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Day after Day

By Jean Day

ONE

It was the Memorial Service for Queen Victoria, February 2nd 1901. Muriel King and May Stinton took their seats near the front of Worcester Cathedral. Muriel noticed that they were very close to the effigy of Robert Wylde in the Cathedral, almost up to the level of the Choir. They were in special seats because they were special guests, as Muriel was to have a part in the festivities later in the day after the church service, and May was accompanying her as her faithful supporter.

Both girls had been in the Cathedral often, both having their growing up years in Worcester but never in circumstances quite like these. Not a seat to spare, and more mink coats and fancy dress outfits than either girl had ever seen – to say nothing of those dressed in their regalia of office, like the Mayor, judges and other notables of the community. The Queen of course, had long been expected to die, as she was old and frail, but despite that, the whole country was in deep mourning for she had been well beloved.

Queen Victoria had actually died on January 22nd and her real funeral was even at this very time being held at St. George's Chapel in the precincts of Windsor near London. Cathedrals and Churches throughout the nation were holding simultaneous services in order to maximise the number of those who could feel a part in saying a last good bye to this monarch who had given 64 years of service to Britain and the Empire.

Muriel looked around the Cathedral. The sun was shining and reflecting through the many stained glass windows - giving a rosy glow to the proceedings. The west window, which was the most recent addition, was particularly stunning.

“I wonder what this place was like in 969, almost a thousand years ago, when it first took form and was a Cathedral-Priory of the Early English style,” she mused.

Muriel was very interested in Church architecture, and she knew from reading books and listening to her father talk about it, that the Cathedral was first remodelled in 1084. Then when King John visited the Cathedral in 1207, he gave 300 Marks for rebuilding the cloisters and offices. He was repaid in 1216 by being given his choice of burial place – and he was interred in the centre of the chancel. Unfortunately, several bits of his marble effigy on the coffin lid were missing, such as his nose, which was removed by the followers of Cromwell. The Cathedral was rededicated in June of 1216 in the presence of Henry III. Henry VII’s son Arthur died in Ludlow in 1502 and his tomb is in the chantry south of the high altar.

The Beauchamp tomb (The current incumbent of the title was in church today with his wife.) is near the north door.

“Then ,” thought Muriel, “in those terrible years of dissolution and civil war, these blessed walls housed horses for Lord Essex and Cromwell and his men.”

A complete reconstruction was done in 1857, and the Cathedral was reopened in 1874, looking much as it does now, in 1901. The naves, aisle, transepts were all paved in marble. There was a new pulpit and a great organ was built with 4 manuals and 62 stops, the air being blown by a hydraulic machine placed in the crypt.

The organist was someone Muriel knew slightly. She knew many of the important people of Worcester – because her father, who owned a very exclusive grocery shop, had most of them amongst his customers. George Williams King, although not involved directly in politics, was known and treated with respect by all the gentry of the city.

The solemn tones continued with the assistant organist, Mr. Coul, playing Schubert’s *Funeral March*. The dignitaries had paraded in, the various noble and ancient lords leading the way.

Earl Beauchamp in his full regalia walked past on the way to his seat. His Honour Judge Sir Richard Harrington from the Whitbourne Court in Worcester followed, with other court officials.

The local M.P., Hon. George Higinson Allsopp, the Mayor, John Alfred Stewart and the High Sheriff, William Kay walked in. Then came the aldermen, Walter Caldecott, Ernest Augustus Day, Harry Day, Walter Holland, Charles Perrius, William Price, Hon. Percy Allsopp, Albert Buck, Walter Higgs, John Millington, Ambrose Knott and William Winwood.

Then came various important men from the community including Warren W.A. Tree, solicitor. Muriel and May knew his daughters, Margaret and Jessie, who were still attending the same school as they had, The Worcester High School for Girls, a Church of England School. Muriel spied Miss Alice Ottley, their headmistress, in the back of the church. And there was Fredrick Haillard, the headmaster of King's, also called the Cathedral Grammar School. It was founded by Henry VIII in 1541. May's brother Tom was a student at King's.

The lectern and candelabra were decked in black crepe. It reminded Muriel about how the local newspapers' advertising had been where to buy your black clothes for the suggested 28 days of official mourning – so the shops would be benefiting from this day.

"I too come from a noble lineage," Muriel whispered to May. "I'll tell you about it later."

"Hush, they're just about to begin," said May and at that moment, everyone stood and the Bishop of Worcester, Rev. James Stewart Perowne, took his place by the altar. The excellent choir, made up of 45 men and boys from the King's choir school sang *O God our Help in Ages Past.*

The Bishop started the main service with prayers for the soul of the Queen and for her family, who have the daunting task of following in her footsteps, especially King Edward VII.

He then talked of the glory of the Queen coming into a new kingdom, the kingdom of God. Dean Forrest and Canon Melville read lessons and the service was from the Burial of the Dead. The Psalm, *Lord Thou Hast Been our Refuge*, was said. Another hymn, *The Souls of the Unrighteous Are in the Hands of God,* was sung, and then the service ended with the *Dead March* from Saul.

After the service, the dignitaries and important people of Worcester were invited to the Hall of the Cathedral Grammar School, originally the refectory for the monastery, which was then part of the Cathedral itself. Here it was that the invited guests were to have tea and afterwards tributes to the Queen would be offered from the general public, this more secular venue being thought to be more appropriate for the views of the common man.

The first tribute came from Charles Walker, elder statesman of the city, well known for his many literary works. Now aged 64, still working in the corn, coal and guano business in Lowesmore, he intended to retire later in the year.

He said, "Queen Victoria reigned for nearly 64 years - longer than any other British sovereign. When she succeeded her uncle, William IV, in 1837, the monarchy was probably less popular than at any time since the 17th Century." (He went on a bit and Muriel started to daydream. Then suddenly she realised that she had better pay attention as her part would be coming soon.)

"By the end of her reign, the crown had been raised to new heights of prestige and affection, and the British Empire now rules much of the world," said Charles. "I had the pleasure of seeing her majesty when I attended the Great Exhibition in 1851. I was on the Duke of York steps to see the Queen pass in magnificent and gorgeous procession to prologue Parliament. After she had passed we walked nearer Buckingham Palace to see her return and were within a yard of the carriage and had an unobstructed view of the first lady in Europe, a stout motherly woman, looking very good tempered and warm."

Then it was time for Muriel's contribution. She had begged her father to allow her to be included in the programme. She was using a poem found in an album written by her grandmother for the Queen when she was newly crowned back in 1837, and Muriel felt the need to share it with the world, or at least the assembled company. Muriel enjoyed being the centre of attention, and was wearing her new black suit. The skirt was gored and created an elongated trumpet bell. The jacket had a high collar. Her lavish hat gave her a certain grandeur for the occasion. Her head held high, and with a deep clear voice she said,

"This is a Poem written by my grandmother Martha Banyon Trew in 1837.

All hail to thee, Queen of the fair and the brave
The bold song of joy reaches the skies;
Bright bright o'er the foam of her subjects wave
See the star of Victoria arise.

Young queen of the ocean – prophetic our fire
To hail thee, the greatest we've seen.
Hark the thundering strains of the old sea-god's quire
To welcome Victoria the Queen.

May years full of glory and loyalty's love
Be thine in thy place of renown;
To say that we honour thee, means not enough
For Britons all honour the crown.

But the crown that encircles young beauty's fair brow
With fonder devotion is seen.
And chivalry sheds its romance o'er the vow
We pledge to Victoria the Queen!

Long, long royal maid may the olive entwine
With the laurels that circle thy crown;
But if war should arouse the old lion again,
'Twill be to increase thy renown.

To battle, while rushing each heart would beat high
To triumph as wont we have been;
Propitious to conquest, our bold battle cry
"Victoria! For England's fair queen!"

After her proud moment, Muriel was surrounded by those congratulating her on her performance and one lady said the quality of the poem had brought tears to her eyes. Muriel was pleased with their approval, but anxious to get back to her group of friends and usual pastime of gossiping and planning for their futures, and more specifically their intended husbands.

Muriel went to rejoin her best friend May, who was by then chatting with Charlotte Walker, and Eveline Duncan. These women, both spinsters, were ten years older than May and Muriel, but she knew them vaguely through family connections. Just then a tall, thin good looking young man came up and said, “Good to see you again, Aunt Dot. I’m sorry I must rush, as I’m straight back to Oxford this evening, but I was very pleased to come to this service.” He then bowed to Charlotte and said, “Please tell your father, Miss Walker, how appropriate I thought his remarks. I have long held him in high regard for his writing and opinions.”

Then he turned to Muriel, “Congratulations, Miss King, on a magnificent delivery of a beautiful poem.” And then he quickly left.

Muriel was absolutely beside herself. Who was this wonderful man? She almost swooned with pleasure from his words, and thought to herself, “This is the man I am going to marry.”

She didn’t know how this would happen, she didn’t even know his name, but she knew that somehow or other, his name and hers would be entwined for the rest of time.

Dot’s nephew

TWO

Holding the *Berrow's Worcester Journal* (Great Britain's oldest newspaper, started in 1690), under her arm, May knocked on the door of Muriel's house. Both girls lived in Lansdowne Crescent, an offshoot of Rainbow Hill, an exclusive area of large wealthy houses, with huge gardens, owned by the rich of the city.

May lived with her parents Eliza and Tom, and brother Tom, in number 9. Muriel, an only child, lived with her parents, George and Louisa in number 7.

When Emily, one of the servants opened the door, May burst in and said, "I must show this paper to Muriel right away. Where is she?"

"I will inform Miss King that you are here," said Emily, trying her best to sound formal and proper, and ushered May into the drawing room and took her coat. May was wearing a pale green daytime dress with straight sleeves which developed into bloused effects gathered into wrist bands.

Minutes later Muriel appeared, very pleased to see her friend again. It had been several days since the Queen's funeral service, and she wanted to start immediately to plan her campaign of marrying the young man she had met there. She was wearing a white and black print taffeta skirt, straight in front with gathers in the back, and a double flounce at the bottom of the skirt and a blouse a creamy textured cotton material, with fancy embroidery and openwork, and a high neck.

"Look what it says here," said May, showing the report of the Queen's real funeral. "This was written by the man who was in charge of the procession," and she quoted from it.

February 2, 1901, was a bitterly cold day with some snow, and the gun-carriage, under the charge of S Battery, Royal Horse Artillery and under the independent command of Lieutenant M. L. Goldie, had been kept waiting at Windsor Station, together with naval and military detachments, etc., for a considerable period. N/R.H.A. were posted in the Long Walk ready to fire a salute of 81 guns, commencing when the cortege left Windsor Station for St. George's Chapel, at about 3 p.m. Lieutenant P. W. Game was placed in command, and proceeded to the station to ensure that signaling arrangements were perfect. When the Royal coffin, weighing about 9 cwt., had been placed on the carriage, drums began muffled rolls, which reverberated under the station roof, and the cortege started. Actually, when the horses took the weight, the eyelet hole on the splinter bar, to which the off-wheel trace was hooked, broke. The point of the trace struck the wheeler with some violence inside the hock, and naturally the horse plunged. A very short time would have been required to improvise an attachment to the gun-carriage. However, when the wheelers were unhooked, the naval detachment promptly and gallantly seized drag ropes and started off with the load. The "gun-carriage" had been specially provided from Woolwich and was fitted with rubber tyres and other gadgets. This was due to Queen Victoria's instructions after seeing a veritable gun-carriage in use at the Duke of Albany's funeral, as also was the prohibition of the use of black horses.

On February 4, in compliance with the command of King Edward, the royal coffin was conveyed on another carriage, from Windsor to the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore by means of the same detachment of men and horses. A few days later King Edward said that no blame for the contretemps was attached to the Royal Horse Artillery by reason of the faulty material that had been supplied to them.

"What a laugh," said May. "To think that our glorious Queen almost didn'tmake it to her own funeral."

"I don't think you should make light of it," said Muriel sharply, "and I am very pleased that those brave men did the courageous thing and took the place of the horses to make sure it all went to plan."

Having shared her enjoyment at the article, May was then invited to take tea, and Muriel said they must begin to make their plan.

“I must find out whom that young man was who spoke to Eveline Duncan after the service,” she said.

“Why are you so concerned about it? He was young and good looking, but he said he was off to Oxford, so he won’t be around here much of the time.”

“He said, Aunt Dot, didn’t he? How well do you know Eveline Duncan? Can you get her to invite us around to her house for tea?”

“It would be easier to ask Charlotte Walker to make the arrangements. She is very thick with Eveline. I myself hardly know her, and would find it most strange to barge in on her on some pretext or other. But I still don’t quite understand your interest.”

“I knew from the moment I saw him that our destinies would be entwined. I knew from the moment I heard his voice that I would never rest until he spoke again to me in those dulcet tones.”

“Oh, don’t be so melodramatic. I don’t see why he appeals to you so.”

“Let’s go out now and call on Charlotte Walker. I don’t feel like I can rest until I have made some progress in my plan.”

“Your plan?”

“I plan to marry him.”

“Oh Muriel, how silly you are. Anyway, he smiled just as brightly at me. Perhaps I shall marry him myself. Is this part of that same thought you had in church about being of royal blood? Do you think you can command whomever you wish to marry you?”

“I said I would tell you more about my ancient royal lineage. Wait here; I will fetch the letters.”

May sipped her tea and enjoyed the roaring fire, as it was a bleak day outside. Not five minutes later, Muriel was back.

“My father’s grandmother was called Elizabeth Burgess King. His half-sister from his father’s first marriage, Fanny Wood, had this letter from her cousin, Mary Michelle and Fanny’s daughter Edith sent a copy to me. I’ve marked the important phrases. I will read them out to you.

This first one was written in 1894. *"If the tradition in the family is true, our grandmother also came from noble lineage being the descendant of the Marquis of Winchester. I have an old book said to have belonged to that family. £50 and a share of his library books were left to each of those who could claim and prove their cousinship to one of the family. Grandmother Burgess proved and received £50 and the books. My mother said that Aunt Eager had a ring, which she told me Lady Elizabeth Paulet gave to her, Grandmother Burgess saying that she, Aunt Eager, was her granddaughter."*

"That's very interesting, but hardly proof of royal blood."

"Here's the other letter. This one is from 1899.

"Our grandmother was Sarah, 5th daughter of George and Elizabeth Burgess who had a farm at Nuthurst not far from West Grinstead Park. The mother of Elizabeth Burgess was the daughter of Lord Peter (5th son of the Marquis of Winchester) and Lady Paulet, who married a Mr. Bates. Mr. and Mrs. Burgess had six daughters and no son.

"The eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Burgess was first married to Mr. Edward Michell of Hermanger, Guildford, Sussex and secondly to Michael King of Linacre, Cranleigh, Surrey. (We actually called our house Linacre, because of him.)

The fifth daughter married B. James Robinson of West Grinstead."

"What do you intend to do with all this information about your *royal* family?" asked May with a wry smile.

"I will make a family tree, and find out all of those who are involved. Then I shall write to anyone who might know where that ring is. I would like that have that ring myself."

"First you say you want to marry a stranger who has only said one sentence to you, and then you say you want to get possession of a ring which belongs to royal ancestors. I think you have ideas far above reality, my girl."

"I usually get what I want," said Muriel firmly, ending the conversation.

The girls put on their warm woolen cloaks and mufflers, and set out for Charlotte Walker's house. Charlotte and her family lived at 26 Lowesmore – right in the middle of the commercial area of the city. Her father, Charles, who had spoken eloquently on the occasion of the funeral, owned 2 properties – and ran his business from the next door house, number 27.

Charlotte, although a dynamic and obviously talented individual, had not married, and Muriel suspected it had to do with her elder sister Mary. The Walker parents were getting on in years, and neither had very good health. Mary, the oldest of the Walker children, had always lived at home. She was somewhat simple, and Muriel suspected that she was of no use whatever in helping around the household. There were two other Walker daughters, older than Charlotte. Both had left home under rather awkward circumstances, leaving without telling their parents where they were going, and then only communicating by letter later, once their futures were established.

Lilian Elizabeth had gone to London to be a nurse and was working at St. John's Westminster Hospital for Women. Lucy Marion had gone north to Kirby Lonsdale and had become a teacher at the Clergy Teachers' School. Rumour had it that Mr. Walker was livid and said he wanted nothing more to do with either of them, and cut them out of his will. So that left Charlotte to try to please her father by remaining at home, helping care for Mary and also for her aging parents.

"I often wonder if my fate will be similar to Charlotte's" said May. "If my father died suddenly, as I am the only daughter, I expect Mother will want me to live with her and care for her."

"You must not do it," said Muriel. "You must make your own life. Daughters should no longer be regarded as unpaid servants to their parents. I will not let you ruin your life like that. I will personally see that you marry, and when I get to meet my mysterious stranger, I expect he will have a friend who will do nicely for you."

May couldn't help but smile at the determination of her friend. She would willingly go along with Muriel's plans – because it was the most excitement that she could see likely to come into her life. Maybe Muriel was right and she would meet a suitable man at the same time. She could but hope, and she did find the young man they had met at church handsome.

So far men had not featured highly in her almost 19 years. She found herself unable to converse with them easily. Although not a great beauty, she was not altogether unhappy with her appearance. She had rather pretty hair, chestnut brown with natural curl. Her features were regular and her eyes a sparkling blue. She was not of great stature – measuring only five feet two inches, but she was slim and well proportioned.

Her friend Muriel, who would soon be twenty one, struck a much more impressive note. She was very confident and determined. Muriel was the taller of the two, perhaps five foot five, and her dark brown hair was swept dramatically on her head – held in place with sparkling combs. Her eyes were hazel, sometimes looking green, and one almost felt like they bored into you as she held your attention.

Muriel always took part in the plays at school - and always had the lead. She quickly answered questions in class, and wouldn't admit to it if the teacher didn't allow her answers. She studied art and architecture and had ever so many books about them. It was as if Muriel was in waiting for a very exciting life to come and sweep her away. And perhaps now it had begun. May was equally clever at school, gifted at music and languages.

It was only a ten minute walk to Charlotte's house, but the girls walked briskly to keep from getting too cold. The door was answered by the maid. "Please could you ask Miss Charlotte Walker if she could see us," said Muriel. "We are not expected, but if Miss Charlotte Walker has a few minutes, we would be most obliged."

The maid took Muriel's card and told the girls to have a seat in the front hall while she went to enquire. Not a minute later Charlotte herself came into the room. She had only been reading, and was very pleased to have a reason to escape for awhile. She recognised the girls, and ushered them into the morning room. Her mother and sister were in the parlour, embroidering, and she didn't want to disturb them.

"May I offer you some tea?" Charlotte looked neat, wearing a cream-coloured high-necked lace blouse and a plain black skirt.

"No, thank you. We've just had tea," said Muriel. "I know this is enormous cheek, but we have come to find out from you whether you will do us a great favour.

We would like to visit your friend Eveline Duncan, and we didn't think she would know who we were or be willing to see us on our own. We wondered if we could impose upon you to take us with you when you next visit her."

"How intriguing" said Charlotte. "Why do you suddenly have this urge to get to know Dot, if I may ask?"

Muriel looked a bit uncomfortable, but decided honesty was the only answer. "Well, it isn't Eveline or Dot, as you call her, at all that we want to know better – but her relatives. We would very much like to make the acquaintance of her nephew, who spoke to us briefly the other day, and she seemed the most likely avenue by which to get such an introduction."

"I know little of her nephew – only that he and his family used to live next door to Dot in Little Perdiswell. But I don't see why you shouldn't have your wish. I will write to Dot and suggest that I bring you both with me and go to visit her in the near future. Would any day suit you?"

"I will make sure that I am available whenever you say," said Muriel. "I will let nothing get in the way of my quest," she added, but when Charlotte looked at her strangely, she rather wished she hadn't put it quite like that.

"I would be most grateful to you for your help in this matter," she added, "and will anxiously await the details of our visit to the Duncans."

Their task accomplished, May and Muriel made their goodbyes, calling into the parlour briefly to say hello to Mrs. and Miss Walker, and then did a bit of window shopping as they wended their way back to Lansdowne Crescent.

Muriel King

THREE

Early in March Muriel had just about given up hope of hearing from Charlotte Walker in regard to her proposal to introduce her to Eveline Duncan, when she received a note from her.

Dear Miss King,

Do you remember that you asked me to arrange for you to be invited to Little Perdiswell to meet my friend Dot and her mother?

I think I might be able to offer you something even better. Dot and Mrs. Duncan have had an invitation to a household ball at Perdiswell House, for Miss Eva Mostyn Walker who will be twenty one. She is no relative of ours, but of course we know of her father, a widower, Harry Walker who is so prominent in the town. Her father said that he would be pleased to include the three of us at his daughter's birthday party. Would that suit you? It will be on Friday the 23rd. Then you will be able to chat to Dot at the same time.

I don't think we would all be able to stay at their house but if we all travel together by cab, it should not be too expensive.

I expect that Dot's nephew will be invited, as he will be home from Oxford for the Easter break. Let me know what you think of this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Charlotte S. Walker

Muriel rushed over to May's house to share the news. May was thrilled, so Muriel rushed back home and penned an immediate reply in the positive.

The girls and their mothers went to town later in the week to see what ball gowns were available, deciding that new dresses would make good birthday presents for both girls.

Gone were the days when dresses had to be ordered and made, taking weeks. There were now many ready-made dresses available to be tried on in the shop and bought and taken home immediately, unless alterations were required. First they went to Miss Leia Akyrne, Ladies' Outfitters, but found nothing that suited. Then to Georges Ltd. Where they also had little success. James Wilkes, who had a Ladies' costume department under Misses Lowe and Wilkes, was their third attempt and there they were successful.

May's dress was of green silk. The bodice had black jet bead decoration and a raised collar. It had puffed sleeves, which curved at the elbow, and each sleeve cuff had black bead floral detail. The heavy pleated skirt was also decorated with black jet beads. May worried that it was too expensive but her mother said it would do her for many occasions over the years. Muriel's dress was much plainer. In pale yellow it featured a high bodice with a flowing, layered skirt. The gown was made of silk chiffon over silk charmeuse with a beaded, embroidered lace overlay on the bodice and the center front of the skirt. The bodice and sleeves were edged with beaded trim.

Early afternoon on March 23rd, the day of the ball, Charlotte ordered a carriage and had it stop on Lansdowne Crescent to pick up Muriel and May. They had arranged to dress at Dot's house, so had taken their dresses in bags, being careful to keep them from getting mussed. It was only four miles to Perdiswell where Eveline and her mother lived, so it only took a matter of fifteen minutes to get there. Once there, they were allowed to hang their dresses in the spare room, and they were invited back to the drawing room for tea. Charlotte introduced her friends to Eveline's mother. "Mrs. Duncan, may I present my friends Miss Muriel King, and Miss May Stinton."

“Pleased to meet you, I am sure,” said Mrs. Duncan stiffly. This would be her first occasion of public socialising since the death of her husband, John, in December 1899 when he was only 62. She was feeling his absence greatly and even with the support of her daughter, Eveline, she often felt at a loss.

Her older daughter, Caroline and her family had until recently lived in the house next door, but they had now moved to Barbourne Road and she missed them. One of Caroline’s sons bicycled out most days after school to make sure that they were all right. The Duncan house was also up for sale but Mrs. Frances Duncan had not yet decided whether they would move in with Caroline and her family or go to Shipton on Cherwell where her son George lived.

“What does your father do for a living, Miss King?”

“He is an epicurean victualler, Mrs. Duncan. He owns the J.J. Williams and Co. shop in the centre of town, offering only the best in all goods. We have been grocers in our family for generations.”

“Oh, yes, well,” said Mrs. Duncan, not approving of grocers. Her husband had inherited wealth accumulated by his father James Duncan who was famous for redesigning the Pamplemousse Gardens in Mauritius. John had moved with his family to Mauritius when he was in his teenage years, and she had met him there. Her two eldest living children, Caroline and George had been born there, but not Eveline. John, with financial support from his father opened a nursery business when they returned to Britain and lived in Calne, Wiltshire. After James Duncan, John’s father, died and they inherited some of his wealth, they moved to Worcester, specifically to be near their daughter Caroline.

“My father was the Registrar for High Bailiffs and Clerks in the District for 17 years until 1889, and then he was promoted to the Office of Treasury Examiner of County Courts and has his office in Sansome Place,” said May.

Mrs. Duncan approved that May’s father was of a higher quality in terms of his profession.

“I shall not dance this evening,” she added, “as it would not be appropriate for someone in mourning. But I can enjoy watching others and listening to the music while you young things disport yourselves.”

“I know that you both are interested in knowing more about my nephew, John,” said Eveline with a slight giggle. The girls blushed, but acknowledged that they would be pleased to know more of him. “John used to live next door with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Curel Roberts Day. His mother is my sister, Caroline,” said Eveline.

“Day!” exclaimed Muriel. “I know two Mr. Days from amongst the aldermen. Are they related to Mr. Ernest Augustus Day or Mr. Harry Day?”

“No, I am afraid they are not related at all,” said Mrs. Duncan with a laugh, “although Mr. Ernest Day lives here in Perdiswell. Mr. John Curel Roberts Day, my son-in-law, is an assistant school inspector for the primary schools in the area and his family came from Rochester in Kent.”

“Oh,” said Muriel, somewhat subdued. “And what does Mr. John Day do, if I may ask? He said that he was off to Oxford when we met him leaving the memorial service for the Queen in February.”

“John is studying theology at Oxford University,” said Eveline. “He is in his second year. He is home for the Easter break at the moment, but has volunteered to help the vicar at the local church and therefore didn’t feel he could take time to attend a ball.”

A vicar-to-be was not quite what Muriel had envisaged in her dreams of her husband-to-be, but she was not totally put off. “Perhaps he helps at the Sunday service in the church,” she speculated. All the assembled women laughed.

“I dare say, if you attended church here one Sunday in the next few weeks, you might well have occasion to see him,” said his grandmother. But the subject was left at that as the women all needed to put on their gowns and attend to their toilettes.

Eveline and Charlotte both wore much plainer ball gowns, as befitted their ages. Eveline’s was in pale lavender and Charlotte’s in even paler blue. Mrs. Duncan wore a simple dress in grey – still feeling the need to be in half mourning.

When it came towards seven, they got into the hired carriage and went the half mile down the road to Perdiswell Hall.

Perdiswell Hall was built in the late 18th century and was currently owned by the Walkers. Eveline filled them in on the recent history of the establishment.

"Henry Walker," she said, "is a prosperous manufacturer who sought life as a country gentleman, and he bought the estate for £26,805 in 1875. However, his wife, Georgiana, died at only 40 and he was left to bring up his four children, though with the aid of his sister and a large staff of servants including a governess, a nurse and two nursery maids. He is also a significant local benefactor, especially generous to Claines Church and Claines School."

The women arrived at the Walker mansion, and, after taking off their capes, were ushered into the main ballroom and introduced. Unfortunately from Muriel's point of view, her intended had either not been invited or had chosen not to attend but she was never without a partner for the dancing.

May, Charlotte and Eveline all had a number of dances and enjoyed themselves, but it was Muriel who put a challenge to the birthday girl, Eva Walker, in being the Belle of the Ball. Although they very much enjoyed themselves, they took their leave of the festivities at ten and a cab conveyed the Duncans home and then took Charlotte, May and Muriel back to Worcester.

FOUR

When Muriel and May got home from their wonderful evening out, they were met with a very different atmosphere. May's mother was in tears. The Kings were both at the house with her, and the girls were ushered into the front room and told to sit down.

"I am afraid, my dear," said Mr. King looking at May, "that we have some bad news for you. Shortly after you left for the dance this afternoon, your father was taken suddenly ill, and collapsed. Your mother called us over, and we got the doctor out, but he was pronounced dead when the doctor arrived. It must have been a heart attack, which was very sudden, so he would not have suffered."

May now understood her mother's tear-drenched face. She herself felt almost too stunned to cry; she could hardly take it all in. "But he was so healthy. He was only 57. He swam each day in the Severn. He can't have died," and then she started crying too. Her mother put her arms around her, and the others drew away to give them their privacy.

"I think perhaps we should go home now, but we'll come back early tomorrow to see how we can help," said Mrs. King, and her family, very much affected by this neighbourhood tragedy, let themselves out the door and walked to their own house, next door but one.

May's brother, Tom, had not been home when his father died, so one of the tasks for the King family the next day was to go to Tom's friend's house, where he had stayed the night, and inform him of what had happened.

The funeral was scheduled for a week's time – on Saturday the 31st of March, and was held at their local church, Holy Trinity in Scrub Hill Road, which had been built in stone in 1866 in a cruciform shape and in the late decorated style. There is an open turret rising from the intersection of the roof and containing 1 bell, which started tolling as the service began for the 57 years of Thomas Stinton's life.

The service was conducted by the Vicar, Rev. George Hough, who had been at the church since 1887. The service was packed as Mr. Stinton had been a well-known and popular man. Those from his work, as well as those from the mill where Mrs. Stinton's father, Mr. George Smith, worked were present at the funeral. Also, Henry Griffiths and Mr. A. S. Allen, who had been registrars when he worked for the treasury; Mr. J.A. Smith, who'd been the High Sheriff from Bromsgrove; Mr. E. Swain from Droitwich; Mr. W.W. Betts from Bromyard; Mr. F.A. Powell and Mr. I. Cameron from Great Malvern; and Mr. F.G. Griffiths and Mr. E.L. Harrison from Worcester. Mrs. Stinton herself had many friends from the Choral Society, and they came to the service too, including Mr. Edward Elgar, who held Mrs. Stinton in high regard as a gifted soprano.

The burial was in Astwood Cemetery, just up the road from Rainbow Hill.

Muriel tried hard to console May, who kept saying that while she was in her finery enjoying herself, her father was at home dying, and she felt so guilty. "There is no way you could have known," although sincerely offered, didn't really help much.

Tom returned to school, and May gradually came out of her mourning, but for her, and for her mother and brother, life would never again be the same. Luckily her mother's brother, Sidney Smith, lived nearby and often stopped in to help with all the paperwork that comes as part of a death in the family. When the Will was read, it was obvious that Tom Stinton had invested well, and there would be no problem of the family having to vacate their very pleasant house to look for a cheaper place to live.

It was hard on Muriel too, for even through the ball at Perdiswell House had been a huge success, she didn't feel she could talk about it with May or relive her glories at the ball. However, she had kept an article from the paper to show May when she felt that she was able to go back to a normal life. This is how the ball was described in the local newspaper, *Berrows Worcester Journal*, the week after the ball.

The dining-room, which was converted into a ball room for the occasion, was most profusely decorated with choice flowers, palms and ferns. The guests, who numbered upwards of 80, comprised a contingent from the staff of the 1st Worcester Regiment, to which Lieut. Walker, who is at present at the front in the South African War, is attached.

Amongst the ladies of the house was Miss Eva Walker who was very gracefully attired in black satin and old lace and who wore a magnificent tiara of diamonds. Miss Florence Walker, her younger sister was very prettily dressed in a pale blue and white costume with turquoise ornaments, and a visitor, Miss Poulett looked very charming in a dress of ivory and Cambridge blue.

Miss Eva Walker and the steward opened the ball, and the dancing was kept up with great zest until the early hours of the morning. The scarlet tunics of the military added picturesqueness to the scene. During the interval a sumptuous repast was provided by the hospitality of Mr. Henry Walker.

May seemed to enjoy reading the article but, of course, it brought back her memory of what had happened after the ball and she started crying again.

To change the subject somewhat, Muriel said. "I couldn't believe it when I read that one of the guests was called Miss Poulett. That was very similar to the name of my relatives with 'royal blood' as mentioned in the letters to my grandmother. Surely this girl must be a relative in some way. Poulett or Paulet could not be a very common name. Finding out more about Miss Poulett shall become part of my quest."

She also remembered that her quest was to marry the man, who now had a name, John Day, and she needed to make her next plan of action. She asked May if she would be up to accompanying her to church in Perdiswell the following Sunday.

“I thought you had got over your infatuation with Mr. John Day,” said May. “You had most of the men at the ball swooning over you. Does that not satisfy you?”

“I know in my heart that Mr. Day is the one for me, and I must keep up my quest to make it happen,” replied Muriel. “I would like to see and meet Mr. Day at a time when we can be free to get to know one another. I think after Church on Sunday would be a marvelous opportunity.”

“But we cannot impose on Dot and her mother again. How will we get there?”

“I have looked into this and there is a train station at Fernhill Heath. That will be less than a mile to walk to the church. I have enquired from the local vicar and the church times there are at 8 and 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. We should have great opportunity to get to the eleven service, and then to chat with Mr. Day afterwards.”

So with her mother’s permission, who felt that she needed to be getting out and about again, May agreed, and Sunday morning found the friends at Scrubhill Station. The journey to Fernhill Heath was only a matter of ten minutes, it being the first stop out of Worcester itself. The girls caught the 10 a.m. train, which left them ample time to find the church before the service.

When they arrived at Fernhill Station, they asked the station master, who according to his badge was Mr. Fredrick Price, for directions to the church.

“Can’t miss it,” he said. “Up that road to the left, and over the next hill, then take the turning on your right and there it is. You will see it long before you arrive.”

The girls thanked him for his kindness and started on the trek. It was as he said, only a short walk, and they easily spotted the tower of the church.

“It doesn’t matter that we are early,” said Muriel. “We can look at the church building and find out its history. And it is always interesting to look at the dates and names on the tombstones in the cemetery.” Then remembering the recent visit to the cemetery, she bit her lip and wished she hadn’t mentioned it.

St. John the Baptist Church was an ancient building and Muriel, who had studied church architecture at school, knew it to be of the perpendicular style. The bell tower was particularly impressive. The east window was fine stained glass, but the rest of the windows were clear.

Inside, (the girls decided to go in, as it was still quite nippy outside despite being late April), they saw that the organist was practicing. Having a music background and being a pianist herself, May went up to her, "What a wonderful organ. I wonder what date it is."

The organist looked quite taken aback at being addressed so boldly by a stranger, "It was presented to the church by the late Sir Henry Wakeman when the church was restored in 1886."

"Ah, I see we have visitors," said a kindly male voice. "Can I offer you girls a tour as we still have some time before the beginning of the service? Let me introduce myself. I am Rev. Alfred Stevenson Porter, and this has been my church for the last 18 years. Where do you girls come from?"

It was Muriel who answered, "We come from Worcester, Lansdowne Crescent, but we were recently at the ball held by the Walkers at Perdiswell Hall. We heard about your wonderful church, and thought we should like to see if for ourselves."

Suddenly, through the door came John Day and the girls couldn't stop themselves looking longingly in his direction. He was as handsome as they remembered, as tall and dark and as wonderful.

"Good morning Rev. Porter," John said, "and I do believe I have seen these young women before. Are you not Miss King who spoke so eloquently at the Queen's Memorial Service? But I am afraid I do not know your friend, although she was with you on that occasion as well."

"Let me present my best friend, Miss May Stinton."

"How do you do, Miss Stinton," said both men together.

"Ah, Mr. Day, since you know these young ladies, I will leave the history of the church in your capable hands and go to prepare myself for the service."

Things could not have worked out better from Muriel's point of view. She smiled brightly at John and told him that they had met his grandmother, Mrs. Duncan, and his aunt Dot at the ball a few weeks before. He said he had heard that they had been there, and had asked after him, for which he was most obliged.

