Those First Affections

By Eleanor Monica Vipan née Westcott



To please my daughter Marigold

This format created for my Mum – Marigold Lamin née Vipan

By Ellie Foster née Lamin

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Chapter I: Father and Mother

Father and Mother met and were married out in Madras. Father was one of ten children, seven sons and three daughters, like Job's family. His father became a Bishop. Of the seven sons, six were ordained; two became Bishops in India, one died as an Archdeacon, one was Chaplain to his Father the Bishop and the youngest died on cholera while working with the Cambridge Mission to Delhi. Father became head of the Theological College in Madras.

Mother went out to Madras to keep house for her Father who was also a missionary and a widower. Very soon after she joined him, he married again and Mother felt she was not wanted. At about the same time, Father's native butler died and there was no-one to run his home. So Father and Mother agreed to be married although they were not desperately in love. They had their difficult times all through their married life but having high ideals and a real devotion to their children, they were able to make a success of their marriage.

When my eldest brother, Foss, was six years old, they decided to come back to England for the sake of the boy's education. By this time they had three children, Foss, Hilda Mary and Brooke. They also had godsons whose Mother had died when they were born. Through all our childhood, the twins stayed with us during the school holidays or at a farm in the parish and later they went out to Ceylon as tea planters.

Mother had not had a happy childhood. When she was three, her Mother died, leaving Mother, a boy of two and a newborn son. The three children were cared for by relatives until Grandfather married again and for a year they had a happy home at the rectory of Papworth St Agnes, near Huntingdon. Then the new Mother died giving birth to a baby girl. Mother loved the little dark-eyed baby and though she was only thirteen when her Stepmother died, she looked after the baby at night.

Mother went to Miss Solesby's school near London, but she was not happy there. One term she was 'sent to Coventry' as she was supposed to have stolen a sixpence which had been left on the piano in the music corridor. Mother had never seen the sixpence which may have been taken by a housemaid who dusted the pianos.

Another sad episode happened when Mother was staying with her great aunt in Yorkshire. She and her brothers looked forward to holidays at the great aunt's big country house with its lovely garden. They used to play Robin Hood games and hide and seek and were allowed to pick some of the fruit. Mother always remembered the white currants. One day her great aunt asked her to dust the piano. She was very pleased to do a useful job and dusted all the notes most carefully, but she had not realised that the piano was more than just the keyboard and her great aunt was very cross when she found the top of the piano had not been dusted.

At one time in her early years, Mother lived with an aunt in Oxford where she had lessons in logic from Professor Dodgson, Lewis Carroll, author of Alice in Wonderland.
He asked her what was her favourite fruit and she replied, "strawberries".
"Then nothing is better than strawberries", said the Professor. Mother agreed.
"And what do you like least?"
"Liver", said Mother, after some thought.
"But liver is better than nothing".
"I suppose so", said Mother.
"Well, if liver is better than nothing, and nothing is better than strawberries, then liver must be better than strawberries".
All very confusing to a little girl.

When she was older, Mother went to a finishing school in Paris. Here a fellow pupil was taken ill with scarlet fever and Mother spent most of her time nursing the girl, while there was a curtain soaked in disinfectant over the doorway. The girl recovered and Mother did not catch the infection, but neither did she learn much French.

At the age of eighteen, she went to the home of a Pastor's family at Schwerin in Michlenburg to study music and German. For the first time in her life she was really happy and shared in the life of the family. The boys were very musical and Mother played the piano accompaniment to their tunes on the violin and 'cello. Mother and the eldest boy, Reinhold, fell in love, but Reinhold never declared his love and was sent off to an uncle in South America where he was to work. Before he went he asked his Mother to tell Nellie of his love and ask her to wait for him, but Frau Garbut thought it better not to say anything about it and it was only years later that Mother found out.

Father lived the usual life of a child of a large family, first in the nursery and then in the schoolroom. He went to Kings' School, Peterborough, when his Father was canon of the Cathedral. He used to tell us of the School paper chases he had in the direction of Eye and about the picnics they had at Milton Ferry, where they bathed in the river. Later he went to Cheltenham and Pembroke College, Cambridge. He was a good classical scholar and won many prizes but only gained a 2nd class Honours Degree. His best friend committed suicide just before the final exams and this greatly upset Father.

When he was quite a little boy, he and his elder brother caught scarlet fever and suffered from an ear infection which left them both partly deaf and this handicap increased so that they were both very deaf by the time they were sixty.

Chapter II: The Village

We went to Crayke in 1901 when I was three months old and stayed there until I was nineteen, so that all my formative years were spent there and it is nearly always to Crayke that I go back in my dreams. Crayke was a Crown living and Father was lucky to have been offered it. His income was small but two of his bachelor brothers were very good about helping with the boys' education and at other times of stress.

Crayke stood on a hill overlooking the vale of York. The road ran up steeply between two grassy slopes. Halfway up on the right was the well from which most of the village drew water. It had an arched stone roof but the side was open and the water must have been full of impurities. There was one epidemic of diphtheria while we were in the village.

The Post Office and General Stores was run by the Biltons, a very superior family. Mr Bilton made and mended boots and shoes and Mrs Bilton kept the shop. We occasionally went there to buy sweets or chocolate if we were lucky enough to have been given a penny. Four of the daughters came in turn to work at the Rectory; Mabel, Phoebe, Elsie and Mary. Gwennie, the youngest girl, had fits. The two sons were Norman and Archie. Archie had fair curls all over his head, but he usually had a dirty face and a running nose.

The Hagg family were the carpenters and undertakers. John Hagg was the verger for many years and rarely missed a service. He was very deaf and his responses always came in a muffled far-away voice. I particularly remember his "amens" in the service of baptism when the rest of the congregation were usually tongue-tied. We always had the baptisms as the monthly "Childrens' Service". John rang the three bells, one rope in either hand and his foot in a loop for the third.



Arthur Westcott





Eleanor Anastasia Westcott née Feast



John's cousins, John Willie and Charlie, were very big men. They made us some fine wooden bricks of different shapes and sizes with which we could build houses and boats and forts or anything we needed for our nursery games.

The butcher, Mr Knowles, was a very prosperous farmer. He also kept the Durham Ox. He was a Church Warden and a great friend of Father's. He had six children, three boys and three girls and they all did well when they grew up.

Mr Watson played the organ. He ran the school with the help of his wife. When their only daughter was a baby, she went to school in her bassinet while her Mother taught the infants. She grew up to be a very clever girl and won scholarships and became a Doctor. Her marriage however was not a happy one and she was later divorced. Every Sunday after evensong Mr Watson used to come in for supper with us. He had a large repertoire of funny stories. Father was usually very tired and did not listen, but we rather enjoyed his tales even if we heard them more than once.

A second small shop in Crayke was kept by Miss Smith and her two brothers Harry and Charlie. They were the carriers of the village. The shop sold corn and meal, flour, dog biscuits and chicken food as well as sweets. One could get a half penny square of Fry's chocolate or a Fry's cream bar there. The shop always smelt mealy and Miss Smith herself was quite in keeping with her flour bags. She was a small, stout person with a round, pale face and her hair was done up in a bun on top of her head. She was always pleasant and kind.
Her brother Charlie drove a dog cart and we used to hire it to take to the station when we had luggage. In those days, boys always travelled to school with a trunk and a tuck box. Girls had a trunk and a square hat box, which was not designed to be carried by its owner. The portmanteau could be carried but it was bulky, being made in two parts with a strong flap in between, one side for suits and the other for shirts and underclothes. The flap kept the starched dress shirts from getting crumpled. There was also the Gladstone bag which was easy to carry and the lady's dressing case which contained various glass bottles with silver tops for eau de cologne, smelling salts, tooth powder and brandy. When we went to the seaside we always took a rug-strap, in which we rolled up winter coats, macintoshes, walking stick, umbrella and cricket bat, inside a tartan rug. Some folk had canvas covers for their rug-strap, but we had to roll ours very carefully and firmly so that nothing dropped out. If a walking stick or something slipped from the middle, then the whole bundle might disintegrate. It was fastened by two straps with a handle between.
We all liked Harry Smith who was a gentle and taciturn man and very dependable. We saw less of Charlie who must have carted round the sacks in the farm cart. All the folk in the village made their own bread so the Smiths must have done a good trade with flour. We had a big lined, wooden flour bin in the Rectory kitchen. Many of the villagers too kept pigs and we used to often hear them squealing. Possibly the Smiths killed them. We were only separated from their yard by a field and the blacksmith's forge. We saw very little of Mr Grainger, the blacksmith, but could hear the clank of his hammer on the anvil from the Rectory garden.

St Cuthbert's Church stood on the top of the hill. It had a square tower and we used occasionally to climb up the worn stone steps which corkscrewed up to the first floor, where the three bells hung. Next there was a ladder to climb to the second floor and the ladder had then to be pulled up in order to reach the trap door at the top of the tower. On one occasion, the boys sent semaphore messages from the top of the tower to the foot of the hill.

The Hall garden adjoined the churchyard. Mrs Matthews and her daughter Eta lived at the Hall. Mr Matthews died when I was still a baby. We were all very fond of Eta. She had a face rather like a monkey's and wore high necked blouses and black button boots. Nearly every morning

she used to come across to the Rectory with a cutting from the paper, some village news, or to tell us how many degrees of frost there had been in winter, or to ask for help with an acrostic. Our little dog, Quis, used always to bark at her and snap at her boots. She and her Mother had a much loved Scotch terrier called Gyp. Eta also had two ponies; she drove one in a small dog cart and the smaller one in a round governess cart. She used often to drive us into Easingwold when she went shopping and when we went to school at the Convent she drove us there on Monday mornings and called for us again on Friday afternoons. We were always pleased when she took the small pony and the governess cart on Monday mornings and the quicker pony to fetch us home on Friday. I think really she always reached school at the same time whichever pony she brought.

I remember so well when I was about seven that the lady at the sweet shop in Easingwold gave me a bar of chocolate. It was Lent and we always gave up eating sweets or chocolate in Lent, except on Sundays. I had forgotten about this and started to enjoy my chocolate as Eta and I drove home. Eta did not say anything, but I suddenly remembered and was horrified to find what I had done. Eta said she would take the remains of the chocolate back with her and I could finish it when we came over to tea on Sunday afternoons. We used to enjoy our tea-parties at the Hall. On Sundays the maids went out and Eta used to boil eggs for us. I liked mine hard so it was boiled for five minutes. When we went to tea on a week-day, during the Christmas holidays, we used to play card games – the Golden Egg, Old Maid, Precedence and a history game which was quite instructive. There were picture cards of the Kings and Queens with a list of all the chief events in their reigns. The idea was to collect all the events of the list for one monarch, as one does in Happy Families. The one I remember best was in William and Mary's reign, "Queen Mary died of smallpox".

When the strawberries were ripe we were invited to a strawberry tea in the garden. We sat under the lime trees on the lawn and I always remember the sweet scent of the lime flowers wafted to us while we ate out strawberries. The Hall strawberries were much bigger and better than ours and their hens laid more eggs. Father's hoodans were very beautiful with their tufted heads and black and blue speckled feathers, but they were not good layers. After tea the old members of the party played croquet and we younger ones would explore the shady walk or play games on the terrace behind the yew trees which overlooked "Lovers' Lane".

On Easter Monday, we always went for a picnic with Eta to the Shanty. Eta's Father had planted a little wood of larch and fir trees as a cover for his shooting and had a wooden hut built there which was called the Shanty. We used to lop off the lower branches of the larches and clear away weeds and nettles and often had a big bonfire. When we were small, Eta drove us there in the pony trap usually with Pixie, the small pony. After a rest and a good feed of oats, she was difficult to harness and would not stand still for us to get in. If it was damp we had tea in the Shanty where there was a table and benches. We could hear Pixie moving about in the stable next door. Eta boiled the kettle on a spirit stove and we usually shut the door to prevent a draught. Sometimes the sun shone in through the round holes where knots in the wood had been and we could see the motes of dust dancing in the beams of light. There were primroses in the woods and on the banks of the lane. Cowslips grew in the meadow and marsh marigolds by the spring. It was a wonderful place for a picnic. We usually arrived home very tired and often very dirty.

In the winter we had another expedition to the Shanty to choose our Christmas tree. We always wanted one that was too big to get into the house; trees always look smaller out of doors. Usually the one the boys carried home reached from the floor to the ceiling.

Another outstanding family in the village were the Gilliards. The eldest brother, Alec, had the farm at the foot of the hill and kept a herd of milking cows. I think his wife must have died



Crayke Rectory



Crayke village looking down the hill



Crayke village looking up towards the church



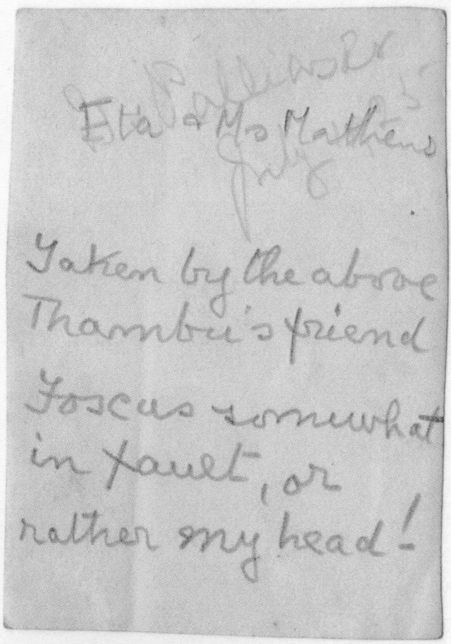
Interior of Crayke church



Mrs Matthews and Gyp



Eta and Mrs Matthews
July 1925





Crayke Hall

young. His old Mother lived at the farm and was the backbone of the family for many years. She came to the church regularly with her grand-daughters, as long as she was able. I remember going to see her at the farm when she was quite old. She sat by the fire in a rocking chair with a shawl round her shoulders and a cat or two beside her. The hearth-rug was made of pieces of coloured cloth. The three grand-daughters were a little older than we were but were rather a similar trio. The eldest kept house for her father, the second one, Margery, became a school teacher and the youngest one, Ethel, was shy and fair and rather like I was.

There was another family of Gilliards where there were two daughters, Ada and Annie, who both came to work at the Rectory. They were extremely good girls, but sadly enough, they had weak chests. Their Mother died in the 'flu epidemic during the First World War. Annie developed TB and had to go to a sanatorium. Mother gave her her fur coat as it was winter and Annie had to live out of doors. Fresh air was the main remedy for consumption in those days, but Annie died.

There was also a large family of Lawsons. The Father drank and there was never any money in the house. Mrs Lawson was very ill when one of her babies was born and Mother brought the tiny child home to the Rectory. Emily was a source of great interest and wonder to Margie and me. She had pink flannelette nighties. It was about this time that I got nits in my hair – a dire disgrace for which the Lawsons may have been responsible.

Mother also took charge of a Belgian baby who had lost his parents in the German invasion in 1915. Mother was very fond of babies and very good with them. Armand stayed with us for a few weeks. He wore a truss and Mother said it was because he had cried so much in his unhappy little life. Later, a home was found for him. His little sister, Leontina, went to the French sisters in Easingwold. She was given to Sister Alexander to look after. Sister loved her and they were a source of great joy to one another.

Mr Gibson was the village tailor. He made some Robin Hood costumes for the boys for a fancy dress party and a Puritan dress, cap and apron for Hilda Mary. We had some white serge summer coats with pale blue collars made by the tailor in Easingwold. He also made our quilted scarlet cloaks to go to parties in, during the winter.

