outfit from Hollywood, while Victorians strutted their brief hour on the stage in the making of a fine film. We picnicked at Englishman's River, where the water chattered over boulders and rocks, the golden-green of bursting poplars was etched against a forest background. We wandered in Cathedral Grove, that masterpiece of "the forest primeval" and so leisurely on, to the log cabins at Sproat Lake, where the water was azure, rocks rose high from the unplumbed depths of the lake, Mount Klitsa towered above us and farther afield Arrowsmith kept watchful guard over the sunlit serenity of the land. Another time, from Qualicum I went to Campbell River, where forests put an end to civilization, but the ring of lumbermen's axes will soon bring desolation and that haunting whine of a falling tree, which has something almost human in its despairing tone.

I wandered round Happy Valley and the Saanich Peninsula, with its snug farms lying among well-cultivated fields. And there was a visit to Fairbridge Farm where, as I stood in the simple wooden church, I wished that instead of three small stained glass windows high up in the East end, there could have been clear ones giving onto "The hills whence cometh my help" as the understanding Psalmist wrote, for hills and mountains bring to many of us the benediction of peace.

There was a day spent at Jordan River, full stop of roads on the West coast, where a handful of wooden cottages stood

against a forest background, and sheltered themselves from the sea behind an ever rising rampart of shingle washed up by the tides. From the forests came strings of lorries with trailers dropping great timbers in the shallow river, to wait till such time as the tugs released them in booms and rafts from the guardianship of big "Dolphins", each one crowned by a gorged and somnolent gull waiting for a free ride down the coast on the logs. I wondered as I watched those timbers, to what use they would be put. Was it their tragic fate to be sawn into planks for those monstrous clapboard houses which scar Canada's face? Or would their luck hold so that they would be used for ships or aeroplanes and fare forth to fight and end their long lives in the glory of battle? One hoped it would be the latter fate, because there must be a soul in trees which have lived for centuries in the silence of great forests.

Looking at the wealth those timbers represented, I remembered a brash journalist who once wrote in *Truth* during 1881, "British Columbia is not worth keeping. It should never have been inhabited at all. It will never return a cent of interest on the money sunk in it." What would he have said could he have paused on the bridge at Jordan River and seen the timber? What would he have thought had he stood in the streets of Vancouver—that virile city midway between the extreme east and the extreme west of the universe? Vancouver, not yet sixty years old and of all Canadian cities perhaps the most alive, with its magnificent harbour, brooded over by snow-capped mountains; Burrard Inlet throbbing with activities; skyscrapers that give it an outline suited to a rising centre of modern world trade. That foolish journalist should have halted his pen before he pontificated on a subject so vast as British Columbia, a province greater in acreage than the combined States of Washington, Oregon and California, and destined maybe in time to be

come richer than any of them. He might, had he heard it, have taken a leaf from the worldly wisdom of a dowager of my youth, who once said to a companion of her own vintage: "I am always civil to girls because I never know whom they may marry." A cynical wisdom which that writer might have emulated, instead of flouting the lovely debutante British Columbia, who in her adolescent vigour can laugh at his blindness.

In May, 1941, I left Victoria for Jasper, where, thanks to the kindness of the Honourable T. Crerar, I was granted the use of a car, which enabled me to wander over all that memory-haunted ground which I had loved in the past. But Jasper was changing. The beauty of Lake Edith was scarred by an eruption of shacks surrounded by all the litter inseparable from humanity's dwellings. The Lodge—not opened at that time—was to be surrounded with red geraniums, at which I could have wept. Could anything be more incongruous than that utterly urban flower in a forest? Up and down through the Park I went with Pete Withers, in our time a game warden, who knew every nook and cranny of the place, for he had tramped and climbed over it all. I saw once again the Mountains of the Athabasca Valley—Kerkesling, Pyramid, Hardisty, Edith Cavell with its angel-winged glacier, and Old Man, above Jasper, up which I had ridden with Pete in the past and watched blue columbines dance in the breeze and heard the marmots calling.

Deer still lay indolently in the Jasper side streets, and one wandered among them without their troubling to move, but the old stag who used to let children twine flowers round his antlers was dead.

At Miette Hotsprings, where the hotel was still closed, we found a herd of Big Horned sheep in possession, who ignored our advent—except a little ewe who when I held out my hand sucked my fingers, perhaps thinking I was a

perambulating salt lick! That is how one loves to see animals, fearless, trusting, as they must have been in the garden of Eden, before murder came with the sin of Cain.