"Now let me give you a short lecture on the church before I have to get ready to help with the service. The mosaic you see in the chancel is that of the descent of Christ from Jesse. You have heard in the gospels about Him coming from the Root of Jesse. That is a sort of family tree."

"I too am interested in plotting my family tree, Mr. Day," added Muriel, "And I might have found a likely candidate for a relative in the visitor we met at the ball. Do you know anything of Miss Poulett, who was there?"

"No, I am sorry, I have not made that lady's acquaintance, but I shall enquire from my various family members to see if they can be of some use in the matter.

"The church has 380 sittings, of which 190 are free. Being the only Anglican Church for some 5 miles around, we normally get a good turnout for this service on Sundays, and I would expect the church to be more than half full. We now have open benches but before the restoration in 1887, the church had enclosed pews. We have a new north aisle and vestry as a result of that restoration. If you have time after the service, I can take you up the staircase to the rood loft. One gets a most wonderful view of the countryside from there."

"Oh yes, thank you," said May, finally coming into the conversation, "we do not have to catch the train back to Worcester until mid afternoon."

"What will you do for lunch?" asked John.

"We brought some sandwiches and thought to have a picnic overlooking a wonderful view," Muriel put in.

"I must go and get robed up now, but I will meet up with you after the service," promised the young Mr. Day.

Muriel and May took seats fairly near the front of the church, but expecting there to be some protocol in the order of who sits where, they asked the organist if they would be all right to sit where they had chosen. She said it would be fine.

The church did fill up quite quickly, and amongst the faithful, the girls recognized many of those they had met at the ball. Dot and her mother were there, and Mr. Walker and his daughters. Several other women they felt they had seen at the ball but didn't know their names. But they smiled and nodded as if they were firm friends.

Even though it was the fourth Sunday after Easter, the service was still filled with Easter music. *Ye Choirs of New Jerusalem; At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing; Come See the Place Where Jesus Lay* and *Jesus Lives, No Longer Now Can Thy Terrors Death Appall Us.*

The congregation sang with gusto and the walls reverberated. The sermon was uplifting, if not very original, and the girls felt very happy to be with this congregation. Of course their main thoughts were with what was going to happen after the service.

When 12.30 came, and the service ended, Muriel and May proceeded out of the church, shook hands with Rev. Porter, and then spoke to Mrs. Duncan and Dot, who were very curious as to why the girls were at church.

"We wanted to see if we could meet John Day," said Muriel, boldly, "and knowing he was likely to be at the church today, it seemed too good an opportunity to miss."

Mrs. Duncan looked shocked but Dot only laughed. "You seem like a woman who knows what she wants and is determined to get it."

"Mr. Day will be meeting us after the service, to show us the rood loft," added May.

"Let me introduce you to the other Days who are here," said Dot, and she drew them over to a large family who had just come out of the church. "Caroline, here are my friends from Worcester, who came to the ball with me. This is Muriel King, and her very best friend, May Stinton."

“How do you do, Miss King, Miss Stinton. I do hope you are enjoying our country service and our fresh clean air. There is such a fog around big industrial towns that one can hardly breathe. We have now moved to Worcester but continue to come here on Sunday as much for the fresh air in the country as for the service.”

“How do you do, Mrs. Day? We are very pleased to have attended your lovely church here today and to make the acquaintance of all of you.”

“Let me introduce my children to you,” said Caroline Day. “My eldest son, John, was serving the vicar during the service, but I daresay you will see him later. This is my next son, Harold, who is 17, then comes George, but we call him Jimmy, 15, then Mark, 14, then our only daughter, Una, who is 11. We also have a baby Steven Roberts, but we call him Bobs. He is only a year old so he is at home with his nurse.”

Muriel and May shook hands with each child in turn, all of whom looked shy and reserved. John was without a doubt the most outgoing of the family.

“My husband, Mr. Day, was unable to attend the service this morning, as he had important work he needed to attend to, but perhaps we will see you another time and you can meet him then. We will say goodbye for the present,” and off the Day family walked to their waiting carriage.

By now the rest of the congregation had come out of the church and were making their farewells to friends before heading on their way home for lunch.

“I understand Mr. Day will take you to see the rood loft,” said the vicar to the girls, “so he can lock up the church afterwards and bring me the key at the vicarage. I hope we will see you again in our congregation,” and smiling at the girls, he too left.

The staircase to the loft was built into the wall, and half way up, was the Rood or Crucifix and a platform where the Epistle and Gospel could be read and the sermon given, but the staircase continued on up to the loft above.

The girls felt more than a little nervous of their footing, but when they arrived at the top and stepped out into the loft floor they felt their anxiety had been a small price to pay. The view from the window on this glorious day was for miles - farms, trees, hills, and you could even see the Cathedral in the distance.

They climbed down again, and John Day spoke, “I hope we might see more of you on some other occasion. I will be going back to Oxford soon for the Trinity term, but will be back again in a few months’ time. Perhaps, if you came up on a Sunday later in the summer, we could plan a picnic together. I could bring my brother Harold and we could make a foursome.”

“Oh, that would be wonderful, Mr. Day,” said Muriel. “I will eagerly await seeing you and of course your church and congregation again.”

“So until then, I must say good bye and have a pleasant picnic and journey home.”

“Thank you so much,” said May. “You have been so kind.” He turned and looked at May, and gave her a very warm smile.

“I am so glad you enjoyed it,” and off he went to the Vicarage.

The girls were on cloud nine as they walked back towards the station. They found a bench overlooking a small stream, and sat to eat their sandwiches, each wrapped up in her own thoughts.

They had all along assumed that the train would follow the usual pattern and offer a mid-afternoon train home, but when they arrived at the station, it was locked and empty. In checking the notices about train times, they realised that the Sunday schedule was different and they would have to wait until 5.25 for their journey home.

“We could walk ,” said May. “It can’t be more than four miles.”

“I dressed up for today and my shoes are not stout,” said Muriel. “I would rather wait for the train. Why don’t we go over to Little Perdiswell? We can call on Dot and explain our circumstances, and I am sure she will have pity on us and invite us for a cup of tea.”

So off the girls trudged down the road. It was as they expected, and Dot and her mother Mrs. Frances Duncan were very welcoming, having nothing else planned for the afternoon. As Mrs. Duncan was herself a recent widow, May didn't mind when Muriel told the family about Mr. Stinton's death the day of the ball.

"My dear girl," said Mrs. Duncan, "how very dreadful for you. You will remember that ball with guilt for the rest of your life."

They all sat in stunned silence for awhile and then Muriel decided it was up to her to change the subject.

She said, "Mrs. Duncan, I know you spent many years in Mauritius. What was that like? Did you enjoy it?"

"Well, yes and no, I suppose is the answer to that. The climate of Mauritius is wonderful, and the scenery is too, but one was very limited in what one could do. There were no theatres, no concerts, no good restaurants. Socialising tended to be with the same few ex-patriots who had gathered there for commerce, and they all seemed to be having a very lazy life, which made us uncomfortable. Of course, we had many servants, and I did not have to do the many things that I had to do once we returned to England. I spent my time educating the children, as the schools were not up to our standard, and I didn't want to send them back to boarding schools as so many of the families did in those days.

"We were there because my father-in-law James Duncan was quite an important personage. He was born in 1802 in Aberdeen Scotland, and when he grew up, he was gardener at Howick to Lord Grey, son of the prime minister. When Lord Grey became Secretary of State for the Colonies, he sent James to Mauritius as director of the botanical gardens. It is the largest botanical garden in the southern hemisphere. The main gates received an award in the Great Exhibition.

"James and his wife Sarah, and family arrived on December 28, 1849, when my John was only 13. James found the gardens to be a jungle, without even being enclosed by a fence.

“In 1850 he reported on the gardens to Lord Grey, and with his permission, in a few years he transformed the layout of the gardens. He introduced new species to replace the old spice plants (his French predecessor’s idea of what a garden should have), planted avenues of palms and created lawns. The marshy grounds near Monplaisir he turned into a pleasant lake with islands in the middle. The Pamplemousse River was dammed to form a pond and the gardens extended. In 1863 he published a catalogue of plants cultivated in the gardens, mentioning numerous recent additions, including hundreds of palms, many ferns, orchids, begonias, gloxinias, roses, azaleas and camellias. He left Mauritius in 1866, but he didn’t stop thinking about the place and sent a list back to them of 32 sorts of trees for replanting in Mauritius.

“My husband was a civil servant in Mauritius. I was originally from Cape Town and our family moved there because of the sugar industry. John and I met there, and married. We had twins, who were born there on Halloween night 1858, but poor John Francis only lived a few days. Charlotte died when she was just over two, tragically getting drowned in a paddling pool. George was born in 1860, and in 1862, I had Caroline. When we arrived back in this country, we settled in Calne, Wiltshire where we had a nursery on Curzon Street, and Dot was born there in 1872. My son George is now a clergyman, and is the Rector of Shipton-on-Cherwell, outside Oxford.”

“There is a funny story about him. He was supposedly relegated to be a perpetual curate because he refused to ring the bells for the wedding of the 2nd Duchess of Marlborough, perhaps because there was a divorce involved,” said Dot, with a giggle.

“No need to bring up that,” said her mother sternly.

Muriel’s ears perked up at the sound of royal lineage. May poked her, “Please don’t say it,” she whispered.

Frances and Dot greatly enjoyed telling the girls about their past lives – and showing them all sorts of pictures of the Pamplemousse Gardens, and their home in Colne, and pictures of Caroline and George when they had been children, taken in Mauritius.

It was soon time for the girls to thank their hostesses for a pleasant afternoon, and once again make their way to the Fernhill Heath station where they caught the 5.25 and got back at 5.32.

May Stinton

FIVE

Muriel didn't want the opportunity of finding out more about her possible relative, Miss Poulett, to come to nothing, so the next week, she sent a letter to Miss Eva Walker of Perdiswell Hall, thanking her for the ball, and asking if she could provide any details of her guest, Miss Poulett, whom Muriel thought might be a relative.

She eagerly awaited the post, but it was over a week before a reply came.

Dear Miss King,

I have delayed in replying to your letter, as I felt it was incumbent upon me to ask permission of Miss Poulett before I provided you with her personal details. I have now done that, and she agrees that you might know her address so that you might write to her.

She is of course curious as to why you think you are a relative, as she knows of no connection with the King family.

Her name and address are as follows:

Eleanor Poulett, 60 Queen's Gate, Kensington.

I am pleased that you enjoyed my ball, and it was very nice to make your acquaintance. I thought I saw you and your friend at church a few Sundays ago. Perhaps if you are in this area again in the future, we might possibly meet.

Yours faithfully,

Eva Walker

Feeling like she was on the way with her quest to find her long lost relatives, Muriel immediately wrote to Eleanor Poulett at the address provided. She explained about how she thought her grandfather King's mother had been related to the Poulett's (or perhaps Paulett's as the hand writing wasn't very clear) and how the letters had come to her attention. She asked Miss Poulett if she thought she had descended from Peter Poulett, the Marquis of Winchester.

It was several weeks later before she had this reply.

Dear Miss King,

Thank you for your letter. I don't think we met when we both were attending the ball for my friend Miss Eva Walker at Perdiswell, but I am pleased to reply to your enquiries.

As far as I know, I do not descend from "noble lineage" as you think that you do. However, as I move in circles with many gentry, I have come across others with the name Paulett, which is very similar to ours, and I can tell you a bit about some of them.

The head of one noble family, Lord George Paulett, was born in 1804 and lived in London. He was in the Royal Navy and eventually became Rear Admiral. His wife, Georgina, was born in Calcutta, and they had two sons, George, born in 1837, and St. John Claud ,born in 1839. Neither of the sons married. George was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Dragoons. In 1871 the family retired to 36 Pillamore Gardens in Kensington. By 1881, Lord George had died, and his widow and her son, St. John, lived at Corktree House, Farnbow Road, Berkshire. George at that time lived in Marylebone, as a lodger ,and retired from the army.

There was another ancient branch, headed by Lord William Paulett born in 1805 who came from Andover in Hampshire. A female of this family, whose name I cannot remember, but she was Lady something beginning with an L, presumably his daughter, was living at Amport House, Andover. She was born in 1860, but I don't know what happened to her.

Lord Charles William Paulett, born in 1833, was a Lt. Captain in the 7th Hussars. He lived at Wellesbourne House, Mountford, Warwickshire. He and his wife had two sons.

I'm afraid none of this information will be of much use to you, as you say your Lord Peter and Lady Elizabeth Paulett had only daughters, and all of these families I have listed seem to have only sons.

I am sorry not to be of more help, but you might try some of the addresses I have given above as someone may have more information than I do.

Yours faithfully,

Eleanor Poulett

Muriel was disappointed and frustrated at this letter, as she had so much hoped she would now be further on with her quest. She decided that she would leave the situation for the time being, as it was now nearing the summer, and she needed to concentrate on the other part of her quest – getting John Day to ask her to marry him.

May 11th was Muriel's 21st birthday. Because she had already had her ball gown as a present she didn't expect to get any other presents. But her father told her that he had ordered a special 21st birthday present for her, but unfortunately, it had not yet arrived, and he was sorry that she wouldn't have it for her special day. She wondered what treat he had in mind for her, but, reassured him that she was happy to wait. To celebrate her majority, her parents took her out for a special restaurant meal with champagne.

May's house, number 9 Lansdowne Crescent, looked very similar to Muriel's. They were on either ends of a terrace of three houses but the middle house had an extra floor. May's house was home only to herself and her mother at the moment; however they had lived in Worcester all May's life, and all her mother's too.

Her mother had been born Eliza Smith, and was now aged 50. Her father, May's grandfather, had been George Smith, who in 1871 lived in Lansdowne Road, with his daughter and her husband Tom. George Smith was a seed merchant and master miller and had 10 men working for him. His wife had died much earlier, so having Eliza and Tom live with him brought him company and someone to run his household.

When he became older the tables were turned, and Tom and Eliza bought a house on Rainbow Hill Terrace – and he then moved in with them for his last years. His son, Sydney, who also worked as a miller, lived with them for some time as well, but about ten years ago, Tom and Eliza chose to move again, though still within the neighbourhood, and bought this house on Lansdowne Crescent. May's younger brother Tom, named after his father, also lived with them, but he attended King's Cathedral Grammar School and at age 14, he was not often in the house. Tom, like his father, was of an academic bent, and hoped to go to Oxford, become a Classics Scholar, then perhaps teach and eventually become a Headmaster.

Also living in the house was the maid, Elizabeth Wilcock who was from Martley and was in her mid 20s. So the five bedroomed, 3 reception roomed house, with a cellar was quite full when everyone was at home. The garden stretched out slightly in front of the house and greatly to the back, with a high hedge on each side separating number 9 from its neighbours and a high brick wall marking the end of the gardens.

There were many features that May and Muriel's houses had in common. At May's house, Number 9, the ceilings were high, over 9 feet, with moulded cornices and sash leaded windows.

The entrance hall was elegant and featured a fine spindled, cantilevered staircase with paneling beneath. Because the houses were built into the steep hill, they had several half floors. The dining room in each house had twin sash windows, which opened right up from floor level to nearly ceiling height, enabling direct access to the southerly facing terrace. There was a polished marble fireplace surround and mantle with a cast iron insert. The floor was polished English oak parquet and there was a multi-paned glazed door from there to the sitting room. Again, this room had sash windows overlooking the garden, but an ornate pitch pine fireplace surround with a polished marble and hearth insert. There was extensive book shelving, deep mouled plaster cornicing and a picture rail. The kitchen to the rear of the house was a large room but it combined as a breakfast room. The cook used a large black Aga.

Going up to the half floor above, there was a very large drawing room, 22 feet by 15 feet, which overlooked the garden and had a magnificent cityscape view of the Cathedral and St. Andrew's spire with the Suckley Hills beyond over a wooded conservation area to the Malvern Hills. The fireplace had a carved marble surround, mantle and hearth.

Also on this level were a bedroom which was used by the maid, and a bathroom.

The garden featured a southerly-facing flagged terrace enhanced by dwarf box hedging, and enjoyed a magnificent view. A natural stone step went down between low stone walling, and the garden was well stocked herbaceous borders and beautifully maintained lawns. It was overhung by flowering cherry and encircled by ancient yew hedging and mellow brick walling. A graveled path continued between the shrubbery and a seating area was located in a sheltered spot. At the lower edge of the garden, a pedestrian gate, inset into a yew hedge, lead to the lower road of Lansdowne Crescent.

Upstairs there were four large bedrooms and another bathroom.

Muriel's house, No. 7, called Linacre, was very similar – again having five upstairs bedrooms. However in the King household, the cellar area contained the kitchen and the bedrooms for the servants. Muriel was an only child, and her parents, George Williams King and his wife Louisa, had two servants, Amy Bunce and Emily Smith, both 22 years old. Amy was from Abberley and Emily came from Worcester.

George Williams King had been born in Guildford, Surrey. His wife Louisa, née Trew, was born in Axbridge Somerset. George came to Worcester in the late 1870s having gone into the grocery business earlier in his life in Guildford, with his father, William. William and his wife,Ann, had had 2 children George Williams and James Downes (named after his grandmother), but William,from his earlier marriage to Frances Stanford., had a daughter Fanny (who married Thomas Wood) and a son, William, who lived with them and helped in his father's grocery business.

James Downes tragically died when he was only 12. After George William's father's death in 1870, his mother remarried, and George Williams (his second name was his mother's maiden name as was the tradition) came to Worcester where he was taken into the James Williams' family and treated as a son.

In the mid 1870s he became part of his uncle's grocery business, which had been established in Worcester for decades under the name of J.J. Williams and Co. At that time, they had two groceries – one on High Street, Pershore, where James and his family lived, and the other on the corner of the Cross and St. Swithin Street in the city centre. They catered for the rich – offering the best coffees and teas available, and imported wines and spirits. So they made a great deal of money, and when, in 1881, James and his family retired to Surrey, they sold the Pershore shop and left George to manage the Worcester business. James died soon after they moved and Emily, his widow, and their children continued to live in Sutton, Surrey. Percy Williams was the only one of their five children to carry on in the grocery business, and he was also a Tea Planter. Charles became an electrical engineer and the girls, Kate, Ethel and Mary married and settled in the Surrey area.

George Williams King invested much of his money in works of art. He had brought Muriel up with a great love of painting, and she had learned a great deal about it at her secondary school.

He had many paintings in his house, which he hoped would appreciate with time, and he knew he was offering a legacy to Muriel and her family to come, that would be worth much more than money itself.

Muriel's mother, Louisa, came from Axbridge in Somerset but had not spent much time there. It had been her grandmother, Martha Trew, née Banyer, who had written the poem that Muriel had read at the Queen's memorial service.

Louisa, herself, was brought up by her grandmother for her earliest years, her father Richard having lost his wife when Louisa was born. After her grandmother died in 1860, Louisa was sent to a boarding school. She met George when she was visiting friends in Worcester, and he swept her off her feet, marrying her within months of meeting her in the summer of 1877.

Muriel, 21, and May, 19, both highly educated for girls, spent much of most days together. Sometimes they accompanied their mothers when calling around the neighbourhood or doing good works, but as they had been allowed a degree of independence not often given to girls at this time, they took full advantage of it and did more or less as they wanted most of the time.

Muriel rang the bell at May's house, but she was so well known that when the maid answered the door, she went automatically into the house. The maid said that May was in the morning room so Muriel went right in.

"We must make plans for going back to Perdiswell," she said. "John will be back for his summer holidays, and he did invite us to come up again and have a picnic with him and his brother."

"Perhaps it would be pleasant if we took our bicycles one Sunday soon and rode there. It isn't that far and would be good exercise for us," said May.

Cycling was becoming more popular in Worcester, and a new shop selling them had opened in the town centre. Both girls owned cycles but they had never taken them on quite such an outing before.

"I will write to John and suggest that we go next Sunday, the 30th of June," said Muriel, "if that suits you."

"Oh, that will be fine with me. I very much look forward to seeing John again too."

"Don't forget it is my quest to marry him," said Muriel. "You might see what you think of his younger brother, Harold, who will be tagging along."

"I don't see why you should think you are the only one John likes. I think Harold will be far too young for us, and if I remember correctly, he seemed very shy and withdrawn."

"Well, so are you shy and withdrawn. He would suit you perfectly," teased Muriel, as no one could seriously describe May as shy.

"I was also thinking that we should pay a visit to the Tree girls this summer. They will be finished with their school and might enjoy a bit of company. Shall I write and enquire?"

“Yes, do,” said May. “I should greatly enjoy going to visit them.”

It had been a year for May and three years for Muriel since they had finished at The Worcester High School for Girls, run by Miss Alice Ottley. The school had offered them a wide choice of subjects including English, French, German, Music, and Art. It also offered the preparation for exams both for Cambridge and was the Local Centre for Metropolitan Exams for the Royal College of Art and the Royal College of Music.

Muriel was interested in Art and had taken all the classes she could to further her knowledge of the subject. May was the musical one and had had lessons from Mr. Edward Elgar, whose father owned the local piano shop.

Most girls of their age would be thinking of getting married and it would be a lie to say that Muriel and May didn’t think about it too. Now that Muriel (and May to an extent) had her heart set on a certain someone, she needed to put her plan into action if something concrete was going to come out of it.

Muriel duly wrote off to Margaret and Jessie Tree to enquire if she and May might call on them sometime in the near future.

The Tree family was large – quite a contrast to Muriel's and May’s experiences. Margaret, 18, and Jessie, 16, were the eldest, but they then had three more sisters, Beth, 15, and Catharine Mary (called Carrie), 14, Janet, 8, and three brothers, Warren Francis 12 (named after their father but called Frank), Charles, 11, and Philip (called Peter), 6. They lived at Battonhill Grange, Camphill Road, Worcester.

As well as the huge number of children, they also had Warren’s sister, Louisa, who was 45, living with them. They had 2 servants, Emily Wilkes, aged 56, who was the cook, and Laura Powell, aged 16, who was a housemaid.

Mr. Tree was a well-known solicitor in Worcester and he had an office (with a telephone) on 25 High Street near Pump Street in Worcester. As well as this, he also a Commissioner for Oaths, and Deputy Clerk of the Peace. He was on a committee for the running of the Museum.

The Trees' house, as the girls knew from having been there before, was huge, much bigger than their houses. But ,of course, the Tree family was much larger than theirs too. There were eight bedrooms altogether, a study, music room, games rooms, a coach house (Mr. Tree owned an automobile) and a conservatory. The garden was over an acre.

Muriel finished her letters, one to John Day and one to Margaret Tree, and went to post with them. Luckily they had a posting box not far from the end of their road, and the mail service was very regular and efficient.

SIX

Warren Tree was at home on the day when the girls called at the Tree house, invited by their friends Margaret and Jessie. He was a tall man, with light brown hair, pale blue eyes and a pleasant face. As soon as the girls entered, he spoke, "Miss King, may I congratulate you on the way you recited the poem at the Queen's memorial service. Might I ask, did your great grandmother write much poetry?"

"All we have of it is the album which she left. She died in about 1850, so of course I never knew her. My mother says she was a prolific writer, but unfortunately most of it was lost. We do have an oil portrait of her in which she is wearing a black dress and cloak and she looks rather bemused with her finger on her chin – perhaps she was thinking of a poem while she was posing. We have it in the front hall so I think of her every day.

"Within the album there are perhaps fifty poems. Some I am sure she wrote, as she has initialed them M.T. for Martha Trew. Others I suspect she wrote because the handwriting and style are very similar but she must have had contributions from other friends, as there are many with very different penmanship and signed with other initials. Occasionally a whole name is signed, and the date 1834 often appears."

"I wonder how you and you mother might take to the idea of having some of them, if not all, printed. My Uncle James Arrowsmith is a printer in Bristol. The whole family, with my Grandfather Isaac, used to live in Worcester and had a publishing firm here, but when I was in my teens , they bought a publishing house in Bristol and moved there.

“I spent a summer working as a reporter for Grandfather, and I know that he was often asked about publishing books of poetry – either just for home consumption or to see if they would appeal to a wider market.

“Perhaps you could check with your parents about the idea, and if it is something they would consider, bring copies of the four best poems to me and a copy of the one about Queen Victoria, and I will see what my uncle thinks of them.”

“That sounds very exciting, Mr. Tree. I now have another quest to add to my list. I will endeavour to make the world aware of my great grandmother’s poetry.”

“Well, don’t put too much stock on it just yet. It was only when I heard you read the poem which so impressed me that I thought perhaps there may be more that can be done with the poetry.”

Margaret and Jessie were anxiously waiting for their father to finish so they could take their friends Muriel and May off to the parlour to catch up on the latest gossip. Margaret had just finished her studies at the school, and Jessie had another two years. Beth would be going to the school in September. She was a prodigy when it came to playing the violin, so she hoped for more tuition from the school which, was well known for its music department. The whole family was musical and played either the piano, another instrument or sang.

Margaret said, “I know what you mean about a portrait that you see every day becoming part of your life. Look at that one Pa had done of us four oldest girls. We look like fat cherubs with curly blond hair. I do wish he had never had it done, or at least would hang it where no one could see it.”

The other girls looked at the large oil painting, which did not flatter the girls, and agreed it was not the best to put on display. But it did make a feature of what each of the girls seemed to have – a mop of unruly curls. Margaret had been so pleased when she was sixteen and was allowed to put her hair up. She could hide the curls in a bun, although some awkward bits seemed to be trying to escape out from it.

As it was a lovely day, the four girls decided to walk up towards Malvern and talk of school memories. Muriel was keen to tell Margaret about the letter she had received that morning from John Day. He has said he would be very pleased if she and May cycled up to Perdiswell on Sunday, and that he and Harold would bring their bikes to Church. Afterwards, he would endeavour to show them a bit of the countryside which they might not have seen before.

He suggested that he would get his cook to make a picnic for all of them, to free the girls from biking with a load all the way from their houses.

Margaret thought John sounded wonderful, and wished she had a man in her life.

"Well he has several brothers, but they are all younger, and I have already said that May can have Harold. (May pulled a face at this.) But perhaps your younger sisters might be in line for his younger brothers. It is through family outings that most marriages are arranged, I am sure."

May broke in, "I found out something yesterday. My brother Tom, heard that we were going with the Days for a picnic and he says he is best friends with their next brother, Mark, who is 14, the same age as Tom. In fact, Tom was staying at their house on the 31st of March. That was the day of Father's funeral and he did not want to go home that night, so had gone to see his friend Mark Day. He thought it was so funny that he would be listed on the census with the Days rather than the Stintons."

"That was not long before we went to the Church in Perdiswell. I am surprised that Mrs. Day didn't make the connection between you and Tom," said Muriel.

"I don't suppose he was very forthcoming with conversation to the adults," said May.

"Now there is a thought for your sisters, Margaret. Which of them would like to marry Tom Stinton, and which of them would like Mark Day? Since Beth is 14 and Carrie is 11, it will most likely be one of them."

The girls giggled at this imaginary match making, but it was true that marriage was always in the back if not the front of the minds of girls of their age. Most girls were married by 20, and if one got to be 30, there was little hope for them. They had already decided that Dot and Charlotte were spinsters for life, and it wasn't a prospect that they wanted for themselves.

"I know," said Margaret. "We often have family picnics. Why don't we see if all our families and the Days can have a picnic together? Then we can see how the various couples pair off. I will ask mother and father when we return."

Mrs. Tree, called Julie fondly by her husband, was not a native of Worcester. She had been born in Cornwall and raised in Devon where her father was a preacher in the United Methodist Free Church. She had a sister Eliza, 14 years older and 2 brothers, Eldred who was 10 years her senior, and Charles who was 4 years older. She didn't get married until she was in her mid 20's having met Mr. Warren Tree when he visited her father's church. Her father by that stage was a widower, and had hoped that Juliana would stay at home to look after him and a baby granddaughter, but Warren convinced her that she had the right to lead her own life. Her brother, Eldred still lived in Cornwall,, with 2 young sons and worked as a grocer and draper.

When Margaret asked her mother what she thought of the idea of a picnic for all their various families, Juliana said she thought it was a wonderful idea, and would get on to organizing it, first consulting with the various families as to when would best suit them.

May and Muriel set off home, well satisfied with their day's work.

SEVEN

On June 30th as planned, May and Muriel set off on their bikes for Perdiswell Church. By going up to the top of their road and then turning left, they managed to go along a rough footpath which crossed the canal and then joined the top end of Sansome Walk which connected with Tything Road, which is in tuynan extension of Foregate Street. There they went almost due North through Barbourne, arriving in Perdiswell not long after. They had left plenty of time for the journey, which took them under an hour, and they were pleased that they had time for a rest and clean up before the service started at 11.

After the service, they waited for John Day to finish with his jobs in the church, and saw his brother, looking very shy and awkward, waiting as well. Two bikes were near where he stood, and Muriel was all for going up to start a conversation with him, but May held her back.

"Don't scare him off. He looks as if he is not looking forward to this day, as it is. Time enough to get to know him when John comes."

Not five minutes later, John emerged, and indicating that he needed to take the keys to the vicarage, he went to do so. By this time, the girls and Harold were the only people left in the churchyard, so the girls went up to him.

"Hello," said May. "We met you when we were last at church here in April, but let me introduce us again. I am May Stinton and this is my friend, Muriel King. We know you are Harold, but that is all we know about you."

"Pleased to meet you," Harold said softly, looking as if nothing could be farther from the truth.

“I heard that Tottenham Hotspur beat Sheffield 3-1 in the FA Cup and that was the first time that a non league side had won it,” said May, bravely.

She had memorized that fact, and thought it might come in useful. She didn’t know anything about football, but thought it was the sort of thing boys would certainly be happy to talk about. Luckily the conversation was halted by the reappearance of John.

“Very nice to see you girls again. I have brought a picnic lunch, as promised. I suggest, unless you are already too tired from your long ride here, that we go to Ladywood for our picnic. It is about another mile up this road and there is a lovely spot near a brook where it is quite flat, so we can spread out the blanket and eat in some comfort.”

The girls said they were happy to ride farther along, so they did as suggested, and went another mile.

En route they passed Bevere and John stopped and got off his bike. “I thought I should tell you a bit about this place,” he said.

“Many of the inhabitants of Worcester came here for asylum in 1541 when they refused to pay the tax, Danegelt, and were thus exposed to the fury of Harkacutt. It was also used in 1637 when some Worcester residents came to escape a pestilence.”

The girls nodded and smiled, interested in these bits of history.

The picnic spot, when they arrived, was idyllic, as promised, and the warm sun made it even better. The large meal was laid out on the blanket. There were sandwiches of cheese and ham, lettuce, cucumber and tomatoes, apples and pears and lemonade to drink. John had not only provided the food and blanket, but had brought plates, glasses, silverware and serviettes to make it anything but simple.

“So tell us what you girls have been up to in the last few months. Muriel, did you find out any more about your ancestors of royal lineage?”

So Muriel went into great detail about the correspondence she had had with Eleanor Poulett, and how in the end, although she had learned many things, she was still no further forward with finding the relative who had the ring that she would have dearly loved to have.

Harold had been quiet throughout, and although May smiled frequently and encouragingly in his direction, he didn't seem inclined to smile back. Finally, May felt she had to bring him into the conversation.

"Are you intending to attend Oxford as well, Harold?"

"No, I am going to be a mining engineer, and the place to train for that is in a mining college so I am off to Camborne School of Mining in Cornwall in September."

His brother added, "Harold is very clever, but he is single minded in this. In fact he won prizes for being top of the class in both physics and mathematics, and as the prizes were to choose books, he chose some about mineralogy, which seems a real waste to me."

"I have all my life wanted to be a miner and go to the far reaches of the world to extract tin and copper and gold. But first I must get qualified. My younger brother, Mark, is also interested and intends to follow my path as well."

"And what will you do, John, when you come down from Oxford?" asked Muriel.

"I intend to teach. Although I am studying theology and hope to be ordained, I have always wanted to teach. So I will have many more years of study in front of me. What about you girls? What long term plans do you have?"

"Girls like us have to stay at home until someone decides they want to marry us," said Muriel boldly. "Although both our parents allow us great freedom, we don't have any real plans in terms of career. I hope to go to Victoria Institute on Foregate Street next year to learn more about art subjects. They have classes in painting, design and modeling. I am particularly interested in learning how to carve wood."

Muriel looked at her friend quickly, as this was the first she had heard of her plans.

"And what about you, May?" asked John.

"I pretty much do whatever Muriel does," said May.

Wanting to take over the initiative on the conversation, she added, "Muriel didn't tell you our great news. We had great encouragement when we visited the Trees last week. Mr. Tree, (who is on the museum committee, by the way) is a very important solicitor you know, and he had heard Muriel recite her great grandmother's poem at the Queen's Memorial Service. He suggested that if there are other poems of similar vein, Muriel should send them to him, and he will attempt to get his uncle James Arrowsmith, who is a publisher in Bristol, to give an opinion as to their worthiness of being published in a book."

"That is a very exciting project for you. And were there more poems, Muriel?"

"Oh yes, there are perhaps 50 poems in the album. I don't think my great grandmother wrote them all, as many have different initials after them, and some have names. Mother has no idea who the people are from the names. I am sure that at least 10 of the poems were written by my great grandmother, Martha Trew. One that I certainly will send to Mr. Tree to give to Mr. Arrowsmith is about Guildford Castle – and she has done a sketch of the castle with it. There are also a few other pencil sketches in the book, and a working of the word Bible by using all the various chapters in the Bible that she thought were important."

"I would very much like to see this myself. Perhaps one day when I am in Worcester, I could call on you at your parents' home."

"Oh yes, indeed."

Not to be outdone, May added, "And another possible place for us to meet is being proposed. The Trees have a wonderful garden, and we all thought that later, in the summer, we might have all of your family and our families to meet together for a picnic one Sunday. I am sure Mrs. Tree will be writing to your mother."

"That sounds like jolly good fun. Perhaps Muriel could bring the album to the picnic, and I could see some of the poems and pictures then."

"Oh yes, I could do that. I don't know when exactly they will plan it, but when would suit you?" asked Muriel.

"Any Sunday, after Church , in mid to late summer would be fine," said John.

“Let’s make it for mid-August if we can. I will contact the Trees and tell them to choose a weekend in August.”

After the meal, the foursome walked along the brook for a distance, but then, as it looked as if it might come on to rain, decided it would be best if they started back. When they had got about half way, the rain started. So, as their new house on Barbourne Road was en route, the boys invited to girls to tea at their house before embarking on the rest of the ride home.

At tea, Muriel and May were introduced to Mr. Day, whom they had not previously met. He was a tall thin man with a white beard, which made him look much older than his likely years. He was gracious and polite, but showed no interest in quizzing the girls or taking much part in the conversation at tea.

However, Caroline, his wife, was bubbling over with questions and very enthusiastic when John told her about the proposed picnic with the Trees, Stintons, Kings and Days all coming together.

May noticed and commented on the trophies on the mantelpiece. “Our Harold is quite a runner,” said Mrs. Day. “He wins most of the races he goes in for. In fact, in the spring events for King’s Cathedral School, he came first in 9 out of the 10 events and was given the title of Victor Judorium. His four also do well in the rowing competitions.”

Harold looked uncomfortable at this praise, and quickly changed the subject. But both girls were very impressed by this new knowledge. It was also noted that John didn’t seem to share this athletic prowess.