Mr Rae was the grocer. He had two daughters, Connie and Vera. Connie had her leg in irons and was a little backward.

There were several out-lying farms that Father used to visit regularly. He liked to take one of us children with him and we were always pleased to go. Our first cook, Mary, married a farmer called Mr Dennis. He had a mentally retarded brother called Leonard, who lived at the farm. I remember once, Nurse took us to visit Mary and she gave us some delicious cheese cakes to eat.

Another farm was run by two brothers. They were really chapel folk but as there were only occasional services in the chapel they came pretty regularly to church. They sat just behind us and were good singers. Father always used to say that the parishioners he had visited would return his call by coming to church the next Sunday.

Our most remote parishioners were the Mannikins. They lived nearly two miles away on the road to Orlston. Mr Mannikin was very suitably named. He was a short round man, just like a kind dwarf in a fairy story. He had white whiskers all around his face and he wore a frock coat and a tall felt hat when he came to church. He was usually accompanied by several small brown-eyed boys and a little girl called Emily.

Most of the boys between eight and thirteen were in the choir, but Margie and I never took much notice of boys. The school master must have been a good disciplinarian as I cannot remember any trouble with the children.

An old castle crowned our hill. The main keep dated from Norman times. Several families lived in it for short periods but for most of the time it was empty. It was supposed to be haunted and there was a bloodstain on the floor of the hall. When there was no-one living there, we children used to enjoy exploring the old ruined dungeon and looking for treasure, needless to say we never found any. There was an underground passage leading from the castle. The mound of it could be seen behind the church. It had been opened up but closed again because the air in it was foul.

Chapter III: George Foss

George Foss was born in Madras. He was a good looking little boy with fair hair and blue eyes. From his earliest days he was always thoughtful, wise and kind. Mother told us several stories about how when he was a little boy. Sometimes in India they had snipe for dinner and when the turkey was brought in on Christmas Day, Foss exclaimed in surprise, "Oh Mother, what a big snipe!" Another time she was having trouble putting on his shoes and remarked that they were getting too small for him. "Oh no, Mother", said Foss, "the shoes are not getting too small. It is my feet which are getting too big."

When Foss was two years old, Father came to England on leave. Foss was left with a family of cousins and their nanny while Father and Mother went visiting. While they were away, nanny wanted Foss to do something which he did not want to do and said to him, "If you don't do as I say, your Mother will be cross." Foss replied, "Mother is never cross", and I don't think she ever was cross with him.

Foss had rather special treatment. He was always so reasonable and sensible in his requests that Mother allowed him certain privileges. He never ate butter and had his own jar of jam as he said other people put butter in the jar. He liked apricot jam and guava jelly and Tiptrees Little Scarlet and black cherry. He was very fond of honey in the comb. When we went to Robin Hood's Bay in the summer, Mother used to buy him heather honey in the comb. For his sweet at Sunday dinner he usually had tinned pears and lemon curd tarts or fruit tart if the pastry was not soggy. He used to sit and let his food get cold and was very slow when he got started. He never took cream. He liked plain sponge cake. Once at a big and splendid party we all trooped in to tea. Such a delicious spread of sandwiches, iced cakes and cream pastries, jellies and trifles. Foss stood and looked at the food. "Mother," he said, "there is nothing here that I can eat". Hastily, a plate of tongue and plain bread was brought for him.

I did not like parties and used to cling to Mother whenever possible. Foss disliked parties too. Sometimes when we had a tea party at home, Foss would disappear for the afternoon. He had several hiding places, some of which we discovered. One was on the roof of the summer house and another on the roof of the woodshed where it backed against the wall of the yard.

Father was very good about visitors on the whole, which was just as well as Mother was very hospitable and out guests had a way of staying longer than was expected because Mother always made them feel at home. Something Father would say in a loud stage whisper when the visitor was scarcely out of hearing, "When is she (or he) going?"

Foss was a very good leader in our games, always strictly fair and honourable and very courageous. I can remember the shields he made for himself and Brooke in a game of knights – one with a red cross on a white ground and the other a white cross on a blue ground. He was



George Foss Westcott aged 18 months





Foss and Phil





Hilda Mary



Mary, Margie and Monica

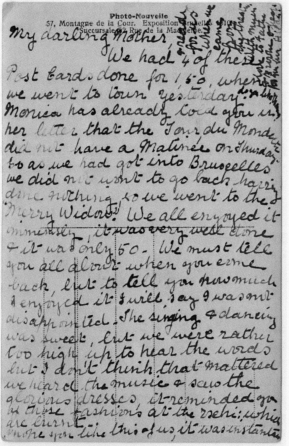


Photo-Nouvelle
57, Montagne de la Cour. Exposition Bruxelles
Succursale au Roi de la Maison

My darling Mother,

We had 4 of these Post Cards done for 1,50, when we went to town yesterday. Monica has already told you in her letter that the Tour du Monde did not have a Matinée on Thursday so as we had got into Bruxelles we did not want to go back hazing done nothing so we went to the Merry Widow. We all enjoyed it immensely, it was very well done & it was only 50. We must tell you all about when you come back, but to tell you how much I enjoyed it I will say I was not disappointed. The singing & dancing was sweet, but we were rather too high up to hear the words but I don't think that mattered we heard the music & saw the glorious dresses, it reminded you of those fashions at the Rschi: which we burnt. Shope you like this of us, it was instantaneous

a very careful and neat painter and made the most lovely scenery for our dolls' pantomime in the Christmas holidays. His one of Aladdin's cave was a masterpiece with multi-coloured crystals and gems and stalagmites and stalactites. One year for the final scene in the "Babes in the Wood", he made a fountain. The water came from a basin on top of the cupboard and flowed through a rubber pipe into an ornamental plasticine fountain head standing in a plasticine base. It was not allowed to run for long or the pool would have overflowed. He also fixed up some footlights worked by electric batteries. In the early days the actors were pieces of wood hung on strings and dressed in bits of coloured material, but as time went on, the actors were changed to cardboard people, usually made by Mary who was quite an artist.

The first play Brooke organised was the "Merchant of Venice" which he had probably been reading at school. It was very lengthy and tedious and I think I was the only one, apart from the dolls, who sat through it, out of loyalty to Brooke. Robinson Crusoe was another early play belonging to the wooden actors' time. The actors had a way of spinning round and the strands of cotton they hung by got twisted together. Later, Foss made lead weights which were fastened with a turned up flap at the feet and stuck up with seccotine.

Foss had a steam engine one year for Christmas which worked fairground models which he made with his meccano. There was a roundabout, swingboats and a cakewalk. He also had a steam locomotive which gave very efficient performances, though the spurts of steam it emitted were sometimes alarming. It could pull several coaches and was just like a real engine about nine inches long.

Foss went to Aysgarth School and Sherborne, where Father's eldest brother was Headmaster. He was not happy at school. He soon found out it was not possible to please everybody and one is bound to get into trouble sooner or later. He lost his faith at the age of six. Mother read him the story of Noah and his Ark and he found he could not believe it literally and from then on, he doubted the truth of most of the stories in the Bible. Although even from that early age he was agnostic, he went regularly to church and was also confirmed out of love and respect for his parents, which seems to me to be a sufficiently good motive.

When he was quite tiny, he saw his Christmas stocking, ready filled, lying on top of the cupboard in Mother's room, so his belief in Santa Claus did not last long, but he never let any of us into the secret. I was quite sure of Santa Claus until I was ten years old. I found it quite easy to believe impossible things, so many things which other people understood were mysteries to me, that a few more did not seem to matter.

Foss left school at sixteen and went into the railway works at Doncaster, at his own request. He was always interested in engines and the driver of our little local train used sometimes to let him travel in the cab with him. Although Foss had to start work at 6.00 am, he was happier than at school, and used to enjoy his weekends at home. About this time he had 'cello lessons and Mother loved playing his accompaniments. Whenever I hear the tunes he used to play, it takes my thoughts back to the drawing-room at Crayke. At eighteen, after some coaching in the classics from Father, Foss passed his Cambridge entrance and went to Queen's College to study mechanical science.

After he had been at Cambridge a year, the First World War broke out and he immediately volunteered. He was first a despatch rider in the RSC and then joined the Royal Flying Corps. While on a night bombing expedition, he was shot down behind enemy lines and taken prisoner. The propeller was shot off but he managed to make a neat landing and he and his observer were only slightly hurt. He was sent after a few days to an RFC prison camp at Karlsruke where he was well treated. He was allowed to have his books from Cambridge, he played in the orchestra, was allowed out on parole and played tennis on the town courts. He received his

Red Cross parcels regularly and came home looking quite fat. For six unhappy weeks after he was shot down, he was reported missing. Foss said that when the prisoners were leaving the camp after peace was declared, the German people were clamouring round the gates asking for any food they had left, especially chocolate and cigarettes.

Foss went back to Queen's where he was granted an Exhibition. He gained a First Class degree and applied for a post at the Science Museum, South Kensington. He became a Head of Department there and stayed all his working life. He married and had two daughters. He wrote one or two technical books which were published.

He was always a great reader and music and photography were his main hobbies.

Chapter IV: Hilda Mary

Hilda Mary was born at Auckland Castle. She was the first baby to be born there for 100 years and the bells rang out merrily to celebrate the occasion. Mary was an artistic child and though she had a very sketchy English education, she was well-informed about history, art and music. When she was 13, she went to Italy as companion to an Italian girl called Fosca, who had been adopted by a wealthy English couple. They had a villa at Fiesole outside Florence. The two girls had lessons with a German governess. Mary had painting lessons in the town and was taken to the art galleries to study and copy the paintings there. She learned to speak German and French fluently and to play the piano. The girls spent one summer holidays at Fraulein Monica's home in Bayreuth, Wagner's home town, where they went to a number of Wagner's operas.

At the age of 16 she joined Mother and the three younger children in Brussels, where Mother had taken a little house. When Mother and Philip went back to Crayke, we three girls were sent as boarders to a Belgian school run by three sisters, where there were a few other English girls. I can remember being very unhappy the first week we were there, although Jessie, a Scottish girl was especially kind to me. I could scarcely eat anything, but after a time life got back to normal again. Poor Mary had to mend our white socks – I can remember her in tears one evening with ten pairs of socks to mend. Mademoiselle Gabrielle read out the list of mending and Mary felt most ashamed. I think one of the other girls helped her with the mending.

We used to get up at 6.00 am two mornings a week to go swimming. We usually went for a walk after breakfast but not on swimming mornings as we were late back. It was a very happy day when the time came to go home and what a welcome Brooke gave us at York station! He had been at home with Father for the two years we had been abroad.

All of us three girls went to the French convent at Easingwold for a time. The sisters taught us very thoroughly and we learnt a great deal of our work by heart. They were Roman Catholic sisters, but they never tried to convert us and had a great respect for Father and Mother. Our Religious Knowledge lessons consisted of learning the gospels by heart and we also read some Old Testament stories in French and were shown large coloured pictures of Bible stories. I took the Oxford Preliminary and Junior Exams in Scripture and passed easily. Mary had lessons in music and needlework. The sisters did beautiful embroidery and dressed a baby doll for Margie and me one Christmas at Mother's request.

When the War started in 1914, Mary joined as a VAD. She had a tough training at a General Hospital in Leeds and later went abroad to a Military Hospital in Rouen. After the War she joined the British Empire Leave Club which had its Headquarters in Cologne. Its function was to entertain Officers on short leave. The girls were specially chosen from good families. They wore a blue uniform and every night there was dancing. Mary was a very good dancer and much in request as a partner, but she never became engaged to a young officer.



Mary



Phil (second from left), Monica (in centre), Mary (on Monica's left)



Foss, Phil and Mary



"The Queen of Hearts"
Mary on left, Margie second left, Monica on right as Knave

Later, Mary went out to Calcutta to live at Bishop's House with Uncle Foss. Mary had a very gay time there and everyone hoped she would get married. After some years she came home having been ill with jaundice and suspected appendicitis. After nearly dying with a perforated appendix, she started work as a Matron at various schools, including Stowe, until she retired. Then she went as a companion to elderly ladies and only gave up when her health obliged her to.

She had some of her watercolour paintings shown at an exhibition in London and for many years never failed to visit the Royal Academy.

Chapter V: Arthur Brooke

Brooke was born in Madras about the same time as Father and Mother's twin godsons, Edward Gordon and Charles Kingsley Groves. They were the sons of a missionary in Madras and the babies' Mother died when they were born and our Mother took charge of them for the distraught Father. They each had an Indian ayah as did Arthur Brooke. Brooke was called Thambu when he was young. It is the Tamil word for little brother.

The twins went to school in England at Hurstpierpoint in Sussex. They usually spent their holidays with us or at a farm in the parish. During the 1914-18 war, Mother went five times to the recruiting office in York to ask for commissions for Foss, Brooke, Ted and Charlie and a boy from Canada whose parents Mother had known in India. The Colonel in Charge got to know Mother quite well. Ted was wounded in the War and came home with an MC and a silver plate in his head. He asked Mary to marry him but she was not in love and suggested waiting five years. Ted, however, found someone before the five years were ended and Mary lost a good husband. Ted's wife was a Roman Catholic and they had two children. Charlie also got married and had three children. Much to everyone's sorrow, his eldest child, a little girl, died when she was about ten, of meningitis. The twins both went to Ceylon as Tea Planters. Charlie retired to East Africa and Ted bought some land in Somerset and grew apples.

Brooke was always obstinate and determined and most conscientious. He was always harder on himself than anyone else but he had a high standard of behaviour for all understanding people. Mother told us how, when he was still a baby, he spent a long time trying to make a ball stand on a sloping board and getting very angry with it. After he was ordained, Brooke made himself unpopular with many of his fellow Clergy for criticising some of their rather doubtful behaviour.

Most of my adventures and accidents took place when I was with Brooke. I remember one summer evening when I was seven or eight years old, he decided we were to climb all the apple trees in the orchard. There must have been a dozen of them. I was very apprehensive as I had only previously tackled two or three of the easiest. At the very first tree, which was an awkward one, I fell and was badly shaken. I would gladly have given up. Brooke would not let me and pulled me up every one of the trees before we went in to bed.

Another time we were playing croquet on the bottom lawn. He had warned me not to stand behind him as he might hit me with his mallet. Unfortunately, somehow I got behind him and received a mighty blow in the centre of my forehead which knocked me out. I was under the oak tree when the accident happened but when I came to, we were at the other end of the lawn, so he must have dragged me there when he went to see what had happened to the balls. He was very upset and we abandoned the game. We had brought the wheel-barrow down for a load of crab apples and he insisted on my sitting on top of the heap and being wheeled up the hill. I would much rather have walked as the barrow was wobbly and bumpy and the load far

too heavy for Brooke through the rough grass of the orchard. However, we reached the house in time for dinner and I went to his room to wash my hands. By this time the bruise on my head must have been very evident. Brooke and I sat side by side at the table and Foss sat opposite. He noticed my head and said, "What has Monica done to her head?" Then Brooke and I both looked over our shoulders at each other and started to cry. Foss tried to soothe us by saying it probably looked worse than it was. Mother put some butter on it and we proceeded with dinner. But for many days afterwards, I tried to keep out of sight as much as possible and spent a good deal of time sitting in the sunshine on a large square stone under the wall along the path near the patch where the gooseberry bushes were. From this spot I was protected behind and in front and could still see anyone coming along the path from either end. I can still feel a slight dint where the mallet hit me.