All strangers coming West should, I always feel, make their debut to the Canadian West via the C.N.R. and up the Athabasca Valley which, despite its breadth is less spectacular than the Bow, and they should make their exit through the Bow, and thus have the grandest views of two superb valleys which lead you into the heart of the mountains. "Fifty Switzerlands rolled into one" is a good description, for though individual summits of the Alps are higher than those in the Rockies, the latter have a vaster expanse.

I left Jasper for the Columbia icefields and spent a few days in the comfortable Brewster Chalet set at the base of that grim mass of ice and snow which shuts out the distance. It's grand in its way, but it depressed me, and is one of the few spots in Canada I have no wish to revisit, for it, like Frank, was haunting and harsh.

Frank, lying in the Kettle Valley district, was the scene of a staggering tragedy when a mountain top crashed down on a mining village without warning, sweeping every living thing to destruction in its terrific path. Nobody heard it, nobody saw it happen, for apparently some time in the small hours of the morning the disaster occurred. Not a soul was left to tell the tale, except a baby in her cradle who was blown clear by the blast and was found, unhurt, on the top of the piled-up boulders, and she was too small then to know what had happened, or who she was. Never, perhaps, since Vesuvius overflowed Pompeii has such complete destruction been wrought on a place and when we visited Frank it was still a piled-up mass of boulders. Only when they carted away stone for road repairs were they able to identify some of the skeletons they found. Frank was to me

the most tragic spot I ever saw, and the icefields had the same effect.

But Victoria's drives and those at Jasper were preludes to the fourteen-hundred-mile trip from the icefields to Vernon in the Okanagan, and little did I think when lunching one day with Mr. Randolph Bruce at the Empress Hotel in 1941, that I had found in Mr. Fred Jones a fairy godfather destined to convert past dreams into an enduring reality. He had railroaded or lumbered all over those great spaces; knew them by heart—and loved them as one must love anything so magnificent, if one has a soul. After driving me about Vancouver Island, he suggested that he should take Somerville and myself from the icefields through the mountains and down to the hospitable home of Mrs. Isaacs on Lake Kalamalka. I kept my fingers tightly crossed till the day came when, as I stood in front of the Brewster Chalet, I saw my charioteer come speeding toward me in a cloud of desert-like dust.

We began by quartering every available corner of the Bow Valley from Banff, studying Castle Mountain from every angle, because no mountain has so many different aspects. We paused under Chancellor, Cathedral, Mt. Stephen—as rugged a type as the man who took his title from it. We loitered everywhere, and climbed to the "Green Spot" on the slopes of Stoneysquaw to watch flaming sunsets and see the light change to dusk along the hard ridges of Rundle standing like a prim duenna over Banff—at that time mercifully devoid of tourists, for none of the big hotels were open. So we escaped the disastrous sight of mountainous females over-flowing luckless mounts, and seated so much askew that I wondered what the beasts' backs were like when unsaddled at night. I felt a special heaven should be set aside for horses subjected to such ignominies. They certainly have earned it!

## UP THE STREAM OF TIME

Between Banff and Calgary we met a bear trio who had devised a brilliant technique for holding motorists up to ransom for candies. Mother stood in the centre of the road, so that cars had to slow down, and if people were rash enough to stop, a cub clambered on each running board, thrusting moist greedy noses into the car. To move was impossible, because the cubs would have been flung off, and then "Momma" would descend in her wrath—and that's a form of wrath to be avoided. Sure enough we found them round a sharp corner, the cubs on their hind legs boxing, and it was such an entrancing picture that one longed to stop. However, we only slowed down long enough to throw out our offering of chocolate bars, and then proceeded on our way. A few days later some foolish person stopped, offered the mother bear a piece of candy, then drew back her hand—and of course got clawed, "Momma" not having been taught "table manners" by some nice English Nannie. So a howl went up to the authorities that she was dangerous, and the enchanting trio were "liquidated". My sympathy was entirely with the bears, because if people are foolish enough to play tricks with wild animals, they ask for trouble.