It was nearly five when the girls got back on their bikes and did the rest of the journey. They felt the day had been very successful, and although Harold did not seem much like husband material at the moment, he had made quite an impression on both girls. What fun it would be, they thought, if they could have a joint wedding, but neither was prepared to commit herself at the moment to be the one who would marry Harold.

EIGHT

The next day, Muriel decided to sort out the poems that she would send to Mr. Tree for his uncle's perusal. She chose her favourite eight, and decided she would get her friends to help her pick the final four.

"I think I will invite Margaret, Jessie, Beth, Charlotte, May and Dot over and we can discuss which poems will suit best," thought Muriel. She herself found them all with merit, so she felt the decision would best be made by committee.

She sent notes to all her friends, asking them to a poetry judging competition, and naming Friday week at 2 p.m. as the time, and her house as the place. She hoped most of them would be able to attend.

Charlotte and Dot replied they would be pleased to come, and May was happy to have something to pass the long days. But Margaret and Jessie and Beth said they were unable to come, as they had much work to do on their music to get ready for a concert. However, in the same letter, Margaret said that her mother and father wondered if the various families would be available on the 18th of August for a friends' picnic in their garden.

Having queried with her parents, Muriel wrote back to Margaret in the affirmative, and marked the date on the calendar. She hoped the Days would all be able to come, or at least one or two of them.

On the poetry afternoon, Muriel provided each of her 3 friends with copies of all the eight poems she had chosen. It had taken her hours to make clean clear copies, but she felt they should both be read and spoken in order for the full impact to be judged.

First of all, they had copies of *Human Frailty*. Muriel read first, but determined that each girl would take her turn in performing the poems.

Human Frailty

Weak and irresolute is man;
The purpose of today,
Woven with pains unto his plan
Tomorrow rends away.

The bow will bend and smart the spring,
Vice seems already slain;
But passion rudely snaps the string,
And it revives again.

Some foe to his upright intent
Finds out his weaker part;
Virtue engaged his assent,
But pleasure wins his heart

'Tis here the folly of the wise,
Through all his art we view;
And, while his tongue the change denies,
His conscience owns it true.

Bound on a voyage of awful length
And dangers little known;
A stranger to superior strength,
Man vainly trusts his own.

But ours alone can ne'er prevail,
To reach the distant coast;
The breath of Heaven must swell the sail
Or all the toil is lost.

After she had finished, she said, "What did you think of it?"

"I don't like it," said May. "It is too depressing. It makes it sound like no matter how hard we try, we will never succeed."

"I like it," said Charlotte, "and I think there is a good choice of words – alliteration, that sort of thing. I like these lines, "a stranger to superior strength."

"It would not get my vote as one to send off," said Dot, "unless the others are even more morbid. It really makes man out to be so weak and feeble, and he may well be, but one doesn't have to go on about it."

"Let's put that one to one side, as not a likely candidate," said Muriel.

Now, Charlotte, you read the next one.

On the Daintiest

What is higher than a feather?
The dust my friend in driest weather.
And what is lighter than the dust I pray?
The wind that blows that dust away.

And what is lighter than the wind?
The lightness of a dandy's friend.
And what is lighter than the last?
And now my friend you have the task.

"I don't understand it," said May. "What does the last line mean?"

"It means that nothing is worse than a friend who lets you down," said Muriel. "I rather like the rhythm of this one, but it is only short. Perhaps we need one with more content. Shall we put it to one side?"

"I agree that it shouldn't be one of the four chosen, unless the others are not in the same league," said Charlotte.

"Now it is your turn to read, May."

Sonnet on Madam Malibian

Twas but as yesterday, a mighty throng
Whose hearts, as one man's heart, thy power could bow,
mid loud shouting hailed thee "Queen of Long"
And twined sweet summer flowers around thy brow.

And those loud shouts have scarcely died away,
And those young flowers but half forgot their bloom,
When thy fair crown is changed for one of clay,
Thy boundless empire for a narrow tomb.

Sweet mistress of the Heart! we list in vain
For music now – Thy melody is o'er
Fidelio had ceas'd o'er hearts to reign,
Tommambula had slept to rise no more.

Farewell! thy sun of life too soon has set
But morning shall reflect its brightness yet.

"Personally, I like this one, but I am not sure what it means. Who was Madam Malibian, anyway?"

"I don't know, but I think if we research it, we can find out, if it is important," said Charlotte.

"I think it is about a woman who dies before her time – a famous woman, and we are left to speculate whether she will be remembered."

"I think we should put this one in the 'promising' pile," said Dot.

"All right," agreed Charlotte, "and now you read the next one for us, Dot."

This world is but a fleeting show
In grand illusion given;
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow,
There's nothing true but heaven!

And folds the light on glory's plume,
As fading hues of eve'n;
And love and hope and beauty's bloom,
Are blossoms gathered for the tomb,
There's nothing bright but heaven!

Poor wanderer of a stormy day
From wave to wave we're driven;
And fancy's flash and reason's ray
Serve but to light the troubled way,/'
There's nothing calm but heaven.

"Another depressing one," said May. Your great grandmother must have had a very unhappy life, and everything went wrong. She really sounds sad. Was she like that, Muriel?"

"I don't think so, but of course one never really knows. She was married and had a son, and when his wife died, she raised my mother as her own for a few years before she died, quite young. I expect she had a hard life, but I didn't hear that she was depressed. That is her portrait over there."

The girls decided that this was a possible contender, as it was not as depressing as the first one, but they still hoped for something better.

Then it was time for Muriel to read again.

Guildford Castle

This Castle rose 'fore Norman William's reign,
And for its master owned a Saxon Thane.
Here gallant knights their powers oft esplay'd
To gain a smile from some obdurate maid.

And high born dames the happy visitor's crowned
While with applauding shouts the hills resound.
Then blazon'd banners decked th'embattled walls,
And midnight revelry illumin'd the halls!

Where are they now? No more the bending lance
Sheers off the gauntlet. Now the warder's horn
No more awakes the hunters with the morn.

No person beats the air in scutheon'd shale.
No gorgeous pageant crowds the happy gale.
The rampant nettle now o'erspreads the halls.
The mournful ivy mantled on the walls.

Sad are the ruthless ravages of time!
The bulwark'd turret flowing once sublime
Now totters to its basis, and displays,
A venerable wreck of other days.

"I like that one best of all so far," said Charlotte. "And it fits in well with the one written for the Queen. Perhaps we should have a theme, about historical places and people."

The other girls agreed, so this poem was put on the 'accepted' pile.

May read the next one:

Happiness

True happiness is not the growth of earth.
The search is useless if you seek it there.
'Tis an exotic of celestial birth.
And only blossoms in celestial air

Sweet plant of Paradise! Its seed is sown,
For here and there a plant of heavenly mould.
It rises slow and buds but ne're was known
To blossom here – the climate is too cold.

May all that friendship e'er can wish be thine,
All blessings earthly and all joys divine,
And oh may Heaven this blessing grant to me,
A friend sincere and may that friend be thee.

"I like the sentiment of that one," said Dot, "but it doesn't fit into our theme either. Let's put it on the 'perhaps' pile and use it if nothing better comes along."

Dot read the next one.

'My God' the beauty oft exclaimed
With deep impassionate tone.
But not a humble prayer, she named
The Highest and Holy One.

'Twas not upon the bended knee
With soul upraised to heaven
Pleading with heartfelt agony
That she might be forgiven.

'Twas not in heavenly strains to raise
To the great source of good
Her daily offerings of praise
Her song of gratitude.

But in the gay and thoughtless crowd,
And in the festive hall,
Mid scenes of mirth and mockery.
She named the Lord of all.

She called you that awful name,
When laughter loudest rang.
Oh when the flush of triumph came

On disappointments spring
The illest thing that fluttering knew,
The most unmeasured jest,
From those sweet lips profanely address
Names of the holiest.

I thought how sweet that voice would be
If speaking this prayer to heaven
My God I worship only thee
O be my sins forgiven.

"I find that quite a wonderful poem – full of meaning which should well be noted," said Dot, perhaps the most conservative of the girls.

"Yes, but it doesn't really fit our historic theme," said Charlotte. "I don't really like it all that much anyway. Let's see what you think of this last one of mine."

The Forget Me Not

Oh lady take this drooping flower
Twill call to mind our parting shot
This simple plant What 'ere my lot
In silence says, Forget me not.

Where on the ocean far away
Or tossed about in Botany Bay

When stormy winds howl round my cot
'Twill tell thy heart, Forget me not.

Even when 'tis withered think of me
Ah when 'tis withered think of me
Tho' I no more may see the spot
'Twill whisper there – Forget me not.

And now farewell Where 'ere I flee
All hopes and joys shall rest on thee.
Ne're from my heart my memory blot
I'll ask but this – Forget me not.

"I like that one," said Muriel, "but it doesn't fit into our theme. So far we have chosen, Madame Malibian and Guildford Castle, and of course the one about Queen Victoria. Which others should we include?"

"Let's choose the one on Happiness that we all liked, and also the one where the woman is chastised for using God's name in vain. I think that gives us quite a wide range."

"Do you all agree on that?" said Muriel, and they all nodded.

She went on, "Well, we all felt we should eliminate the ones that were rather depressing, which means we only have the one called Forget Me Not, and On the Daintiest as alternatives. I think On the Daintiest is perhaps a bit short, so I am happy to eliminate that, but I really do like Forget Me Not better than the one about the lady who uses bad language."

"Well, as it is your great grandmother's poetry, I think we should defer to you on that. We will include Forget Me Not and the one on Happiness, along with Madame Malibian, Guildford Castle, and the one about the Queen. All agreed?"

A chorus of yeses, and then it was time to talk of other things and take tea.

NINE

Muriel posted the chosen poems off to Mr. Tree, and he replied that he hoped he would know something more for her when they met again at the picnic in August.

One day in late July, her father, George Williams King, asked Muriel if she would like to accompany him to an auction of fine art, which was being held in Worcester. He was very keen to add to his collection, and as his only child, Muriel would one day inherit all his paintings, so he felt it was necessary for her to like the work as well. Also, he would value her opinions as an art critic, as she had studied the history of art at school and had many books on the subject.

Muriel enjoyed going on outings with her father, who was a handsome man. Perhaps 5'10" tall, he had a round face with laughing brown eyes, and a thick slightly curly at the edges moustache.

Muriel had always been a daddy's girl. She loved her mother, but she adored her father, and had always looked for his praise, accepted his criticisms, and sought his opinions. George was well known as the head of a large grocery store which was located on the corner of the Cross and St. Swithin's Street. He had originally been in the grocery business with his father and elder half brother in Guildford, but when his father died, he chose to come to Worcester to seek the family connection of his mother's brother, James John Williams.

The Williams family took him in and treated him as if he was a child of their own. They already had several children, all of them younger than George by at least 5 years, but it was George with his flare for the grocery business who was offered a partnership.

James Williams taught George all he knew and helped him with all the local contacts, and then when he felt that George was able to handle it on his own, he sold his share of the business to him and moved his family to Surrey, back to where George had come from.

The name on the grocery didn't change with the change in ownership. The name King never figured in it at all, but it was George Williams King who kept it successful and even increased its success over the years. Everyone liked George Williams King, who was in reality a rather shy man, who shunned the public eye beyond the necessary to keep on top of the business world. He was a member of all the various commerce-led groups and a Mason, and for awhile, at the suggestion of James Williams, he held a Councillor post. But he didn't really like the public aspect that was demanded of him in that role, and didn't stand a second time.

The auction was being held at Everill Frank and Co. whose auction rooms were located at 59 Foregate Street. Muriel was very excited about the prospect. They entered the auction room which was fairly well packed with businessmen and dealers. She caught sight of Mr. Henry Walker from Perdiswell Hall and smiled at him. He smiled back with the sort of look one makes when one doesn't really recognise someone, but in the back of one's mind is the thought that maybe one should.

Muriel, who enjoyed creating mischief, said to her father, "Do you know that man over there?" pointing to Mr. Walker.

"I recognise him as Henry Walker but I don't think we have been officially introduced."

"Let me introduce you," said Muriel, and drew her father towards Mr. Walker.

"I am so pleased to see you here, Mr. Walker," she said. "May I introduce you to my father, George Williams King, who is the proprietor of J.J. Williams and Co. Grocers, which I am sure you have had occasion to use."

Henry Walker looked even more embarrassed than before, as he hadn't really a clue who Muriel was or where he had met her previously.

“Pleased to meet you, I am sure,” he said to GW, extending his hand, which George Williams King shook, also looking somewhat bemused.

“And how is your daughter Eva?” asked Muriel. “I haven’t seen her since her ball to which you so kindly invited me and my friend May Stinton. You might not have heard, but poor May’s father died on the very day of the ball, so we returned home afterwards, full of our excitement, to have a very sad end to the evening.”

Henry Walker, much relieved to now be able to put the name and face to an occasion said, “I am very sorry to hear that. Please give Miss Stinton our sincere condolence on the sad loss of her father. And thank you for asking after my daughter, who is very well. I will tell her you asked.”

“I have been in correspondence with Eva since the ball. She is helping me in my quest to find my noble ancestors,” said Muriel, with a sweet ,innocent expression.

Her father, hearing of this for the first time, was about to ask what in heaven’s name she was referring to, when the auction appeared to be starting, so they all took their places to get ready for the action.

George was obviously well known to the assembled bidders and auctioneers. Earlier, Muriel and her father had registered their interest, and then examined the paintings which were later coming up in the auction. Her father pointed out the ones that most appealed to him.

“John Clayton Adams was a prolific painter,” he said, “and he did many paintings of Guildford, which is where I come from. I would like to bid on his paintings here, which are Highland Scenes.”

Muriel looked at them carefully. The views were of mountains, with heather in the foreground, and hills, no people, but majestic scenery. The most minute flower was executed with great care. She loved them and very much hoped they would get them.

“Also a favourite of mine is John Millar Nicholson, who comes from the Isle of Man, but he has painted abroad as well. I particularly like his shipping scenes.”

“Oh Father,” said Muriel, “Please buy that little one that Mr. Nicholson has painted for me. *In Pulrose Meadow*, it is called. It would go so well in my bedroom, and is small enough to take with me wherever I go.”

“I will do my best,” said George.

“One of Worcester’s most famous artists is Henry Harris Lines, and he has some paintings in the auction today too. He mostly paints aspects of the Cathedral and scenes around Malvern, but today his work is of an old woman in a church porch, and a magnificent view of trees. I will try to get them both,” said George.

George was as good as his word, and bid well beyond the expected prices for the various paintings to make sure that he got what he wanted. Although he was an astute businessman, he also knew the value of paintings as long term investments.

He managed to get all the paintings that he had pointed out to Muriel, and as well got a water colour by Richard P. Leitch of *Cattle Watering in a River Landscape.* He was particularly pleased with getting two river landscapes in oil by Edward Waite, whose work was well known in London Galleries.

George read to Muriel from the guidebook about Edward Waite.

Edward Wilkins Waite RBA was born at Leatherhead in Surrey on the 14th April, 1854, the son of a dissenting minister the Rev. Edward Waite, MA, and his wife Cleopha Julia (née Dukes). He was the second in a family of six sons and two daughters. He was born into an artistic tradition; his grandfather, William Watkin Waite, was a miniaturist, and his father an amateur watercolour painter. Three of his brothers became artists and two musicians. Waite was an amateur musician himself, playing the violin.

Waite was educated at Mansion House Grammar School, Leatherhead. In 1874 he went to Ontario, Canada and worked for a while as a lumberjack, a sketch book from this journey survives. Waite seems to have taken up painting seriously on his return. In 1878 he exhibited two pictures at the Royal Academy in London and again two in 1880. Thereafter, with only eight breaks, he exhibited at the Royal Academy every year. From the late 1880's Waite exhibited his work extensively, for example in 1893, in which year he became a member of the Royal Society of British Artists, he exhibited some 30 works in over twenty separate places.

George added, "I see that one place he is exhibited in is Bristol. We must go there soon and become familiar with more of his work."

So carrying the smaller works, and having delivery of the larger ones promised by the next day, George and Muriel were very pleased with their day as they went home to tell Mrs. King to make room on her walls for eight more paintings. The ninth one Muriel would take charge of herself.

TEN

August 18th dawned bright and beautiful – a perfect day for a picnic. The Tree family had a long-established tradition of al fresco dining, so opening their garden to several new sets of families was not at all daunting. Warren Tree knew George Williams King, and he had also known Tom Stinton, so it was only their families that would be new to him, and he had already met May and Muriel, so that only left Tom Stinton, the son, Mrs. Stinton and Mrs. King. He had never met the Day family, but he had heard of Mr. Day and his work in the education department as an assistant inspector of primary schools.

Soon everyone was intermingled on the lawn outside, with food and drink in abundance. His wife, Julie, was warmly welcoming, and especially enjoyed seeing a toddler, Bobs, who was just over a year old and starting to walk. Julie and Caroline instantly made friends and they left the children to sort themselves out. Una Day was the same sort of age as Carrie Tree, and Margaret, Jessie and Beth all knew May and Muriel from school. Harold and John stood to one side, and May and Muriel planned to disentangle themselves from their girl friends to try to establish more of a link with their new boy friends. The other Day boys, George, and Mark seemed to get along with the three Tree boys, so everything just took care of itself. Frank was soon to go to Warwick Grammar school and he was greatly looking forward to it. Charlie, who was very bright, but also very reserved, was also being sent to a new school near London to be prepared for the entrance exams to a public school such as Harrow, but he was dreading it.

May went up to John, “How lovely to see you again. Will you soon be off to Oxford?”

“Micklemas term is quite late starting, not til the very end of September. But with my clerical training I find I have much outside reading to do, so I keep busy.”

Muriel was quite annoyed to see that May had got a head start on her. “And when are you off to Camborne, Harold?” she asked?

“I start at the beginning of September. We put in many more weeks than the toffs at Oxford. I will go down the week before to find lodgings.”

“What sort of courses did you have to take to qualify to become a mining engineer?” asked Muriel.

“I took Latin, French, Arithmetic, Addition Mathematics, Euclid and Scripture Knowledge for my lower certificate and have just qualified for the higher certificate in French, Elementary Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Trigonometry, Statistics, Scripture Knowledge, and English essay.”

“I did Greek and Latin at school,” said May, “but I can’t see that it will do me much good.”

“What sorts of courses do you take to become a clergyman?” Muriel asked John.

“Well, this last year I had to do four papers and I chose to do Israel from the beginning of the Exile to 4 B.C., The Gospels and Jesus, the development of the doctrine in the early church to 451 A.D. and God, Christ and Salvation. Each paper was 10,000 words, so all together it was almost like writing a book.”

“Which College are you at?”

“Hertford. It is located in Catte Street, directly opposite the main entrance of the Bodleian Library. The college was originally founded as Hart Hall in 1281 by Elias De Hertford. Some of our famous students include John Donne, the metaphysical poet, Thomas Hobbes, the political theorist and William Tyndale who first translated the Bible into English. We are great contenders in the annual college boat race. I hope you can come and see it sometime.”

“Oh, I would love that. Do you have special parties or festivals?” asked Muriel.

"We have a Ball after the end of term each year, and of course all the Colleges get involved for the May Day celebrations when Magdalen College has their choir on the bridge at the break of dawn. Many visitors come for the day and go punting on the Isis."

"I shall keep next May 1st free and hope you will remember that you invited me," said Muriel.

"I would like to come too. Perhaps you can find a friend to pair me up with," said May.

"I'm sure I can," said John, "and I will, of course, write to you to let you know how things are going in relation to it."

Harold looked like he was trying to screw up his courage. "Will you write to me too?" he asked the girls.

"Of course we will," answered May for both of them. "I expect being so far away you won't get home very often."

"Probably not til Christmas and then again in the summer," said Harold. "I will check to see if we have any social occasions that I could invite you to. I understand that Cornwall is a very attractive county."

Mr. Tree gathered the whole group together for a photograph before they began to leave. Muriel was very keen to learn to be a photographer herself so took close note of what he was doing.

"Come now, boys," said Mr. Day. "It is time we made a move home." So the Days gathered together and went off back to their home in north Worcester.

Just before they left, Mr. Tree called Muriel to one side.

"I have heard back from my uncle James Arrowsmith regarding your great grandmother's poems. He thinks they are very fine, but not quite up to the sort of quality that normally gets made into a poetry book on its own. He suggests you try to get them published, one by one, in a lady's magazine, the *Women's Home Companion* perhaps or *Harper's Monthly Magazine*. Another suggestion is that you could write to Arthur Quiller Couch at Oxford University. He brought out an anthology of poetry last year called the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, and he might have some useful advice for you."

Muriel couldn't help but be disappointed, but she put a brave face on it. "Thank you for all your efforts, Mr. Tree. I will do those things you suggest and thank your uncle for me for his time taken over reading the poems."

May and Muriel and their families thanked the Trees for their hospitality and said that the next annual picnic would take place next August in Lansdowne Crescent. All agreed that it had been a very successful day, and May and Muriel were radiant as they went home.

ELEVEN

True to his word, it was not long into September when the girls received their first letter from Harold. He wrote it to both of them, but sent it to Muriel's address.

Dear Muriel and May,

I have now been at Camborne School of Mining for a week, and am absolutely fascinated by everything we are being taught. I don't know how much you know about this place, but I shall assume that you know nothing and tell you all about it. Camborne, which is near Redruth, is in the centre of the rich lodes of copper and tin. By the end of 18th Century there was a huge boom in copper mining here, followed shortly after by tin mining. Redruth became the richest mining area in the world. There are engine houses at East Pool and Agar Wine. One of the local men from here, Richard Trevithick, was the inventor of the high pressure boiler and the Corning beam engine. He died back in 1834, but he is still very much remembered.

We have a huge celebration each year on April 26 which is called Trevithick Day. Perhaps you would be so kind as to see if you can come to visit me at that time. One of our attractions is the Plough Inn on College Street ,which is 300 years old.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,

Harold Day

Muriel immediately went to visit May to share the letter with her. "I think we have made a conquest," she said. "I do hope our parents will allow us to go to visit him. I should so like to see Cornwall, and of course to see Harold again."

Not many weeks later, a letter arrived from John Day.He had settled back into a routine at his college, and all was going according to plan. He said he was very busy but would no doubt be seeing them at Christmas, and had not forgotten their arrangement for May Day.

"We will be very busy to spend time on April 26th in Cornwall and then go straight over to Oxford for May Day," said Muriel, but she was also sure that no problem would be too huge to keep them from keeping those dates.

Because their men (as they liked to call them) were not available for a social life at home, and because the girls felt committed to them and therefore not looking for other men to socialise with, they decided they should have a plan to keep them busy.

They decided to go to the Museum/Technical & Art College the next day to see if they could enrol for something that would suit them.

September always brought the much-awaited Choir Festival which involved the three choirs of Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester. This year Hereford was in charge of proceedings and the Kings arranged to have Mrs. Stinton and May go with them. While there, they ran into the Tree family. All the Trees were musical, or so it seemed. Beth played the violin, and in fact May and she had both had lessons from Mr. Elgar, who was now becoming so famous. Eliza Stinton sang in the choral society, so she was also very involved in music in Worcester, and Mr. Elgar conducted the sessions for the Philharmonic Choral Society each week. Mr. Tree knew Mr. Elgar from the Golf Club in Malvern, where they often had a friendly game on Friday afternoons.

Everyone enjoyed the concert, especially the new Delius, *Dance Rhapsody Number 1*, but as usual, the inclusion of *Elijah* by Mendelssohn was given the most rapturous applause.

May and Muriel wrote to both Day boys individually, but usually, when the letters came back, they were addressed to both women. The girls wrote about their classes at the Institute and their charity work. May had chosen to work with the School for the Blind, reading aloud from books for them once a week. Muriel worked with poor people and supervised the distribution of clothing which had been donated.

They wrote about going to the annual Fair in Worcester, always held on the 19th of September, which featured cattle, hops and cheese, but always had stalls for fancy goods and games of various sorts.

At least once a month a letter arrived from Harold.

October 5th

Dear Muriel and May

My studies are progressing well. I am taking the following subjects: Applied Mechanics and Practical Mechanics, Technical Drawing, Dynamics, Hydrostatics, Practical Mathematics, Practical Geometry, Practical Chemistry, Physics, Practical Mineralogy

I find the Dynamics class the hardest, so must spend more time on it. I find the science subjects to be easier than those we were doing at King's, so don't need much work on them.

Do you remember our discussion about Football when we met in the summer? Well one of the best rugby players in the world is living here. His name is Fredrick Jackson and he has appeared for the Cornwall team many times. I have not yet spoken to him, but have seen him in the public house.

There is a tradition for a rugby match between us and the Royal School of Mines in London each year. I am not really the right build for rugby and far prefer running, but I do work out with the team.

Have you heard about the submarine which was launched earlier this week? So many advances in science that it is hard to keep up with it all.

What sort of books do you girls read? I am a prolific reader but I must admit I seldom read fiction. I do like G.K. Chesterton. Have you read any of his books?

Yours sincerely,

Harold Day

By the next post a letter came for them both from John.

October 8th, 1901

My dears May and Muriel,

I think of you both busy at your studies and projects, and wish so much that I could be spending time with you. I am very busy as always, but wondered what you would think of perhaps meeting me in London one weekend.

The new musical play, "The Chinese Honeymoon," opened at the Royal Strand Theatre on the 5th of October, and has had very good reviews. Would it be of interest to you? I imagine you would take the train to London from Worcester on Saturday morning and I would endeavour to find suitable accommodation for you nearby. My father has relatives in this area, and although we don't hear from or visit them often, this would be a good reason for me to make their acquaintance again. If you write and say you are interested, I will look into it. I would suggest sometime in November, but will not book anything until I hear from you.

With great regard,

John

May had received this letter and rushed over the Muriel's house.

"Do you think we could go?" she said. "Do you think your parents would allow it?" I expect my mother would if yours would, but it would depend on where we were to stay in London. Do you have any contacts there?"

Muriel was as excited as May when she read the letter, and they went together to discuss the situation with Mrs. King. Muriel's mother was not at all convinced that going on the train to London was the sort of thing two young girls should be doing – and even though they would be accompanied to the theatre by a man they knew and respected, she still had her doubts. But she said she would discuss it with Muriel's father and would let them know.

They then went back to May's house to see how Mrs. Stinton would take the idea. Eliza was not a woman who had had much experience of the wider world, and she couldn't visualise that her daughter would be able to do such a journey with just another girl as companion. And to meet up with Mr. Day was being very brash, no matter how nice a man he was. Even though he was studying for Holy Orders, she still did not like the idea of the girls staying with his relatives whom they had never met – and John hardly knew them from the sound of things.

"I know how much you want to do this, girls, but I think you can only go if you have an adult to accompany you, and you stay at a hotel in a good part of London."

"What if we get Charlotte Walker and Evelyn Duncan to accompany us?"

"Well, I suppose they might be suitable, being that much older. But I do think you must give this a lot of thought before you rush off and reply to John."

So the girls went back to the King household and told Mrs. King what Mrs. Stinton had suggested, and asked how she felt about them going if they got the older girls to chaperone them.

"We will wait til your father gets home and get his views," said Mrs. King firmly.

So when dinner was finally over at seven thirty that evening, Muriel laid out the letter from John and the suggestions from Mrs. Stinton for her father's approval. He very much believed that Muriel should get as rounded an education as possible, and seeing London would certainly be something that would add to her experience. So he proposed that the girls ask Miss Walker and Miss Duncan, but that instead of just going for a weekend, they went for several days and also took in the main sights in London. He knew that Charlotte's father had written about his experiences in London and would be able to give them some advice about where to stay.

So, permission given, the girls went the next day to see Charlotte to see if she was willing to go with them.

"What a wonderful idea," she said. "I will write today to Dot to see if she could accompany us. You say the middle of November? Shall we pick the dates and then ask Mr. John Day to see if he can get theatre tickets to suit us, or shall we ask him to get the tickets first and then make our firm plans?"

"Oh, since it was all John's idea, I think we should let him get the tickets first. It needs to suit his schedule. I will write back to him tomorrow."

So she did just that, and it was not more than three days later when his reply came.

My dear Muriel and May,

I have contacted the Royal Strand Theatre, and they have agreed to save me five tickets for Saturday the 9th of November.

So if you find yourselfvesa hotel to stay in, I will make my way there as early as I can on that day, and we can take in some of the sights together and go out to dinner before we go to the theatre in the evening. I will find a boarding house nearby to stay in. Several friends have done this and can advise me as to whom to contact.

Greatly looking forward to seeing you all again.

From John

TWELVE

Armed with this new letter giving the date for their grand adventure, May and Muriel once again went to Lowesmore to visit Charlotte, and hoped to have a chance to talk with her father about what he did and saw when he was in London.

Charles Walker loved talking about the past, and especially the year of 1851 which he enjoyed greatly, with his two trips to see the Great Exhibition and many other sights of London.

He got out his diary, which he had carefully annotated so he knew just where to turn to find out the information they wanted. He read it out to them.

26 SATURDAY

Hard at work all day preparing the work to leave. At 1/4 to 8 left Worcester by Govt. train, Mrs. Jones accompanying me to Birmingham on a visit to her friends there & Uncle Wilson who goes in to London.

27 SUNDAY

Uncle went to one place & Mrs. Jones having to go to her friends Wilkins, who keep a Temperance Hotel I & her took cab there; after some tea, she, I & Wilkins went through the market & at 8 this morning Uncle & I started to London reaching there at 1/2 past 2; Father & Ned Walker meeting us in the Station, & afterwards Mr. Robt Eagle, (who later became my brother-in-law you know) *Alfred Harris & a Mr. Tait; to the Gen. Wolfe in Little Grays Inn Lane; dinner there; didn't like the place; took 1d packet to Westminster Bridge & secured lodgings with Mrs. Schofield, 21 Mount Gardens, Westminster Rd. for Father & Ned and I, back to Grays Inn Lane for luggage, calling in at Westminster Abbey.*

Evening prayers, dim, solemn, & rich effect; Up & out by 9 o'clock & away across the Green Park & Buckingham Palace to the Exhibition with many thousands of others; a 1/ paid we enter this palace of wonders; from 10 til 6 examining one portion of the building - the Brown & Sheffield ware; noting especially Gillotts stand on Pens & Holders, the Fine Arts Court, the Medieval Court, until tired with wandering we came out, had tea in the Knightsbridge Road at a French cafe & went to Drury Lane Theatre, which opened this night with a company of American & French equestrians; Caroline there, being the main attraction, a very dull American clown had to be hissed deservedly off.

28 MONDAY

This morning we crossed by the Horse Guards & went to the Vernon Gallery at Marlboro House; Hogarths paintings wonderfully minute & careful, full of deep meaning; modern paintings by Etty, Turner, Ward, Landseer, Roberts, Maclise, Stanfield & Others; then to the dreary collection at the National Gallery, then to the Coliseum, the music and quiet beauty of which was quite enchanting; a real waterfall too in the Swiss scene; in Regent St. we put Ned in a bus with a wrong address, & had to make to our lodgings after him; crossing the Horse Guards saw the Hero of a Hundred Fights - the great Duke of Wellington, a tottering feeble old man now, mount his horse; found Ned at home, then Father & I went to the Lyceum Theatre, highly delighted; the scenery is King Charming, very wonderful, Chas Mathews in Only a Clod, excellent, the general acting, costume reflect of Court Beauties, marvelous.

29 TUESDAY

This morning we went to the Regent Park Tropical Gardens, & saw the Hippodrome, the Elephant Calf, the Utan Utan & the rest; then across Regents and Hyde Parks to the Exhibition & there until 5 o'clock, in another department;, find Jerrold's Guide an invaluable companion; we all three went to the Princesses Theatre after, & saw Love in a Maze, in which the Keeleys are very humorous and the Alhambra in which they are as good, the scenery & dress tho good are under the Lyceum, but the piece is better written & the hits more pointed.

30 WEDNESDAY

Today Father went to seek Mr. Tringham out, & Ned & I to the Exhibition; had a good day in it; dear refreshments; noticed & used the Shoe Brigade; detachment of Ragged School boys equipped with brushes & blacking & set adrift;

Put Ned in omnibus home; down Holywell Street, the vile print & publication street; at lodging met Father & then Mrs. Tringham & Emma Brooks, her daughter, all went to Astleys nothing notable save Widdicombe the immortal.

31 THURSDAY

This morning to Lincoln's Inn & to Grays Inn Lane for intelligence of friends;

*Uncle Wilson went home this morning; through the City, saw the Punch office; to St. Paul's & looked round the Monuments; the 2d entrance fee removed to the Tower, after waiting some time & not getting in we three (Father, Ned & I) took rowing boat to the Tunnel and went through it; wonderful work, though not attractive; took Steamer to Woolwich; round the Dock yard etc. & back home; wrote to Mrs. Griffin for Cash; to Uncle Wilson; to bed early.*He stopped his narrative temporarily to explain that between his first and second visits to London, he had gone to his home in York to visit with his parents. Then on his second trip, he was accompanied by a different set of friends and relatives, including the girl he had hoped to marry.

6 WEDNESDAY

Wednesday morning at 1/4 to 10 to the Station & Great Northern to London; party: Mother, Uncle Charles & Lilla, Mrs. & Miss Miles! Miss Bacon, Miss Newcombe, Ned Thackray & self; spun merrily to London with much laughter & comfort; great to do at lodgings; Uncle Chas & I got to Mrs. Scofields, Mother & Miss Bacon in a crib next door but one, Ned to Mr. Whitwells at Camberwell & Mrs. & Miss Miles to their relatives in the Edgware Road & Miss Newcombe to hers in Red Lion Square & we did not hear of her after.

7 THURSDAY

All met this morning at Prince Albert's Model lodging - houses, in excellent, healthy, cleanly & no doubt, cheap cottages; then to the Exhibition; a pleasant wander down the main avenue & then we lost one half our party in the Machinery Court; Mrs. Miles, Miss Miles & their friends becoming detached from us; trying to find them, useless labour though by after accounts we must have been within a yard or two of each several times; in the gallery devoted to Musical Instruments, arms & clocks, bid good by to the Exhibition; pleasure damped by losing Mrs. & Miss Miles; trying with Mother, Miss B & Ned to find their lodging, in vain; Mother & Miss B. went to lodgings &

Ned & I to the Olympic Theatre; saw the Farens, & Compton; by the side of the Lyceum, a poor and vapid concern. Thursday morning Miss B, Mother and I to the Horse Guards having written to Mrs. M to meet us. No one came (they had not rec'd letter in time) then to the British Museum; spent two hours where we should have spent two days;

*Magnificent collection of autograph letters in the library & portraits in the other rooms; from there to the Duke of York steps to see the Queen pass in magnificent & gorgeous procession to prologue Parliament, after she had passed we walked nearer Buckingham Palace to see her return & were within a yard of the carriage & an unobstructed view of the first lady in Europe, a stout motherly woman now, looking very good tempered & warm; (*you might remember that I spoke about this at the Queen's Memorial Service*) we then took a cab to the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens, met Ned, Uncle Chas & Lil there;*

I left all to find Miss Miles out to go to the Opera; took Hansom to Edgware Road after much searching found their lodgings then past 5; left word for Miss M to be ready, & took cab to lodgings, calling at Leade & Cocks in New Bond St. to buy 2 pit tickets for her Majesty's; dressed, & returned to cab to Miss M's and waited for her dressing and then to Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket; the most noble theatre & largest theatre in Europe excepting La Scala at Milan; pit crowded so moved to the Stalls; the Opera was Don Giovanni; Coletti playing the Don, Mad Fiorentini Donna Anna. Lablache-Leporello. F. Lablanche-Masetto. Tierlina- Alboni, whose rich melodious-rounded tones I can never forget; Lablache as Leporello and Mde. Fiorentini as Donna Anna were to be admired, though the whole was very stately, very grand, the long tiers of boxes, curtained & concealed had a chilly look & the place lacked the comfort of the Lyceum; there was a ballet afterwards. Rosati dancing; cab to Edgware Road & Charring X; I hope she was delighted; it was enough to be in her company; we did not talk much & I had no courage to say what I wanted & I could not talk mere small talk.