Another accident happened in the Christmas holidays when we were busy with the dolls' pantomime. We were halfway through the performance when the gong sounded for tea. Brooke rushed downstairs saying we must be back at five o'clock prompt to resume the play. I rushed after him but missed my footing five steps from the bottom and plunged headfirst across the passage and into the dining room, knocking my head on the sideboard. I picked myself up with blood streaming down my face. Father and Mother were in the study next door. Brooke knocked on the door as we always did and Mother came to see what the matter was. She was shocked at the sight of me and asked Father to cope. He took me up to his dressing room and bathed my head in cold water with his very soggy sponge until the bleeding stopped. Then Mother tied a bandage round my head and put me to bed in her room. When Ted came in a little later, he mistook me for Brooke. We were very much alike and in bed with no hair showing and perhaps looking a little older from the shock, it was quite an understandable mistake. I was so thrilled at being mistaken for Brooke that I felt the cut had been well worthwhile.

Some of our adventures happened at Robin Hood's Bay where we went for a month most summers. Once we got lost on the moors and were very frightened when we walked in a boggy patch and felt the tussocks of grass moving under our feet. In the end, we saw the telegraph poles on the Scarborough to Whitby road and went towards them. We had a long walk back to the farm and were very late, but no one seemed to have been worried.

Another time we had wandered far out on the rocks when the tide was coming in and found that we had been cut off by a wide inlet of water. We started to cross it. There were rocks and seaweed underfoot and gradually the water got deeper. In the end I went in almost to my waist before we got across. Brooke just managed to keep his shorts dry. I ran back a mile to the farm and then back again to the beach, by which time the tide was high and we all set out for the house again.

Once we were spending the day at Ravenscar as we usually did at least once during the holidays. Sometimes we walked by the beach and Father took his hammer to cut fossils out of the rocks. Sometimes we went by train and walked back by the beach or across the moors by Fylingdale. The cliffs were very high at Ravenscar and there was no beach, only shelves of rock. Brooke suggested that we should try climbing the cliffs a new way and we set off together, but soon we came to a steep bank of scree and we started to slip. The loose stones ended in a deep drop on to the rocks below. I was terrified, Brooke told me not to look down and to hold on to his foot. There was no point in going back as we were about half way across. Very carefully we edged out way along, clinging to the bank and reached safety with sighs of relief. There still remained a stiff climb but with grass and bushes to cling to, it was comparatively easy.



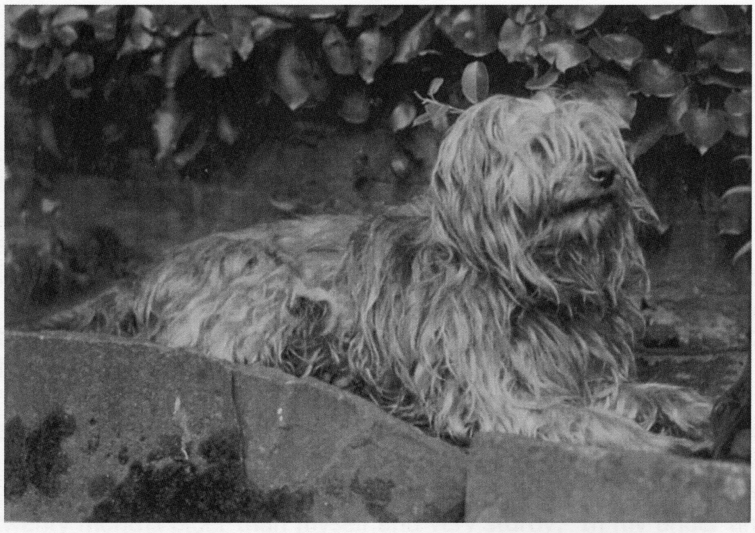
Reverend Westcott, Mary, Mrs Westcott, Brooke, Uncle George, Uncle Foss
(front) Foss and a cousin (?)



Brooke



Foss, Phil and Brooke



Quis

Brooke loved to go birds' nesting in the Spring and I usually went with him. Mostly we found thrushes and blackbirds' nests, but sometimes Brooke had to climb up to investigate a pigeon's or a magpie's nest and occasionally we came across a robin's or a wren's in an ivy covered bank. The first hedge sparrow's nest that I saw made a lasting impression. It was in the hedge at the bottom of Castle Bank and had four clear blue eggs in it. From then on, whenever Father read the general thanksgiving in church and we came to, "but above all for his **inestimable** love", I always thought of the hedge sparrow's nest and its sky blue eggs.

Brooke went to St Anselm's school, Bakewell and to Durham. At his prep school, he made two good friends who came to stay with us. Philip Booth, who was killed in the War and a boy called Geoffrey Brooke Taylor, who I think of as the Father of Tim Brooke Taylor of "The Goodies". Brooke did well at rugger. He left school at eighteen and got a commission in a West Yorkshire Regiment. His Army career was very chequered. He got shingles and shell shock, was shot in the hand and finally went to hospital with pneumonia. After the War, he went to Pembroke College, Cambridge, to study classics. He was married very young to Fosca, the Italian girl with whom Mary had shared a governess in Florence. Mother did not approve of the marriage as Brooke was so young and had no money and Fosca had a paralysed arm. However, with the help of Fosca's foster parents, they rented a little house in Cambridge and their elder daughter was born there. Brooke got his degree and went to Westcott House for his theological training. After serving his time as a curate, he was offered the living of Corby in Northants, where he remained for forty years. Father had the living of Deene, only six miles away, when we left Crayke. Both Mother and Father died at Corby Rectory where they spent a good deal of time after Father retired.

As quite a small boy, Brooke made up his mind to be a clergyman. On Sunday afternoons, we younger children had to bring our dolls to a service in the dining room. The chairs were arranged side by side for pews and Brooke stood behind the wine cellarette. He read prayers and preached to us and we sang hymns. I remember finding it rather boring. It was Brooke who taught me to tell the time by the church clock which we could see from the garden. Brooke had three children and eleven grandchildren.

Chapter VI: Margaret and Monica

For nearly eight years until our little brother was born, Margie and I were known as the babies. Margie was born in Germany at the home of Frau Garbert where Mother had been happy as a girl. When we were at war with Germany, Margie found her German origin an embarrassment. Margie was a forthright and determined person. Often I could see her heading for trouble. She did not seem to mind, but I did. On the whole we were very good companions. Margie was always very comforting as she was so sure of what was right and wrong in her opinion. Children always loved Margie and trusted her. From the time she was ten, the care of young children seemed to come her way; our little brother, Philip, various cousins and other young folk. For some years she ran a Wolf Cub pack with great success. The worst boys did well with her. She kept them fully occupied and expected co-operation from them. She could always see the good and shut her eyes to the bad in people.

I remember well one occasion when Margie and I fell out. I could not have been more than five. For some reason Margie would not let me go to the toy cupboard to take something from my shelf. She stood in front, a very solid and obstinate person, and I had no hope of moving her. She was twenty months older than myself and very sturdy. In my anger and frustration, I bit her hand. There was a loud outcry. I was sent to Mother and she scolded me and said that I had behaved like a little animal. Nobody saw my point of view. I was very indignant and offended. In tears I hid myself in the brush cupboard under the stairs.

Once at a party, Margie caused me the greatest embarrassment. We were playing 'Nuts in May' and Margie had not been chosen either to be pulled across or to do the pulling. All of a sudden, she remarked in a loud voice, "I think someone has forgotten this little person!" Everybody laughed and no doubt she got her turn, but I nearly sank through the ground in confusion.

We had a real nanny for about a year when I was four years old. I remember very little before her time. At two years old I could sing "Jack and Jill" and seem to remember being praised for it. Mother had a music book of Nursery Rhymes. There were two pictures in it which I specially disliked, the one of Tom, Tom the Piper's Son, with the pig under his arm being chased by a thin, long-legged man in a pointed hat and the one of the old man who would not say his prayers, falling headlong down the side of the page. The pictures were black silhouettes and were rather startling.

On the staircase there was an oil painting of St George with a sad face and a weird light shining on his armour and this again frightened me. I was afraid of the dark but when I had a bad dream which happened fairly often at one time, I used to get up and walk in the dark to Mother's room and join Father and Mother in their high bed. One night I remember going and expecting Mother to lift me up, instead of which it was Foss who told me that Mother was in the oak room with Brooke who was ill.

Nurse was quite strict but we were not afraid of her. I remember her crying when she left. She used to take us for long walks every fine day, usually along the Easingwold road. She had a young man at the draper's shop in Easingwold and had hopes of getting as far as the shop to see him. One day we did manage it but it was too much for my short legs. The last part of the walk was very wearisome and when nurse sat me in my high chair, my legs were buzzing. Nurse got into trouble for taking us so far.

Another day in the winter, when there was a thick ice on the water, we went for a walk along the York road. A little way from the village there was a pond at the cross roads. Usually ducks were swimming on it but this morning it was covered with thick ice. Nurse decided that it would be fun to walk over it. I did not trust the ice, neither did I like the thought of our feet slipping. Nurse went over first with Margie to show me that it was quite safe. Then she came back to fetch me. I went in great fear and trepidation, clinging to her hand and have never forgotten the misery of it.

Our night nursery was on the north side of the house, above the kitchen and overlooking the stable-yard. It was rather a dark room and to brighten it up Mother chose a wall paper with a nursery rhyme picture theme on it. Little did she know how I used to pray at night that I should not open my eyes in the morning and see the fierce cow with the big horns looking over the gate at the pretty maid and her mercenary lover.

It was in this room that I used to look under my bed each night for Red Riding Hood's wolf. My first pantomime in York was Red Riding Hood and I was most upset at the point where the wolf gobbled up the old Granny. The stage was darkened and I just caught a glimpse of someone jumping through the window at the back, but still did not believe that the wolf had not eaten the old lady. There he was, sitting in her bed with her night cap on when the lights went up.

I remember prayers that impressed me. Father loved the collects and read them out in a very sonorous voice when we had family prayers. There was the one about little Lucy. I never knew what she was doing in that prayer, "Though we be tied and bound by the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us". I pictured the clanking chains and then my thoughts went off to the adventures of Lucy in "Mrs Tiggywinkle". It was one of my favourite



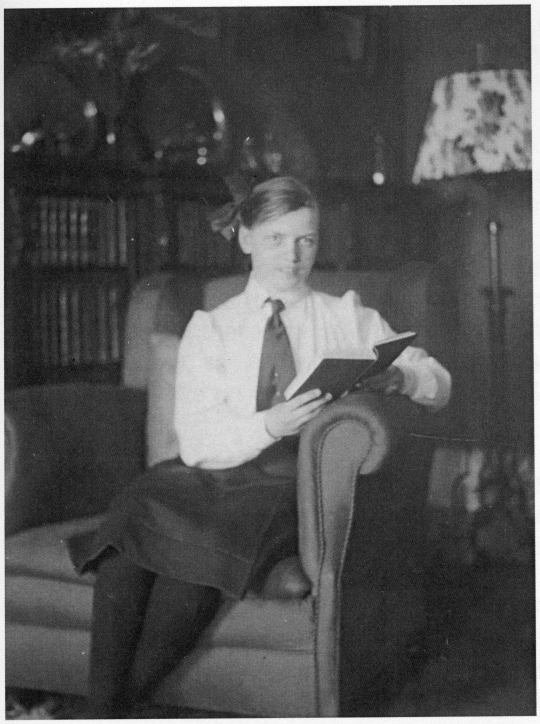
Monica and Margie



Mary, Margie and Monica



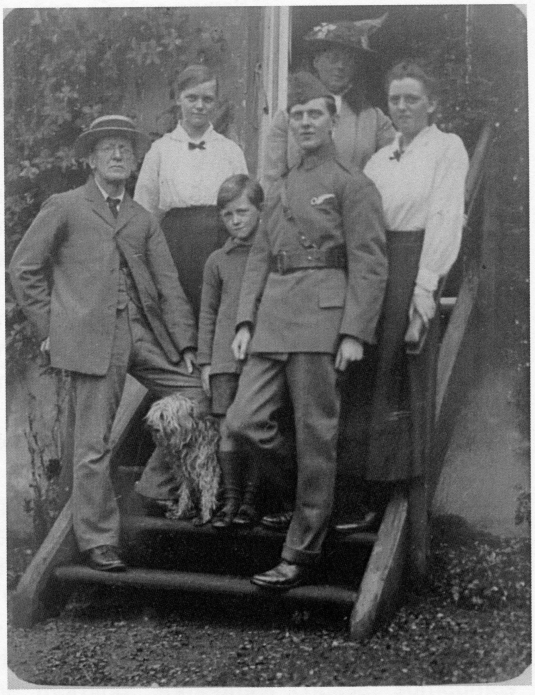
Margie



Monica May 1916







4th August 1916

stories, partly because the book was my own, given to me one Christmas. "Grant that we may so pass through things temporal that we finally not lose the things eternal", and there we were passing through a splendid arch, supported by Corinthian columns like the silver candlesticks we had on the dining room table.

I can remember so well kneeling up against the big armchair by the fireplace and looking at the dust caught in the buttons of the brown leather upholstery of the chair.

It was in the dining room that Margie and I tried to burn a hole through the wall. The door was shut and we wanted to get out and could not turn the handle. We decided to burn a hole in the wall and get out that way. We heated the poker in the fire and then pressed it on to the wall. Needless to say, we had not made much progress when someone rescued us, but there was a ring of black dots on the red wall paper for a long time to come, which caused us much shame and confusion.

To go back to prayers, I used to find "Gentle Jesus" very confusing.
"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild", *(which sounded like bread and milk)*
"Look upon a little child" *(not myself, but some other little fair-haired child)*
"Pity my simplicity", *(Oh, that must be me in my nightdress)*
"Suffer me to come to thee", *(Jesus had said himself, "Suffer little children to come unto me", so there was no need to ask about it)*
"Fain I would to thee be brought", *(what did fain mean?)*
"Gracious Lord, forbid it not", *(no sense at all)*
"In the kingdom of thy grace,
Give a little child a place", *(lucky child)*
"Oh supply my every want,
Feed the young and tender plant", *(that must mean water the sensitive plant in the greenhouse that closed up its leaves when you touched it)*
"Day and night my keeper be", *(who was to keep the bee, God or myself?)*
"Every moment watch round me. Amen."

When Margie was ten and myself eight and Phil nearly a year, Mother took us to visit our German Granny. She lived in a pleasant house in a quiet street in Schwerin. Our room had a big closed stove standing in it and the window had double glazing. We arrived towards the end of January and Granny had kept the Christmas tree for us to see. It was a big well shaped tree covered with little yellow candles and Granny had made some ginger sweetmeats for us to eat. The tree was very dry and one of the candles set alight to a branch. The flames spread rapidly with a crackling sound. Granny acted very promptly and bravely. She told us all to get out of the way. Margie and I took refuge on the wide windowsill in the drawing room. Mother picked Phil up, but slipped on the parquet floor and hurt her elbow. She managed to move away before Granny came out dragging the burning tree behind her. She pulled it through the drawing room, along the hall and out through the back door into the garden where the flames were soon put out. It was quite an alarming experience.

Margie and I were sent to a Junior School for girls although we could neither of us speak German. I could manage the handwriting classes where we learnt the German lettering, but when it came to writing compositions, I was all at sea. I did not even understand what the subject was and it was very frustrating. Twice a week we went at 8 am for a French lesson. We enjoyed the French as we already knew a little. On the way to school at 8 o'clock, we saw the big boys coming out into the playground of their school for their first break. We always took sandwiches with us to eat in the middle of the morning, sometimes cheese, sometimes sausages.

Mother used to meet us after school with Phil and we often went to a little cake shop opposite where we had a slice of delicious chocolate cake with a dollop of whipped cream.