I don't think there were any corners of the Bow Valley, attainable by car, which we failed to visit before setting sail for Golden in the Columbia Valley. In the past I had often hankered for Golden, lying in such a perfect situation, but we didn't stop there in those days more than a few moments. This time, I thought jubilantly, my desire was to be gratified. But alas, Golden proved a disappointment, because it was the spot where the "pusher" engines were attached to trains going up the Kicking Horse Pass, and all night through there was a Hades of crashings and bangings, followed by desperate efforts of the engine to pull the trains up the precipitous pass. One seemed to hear them saying, "Can I do it? Can I do it? Can I do it?" as they struggled upwards, till after a

time they thought they could, and sent forth a hissing "Yesssss, Yesssss, Yesssss" before the noise faded away in the distance. To normal people who value a night's rest Golden is not to be recommended, though I can never understand why the C.P.R.—as a rule so far-seeing—should not have made it into a "resort" because, lying in the beautiful Columbia Valley, between the Rockies and the Selkirks, it would be ideal in every way—provided the "pushers" were eliminated.

Poor little Golden!—a sad spot. It was once a prosperous lumber centre, but the industry had moved away since our time, and now the sheds that housed machinery were falling down, the machinery was rusting in long, rank grass, the streets were empty, and as though to crown the forlornness of it all, a huge stuffed owl stared sorrowfully out of the window of the General Store. Golden—lovely in name, lovely in position, was dead but unburied. Perhaps some day it may live again, placed as it now is on the highway to the Big Bend Road.

I can't say that I enjoyed the drive from Field to Golden down the Kicking Horse Pass. Those familiar with the railway know that it is alarming enough in spots, but it is nothing compared to the road—a nick out of a clay mountain-side, with in most places no guardrail, or protection of any kind—and although Mr. Jones declared it was perfectly safe, I can't agree with him, nor do many others who have travelled that shattering road.

As I sit here recalling those halcyon days of three years ago, I still ask myself what was the highspot of the wonderful fortnight, and I am still undecided, as picture after picture rises before me. Which would I pick out to revisit? Was it the gorgeous emerald and sapphire of Lakes like Bow, Peyto, Louise; or peaceful Moraine Lake embedded in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, where toy avalanches of pebbles

went clattering into the silent waters far below as we sat in the blazing sun and in complete solitude? Was it the Sun-wapta River? The beauty of Beaver Creek, or the maliciously chattering Kicking Horse River? Was it the Yoho Valley alight with three-foot-high forget-me-nots and fragrant flesh-tinted wild heliotrope, that led to the Takakkaw Falls hurtling breathlessly down a sheer eighteen hundred feet from a rocky ledge to a flower-filled valley that slid away into virgin forest? Was it the flowers on all sides—the orange cups of the mountain lily, its face uplifted to the sun's rays, or the drooping yellow bells of *Lilium Columbianum*, fringing the Big Bend Road from above a groundwork of spireas, ferns and twinflower, whose gentle fragrance filled the air? Was it the sheets of Indian Paint Brush in all shades from scarlet to white which will only grow on a certain grass, and therefore is impossible to cultivate? Or was it the impenetrable bushes of wild roses shaded from deep rose to shell pink? It was all so wonderful, so peaceful, with nobody about except the wild animals in their fearlessness. I remember a lovely picture not more than twenty yards from the road where a cow moose and her twin calves drank from a puddle left by a passing rainstorm through which we had just driven. They were quite unafraid and merely lifted their heads for a moment to survey us. The calves still wore their tawny-golden baby coats, and the ugly moose nose hadn't developed to disfigure them. Their lovely brown eyes were gentle and enquiringly trustful when they looked at us. Bears were a commonplace, also deer of various kinds, while the fussy ruffled grouse hens raced along with their downy babies in the roads when we passed through the forests. All these animals, like the flowers, have their eternal place in the pictures that dwell in my mind as I dream again and again of that idyllic fortnight.

Then there comes beating back into my mind, as though



resentful at not being mentioned, the great natural portcullis of the Sinclair Canyon towering upwards—a rocky gateway to the hot springs nestling in the wooden hill-side, where we spent a night in the charming log cabins as the guests of Miss Armstrong, Mr. Jones' cousin. I got up early next morning to watch the Big Horned sheep gather round the salt lick above the cabins, where the leader of the herd saw to it that he had first lick. There was no nonsense about "ladies first" with that old Pasha, and he would butt or push everybody aside with a roughness that threatened to send them crashing down the mountainside.