9 SATURDAY

Saturday morning all of us continued, after much waiting to meet together at Hungerford Bridge & took Steamer from there to Greenwich; where we enjoyed ourselves much in wandering about the Hospital, & the Grounds & talking to the old veterans.

We went on to Woolwich & were very tired; Mrs. & Miss Miles, Miss B & and I left Mother, Uncle Lil & Ned there, & returned to London had tea at Mrs. M's brother's and then we all went to the Lyceum & saw King Charming & the Practical Man; but Mrs. & Miss M in a bus without scarcely saying goodbye & didn't see them after; when Miss B and I reached lodgings we found Aunt Charles, Mrs. & Tommy Eagle (future mother and brother-in-law you know) *had joined out crowded party; found I must leave by first train in the morning; had to seek lodgings at 1/2 past 12; got to a dreadful place a "lively bed" as Tommy who went halves with me in it, termed it. Good bye.*

The girls thanked Mr. Walker for telling them about his experiences, and commented on how interesting it was that he was spending time with his future in-laws in London, but at the time had no idea that they would be his in-laws.

Mr. Walker said that perhaps Mr. King would like to see his diary and told Muriel that she was welcome to borrow it, and to note how he had indexed the important happenings of the year on a front page.

"Thank you, sir. I am sure he will enjoy reading it very much," said Muriel, putting the small black leather diary into her bag.

Charlotte, having received notification of Dot's concurrence with the plan, suggested that they stay at the Mina House Hotel, which was very close to Paddington Station and convenient to all the sights they might want to see in London. So Muriel said she would write to the hotel on Craven Road and seek to reserve 2 rooms from the 7th to the 10th of November.

Charlotte told the girls when her father had left the room, that she hoped to spend some time while they were there visiting her sister, Marian. Her father had been very upset when she left home to live in London and work as a nurse, so they had not seen her now for several years, and Mr. Walker did not like them to even talk to her or write to her. Of course, Charlotte said, she and her mother and sisters did write to her, but they had to keep their correspondence secret, and had the letters from Marion come to Dot's house.

THIRTEEN

November 1st

Dear Muriel and May,

It has been such a time since I last wrote to you. I know you are excited about the trip to London that John has arranged for you. I was hoping to find something equally exciting to tempt you to come and visit me. The main thing about Cornwall is its wonderful scenery, but it is at its best in the spring. I will try to find an outing to attract you to come to visit me at that time.

I thought it would be fun if we exchanged favourite quotations. I told you I greatly admire G.K. Chesterton, so I shall put my first one in here.

'A good novel tells us the truth about its hero; but a bad novel tells us the truth about its author.'

I hope you have a wonderful time in London and hope you will tell me all about it when you return.

Yours,

Harold

The London trip started out on a cold and windy day. The girls decided to get the train which left Worcester Shrub Hill station at 11.35 a.m. and arrived in London Paddington at 2.35. The addition of a "Luncheon Car" made it a very special treat for them. They walked the 350 yards to the hotel and settled in, and then went for a walk around the area before it became dark, when they went in and had an early evening meal.

The Mina House Hotel had been built about twenty years before, and was painted white with wrought iron balconies. It stood apart from the other properties in the area because of the white paint.

Their bedrooms had been decorated along an Egyptian theme, with light coloured walls and rich fabrics. The dining room, where they had both their evening meals and breakfast, also had an Egyptian theme, and featured trome L'oeuil stone work. After a small repast of omelette, bread and salad, the girls gratefully retired to their rooms, exhausted after the day's activities but full of excitement for the rest of the week.

After a substantial English breakfast of eggs, bacon, sausage, toast and coffee, the girls walked out of the hotel and after half a mile they came to Hyde Park. Although the weather was far from clement, it was exciting to be in this much-written-about venue. They hired a horse-drawn cab to ride through the sandy paths around the park. There they saw the famous Serpentine Lake, but were not tempted to hire a boat and row out in the weather of the day.

After their ride, they bravely went back to Paddington Station, this time to try out the newly built underground service. They walked down into the earth, but when they got to the underground station, found it very like any other train, and got on to travel the two miles to Oxford Road.

Here the girls took in the shopping opportunities of Oxford Circus and went into Harrods, the world's most famous department store. Each bought something new to wear and presents to take back to their mothers and fathers at home.

After lunch, Charlotte said she would like to go off to visit her sister, and intended to take tea with her before making her way back to their hotel. Dot agreed to go with her. That left the younger girls on their own to decide how to spend the rest of the day.

May wanted to go to one of the museums, so they chose the Victoria and Albert,and spent several hours there looking at exhibits and paintings. They had decided to do the main London touristy things the next day when John would accompany them.

They met together again in the evening, and Charlotte reported that she had had a good visit with her sister, who was much smitten with one of porters from the hospital, a German, who had recently emigrated and lived in a nearby boarding house. Charlotte thought her sister seemed in very good spirits and wished her well, but knew that she dare not tell her father about this liaison, as he would not approve in the least.

The next morning, John arrived bright and early, just after the girls had had another large English breakfast, and hoped they were ready for their full day. He had got up very early to take the first train out of Oxford.

The plan was to go by underground train to the centre of the City and then see all the sites that one hears so much about – Buckingham Palace, Westminster Cathedral, the Houses of Parliament, St. James' Park and so on. They felt, to be fair to Mr. Walker, that they had to see as many of the sights as he had, so they could report back to him. They glimpsed the Crystal Palace but didn't really have time to go inside. They stopped at each venue and gazed at the famous site, and breathed in the atmosphere. They had read so much about London and now to be seeing first hand all these wonderful places was indeed a privilege. The girls were enchanted with the marvels that London had to offer and enjoyed every minute of the tour.

After lunch they decided to go back to their hotel for a rest before changing for dinner and the theatre. John said he would bring a carriage around at 5.30 and would book a meal for six p.m.

Adorned in the finery they had bought for the ball back in March, each girl looked lovely. The first port of call was the restaurant which John had booked, called Simpson's-in-the-Strand. The notice on the door (Established 1828) said it was reknowned for its great British roasts, carved at the table from magnificent silver-domed wagons.

Once inside, the girls marveled at the restaurant's oak paneling, leather seating and lofty ceilings. They chose the specialty of the house, roast beef with all the trimmings, and were more than replete when 7.30 came and they had to recover their cloaks and make a move for the theatre next door.

Outside the theatre there was a particularly foul-smelling beggar. It was a cold, wet, miserable evening, and the girls were moved to pity. Charlotte started to reach into her reticule for a coin.

“Don’t do that,” said John, harshly. “He is no doubt making up his penury and if he is made rich by the likes of you, he will never make the effort to get a decent job.”

Charlotte was taken aback, “You cannot tell me what to do with my money, Mr. Day,” she said, and very deliberately put two coins in the dish in front of the man. The others were astonished by her so calmly going against Mr. Day’s wishes.

“Men are expected to behave like men and work for their living,” he said, in an attempt to justify his opinion.

“And what are women expected to do?” asked Charlotte, just as aggressively.

“They are expected to follow the dictates of their husbands and fathers. Women do not have the intelligence to make their own decisions. My wife will trust me to make the right decisions and allow me to follow the path of leadership set out for us by the Bible itself.”

“I think perhaps we had better go into the theatre now, as we are getting cold and we want to make sure we are in good time to find our seats,” said Muriel, trying to smooth things down. But she was disturbed by the conversation. She had taken no part in it, but if she had had a point of view, it would have reflected that of Charlotte, and she was proud of her for speaking her mind. And as far as John saying his wife would need to follow his every command and dictate was concerned, well, just maybe John wasn’t the man for her after all.

The doors for the Royal Strand Theatre were opened promptly at 7.30 by the Manager, Mr. Frank Curzon. John had bought tickets for them in the dress circle which had cost six shillings each. The girls offered to pay for their own tickets, but John wouldn’t hear of it. They easily found their seats and had time to spare in order to read the programme. John had bought five at the cost of 2d each. The girls read from their programmes.

A Chinese Honeymoon. A musical comedy in two acts by George Dance, opened 5th October 1901. The role of Princess Soo-Soo is played by Beatrice Edwards. Directed by George Wilson. Musical Director, Ernest Vousden. Music by Howard Talbot, with additions from Caryll, Woodville, and Vousden. Additional Lyrics for this production by Murry, Greenbank and Adams. Costumes by Nathan from designs by Comelli. Choreography by Will Bishop and Fred Farren, scenic design by Philip Howden for Act 1 and Walter Hann for Act 2.

Having started out as a low-budget touring musical in 1899. A Chinese Honeymoon settled down in London. The Royal Strand Theatre stands in the Strand itself, opening in 1832 to stage burlesque and melodrama, reopening the next year as a theatre school, then becoming a theatre again in 1836. In 1850 it was renamed Punch's Playhouse, becoming associated in 1858 with H.J. Byron's burlesques.

It was a wonderful two hours, with memorable singing and melodies that would keep repeating in the girls' heads for the rest of the night. They were so very pleased to have had this opportunity and thanked Mr. Day profusely.

The carriage came to pick them up after the performance at 11 p.m. and dropped the girls at their hotel. John said he would be around after breakfast in the morning and they would go together to the 10 a.m. service at Church. After that he would accompany them to the train to go back to Worcester before he caught his train back to Oxford.

Promptly at 9.30 the next morning, John came again to their hotel. The Church they had chosen was All Hallows-by-the-Tower. As they walked along to the church he told them about it.

"All Hallows' greatest claim to fame is its association with famed diarist, Samuel Pepys. When the Great Fire of London raged in 1666, Pepys climbed the brick tower of All Hallows to watch the progress of the fire across London. He lived in Seething Lane, across the road from All Hallows."

None of the girls had read *Samuel Pepys' Diary*, but they had heard of it, and determined that they would get it out of the library when they got home.

John read from a leaflet about the church,

All Hallows by-the-Tower lays claim to being the oldest church in London. The original church was founded by the Abbey of Barking in 675,

and an arch from that first church still survives. Beneath the Saxon arch, traces of Roman pavement can be seen, evidence that this site was in use as far back as 2000 years ago.

All Hallows has a bloody history; due to its close proximity to the Tower of London, the church received the bodies of many of those unfortunates executed in that spot, including Archbishop Laud, Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More in the sixteenth century.

The church has strong associations with the United States; In 1644 William Penn, father of the founder of Pennsylvania, was christened here, and the second president of the USA, John Quincy Adams, was married in All Hallows while ambassador to the Court of St. James.

In the crypt is an altar believed to have been carried on the Second Crusade by King Richard II.

The service was well attended and very uplifting, and seemed a proper ending to their exciting holiday. John seemed involved in the service, and kept his head bowed in prayer while the girls looked all around, taking in the decorations in the church, as well as the fashions on the church goers.

After the service, there was time for a walk around the area and lunch before the girls caught the 4.45 p.m. through train, which featured a "Tea Car" and was due to arrive back in Worcester at 6.55.

John's train was at 5.35, and he would get to Oxford just before 7. They thanked John Day most sincerely for a wonderful treat, and said they had enjoyed every moment of it. He said that he too had had a weekend to remember and kissed a hand of each as he bid them goodbye.

On the long train journey home, Muriel couldn't contain herself. She had been thinking of John's comments about the beggar and his attitude towards women ever since he had uttered them.

"What did you think of what John said about women not being intelligent enough to make up their own minds about things?" she asked the others.

"Typical male attitude," said Charlotte. "My father thinks just the same. That is why he was so incensed when my sisters left home – because he hadn't arranged it for them and they hadn't asked his permission, and he just couldn't accept that they could possibly manage anything without his organizing it."

“My father was also similar to John in his attitudes,” said May. “In fact, it made me think of my father while he was saying it. I’m sure my father would have said much the same.”

“And what of your mother? Has she no life of her own?”

“Oh yes,” said May, “she sings in the choral society and goes to the Cathedral for services every day. And she has for many years attended the Worcester School of Embroidery. A few years ago, she won a prize, which we have framed on the wall.”

“What was that for?”

“It was in the Worcester Art and Loan Exhibition - First Prize for Lace making. She makes the most wonderful, delicate lace.”

“I can hardly see your father objecting to her making lace or singing or going to church. Did she always defer to him on everything?”

“Yes, she did, and that is partly why her widowhood has been so difficult for her. She tries to get my brother, Tom, to help her make decisions, but he is only fourteen and often doesn’t even know what she is talking about. She doesn’t seem to think she is capable of deciding things, so usually I tell her what to do. She doubts that I know anything either, being a mere woman, but at least things get done.”

“So you are not going to follow in her footsteps and do all that your husband dictates?” Muriel was insistent in getting an answer.

“How can I say what I will do until I see whom I will marry? If I were to marry John, I think I would be content to let him make decisions. He made a wonderful choice of play and sightseeing and church service for us this weekend. I expect he would ask my opinion on occasion, but mostly I would just go along with his.”

“And Dot,” asked Muriel, milking the situation for its full value, “what was your father like?”

“I don’t know really,” said Dot shyly. “I didn’t see much of him. I think mother deferred to his decisions however.”

“It looks like Charlotte and I are the only ones here who are willing to stand up for the females of our society and claim that we have as much right to make decisions, and as much intelligence as our male counterparts,” said Muriel boldly.

“Does your father allow your mother to make her own decisions, then?” asked Dot.

“He consults with both of us over everything that relates to our well being. He doesn’t ask us for advice about how he runs his business, but he took me with him to give my opinion on the paintings he bought recently. He values my intelligence, and I, for one, am not willing to let any man take that away from me.”

“And what if you had said you didn’t like the paintings he had chosen. Would he have then not bought them?” asked May.

“There was no question of that, as we both enjoy the same things. But I think if it had come to it, he would have deferred to my opinion. He made it plain that he was buying the pictures with my inheriting them very much in his mind.”

“So if you want a husband who will allow you to think for yourself, does that mean that your quest to get Mr. John Day to marry you is at an end?” said May with a huge smile on her face.

“It certainly means that I won’t make any rash decisions in that direction,” Muriel stated. “And I must ascertain if Harold holds similar views before I spend any more time with either of them.”

FOURTEEN

It was a few weeks later when a letter arrived for the girls from John.

He had cut an old review from the *Tatler* and sent it, asking the girls if they agreed with it.

The play-going public owes many a debt to Mr. W.S. Gilbert, and is particularly grateful to him for having discovered, for stage purposes, the land of the Mikado. Countless thousands, if not millions, of theatre-goers and music lovers have found enjoyment in all parts of the world in the delightful comic opera which brought forth the full brilliance of its witty author and inspired Sir Arthur Sullivan in the composition of some of the very best music which ever emanated from his gifted brain. Again, but for the piece in question, it is doubtful if we should have had the gay and tuneful Geisha [Daly's, London, 25 April 1896] or the clever and melodic San Toy [Daly's, London, 21 October 1899]. So that, directly and indirectly, we owe much indeed to the author and composer of The Mikado [Savoy, London, 14 March 1885].

Our indebtedness is further increased by A Chinese Honeymoon, which is suggestive of the method of Mr. Gilbert even if it does not remind one of the unceasing melody and the musical skill of Sir Arthur Sullivan. The scene is laid in China at the present time, and the story is sufficiently whimsical and the various complications are undoubtedly funny although – a pardonable fault in comic opera – they are decidedly extravagant. The Emperor seeks a bride who will marry him "for himself alone," so he dispatches an English skipper, who has been promoted to the post of Lord High Admiral of the Chinese fleet, in search of the paragon in question. But the conditions are rather hard, for the high state of the Emperor is withheld and the unlucky admiral has to pretend that he represents a billposter.

It may be easily understood that the admiral returns from his quest without success. As a lingering death is the penalty of his failure it need hardly be said that he resorts to all sorts of expedients in order to avert the punishment.

As there are various fair ones still at hand the ball is kept rolling, and some comical effects are obtained by making him abnormally tall. It also be said that the imbroglio while diverting is innocent enough, and, save for some questionable lines in the second act, there is nothing whatever to offend Mr. Gilbert's "young lady of fifteen," or anyone else for that matter.

If Mr. Dance will just revise his libretto – it only means the cutting out of half-a-dozen lines – he will have given us an amusing story without a flaw. "For this relief much thanks," for although the London playgoer may not be in the throes of "bitter cold" just yet he is decidedly "sick at heart" when he thinks of the vulgarity and suggestiveness which prevail in many of our so-called theatres just now. Mr. Howard Talbot's music is right, cheerful, exhilarating, and some of it is certainly of the order known as "catchy." Other composers, including Mr. Ivan Caryll and Mr. Ernest Vousden, who conducts the music of the piece, also contribute effective numbers.

A great element in the success of the production is the comical appearance of Miss Louie Freear, who plays the "slavey" and keeps the house in a roar of laughter whenever she is on the stage. Her quaint facial expression and her curious antics belong to herself, and would seem to have been given to her by nature as compensation for her diminutive size. As a contrast the Emperor is impersonated by an actor of unusual height, Mr. Picton Roxborough, whose bland and perpetual smile is apparently so natural that it is constantly enjoyable. "The long and the short of it" in this piece are in every way excellent and, moreover, the idea is not run to death. The cockney tradesman is humorously represented by Mr. Lionel Rignold, and Miss M.A. Victor carries out in her well-known style the comical idea of an "official mother-in-law" imported from England by the Emperor, who rules the roost and inspires dread even within the bosom of the august potentate who has "invented" her.

A newcomer, Miss Beatrice Edwards, who appears as the princess of the customary type, has a pleasant voice which wants proper control. The

production is beautifully mounted the scenery and costumes being capital in all respects. In regard to the former it is curious to observe that while the programme gives the names of tradesmen, the names and addresses of the people who have supplied the costumes and the hats being duly set forth, no mention is made of the scenic artist. This is quite in keeping with the modern manager, who no longer regards the painter of his scenery as of the same importance as the dressmaker and milliner. (The Tatler, London, Wednesday, 16 October 1901, p.128)

He had also included a recent review of the leading actress.

Miss Beatrice Edwards was the well-known possessor of a beautiful voice long before she became a member of a theatrical company. In June, 1898, full of nervous fears, she made her début as Muriel in The Old Guard at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. The engagement of the company there extended over four weeks, in each one of which a change was made in the programme. The comic operas performed included Pepita, Olivette, and Madame Favart, in all of which she appeared.

Then almost immediately an engagement followed to play Mimosa in The Geisha on tour. Four two years she continued in that and only resigned it at last to play Maia (another of Miss [Marie] Tempest's parts) in A Greek Slave. Her appearance at the Strand Theatre, where she is the Princess Soo Soo in A Chinese Honeymoon, made an excellent impression, and there is little probability of her being permitted to leave London for long.

Previous to going on the stage Miss Edwards was one of the Royal Welsh Choir, and had the honour of singing before Queen Victoria. She was only sixteen when she became a member of that celebrated organisation, with which she paid a professional visit to the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893. Miss Edwards is a native of Cardiff and confesses that her real ambition in life is to play a good part in a successful drama. Her only superstition connected with the theatre is a very uncommon one. She believes that it is unlucky to whistle in a dressing room. Miss Edwards lives at Holland Park [west London], and in addition to being a charming singer is an adept at tennis.

(The Tatler, London, Wednesday, 19 November 1901, p.276

He enclosed two posters of the play bill for the girls to put on their walls.

The girls were thrilled to receive the review and the article about the lead actress, and especially the posters, and wrote immediately back to thank John once again for his thoughtfulness.

Muriel, in the meantime, had written a special letter back to Harold.

December 3rd

Dear Harold,

I very much enjoyed your quotation from G.K. Chesterton, and think it is very true.

Today we went to the Christmas Fair in Worcester, and I managed to buy most of my Christmas presents. When will you be back for the holidays? Will we get a chance to see you? I have bought you a present which I think will be of interest to you, so you must come to see me to collect it before Christmas.

I have seen an article in the paper saying that Australia is about to give women the vote. Of course New Zealand did it many years ago. How do you feel about this? Do you think it will be long before women have the vote in England?

'Literature is a luxury; fiction is a necessity.'

Affectionately yours,

Muriel

Harold's response was not long in coming.

December 6th

My dear Muriel

What a wonderful letter, and I am so pleased that you are looking forward to my return. I can only say that I am counting the days until December 20th, when my term will be finished and I will be returning to Worcester for two weeks. I will come to your house on Monday December 23rd, about noon, if that is convenient.

I applaud the Australians and New Zealanders for giving the vote to women. I hope it will soon come to this country too, but I fear it may not be for a while, as there is such a feeling in the current House of Commons against it.

One more quote for good luck. 'I owe my success to having listened respectfully to the very best advice, and then going away and doing the exact opposite.'

Best wishes from Harold

This was the first time that either girl had had a letter sent to just one of them. Muriel had engineered this by making her letter rather more personal than usual, and implying that she had a very special regard for Harold Day. But she was very pleased to see that his views not only coincided with hers regarding women's rights, but that he seemed in his choice of a quote to be encouraging her to rebel. He was her sort of man.

FIFTEEN

John had much longer holidays as the terms at Oxford were only 8 weeks long. He had been back in Worcester since early December. But with being busy preparing for Christmas at the Perdiswell Church, and with entering into the true spirit of Advent, he did not feel it was appropriate to instigate any social activities with the girls until the penitential season was over.

Muriel told May, that as far as she was concerned, she had no further romantic interest in John Day, and she would be spending her efforts in trying to ensnare his younger brother. She had patience and knew that the three years that it would be before Harold finished his course would mean that he would have time to mature considerably.

Harold arrived promptly at noon on the 23rd. The King house was decorated to the hilt – with a huge wreath on the door, and holly, yew, laurel and ivy hanging from every picture rail. The tree was huge and every inch was covered with cranberry chains, candles, golden ribbon bows and homemade golden stars. Harold said that their house was still unadorned, as John had forbidden them to do any decorating at home until Christmas Eve, when Advent was officially over.

Muriel was very pleasantly surprised by the change in Harold. In only the four months since she had last seen him, he had grown up a lot. His moustache added maturity to his face, and really suited him. He had grown another inch or two in stature, but the main difference was that he seemed so much more confident. She invited him in and they had a cup of coffee in the parlour with her mother. Her father was very busy at work with it being so close to Christmas. After coffee, Mrs. King said she needed to do some preparation for the Christmas pudding and excused herself.

Since they wouldn't be seeing each other on Christmas Day itself, Muriel decided they should open their gifts for each other there and then.

Harold opened his present first. "What a wonderful gift and ever so useful to me." She had bought him a black leather covered book*, Traverse Tables, with an Introductory Chapter on Co-ordinate Surveying.*

"I had to get advice to know what to buy for you, and as this is a new book I was hoping that you had not already acquired it. If so, the bookshop has agreed to change it for you."

"No, I don't have it," said Harold leafing through the pages and pages of charts. "I shall treasure it all the more because it comes from you."

Now it was time for Muriel to open her gift. She suspected it also was a book, but when she unwrapped it she found three small books, all with red leather covers and gold lettering*, Fra Angelic, Watteau and Burne-Jones.* There were illustrations from each artist, with a description of when, how and why each picture was painted. Muriel was beside herself with excitement. "I have never had such a lovely present. Thank you so much."

They looked into each other's eyes, and the same emotion was evident to the other. Harold gently leaned forward to kiss Muriel on the cheek. She, being the bolder by far and anticipating the gesture, moved her head slightly making it inevitable that his lips should meet hers.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he said to cover his confusion, knocking over his cup of coffee.

"Oh please don't worry," she giggled as she wiped the coffee up with a serviette. "You know as well as I that you really wanted to do that."

So once again they kissed, and this time Harold hit the target exactly.

After a few more minutes, Harold said he really must be leaving, and went to the kitchen to say goodbye to Mrs. King and wish her a Happy Christmas.

"I hope we will be seeing a lot more of you, young Harold Day," she said.

"You can be sure of that, Mrs. King," he replied and Muriel let him out of the house with a last furtive kiss.

The dining table at the Kings' house had a beautiful centerpiece made of a holly wreath complete with red berries, and a setting of white candles in the centre.

May and her family were invited for Christmas Day, and they had all attended church together in the morning and opened their family presents.

Dinner consisted of goose, stuffed with chestnuts, pork and apple and served with apple, gooseberry and bread sauce. Plum pudding was, of course, the dessert.

Muriel received a lace edged handkerchief from May and her family, and Kings in turn gave the Stintons a huge box of specialty chocolates. Muriel gave her father a hefty tome*, The Great Boar War*, by Arthur Conan Doyle, and *The Poems of Robert Browning*, to her mother. For May she had chosen a novel called *John Halifax, Gentleman* by Mrs. Craik. From her parents she received a wonderful leather bound, gold edged *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, which her father said was her delayed birthday present as well, but nothing could compare to her present from Harold.

After dinner the assembled company got down to the main feature of the day: the parlour games which included Charades, and Blind Man's Bluff. Then Mrs. King sat at the piano and they all sang carols until they could think of no more.

On December 27th, John Day called by Muriel's house. He had sent a Christmas card which had arrived on Boxing Day, expressing his intention to call and asking if May might be invited to be there as well, as he had presents for both of them.

John, looking as handsome as ever, arrived promptly. Muriel and May ushered him into the parlour, and he marveled at the Christmas decorations. He presented the wrapped gifts, again, obviously books, and the girls each gave him a similarly sized package.

They eagerly opened them. Muriel had been given *Lorna Doone*, by R.D. Blackmore and May, *The Hunting of the Snark* by Lewis Carroll.

John had been difficult to buy for, but the girls had felt that religious books could not offend. May had bought him *Great Souls at Prayer* and Muriel after much looking had finally decided on a small red leather bound *Geographical Dictionary*.

He seemed pleased with both books but his smile to May, for having chosen a religious book, was that bit warmer. If he noticed a slight cooling in Muriel's attention to him, he didn't comment on it, but it seemed to Muriel as if he and May had grown closer since the time spent at the theatre, and was pleased that things were nicely now falling into place for the four of them.

Harold Duncan Day

SIXTEEN

January 1902

After the boys had gone back to their respective school and university, May and Muriel continued to correspond with them on a regular basis, but now Muriel only wrote to Harold and May only wrote to John. They didn't share their letters with each other quite as they had before, possibly reading out bits, but not letting the other read the entire contents.

Muriel wrote to Harold:

Dear Harold,

I know that you are dedicating your life to finding tin, and I am sure that is a worthwhile occupation, but it occurs to me, that I really know very little about what tin is used for. Perhaps in your next letter you could enlighten me.

Here is my quotation for you.

"The best way to become acquainted with a subject is to write a book about it."

Do you know who said that? Perhaps I should write a book about tin and tin mining so that I could learn about it properly.

Love,

Muriel

Harold's reply in just over a week went like this:

Dear Muriel

I think what you quoted came from Disraeli. Am I right?

You asked about the uses for tin. There are so many it is hard to list them all, but the main one is to use as a coating for iron to keep it from rusting. That is called galvanising. There are two forms of tin but the one that has most use is called white tin, and it is formed by heating grey tin above 55.76º. It will turn back to grey tin if its temperature falls below that level, so small amounts of antimony or bismuth are added to white tin to keep it from doing that.

Tin cans are the most familiar example of galvanising. The can is made from steel and then a thin layer of tin is applied inside and out to keep it from rusting. Tin is also used in the Pilkington process of making glass. Molten glass is poured onto a pool of molten tin. The glass floats on the surface of the tin and cools forming solid glass with flat parallel surfaces – as you need when you make window glass. Tin combined with copper makes bronze, and with lead it makes pewter and solder.

I hope you don't find that too boring, but you did ask. I am always pleased to have a suggestion as to what to write in a letter, as it sometimes is hard to think of things to say.

My quotation for you is, 'I have made this letter longer because I have not had time to make it shorter.' Who said that?

Love,

Harold

The late winter and early spring was a rather dull time for Muriel, so she decided she would follow up Mr. Tree's suggestion regarding her grandmother Martha Trew's poetry, and try sending it to various magazines. She had copied out each poem in a fair hand for the poetry-choosing session with her friends, so she needn't do that again. She just had to decide which to send to whom.

To make her list of publications that might suit, she visited the local bookstores, and the library, and also spoke with the literature tutors at Victoria Institute. Her short list was as follows:

The British Women's Club Health and Beauty Magazine. She sent them the poems called *Human Frailty* and *The World is but a Fleeting Show.*

Everyday Housekeeping was sent - *Forget me Not* and *Happiness.*

The Young Woman – a hard one to send to, as all the poems were rather old fashioned, but she ended up sending *My God* which was the poem about the woman who kept taking God's name in vain.

MacMillan Magazine – She thought the poem about the Queen might suit them best.

And then there were two magazines which were due to start later this year, but they apparently would already be considering material to put in it. She thought she would send a poem to each of them – The Hibbert Journal with *Sonnet on Madame Malibian* and The Women's Magazine with *Guildford Castle* with the illustration her grandmother had done to go with it.

Harper's Bazaar was an American Magazine, mostly fashion but perhaps worth trying. *On the Daintiest* could do for them.

So matching the likely audience for the magazine with the content of each poem, she sent them off, and then settled back to await the result.

May 10th, 1902

Dear Muriel,

I know it will be your birthday soon. I hope you have a very wonderful day.

We had a good time at the Trethisick Festival. I had hoped you might come, but there is always next year. I missed having you here. Lots of the men had their girls and I felt rather left out, since I would have been proud to show you off as my girlfriend.

The weather here has been very good, and I am really enjoying the extra mildness after the sharp winds we often had in Worcestershire.

Here is my quotation for this letter. I know you are an artist so I hope you won't be offended:

'Painting: The art of protecting flat surfaces from the weather and exposing them to the critic.'

Love from Harold

June 1st

Dear Harold,

I didn't know your quote, but I have got a book from the library on quotations but I couldn't find it in that either. You will have to tell me.

My art work is progressing – although it isn't the conventional art of paint on paper. I have made some very ornate tables in my woodworking class and carved them with patterns. I can't wait for you to come home so I can show you.

I am still pursuing the idea of having great-grandmother's poetry published and have sent each of the poems that our little group read to different magazines. I hope that at least one of them will find success. But I haven't heard anything yet.

Will you have time off in the summer? I expect your term will be finished by the end of June, but I don't really know. Perhaps your terms are longer than other colleges. John will be home soon as Oxford terms are only 8 weeks. May can hardly wait to see him again. I am wondering if he will ask her to marry him. They do seem very close.

It is hard to think of things to write about. Perhaps you could ask me questions too. I could rant and rave about the local gossip, but somehow I don't think that would interest you. I hope to be seeing you soon.

My quote for this letter is:

'Let each man exercise the art he knows.'

Love,

Muriel

John and Harold came home, and May and Muriel spent many exciting times with them, cementing their friendship, but no rings were exchanged that summer.

Muriel got letters back from three of the magazines. Two said that they were sorry but the material was not suitable for their publication. One said they had already chosen their material for the near future. Not only were the poems rejected but Muriel felt like she herself had been rejected, even though she hadn't written them.

Muriel became more depressed as each letter arrived. She had so much hoped to share her grandmother's work with the world. But at least she had tried. She had done her best.

The only other thing of consequence that happened in that year was that Mary Walker, Charlotte's mother, died suddenly of apoplexy. It was a great shock to the family, but Mr. Walker kept up his rule about the girls who had left home not coming back, even to the extent of barring them from their mother's funeral. Charlotte thought he was starting to "lose it" himself and found him more and more difficult to cope with.

SEVENTEEN

On a morning in early November, her parents greeted Muriel at breakfast and there at her place was a most enormous package. She lifted it, and found it very heavy, so she guessed that it was most likely books of some sort. She opened it eagerly and to her surprise there were only two books inside – a two volume dictionary. Muriel opened the front cover, and there on the front page, her father had written, "To Muriel with Love from Father, November, 1902". She wondered why her mother's name had not also been appended, but she knew also that the choice would have been her father's. She looked at the title – *A Standard Dictionary of the English Language* by Funk and Wegnalls, New York and London. It had been published in America and the publishing date was 1902. Her father explained that this was a late birthday and early Christmas present for her.

"But Father," she said, "these are American dictionaries. Did you know that?"

"Of course, I did," he said, "and they are the biggest and best ones I could find. They put in both English and American spellings and definitions when there is a difference. I think you could not find a more complete collection of words anywhere else, in a form that was able to be used at home, of course."

"They are wonderful, Father and Mother," said Muriel. "Thank you so much."

She perused them, and found many colour plates which she knew she would enjoy looking at in depth, and also an atlas at the back of the first volume.

“There are 2286 pages,” she said, “not including the atlas or the section on disputed pronunciation and abbreviations and contractions which aren’t numbered. That should keep me busy for awhile.”

“It is the sort of book that will be in use in one hundred years time – and that you can pass down through the generations,” said Mr. King, pleased with his choice and Muriel’s response to it.

Muriel had decided earlier in the week to invite her best friends around for a dinner party which she herself would cook. And as it would be late, she would invite them all to stay the night.

She had invited May, Margaret, and Jessie Tree. She would put Margaret and Jessie in the guest room and May could sleep in her room, so they would all fit in.

She worried over her choice of menu, as she wanted it to be interesting and different, but not too difficult. She decided to consult Mrs. Beeton for ideas. Luckily the book had provided menus for a party of eight for the autumn, (and since she would be cooking for her parents and the servants as well that made eight) and looking through the five choices, Muriel chose the first on the page.

Julienne Soup

Turbot with Shrimp Sauce

Braised Chicken

Boiled Potatoes and Vegetable Marrow

Mrs Beeton’s Choice of a Cream Dessert sounded too bland and pale so Muriel instead chose Chocolate Parfait.

She also spent many hours looking at the diagrams in the book at the various folds for napkins, and not able to decide which she liked best, she decided it would be fun to have each one in a different fold – The Bishop, The Fan, The Boat, The Palm, The Lily, The Cactus, The Slipper and The Pyramid.

“Are you all ready for the party this evening?” asked her mother.

“I have bought all the food and studied the recipes. I shall make a start on the dessert later this morning, and then make sure I have time for the starter and main course after lunch.”

“Would you like me to help you, or you could ask Amy or Emily to help with the vegetables?”

“No, tonight my meal will be for everyone, and I will prepare extra for you and Amy and Emily to eat on your own, away from the dining room. I hope you don’t mind my taking it over, but I think I would like to have full control of the course of events for the evening.”

“Yes, my dear,” said her Mother. “We will let you have your way, and hope that your good works will include washing up.”

After dinner, which was acclaimed an enormous success by all the girls, Muriel had planned a special parlour game using her new dictionaries.