When we first arrived in Schwerin, it was very cold weather. There was snow in the streets and the lake in the centre of the town was frozen hard enough for skating. We were pleased when the Spring came and we were able to play in the garden at the heaps of sand Granny had got for us. We enjoyed our walks in the Schloss gardens. While we were there, the little heir to the Grand Duchy of Michlenburg was born at the castle. The guns boomed to announce the birth and we listened anxiously to know whether it would be 25 salutes for a girl or 100 for a boy.

In the Easter holidays, one of the German 'uncles' took us on the lake for a row – we walked in the woods too but the anemones were not out. We had to pass the military barracks on the way to the woods and we much admired the smart officers in their well-fitting grey uniforms and shiny black top-boots. We spent Easter in Schwerin and were told that the Easter Hare brought the chocolate eggs which we found in the garden. Before we left, the marsh marigolds were out by the lake.

I had my ninth birthday in Schwerin and well remember visiting the little toy shop to choose my present. There were such lovely things there for my dolls and I think I chose a little satchel with school books in it and a little slate. We left at the end of April and went to a small house that Mother had rented for us at Watermael near Brussels.

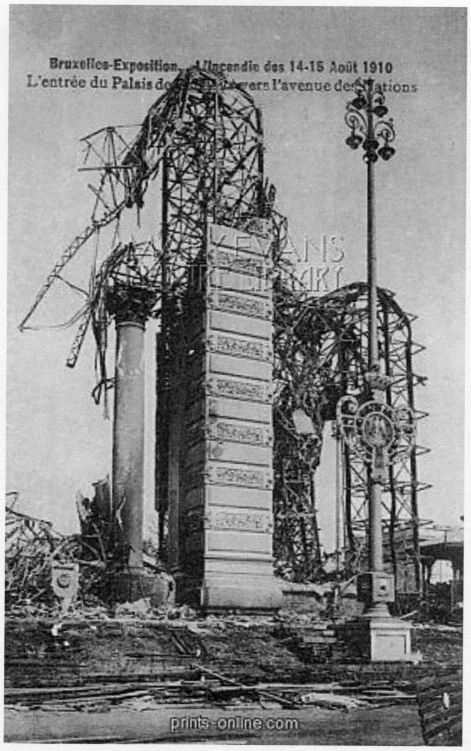
Chapter VII: Brussels

When Philip was six months old, Mother decided that she needed a change and resolved to go abroad with her three youngest children. Father was to have rooms in the village and the use of his study when he wanted. Otherwise, the Rectory would not be used. Brooke would stay with Father for company and do lessons with him and with a tutor at Brandsby for the time we were away. Foss was at the railway works in Doncaster and Mary was in Italy. Mother had always been keen on foreign travel. She thought the English were far too insular and self satisfied.

She travelled with Phil to Brussels in September, leaving Father to bring Margaret and me as soon as she had settled in. She took two rooms in a pension nearly opposite the home of the British chaplain. The journey out was a big adventure for us little girls. We each had a big teddy bear that we took with us and I had to carry my violin in a wooden case. It was quite unusual for us to be in Father's care, but he was very kind and looked after us well. I was sick when we arrived at King's Cross Station but was able to eat tea afterwards at a small tea shop near Victoria Station. Father left his spectacles there and we had to go back and fetch them. Someone said, "Oh, yes, they were left by the gentleman with the little girl and the fiddle", which rather pleased me.

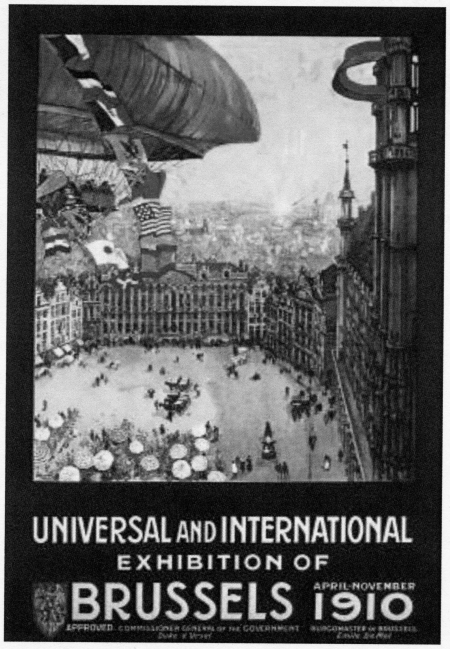
We must have crossed from Dover to Ostend, leaving late at night. Father put us in the charge of a kind stewardess who gave us each a piece of ship's biscuit to eat. It seemed to me very like a dog biscuit. We had a calm crossing and a short journey by train to Brussels arriving there at about 5.00 am. Father remarked how early the men were going to work.

It was good to see Mother again, although the rooms were not at all like home and we had our meals downstairs with the other guests. The house smelt of cooking and unfamiliar food. Father went home very soon.



The devastation caused by a fire at the Brussels Exhibition of 14-15 August 1910. This was the entry to the Palace of Belgium on the Avenue of Nations.

http://www.prints-online.com/r2/results_of_fire_at_brussels_exhibition/print/4408471.html



http://www.worldexhibition.org/worldexpo/1910-brussel/



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:KMMA_reclame.jpg

(Received August 20, 9.15 a.m.)

BRUSSELS, August 19.

The President and Executive of the Exhibition, commenting on the great exaggeration of damage started by the local newspapers, state that all traces of the fire will be removed in a fortnight and the Belgian and British sections re-opened.

There are widespread complaints of the carelessness and dishonesty of some of the watchmen and the inefficiency of the precautions against fire.

Yielding to public opinion the Executive is forming a corps of 600 firemen, equipped with new engines.

DOCKERS FINED.

(Received August 20, 11,30 a.m.)

LONDON, August 19.

Two dockers at Newport were fined £10 each, and one £5, for assaulting the free laborers on the Beacon Grange.

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The Straits Times, 14 September 1910, Page 11

Brussels Exhibition.

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Brussels Exhibition.

ENORMOUS LOSSES CAUSED BY FIRE.

King George's Message.

The first attempt of the British Government to organise officially a British section at a great international exhibition has ended disastrously—though through no fault of the organisers, says the Daily Mail of August 20.

Late on Sunday evening a fire broke out in the Belgian portion of the Brussels Exhibition. Spreading with amazing rapidity the flames speedily enveloped the entire section. The British and French sections were next attacked, and the magnificent contents entirely destroyed. Happily the machinery Hall, where the British exhibits were of great value, was saved from the fire. An account of the unique and priceless articles burnt in the other part of the British section appears below.

The British Minister in Brussels has received the following telegram from Lord Knollys at Balmoral:—

I am commanded by the King to ask you to convey to Mr. Wintour (Commissioner-General of the British Section) his distress at hearing of the destruction by fire of a number of parts of the Brussels Exhibition, especially of the British section, and to express his Majesty's deep sympathy with him and his colleagues in this calamitous event.

The King of the Belgians has telegraphed to Mr. Wintour as follows:

I desire to express to you and to your compatriots who have co-operated in the success of our exhibition how deeply I regret the disaster, which has particularly affected the British section, which in its completeness and interest was an honour to your nation.

The British exhibits, Lord Lytton, chairman of the British Royal Commission on Foreign Exhibitions, said to our Brussels correspondent, were shown in two sections—the commercial exhibits in the loan section adjoining the Belgian section, and the machinery exhibits, which were on show in the international hall. The former were entirely destroyed and the latter are intact. It is reassuring to know that the Belgian authorities have expressed their determination to repair the damage as soon as possible and to continue the exhibition until the end of the season.

British Courage.

I cannot speak too highly of the splendid services rendered by the staff of the British Commissariat in the brief time at their disposal. They were on the spot immediately on the alarm being given, and they saved everything that it was humanly possible to save.

I obtained full information of the brave conduct of the British Commissariat during the fire. When Mr. Balsam, the accountant, and other officials were trying to rescue the papers from the office several other members of the staff—Mr Heather, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Taft, Mr. Foster, Mr. Frankland, Mr. Reason, and Mr. Spencer—were trying to

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Table of Contents of this Issue

Ransom, and Mr. Spencer—were trying to save the treasures in the loan collection. They got out of one of the rooms a piece of Morlaix tapestry, and had got a second piece almost to the door when the flames overtook them.

When the hose was unrolled it was found that there was no pressure of water. Another hose was run out, but no water came. But for this regrettable lack of water the fire could have been held in check.

£2,000,000 in Losses.

The whole of the attendants in the British section showed splendid self-possess and calmness. There was no panic, and they only left the flaming building when it was impossible to remain any longer. Then, realising that the section was beyond all help, they went on to the French section and worked hard, salving jewellery and other exhibits.

The official British claim against the Belgian Exhibition authorities, the object of which is to safeguard the British exhibitors, has been prepared, and will probably be brought before the courts.

Among the ascertained losses are:

Loan collection	£100,000
Motor-cars	£8 000
Showcases	£30,000
Case of the old Worcester china valued at	£6,000
Chippendale lent by Lady Cowdray	£2,000
Rare prints and MSS. from the Oxford University Press ...	£8,000
Model of the first Dreadnought, lent by Messrs. Armstrong, valued at over	£1,000

The total British losses are between £300,000 to £400,000. The total damage done by the fire is about £2,000,000. The exhibition was opened by King Albert on April 23. It covered 220 acres on the north east side of the town adjacent to the Bois de la Cambre. The cause of the outbreak was the catching fire of a curtain in the Needlework Hall. The flames, fed by the flimsy material, spread with such rapidity that they were out of hand in a few seconds. Looting commenced as building after building was enveloped in flames, and despite the efforts of police and troops, many acts of robbery were committed. Bostock's Menagerie was destroyed by the fire. Lions, bears, panthers, and crocodiles were among the victims, and their bodies now lie charred among the debris.

British Enterprise.

The Exhibitions Branch of the Board of Trade on Thursday, sent a letter to the exhibitors in the British section of the Brussels Exhibition saying:

It has been decided, within the limits of space available and subject to a satisfactory response being made by exhibitors, to reconstitute the British section in the Salle des Fetes. The commission of the British section feel that a valuable object-lesson of British enterprise and resource would be afforded by their determination to recover without delay from the blow which is regarded in the minds of so many people as being irreparable and final. The commission therefore appeal to those exhibitors who have so worthily upheld the prestige of this country at the Brussels Exhibition to assist them by contributing a fresh exhibit without loss of time. No charge will be made for space in the new building, and showcases will be placed at the exhibitors' disposal.

British Losses.

The principle attraction of the British section was a series of striking tableaux devised for the Bradford Huddersfield Chambers of Commerce. The Bradford series illustrated the worsted industry from the growth of the wool to the finished article. The Huddersfield exhibit represented the Lobby of the House of Commons with portrait figures of leading politicians. The British section was thoroughly representative of the industries of the country; probably it was the most effective display of British goods that has ever been seen at an international exhibition. The

was considered the best exhibition we have ever sent abroad. One large court was entirely filled with beautiful specimens lent for the first time out of the country by the Victoria and Albert Museum, while in addition some choice pieces of old furniture were secured from English country houses, representing the four principal styles of English decoration. Two rooms furnished by Messrs. White, Allom, and Co., contained among many other precious objects some carvings by Grinling Gibbons: while Messrs. Gill and Reigate have to deplore the loss of a representation of fifteenth and sixteenth century architecture in old English beam oak. In the loan collection, the value of which has been estimated at £100,000, were the famous Tudor panelling belonging to the Toronto Museum, and two large Morlaix tapestries. The value of Mr. Clarence Wilson's loan collection is said to have been about £8,000 and he was only one among many lenders, including the Marquis of Anglesey, Lord Northcliffe, Lady Stern, Lady Swaythling, Lady Cowdray, Lady Denman, Major-General Sir Coleridge Grove, Mr. Alexander Argenti, Miss Lilian Colston, and Mr. J. A. Turner, the latter lending fifty-six Toby jugs from his collection. The leading potters of North Staffordshire had sent their very finest and most valuable ware to the exhibition. Such firms as Wedgwoods, Mintons, Doultons Ashworths, Cauldon, Goss, Macintyre, Johnson, and Bernard Moore lose heavily by the fire. Mr. Bernard Moore, who sent priceless specimens of his Chinese and transmutation glazes, has received a telegram from his Brussels representative, saying: Burnt out. We lost everything.

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The Straits Times, 14 September 1910, Page 11

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Table of Contents of this Issue

Brussels Exhibition.

ENORMOUS LOSSES CAUSED BY FIRE.

King George's Message.

The first attempt of the British Government to organise officially a British section at a great international exhibition has ended disastrously—though through no fault of the organisers, says the Daily Mail of August 20.

Late on Sunday evening a fire broke out in the Belgian portion of the Brussels Exhibition. Spreading with amazing rapidity the flames speedily enveloped the entire section. The British and French sections were next attacked, and the magnificent contents entirely destroyed. Happily the machinery Hall, where the British exhibits were of great value, was saved from the fire. An account of the unique and priceless articles burnt in the other part of the British section appears below.

The British Minister in Brussels has received the following telegram from Lord Knollys at Balmoral:—

I am commanded by the King to ask you to convey to Mr. Wintour (Commissioner-General of the British Section) his distress at hearing of the destruction by fire of a number of parts of the Brussels Exhibition, especially of the British section, and to express his Majesty's deep sympathy with him and his colleagues in this calamitous event.

The King of the Belgians has telegraphed to Mr. Wintour as follows:

I desire to express to you and to your compatriots who have co-operated in the success of our exhibition how deeply I regret the disaster, which has particularly affected the British section, which in its completeness and interest was an honour to your nation.

The British exhibits, Lord Lytton, chairman of the British Royal Commission on Foreign Exhibitions, said to our Brussels correspondent, were shown in two sections—the commercial exhibits in the loan section adjoining the Belgian section, and the machinery exhibits, which were on show in the international hall. The former were entirely destroyed and the latter are intact. It is reassuring to know that the Belgian authorities have expressed their determination to repair the damage as soon as possible and to continue the exhibition until the end of the season.

British Courage.

I cannot speak too highly of the splendid services rendered by the staff of the British Commissariat in the brief time at their disposal. They were on the spot immediately on the alarm being given, and they saved everything that it was humanly possible to save.

I obtained full information of the brave conduct of the British Commissariat during the fire. When Mr. Balsam, the accountant, and other officials were trying to rescue the papers from the office several other members of the staff—Mr Heather, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Taft, Mr. Foster, Mr. Frankland, Mr. Reason, and Mr. Spencer—were trying to

Russia, and Mr. Spencer—were trying to salve the treasures in the loan collection. They got out of one of the rooms a piece of Merlaix tapestry, and had got a second piece almost to the door when the flames overtook them.

When the hose was unrolled it was found that there was no pressure of water. Another hose was run out, but no water came. But for this regrettable lack of water the fire could have been held in check.

£2,000,000 in Losses.

The whole of the attendants in the British section showed splendid self-possess and calmness. There was no panic, and they only left the flaming building when it was impossible to remain any longer. Then, realising that the section was beyond all help, they went on to the French section and worked hard, salving jewellery and other exhibits.

The official British claim against the Belgian Exhibition authorities, the object of which is to safeguard the British exhibitors, has been prepared, and will probably be brought before the courts.