We drove back from there through Vermillion Valley, alight with flowers, and so to Golden once again, and to the little farm—Canyon Ranch—owned by Mr. Jones, where we rested for a few days. It was an enchanting spot up the Columbia, and some miles from Golden, where, in one of those quiet "draws" of the thickly wooded mountains a little stream ran past it to join the Columbia. There Mr. Jones would smoke his pipe and tell us, with his humorous chuckle, tales belonging to the past, when he was a young man in the district. Some of them won't bear repeating—others I have forgotten—but I remember two about an "old-timer" of the swashbuckling type, who wore the ringing spurs, ten-gallon hat and all the rest of the equipment pertaining to the part he played. The truth wasn't in this Ananias but his tales were amusing if apocryphal, and he was always on the look-out for an audience to impress. One tale referred to a shooting trip with a "Tenderfoot" who longed to kill a Grizzly. Ananias assured him they were as plentiful as mosquitoes in that district, and sure enough they were confronted, in true Western film style, with "The biggest grizzly I ever clapped eyes on." Seeing that his companion was nervous, Ananias told him he would shoot this one, because it was "so darn close," but the "Tenderfoot"

should take the second one. Accordingly he shot it, and then in his own words: "I shot that thar bear and, believe you me, he turned around that quick the bullets came out of his rear end and shot my poor pal stone dead."

His other stock tale was of being caught out on a winter's night in the mountains, by the biggest snowstorm the West had ever known. Since he could get no farther he tethered his horse to the branch of a tree and dossed down himself in the deep snow for the night. But when he woke in the morning he found that one of those sudden thaws which a Chinook brings had come along, and he was lying in a "Swaaaaamp" and nowheres could I see my hoss. I looked round and round—then I saw him hanging to the top branch of a tree, stone dead, with his neck broken—that thar thaw had come so almighty quick it had cleared the snow." It was tempting for such a type of man to try and impress a gaping audience in those days, though the modern folk would promptly laugh him out of court. There was a true tale about two Scottish immigrants who settled in an out-lying place. James was a "meenister of the Kirk—", and Dave opened up a store, so James pinned up on his chapel door a notice: "Serve God and deal with Dave" which, as an example of Scotch thrift in double advertising was a masterpiece.

At Canyon Ranch I remember the spotless kitchen utensils hanging on nails driven into the log walls, an immaculately clean stove, and a big table of bass wood, scrubbed to a virginal whiteness which was our host's pride. After our simple meals we had to scrub it, then cover it with newspapers so that sun from the big southern window shouldn't stain or flies defile its beauty. No film star had greater care taken of her complexion than that table at Canyon Ranch! We had also to clean and polish the dishes and cutlery, and hang everything back in its appointed place. Woe betide us

if the gravy spoon went on the nail for the soup ladle, or the frying-pan onto that of the stewpan! Down they would come with many "tuttings" and mutterings about the "untidiness" of women, and the owner never tumbled to the fact that Somerville and I often made these "mistakes" just to hear him scold like an angry squirrel. But if he was meticulously tidy about his cooking things, he sported the world's most disreputable hat, something between brown and green in colour (from age); moths had eaten so many holes in it that it would have served as a colander; its shape had been lost long ago. (It reminded me of Julian's clothes, of an equally disreputable character, which used to cause his staff acute anguish, so that Pat Hodgson once surreptitiously dropped the worst of his coats off the train, and I hope some hobo profited by that noble action. But what a hullabaloo there was when "Old Mossyback" couldn't be found, and it wasn't till long afterwards that its owner learnt the tragic fate of his treasure.) Queer things, men, with their passion for something so old that it is unwearable, for though Julian was a hoarder of such horrors, where uniform was concerned nobody could have been more meticulous, both for himself and those about him, and it was a source of delight to him when Pat Hodgson had to dress in his Yeomanry kit for a drawing-room, because the dear little man—quite the most un-military creature I ever saw—got hopelessly muddled as to what went where, and his busby lines seemed to have an uncontrollable affinity for his spurs, till Julian disentangled them.