After the girls were shown them, and expressed their awe at the size and volume of words, Muriel said, “Now let us take turns to find a word, and then all the others of us will have to guess what it means. I think we should each look for our word in the page just before or after one of the beautiful coloured plates – and we should choose words which are not so difficult that no one could guess – but not so easy that everyone would know. Since it is my game, and they are my books, I shall go first to show you how it works. I have paper and pencils for each of you to jot down your thoughts.

Taking the first volume – A to L – Muriel flicked through to find the first coloured insert which was pictures of dozens of butterflies.

“I have found my word. It is BUTTWOMAN. You all have five minutes to write down what you think it means, and I can spend that time looking at the pictures.”

The girls seemed reluctant to write anything down at first, and stared around the room for inspiration. Finally the five minutes were up and everyone had made an effort.

Muriel said, “May – you go first. What did you write?”

“Buttwoman – a lady with a big behind.” Everyone laughed.

Margaret came next, “I think it is a woman who fills water butts.”

Only Jessie was left, “I have put a woman who makes butter.”

Muriel laughed, “You are all partly right, so I think you can all have 1 point – as it is a woman – but it is *a church cleaner or pew opener’s assistant.* Isn’t that odd? Who would have thought it had anything to do with a church? Who wants to have the next go?”

“I want my turn now,” said Margaret and she took the first volume from the table where Muriel had laid it. Going to the section on Birds, she chose the word BIOD. Again the girls set to the task and when the allotted time had passed they offered their ideas.

“As you are looking in the bird section – I think it must have to do with birds – perhaps it is a rare species,” said Muriel.

“Mine is a garment worn next to the body,” Jessie softly offered.

“I also thought of birds,” said May, “perhaps a stuffed bird.”

“No points to anyone for that,” said Margaret, “as it means *animal magnetism* – which I think you could say was a life force.”

“Can’t we have a point for saying that it had something to do with birds?” asked May.

“No, I think our marking has been far too generous so far anyway,” answered Margaret.

“My turn,” said May, taking the book from Margaret. “My word is GECK.”

Soon the time was up and the guesses began again.

“To look at something carefully.”

“A bird with a funny call.”

“A mixture.”

“Mine is something that is not nice, unpleasant,” said Jessie, the last to guess as usual.

“Well, I think we can give you four points this time, Jessie,” said May, “as the real meaning is scorn or derision, a jeer or taunt. And none of that is very nice.”

Jessie looked very pleased that she was doing better now. Her picture in the dictionary was of Armies of the World, and the word she chose was EUXANTHIN.

"I rather think it might have something to do with medicine," said May.

"I also think it is a chemical word, and perhaps to do with ingredients in paint," said Muriel.

"I thought might relate to being exalted in some way," put in Margaret.

Jessie announced, "I think I will give five points to Muriel, as it means *a yellow pigment made from the urine of animals fed on mangoes*."

"Oh, you didn't have to add that detail," said Margaret, somewhat offended by the word urine.

"Don't be so soft, it is just a word which we all know the meaning of. But is it a foreign word?" asked Muriel.

"Yes," admitted Jessie, the pigment comes from India and China, but so do many of our pigments, so I didn't think that made it too difficult."

"Now add up your scores, and the winner will have this prize," said Muriel showing a wrapped package.

They busily added their points, and called them out in turn: Jessie had 5 and May and Margaret each had 1 but Muriel, with some embarrassment had to admit that she also had the top score of 5.

"I expect you had a look at all the words in front of the coloured pages before you thought of the game," said May with a sly smile.

"I must certainly did not, but of course, I cannot win the prize, as I bought it," said Muriel, "so it must go to Jessie."

Jessie blushed as she went over to where Muriel was sitting to collect her prize. It was wrapped nicely, but everyone wanted to see what it was so she opened it straight away. It was a small book called *The Modern Hoyle* – all about how to play all sorts of games. Muriel's father had one in his study which they used all the time. Jessie, also coming from a game-playing family, was very pleased with it.

So the excitement of the evening over, the girls went to their various beds and Muriel was well pleased with her party.

Carrie, Margaret, Jessie and Beth Tree

Taken about 1901

EIGHTEEN

1903

Muriel had a plan. It was not really a new plan as she had been mulling it over in the back of her mind for months, if not years. She wanted to help the cause of women's suffrage, and she wanted to do it in Worcester.

The New Zealanders had allowed women to vote back in 1896, and the Australians had made the change last year. "Great Britain is supposed to be the most influential country in the world," she thought, "so we should be leading in this fight, not holding back." It was important that women's voices were heard and their votes counted.

Muriel knew that May wouldn't help her much as she was so much not wanting to do anything that might annoy John. And you can be sure that John would not approve of what Muriel was going to do. Harold, on the other hand, would be proud of her. She hadn't actually told him in detail what she was proposing, but she knew that he felt like she did, that women needed to take their rightful place beside men, not two steps behind.

Muriel decided that her most likely ally in her plan was Charlotte. The youngest of the Walker girls, Charlotte was caring for her father who was getting more senile by the day. Her oldest sister, Mary, was not very capable so the entire burden fell on Charlotte. She might not be able to get out to march with Muriel, but she could help her plan the campaign.

Muriel decided that she would collect all the information that she could find on the subject and pay a call on Charlotte, and pick her brain about what to do next.

From the middle of the 19th century, many women campaigned peacefully for the right to vote on the same terms as male voters. They organised themselves into groups, held meetings, sent petitions to Parliament and tried to persuade MPs to change the law to enable them to vote.

In 1897 all these small groups came together to form one large group, The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) led by Millicent Fawcett. However, the Government continued to ignore the activities of the NUWSS and, at the beginning of the 20th century, women seemed no nearer to winning the right to vote in parliamentary elections, although they could do so in municipal ones.

In 1903 the campaign for women's "suffrage" or the right to vote entered a new phase. That year Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Christabel, Sylvia and Adela started the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in Manchester. The motto of the WSPU was "Deeds not words". The Pankhursts and their supporters were determined to win the right to vote by any means.

The Pankhursts led an extremely well-organised campaign and established local branches of the WSPU throughout the country. The Union published a weekly newspaper called *Votes for Women* to inform members about recent developments and to raise much needed money. Supporters were encouraged to wear clothes, sashes and badges in the Union's colours of purple, white and green to bring attention to themselves and their campaign. These items could be purchased in specialist WSPU shops.

Muriel purchased a copy of the petition with which Parliament had been appealed to previously, so that she could use it as a template for what she intended to do.

To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of the undersigned the Head Mistress and Assistant Mistresses of the Dulwich High School

Sheweth

That a measure is now before Parliament for extending the franchise to all men householders in the United Kingdom.

That by this Bill two millions of the least educated section of the Community will be added to the electorate, while educated and intelligent women, who are head of households are excluded from the operation of the Bill although they contribute equally with men to the taxation of the Country.

That among the persons so excluded are women landowners, who form one seventh of the land proprietors of the country; women of means and position living on their own property, schoolmistresses and other Teachers, women farmers, merchants manufacturers and shopkeepers besides large number of self-supporting women engaged in other occupations. They believe that the claim of these householders for admission within the pale of the Constitution is as reasonable as that of the County householders and that they would be at least equal in general and political intelligence to the great body of agricultural and other labourers who are to be enfranchised by the Government Bill.

That the injustice of excluding women householders from representation would be greatly intensified by the operation of the new service franchise, under which the servants of a Lady, living in houses for which she paid rent and taxes, would have the vote in right of the occupation of those houses while she herself though the head of the household would have no vote.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that in any measure which may be submitted to your Right Honourable House, for amending the Law relating to the Representation of the People, your Lordships will make such provisions as shall seem expedient for the exercise of the Franchise by duly qualified women.

And your petitioners will ever pray etc.

Muriel collected all the newspaper evidence she could find to try to convince her friends that they had right on their side. She found an article about Dorothy Levitt, a secretary who shocked conventional society by being the first woman to take part in a car race.

Of course Marie Curie was awarded a Nobel Prize for her work on radioactivity and the discovery of radium.

Mary Howard became the launch editor for the *Daily Mirror*, a paper aimed specially at women.

Charlotte was very enthused about Muriel's plan and they invited the older two Tree girls and Dot to their first planning meeting.

“I have had a thought,” said Muriel brightly as the meeting of the planning committee got underway. “We need to involve people who nobody else has thought to involve – the servants.”

“What do you mean?” asked Margaret. “They won’t have time off to go to a rally, much less money to donate to the cause.”

“No doubt that is true, but there must be away we can have them represented. Think that for every household there are at least one if not four women who have very little say in their lives. They are badly educated, usually through no fault of their own. They don’t have a chance to read the newspaper, so they probably are even unaware of the wave of action that is now sweeping the nation. But if we could represent them, that would make everyone sit up and notice us. It would be different – not the daughters of mayors and clergymen and musicians – but women who have been denied most of their civil rights, making their voice heard in one way or another.”

“I still don’t know how you intend to include them?”

“What about a petition? We could march to the Guildhall with our banners, and as well, demand votes for women, not only in the local elections but in the Parliament. This would be for all women including the domestic servants – so we could say we have the backing of the working classes – and produce the petition.”

“How would we go about it? I can just see my mother being very upset at the very idea of her servants having a voice in anything.”

“Well, we can start from home ground. We all have servants in our households. We can find out more about them. Then we can explain about women’s rights and ask them to sign.”

“What if they won’t?”

“Nothing will be lost but my good idea. And you must always look at things from the positive side. Assume they will, and that they will be pleased to do so, and that we, in some way, can make their lives better.”

“What if they can’t even write?”

“I thought about that. I think we should find out how many of our domestics have been badly failed by the school system as it is, and see if we can get local legislation for employers to be obliged to let their workers go to the WEA for reading lessons.”

“That sounds a bit much to aim for. Those classes are just at the time they are doing the washing up.”

“They don’t need to be. We could get classes run for them at a time to suit them. That’s what the WEA is all about – improving the lot of the common man, making education available to those who have not had it in their childhood.”

“We could set up classes in our homes – for the servants on our road. We know most of the owners nearby, and those we don’t we can call on and explain about our scheme. Some will not like it, I know, but I think we should try to make a difference somehow in the world – and this might be our best chance.”

“I don’t know how to teach reading. But we could ask the leaders of the WEA to teach us how to teach, and to lend us books to do it with – simple books, not the ones in our parents’ bookcases.”

“And maybe we could teach simple maths too, so they can figure out how badly off they are and how we should pay them more money,” said Charlotte, laughing.

“An excellent idea,” said Muriel, and Charlotte looked taken aback, as she hadn’t meant her suggestion to be taken seriously. “If we wanted to we could teach them all sorts of skills to help them advance. So what if it means they advance beyond our employment. There will be others to take their places. But we will have made a difference to a few lives. Maybe instead of domestic service, they will have the skills and confidence to work in a shop, and make twice the money, or even in a factory.”

“Well this is all very well to speculate about, but where do we start, Muriel – not with giving them new jobs just yet.”

“We start by writing a petition, with the intention of sending it to the Mayor along with our views about women’s suffrage. We ask them to sign it, and at the same time we find out if they are lacking in basic educational skills, and how they feel about bettering themselves, without actually promising anything. After all, we mustn’t raise up their hopes only to dash them again.”

“Let’s get down to business. Muriel, you dictate what is to be in the petition, and then I will make 10 copies of it. Each of us should try to get at least 20 signatures on it by next week.”

“We don’t actually need to have the petitions ready until just before the rally.”

“Let’s say, *We the undersigned, believe in the right of women to vote in order to be able to express our views and help make the world a better place*.”

“I think maybe that is a bit too much Muriel,” said Margaret. “What we don’t want to have happen is for people, meaning men, to be so frightened of giving us the vote, because they think we will immediately take away all their privileges and make life more difficult for them.”

“Well, why do we want to vote anyway?”

“I want to have a say in who represents me at Parliament where the real decisions are made.”

“Do you want it to be a woman?”

“Not to start with – but a man who has sympathy with the cause. If one man strongly states his views publicly and supports us, others will not be quite so able to be critical of the idea.”

“What does your father think on the subject?”

“He is not strongly committed at the moment but I am sure I can talk him around.”

“What about Mr. Tree? Should we ask him to speak for us?”

“No, I think we should not consider one of our family or friends but someone outside of our circle. I will give it some thought and report back.”

“As far as running classes for the servants, Charlotte, you could do it at your house. The rest of us have parents who might object to such a scheme, but your father is not really in a position to object. So effectively you are the head of the house, and could make that decision yourself. Your father, if he were able to do so, would probably be in favour of it, wouldn’t he?”

“I must admit that now that my father is virtually senile and I can’t communicate with him, I have actually taken to reading his diaries going way back to the 1850’s. He kept every one. And I find that I feel that I now know him much better as a person, now that he no longer is much of a person. And I do think he had very high regard for those he considered not to be his social equals. He for many years kept up a strong friendship with Mr. Jones and Adelaide Hilbourne, both of whom many would not consider proper to be seen with. He obviously felt very strongly about education.”

“What else have you found out from reading the diaries?”

“Well, not only the diaries, but also journals that my mother kept for awhile. She wrote very movingly about her feelings when she was pregnant with Mary, and the time when Mary was first born and they found out that she had had brain damage at her birth which caused her to be as she is. And also I was interested to read about the death of my brother, Frank – as I was only very young at the time, and he was never openly discussed by my parents. I can now read about what he was like and how they doted on him, especially my father, with him being the only boy. After he died on March 22, 1881, my father changed and became a much more protective person almost to the extent of obsession. That is why he so objected to my sisters leaving home. He felt that he wanted control over all of us. The family still have a memorial message in the paper each year on my brother’s anniversary.”

“I think that is very sweet.”

“Yes, but there comes a time when you have to say goodbye and get on with real life, like treating your other children as if they had some worth, even if they aren’t boys.”

Muriel agreed, and the meeting soon adjourned, with plans to meet again the following week

NINETEEN

Charlotte had done her bit, and had produced 10 petitions, all identical for each of the girls (several others of their friends had joined in the group) to take with them to try to get as many signatures as they could. They were told, by Muriel, to ask all their neighbours, and all the servants and the shopkeepers, and any other women they could find.

It read:

To the Mayor of Worcester and Aldermen and Councilors

This humble petition from the women of Worcester allows that:

Men, including agricultural and other labourers are now enfranchised by the Government and many of these are within the least educated section of the Community. However they now have the right to vote in Parliamentary elections.

There are millions of educated and intelligent women, who are head of households who are excluded from this right although they contribute equally with men to the taxation of the Country.

Among the persons so excluded are women landowners, who form one seventh of the land proprietors of the country; women of means and position living on their own property, schoolmistresses and other Teachers, women farmers, merchants manufacturers and shopkeepers besides large number of self-supporting women engaged in other occupations.

We the undersigned believe that the claim of these householders for admission within the pale of the Constitution is as reasonable as that the injustice of excluding women householders from representation was greatly intensified by the new service franchise, under which the servants of a Lady, living in houses for which she paid rent and taxes, would have the vote in right of the occupation of those houses while she herself though the head of the household has no vote.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray you will use what pressure you have in your political arena to make Representation to the Government to bring forward the exercise of the Franchise by duly qualified women.

Muriel read it through and was somewhat concerned.

"Charlotte, it is a wonderful piece of work, but I think first of all, it should go not only to the local government representatives, but also to our MP and perhaps to the neighbouring MPs as well. And I think you should not say we are wanting the voting rights for educated wealthy women. We really are hoping to have this changed so that all women can vote – the servants as well as the ladies."

"Oh, I am sorry, Muriel. I was copying the words from the original document as closely as I could, and I overlooked that aspect of it. I will do them all again."

"Perhaps if we alter one of them now, with common consent of the group, that will make it easier for you to make the copies."

So the girls went back through the document and altered it as follows:

They added in the heading, that the petition was to go to the Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire MPs.

They left out "duly educated women" and substituted "all women, regardless of their position in life, and including servants."

Charlotte thought that she could use some help with the rewriting of the petitions, but without too much effort, they should have them ready in another week, and then they could begin getting signatures.

"I think that as well as our households, neighbours, friends and shopkeepers, we should knock on doors, and ask if anyone within each household wants to sign," said Margaret and all agreed.

Charlotte's other task had been to make the purple ribbon banners with green writing, which they would each tie across their shoulders and down to their waists, stating that they were supporters of the WSPU. The girls tried them on and were very pleased with the effect.

So the meeting adjourned, and the girls all went back to their respective homes.

Muriel had purposely kept her parents in the dark about her activities. She wasn't sure they would approve and wanted to make sure everything was running smoothly before she let them know her intent – to have a march on the Guildhall, and a rally followed by a speech by some well known person sympathetic to their point of view.

It was just a week when the girls met again, and this time as the petitions were deemed correct and to their liking, each took hers and they determined that by the time they met the following week, each of the 100 lines on the paper would be full.

Muriel, having signed it herself at the top of the page, took hers first to the servants of her own house. Amy Brewer said she didn't suppose it would do any good, but she signed it. Emily Smith said she didn't want to lose her job, and she wouldn't sign it unless Mr. King said it was allowed and that he wouldn't dismiss her because of it.

Muriel was forced to change her plan and present her ideas to her parents before she went any farther with it.

That evening, after dinner, she said, "Mother, Father, I have decided on a new quest. I want to attempt to do my part to forward the cause of women's suffrage. I have joined the WPSU and so have 4 of my friends. We now intend to take a petition which we hope to get hundreds of signatures on and present them to the local and national representatives of Worcester."

Mrs. King looked most put out. "Muriel, have you not got better things to do with your time? I would have thought with your charity work and your lessons in art you more than have enough to keep you busy. Why this? Why don't you learn to play the piano if you have so much extra time on your hands?"

Mr. King, having taken the petition that Muriel produced read it over carefully. "I can see where you got your material from, and I think that the arguments are well presented. I can see no harm in you asking your friends and colleagues to sign this. Not that I expect it will have much effect, but I don't see how it could harm the situation. If you feel so strongly about it, I will, of course, support your efforts."

"Oh thank you, Father," said Muriel, "and can I tell Emily that you won't let her go if she signs it as well?"

“Have you been getting at the servants with your idea?” said Mrs. King, all in a huff. “You leave them alone. I don’t want them striking and refusing to work because you put ideas of equality into their heads.”

“No, of course I won’t get rid of Emily or Amy. But I can see that you are unlikely to get your mother to sign it.”

“You can be most sure that I will not!”

“Thank you Father,” said Muriel and kissed his cheek. “Don’t be worried Mother. I won’t ask you to sign it, but I expect that if as a result we do get the vote, you will be willing to do so.”

“I don’t expect that I will live that long,” said Louisa King.

Muriel rushed up to Emily and told her that her Father had agreed with the principle of the petition, and would be happy if she would sign it, so she did.

The very next day, Muriel and May, who had agreed reluctantly to take part as long as nobody told John, were both out by ten o’clock with their petitions in hand. May’s mother had also refused to sign, but was quite happy for Elizabeth Wilcox, their servant, to do so. “Much good may it do her,” was her final comment.

As Muriel lived at number 7 Lansdowne Crescent, and May at number 9, Muriel went to 1,2,3,4,5,8 and 10,and May went to 11,12/13,14,15,16,17,18 and Lansdowne Villa, around the corner.

Then May walked up on the left hand side of Rainbow Hill while Muriel tried her luck on Rainbow Hill Terrace and the houses on the right hand side. They agreed to meet again after lunch to compare notes and decide where to go next.

They were both bitterly disappointed with the results. Many householders had been very unwelcoming. Only two of the women of education with whom Muriel talked had agreed to sign, and none that May had seen. May did have several more signatures from the servant group than Muriel did, but between them they had only a total of 15 signatures. None of the servants admitted to being unable to read.

However, undaunted, they went into Lowesmore Road and one on each side of the street, they tried their luck with commercial premises. They did better in establishments with women in charge. By the end of the day they had doubled the numbers, but still had some way to go towards the target that each hoped to get by the end of the week.

At their next meeting, it turned out that similar experiences were expressed by each of the girls there. No one had reached her target. They were disappointed and rather bored with the whole idea. Muriel tried to get the enthusiasm back into the group.

"Surely you must not let our slow start deter us. This is an important matter, and if we fall at the first fence, as it were, what hope is there for our cause? Do you think Emmeline Pankhurst didn't have people slam the door in her face? But she didn't give up. There are thousands of brave women devoting all their time to this cause so we must not be deterred by a little setback. We must keep at it each week until we have reached our goal. Now can we all get out there and think positively? We will meet again next week, and I hope we shall have met our target by then."

Several of the new girls who had been recently recruited said they had had enough, and leaving their petitions behind, they walked out. But Charlotte, who had had the fewest signatures as she seldom left home, was undeterred.

"We must go to the Victoria Institute where the classes are going on. I'm sure we will get support from those women. And why don't we get men to sign our petitions too? Some of them might agree with our cause. Has anyone had a man's signature yet?"

"No," chorused around the room.

"Have you specifically asked any men?"

"No," they again said.

"Well it won't hurt to try, and if they refuse, we haven't lost anything. But if several men sign, it will add weight to our argument."

Later that night, Muriel asked her father if he would sign her petition. He had forgotten all about her plan, and read it again. “Yes, I will,” and surprised and delighted her by putting his name boldly across the page, in much bigger writing than the rest, “but you don’t have to tell your mother I did it,” he said with a wink.

Charlotte’s idea of petitioning at the Victoria Institute’s classes worked a treat. Before long all the forms were filled – with some other men as well as Mr. King being brave enough to put their weight behind it. Mr. Tree, like Mr. King, was very proud of his girls and agreed with what they were endeavouring to do. His wife and his sister also signed, as well as their servants, Emily Wilkes and Laura Pownell.

By mid April the girls met again at Charlotte’s house and seemed much happier with themselves and the rightness of their cause.

“Now we must plan what day and time we take the petitions to the Guildhall. Our plans for the rally can be delayed until after our first big impact,” said Muriel.

“We should do it on a Thursday, as that is when most of the meetings take place in the Guildhall, and the meetings tend to be between 11 and 1, so if we get there for 12, we should be seen by those finishing at the earlier meetings as well as those coming for the later ones.”

“Let’s make posters inviting anyone interested in joining in the rally, and put them in the windows of all the shops, and see how big a crowd we can attract.”

“How about May 6th for the Rally. That gives us a couple of weeks to make and display the posters.”

“That sounds fine,” said Charlotte. “Should the posters should say something like this?”

Rally in Support of Women’s Votes

Meet at the Guildhall on

May 6th at 12 noon

“That sounds fine,” said Jessie. “I will come and help you make them. How many do you think we should make?”

“I would think 30 might be enough. Not every shop will agree, and we want to concentrate on the ones in the centre of town where people might be shopping on that day anyway.”

The girls went home full of enthusiasm and hope for their venture.

TWENTY

The day of the rally arrived, and it was not a nice day. The rain was pouring down, the wind was sharp and constant, and the spirits of the girls were considerably dampened.

"We must give it a go," said Muriel. "We have put such a lot of time and effort into this that we cannot balk now just because the weather isn't on our side."

So the six girls who comprised the remainder of the committee, donned their purple sashes, and with their petitions tightly clutched in their hands, they made their way from Charlotte's house up across the bridge and into town. It was only a ten minute walk, but somehow it seemed to take forever, with the wind trying to steal their umbrellas and the papers in their hands. Their sashes which had looked so fine when they had first put them on, were now looking decidedly droopy, and some of the ink had run, smudging the message.

It was just before 12 when they arrived and had hoped to see a huge crowd waiting to cheer them on, but there was nobody there, other than the casual shoppers who didn't even notice the girls as they hurried about their business, getting out of the miserable weather as quickly as they could.

Muriel knew she had to take the lead. "Votes for women!" she shouted at the top of her voice, and started walking in a circle around the area of High Street just outside the Guildhall. The others felt they had to join in the parade, but their voices were not as loud or positive as hers. Around and around they went, and not a bit of attention did they get – positive or negative. Finally, Muriel said, "Let's take the petitions into the Guildhall and present them to the Mayor."

The Guildhall is a most impressive building. Built of brick, with elaborate and extensive stone dressing, it has giant Corinthian pillars.

Thomas White, the architect, carved the statue of Queen Ann which is high above the door, and also the side statues of Charles I holding a church and Charles II with orb and scepter. There are five figures on the parapet of the building representing Hercules, Peace, Justice, Plenty and Chastisement.

"We're here for Justice," thought Muriel as she looked up at the statues.

They trooped through the iron gates and railings, and through the big wooden door at the front entrance, past the statues on either side of the door. The Guildhall had been built in 1717, but rebuilt and opened in 1724 and restored in 1880. They came into the large hall with its high ceiling. Various people were rushing from one room to another and up or down one of the staircases. Muriel found a reception desk and asked politely if they could see the Mayor. "I'm sorry, but he is not here today," she said. "May I help?"

"Is Mr. Maund around?" asked Margaret. He was one of the city officials and they hoped he might be interested in the cause and be able to help the girls.

"I will check if he 'is in'", she said. Moments later she came back. "Mr. Maund will see you for a few minutes. He is in the Randall Room."

"He's our cousin, I think," whispered Margaret. "My father's aunt married a Maund."

The girls climbed the staircase, and when they came to the door the receptionist had indicated, they knocked. "Come in," said a gruff voice.

"Yes, what is it you want?" he asked, not at all impressed by the water dripping off 6 umbrellas and the tracks made by 12 feet.

"We are members of the WSPU, and we have been circulating throughout Worcester and getting people to sign our petitions which we intended presenting to the Mayor. We have been told he is not here at the moment, so we would like you to accept these and hand them on to him," said Muriel.

"I don't know anything about it," he said. "Why don't you girls make an appointment and come back another day and see him when he is free?"

"No, this was our day of protest, and the petitions are to be left here today. Will you take them or not?" said Muriel, not a little annoyed at his patronage.

“Please Mr. Maund. I think we are related. I am Margaret Tree, and this is my sister Jessie. I think your mother and my father are cousins. My great grandfather was called Isaac Arrowsmith, and I think that perhaps he was also your grandfather. I would like you to know that everyone in our household, from my father downwards, signed this petition.”

Muriel was so surprised yet pleased that shy Margaret had made this speech, and Mr. Maund was no doubt impressed by Margaret’s mention of the name Arrowsmith which was well known and revered in Worcester and also in Bristol where the remainder of the family now lived, a very successful group of printers, publishers and authors.

“What a coincidence,” he said, suddenly much more friendly. “Yes of course, Isaac Arrowsmith was my grandfather and we are relatives of a sort. Here, let me see that petition that you say your father has signed. Ah, here it is, Warren W. A. Tree. The A stands for Arrowsmith. I suppose you knew that. Well, girls because I value this document for the fact that it has been signed by Mr. Tree, I will accept your petitions and hand them on to the Mayor. Thank you for coming out on your mission on such a miserable day.”

He went around and took the petitions off them, shaking each by the hand as he did so.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a meeting in a few minutes.”

So the girls left the room, left the building, feeling both successful and disappointed. They went to a nearby tea shop and had drinks and a pieces of cake to celebrate what they had accomplished, whatever good might come of it in the end. Just before they left, Muriel stood up.

“I think we will leave any plans for a rally or concert to raise funds, etc. for a few weeks to see if we are going to get a response from the Mayor. I think we all have done jolly well, and I want to thank you all for supporting me in this. Perhaps we should plan another meeting at Charlotte’s house in a month’s time so we can report back to each other on what actions our petitions have caused.”

So with that official ending, the girls trailed off in their various directions, pleased that soon they would take off their now almost unreadable badges and get out of their wet clothes.

May and Muriel eagerly searched all the local papers over the next weeks, but there was no word whatsoever about their petition.

Muriel, who had put her name and address with a covering letter to the Mayor awaited the post each day, but no letter from the Mayor or any of his underlings appeared. They were rather lacking in enthusiasm when the group met again at Charlotte's house.

None of the girls had heard or read anything relating to their efforts. Even criticism would have been preferable to total silence.

"Let's not do a performance," said May. "I don't think I could take any more rejection. Let's just say we did our best and got nowhere."

The others agreed with her, although Muriel was not quite ready to give up the fight.

"All right, I agree that perhaps we should let the situation alone for the time being, but I have made a copy of the names of those who signed the petition, and I expect there will be a time in the future when I might be glad to know who we can count on to support us."

Since there was no other pressing business to do, other than to settle up the accounts with Charlotte for all she had spent for the sashes, paint, cardboard and paper, they agreed that it would be very pleasant to spend the rest of the afternoon playing whist. As there were six of them, two took it in turns to sit out.

TWENTY ONE

It was nearly September 1903 but May and Muriel had not yet started back at the Victoria Institute, which, now that the Workers Educational Association had been formed, had branched into all sorts of new courses and activities. The WEA had actually officially started in 1902, and the idea was slowly catching on and now Worcester was able to take advantage of it. The girls were not actually workers as such, but they hoped to take part in any new initiative. And typewriting was a skill that they both felt they should learn.

"Muriel," said May, "what ever happened to your quest to find that ring or at least learn more about your supposed noble ancestors?"

"You remember that girl who was at the Walker dance back in 1901? Well, when she first wrote back to me, I rather felt she was not at all interested and just pushed me off onto some other people who had the right name. I did write to the various Paulets as she suggested but nothing came of it. Then out of the blue, a letter came from her again and she suggested I find a copy of *Burke's Peerage*, as she thought it might have the answers I was looking for."

"Where does one find *Burke's Peerage*?"

"I went to our library, but they didn't have a copy. But then I thought of the Beauchamps. Earl Beauchamp's family (you know he is really called William Lygon) have been in this area for many generations, and although he went off to Australia to be governor of New South Wales, he didn't like it very much and came back here.

I thought that since Madresfield Court is nearby, he might be willing to let us see his copy of the book. He was Mayor of Worcester in 1895, you know. Anyway I wrote to him and his wife."

"And, what happened next?"

“I was invited to come to their home at Madresfield Court in Great Malvern last Wednesday when you were away. I took the 9.50 train from Worcester and arrived at 10.17, and it was only a short walk down the hill to their house. It is really a wonderful place. The Earl’s wife, Lettice, (seeing May’s expression she added, ‘She told me to call her that.’) anyway his wife (they were only married last July 26) told me all about the house. Built in 1593, it was remodeled in the 1800s to look like an Elizabethan house and it contains about 100 rooms. It has a perfect moat and Lettice says it is noted for its wonderful display of daffodils in the early spring. Anyway, she showed me into the library and let me look at the most recent copy of the book. The entries go back to the 13th Century.

“I was looking for any entries that mentioned the Marquis of Winchester, but she told me that from early days the Winchesters also had the title of Earl of Wiltshire. So I looked for anyone with that title too.”

“Don’t keep me in suspense. Are you related to Charles I or Henry VIII?”

“No, but you are not too far from the truth. If the line proves true, and I have no reason to doubt my source saying we descend from Peter Paulet, then his ancestors were first mentioned in 1459 and 1472 for the first and second Earls of Wiltshire. But the interesting thing is that Ann Boleyn is certainly mentioned in connection with one of our ancestors. So don’t be so sarcastic when you talk about Henry VIII.”

“What else did you discover?”

“Well all about the Beauchamps, and Lettice was pleased to point out go they back even further than my family does, with the first one being mentioned in 1348 as one of the founder group of the Knights and Ladies of the Garter. That was Thomas de Beauchamp – the 11th Earl of Warwick. After that there were many Beauchamps listed in each century.”

“You aren’t related to them too, are you?”

“Oh no, but since I was looking at the book in her house, I had to show as much interest in her husband’s family roots as I have in my own.”

“And were any of your other forebears famous?”

“Perhaps not so much famous, as infamous. Here let me get my notes.”

Muriel rushed to her desk where she carefully kept all her information about her quests in order. She brought back her book and read out the following:

Marquis of Winchester to be attached.

Ordered, That the Gentleman Usher attending this House shall bring the Marquis of Winchester to this House presently, to acknowledge his Offence committed against this House, he being taken in Arms at Basing House; and then this House will take into Consideration how to dispose of him further; and the Gentleman Usher to take him into Custody wheresoever he shall find him.

"Then comes the next entry.

Marquis of Winchester committed to The Tower.

This Day the Marquis of Winchester was brought to this Bar, as a Delinquent. And the Speaker, by the Direction of the House, told him, 'That, for his High Offence, in deserting the Parliament, and for taking up Arms against the Parliament and Kingdom contrary to his Duty, this House for the present doth commit his Lordship to The Tower of London, there to be kept in safe Custody, during the Pleasure of this House.'

"Another entry says:

Marquis of Winchester, a Servant to attend him.

Ordered, That the Marquis of Winchester shall have One of his Servants to attend him, in The Tower of London.

"And what happened next?"

"I don't really know. I expect I should find out if I can have another go at reading more from that book."

"That wasn't in *Burke's Peerage*, was it?"

"No, that came from the *Proceedings in the House of Lords, October 20th, 1645*. The Beauchamps have quite a library, but I didn't feel that I could spend too much time looking at things, as they were doing me a favour."

"What else did you find out?"

"It did say in one part that the names Paulet, Paulett, Poulet, Poulett, and Powlett were all part of the same family – just that the spelling had changed over the years."

"So that fancy Miss Poulett probably was a relative of yours after all."

"I dare say she and I share some ancestors."

"Any other famous names to brag about?"

“Well, yes, as a matter of fact, the 2nd Marquis was the son of Sir William Capel, and he was the Lord Mayor of London in 1503, so how about that!”

“Do you know what I think? I think we should both go back there and spend as much time as we can to find out everything about your family, and then we can write a book about it.”

“Do you really think we could? I think that is a wonderful idea – a sort of fitting end for my quest, even if I don’t get to have the ring that Peter Paulet’s family was given.”

So Muriel again wrote to the Beauchamps requesting that she and a friend spend another day in their library. Lettice wrote back and said she would be delighted to have them when they were next in Madresfield Court which wouldn’t be until October. She invited them both to come at 10.30 on October 14th to research and stay to lunch with time afterwards for more work if they so wished. They were beside themselves with excitement.

Soon the day came for the visit to the Beauchamps to find out more about Muriel’s noble relatives. Muriel prompted May, “Now, we must be very systematic about this. We must go through the reports for the House of Lords, and copy down anything interesting about the Marquis of Winchester, or any of his family, and we must make sure we have the dates for it all. Then we can assemble them all into a sort of story when we have finished. But we have only a day, so don’t waste time putting down anything that isn’t interesting. If it only tells that the person was born and died, we don’t need to know that.”

“But I think you should make a family tree.”

“All right then, take note of names of each new Marquis of Winchester, and his children, but our main job is to find things that will make for good reading.”

The girls laden with notebooks and pencils, and dressed in their finest clothes, again caught the 9.50 train from Scrub Hill Station. By 10.30 they were in the gardens of Madresfield Court, and May was as impressed as Muriel had been.

The butler let them in and they waited in the front hall for Lettice to come and show them again into the library.

It had been several months since Muriel had first visited, and she thought that Lettice looked a bit plumper than she had previously. She wondered if she was expecting, but she wouldn't dream of asking.

Lettice showed them the place where the books they wanted were located. She said she would leave them to browse the library at their leisure, and she would ask the maid to bring them coffee at 11.15. Then she would expect them in the small dining room for lunch at 1.

They took copious notes, and their day was very full. At the luncheon party which consisted only of themselves and Lettice they had very simple fare – game soup, homemade bread, a lovely salad with cheese, and fresh fruit salad and cream. May thought that the fruit must have been imported, as she hadn't seen its like in the local shops or market. Everything was beautifully presented on wonderful china and with crystal water glasses they were afraid to touch, much less drink out of.