Among the ascertained losses are:	
Loan collection	£100,000
Motor-cars	£8 000
Showcases	£30,000
Case of the old Worcester china valued at	£6,000
Chippendale lent by Lady Cowdray	£2,000
Rare prints and MSS. from the Oxford University Press ...	£8,000
Model of the first Dreadnought, lent by Messrs. Armstrong, valued at over	£1,000

The total British losses are between £300,000 to £400,000. The total damage done by the fire is about £2,000,000. The exhibition was opened by King Albert on April 28. It covered 220 acres on the north east side of the town adjacent to the Bois de la Cambre. The cause of the outbreak was the catching fire of a curtain in the Needlework Hall. The flames, fed by the flimsy material, spread with such rapidity that they were out of hand in a few seconds. Looting commenced as building after building was enveloped in flames, and despite the efforts of police and troops, many acts of robbery were committed. Bostock's Menagerie was destroyed by the fire. Lions, bears, panthers, and crocodiles were among the victims, and their bodies now lie charred among the debris.

British Enterprise.

The Exhibitions Branch of the Board of Trade on Thursday, sent a letter to the exhibitors in the British section of the Brussels Exhibition saying:

It has been decided, within the limits of space available and subject to a satisfactory response being made by exhibitors, to reconstitute the British section in the Salle des Fetes. The commission of the British section feel that a valuable object-lesson of British enterprise and resource would be afforded by their determination to recover without delay from the blow which is regarded in the minds of so many people as being irreparable and final. The commission therefore appeal to those exhibitors who have so worthily upheld the prestige of this country at the Brussels Exhibition to assist them by contributing a fresh exhibit without loss of time. No charge will be made for space in the new building, and showcases will be placed at the exhibitors' disposal.

British Losses.

The principle attraction of the British section was a series of striking tableaux devised for the Bradford Huddersfield Chambers of Commerce. The Bradford series illustrated the worsted industry from the growth of the wool to the finished article. The Huddersfield exhibit represented the Lobby of the House of Commons with portrait figures of leading politicians. The British section was thoroughly representative of the industries of the country; probably it was the most effective display of British goods that has ever been seen at an international exhibition. The

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Mother engaged a Belgian woman to look after us but she was not a success. Mother had to go to the Palais de Justice to get rid of her. We won our case. Mother had a good English lawyer.

Sometimes we went to tea with the children of the English chaplain and we went to church with them as well. It was in Brussels that I learnt some of the collects by heart for Sunday School.

Mother found a good school for us and we did not feel too much out of touch there as we had already learnt some French at the convent of French Sisters of Mercy where we had been at school in England. The mistresses used to line up in the entrance hall in the morning and we had to shake hands with each one when we came in and make a little curtsey.

Our Christmas in Brussels was not at all like our home Christmasses at Crayke. We missed the rest of the family and the carol singing and the much more lavish festivities we had been used to. Mother did her best and we had a little Christmas tree. For our main present, Margie and I each had a doll in a box with some changes of clothes. We had seen the dolls in the shop window so we knew they did not come from Santa Claus.

One night when Mother was preparing the baby's bottle, the methylated spirit stove flared up. I woke up to see an alarming blaze. Mother's eyebrows were burnt but no serious harm was done.

After Christmas we went to Germany and when we came back we had the little house at Watermael where we were very happy and comfortable. I resumed my violin lessons but they had a tragic ending. The young man who taught me was very patient because I was not really musical but he kept me too long with my arm held up so that I felt sick and faint and had not the courage to tell him. Instead, I flung the violin down on the table and rushed from the room. That was the end of my career as a violinist. Mother was disappointed that her children were not more musical. Foss played the 'cello well and Phil was a very versatile musician. Mary played the piano fairly capably and had a very light singing voice. Foss and Phil were both in their school choirs.

At Watermael, we had a very pleasant Belgian woman called Emilie to clean the house and help with the cooking. She had brown eyes and was always cheerful and a great comfort to us all. Mother was able to have visitors at Watermael. We had Miss Griggs, a friend of Mother's from Norfolk, who was kind enough to take us three girls, (Mary had joined us by then) to visit some of the places of interest in Belgium. She took us to Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp and to Namur which we liked best of all. It is a lovely town on the River Meuse, just at the entrance to the Ardennes.
Another visitor was Aunt Edith who came with her daughter Biddy, who was about my age. Aunt Edith had been Mother's bridesmaid in Madras. Biddy was very pretty and rather spoilt though we did not really envy her as Aunt Edith had some rather peculiar ideas. She sewed Biddy's season ticket inside the hem of her skirt and she had to turn up the hem of her skirt to show the conductor her ticket. This caused some amusement on the train on the way to school and some embarrassment to us.

Father and Brooke also came to visit us when the Brussels exhibition was on. There was a big fire at the exhibition one night and we could see it from our house. A lot of damage was done. We seem to have been dogged by fires during our two years abroad.
(*Note: This refers to the Exposition Universelle et Internationale held in Brussels in 1910. There were 13,000,000 visitors and the site covered 220 acres. The fire was on 14th and 15th August 1910. It is also mentioned on the postcard which Hilda Mary wrote.)*

We went to Waterloo with Father and Brooke and saw the big lion commemorating the victory. We were sad when Father and Brooke left us and I missed Brooke very much. In one of the bedrooms at Watermael there was a mirror on the wall beside the bed. One morning when I awoke, I saw myself in the mirror and thought it was Brooke. We were very much alike and probably his face was more familiar to me than my own, as we did not spend much time looking in mirrors.

There were lots of young frogs at the bottom of the garden in early summer and red slugs and black ones crawling along the lane on the way to the woods. Margie's music mistress came for a walk with us in the woods one day and I was much surprised when she said how pleasant it was to walk on the grass! I suppose the poor soul was only accustomed to walking on pavements.

Mother left with Philip for England after a year at Watermael, leaving us for the summer term as boarders at our same school, with our sister Mary who was sixteen. It was a great wrench when Mother left. The faithful Emilie took us to the Kermesse in the evening and treated us to waffles with syrup but I was very unhappy and continued for nearly a week to have no appetite and to cry on the slightest pretext. When I was young, crying was a great relief to me and I was sorry in later years not to be able to indulge in tears. But as one grew older they made one's eyes swollen and puffy and one's head ache so that there was no benefit in shedding tears.

There were several English boarders at the School, mostly about Mary's age. But Margie made a lifelong friend of a girl called Bairnie, whose Mother was a widow. I was supposed to be friends with her young brother but I never really cared for him and rather resented losing Margie's company. Bairnie was the leader in most of our escapades. It was she who suggested throwing the little green chestnuts which we picked up in the Avenue Louise, into Mademoiselle Albot's hat which turned up all round. When we arrived back at School Mademoiselle took off her hat and counted the chestnuts. There were a good many of them. We felt a little deflated when she was not cross.

Another day Bairnie pretended she had fallen and hurt her leg in the Bois. I was sent to tell Mademoiselle Albot about the accident and Bairnie lay on the ground as if she had fainted. Mademoiselle knelt down beside her and took off her yellow cotton gloves, but soon we could not help laughing and the trick was discovered.

We were given a holiday for the Coronation of King George V and were somewhat annoyed because the little Belgian girl Lucie, who was also a boarder at the School was given the afternoon off as well and came with us to the Bois.

Twice a week we got up at 6.30 am and went to the swimming baths. We enjoyed this very much and came back with a good appetite for breakfast. We were each given a kind of Chelsea bun to eat when we came out of the water and it tasted delicious.

Bairnie came to stay with us in England some years later and when her Mother married again and made her home in Dresden, Margie was asked to go and stay with Bairnie and go to School in Dresden. Margie was happy there and learnt to skate well. She came home just after the first war broke out, and was so engrossed in telling Mother all her experiences in the train that they forgot to get out at our junction and were carried on to Raskelf. I was waiting anxiously at the Convent to greet them and was bitterly disappointed when they did not turn up at the time expected. However, about an hour later they arrived having hired a car from the next Station. Margie's luggage had gone astray but she had her bull finches in a cage with her. She looked

so cheerful with her round face under her small red hat, with the birdcage in her hand, that I was quite overwhelmed with delight.

Margie was always a practical person. She made bread for us in the war and did most of the cooking. She mowed the lawns as best she could though it was heavy work for her, even if I was there to pull. All the time we seemed to have children to look after. Later in life she became Matron of a Waifs and Strays Home for a time. After Mother and Father died, she took in children from broken homes. Her three special protégés all married and have families of their own. She taught for many years and although she had no special qualifications, her experience and her gift of managing children have always made her much in demand.

Chapter VII: Cuthbert Philip Brooke

Phil was born at Crayke. He was called Cuthbert in honour of the patron saint of the North. St Cuthbert was patron of our church at Crayke and also of Durham Cathedral where grandfather was bishop.

Philip was a great joy to us all. Margie and I were sent to stay at the hall when he was due to arrive and Eta was very good to us all. She brought out some of her old toys from a dark cupboard on the landing. Mrs Matthews sent us tea in the tea in the early morning in little blue cups. It was pale china tea, not like the brown Indian tea which we had at home. There was snow on the ground on March 16th when Phil was born. Father came across to tell us the news. "We've got a little baby boy", he said. Margie and I had no idea that a baby was on the way and were taken completely by surprise. "Has he come to stay?" I asked. "He has come to live with us", said Father, "he is your baby brother".

Margie must have been very pleased as she told me years later she had been praying for God to send us back Grace Catherine, the baby girl who died in India. When Phil was born she accepted him as the answer to her prayers.

We were allowed to see the baby shortly afterwards and were taken aback to find Mother in bed. I don't know where the cradle was kept, but I had not seen it before and thought it was very beautiful with its muslin curtains. We were surprised to find a strange nurse in the house who told us to be very quiet.

Phil was a very loving little boy and very loveable. Mother once said to him when he was very small: "Who loves you?" thinking he would answer, "You do", but instead he replied, "Everybody loves Phil". Certainly everyone at home did and we were never jealous of him. He was a most trusting and confiding little boy. He believed in Santa Claus and fairies until he went away to School at the age of eight.

I remember one little incident which took place shortly before Christmas when he was three years old. Mother had bought a doll's bath for my present. It had a tap to let the water out and a bucket to catch the water. Phil was allowed to play with it in Mother's room before breakfast. On this particular morning, when the gong went for breakfast, Phil and I came out of our rooms at the same time and met at the top of the stairs. I sat on the top step to say good morning and he whispered in my ear. "Oh, Mon, you've got such a lovely Christmas present, but I'm not allowed to tell you what it is", and then said in the same breath and a low whisper, "It's a bath!"

Phil taught himself to play the piano when he was very young. He played hymns at first, "Forty days and forty nights" being a favourite. When he went to school he taught me to sing his school songs in the holidays. "Early one morning", "Flora's Holiday" and "In the beauty of the

lilies". After Prep school, he went to Cheltenham where Father had been and then to Magdalen College, Oxford. Mother liked Oxford best and wanted one of her sons to go there. At Boat Race time, Mother always used to scold Father if Cambridge won. Nearly all Father's family were Cambridge.

Phil travelled abroad a lot and studied modern languages. I went on two walking tours with him, one in the Harz mountains and one in Normandy and Brittany. We stayed with friends at Hamelin in Germany and visited the Ratcatcher's House, the church and the Koppelburg Hill.

When he was in Germany at one year old he understood "Wo ist die lampe?" and "Wie gross bist du". In Brussels he used to waltz round and round to the "Merry Widow" waltz which Mary played on the piano.

During the Second World War, Phil was a Chaplain in the Air Force. He was stationed for a time on the Isle of Skye and later in the Cocos Isles in the Indian Ocean. After the War, he went back to his teaching and later combined it with work as British chaplain in Italy. He had several language schools in Northern Italy before settling down as chaplain in Sanremo and Bordighera. He has done good work in fostering a spirit of unity amongst the various different Christian churches in his neighbourhood.

Chapter VIII: The Garden

I do not agree with Wordsworth's theory that children come into this world, "trailing clouds of glory". The glory is here already and when we see something really beautiful for the first time we are spellbound with joy and wonder. I can well remember the first time I saw violets growing on the rockery. I could hardly believe they were true. There were violets of all shades, lilac, white, pink and deep purple. The obvious thing was to pick some and I did so. When I brought them in my pinafore to the steps of the garden door, Mother said, "They must all be put in water or they will die". There were some little round glass vases in the china pantry and by the time four of them were filled, I was very tired.

The sight of a carpet of bluebells in a wood has always moved me beyond words and the first wild primroses on a mossy bank are equally lovely. There I agree with Wordsworth. "To me the meanest flower that blows can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Every Good Friday morning we used to go primrosing, either in the morning or after Father had read the litany in church at 3.00 pm. Then we bunched the flowers up with moss around the stalks and stood the bunches in a wash basin ready for decorating the church the next day. Mother always did the alter flowers and decorated the screen for Festivals. At Easter she tied bunches of primroses to the screen and hung trails of ivy down. At Harvest time she had bunches of corn and Virginia creeper and at Christmas it was holly and little red everlasting flowers and ivy.

My grand-daughter delighted me one day when we were out walking together and she noticed a speedwell for the first time and was filled with wonder at the sight of the pretty blue flower. "Look, look, granny," she said, "it has come out of the ground".

My son also when he was a tiny boy looking out of the window at bedtime after a showery spring day, saw the big red sun setting behind the trees. "Mummy, look at the lovely sun", he said, "I believe I can see the Lord's face in it".

Both these children had the same experience as I did with the violets and were able to put their vivid emotion into words.



Phil











2nd August 1942

The garden at Crayke was a perpetual delight to us. We had a good gardener called Taylor who with the help of his son Tom, who was rather simple, kept the lawns, the greenhouse, the vegetable garden, the flowers and fruit trees all in good order. We grew enough vegetables and potatoes to keep us the year round, and usually had plenty of apples and pears. Taylor must have worked very hard. He pumped all the water for the house as well. We had a WC but no bathroom. There was an earth closet in the garden and another one for the maids in the yard.

How well I remember Sunday evenings in the summer with the bells ringing for church, standing on the front lawn with its beds of geraniums and lobelias and looking out across the Vale of York to the twin towers of the minster thirteen miles away. Sunday evening services often made me sad, specially on the last Sunday of the holidays. We were so happy at home that we wanted nothing better than to stay there forever. But Mother was wise and like a mother bird she tumbled her fledglings out of the nest.

There were window-boxes at the front windows filled with double pink creeping geraniums and lobelias. By the drawing room steps there was a jasmine plant and the scent of white jasmine always takes me back to Crayke. Lilacs and laburnums grew round the side lawn where we often played croquet. I enjoyed a game but was always glad for Margie or Brooke to win. They were so keen and better players than I was.

There were plenty of trees in the garden which we could climb and others like the big elm trees which had no low branches. We played a grand game of "factories" under the trees. Brooke had the factory under the deodar. He sold chocolate which he baked in slabs. The chocolate was made of mud. We all made mud pies and took them to the factory to be cooked. Brooke made a fire of sticks and pine needle pins. Mary had a restaurant under her beautiful beech tree. She made fancy cakes and iced them in different ways. With an old boot polish tin and brush she collected the green dust from the trunk of the beech tree and used that for icing. Or she crushed a piece of brick to make red icing or a white stone for white icing and topped the cake with an oval white pebble for an almond or a small flower or leaf. She had a flat stone in her tea-room for a table, but I was too poor to buy her cakes. I lived in a laurel bush and sold matches, little bundles of sticks fastened with a grass stem. Margie sold milk and lived in a yew tree. She made her milk by mixing clay and water in an old tin. We all had pretence children. My little girl was called Lucy, Mary had Phyllis and Brooke had some little boys. Margie's Margery was there in person. She was an old oil can and Margie fed her through the round hole in the top and the mud pies rattled inside her. Brooke used to say how long the nights were to be. We all had to go upstairs to bed, except Mary who had a bedroom amongst the roots of her tree. Margie used to get very dirty climbing up her yew tree to bed. I could not get very far above the ground, but Brooke sometimes went to the top of his deodar and then we had a long night.