And so time had slipped by on our trip till we reached the last day but one of our travels. Early next morning we set sail sadly enough for Revelstoke, down the Big Bend Road, that wonderful highway only opened the previous year. It followed the Columbia River and eventually reached Revelstoke—another place where in the past I had always

longed to stop, though we had only paused there on our way West and then found an ex-10th Hussar sergeant (the Revelstoke policeman) to greet us. But Revelstoke wasn't the disappointment of Golden—it was a prosperous little town beside the great river, and above it towered Mount Revelstoke, up which we went next morning by the admirably engineered road that made little of the four-thousand-foot climb. And once on the summit what a view greeted us! Masses of heavily-forested mountains far as the eye could reach, and basking in the sunshine the little peaceful town and the great winding river. There below us lay the Illicilliwaet Valley, up which we had once travelled when a forest fire was raging and crackling near at hand; the deep valley of the Eagle Pass like a dark tunnel, down which we were to drive later in the day on our way to the Okanagan. On all sides birds were singing, there wasn't a human being in sight, just we three standing there with the fresh tang of the air blowing in our faces from the snow that still covered the summit, though up to its very edge the ground was matted with yellow *Erythroniums* which formed a "Field of the Cloth of Gold," while little rivulets rushed downward shouting their triumphant spring song as they escaped from winter's clutches. It was good-bye to the mountains, but a sun-flooded peaceful farewell and a glorious memory to be cherished in all the days to come.

And so we set sail for the lovely Okanagan Valley. Man's ingenuity has made it produce its harvest of fruit—and what a harvest! It was cherry time when I visited the Summerland Experimental Farm and I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw the "Black Bings" (spelt the wrong way I always say) hanging in unbelievable clusters from the bowed-down branches. There were gorgeous hybrid lilies raised by Mr. Palmer, who vied with his sister at Cobble Hill, on Vancouver Island, in the production of these beautiful flowers

which looked as if they were made of the finest red Chinese lacquer. I wandered over the hills where Mrs. Isaac's house stood above Lake Kalamalka, where peaches were ripening in gold and crimson on the trees, and beneath them a forest of waist-high vetches—blue and white, purple and white—mingled, with the small white clover, which has a haunting perfume. It was an orgy of production, a riot of colour; and as I stood among it all I thought again of British Columbia "which should never have been inhabited".

And here I parted from my kind chauffeur and guide, to whom I shall always owe a deep debt of gratitude for glowing memories of the places we enjoyed together. My only regret all through that trip was that I couldn't drop twenty-five years off my age and clamber to places where roads didn't yet exist. But these new roads that cross the Dominion from coast to coast will play a great part in the post-war days, and will draw together the widely separated people of this great land—separated not only by physical distances but by a diversity of interests and a lack of understanding of how much they are all the complement of one another and how much the East needs the produce of the West, and the West needs the things from the workshops of the East. Many Easterners have never been West, and I have heard them say when they have stood among the beauties of British Columbia, "One can't believe this is Canada!" That's a thing to which these wonderful new roads will put an end, because now rail travel and hotel charges make it impossible for many people to get about, as they would like to do, but in post-war days people in their own cars will wander far afield at small expense, staying at the excellent auto-camps which are springing up on all sides. A trip across the country will then no longer be prohibited to the lower incomes, so that West and East can meet and fraternize. The Government has builded perhaps better than

## UP THE STREAM OF TIME

it knew with these roads, started largely with the idea of attracting our neighbours from the south; but now they will attract Canadians as well, and form a chain between settlers drawn to farm in the West, but who might have shunned the isolation their predecessors battled against. So the new roads will help to develop the country and bring it a new prosperity.

Here alas, is the end of my voyage "Up the stream of time" which I have given you in these sketches of days gone by. How much longer I may be in Canada nobody can foretell, but when the hour strikes for my departure from many kind and loyal friends, and the lovely land they call home, it will be with an ache in my heart as I stand on the deck of the ship that carries me eastwards. My thoughts will fly to the flaming glory of Laurentian autumns, to green forests and snow-capped Western mountains, to peacock-coloured lakes drowsing in summer's heat, and golden grain-fields framed with brilliant wild flowers. In my ears will ring the eerie laugh of loons on silent waters, the plaining of the whip-poor-will in summer evenings, the strange drumming of the mosquito hawk's strong wings as he plunges earthwards in his nightly hunting. All these things I shall recall as my ship slips perhaps down the mighty length of "Le Fleuve", towards the cold grey waters of the Atlantic which I must cross again, for the last time, before I tread the rolling fields of my East Anglian homeland.