They left at 4.30 and ran all the way to catch the 4.42, puffing and panting at running up hill. Back in Scrub Hill at 5.05, they had a leisurely walk back to their homes, and agreed they would start fresh in the morning and compare notes to see what they had found.

TWENTY TWO

Next morning promptly at ten, May went to Muriel's house and brought out her notebook. "Here is what I have found. I've put them all in order by date."

Parliament, to see that the Papists be disarmed in those Counties: And that they may have Power to examine where the Defect hath been, that the Disarming and Convicting of them hath not been put in Execution: And to inquire the Cause thereof.

Next, To let the Lords understand, that the Conviction of divers Recusants hath been hindered, under Pretence of Privilege 7 August 1641
Proceedings against Recusants

Sir Wm. Lewis, by Appointment, went up to the Lords with this Message; to desire a free Conference, by a Committee of both Houses, so soon as may stand with their Lordships Conveniency, concerning Proceedings against Recusants.

Mr. Pym reports from the Committee, appointed to prepare Heads for a Conference to be desired with the Lords, concerning the Proceedings against Recusants.

Next, To desire their Lordships, all Certiorari's in the King's Bench in this Case be superceded, that do hinder free Proceedings in this Kind; and that those that are Recusants, as also justly suspected, may be disarmed by the Common Law; as, in case of a Riot, or other Mischief, a Justice of Peace may use his Power to prevent it.

"I've skipped a bit here.

Next, That Precedents are extant: That the Marquis of Winchester, the Earl of Arundell, and others, have been disarmed, being Recusants."

"What do you think Recusant means exactly?"

"I will get out my new dictionaries and look it up."

Five minutes later she was back. "I'm not sure this makes sense. It says, "Having the back displayed instead of the front."

"I suppose it means people of the opposite opinion, or something like that."

"Anyway, that was rather a complicated piece."

"Yes, but I think it is very interesting. The Lords needed to be sure that they set their criteria for acting down very specifically, as they intended arresting very powerful men."

19 August 1641

Information concerning Arms.

Mr. Sewer, being called in to the Bar, did inform this House, that he did see, on Monday was Sevennight, a great many of Arms in the Marquis of Winchester's House at Basingstoke, a Recusant; and that the Keeper of them told him, there were Arms for Fourteen or Fifteen Hundred Men.

"Interesting isn't it how they talked about sevennight instead of week. We still use fortnight, but I never heard the word sevennight before."

"They obviously felt they had good reason to worry about your relative."

18th October 1643

Proceedings against Marquis of Winchester.

A Warrant of the Marquis of Winchester, to levy Monies, was read.

Resolved, &c. That the Marquis of Winchester's Estate shall be forthwith sequestered; and that it to be recommended to the Committee for Sequestrations, where his Estate lies, to put the same in Execution.

Resolved, &c. That the Marquis of Winchester be accused of High Treason: And Mr. Browne is to bring in a Charge against him.

"Oh, oh, your relative is in trouble! But look at the next one. It took them over two years to go from worrying about the arms at his house to arresting him."

14th October 1645

Marquis of Winchester to be attached.

Ordered, That the Gentleman Usher attending this House shall bring the Marquis of Winchester to this House presently, to acknowledge his Offence committed against this House, he being taken in Arms at Basing House; and then this House will take into Consideration how to dispose of him further; and the Gentleman Usher to take him into Custody wheresoever he shall find him.

Marquis of Winchester committed to The Tower.

This Day the Marquis of Winchester was brought to this Bar, as a Delinquent. And the Speaker, by the Direction of the House, told him, "That, for his High Offence, in deserting the Parliament, and for taking up Arms against the Parliament and Kingdom contrary to his Duty, this House for the present doth commit his Lordship to The Tower of London, there to be kept in safe Custody, during the Pleasure of this House."

11 November 1645
March. of Winchester, Leave to come to London, to her Husband.

Upon reading the Petition of Ja. Marquis of Winchester, Prisoner in The Tower of London; shewing, "That, by reason of his Imprisonment, he finds himself deprived of many Comforts he was wont to receive; and it being now Winter Season, and the Petitioner in Want of many Necessaries, and for the present somewhat infirm, he humbly beseecheth, that their Lordships would give Leave that his Wife may come up to the City of London, and have Access unto him, and to bring with her such Servants, and in such Sort, as their Lordships shall seem meet."

It is Ordered, That the Petitioner's Wife shall have a Pass to come to London, with her Servants and Necessaries,

"I don't expect prisoners now days have servants and necessaries. He'd only been there a month. And don't you think it is interesting how they capitalise so many of their ordinary words?"

15 January 1646
Marquis of Winchester to have an Allowance.

The House was informed this Day of the great Necessity of the Marquis of Winchester in The Tower; "that he hath nothing to feed him but what his Keeper voluntarily gives him:" Therefore to send to the House of Commons, that he might have some Allowance of his own Estate, for his Maintenance.
A Message was sent to the House of Commons, by Dr. Heath and Dr. Aylett:
"I've skipped 1-4."
5. To deliver the Lady Drake's Petition to them, with Recommendations for the Marquis of Winchester to have an Allowance;
6. To acquaint them of the distressed Condition of the Marquis of Winchester in The Tower; desiring some speedy Course may be taken for his Relief, that he may not starve.
"I find that rather amusing. The rich look after their own. They were very worried that he might be inconvenienced by being in prison.
7 September 1647
Passed the House of Commons the 7th of September, 1647.

"It is Ordered, by the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, That the Marquis of Winchester, a Prisoner in The Tower of London, shall have Liberty to go to Epsom Waters, for the Recovery of his Health; upon good Security given to the Lieutenant of the said Tower of London, to render himself a true Prisoner that Day Five Weeks that he shall go out of The Tower upon the said Security."

"Now he not only has servants and necessaries, and an allowance, and relief, but he also gets to go to take waters in Epsom. This is all really a joke."

"But look at the date. This is nearly two years after he was arrested. I think he had served his time."

Marquis of Winchester's Bill.

The Lord Marquis of Winchester's Bill was reported, with the Amendments and Additions; which being read Twice, was Ordered to be ingrossed.

Memorandum, The Bond of Ten Thousand Pounds, entered into by the said Marquis of Winchester, for preserving of Woods, and preventing committing of Waste on the Lands, is to be kept in the Hands of the Lady Viscountess Savage, Grandmother to the Lord Marquis's Son.

"So even though he was in prison, he was receiving funding, which was sent to his mother," said May.

"That's what it sounds like, but I wonder if you haven't got that one out of order, and it happened before he went to prison."

"If that was the case, they wouldn't need to give the money to his mother," said Muriel

"And then almost another year passed."

30 June 1648

Message from Lords.

A Message from the Lords, by Dr. Heath and Mr. Eltonhead;

The Lords desire, That the Marquis of Winchester be at Liberty, upon Bail, by reason of his great Weakness, which very lately so extremely took him, that he was seeming dead for a great while.

"So he was out after less than three years."

The Lords Concurrence to be desired herein.

5 September 1649

Sir T. Jervis', &c, Claims.

Mr. Garland reports from the Lord President's Committee, the several Petitions of Sir Thomas Jervis Knight, Robert Wallopp Esquire, and Peter Weaver Gentleman, That it hath been proved unto the said Committee, That the said Sir Thomas Jervis Knight hath lost by these Wars, to the Value of Fifteen thousand Pounds: That the said Robert Wallopp hath also thereby lost to the Value of Fifty thousand Pounds: And that this Committee do think fit, if the Parliament be so pleased, to give unto the said Peter Weaver the Sum of Five hundred Pounds for his Losses and Imprisonment by the Marquis of Winchester:

And that the said Committee do also think sit that the said Sir Thomas Jervis have the Sum of Nine thousand Pounds, and the said Robert Wallopp the Sum of Ten thousand Pounds, allowed unto them out of the Marquis of Winchester's Estate, by whom principally they suffered such their

Damages: And that, for the Relief of the said Sir Thomas Jervis, Robert Wallopp, and Peter Weaver, the said Mr. Garland bring in Acts of Parliament accordingly.

"So they not only put him in prison, but even after they let him out, they took his estate and sold it and gave the proceeds to these various people who they said suffered because of him," said Muriel.

"That's what it sounds like. Now we are skipping 11 years here, but your relative has done pretty well in the end.

11 April 1659 Coney's Purchase.

The humble Petition of George Coney Esquire was this Day read; and was, concerning a Purchase made by him and others, from the Trustees for Sale of Delinquents Estates, of the Manor of Hooke, and several other Manors, and Lands, late Parcel of the Possessions of John now Marquis of Winchester, in the Counties of Dorsett, Devon, and Cornewall.

The humble Petition of Charles Lord St. John, eldest Son to John now Marquis of Winchester, was this Day read; and was, concerning his Claim and Title to the said Manors.

This Committee are to examine the Matter of Fact in the aforesaid Two Petitions of Mr. George Coney and the Lord St. John; and to report the same to the House: And have Power to send for Parties, Papers, Witnesses, and Records: And are to give timely Notice to all Persons concerned: And are to meet about the same in the Star Chamber, To-morrow in the Afternoon, at Two of the Clock.

Chief Baron of Exchequer

"Two of the Clock, yes sir. Notice how they spelled Cornwall and Dorset."

14 August 1660

Order to restore the M. of Winchester to all his Estates sold without his Consent.

The House being this Day informed, "That the Estate of the Marquis of Winchester was illegally disposed of, aliened, and sold, without either Hearing, Summons, or Proof of any Charge against the said Marquis, and contrary to the Privilege of Peerage, and the fundamental Laws of the Land:"

It is ORDERED, by the Lords in Parliament assembled, That the said Dispositions, Alienations, and Sales, of the Estate of the said Marquis of Winchester, be, and are hereby declared to be, null and void (excepting those Lands which he hath consented to be sold); and that the Marquis of Winchester be, and is hereby, restored to the Possession of his Estate, in whose Hands soever the same is, together with all Arrears of Rents, Fines, and other Profits, which are now in the Tenants Hands, or in any other

Persons, not accounted for, and to all Timber and Wood felled off any Part of the said Estate, and to all Materials of Houses and Buildings taken off any Part of the said Estate. And hereof all Persons whatsoever are to take Notice, and yield Obedience hereunto accordingly.

"It sounds like he intends to get his pound of flesh. And speaking of flesh, let's have lunch."

TWENTY THREE

Still wading through the pages of notes that Muriel and May had made in their visit to the Beauchamps, May went again through her list in order of references to the Marquis of Winchester.

2 July 1661

Marq. of Winchester's Estate.

An ingrossed Bill for the Marquis of Winchester, was this Day read the Third time: And Resolved, That the said Bill do pass.

Resolved, That the Title of the said Bill shall be, An Act for Reparation and Satisfaction to be made unto John Lord St. John of Basing, Earl of Wilts, and Marquess of Winchester, out of the Manors and Lands of Robert Wallop Esquire, for the Sum of Ten thousand pounds, heretofore granted unto him by the then pretended Parliament, out of the said Marquess of Winchester's Estate.

"Interesting how he says, "the then pretended parliament.

"Again, this next is not to do with your relatives, but interesting all the same."

Executing Regicides. Ordered, That Mr. Solicitor General do bring in a Bill, To-morrow Morning, for Execution of the Persons, Prisoners in the Tower, condemned for the horrid Murder of his late Sacred Majesty King Charles the First

18 March 1662

Marq. of Winchester's Estate.

An ingrossed Bill to confirm the Estate of John Marquis of Winchester, in certain Manors and Lands, whereof the Writings were burnt and lost, was this Day read the Third time.

Resolved, upon the Question, That the said Bill, sent down from the Lords, be agreed to.

Resolved, That the Title of the said Bill, being intituled, An Act for confirming the Estate of John Marquis of Winchester, in certain Manors and Lands, whereof the Writings were burnt and lost at the Taking of the Castle of Basing, be agreed to: And that the Bill be returned back to the Lords.

"They took almost as much time to decide whether they should give him lands back as they took to decide whether to put him in prison in the first place or not."

Marq. of Winchester's Award.

30 May 1663

Marq. of Winton's Bill.

"An Act for confirming the Conveyances made, or mentioned to be made, in Pursuance of the Award by the King's Majesty, for composing the Differences between John Lord Marquis of Winchester and his Eldest Son Charles Lord St. John."

"Finally we have something that doesn't have to do with the imprisonment of the Marquis of Winchester."

"Another 11 years pass."

27 January 1674

Marq. of Winton, Privilege, not to be proceeded against for Recusancy.

The House being informed, "That the Lord Marquis of Winchester, a Peer of this Realm, is proceeded against for Recusancy, during the Sitting of Parliament, contrary to the Privilege of Parliament:"

Upon Consideration had thereof, it is ORDERED, by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the said Marquis of Winchester (not being a Convicted Recusant) shall have the Privilege of Parliament, to be discharged of all Proceedings had against him for Recusancy since the Time of Privilege began, and during the Continuance of the same Privilege; and that if any Indictment have been brought against him for Recusancy during the Time of Privilege aforesaid, the same shall be forthwith brought into the Court of King's Bench by Certiorari, and the King's Attorney shall enter a Non Pros. upon the same.

"In other words, he had his name cleared, after the event."

"Then we have pages and pages of details of the court case, which I have eliminated, although it was very interesting. I know what I have copied is long, but it shows the sort of work the Marquis was doing as a magistrate after he was released from prison and got his lands back."

The Information of Henry Berry, Porter of the Gate at Somersett House, taken by the Right Honourable the Marquis of Winchester, this 11th Day of November, 1678, as followeth; videlicet,

"Oh, there's another word to be looked up."

Muriel reached for her huge dictionary in the corner of the table, "Videlicit – it means towit or that is saying."

"It sounds a bit unnecessary for them to put it in, seems to me. Now this next bit is just to show the sorts of things he was doing after he was back in favour again."

John Saunders, being sworn, and examined by the Right Honourable the Lord Marquis of Winchester, One of the Justices of the Peace for the County of Middlesex, saith, That this Deponent hath seen Mr. Lee Faire, in Company with Mr. Bedloe; and that he was bound, with Mrs. Herne, unto a Shoemaker, for Ten Pounds; which Money Mr. Lee Faire brought, and took the Bond in the Shoemaker's Name. And Mr. Lee Phaire was a Witness unto the same Bond, together with Mr. Bedloe.

The Information of Alexander Oldis, taken the 12th of November, 1678, before the Right Honourable the Marquis of Winchester, One of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Midd's:

"I think that is enough for one day," said May, and Muriel agreed that they would meet again at ten the next morning.

TWENTY FOUR

May, having revealed all her research, had to wait til the next day for Muriel to announce what she had found out.

"I have all sorts of boring details that I copied from the books for the family tree. But then, last night, I was looking through some of my father's old books and I came across *Webster's Biographical Dictionary*. So just for fun I looked up Paulet in it, and this is what I found. It is really a summary of what I had already found but much more concise.

Sir Annas Paulet – 1536 -1588 Lt. Governor of Jersey – commissioner at trial of Mary Queen of Scots and famous as her Puritan guardian – refused to take suggestions to murder her privately.

Sir William Paulet – 1485-1572 First Marquis of Winchester – honoured by Henry VIII. Lord President of Council and one of Council of Regency. Lord Treasurer 1547. Joined Lords at Baynard Castle who proclaimed Queen Mary in place of Lady Jane Gray. Also gained favour of Queen Elizabeth and was treasurer (1550-72).

Grandson William Paulet (1535-1598) Third Marquis of Winchester commissioner at trial of Mary Queen of Scots – Lord Steward at her funeral.

John Paulet (1598-1675) [I think this was the one we were talking about yesterday].*The great loyalist" after fortifying and garrisoning Basing House in Hampshire against Cromwell (1643-45) suffered by imprisonment and loss of property.*

"Isn't that interesting," interjected May. "All along I thought he was against the King and for Cromwell when we were reading it yesterday. It must have meant that those who tried and condemned him were Cromwell's men even though they were in the House of Lords. Do you remember how we commented on the words, *pretend Parliament*? Well now we know what they meant."

Charles Paulet (1625-1699) – against Stuart cause – supported Whigs and William of Orange on his landing. Precipitated Marlborough's disgrace by disclosing to the King.

Charles Paulet (1661-1722) – 7th Marquis of Winchester – Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Charles Paulet (1685-1754) 8th Marquis of Winchester – deprived of offices because of opposition to William Walpole Married an actress, Laurissa Fenton, in 1751.

Harry Paulet (1715-1794) 11th Marquis of Winchester.

"And not a Peter Paulet amongst them all. How disappointing for you," said May.

"Well, my informant might have had the first name wrong, but there must have been some evidence for her claims. Anyway, back to our research. One reference I wanted to find again was the one relating to Anne Boleyn. Here it is and this is about William Paulet, the 1st Marquis of Winchester:

When the Pilgrimage of Grace broke out in the Autumn, Paulet took joint-charge of the musters of the Royal Forces and himself raised two hundred men. As the rebels complained of the exclusion of noblemen from the King's Council, Henry reminded them of the presence of Paulet and others. In carrying out his Royal Master's commands, he was not, it would appear, unnecessarily harsh. Anne Boleyn excepted him from her complaints against the council: "the controller was a very gentleman" she admitted.

"It goes on a good bit more, but I thought that was an interesting point. Amyas Paulet, a nephew I presume, who was in the king's service at the same time, is also an interesting character."

He was Mary Queen of Scot's last jailer. His first action was to take down Mary's cloth of state with her famous motto "In my End is my Beginning" which she had hanging over her chair in all her prisons since the days of Shrewsbury. Paulet was a Puritan who found Mary irritating and tiresome as well as offensive to his high principles. He repeatedly ignored her complaints regarding her health and eliminated her outings to Buxton Baths on the pretext that by her alms to the poor she might gain popular support. She was not even allowed to take the air nor to receive any correspondence except from the French Ambassador. He refused to baptise the child of one of Mary's servants, and was scandalised when Mary baptised the baby as a Catholic herself. By the time the Babington Plot was taking shape,

Mary had to be moved to Chartley due to her ill health. It was during that time that Paulet broke into her apartments while she was lying ill in bed and unceremoniously seized her money under Elizabeth's instructions. Paulet was entrusted with several letters from Mary to Elizabeth and others. He delayed dispatching these for fear that Elizabeth might be touched by them and evoke the Death Warrant. It took almost a year for the other letters to be received by the addressees. Paulet also attended Mary's execution and was Knighted after it.

"I don't think he sounds like a relative that I would want to boast about," said May. "Your other relation, William, was much kinder and more honest, from what we have read."

"Do you know what? I am getting a bit tired of all this. Let's talk about something else. But in a way it is related, what if your ancestor had been the one to carry the royal title all the way through, what would you be called, a Marchioness?"

"Well, I suppose that I would have that title only if I were married to the Marquis. I think the daughters are called Lady. I noticed in the paper that Lettice is a Countess – and of course her husband is an Earl. My ancestors were both Earls and Marquis, but I think a Marquis is more important."

"But even though we have done all this research, we are no nearer finding out about the ring, which was the whole reason for your searching in the first place. I think we are going in the wrong direction.

Why don't you write to that relative of your grandfather's and find out the addresses of the other grandchildren of the Marchioness – if that is what she was – and then you can perhaps feel like you have accomplished something, even if it is to know that the ring has been sold, and nobody knows where it is."

"What else did you find out?" asked May.

"The eldest son of a Marquis is by courtesy given his father's second title, which should be the next rank down, which is Earl, but if his father doesn't hold an earldom, he goes by whatever lesser title is available. Other children are Lords or Ladies with both the forename or surname. So if as you suggested our line had continued, and my father was the oldest son (which he wasn't) he would be the Marquis of Winchester, if I had a brother (which I don't) he would be the Earl of Wiltshire, and I would be Lady Muriel Paulet.

“You would normally address as Marquis as “My Lord” and address an envelope to “The Most Honourable the Marquis of Winchester,” but the letter itself would start, “My Lord.” But it also said in the book that things are not nearly so formal as that today, so you can forget the most honourable part, and write “Dear Lord Winchester.”

“Is that what you did when you wrote to the Earl of Beauchamp?”

“I’m sure I didn’t write it as formally as they suggested. I just said, “Dear Earl and Countess Beauchamp” but I am ever so pleased that Lettice asked us to call her by her given name. And she didn’t want me to curtsy or anything like that, but she never let me forget by her mannerisms that I was talking to someone of quality.”

“No wonder you are finding out that having noble ancestors is so interesting. They really were given a great deal of importance, almost like the royal family themselves. Yet they only came by their titles because they did something to please the King.”

“And not only did my noble family make an impact in England, there is even mention of an old town in America which is named after them. It is called Winchester, in New Hampshire and in 1733 was named in honour of Sir Charles Paulet, Marquis of Winchester, and there is still a church there which was founded in 1736.”

“That isn’t very old for a church.”

“It is in America.”

As it was getting time for dinner, May said she would see Muriel again soon, and left, saying that her head hurt with all that she had learned about her noble neighbour, and curtsied upon leaving with a grin on her face.

TWENTY FIVE

Muriel took up May's suggestion and wrote to her half-cousin Edith Wood for the addresses of others who were related through the Marquis of Winchester.

After some time she had this letter back,

My dear Muriel,

Now you say you want to know something of your family, so I enclose a list. I do not say dates are accurate. In the main I believe it to be so but of course I have never had time or money to spend on verifying. You see I have not put Elizabeth's maiden name in – it is always said to have been Paulet but I have never traced it – so leave it as it stands. You will see the many families sprang from Mr. and Mrs. Burgess's family of daughters, four of whom married. Thom Stanford comes in two ways. Our grandfather's first wife was Frances Stanford, sister to William Stanford who married Rebecca Botting, a cousin of our grandfather's.

You will find James Robinson underlined. Auntie Jeanie did not quite approve of him, because having run through all his money, he was taken in by Alfred Carter, he and his family; just as well, we all thought, he made a good thing of it; perhaps we should have done the same in similar circumstances, at any rate it was lucky for them to have a cousin Alfred King to fall back on.

You asked about the name Linacre, which you say you have given to your house in Worcester. That was the name of our great grandfather, Michael King's house in Cranleigh, Surrey. But the name Linacre goes back much farther than that.

There was a John King of "Longacre" or Linacre mentioned in deeds in 1663. But as early as 1615 Longacre farm and lands in Cranleigh Surrey then in the hands of Stedman, Yeoman of Cranleigh, according to an old deed. And in 1759 a James Stedman married an Ann King. I have never connected them up but no doubt they are all in the family circle.

You mentioned Mrs. Michell, née King. She married her cousin Matthew Michell as his second wife. It was she that was so interested in the Paulet connection.

It is sometime since I wrote all those things and I have half forgotten what it was I said. However, I now think that perhaps our relative wasn't the 5th son of a Marquis after all, but a grandson. I have had another look in my book of peers of the realm, and I cannot trace Peter Paulet. I don't suppose we shall ever know more, and I don't suppose it makes any difference.

You specifically asked about the ring. As far as I understand, it is now the possession of Mrs. Mary Michell Eager's husband's sister – Mrs. William Eager who I understand gave it to her daughter, Blanche Eager. She is now married to a Mr. Sharp. So who knows where it is now, but certainly not now in our immediate family.

Muriel decided that the time had come to draw a line under her quest for the ring. But she was pleased that she had written and found out about the name of this house. Her father hadn't known any of that information when she asked him. He just remembered it as the name of his grandfather, Michael King's house. His grandfather died in 1821, long before he was born.

She also was pleased that she and May had done the research into the Marquis of Winchester's family, and she fully intended to write up the details of the interesting relatives she had found, perhaps to share with others at her WEA history course. She still firmly believed to be related to the Marquis of Winchester, but in an even less direct line than she had thought previously. Never the less, she still claimed that she must have at least one drop of noble blood.

Nothing else much happened worth noting for that year and it wasn't until Christmas of 1903 that John proposed to May. But they were still very cautious, postponing their wedding plans until John finished at Oxford and found employment and they saw how things were going on. May was frustrated by having the delay, but she loved John, so she said she was prepared to wait for as long as it took.

TWENTY SIX

1904

Muriel King and May Stinton were on the train, en route to Redruth in Cornwall for the Trethisick Festival, held each year in Camborne on the 26th of April, and this year it was on a Thursday, so the girls were to arrive on Wednesday and stay through the weekend.

They had risen early, and caught the train from Worcester at Foregate Street to Birmingham at 8.53 arriving in Birmingham, Snow Hill station at 10.15. They then had a quick walk to another platform for the departure of the Birmingham Penzance Express which left Birmingham at 10.35, getting to Plymouth at 3.50 and then with another change, they were due to get into Redruth at 6.16.

Muriel and May had gone travelling before, but most of those occasions they were accompanied by their other good friends Dot Duncan and Charlotte Walker. However this time, Dot have moved away to live with her brother and Charlotte couldn't leave home as her father was now senile, and she needed to care for both him and her oldest sister, Mary, who couldn't have coped on her own.

May was engaged to John Duncan Day, who was now aged 23. Muriel's intended (but nothing official yet) was his younger brother Harold, aged 21, and in his last year as a student at Camborne School of Mining.

Muriel had to smile when she thought how lucky she was that it was May who was now marrying John Day, and not her, as she had originally intended.

She still liked John but she loved Harold, who was much more in tune with her way of thinking. John would soon come down after his four year theology course at Oxford, and he was in the process of being made a priest of the Anglican Church. He managed to secure a very good job straight away and in September he would be starting as Senior English Master at Warwick School. May was looking forward to the move to Warwickshire, and their wedding was scheduled for the spring of 1906.

The girls had often talked about having a double wedding, but Muriel wasn't as yet officially engaged. Harold was very anxious to get married, but he also wanted as soon as he was married to work abroad – perhaps in Malaya or South Africa so he was busy applying with that in mind. Muriel had let it be known that she did not intend to rush into marriage and moving to a new country immediately afterwards.

Muriel was very devoted to her parents, and especially her father. Not that she didn't love Harold, she did. But she only saw him on short visits in the week when he had holiday usually around Christmas. So their courtship was largely conducted through letters, which they both enjoyed writing. They had developed a sort of code whereby they each found an appropriate quotation to add to their letters.

Harold was about to complete his formal education at the Camborne School of Mining and he was anticipating receiving 1st class honours. He would have no trouble getting a position in Cornwall, and Muriel encouraged him to do so, but he was determined that he would go abroad, and he had made an application to go to a mine in the Federated States of Malaya.

Muriel knew all about his work, as most of his letters were spent in detailing it in every way, including its history. Most recently he had been working at South Crofty Mine as an assistant to the manager. Earlier, his practice work was done at King Edward Mine. In 1897, the School took over the abandoned eastern part of the South Condurrow Mine around Engine Shaft and in 1901 it was renamed after the new King. This offered the students the opportunity to work both William's Lode and the Great Flat Lode down to 400 feet from the surface. The mine was operated semi-commercially and produced tin on a regular basis, employing some 10-20 men in additional to the college teaching staff. Much of the production work was carried out by students.

The girls were met at the station by Harold, and they both kissed him and told him how wonderful it was to see him. Then Harold escorted the girls to the 300 year old Plough Inn, on College Street. Because they were very tired from their journey, they decided to just have a quick meal at the Inn with Harold where they could update him on the latest Worcester gossip and then meet up with them early the next morning for the day's festivities.

The next dawn dawned glorious and the streets were full of revellers from very early on.

The main streets were closed to traffic for the day, and the group checked the programme.

1. 11 a.m. Bal Maidens & Miners Dance - led by miniature steam engines and Camborne Town Band, with school children dressed in traditional costumes of miners and bal-maidens
2. 2 p.m. Trevithick's Dance - adults processional dance, led by Camborne Town Band. Dancers dressed in gold and black, Cornish colours. (both dances follow a route that takes them through the central streets of the town)
3. Indoor exhibitions – all day long - i.e. schools competition entries, Church Flower Festival, display on the life of Trevithick, model exhibition (trains, steam vehicles etc.)
4. Static Displays - of steam vehicles, fair organs, stationery engines, vintage vehicles, etc.
5. Free Street Entertainment - e.g. from locally based performers choirs, Camborne Town Band, buskers, musicians, jugglers, and theatre groups etc.
6. The Annual Steam parade - The engines will steam along Church Street, down Wellington Road and Trelawney Road, then up (Camborne Hill) Tehidy Road and back to Basset Road.

They decided to start with looking at the outdoor displays, as the weather was so fine, and if it came on to rain later, they could always take shelter and look at the indoor exhibitions at the same time. It was very entertaining and the girls were enthralled by each and every aspect and although Harold had twice before experienced the day's events, he too enjoyed it very much.

The girls were interested in knowing the history of the day, so although Harold was very familiar with it, they spent time going over it all and reading from the placards.

The girls and Harold had a wonderfully full day, and were very tired when they finally decided to stop. Harold had to be up early for work on Friday morning, but the girls said they would walk around the countryside, and see him in the evening for a meal. Then on the weekend, they would all take in some of the local sights.

Saturday, they took a bus to see the town of Falmouth. Harold had showed them leaflets telling about it:

The port of Falmouth - south west Cornwall's premier resort and home to Cornwall's maritime heritage. Washed by the ocean and warmed by the Gulf Stream, the town basks on the shoreline of the world's third largest natural harbour - the gateway to a beautiful network of rivers and creeks. Famous for its beaches and castle and infamous for its smugglers and pirates - Falmouth has protected the deep water anchorage of the Carrick Roads since Tudor times.

They went on the beach at Maenporth and the girls enjoying having the sand between their toes as they strolled along watching the ebb and flow of the Atlantic.

On Sunday after church they went on a visit to the Trelissick Gardens. May read aloud from the brochure:

In about 1750 a modest two-storey villa was built at Trelissick on the foundations of an earlier building. The Gilbert family acquired Trelissick around 1844 and made many improvements throughout the grounds including the ornamental woodlands, huge oaks and conifers.

They very much enjoyed their walk around the gardens, but the girls had very sore feet from all their walking over the last few days.

Because Harold had to be up at the crack of dawn, and the girls' train journey didn't start until 11.29, they said their goodbyes on Sunday night. It

would not be for long this time, however, as Harold's course would be finishing at the end of July and he would be back in Worcester soon after that.

But he also told Muriel that he had applied to work in Malaya and if he was accepted, he would be leaving in September for at least a two year contract. Muriel has always known that he intended to do this, so it didn't come as a big surprise, but she did feel that she hardly knew him, and he was already slipping away from her.

The train left on time and stopped at Plymouth departing from there at 1.48. They reached Birmingham Snow Hill at 7, and they knew if they were early or the train was late, they could catch the 7.05 which took them back into the Foregate Station by 8.08, but if not there was a train at 7.15 which would get them to Scrub Hill Station by 9.05. In the end they managed just to catch the earlier one and they walked home.

Harold finished his course with first class honours, and came home in late July. He had heard that his application to go to Perak in the Federated Malay States had been accepted, and he could hardly contain his joy. He got all sorts of books from the library about what it would be like to live in that part of the world. Muriel tried to enter into his enthusiasm but she felt like he was so wrapped up in his career and plans that he had no time for her.

So it was a bit of a shock, when after a particular nice dinner at a restaurant one evening, Harold (having first checked with Mr. King) went down on one knee and proposed to Muriel. He presented her with a very pretty ring of sapphire and diamond chips. She was overwhelmed, and accepted him and they kissed and hugged for some time.

"We will need to check with the Rector about having the banns read soon," said Harold, "as we don't have much time to get ready for the wedding and leaving."

"Oh," said Muriel, "so soon. I don't want a rushed wedding. I don't want people thinking that I am with child and we have to get married in a hurry. I think we should postpone it until you come home on leave, and then we can plan it properly. Why don't we plan on having a double wedding with John and May a year from April? That would give you the chance to see how you like living in Malaya and if you don't like it, you can get a job around here again."

Harold was very disappointed, as he thought Muriel had shared his excitement for this new life. But he said he would be prepared to wait for her, and that was the way it was left.

There were many engagement celebrations planned for the couple, and going away parties for Harold, so the rest of the summer proved a busy time. But before long the time came for Harold to pack up his kit and go off to South Hampton, to board the ship to take him to the other side of the world.

It was a tearful goodbye from Muriel, who at times felt that she might have made the wrong decision not to go with him, but in her more sensible moments, she felt she had made the right choice. She was secretly hoping that his wanderlust would wear out before she saw him next and she wouldn't have to leave the country and family she so much loved.

TWENTY SEVEN

Letters between Muriel and Harold

7 Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester

September 1st 1904

My Dearest Harold,

I know that, as I write this letter, you are still en route to your destination. I hope that it will go on the next ship out, and therefore you won't have to wait all those weeks for a reply from me. I am sending it to the offices of your company, and assume that they will know where you are working and will get it to you.

I do miss you so much. It seems like much more than a week since you sailed off from South Hampton. I hope you are having a reasonable trip. I expect all the rowing you did when you were at school will have prepared you for being on the water. Do you spend much of your time reading up about your work and your new life? I wonder about the others on the ship. Do you have your meals all together? Are there lots of young attractive women who are vying for your attention? I wish engaged men had to wear rings as well, so that those women would know that you are spoken for. I do love my ring and gaze at it all the time, remembering those wonderful moments when you asked me to marry you.

I hope you think we were being sensible in deciding that you should go out on your own to assess the situation. If I had gone along straight away, and it turned out that you didn't like the life or I couldn't cope with the climate, then we would have all that effort for nothing.

This way you can get settled in and know exactly what I should bring, when we go there after we are married in 1906. I hope you like the idea of us having a joint wedding with John and May. Since we started out our knowledge of one another as a foursome, I thought it was very appropriate that we should seal our marriages on the same day.

John is greatly looking forward to his job at Warwick, and will be going up soon to find accommodation. He will be senior English master, and I am sure he will be very good at that as he was always very clever when telling us about the books we read and how to interpret them properly. We hope to go up to Warwick to visit him when he is established. I rather think that May is the time to go, and then we can take in a play at Stratford at the same time. But of course he will be home for Christmas before then, so we can make our plans after he tells us what else there is to see and do in that area.

I wish you would be home for Christmas. But I know that with it taking three weeks to get there, and the commitment that you have for the job, that I will not see you again until just before our wedding.

I eagerly await your letter to tell me of your safe arrival and your first impressions of your new home (and soon to be mine as well).

Here is a quotation for you to be working on in the meantime.

'Art is born of observation and investigation of nature'. I sort of think that is what you are doing – investigating nature – so you an artist, despite you thinking yourself a practical scientific man.

All my love from Muriel

Lahat, Perak

15th October, 1904

My darling Muriel,

What a wonderful surprise to get your letter so soon after arriving. I couldn't wait to open it. Of course the others teased me about it – seeing as it was remarkable for a personal letter to arrive for someone who just officially signed on as an employee.

You asked about the ship going over. It was called the *HMS Gort*, which was built at the Glasgow shipyards in 1894. It is a 4,500 gt and has a single screw triple expansion engine. I know those details will not mean much to you, but they do to me, as we learned a lot about engines in our courses at Camborne. The ship has a maximum speed of 13.5 knots. As it is primarily a cargo shop, and the main port of call is South Africa, there were not many of the passengers who came the full distance with me, although we did have more getting on the ship at Cape Town. That, of course, is another area where there is some mining, and we may in the fullness of time get an opportunity to live there. I have an idea that the climate there would suit you better, as you might find the humidity here rather oppressive at least to start with. We spent 4 days in Cape Town while the cargo was off loaded and new cargo put on. It is a wonderful beautiful city, and I could quite well imagine us living there very happily. But back to the ship. It had four masts and one funnel, and had a few first class passengers, 200 second class passengers (which included me) but 1,150 third class passengers.