It was under the trees that I cut my hand badly on a piece of glass when I was a small girl. I have the scar to this day. Mother was in church but she said she heard me crying and nearly came out.

Just below the part of the garden where we played houses was a cottage which Father called The Chapter House. It had a big room downstairs with a table and benches so it may once have been used for meetings. When I first knew it a man called Seagrave was living there. I thought he was a retired sailor but it may just have been the name Seagrave which gave me that impression. He did not stay long. One day he was gone and we never saw him again. It was possible to climb on to the roof of the cottage from the higher ground behind and Foss and Mary made a "stork's nest" there. Margie and I never ventured across the deep gap between the higher ground and the roof.

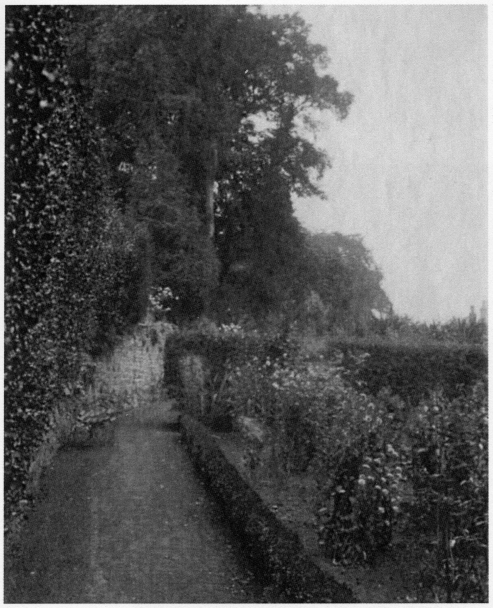
Beside the cottage there was a tall beech tree and against the wall behind was a big pile of fallen leaves. There was a water butt to catch the water from the roof and Brooke thought of a good game to play in the water. We collected some old tins from behind the cottage and filled them with the prickly shells of the beech nuts. Then we put them on the water as boats with men in them. Brooke then made a rough sea, filling the boats gradually with water until they were so full that they sank and the men came bubbling up to the top. We called the game "Bubbling Boats", but it did not have a very long life as we got so wet and dirty that nurse said we must not play it any more.

One day in early summer Brooke and I sat on the rockery which was covered with blue periwinkle under a big American currant bush and ate "liquorice bootlaces" as someone must have given Brooke a penny and he shared his sweets with me. I can remember being so blissfully happy in his company with the warm scent of the currant bush and the bees buzzing in the sunshine.

There were walls round the top part of the garden and we enjoyed climbing along the walls and seeing how far we could go without getting on the ground. We started by the manure pit and round the pig sty which was not occupied in our time, behind the woodshed, across the yard gate and along a stretch of high wall to the cowshed. Here we had to jump down and walk past the range of outbuildings comprising cowshed, tithe barn, coach house, loose box and saddle room. Then we went along a wall with a rounded top, straddled across the front gate, past a big elm tree which made the wall bulge, struggled through the lilac bushes and on to an easy piece of flat topped wall behind the deodar. When the ground dipped to the lower level where the cottage stood, the wall was high on both sides and I usually crawled along on my hands and knees. Then came the door which led to the village street but the wall continued over it. Beyond this was an awkward stretch of wall with a crenellated top, one sharp stone up and one down. I went along this on my bottom, sitting as far as possible between the humps, but it was very uncomfortable and slow work. The last piece was easy; going round the rubbish heap behind the greenhouse, past some bushes and along the low stretch of flat-topped ivy covered wall which bounded one side of the square. The rest of the garden had hedges to the foot of the hill.

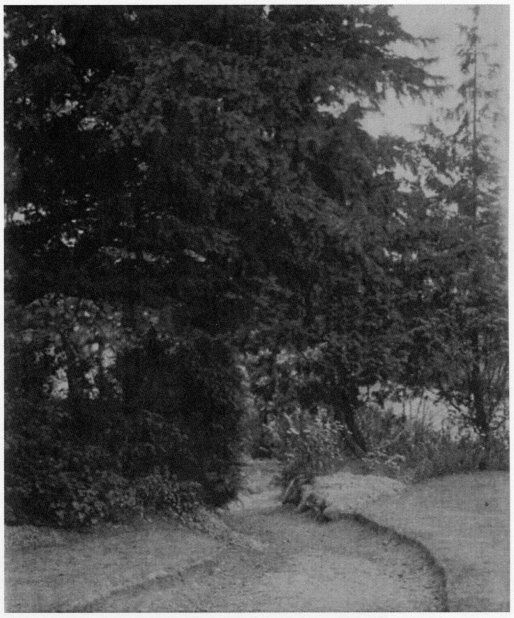
The greenhouse was a pleasant place to visit. It was warm in the winter and there was always a smell of damp earth and growing plants. Mother had a plant stand in the drawing room which was kept filled from the greenhouse. We had primulas, cyclamen, begonias, gloxinias, pelagoniums, and azaleas. The cinerarias usually had little flies on them. In the second part of the greenhouse where Taylor kept his seedlings, there were arum lilies growing by the water tank which was sunk in the ground and Father had some pots of sea kale. There was a creamy coloured Marshall Niel rose which flowered very early and a pale blue plumbago. In the Summer, Taylor grew tomatoes. The tiny ones were my favourites and I used to help myself when I fancied. No-one ever told us not to eat things from the garden and we used to eat the raspberries and gooseberries when we liked. There was an apricot tree on a south wall and it seemed to be my special privilege to pick the warm golden fruits as they ripened. I would break the fruit in half, pick out the loose stone and savour the delicious flesh. We had apples and pears in abundance and several plum trees. Brooke made a rule that I must not eat more than five apples a day. It was a serious affair choosing which apples to have. Some of the smaller ones were very sweet and delicious, but I had to have one or two big ones as well. I did sometimes have tummy pains in the summer.

The garden was laid out in terraces down the hillside. The top terrace was wide enough to skip along and bowl our hoops. There were hyacinths growing in the border and one year Mother hid my Easter egg amongst the hyacinths. Berberis grew on the bank above and we used to









Photos of the Rectory Garden at Crayke



pretend the clusters of berries were dolls' grapes. Along the lower terrace were the gooseberry bushes and on the bottom one the strawberries, but they never did very well. Beyond the strawberries were rhubarb and horseradish, and two lovely syringa bushes.

Going back to the top of the hill outside the greenhouse was a small rose garden. The roses were mostly pink and dark red. Father liked a dark red rose best. He pruned them himself and I used to enjoy watching him. One spring time I had been in bed with 'flu and was well enough to get up. Rather foolishly I went out into the cold wind to watch Father pruning the roses. Of course I caught cold again and was really ill that night. Mother scolded Father for letting me go out but I was really old enough to have known better. While I was in bed, Mother read me some of "The Mill on the Floss". I was not really feeling well enough to want to listen but Mother loved reading aloud to us and "The Mill on the Floss" was a favourite book of hers. One book called "The Squire and the Page" always reduced me to tears at one point. On Sundays, Mother read us the "Jungle Book" or the "Just So" stories. We used to take turns in choosing the story. Mine was always "The cat that walked by its lone".

To go back to the garden the square was the sunniest and most sheltered part. Nurse used sometimes to send us to walk round the square on a winter's morning if there was no time for a walk. The centre of the square was occupied by the asparagus bed with peas, beans and carrots in season and a border of flowers round, sweet peas and gypsophila, Shirley poppies and love-in-a mist. There were also some frames for early lettuces and seedlings. Below the square was a bed for spring greens and radishes and parsley and a large black currant bush. Then came the main potato patch. All down beside the potatoes were steps with logs of wood for treads. Below the potatoes were cabbages, onions, leeks, celery and marrows. A small gate led from here into the field.

The field ran steeply downhill but at the bottom was a level lawn where we played bowls, croquet or tennis. We kept the equipment in the Summer House. Two fine oak trees grew near the lawn. One was easy to climb and provided good seats. Oak apples grew on it.

The other oak was very old and had a very stout trunk. The roller stood up against it and by climbing on the handle, Margie and I could be hoisted up to the first intersection where the branches spread out. Room could be made for all five of us to sit at the top of the trunk.

We each had a garden of our own up near the house, where we grew pansies, mignonette, forget-me-nots, candytuft and such easy growing flowers. Father had a special place for primroses. He was very fond of his blue primroses. Every year he would arrange his plants to form the initials of one of the family. How proud I was when it came to my turn and I saw E.M.W in primroses.

We had a swing and a see-saw under the chestnut trees. I was afraid of the see-saw as I once got my leg pinched when I sat in the middle. Sometimes all five of us climbed on the swing together and pretended we were Huguenots escaping from our enemies or Cavaliers being chased by Roundheads. The swing went up and up and faster and faster until at last we reached safety.

Chapter IX: Summer Holidays

Sometimes in the Summer a fair came to the village but I was always glad when it went away again. It meant strangers and noise in the village and the steam-engines were rather alarming. I actually had a ride on the roundabout and one of the family as a rule came home with a coconut, but it was not the annual sensation it might have been.

We enjoyed the haymaking when we were at home to take part in it. The Orchard and our other small field comprising about two acres in all were cut for hay, usually early in July. Eta had the hay for her ponies and arranged with Harry Smith to do the scything. He also carted it but it rested with Eta and the family to turn and toss it and make it up into cocks. We children had happy times making nests in the fragrant grass or sliding down the cocks or pelting each other with hay.

We had a favourite game we played in the Summer when there were enough of us for three or four a side. It was called "Robbers and Princesses" and the robbers had to catch the princesses and shut them up in a prison. There had to be a possible way of escape from the prison without doing any damage. Several of us were once imprisoned in the lumber room, behind the laundry. The door into the laundry was locked or bolted but there was a wooden door which gave on to the yard some six or seven feet below. The yard was cobbled and we did not fancy jumping down but we found an old mattress amongst the lumber and we threw that down, jumped out and got safely away. Another time I was shut up alone in the loft above the saddle room and the ladder was taken away. There was a small window with a wooden shutter, but no glass. It was just wide enough for me to get through and the wall outside was covered with ivy. I managed to find a good grasp with my hands and a hold for my feet in the tough, twisted stems of the ivy and climbed safely down. It was quite a story-book escape and I felt very elated.

We were once shut in the greenhouse for what seemed a very long time and had to be let out in the end. Again in the Summer House we were well and truly trapped. One of my escapes I thought was very cunning. The saddle room was my prison and the door was fastened with a skipping rope. I loosened it so that my fingers could get through but the door was impossible to undo. The window of the saddle room was impossible to open. The chimney did not afford any better hope but there was a corn bin with a lid under the window. I climbed into it and let down the lid. Presently the robbers came back to see if their prisoner was still there. They saw the rope had been tampered with, they called but there was no answer, so they opened the door and rushed off to find me. When they had gone I climbed from the bin and got safely away.

Nearly every summer we visited our favourite picnic places. The older ones used to go on bicycles and we younger ones went in the pony trap with Eta. Mother did not always come. Byland Abbey was a favourite haunt. Not only were the ruins very lovely but there was also a wishing well and the Wass woods where ferns and foxgloves grew.

Sometimes we went from Coxwold on to Kilburn where there was a white horse cut out on the hillside. It was a big horse, sixteen people could sit on its eye, which was a grass plot. There was a story that a man on a white horse had jumped from the top of the hill into Lake Goomyre, which was just below. It was a gloomy lake, perhaps because of the story, but also it was surrounded by swampy ground so we could not get near it. It was much more fun to climb Hood Hill and find the Druid's altar on top. Hood Hill was a rounded hill wooded on the slopes and with a clump of fir-trees on the top, surrounding the big flat rock which was known as the Druid's altar. It was a rough climb up the hill and we did not always reach the top. Instead we lit a fire and had our tea in the woods. One year, Brooke collected a lot of burrs and could not resist sticking his into Fosca's long hair. He was sorry afterwards as it took ages to get them out. Quis too used to get burrs in his coat.

The Prowdes lived at Kilburn rectory. The Rector himself seemed very old and his wife even older. She wore a shawl and a lace cap and never moved from her chair. There were at least four unmarried daughters, Edith, Emily, Fanny and Ada and a son called Ralph. The other son,

Stephen, had left home and we gathered he was the black sheep of the family. The Miss Prowdes were friends of Eta's and we sometimes met Emily at the hall at Crayke. She was a cheerful, lively person and very artistic. We still have one of her sketches of a cornfield.

Pond Head was another of our best picnic places. It was lovely at all seasons of the year. In the winter when the ice held, the older ones used to go there to skate. Once or twice we walked to Pond Head in the springtime. It was a long rough walk across the fields but shorter than the five miles by road. All kinds of flowers grew on the hillside just below the pond; primroses, anemones, bluebells, and spotted orchis and clumps of golden kingcups by the water. The pond itself was a joy, surrounded as it was by rocks and trees. Some of the tree trunks leant out over the water and made ideal seats where we could rest and dangle our feet in the water. One year after we had the motorcycle and sidecar (it was a Humber with a basket sidecar), Foss, Mary, Phil and I set out for a picnic at Pond Head.

It was a warm day in August and the sky was overcast. While we were having tea, the flies pestered us and we had to wave bracken fronds to keep them away. Soon we heard a rumble of thunder and quickly packed the basket and made our way through the wood back to the road. Foss drove the bike, I sat on the pillion seat and Phil and Mary occupied the sidecar. Before we reached Oulston, the storm was on us. We stopped at the first cottage and left the bike under a big sycamore. The owner of the cottage very kindly allowed us to shelter indoors until the storm was over.

Chapter X: Robin Hood's Bay

The great event of the Summer was our holiday at Robin Hood's Bay. We usually spent several weeks there in August. The older ones often cycled the twenty miles or so to Malton where they joined the train. Sometimes instead they cycled from Scarborough to Robin Hood's Bay. Eta used to drive us to Strensall or Coxwold to catch the train and the luggage came in a cart. In those days, people always travelled with large trunks and with seven of us and sometimes the twins, we were a big party. Father took one Sunday off and sometimes came back for the inside of another week. We stayed at Middlewood Farm in the little village of Thorpe about a mile from the bay. What a thrill it was when we came out of the tunnel into the station of Ravenscar and saw the sweep of the bay far below and the moors rising above. We passed the farm a field away as we chugged on to the station. We were met there with the little round trap drawn by a fat white pony. The white hairs used to blow onto us as we drove to the farm. Our seaside days were very happy ones and with never a dull moment. If it was fine, we played on the one good patch of sand on the beach below the mill. Foss used to dam up a part of the mill stream and we all dug pools and filled them from his big reservoir. If the tide was coming in, we set to work to build a giant sandcastle, big enough for five or six of us to stand on, with steps leading up and a wall in front as a breakwater. I used to leave the castle as soon as it was surrounded by water but the others paddled back through really deep water after the waves had swept over the top of the castle. On warm days we bathed, undressing in the rather damp cave in the cliffs. Later Mr Hutton, the owner of the mill, bought a bathing machine, and we had to use that. Father used to take a hammer and chisel and prise fossils out of the rocks. He found some good stalactites and ammonites.

We always spent a day at Ravenscar during the holiday. Sometimes we took the train at Fylingdale walking there by the moors. We always walked part or all of the way there or back. We also visited Ramsdale Mill and Rigg Mill, two pleasant spots in the woods within walking distance of the farm. The Falling Foss was a favourite picnic place. The stream and the waterfall were all very beautiful and there was the Hermit's Cave to visit. Somebody did once actually live in the cave which was hollowed out of a huge boulder. There was a ledge inside where no doubt the hermit slept and a stone chair on top of the rock.