There were a few in the group that I got to know quite well, as we always ate at the same table, one being a clergyman and his family who was interested to hear that I had a brother about to take holy orders. They and several others I fully intend to look up as they have commitments in areas not too far away. As far as pretty girls flirting with me, you need not worry. Most of the women were wives or daughters, and much too fiercely defended by their husbands or fathers for any shipboard romance to take place. Besides, you know that I would not look at any woman but you – as has been the case since I first met you at Perdiswell Churchyard all those years ago.

I will tell you a little about the situation here. I am to be a divisional assistant, and will live for the time being at Lahat. The number of the white staff depends upon the size of the mine - an average of one white man to every 400 workers is usual.

My bungalow is built on posts some four or five feet from the ground. It is an open design - plank walls and attap (palm leaf) roof. It is surrounded by a verandah, and the kitchen and servants' quarters are built away from the main building though connected with it by a covered way. I have three native servants - house boy, cook, and water carrier, all men you will be pleased to hear.

There is also a divisional manger of a slightly larger mine in Batu Gjhah and the Manager lives in Ipoh which is the centre of activity, and quite is a sizeable town with many advantages. Those of us who are farther afield have a rather solitary life when it comes to any social interaction. But I have long and tiring days and am quite happy to put my feet up and read at night without having to worry about being polite. I'm sure that I will make some social acquaintances as time goes on, but that is not my priority at the moment. I may try to get a motor cycle after awhile and then I could keep in touch with the others through a Club in Ipoh.

The climate is pleasant, but much warmer and wetter than we are used to in England. We have a high in the day of about 85º, but it doesn't get below 60º at night. My servants cook and clean for me, so other than work, I have nothing to do. They are very pleasant and have a sort of pidgeon English. As the French were in this area from the 1880s many of them also have a smattering of French and if I cannot get them to understand my English, I try in French often with more success. I hadn't realised my lessons at school would come in so handy when I was a miner.

All for now, but I long for your next letter, and will write again more about what life is like here next time. Let me know what is going on in Worcester and what you and May are getting up to.

I think your quote was from Cicero. Am I right?

Here is one for you. 'Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures'.

Much love

Harold

*****

7 Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester

8th November, 1904

Darling Harold

What nicer treat could I have than a letter from you? I have so looked forward to getting it, and will treasure it forever, along with many more from you, I do hope. It is so frustrating that it is a minimum of 6 weeks for our letters to do their journey and for us to get a response.

I enjoyed hearing about where you are living, but being a female and an artist of sorts, I would like you to describe it in more detail for me. How are the rooms decorated? What sort of furniture do you have? What do the servants cook for you? Where do all your workers live? What sort of time to you get up and start work? Do you go to church on Sundays? What is the scenery like? That should give you a few things to put in your next letter.

As far as life around here goes, we do much as we did last year. May and I go to the Technical College at the Victoria Institute for me to learn more of art subjects and she to learn management skills as well as to improve her music skills which are already exceptional, as you know. Her mother continues to enjoy singing with the Worcester Choral Society and they have just had a concert which was well attended as usual. It is so nice that May knows Edward Elgar personally, as he was the first to teach her piano way back before he was famous. We catch the odd glimpse of Mr. Elgar and his daughter, Carise, who is now at our old school, when they come to visit with his parents Mr. and Mrs. William Elgar, Edward's sister Helen, and the grandchild who is called Clare Grafton.

I occasionally read in the paper that your sister Una is doing well at Alice Ottley's, and of course both your brothers, Mark and Jimmy, are written up for their sporting prowess at King's School, although neither of them is as good as you were.

I have heard the rumour that May's brother, Tom, is more than a little interested in one of the Tree girls, and will let you know when I find out more about that. He doesn't divulge much to May, as you can imagine, but she apparently overheard him speaking to Carrie Tree on one occasion and felt there was something more than plain friendship in his tone.

But of course they are still far too young to have a proper romance going. As you know he has gone off to Oxford, and we think he is enjoying it, but he doesn't write home very often. We shall see him soon when his term finishes. I keep meaning to go over to visit with your mother but have not managed it yet. I will make sure I do so over the Christmas period as they will be missing you very much.

And talking of the Trees, do you remember the eldest son, Frank? He has left his school and has joined his father's firm, and has every intention of doing his articles and becoming a solicitor like his father. He is a very charming man, and we have great fun when he is with us.

I trust this letter and my little gift to you for Christmas will arrive in plenty of time. For Christmas presents, I asked friends if they would like to help me fill my bottom drawer, so Mrs. Stinton gave us an early present of a pair of pillowcases with the finest lace trimming. So when I finally come to your headquarters in Lahat, I shall do so knowing that I have very fine pillowcases with decoration on them from a prize winning lace maker. I wonder if your servants do a proper job of washing delicate things.

I didn't know your quote but mentioned it when I was visiting the Trees. Mrs. Tree knew it straight away. Her father was a minister in Plymouth. It is from Henry Ward Beecher's Proverbs from a Plymouth Pulpit. I must not take the credit for knowing it, but I have now learnt it.

Here is one for you: 'Many books require no thought from those who read them, and for a very simple reason; they made no such demand upon those who wrote them.' I can't imagine that you read those sorts of books.

All for now, my love. Have a wonderful Christmas. You must tell me what traditions they have there and how different they are from ours. I miss you very much.

Love from Muriel

Lahat Perak, December 1st, 1904

Dearest Muriel,

I am writing this immediately after receiving yours as I want to make sure it gets on the next available boat back to England, hopefully to be in time for Christmas.

I have enclosed a small gift – and thank you for yours, but I won't open it until Christmas Day when I then shall be able to think about you wrapping it and imagine that I can smell your scent on the paper it is wrapped in.

I will answer only a few of your questions now, and take more time to write to you properly in a few days. You asked about the scenery. My work is on the Kinta River in the Kinta Valley.

It is difficult to imagine Kinta Valley before the roads and open-cast mines - when the hills and valleys were covered with primeval forests in which great beasts like elephants, tigers and rhinoceros roamed. In fact the whole of the Malay Peninsula is one vast forest, through which flow countless streams that from one of the most lavish water systems in the world. The rivers, though many of them are of imposing appearance and of considerable length, are uniformly shallow, only a few on the west coast being navigable by ships for a distance of some 40 yards from their mouths. Only a very small fraction of the entire area has as yet been touched either by mining or agriculture. It is not too much to assert that the larger half of the forest-lands has never been trodden by the foot of man.

As far as going to church on Sundays, preachers of any denomination are few and far between. They tend to have a rota and visit areas in turn. We do have work here on Sundays as well as other days to maximize the output, so I am afraid that I have not been able to have a day of rest and prayer as one would expect to do. You will have to pray extra long and hard to make up for it. I do get days off, but not often on a Sunday.

Have a wonderful Christmas. Do visit my parents if you have a chance and then you can bring me up to date with all that I am missing. What I miss most, of course, is you.

I'm afraid I cannot guess your quotation, you must tell me in your next letter. Here is mine: 'An author is a fool who, not content with boring those he lives with, insists of boring future generations.'

Much love my darling,

Harold

TWENTY EIGHT

Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester

January 1, 1905

Dearest Harold,

Thank you so much for the beautiful broach of quartzite as you call it. I will be very proud to display it on my dress, and the rich blue colour is my favourite hue, as you probably knew.

The quotation from before that you did not know was from Charles Caleg Colton. I know it is very obscure. He wrote Lacon in 1820.

Your quotation I had heard before and managed to find it in my book of quotes. I hope you don't think that is cheating. It was Charles De Montesquieu. I find it a rather sad way to think of writing – as a form of enforced boredom on future generations. I hope you do not find my letters boring. I could never think to write a book – but I suppose if one kept all one's letters, they would almost make a book.

Here is an easy one for you. 'Beneath the rule of men entirely great, The pen is mightier than the sword.'

I did manage to get over to visit your family in Barbourne Road as I promised you. In fact your mother invited May and me and our mothers over for tea. She was quite pleased to know all I have heard from you, as you haven't yet managed to write to her, and I think she felt a bit jealous. She thought my broach was most beautiful.

She seems quite concerned over the health of her mother, Mrs. Duncan. She has aged considerably over the past four years that I have known her, and seems very frail now. Dot was shy and quiet as usual, with her glasses so thick you could hardly see her eyes. Una was around for our tea party as well. She is such a beautiful girl – she by far outshines both May and me.

I expect she will have many beaux in her time. She was pleased to tell me that she continues to get top marks at the High School for Girls, and it is interesting that she is best friends with Carrie Tree, who I mentioned to you before. May and I are good friends with Margaret and Jessie Tree in particular, and May knows Beth from her musical activities. Beth will train professionally in music as she was a prodigy from her earlier days, and continues to excel.

John is very much enjoying being a master at Warwick School. He has found lodgings in Northgate Street and is quite happy there. I think when he and May marry a year from next spring, he will probably hope to become a housemaster, which will include, , accommodation and a higher salary. He also hopes to be appointed chaplain but as they already have someone in that post, he will have to wait his turn. He thinks it would be pleasant for May and me to go to visit him in May, and he might also take in some plays at Stratford at the same time. He will look into appropriate hotels for us both in Warwick and in Stratford, as it would be too late to get back to Warwick after the play finishes.

My parents are well, and busy as usual. My father has been made chairman of the Chamber of Commerce which he much enjoys. Mother complains that he is on so many committees that he is hardly ever home. But she spends much time in the company of Mrs. Eliza Stinton, May's mother.

Our weather has been very bleak and cold. It makes me very envious of you having temperatures in the 80's. Do you have a suntan? What sort of clothes do you wear for work? What does your work consist of? Perhaps you could send some pictures of your mine so I can have a better idea of what it is like.

All for now my darling as I need to be out in a few minutes to play whist. Did I tell you that I am teaching a group of like-minded females the game? It is especially to benefit my good friend Charlotte Walker, as she is stuck at home most of the time now that her mother has died and her father is not very clever mentally.

Love from Muriel

*****

Lahat, Perak,

1 February, 1905

My dear Muriel,

How much I always enjoy your letters and certainly do not find them boring. I am pleased that you managed to have time to visit my family, and thank you for your comments on how they are all getting on. I know that Mark hopes to follow in my footsteps and go into the mining business, going to Camborne School of Mines, as I did, in September. Jimmy has written to me telling me about his training to be a teacher. But I expect you see something of him during the holidays, so perhaps you know all his news.

As to your quote, I certainly have heard it before, but cannot remember from where. You of course have a book to help you, while I have only my own simple brain and those of my native workforce, who I can tell you are no help at all.

Here is one that you might know with your feminist leanings. 'You ask me why I do not write something – I think one's feelings waste themselves in words, they ought all to be distilled into actions and into actions which bring results.'

I can now take more time to answer your questions from the last two letters. You asked me to describe the living quarters. The house is quite well set out, with a large veranda which is supported on posts with wrought iron trim on the top, where I sit out often if the breeze is blowing to make the weather more tolerable. It extends to both the front and the side of the house, with the roof overhanging so there is protection from the rain (unless it is blowing in the wrong direction).

There are several blue gum trees to the front and the side but beyond that is rough grass which we don't even attempt to cultivate. There are six shallow steps up to the front door and three sets of large windows which are nearly always open top and bottom.

The house does reflect the French influence of the previous occupants. There is a gable above the steps which has a pattern on it, and the shape is mirrored in the space above, where there is a window in the attic room. The French doors and attic window are all decorated with a pattern of square coloured stone which makes them look rather interesting. I will try to borrow a camera and send you a picture, as I am doing a very bad job of describing it for your artist's eyes.

The view from the homestead is across the Kuiks River with a very high hill in the background, but some farmed land in between. Most of the furniture is made of wicker and very light in weight to make one as cool as possible.

The kitchen is fairly primitive, but as you will not be expected to do any cooking, it probably won't matter to you. There is a dining table with four chairs, although seldom is more than one used at a time as the servants do not eat with me. There are several small carpets on the wooden floor, and a bookcase and a desk and a selection of wicker chairs. There are wooden shutters on all the windows to keep out the sun. For the most part the internal walls are clad in wood panels. That's about all I can think of to say about the house for now. Ask me specific questions about what I have missed.

I have managed to join the rowing team which competes in Ipoh. We five give it a good go whenever we can manage to all be there at the same time. We try to coordinate our times off so that we can meet there on a Sunday and spend the day on the river.

You also asked about what the servants feed me. They provide traditional satay and tasty seafood dishes. There are many types of tropical fruits and vegetables. The cook makes bread and will attempt anything I ask, if we can manage to communicate with sign language and diagrams when words fail us. The food is good, well seasoned and plentiful.

You must tell me more about your activities at home. Have you chosen which play in Stratford you will book to see? What are the elder Tree girls doing now?

Thank you so much for the initialed cuff links you sent me. I have not had occasion to wear my suit or dress clothing as yet, but I will treasure them, and think of you whenever I look at them. You asked what we wear for work. Because the sun is so hot, we dare not go about uncovered lest we get sunstroke. So for the most part I wear a white shirt to reflect the sun, light coloured trousers, strong and heavy boots, as we work amongst much rubble and muck, and always a hat. So the answer to your question as to whether I am tanned or not is that my face and hands are quite brown but the rest of me is as white as if I lived in England still.

You also asked about where the workers live. Most of our workers are Chinese. We, the owners of mines are obliged by law to provide suitable, ample, and sanitary housing accommodation. This generally takes the form of a building raised some five feet from the ground, partitioned into rooms of ten by twelve feet; one room being allowed for a married couple or for three bachelors. The walls are of planks and the roofing of either tiles or attaps (dried palm leaves). The manager, or assistant manager as I am, is held largely responsible for the adequate feeding of his labourers. An ample water supply, hospital accommodation, and medical attention are obligatory. As the supply of labour is very much below the demand, the first object of a manager is to make his labourers contented, and the rule is to do for them more rather than less than that required by law and most Englishmen are known to be kind to their workers.

I find the Chinese very hard working and biddable. The little contact I have had with Malay workers has not been so successful. The daily life of a mine manager is spent chiefly out of doors, and the length of his day's work depends very largely upon the stage of development which the project has reached. Usually my day begins before 6 o'clock, when I muster the labour force with breaks for breakfast and Tiffin, and goes on until 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, but usually the evenings are free.

It seems a long time ago now, but you did ask about Christmas in Malaya. To say Happy Christmas you would say, "Selanat Hari Natal", but since most of our workforce is Chinese, a more used one was "His Hsin Nieu

Bing Chu Shen Tan". Christmas celebrations here in Malaya are a little different from the rest of the world, since we live in a multi cultural country with no snow. Malaysians tend to celebrate by visiting friends and families in their homes.

On Christmas day, families have a feast and friends of all faiths make their rounds to wish each other Merry Christmas. Some visitors bring presents and gifts. The children receive gifts and money in a modified version of "ang-pow" from friends and relatives. Giving gifts is an old tradition. Traditionally, men give glass bangles to the women of their family. Women wear henna to create traditional hand and foot decorations known as mehndi. Although the constitution guarantees freedom of worship, Islam is the official state religion. To avoid giving possible offence to Malaya's king, who is also the constitutional head of Islam, carols will be sung but we were told, "Jesus should be praised only before the King arrives to take part in the celebrations."

Malaya has a population of which Muslims are 53 per cent; Christians are 6.5 per cent.

The tropical heat and monsoon rains may be unfamiliar, but the Spirit of Christmas - the loving and giving, sharing and feasting - is as much a part of Christmas in Malaya as it is in England.

I think that brings me up to date with your questions. Do ask me more, as it is easier to think of what to write when I know what you are interested in hearing about. I delight in anything at all that you wish to tell me, and think of you every night as I am going to bed, hoping that you are thinking of me too.

Love
Harold

7 Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester
March 15th 1905
Dearest Harold,

What a wonderful letter you sent with all those answers to my questions. I have hundreds more, but I will try to confine myself to a few each letter, so as not to overwhelm you.

First of all, I will tell you that the quote you couldn't remember comes from Edward Bulwer-Lytton. And I am quite sure with the hints that you gave me, that your last quote was from one of the suffragettes – probably Emily Pankhurst.

You said that you were responsible for the medical care of the workers. How do you go about doing that? What about the women and children – how to they cope and what sorts of things to do they do? I don't think you have ever mentioned the names of your servants, or of your fellow rowers in Ipoh. I am pleased that you are getting a chance to keep up your athletic prowess. Do you do any other sports?

As far as our plans for going to Warwick and Stratford, we have checked to see what plays are on. As you know the season there runs for two weeks from Shakespeare's birthday each year, and the 14 plays they put on are all different. We haven't made our final choice yet.

I am rather hoping we can also take in a visit to Coventry to see the Cathedral there. I also have heard that in early June they have a Lady Godiva Festival each year. I would think it would be great fun to be there for that. Charlotte says her father went to it in 1851 – and enjoyed it very much. He is such a stiff old sourpuss now that it is hard to imagine him as a young and lusty young man.

We meet at the Walker house for our whist afternoons. I have now taught 2 groups of 4 to play, and so we can have two tables of whist, and then change partners after tea. It is a wonderful way to keep one's mind alert and also socialize at the same time.

Charlotte is so grateful to me for suggesting it, as she is more or less tied to the house due to her father being senile now. Her sister Mary who is a bit on the slow side anyway, is happy to sit with him while we have our afternoons, and even if he says the same thing twenty times over, she doesn't mind. She just smiles and nods and gets on with her embroidery. But it upsets

Charlotte so much to see him like this as she is so very fond of him. I wonder how much longer he can last. He misses his wife, who you will remember died in October of 1902.

Charlotte has been reading her journals (when her father is not about to see her doing it) and is amazed at what she has found out about what her mother was like as a young bride in Worcester. She apparently tried to get Mary adopted by some other family without their knowing it – put her baby in their baby's crib. I can hardly credit that any woman would do that with their baby, but Charlotte says she had her reasons, but wouldn't go into any real detail with me.

I will write again soon and let you know how things are going on. It will soon be Easter and John and Jimmy and Tom will be home.

I love you very much,

Muriel

*****

Lahat, Perak,

25th April, 1905

Dearest Muriel,

I hope you had a wonderful Easter and managed to meet up with my brothers and May's brother as planned. I am quite envious of your social life, even though I am not the most sociable of men.

I am so pleased that I managed to score a point off you in the quotations test. It was Florence Nightingale who said it, but she might have been considered one of the earliest of the suffragettes.

How about this one? 'How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live.'

You asked if I did any other sport. I ride a horse occasionally, which I never did at home, but it is good exercise, and is sometimes necessary when we need to get to a neighbouring area and no other method of transport is available. I also run. The roads here are very good – as they are needed for hauling the tin to the railways.

Next year by this time, I will be home on leave, and we shall be getting married. How I long for that day. I picture you here with me and how much more exciting and fulfilling my life will be when you are here to share these things with me.

You asked about medical care. The Government of the country are solicitous for their welfare - and very rightly so.

Our camp runs schools for the workers' children, and we have a system by which a bonus is paid to the parents for each child born and reared here. This helps largely to reduce infantile mortality.

The Medical Mission trains and supplies the local hospitals with Eurasian and native midwives and nurses. The type of woman required is not easily found, however, in a country where the elder women either have their own homes or are not anxious at their age to learn a new profession and to work for others and young women who are not yet familiar with childbirth are not considered suitable. At present the hospitals are practically without midwives, and short of nurses and it is most earnestly hoped that the Medical Mission will see its way to satisfy this need.

The average number of days in a month upon which our workers are at work is about twenty-four, so they have one day off each week. The wages which they receive are sufficient to enable them to make big savings; so much so that, on an average, each returns home for a holiday at the end of every two years' work.

It is interesting that a small percentage of our tin actually comes from the efforts of women. They collect the tin whilst doing their washing in the local streams and rivers. There is more than one stream where a good worker can earn a dollar per day. Panning for tin with a wooden tray (which called a dulang) is called melanda. You will have to build up your vocabulary of Malay and mining terminology so that when you come out you will quickly understand what we are talking about.

My servants are called Sum Lui, Gallet Sin and Sey Nawab. My rowing friends are called Osbourne, Craddock, Roberts and Blackwood. All went to schools like mine where one was always known by one's surname.

I hope you enjoy your time with May in Warwick which I know will be coming up soon. That will make a nice treat for your birthday for you. Happy Birthday a bit early from me. I await your description of your time there, especially your notes on Lady Godiva. I wonder what John will make of all of that.

Love,
Harold

TWENTY NINE

7 Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester
June 10th, 1905
Dear Harold,

Good news. Mark has been accepted at Camborne. He is very thrilled.

When you next write perhaps you can tell me more about why the Chinese are involved in Malaya.

I think your quote was from Thoreau, am I right?

Here's another: 'Wagner's music is better than it sounds'. Do you like classical music?

We had a wonderful trip to Warwick and then to Stratford, leaving home on the 8th and then touring around Warwick and Coventry until the 10th. We managed to go to 2 plays when we were in Stratford, *Othello* on May 11th and *The Taming of the Shrew* on the 13th.

Frank Benson whom I'm sure you've heard of, directed and acted in them both, and Constance Benson, his wife, played Desdemona, while he played Othello. She also played Katerina and he played Petroucio. They were both very good, as you would expect them to be.

I read in the programme, "Frank Benson born 1858, actor – manager. He is the Shakespearian actor who makes his company a nursery for the English stage." I wonder what they mean by that.

Have you ever seen a play at Stratford? The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre is a Victorian Gothic building. It opened in 1879 with a performance of *Much Ado About Nothing.*

We stayed at an inn that had been recommended to us, The Falcon, and the landlady told us that the indentation in the window seat was where Shakespeare had rested his bottom when he was drinking beer there. It was a

wonderful place, built in 1615, and with dark smoky beams which still seemed to have the spider webs of centuries ago.

We went to visit Shakespeare's house in Henley Street which is preserved intact and also Anne Hathaway's cottage. At the age of 18 he married Anne, who was seven years his senior and three months pregnant. She was of yeoman stock, and according to the leaflets, her family owned a farm one mile west of Stratford in Shottery. Shakespeare "endured her until he could stand it no longer" and fled to London to become an actor. He then became actor-manager and part-owner in the Blackfriars and afterwards the Globe Theatres.

On our day off from seeing a play, we walked the River Avon. From the East side of the river we could see Holy Trinity Church, where William Shakespeare is buried, a beautiful view with weeping willows.
From the bandstand we took a footpath alongside the river and on our right was the tramway bridge. There were many boats being rowed on the river. After a couple of hundred yards we saw the pedestrian chain ferry.

We also saw some attractive weirs and canal boat locks and went on until we came to the Mill Bridge. We crossed the bridge, keeping to the right, walked up Mill Lane and came to the entrance to Holy Trinity where we entered the church yard and the church. Afterward we turned right again to Avon Bank Gardens and then crossed back on to the Chain Ferry once more. Once past the ferry we came to the Memorial Theatre Gardens where we walked along the river bank, until we were so tired we needed to stop for a coffee and a rest. It was a wonderful walk.

Our visit to Coventry went well too, but we were too early for the Lady Godiva festival. When John overheard May mentioning it, he said he would have positively forbad us to go anyway. Not that we would have told him about it or asked his permission.

Since you have told me so much of the history of Perak, I can now educate you in the history of Coventry, which we learned when we visited it. In ancient times the land covered by Warwickshire was made up of two sections, Arden and Feldon with the River Avon forming the boundary.

In the eastern part of the Ardern bit, there was a settlement that came to be known as Coventry. The Feldon part was rich open countryside, but Arden was full of dense clay, so couldn't grow crops, but oak trees for some reason grew well and the forests were thick. So the settlements grew up in the

clearings. There was one very good resource in Arden, water – the Sherbourne River and a lake filling much of the land on the northern edge. So there were plenty of fish and enough drinking water and the land was easily defended. Instead of farming, the settlers raised cattle and sheep, so much of Coventry's wealth came from the wool industry.

I will also tell you about Leofric and Godiva. Her given name was Godgifu meaning God's gift and she was never officially a lady although some call her a countess. Even before she married Leofric she was a woman of high status and owned much land. So when they married they became an extremely wealthy couple who endowed many religious houses with riches, and the monastery in Coventry was described by John of Worcester as being, "so rich in various ornaments that no monastery in England might be found the abundance of gold, silver gems and precious stones that was at the time in its possession." I don't know who the John of Worcester is – presumably not King John who is buried in our Cathedral. I will look him up and let you know. Leofric reported directly to the king, who was Cnut, who appointed him Earl in 1016 and Leofric's influence and power grew until he died in 1057. Godgifu died ten years later – then the most powerful lady landowner in England.

She is mostly remembered for her naked ride through the town on horseback, allegedly in an attempt to persuade her husband to lower the taxes that were crippling the poor citizens of Coventry. He had apparently rashly said he would not do so unless she would ride naked through the town, so she did - although I think her hair was so long that nobody saw much. In fact in one of the books it said that Leofric forbad anyone to watch her do it. It was written about 120 years later in a book called *Flores Historiarum* by Roger of Wendover from St. Albans. I am disappointed that we didn't get to see the actual ride, but much enjoyed our time in Coventry, and the Cathedral was worth a trip for its own sake.

Coventry's earliest cathedral, dedicated to St. Mary, was supposedly founded as a Benedictine community by Leofric and Godiva in 1043. It was built on the site of a former convent and is very big and shows signs of huge wealth.

It is now almost a ruin due to the dissolution of the churches in 1539 and will take much money and effort to rebuild but I understand that there are

plans for doing that. Of course we see some evidence of those problems in our Cathedral in Worcester too. Poor King John had his nose chopped off.

Warwick School is very pleasant. The main building dates from the 1870s and contains classrooms, offices and the Headmaster's residence and boarders (about a quarter of the pupils) live on the top floor. The school is situated on the Myton Road, running between Warwick and Leamington Spa to the south of and parallel with the River Avon.

The "Quad" (not strictly a Quad because it's not square, and not surrounded by buildings) and the Fives court (I didn't know what this is but John tells me that Fives is a strenuous game for two involving hitting a tennis ball against the far wall with a gloved hand). Behind the Fives Court are the staff common room and music practice rooms. Behind that, is the assembly room with a large stage which is used for plays and concerts.

We saw the swimming pool with the Gym. According to John, the raised seating in front of the Gym was known as "The Altar" and was for the older boys only.

John says there is great emphasis on games (which you might appreciate more than he does) a certain academic rigidity, and an inflexibility in dealing with boys who don't quite fit the expected mold. I think John approves of these things, but they make me feel rather uncomfortable. I would like to feel that children who are somewhat different should not suffer for it.

There is apparently a concert at the end of every term, with orchestral pieces, choral items (at Easter and Christmas usually bits of an appropriate oratorio) and solo or group items. I'm sure May will come into her own as both an accompanist and a soloist on these occasions.

Apparently, when May comes to be a Master's wife, she will be expected to help with the plays – make costumes, that sort of thing. She was very excited to see what will be her new home in just over a year's time. Quite a different new home as to what mine will be I think.

'I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.'

Much love from Muriel

*****

Lahat, Perek
July 31st 1905
Dearest Muriel,

I find it hard to believe that it was a year ago when I received confirmation that I was to work here in Malaya. The time has gone very quickly and although I have been lonely at times, and of course miss you very much, I have also learned such a lot. And I have accumulated quite a good salary so that we should be confident of a good standard of living after we are married – wherever we may live.

You asked why we have mainly Chinese workers here. It is really because it was they who first found the tin in this area and set up the whole industry.

I hope this won't sound too much like a lecture, as I am copying some of it from a book that I have found on the subject.

The initial work of opening up new land is generally undertaken by Chinese, who are stronger and more fitted physically for heavy work. Rich alluvial deposits of tin had been worked here from early times and, a long time before the arrival of the English, Chinese came down from their own country to search for it.

Most of the land which is now being worked by big European companies (in some cases by underground shafts, in others on the surface by means of hydraulic monitors or of the dredge) has already been partly worked by the pioneer Chinaman with his pick and shovel.

Practically all the labour employed on tin mines is Chinese, and many of the largest and most valuable mines are owned by Chinamen. They are an extremely hardworking and enterprising people, and many of the richest towkays (leading Chinamen) of to-day came to the country in the first place as unskilled coolies.

The natives of the country, the Malays, do little wage-earning work, as they have their own little plots of land, the produce from which provides them with a livelihood without much effort. We benefit from their agricultural products – and the rainfall, sunshine and rich soil mean that farming is very successful.

The Malays were the earliest miners in Kinta. Then came the Chinese (Siamese and Mandailings) who brought with them more intensive methods.

However, it was the Chinese migrants, including those from the gold-fields of California and Australia, who turned Malaya into a world tin producer. The Europeans revolutionized tin-mining in Malaya with Western capital and technology.

Most of the towns in this area were established in the late 19th century and have character and charm and are flourishing, but most urban growth is concentrated in Ipoh.

In terms of numbers, I have read the following statistics. "The estimated aggregate area of the Federated Malay States is 28,000 sq. m., and the estimated population currently is 860,000, as against 678,595 in 1901, and increase of almost 200,000 in the last four years. Of these only about 230,000 are Malays. That means that most of the population, 630,000 are foreign workers, either Chinese, Indian or like me, English.

The principal sources of revenue are an export duty on tin, the rents paid for the revenue farms, the right to collect import duties on opium, wine and spirits, to keep licensed gambling-houses for the exclusive use of the Chinese population, railway receipts, land and forest revenue and postal revenue."

Perhaps this sort of information is not of much interest to you, but I find it fascinating. The Malay government, due to its clever financial dealings, does not owe money to anyone. They paid for the railways, the roads, the health service and benefits to their own people as well as the many work emigrants out of their profits. Most of the tin that is produced in the world comes from here – and I feel very privileged that a good share of it comes from my own little piece.

I think perhaps I have bored you enough for one letter. I do so look forward to hearing from you, but find that my thoughts and words tend these days to be almost entirely relating to work. Perhaps I should make more of an effort to get out more, so that I can make my letters to you more interesting.

It will soon be autumn and we will have been parted for a year. But it is my dearest wish that I will be with you, making you my wife in 10 months' time. I will count every day until I see you again.

I think your quote was from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and I do like classical music, but not particularly Wagner. And I don't know who the quote was by.

‘There are no wise few. Every aristocracy that has ever existed has behaved, in all essential points, exactly like a small mob’. Who said that?
All my love from Harold

THIRTY

7 Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester
September 1st, 1905
Dear Harold,

What a very interesting letter you sent last. I do very much enjoy hearing about your new country which shall soon be my country too. Do feel free to talk to me in the letters about whatever you wish to in regard to your work. I may not understand it, but I must learn about it. I don't properly understand how you go about mining for tin. You talked about the women panning for it – rather like people pan for gold, but that is not how you obtain most of the ore, I am sure. Is the system mechanised? It sounds as if there is money to spend on using the latest methods, so please tell me a bit more about how you do it?

I admit that I had to have Father's help in finding out where your quote came from. Good old Chesterton. We started our quoting with him, and we are now back to him again.

I expect you will get this one very easily. 'There is no such thing on earth as an uninteresting subject; the only thing that can exist is an uninterested person.'

Do you have access to newspapers? Would you like me to give you some of the headlines of importance that I think may be of interest to you? For instances did you know that Lord Curzon has resigned as the Viceroy of India? Perhaps you are better informed than I am in which case I will not tell you what you no doubt already know.

As I have reached the ripe old age of twenty five, I am so pleased that I have my diamond and sapphire ring to flash if anyone dares to insinuate that I am on the way to being an old maid.

May and I will continue with our education and our pastimes and we are pleased that the new season will soon begin for classes. Margaret Tree

has got a job working in the city for one of the councilors. She works each day from 11-1 and finds it fascinating. Jessie spends some time working in her father's office. I wonder if May and I should look for paid work. We still do our charity bits – May with reading at the Blind School and me with finding ways of helping the poor people with clothing. Father is increasingly busy with his committees and his work. I feel like I say the same things over and over to you, but our lives are very much a repetition from one year to the next. From next May onwards that will not be the case for me – as you will be presenting me with a whole new life.

The Wagner quote was by Edgar Wilson Nye. I hadn't heard of him either, but I thought it was quite clever. Here is another music one. 'I think I should have no mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort, when I am filled with music.'

I expect you will find that one very easy.

Much love from Muriel

*****

Lahat, Perak
September 30th, 1905
Dearest Muriel,

How I look forward to your letters. I am pleased that you didn't find my ramblings too boring. As far as you sending me tidbits of information, I would welcome them. We do get some newspapers but often the news is very old, and we have little time. Even if I have heard things before, it will be interesting to find out what you think is important in the world.

I have read most of George Eliot's books and did recognise the earlier quote as coming from her. And I do know my Chesterton pretty well, and have got a copy of Heretics. Who are your favourite authors?

'Art is on the side of the oppressed. Think before you shudder at the simplistic dictum and its heretical definition of the freedom of art. For if art is freedom of the spirit, how can it exist within the oppressors?'

You asked about the mechanisation of the site.

From very early on there were pumps to drain the water. One of the early Frenchmen on the site, Jacque de Morgan, was a civil mining engineer, and it was he who set up the methods that we still use to a large extent.

In Papan, a dam was built by the Mandailings, possibly with the help of the Chinese, to supply hydraulic power to the mines in case of drought. The Mandailings themselves are skilled in dam construction and have great engineering skills.

The leader, Raja Bilah bought his first machine, a horse-powered engine imported from England but found out that it could not be used. One can picture the poor Mandailings, not understanding the meaning of horse-power, spending days and weeks trying to figure out how to harness the machine to their ponies!

The furnace used by the Mandailing smelters in particular required charcoal made from hardwoods, and large tracts of forests were cleared merely to extract these timbers. In 1888, the Perak Government banned the use of all Chinese furnaces except ones which employed only ordinary firewood.

The ban was accepted in Lahat, where most of the Chinese smelters had already switched to the other forms of furnace due to the scarcity of hard timber for charcoal. Previously Western companies had difficulty getting into the smelting business, but after the ban, they began to establish their agencies in Kinta at Papan, followed by a new branch each year, successively at our three mines, Batu Gajah, Lahat and Ipoh. The manager who was stationed at Ipoh came to control the purchasing and freighting agencies all over the region.

So In 1891, Sir George Maxwell visited Papan, which in those days was a bigger town than Ipoh, met Raja Bila, who he said was a grand old man and arranged for the English to take over much of the mining industry.

I think that is enough for one letter about the history of this place and how it works. I could just say that we use pressurised hoses to loosen the sand that surrounds the tin with its other complex metals, and it washes into the river where the tin, being heaviest, falls to the bottom.

The resulting metal mixture is sent along a magnetic belt and the tungsten sticks to the belt, and the tin is then recovered in quite a pure form.

I must admit that it is my impression that this a very lonely life for white women, and the ones I've met generally finds the climate more trying

than the men, as most of their time is necessarily spent in the bungalow. You must make sure you bring with you your sketching and painting materials, and writing equipment so that you can entertain yourself for those long lonely hours when I am at work, and before the children come.