On one dramatic occasion Father chose a sloping bank covered with ivy where we were all to sit while Mother read to us. As soon as he sat down, wasps flew up all around him. He was not stung but several of us were. I ran and howled and was stung six times. We went to the nearest house for treatment. The wasps had got inside my jersey and stung me on my chest. Once when we were driving with the white pony we saw a snake in the road. It was most likely only a grass snake but the boy who was driving got down and killed it with the whip.

We visited Whitby on one or two occasions, going by train to Robin Hood's Bay.

On wet days, we were very happy playing in the hayloft. Mr Collinson did not object to our playing there and we made tunnels through the hay. It was quite hard work preparing the tunnels from front to back, then from side to side and if there was time, transverse passages as well. We had to call out "coming from A to B", or "from C to F", to let the others know to keep out of the way. In the evenings after tea, we used to play 'catch' round the haystacks. Sometimes the boys used to climb up out of reach between the stacks. It was always fun to see the trains coming, to run across the field and to climb over the stile and feel if the line was warm after the train had passed.

The stiles were a great fascination. The ones by the railway were steep wooden steps with a platform at the top and steps down the other side. Most of the stiles in the fields were stone slabs and the footpaths by the roadside were made of slabs of stone well worn down in the middle. There was one of these stone paths in the orchard leading to the earth closet and past the wire enclosure where the pigeons lived. We used to spend Sunday afternoons in the orchard, climbing the trees, reading, watching the pigeons or sitting on the flat-topped wall wondering if anyone would come by. The pigeons were an interest to us as there were pouter ones amongst them, which could puff out their chests in a funny way and lovely white fantails which at times spread out their elegant tails. On Sunday mornings when it was fine we went up to the moors. Mother took a book and read to us. When Phil was a baby we took it in turns to help push the pram up the steep, rough road and Mother took the spirit stove to warm up his bottle. We went to the moors on weekdays as well if the tide was up and had great times sliding in the stone quarries.

In an early season, we used to find ripe berries on the bramble bushes which grew freely on the hillside and were laden with fruit. On Sunday evenings we always went to church, walking along the cliff top and listening to the sound of bells.

Father sometimes told us stories when we had a long way to walk for our picnics. One year when we were very small we had a donkey. I can just remember riding in the panniers to the beach with Margie on the other side.

Mother went to the village every day to buy the food for us in the evening. I liked to go with Mother but she thought it was tiring for me and preferred me to go straight to the beach with the others. She used to bring our lunch to the beach most days. We had slices of bread and potted meat, followed by gooseberry jam puffs made by Mrs Collinson with her home-made jam. There were plums and chocolate to follow or sometimes a melon.

We always enjoyed our tea at Middlewood after a long day out of doors. On a warm day, the bees came in to eat the jam. Mrs Collinson had several hives down the garden. Foss started catching the bees in the glasses which were on the sideboard. When he had caught several bees, he would put them together in one glass by fitting the open ends of the glasses together and when the bees were all in one glass he would place it upside down on the table. After tea, the bees were set free.



Filey July 1899



July 1915



Foss, Rev Westcott, Mrs Westcott, Brooke
Margie, Monica, Phil, Mary, Fosca

The garden at Middlewood was rather wild but we enjoyed the shady pathway up from the little gate to the stone ramps at the side of the steps and we used to slide down. When we had nothing special to do Margie and I made tiny children out of pieces of stick and dressed them in leaves. There were pretty and glossy leaves on the pear tree and russet and amber leaves on the gooseberry bushes and the shining bay leaves looked very smart.

One year Brooke thought he would try to harden his feet by walking barefoot down to the beach. It was a walk of over a mile and the road was rough and stony. We loved going under the railway bridge specially when we were in time to hear a train rumbling over our heads. I got a thorn in my foot one day and was taken to the Miss Huttons. They had grey hair and whiskers on their faces but they were really very kind. They lived at the mill and I was afraid of them. It was their brother who sometimes shouted at us. Occasionally we visited the mill pond which was deep and had a weir at one end. One of our visitors went fishing in the mill pond but I can't remember that he ever caught anything. His name was Trowbridge and he was a naval cadet. He was the brother of Biddy who was with us for a time in Brussels. He shocked us by once eating a whole tin of sardines by himself. We never ate more than two or three each. If there were too many of us to fit in at Middlewood, some of the party stayed at Flagstaff Farm. It stood in a very pleasant position on the cliff top. The only trouble there, was a large and very smelly manure heap just outside the back door.

Quis always came with us to the sea. He was our constant companion and faithful friend and was as little trouble as a dog could be. He loved to stand on a ledge of the cliff and bark at the waves as they splashed up. One day he must have swallowed more salt water than usual as he was sick at night after the boys went to be. He slept in their room. Foss turned him out and refused to have him back, but Brooke thought this very unkind. This is the only time I can remember the boys quarrelling. It ended in Brooke and Quis sleeping on the very uncomfortable sofa in the drawing room. Quis was not sick again and next night slept in his usual place in the boys' room.

By the time we came home from the sea, the leaves were turning and the chestnuts ripening. It was a joy to be home again in the familiar surroundings and we ran round the garden to see what had changed. We played schools with the chestnuts. The piebald ones were girls and the dark ones boys.

Chapter XI: Christmas Holidays

We were lucky children to have such a happy home with constant love and security. The house and garden were ideal for children and the surrounding country was lovely. All my life I have been loved though I have done nothing to deserve it. As a child I was very self-conscious and timid, afraid of being found fault with and anxious to pass unnoticed. I seldom had to take the lead and always shirked responsibility. In fact I was quite content to follow and observe and watch out for any likely snags. When I first understood the parable of the talents in the gospel, it seemed to me that I had no particular talent, or if I had, it was certainly hidden. This gave me a slightly guilty feeling and inclined me perhaps to have a little more initiative. But my native caution still led me to procrastinate. It was not until quite late in life that I realised that even the best people make mistakes. Grown ups tend not to admit their mistakes and that is why children sometimes feel so guilty when they have inadvertently done wrong. They suffer also very much from hurt pride.

The few days before Christmas were a very exciting time for us. We children never sent cards or presents to friends and relations as children do now, but we were very busy decorating the

house, fetching the Christmas tree and making chains of holly leaves for the church. We threaded the separate holly leaves on to a fine string which was threaded through a needle with a very big eye. It was painful work and damaging to the fingers but there was a great satisfaction in seeing the prickly snake grow and it looked very handsome twined round one of the pillars in church.

We made our chains in the nursery which had cork lino on the floor. It was a bright room with two big sash windows facing south across the Vale of York. There were bars at the windows. I can remember the time when I could not see on to the top of the table. I sat in a high chair for meals. The chair let down into a rocking chair. I had a bib with a picture of Humpty Dumpty on it. Sometimes we had bread and butter sprinkled with brown sugar for tea.

The greater part of the nursery wall was covered with coloured pictures out of magazines like 'The Sphere' and 'The Illustrated London News'. Near the door were big copies of "Cherry Ripe" and "Bubbles". One picture that I liked very much was of the Pied Piper and the children in the pleasant land inside the mountain. Birds and animals and butterflies roamed amongst the smiling children under fruit trees covered in blossom. One picture was of three girls dressed in gay clothes of Charles I's time, with lace collars and slashed sleeves, one in pink and a large black hat with a ostrich feather, another in blue and the third in yellow. Mary, Margie and I fancied ourselves as the three girls laughing together as we passed a solemn Roundhead in his black suit and knee breeches and tall crowned hat. One very striking picture was called, "the calm before the storm". There were sheep in the foreground grazing in a field and a fine tree stood out against a background of ominous black cloud. A drummer boy and a young bugler were the subjects of another picture. The drummer boy had a bandage round his head and the bugler was sounding the "last post" on the battlefield.

The morning of Christmas Eve was taken up with decorating the church, some of the children from the village used to come and help. We collected baskets of moss and trails of ivy, fetched cans of water, handed up scissors and wire and put little bunches of red flowers amongst the holly and blobs of cotton wool to look like snow. There were two big placards hung on the wall at Christmas and Easter. The Christmas one, "Christ is born" on a red ground and the Easter one, "Christ is risen" on a blue ground. We made a good deal of mess with the moss and the evergreens and tried to tidy up when all was finished, but the Church cleaner must still have spent a busy afternoon in the church. All the decorators came over to the Rectory for a cup of coffee and a mince pie. The children had cocoa and biscuits. We were always very tired and dirty and were glad to get clean and tidy for dinner.

Foss and Mary decorated the Christmas Tree and we little ones were not allowed into the drawing room till after tea on Christmas Day when we had our presents. We went to bed early on Christmas Eve with our empty stockings at the foot of the bed. We each had one of Father's golf stockings which could hold a lot. We often woke during the night and felt at the bottom of the bed to know if our stockings were filled. Yes, there it was bulging with odd shaped parcels. It was too early too look at it yet so we got under the clothes again and went back to sleep. When Mother heard us talking in the morning she came in with a lamp and then the joyous excitement began. There was always a cracker at the top, an orange in the toe and an apple in the heel with nuts in between. We generally had a small book, perhaps a Beatrix Potter for the young ones, something for our dolls' house, a fireplace, a little piano or a bird cage. Often we had a game or a pack of cards, crayons and always some sweets or chocolate. Our stocking presents kept us happy till the evening when we had our big presents.

Mother and Father went to church at 8.00 am and we children got up then and were dressed and ready for breakfast at a quarter to 9.00 am. There was church once again at 10.30 am and Christmas Dinner at a quarter to 1.00 pm. The dinner table always looked very gay. We had a

brown basket with holly and a robin on it in the middle filled with fruit. There were silver dishes with almonds and raisins and crystallised fruits and sweets. At a party we went to we had each been given a little figure with a nodding head, a chinaman with a wire pigtail, a fluffy dog and a black cat, a plaster puppy with a blue shoe in his mouth and a little fellow called "Billiken". We liked to see whose figure would keep its head nodding the longest. I think "Billiken" usually won. The same kind friends had also given us a set of huntsmen complete with jumps and hounds and a fox. We used to take care that the fox was well hidden from the hounds. Father carved the turkey and Mother served the plum pudding which was always brought in alight with the brandy. Mother put the little silver charms in at the table. She liked to give Foss the sixpence, Mary often had the thimble and Brooke the bachelor's button. Margie and I perhaps a 3d piece or a little donkey. Father usually had to go without.

At 2.00 pm we had a carol service and then home for an early tea. Mrs Matthews and Eta from the Hall always came to tea. We waited for Foss to ring the bells when everything was ready in the drawing room and then we all rushed in for the great event of the day. There was always a bright fire of logs, the standard lamp stood by the piano, the tree with its shining tinsel and coloured glass ornaments was lit up with its little candles and round the room stood the tables with our presents on them. First we had to sing a carol. We always sang, "Come to the manger in Bethlehem", which was Mother's favourite. One year, Father told me to be the page in "Good King Wenceslas" and he was the King. I managed to sing my part quite creditably because I knew it so well. Sometimes the choir boys came round singing carols and were invited in to see the tree. They were given an orange each and pennies. Father kept a bag of pennies to give to the carol singers. Some came on Christmas Eve and some very early on Christmas morning. "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and please will you give us a Christmas Box", was a familiar cry on Christmas morning.

Mother always chose our presents for us. The Aunts and Uncles must have sent money. We girls usually had something for our dolls, a high chair, a cot or a tea set. We were always surprised and delighted with our presents. Mother seemed to know just what would please us most and we never wanted anything that the others had. As a rule, we each had a book, Fairy Tales or an E. Nesbit, or a children's classic like "The Water Babies", "Peter Pan" or "Treasure Island" and usually, there was a box of chocolates for each of us. Then perhaps we had hoops or skipping ropes. The boys had trains and soldiers, tools and puzzles. Brooke generally had a wooden box of tangerines. We took our pile of gifts up to bed with us so that we could gloat over them again in the morning.

The drawing room carpet, which was a pretty green one, was always taken up at Christmas time when there was so much coming and going in the room. A large grey drugget was spread on the floor. We took this opportunity to have a dolls' hospital and the boys filled bottles with paint and water in different colours. The dolls had some dreadful complaints, such as scarlet fever, broken limbs and chicken pox. Mary had had her tonsils and adenoids out so she knew something about hospitals.

When the snow fell, out came the toboggans. Margie and I wore boys' shorts over our dresses, with gaiters and snowboots made of felt fastened with a clip, coats, scarves, tam-o-shanters and two pairs of gloves. We were so wrapped up it was hard work walking about but we certainly never felt cold. We had several toboggans. Foss had a light one bought in York, but we had three others made by the village carpenter. We tobogganed down the orchard. There was a small iron gate at the bottom and when the going was good, it was possible to steer through the gate across a level stretch and down a steep, short slope on to the bottom lawn. It was quite a tricky run and some speed was needed to cross the level piece beyond the gate and the gateway itself was narrow.

One day, Brooke was tobogganing in the next field and ran straight down into the pond. We were all afraid he would catch cold as he was soaking wet. He had had pneumonia twice, but this time, fortunately, he took no harm. We were all tired out after a long morning in the snow and spent the rest of the day indoors.

After tea, we often played "catch" all over the house. There was a little light to make the darkest corners safe, but it was easy to find a secret hiding place. I spent most of my time hiding as I got in the way of the others when they were being chased. Sometimes the game grew very noisy and Father would look out of the study and tell us not to make so much noise. This usually put a stop to the game, which by this time was probably getting a little out of hand. A light shone from a window over the kitchen door and made the back stairs more negotiable. Some of the bedrooms had two doors and there were passages and landings so that we could get a good run.

Every Winter we had invitations to parties at some of the large houses roundabout. I was always apprehensive about parties and did not expect to enjoy myself. We usually went in a hired cab. Although Margie and I wore warm red quilted cloaks over our party frocks, it was cold driving seven or eight miles each way on a winter's night. On the return journey however, we felt relaxed and happy and enjoyed the drive in the dark.

Lady Julia Wombwell gave a party one year at Newborough Priory. When we drove past in the summer we admired the peacocks strutting on the terrace in front of the yew hedge. There was a large lake beside the hall and I always clung tightly to my hat as we drove past it. The house itself was supposed to be haunted. There was a tale about a wall which always fell down as soon as it was built. Certainly the big entrance hall was gloomy with suits of armour gleaming in a rather dim light. Sir George Wombwell had been at the battle of Balaclava. He may have beek killed in the Crimean War as Lady Julia was a widow.

Miss Love gave a party most years for her niece and nephew, Mildred and Miles Stapleton. I liked Miles; he was a quiet little boy about my age and wore a white sailor suit with long trousers. We met him at the dancing classes. Miss Love, as I think I mentioned earlier, had a big Christmas Tree and gave each child a really expensive present. I once had a horse and wagon with sacks in it and Brooke had a smart red motor car. Mary had a dolls' tea set but as part of it had got broken, she was given a doll as well. Rosamund was very pretty and became one of her favourite dolls. We were always willing to go to Miss Love's parties.

At Dorothy Vernon Harcourt's party we had a conjuror and ventriloquist. Dorothy was a very pretty girl and very friendly. Her Father had died and she had a step-father and a step-brother. Dorothy came to tea with us once or twice.

The Hepplethwaites usually had dancing at their parties. Mary enjoyed dancing with the two boys, Rhodes and Jack. The girls, Phyllis and Monica, were very pretty.

There were several smaller parties at the Rectories in the neighbourhood. We gave a party one year but usually we had our friends in ones and twos. There was a large family at Stillington vicarage but they were seldom asked to parties. They looked as though they did not get enough to eat. I think it was a very small living.

The Radfords at Raskelf we met on occasions. Basil became a TV star. As a boy, we thought him dull. He had a sister called Monica, who wore glasses. Mr Radford looked like a chapel minister, he was small with bushy hair and a drooping moustache.

Claud and Ruth Gill had a comfortable rectory as Husthwaite but we did not see much of them. Ruth Hedger at Coxwold was an only child and delicate. The Geipels of Coxwold were friends of Mother's. Mrs Geipel sometimes fetched Mother for the day in her pony trap. Mother walked home and once her feet were so tired she took her shoes off and walked in her stockings. The Miss Saunders, Bertha and Rhoda, also lived at Coxwold. They were daughters of a previous Rector and lived in a pretty little house with a gay garden. Their sister, Monica, came to see us as a governess before the older children went to School. She was more of a friend than a governess and made the drawing room chairs for Mary's big dolls' house. They were made of cardboard covered with flowered silk. She also taught us to make paper dolls and dresses for them that would take on and off. The dresses had a slit up the back and a small opening for the neck. The head was slipped sideways through the slit at the back and turned round at the neck opening. Years later, I met Monica again in Australia. She had gone out there to visit her eldest sister who had married a wool-classer in Tasmania. Monica married a clergyman much older than herself and went to live in the Blue Mountains when he retired. I spent two happy holidays with her and two with her sister in Tasmania. They were very good to me.

There are still one or two memories of my childhood that I have not mentioned. One is the sad story of the silk smock. I must have been about four years old at the time. Mother was writing letters at her desk in the drawing room and I was playing with her work basket. I found a lovely piece of white silk in it and asked Mother if I might have it. She was busy writing and not really listening to me. She said "Um", which I took to mean yes and I started to snip a small hole in the silk. Mother turned round and was very upset to find I had cut the silk. She was making a silk smock for me. I was in bitter tears. Mother darned the cut very carefully and finished the smock. I wore it for a time but was always unhappy in it and it was soon given away.

I can remember learning to read when I was nearly eight. I should have been at School, but Mother kept me at home as I had earache very badly. I used to go about the house with a brown cashmere shawl tied around my head. Mother put laudanum in my ear to ease the pain. One day I went to sleep with my head on one of the pretty drawing room cushions. When I woke up, I found a wet patch on the silk cover where my ear had discharged, but nobody scolded me. I learned to read by myself from a book with little sentences of three lettered words. The pictures described sentences such as, "Ned ran to the log", "Tom can hop."

When I first went to the Convent, we had reading practice every morning with the bigger girls. We all read together several pages of "Reading without tears". The Sisters at the Convent were always gentle and kind and we were very happy there. They were French Sisters of Mercy and their mother house was at Rouen. Sister Philip was our teacher. Sister Simeon, the cook, made delicious little rolls for our tea sometimes and we used to go to the kitchen to thank her. She was a very sweet and cheerful person. There was a little French orphan girl called Leontine who played with us in the evening. When we had learnt a little French we had to speak it with Leotine when we were playing together. After our time in Brussels we could understand and speak French fairly well. Sister Philip was one of the best people I have known. She was an excellent teacher and gave us a good grounding in all subjects. We learnt a great deal by heart. I can still remember lists of bays and capes which we learnt and lists of the rivers of England.

Mother kept us supplied with good books. She had her favourites to read aloud. We all enjoyed George MacDonald's books especially "The Princess and the Goblin". "The Princess and Curdie" went well too, but "The Back of the North Wind" was not so popular. We girls read Amy Le Feuvre and Mrs Molesworth and Frances Hodgson Burnett. Jackanapes was sad but so were a number of books for children in my young days. "Misunderstood" always reduced me to tears and so did "Little King Richard". It was about a boy who was despised because he was so delicate, but he turned out to be very brave and his back was cured in the end. "His Little

Daughter" was about a child who had lost her Mother and made friends with a wild moorland pony. It seemed to be based largely on "Pilgrim's Progress" and had the advantage of making us feel mildly interested in the adventures of Christian.

I loved Fairy Stories and was never alarmed by the giants and witches in them. There were stories which I loved in "Fairy Stories Old and New". Unfortunately, the book must have fallen to pieces. It was a fat book and loosely bound. Some of the stories I have never found in any other book. "The Man in the Moon" was a special favourite of mine. In it, Santa Claus pays a visit to the Man in the Moon and his servant Lollipop. The Man in the Moon was very lonely and had been passing the time by reading Fairy Stories and Nursery Rhymes and always the end of the story was missing. Santa Claus was able to tell him that Little Red Riding Hood was not eaten by the Wolf. He then takes the Man in the Moon to his castle in the clouds where he meets the Fairy Story People and they all go on a cruise to rescue the Man in the Moon's brother and sister who are prisoners in Bluebeard's Castle. Jack the Giant Killer helps to release them and the book ends happily with the Man in the Moon reunited with his brother and sister.

Another book I enjoyed when I was young was "The Three Bold Babes" about three children called Hector, Hononious and Alexandra who met a fierce dragon who ate people. After various adventures in which they were able to help the dragon, they persuaded him not to eat people any more. So he turned vegetarian and planted cabbages, watering them with his tears. The pictures told the story so once it had been read to me, I was well able to tell it to myself again, which I did, many , many times. The Beatrix Potter books too I knew almost by heart. Mother said I used to correct her if she said a word wrong. The ones which belonged to me were my favourites – Mrs Tiggywinkle, Mr Jeremy Fisher and The Roly Poly Pudding. When we were older we read the E Nesbit books. The children in those books had the same code of honour as we had, no telling lies, no deceit, no cowardice, not always easy to live up to.

We loved the "Alice" books and could repeat pages of them by heart. Peter Pan did not appeal to us quite so much, though we enjoyed the play in London. Mother liked the JM Barrie books but we thought them a little sentimental. Mother was partly a Scot at heart. "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was another favourite of hers. She bought a second-hand copy of it shortly before she died to give to my daughter. She was reading it again to herself during her last days.

Foss read Rider Haggard books and HG Wells and some of the Jules Verne. Brooke read Captain Maryat and Ballantyne. Foss was a voracious reader and read many scientific books as well.

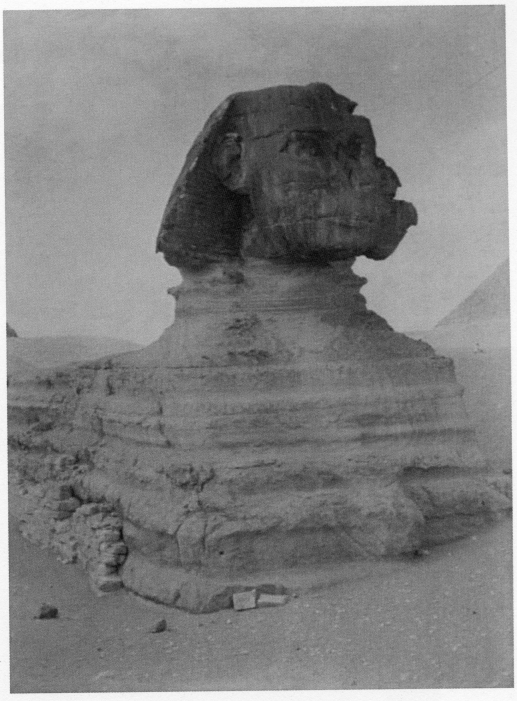
The childhood incidents recorded here all took place between 1904 and 1914. They stand out vividly in my memory, but it is possible that some slight errors may have slipped in during the course of so many years. There are other periods of my life about which I could write. My later school years and life in the Cathedral Close at Norwich; my first post in Alexandria; five years as a governess in Australia in the 1920s; my married life and the children; the ten weeks I spent in Italy after my husband's death and recent years in my daughter's home. Perhaps one day I shall take up my pen again.



Gerard and Nicole de Vitasse



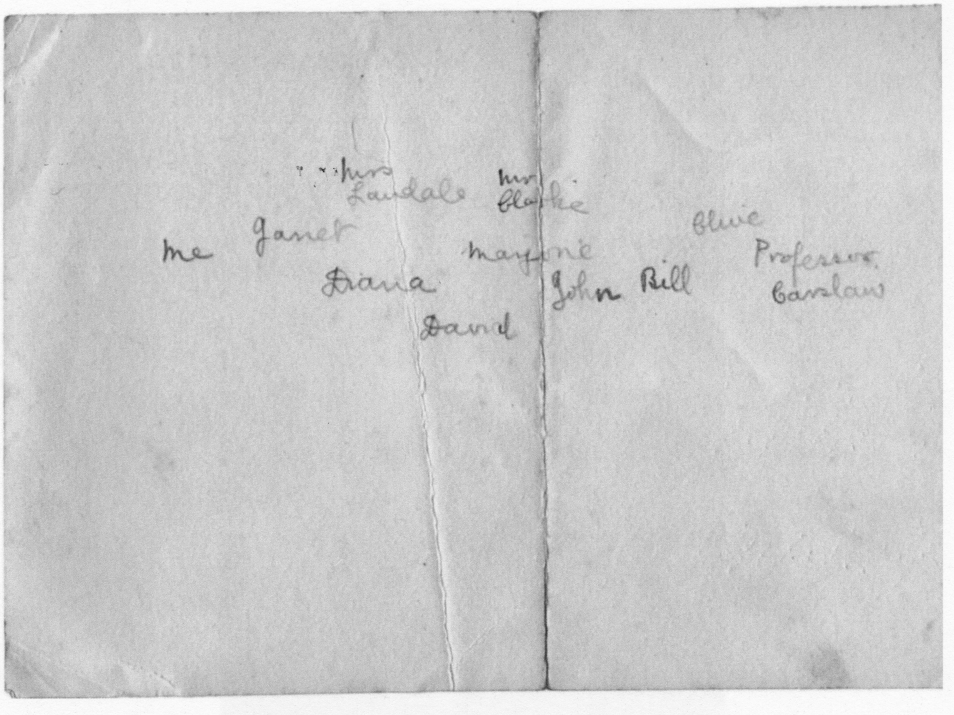
Nicole having tea on top of a pyramid







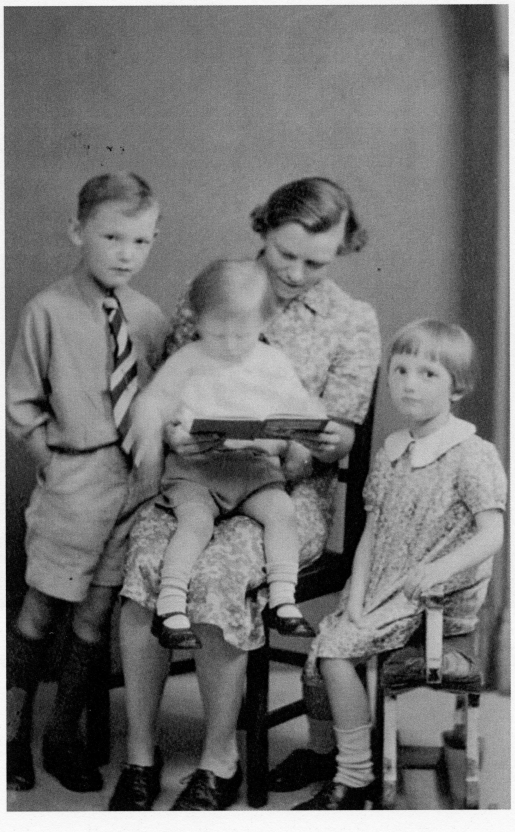
Monica in Australia



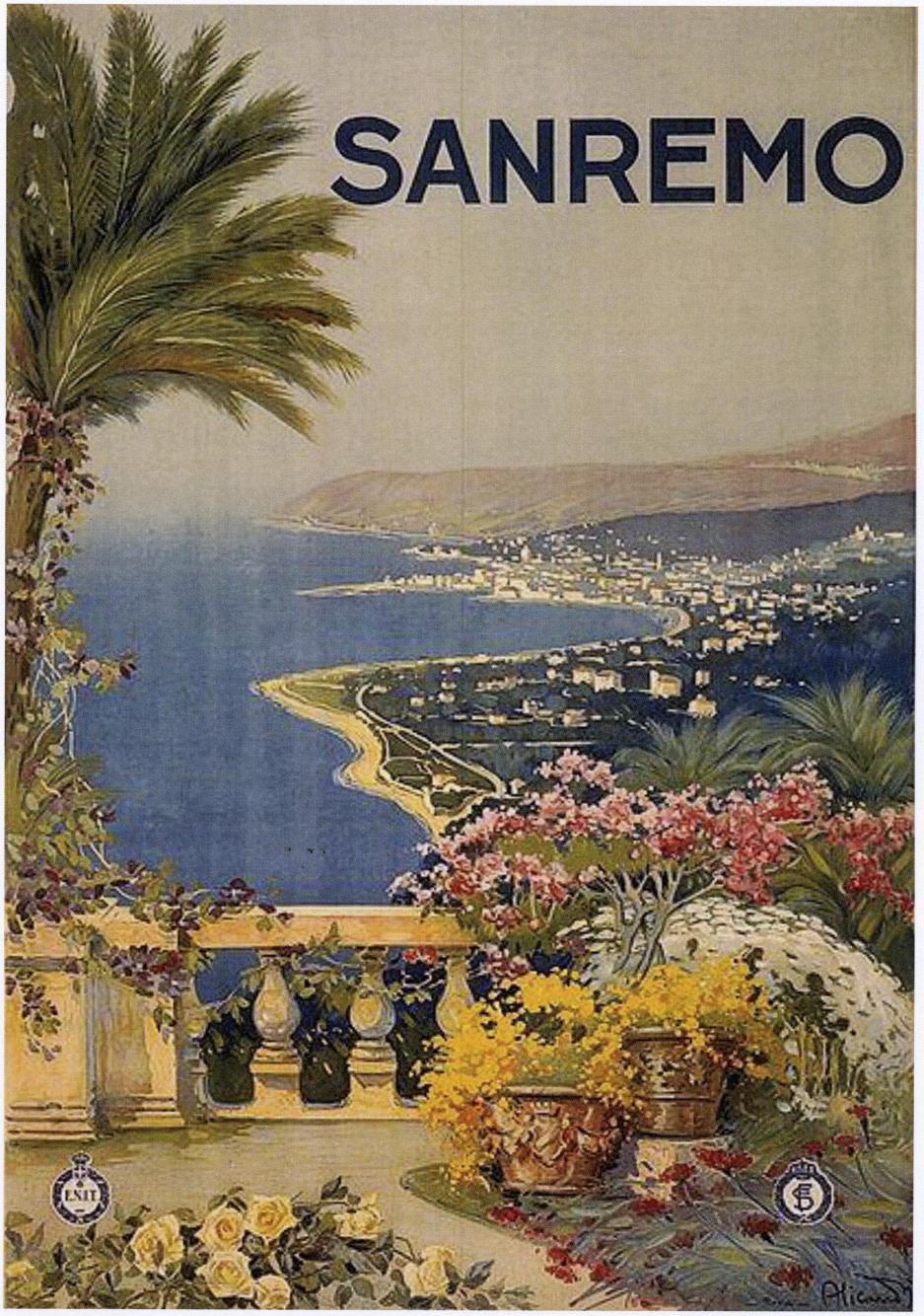
The back of the photograph



Monica's wedding to Alexander Vipan 23rd April 1933



Monica with her children
David, Robert and Marigold



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sanremo_poster_1920.jpg