One thing we must discuss at some time is the education of any children we may have. Most, when they are old enough to be educated in England, are sent back there to boarding schools, and I imagine you met many girls at your school whose parents worked abroad, as I did in mine. But I have thought that with this separation there comes the inevitable break up of the home life; the children either having to forego the parental influence or the wife having to remain in England with them and thus be parted from her husband. I wonder if perhaps when our children are old enough for school, I will have earned enough money and had enough adventure for me to choose work back in England.

I hope this letter will not be too heavy to go by the basic rate, as I have only enough stamps to cover that.

All my love from Harold

*****

Lansdowne Crescent

22nd October, 1905

Dear Harold,

It seems so strange for you to be talking about the education of our children, as if they had already been conceived and born.

But I do agree with you that I wouldn't like them to be sent home on their own. The ones we had at our school, many of whom became my good friends, were very lonely and so much missed out on having a family to go to for the holidays. We had several of them staying with us during the breaks.

I didn't recognise your last quote. I would guess Karl Marx, but I don't really know. I found it a bit hard to understand.

'Artists who seek perfection in everything are those who cannot attain it in anything.' Now, who said that?

I don't think I told you much about the town of Warwick itself when I last wrote.

Warwick is built on a low hill above the Avon, and, according to the guide book, is one of those towns that leaves one with a sense of wonder. (I

do agree.) Not just for the famous castle which is thought to be the finest medieval castle in England, nor the soaring church tower, nor its wealth of historic buildings, but rather the atmosphere of the place, as if history was all there in one package.

According to my research, "Warwick was founded in about 914, by Ethelfleda, a daughter of Alfred the Great, but following the Norman Conquest, it was the Beauchamp family, Earls of Warwick for over 400 years, that really gave Warwick its character. (You know of course that May and I are friends with the current Beauchamps who now live in Great Malvern.) It played a particularly important part in English medieval history, because Richard Neville, who married Anne Beauchamp, succeeded to the estates. His dazzling political and military manoeuvres in the Wars of the Roses, earned him the title of "Kingmaker".

A great deal of medieval Warwick was destroyed by fire in 1694 but while older buildings survived on the outer ring of the town, the "new" buildings of Warwick, dating from the late 17th and 18th Centuries are in profusion.

Another place we visited was Wroxhall Abbey the country retreat of architect Sir Christopher Wren, set on the site of a medieval abbey with 27 acres of grounds and gardens complete with Wren's Walled Garden. John rather fancies the idea of being the chaplain for the Abbey if the position ever comes vacant.

I would like to spend time in that area, but that will depend on how May feels about another trip there.

You asked about my favourite authors. I would have to list Shakespeare and Dickens at the top, and then the Brontes, Elizabeth Gaskill, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Mrs. Henry Wood (who came from Worcester you know), Henry Fielding, Wilkie Collins. I have eclectic taste, as you will see from this list.

I have another small snippet of news for you. The actor Henry Irving died last week. And going back a bit, on September 8th there was an earthquake in Italy that killed thousands and destroyed 25 villages. I also read that there is a new Anglo-Japanese treaty which provides for Japan to help safeguard India. And there are plans to connect the Far East and the U.S.A. by submarine telegraph lines. You might be more interested in those things than I am.

I might also inform you about the Three Choirs Festival which was in Worcester this year. In early September, the Mayor, Hubert Leicester seconded by the High Sheriff, resolved unanimously: "That pursuant to the Honorary Freedom of Boroughs Act, 1885, the Honorary Freedom of the City of Worcester, be conferred upon Sir Edward William Elgar, Musc. Doc., LL.D; in recognition of the eminent position which he, a Citizen of the Faithful City, has attained in the Musical World; and that he be admitted as an Honorary Freeman accordingly."

Among the items on the programme were new works: the *Introduction and Allegro* and the *3rd Pomp and Circumstance March*. Mr. Jaegar was there, and the composer Havergal Brian. The Mayor and members of the Corporation went to St. George's Catholic Church with Mr. Elgar, both Edward and his father had been organists there, and the new Mayor had been the choir master.

On Festival Day there was a procession making its way from the Guildhall to the Cathedral with the Mayor, the High Sheriff and all the aldermen in their civic robes and Elgar walking solemnly in their midst, clothed in a strange gown which puzzled most of the onlookers. Upon inquiry this turned out to be the Yale University gown and hood which Elgar hastened to wear on the very first occasion that a Doctor of Music's robes were needed at any of his public engagements. It was also lovely that Elgar turned as he passed a certain house in the High Street on his way to the cathedral and saluted an old gentleman whose face could just be seen looking out of an upper window. It was his father, who was watching the honour being paid to his son by the city of his birth. Being very old and growing feeble, he was unable to leave his room; but what must his feelings have been on looking out of that window and seeing before his very eyes the fulfillment of his wildest dreams!

Gerontius followed the ceremony, conducted by Atkins, and then the Mayor's luncheon for Elgar. Atkins *Hymn of Faith* for which Elgar had written the libretto, was in the afternoon. Elgar conducted the *Introduction & Allegro* at the evening concert.

The next day, Elgar conducted *The Apostles* in the morning. The composer Thomas Dunhill (one of his pieces was being performed at the festival) is quoted in the paper as saying: "He was most adorable to me. His praise of my song pleased me more than I could express. To a young

musician, only just free from the shackles of student life, this was a thrilling privilege for which I was quite unprepared, for Elgar is now at the summit of his career and was entertaining a large house-party of close friends and ardent admirers."

Needless to say we went to all the concerts and enjoyed every note.

Love from Muriel

*****

Lahat, Perak

15th October, 1905

Dearest Muriel,

I know this letter will cross yours in the post, but I must send off this small gift. I hope you will like the bag, which was done by one of the Chinese women whose husband works for me. She was so thrilled when I told her I was buying it to send to my future wife.

I'm afraid you caught me out with your last quotation, and I haven't time to find a pithy one to return to you now. I will do better with my next letter.

I think of you always with love and affection,

Harold

*****

Lahat, Perak

November 15th 1905

Dear Muriel,

This will be too easy for you I know. 'A woman dictates before marriage in order that she may have an appetite for submission afterwards.'

Let me tell you a bit about Ipoh the largest centre in our district. Ipoh grew from a small village in the 1880s to Perak's largest town. The centre of the richest and most populous district in Malaya, Ipoh is home to the professional elite, diverse ethnic groups and significant minorities. Missionaries, private associations and philanthropists helped to develop a variety of schools. The press calls Ipoh the "Hub of Malaya".

I hope this won't sound too much like a lecture to you, as I am copying it out of a book.

The name Perak for our region means the Land of Grace.

The federated states of Malaya including Perak are under the protection of Great Britain, but are not British possessions. Each state is under the rule of a

sultan, who is assisted in his legislative duties by a state council, upon which the resident, and in some cases the secretary to the resident, has a seat, and which is composed of native chiefs and one or more Chinese members nominated by the sultan with the advice and consent of the resident.
The administrative work of each state is carried on by the resident and his staff of European officials, whose ranks are recruited by successful candidates in the competitive examinations held annually by the Civil Service commissioners.
The sultan of each state is bound by treaty with the British government to accept the advice of the resident, who is thus practically paramount; but great deference is paid to the opinions and wishes of the sultans and their chiefs, and the British officials are pledged not to interfere with the religious affairs of the Mohammedan community.
In the actual administration of the Malay population great use is made of the native aristocratic system, the peasants being governed largely by their own chiefs, headmen and village elders, under the close supervision of British district officers. The result is a benevolent autocracy admirably adapted to local conditions and to the character and traditions of the people.
The mountain ranges, which cover a considerable area, run from the north-east to the south-west. The highest altitudes attained by them do not exceed 7500 ft., but they average about 2500 ft. They are all thickly covered with jungle. The ranges are two, running parallel to one another, with the valley of the Perak between them. The larger is a portion of the main chain, which runs down the peninsula from north to south. The lesser is situated in the district of Lahat. There are several hill sanatoria in the state at heights which vary from 2500 to 4700 ft. above sea-level, but the extreme humidity of the atmosphere renders the coolness thus obtainable the reverse of enjoyable.
The taller hills are exclusively composed of granite, as also are some of the lower ones. The ores of the following metals have been found: lead, iron, arsenic, tungsten and titanium, gold, silver, copper, zinc, manganese and bismuth.
Thus endeth the lecture. I greatly look forward to your next letter.
Love,
Harold

THIRTY ONE

7 Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester

November 20th, 1905

Dear Harold,

Thank you so much for the exquisite bag. You must give me the name of the lady who made it so I can write and thank her as well. It caused much interest and comment when I wore it to church last Sunday.

I enjoy your lectures, although sometimes they do go on a bit. But it is all information that I must learn if I am going to do a proper job of being your wife and living there.

I expect you already have heard about Einstein's theory of relativity which was published recently. I am more interested in the fact that Picasso is beginning what he calls his "Pink Period" in Paris.

Changing the subject, you know the Misserrimus, in the cloister of the Cathedral – the nameless grave for the unknown unfortunate who lies below. I much enjoyed reading the poetry about it and I have copied it here for you. It can be your quotation for this letter.

Miserrimus! and neither name or date,
Prayer, test, or symbol, graven on the stone;
Nought but that word assigned to the unknown;
That solitary word to separate
From all, and cast a cloud around the fate
Of him who lies beneath. Most wretched one;

Who chose his epitaph? Himself alone
Could thus have dared the grave to agitate,
And claim, among the dead, this awful crown;
Nor doubt that he marked also for his own,

Close to these cloistral steps, a burial place
That every foot might fall with heavier tread
Trampling upon his vileness. Stranger, pass Softly!
To save the contrite, Jesus bled.

Do you know the story of the man whose tomb it is? He was in fact, the Rev. Thomas Morris, a minor canon of the Cathedral and curate of Claines, a man of great charm and eloquence, handsome, kindly and cheerful. I have copied this information from a book about it I found in the library.

His story touches on the problem of loyalty, which caused so much heart-searching in the 17th century. He believed in the divine right of hereditary sovereigns, and when James II was driven from the throne, his conscience forbade him to transfer his allegiance to the new sovereigns William and Mary. There were others like him called non-jurors (a kind of conscientious objector). Eventually they were "ejected" from the Church, but only after the new Dean and Chapter had shown extraordinary forebearance, doing what they had to do only because it was law.

Thomas Morris withdrew from his office in the Church, but lingered under the shadow of the Cathedral, attending daily services, kind and gentle to all, leading a quiet life, until in great age, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle extinguished the last hope that the exiled royal family would return, and the old man's heart was broken.

He was carried to the grave in the cloister, close to the Cathedral he loved, but outside it, as he had been ejected. His coffin was borne by six maidens dressed in white, with rosettes of a pattern of his own choosing; and by his desire, one word "Miserrimus" was engraved on the stone."

A quick quote for you, 'Literature is a luxury; fiction is a necessity.'

All for now. I am nearly late for whist.

Love,

Muriel

Lahat, Perak

15th December, 1905

Dear Muriel,

I wish you the happiest of Christmases, this second one when we will be without each other, but it is my hope and plan that we shall be together for the one in 1906.

However, I have bad news. I was told today that my application for leave from April-May next year has been rejected. I will not have been here yet the required two years, and they were unwilling to make an exception for me, even for the very good reason of our hoped for wedding date. I have been assured however, that when I apply again, for a date after September, they will be much more likely to approve it.

So that means that our plans for sharing our wedding day with May and John will not happen after all. It means that I won't be able to see them married either. What a disappointment that will be for you – as it is for me, but more so for you. But we can with confidence plan our next wedding day and I will leave it to you to say when that shall be.

I think they are more likely to be pleased to give me time off in the winter months – November to February – so keep that in mind in your planning.

The Chinese lady who sold me your handbag was Rey Cheung. Write to her if you like, but she does not understand English writing. But I will try to find someone to translate it for her.

I do know my Wordsworth as well as Chesterton. You never did tell me that other one that I couldn't guess.

'I choose my wife as she did her wedding gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well.' Have you chosen your wedding gown yet?

I feel so bad to be saying these things now when you want most to be happy. It will be a very lonely Christmas without you my love.

Harold

1906

January 20th

Dear Harold,

It is very British to start one's letter first with news of the weather, but we have had such atrocious weather. Your climate must seem like heaven in comparison. It has been cold and frost and snow storms, followed by more of the same, day after day, week after week.

I'm sure you have hard about how in the General Election on January 15th, the Liberals defeated the Conservatives in a landslide victory – the exact opposite of the poll here. The Tories lost 245 seats.

A very important news item as far as I was concerned: In Washington 300 suffragettes presented their demands for electoral reform. Perhaps if the American women get behind the cause, we will have a better chance of success.

We went to Malvern on the 17th for a Concert with Max Mossel and the pianist George Woodhouse. The accompanist spoiled the Sonata, and it was a let down after the wonderful concerts we are used to.

This of course is the year of May and John's wedding, and ours to follow later. We have decided to go out looking for wedding dresses now, as there will be reductions just after Christmas, and we need to have the time to have them altered if need be.

I'm afraid I couldn't guess your last quote. Here is mine: 'The covers of this book are too far apart.'

Love

Muriel

P.S. May and I went shopping and looked for wedding dresses, and she tried on several. She will have to go with her mother when she finally is ready to make her choice, but we felt it was important to see what was on offer first. I also tried on some, and may well have made my choice. But I certainly am not going to tell you what it is like.

THIRTY TWO

March 15th 1906

Lahat, Perak

Dear Muriel,

It seems odd to have you mention politics, as I didn't think you were very interested. Perhaps you could tell me a bit about that in your next letter.

I think your last quote was from Ambrose Bierce. I too enjoy *The Devil's Dictionary*. You asked about Ipoh. Here are some of the bits of information written to attract people to the area.

The Ipoh Railway Station is an impressive landmark, which combines Gothic and Moorish architecture with modern embellishments. Surrounded by a beautiful floral garden, it also serves as a charming welcome to visitors arriving by rail. Some call it the Taj Mahal of Ipoh! In the grounds is the famous "Ipoh Tree", a poisonous tree whose sap is used by the natives in the olden days to make fatal darts for their blow pipes.

*Above the train station, on the second and third floors resides the Station Hotel, also known as The Majestic, and sometimes called The Heritage Hotel. The hotel boasts of "first class accommodation" and "excellent cuisine" (*but I have heard differently*). 200 yard long verandah runs the length of the building. You see planters planted in rattan chairs, the smoke from their pipes whiffed away in clumps of tiny clouds trying to ascend all the way up to the high ceilings. Ceiling fans with ornate iron engravings proudly wrapping their bases swirl rhythmically all day long to cool the consistently sweating masters. A cosy bar satisfies the liquid needs of its thirsty patrons.*

The banisters and wooden stairs stand firm and proud and charmingly pleasant with cool and carefully laid tiles.

I'm sorry if this sounds too much like a hotel advert – because of course it is.

Opposite the railway station is a neocolonial style building. Adjacent to that is the memorial where J.W.W. Birch, the first British Resident of the state was assassinated by a group of Malay chieftains in Paris Salak in 1875, but interestingly enough dedicated to the Malay warriors who murdered him and the others who fell with him. There are plan afoot to build a Clock Tower, as a proper memorial to Mr. Birch.

J.W.W. Birch was an unpopular character. He was arrogant and showed no sensitivity towards local customs, religion and nuances. He did not think much of the Malays. Likewise the feeling, too, was mutual amongst the Malays, especially the royalty. It wasn't surprising at all that he was eventually assassinated by the Malays, headed by a chieftain called Dato Sago. Even after his death, he is still surrounded by scorn and derision from the Malays.

Regarding food, the early Chinese immigrants who poured into the state brought with them the cooking styles of their provinces, most of whom were from the south. These cooking styles blended well with the local air and a new breed of food came about, such as the Ipoh "Hor Fun" or flat rice noodles and I also personally recommend the fish balls.

The Kinta River basically runs through the middle of the town. In 1892, a great fire gutted the East part of Ipoh. The town had to be rebuild, looking all new and grand, and rightfully so, it became to be known as "New Town." The reconstruction of the New Town also made way to deliberate town planning. And this explains why buildings file along roads that are set into systematic grids.

The buildings built from the money derived from tin (and amassed by the colonials) did everything to expose the identity of the nationality of the men who designed them. Big trees with wide canopy that line the suburban Ipoh roads provide glimpses of the British want for greenery and shade from the grueling tropical sun.

Perhaps the grandest and biggest of all the buildings in Ipoh is the local school. The Missionaries are trying to take it over and have it run by Brothers, but they have come up against quite a lot of opposition. (With your interests in architecture you would much appreciate the carefully decorated gables and the lovely wide arched verandahs.) *Most of the new buildings reflect neo-classical architecture.*

Padang is the Malay word for “field”, and this is exactly what it is - which is also exactly where we pale British males march into the field with our starched white cricket ensemble to hit a wicket or two, running every now and then out of the field to catch several gulps of the most refreshingly cool beer.

At other times, the same men can also be seen kicking a football around this Padang attempting to score a few goals in a game of soccer.

So far the buildings of Ipoh have left the Padang unscathed, together with the beautiful casuarina trees that encircle it. Commonly known as the she-oak (sometimes sheoak), beefwood, or Australian pine, casuarinas are common in tropical and subtropical areas. The tree has delicate, slender ultimate branches and leaves that are no more than scales, making the tree look more like a wispy conifer. The plants do especially well in wind-swept locations, and are widely planted as wind-breaks.

And what’s the use of a Padang without a Club? Tin miners and administrators as well as the rubber barons patronise a black and white Tudor style clubhouse. While the athletic ones (like me) trample or row about under the scorching hot sun, the more stationary ones work their lazy muscles trying hard to keep their cigars in between their fingers while downing their whisky.

FMS standing for “Federated Malay States” is the building which I think you will enjoy most. It is believed to be Malaya’s oldest functioning Bar. As you walk by you can smell the savoury aroma of Szechuan Prawns and Belacan Kangkong, even though this is an exceptionally British institution.

I hope I haven’t bored you with all this, but I do think you will enjoy all that Ipoh has to offer.

‘You can cover a great deal of country in books.’

Love,

Harold

Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester

April 10th 1906

Dear Harold,

I was certainly not bored. I long to visit Ipoh and see all those places that you have described so well, and sit at the FMS. Tell me, are women allowed in your Club? If not, I shall find another quest come upon me, I expect.

I didn't guess your last quote. Here is mine, also about books. 'Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers'. I think that is so lovely. What would we do without books?

You asked about politics. The nation is full of the repercussions of the national elections in January, where the Liberals had an unbelievably big majority and swept to power. The main issues for the general election were Free Trade vs. Protectionism and Home Rule for Ireland vs. Rule from UK.

Now everyone is trying to put blame and find reasons for this huge shift in public opinion and the papers are full of stories of bribery and corruption. And as you no doubt know on the 18th of January there was dissolution of Parliament and all sorts of committees including an Election Commission were formed to look into the various scandals.

We in Worcester, unfortunately, are right in the middle of it. The main complaint is against our M.P. He is accused of misappropriating a cheque for £100 and for bribing voters. Trying to sift through the facts is quite difficult as for every accusation by the Conservatives, there is a counter accusation against them by the Liberals. I'm sure many politicians are very nervous, thinking that skeletons in their cupboards will soon be revealed.

The way the common labourer was supposedly bribed to vote was by being offered a lift to the polling station, a drink of homemade rhubarb wine (or whatever else his tipple might have been) or 6d, presumably so he could buy and drink whatever in a location of his own choice. All sorts of accounts from people who say they were bribed have come forward, and as I say, it is a huge mess.

I will keep you posted as to how the situation evolves. The Church is becoming involved in the row now too, and that does not please everyone. My father, a staunch Conservative, is very upset that the Conservatives are blamed for the bribery. He so much wants to clear the party's name and show that not all politics is corrupt. He gets on his high horse and speaks out about it not only at home, but at the Chamber of Commerce and Masonic Lodge and other organizations that he belongs to. He seems quite different from the quiet father that I normally see.

I can bring you up to date with a few more news items. Something dear to my heart – women's suffrage has had another victory. In February, Finland, the first European country to do so, has given voting rights to all (including women) citizens over 24, except those supported by the state.

I do so hope we can soon get similar legislation in this country, although my efforts previously do not seem to have had much impact. I will be working on it again when we have our local elections in November.

The rugby fans (which include May's brother Tom) were very pleased when England beat France in the first ever international ever played against them.

We are working long and hard to get ready for May and John's wedding – now only a week or so away. They will be married on Wednesday the 18th at Holy Trinity. We are very pleased that your uncle George, the Reverend G. Duncan will come to help with the ceremony.

Your parents' new house, which is right down our road, has such a lot of space, so he will be staying with them for a period before and after. I wonder if he will get married, now that he has a way of life more or less established at Skipton on Cherwell. It is so much more convenient seeing your family now. We actually see quite a lot of your brother Jimmy who is nearly finished with his teacher training and hoping to get a job nearby. Una and I have become good friends and she intends to help me in my suffragette activities.

I don't suppose you will be interested in all the details of the dresses and flowers etc. at the wedding, but you may be sure that I will be writing them to you, and you can read them or not as you wish. It could have been our wedding too, , but now we will have to wait a bit longer.

Love from Muriel

May 4th 1906

Dear Muriel,

I don't expect this will arrive in time for your birthday, but know that I am thinking of you.

I long to read whatever you write, down to the last button and ribbon on the dresses. I know that the wedding will have gone down well, and as you say, it might have been us, but we won't be far behind.

I have now had confirmation that I can have leave from December 1st to January 29th, so that will leave us time to get reacquainted before we finally say our vows on January 5th and have our long leisurely honeymoon on the boat coming back here. You will have quite a lot of organizing to do, deciding what clothes and furniture and other things you want to take, as we probably will not be given another home leave for several years.

Your last quote I recognized as Charles Eliot, and I agree with the sentiments. You said you couldn't get my last one. It was Andrew Lang.

Just to whet your appetite a bit more, I have found some more information about this area. Ipoh has many limestone caves. The Sam Po Tong (Cavern of Three Precious) is a Chinese temple built within a gigantic limestone cave. It houses a few giant tortoises too. Its sister temple, Perak Tong (Perak Cave), has a steep, tall staircase in the interior of the cave up to the top of the hill where one is greeted by a panoramic view of Ipoh and its surroundings. The statue of Buddha in Perak Tong is the tallest and largest of its kind in Malaya.

Another sight worth seeing they say is the Kek Lok Tong (Cavern of Utmost Happiness) which is a cave temple that lies on the other side of the same range of limestone hills as Sam Po Tong. However, it is only accessible through the Gunung Rapat area.

Limestone hills extend 12.5 miles north and south of Ipoh. There are many caves in these hills. Gua Tempurung, near Gopeng south of Ipoh, is a very good one that I have visited.

'Woe to him who reads but one book.'Until I hear from you again, I am your eagerly awaiting husband to be, Harold

THIRTY THREE

June 1st 1906

Dear Harold,

As promised here is the description of the wedding. May looked so beautiful in her silk dress with a flowing train. Her dress was a two piece with a high neck of lace and faux pearls and long sleeves which draped in points to cover her hands. The skirt had vertical pin tucks down the front and multiple rows of horizontal tucks on the lower area of the skirt which continued on the train. She wore a lace veil which had been her mother's.

Of course you don't know our church very well, as it wasn't your parish church. It was built fairly recently, in 1887, and became the parish church for our part of town rather than St. Martin's. The walls are Ombersley stone of various tints. Perhaps the best part is the chancel roof, decorated in colours and unusually effective. The nave is covered by the 14th Century roof from Guester Hall at Cathedral Priory which was taken from there in 1864, and restored and re-erected here. Below the East Window of the apse, there is a sculptured representation in high relief of the Last Supper by Boulton who also carved the pulpit. The font is of stone, alabaster and marble. It is a large church, with 900 sittings altogether, 650 of them being free. But on this wedding day there were no more than 50 in the church.

My dress, as her bridesmaid, was in blue. The neckline is slightly squared, the sleeves are 3/4 length. Insertions and embroidery flourish everywhere. The skirt has two kick pleats in front and two in back, along with numerous vertical insertions, coin dot type of embroidery and embroidered panels. I'm sure it will serve me well when we have fancy occasions to go to in Ipoh, as it is both modest and cool.

We both carried roses in our bouquets – hers were white and mine were an orangey red.

Tom, acting for their father, gave May away. John of course looked very smart in his clerical suit. He had Jimmy for his best man as you were not there to take the part. The meal after the ceremony was perfect and the menu was as follows: (I've underlined my choices.)

Chicken – kidney
Fillet of Haddock
Fillet of Plaice

Roast Sirloin of Beef
Potatoes – Peas

Chicken and Tongue
Salads

Apple tart
Cabinet Pudding
Compote of Fruits
Cream Jellies

Desserts

John and May had a week's holiday in the Lake District and they have just returned to Warwick for the new term.

I enjoyed hearing about the caves. How difficult will it be for us to explore or do we need to go only on paths that are established? What sorts of animals do you see there? Are there dangerous spiders as one hears about from Australia?

As I mentioned before, your parents, with Dot, Mark, Una and Bobs moved into Lansdowne Crescent as well, which meant that our families will be closer than ever. They were very pleased to see that number 6 had come on the market. The previous owner Raymond Burrow who is a solicitor bought a place in the country near Malvern.

Number 6 is the biggest of all the houses on Lansdowne Crescent, excepting Lansdowne Villa. It was sufficiently large for them to offer a bedroom to Dot, and with Mark having gone off to Camborne, Jimmy on his own now, and with John and you both permanently away from home, and only Bobs and Una at home, there was plenty of room for the two families to move together.

Your last quote was from George Herbert. I didn't know but Father did. I think he enjoys this game as much as we do, and he always is pleased to have one up on me.

Here is yours for this letter, 'How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book'. I suppose that was true with you. Your new era, your life in Malaya, was started by reading a book about mining, many years ago.

With love and also eagerly awaiting our marriage,

Muriel

*****

Lahat, Perak

July 10th 1906

Dear Muriel,

How true your sentiments in regard to the quote. I think that is Thoreau again. He has given us a lot to think about with his writing. How about this one?, 'I am a galley slave to pen and ink.'

You asked about the dangers of living here. I will try to reassure you, but it is sensible to take the advice of those who have been here longer and know more about it than we do.

Some of the animals here are tigers, wild pigs, lizards, crocodiles, rhinos, and elephants. The animal that the Malaysians are most afraid of is the tiger. They are not afraid of lizards. There are snakes and there are spiders.

A grayish brown monkey is very familiar. They aren't worried by humans and can be quite bold. They are found everywhere in the lowland, jungles and even in the mangrove swamp. The main problem with them is that they are carriers of malaria, so everyone must avoid contact with them. The Malayan tigers, the largest predators of the Peninsular Malaysia forests are elusive and usually shy of man. Often it is the sick or old tigers that become man-eaters, but increasingly, the loss of tiger habitat has been to blame for most man-tiger conflicts.

Wildcats can be found in almost all types of forests from the lowlands to the mountains. Most of the time though, encounters of wildcats are made by pure luck! We sometimes walk on open trails or logging roads or along the river to spot animals along the riverbank. Cats are active by night, so we need to take acetylene lamps.

Here are some others that they say are here but I have not seen. The leopard can adapt to almost any habitat that provides sufficient food and cover. It occupies lowland forest, mountains, grassland, brush country and deserts.

The Leopard Cat is more adaptable to deforestation and other habitat alterations compared to most other Asian felines and is often found near villages. The golden cat occurs in deciduous forests, tropical rainforest and occasionally open habitats. It is usually a terrestrial cat.

Ipoh is surrounded by mountains on all sides and the forested area in not far away. It has numerous collecting grounds good for collecting butterflies and has a large group of praying mantis' which many people enjoy collecting.

Do not worry as I don't expect you will see tigers, snakes or wild boars (though they do see us, I am sure). I will tell you more when I next write, as I think perhaps I have frightened you enough for one letter.

Love,

Harold

7 Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester

August 1st 1906

Dear Harold,

The Election Commissioners are busy in Worcester trying to sort out the facts of the scandal from the last election. My father is getting more and more politically minded, and I know he is being pestered to stand for council. He was a councilor when he first moved to Worcester 20 years ago, and apparently his father was an Alderman back in Surrey where he lived for the first part of his life.

The churches are trying hard to get trustworthy citizens to stand up and be counted when it comes to civic office, and I think that is influencing him. He came home the other night and said that he felt that perhaps he had a calling to go back into politics.

I have decided my contribution will be to reorganize my group of women who marched and petitioned for women's suffrage back in 1903. We shall this time try to influence women around here who have the vote for local elections, but do not choose to use it. We will try to encourage more of them to get out and vote in November. It is my newest quest, and I have already got Charlotte and the Tree girls involved again. We will miss May this time, but she has more important things to think about.

May writes that she is almost sure that she is pregnant, and if so, the baby will be born in early spring. She seems very pleased, and I am sure John is too. They will be here visiting in a few weeks time. It will be so good to see May again.

My good friend Evelyn Underwood gave me the sweetest book. It is called *The Ghosts of My Friends*, and is a sort of autograph book with a difference. You get your guest to write their name in sideways on a folded page, and then immediately blot the page to spread the ink. The shape that results from this is very odd, and then the idea is for the person to add features to the shape to look like a person. I had Mother do the first one and she wrote out Louisa Marion King and blotted it. Then she put eyes, nose, mouth, chin, eyebrows, a necklace, arms and hands, but the rest of the shape of the person was from the ink blot. It is such fun.

I don't know if I have told you much about my friend Evelyn. She went to school at the Royal Masonic Institute for Girls in Battersea, London. We got to know her because her father who is a coal merchant is in the same lodge for the Masons as father is.

I don't suppose you are a Mason, but Father tells me that it is a most wonderful group for a man to belong to. He said, "Our fraternity has a wonderful history, which dates back more than three centuries. It is one of the world's oldest secular fraternities, a society of men concerned with moral and spiritual values. Founded on the three great principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, it aims to bring together men of goodwill, regardless of background and differences. The essential qualifications for admission is that you have a belief in a Supreme Being."

Father is what is called a Mark Mason – which is a slightly different grouping. They were set up in Worcester shortly after he arrived here and he was one of its founding members.

As far as quotations go, your last one sounded like Honore de Balzac (again with help from Father). I think I will go back to quoting things about music. 'There is no feeling, except the extremes of fear and grief, that does not find relief in music'.

Do tell me more about the beasties of Malaya. I am fascinated and won't be frightened as long as I have you there to protect me from the tigers, and even the lizards.

Much love

Muriel

*****

Lahat, Perak

September 8th 1906

Dear Muriel,

You are getting yourself engrained in politics, and getting your women out to vote. I applaud you for it and I hope you have every success. But don't forget that from Christmas time onwards, all your attention will need to be focused on me, not on the politics of Worcester or even Britain.

You gave me a clue when you said who your favourite authors were. George Eliot wrote your last quote. Mine is also about music, but I will give you a hint, it comes from a very early source. 'Among all men on the earth bards have a share of honor and reverence, because the muse has taught them songs and loves the race of bards.'

You asked for more about the natural aspects of this area. Again I have to admit that most of this information I have had from books which I am copying from.

Spiders can be found anywhere in Malaysia - inside the house, in the garden or backyard, in the fields, in the belukar, or overgrown patch, and deep in the forest. There are spiders which look obviously like spiders, spiders which look like ants, and even spiders that mimic bird droppings!

The Argiope spider weaves a web marked with distinctive zig-zag bands of white silk. It is known as the Signature Spider because of this. The spider holds its legs together in pairs, making it look like a creature with four legs instead of eight.

Crab spiders catch their prey by ambush. They lie in wait on flowers, often aided by camouflage, for nectar-feeding insects. These insects may be much larger than the spider but they are soon paralysed with a venomous bite.

Jumping Spider - Unlike web-weaving spiders which ensnare flying insects in their nets or crab spiders which ambush their prey, jumping spiders actively hunt for food. Jumping spiders prey not only on insects but also other spider species.

The Spiny-backed Spider has projections which curve over its back like a pair of horns. It is also known as the Horned Spider.

The Kerengga Ant-like Jumper - These are ant-mimics among the jumping spiders who mimic the ferocious weaver ant which is locally known as the kerengga. The female spider is a near-perfect copy of the ant, but the male's disguise is somewhat spoilt by his large jaws which protrude from the head like an oversized nose.

However, you can be reassured, that although I have seen many spiders, I have never been bitten, nor have I heard of any fatalities amongst the workers around here from bites.

Malaria is a big problem around here, but we take preventive measures, such as having lights outside the camp to attract the mosquitoes and catch them in nets, and of course nets over our beds. We all wear long sleeved high necked clothing, and if all else fails, we have large stocks of quinine.

I hope you are enjoying your election campaign trail and have managed to recruit all sorts of women to your way of thinking. Good luck with it.

Love from Harold

Mine at Ipoh

THIRTY FOUR

October 1st, 1906

Dear Harold,

This time it is I who have bad news for you – in that I think we must postpone our wedding yet again. My father has just told us his news. He is being plagued by the Conservatives to stand for the council elections in November. I know that on its own should not influence me, but he also said that the group has almost promised him that if he wins he will be asked to be mayor. Can you imagine it, my father the Mayor of Worcester? He, for all his groups and business connections, is basically a very quiet and shy man and to take this step – to agree as he has done for his name to be put forward for St. Martin's Ward, is really showing how seriously he feels that he must do this. He heard a sermon at St. Martin's last week by his friend Rev. R.R. Needham, about how one must not hide one's talent and how important it was for men of integrity to come forward and stand for public office. Rev. Needham spoke of the necessity of a reconstructed human society constructed on Christian principles, in which the highest ends should be encompassed by honourable means, and in which the best men should fill the places of respectability.

Mr. Needham strongly disassociated himself and the Church from any complicity with or condoning of the state of unworthiness revealed during the recent inquiry, and appealed to all who exercised votes to use them for God's glory and to the highest good of their fellow men.

Father said it was almost as if God had stepped down from the altar and talked to him personally. It was like having a call to a religious vocation – he felt impelled to reply in the positive and offer his services, and now he has. Since I am a forward planner, and think of every eventuality and the consequences of it, I know that my father as Mayor will find it very hard work – and it will be even harder on my mother.

She has not been particularly well. Her weight is such a problem to her. She very much avoids public appearances whenever she can. So, if she is the wife of the Mayor, she will be expected to be at his side for all the public engagements, and take many of them on her own. She begged me to be with her – and I agreed. It is as if I am becoming joint-Mayoress with her (all this is supposing that he is elected, but as he says, the group to whom he spoke were very much going to back him for the position).

Darling Harold, I am asking you, please understand. Please let us put our wedding back by another year, so that I can complete with my father and mother this momentous year of their lives. Let us plan now for January or February 1908, and then I promise I will let nothing that might happen stand in the way of our marriage and my going with you to Malaya.

Please reply to me as quickly as you can, and reassure me that it will be all right and that you will wait for me.

On a lighter note, you asked who else had signed my *Ghosts of My Friends* Book. Evelyn Underwood of course, who gave it to me, then Father, and your brother Jimmy, May (signing with her new surname, Day) and John. And then in late August we had the Pinkeys to stay and quite a house party. So Violet, Isobel, Edward and Phyllis all signed it. Gertrude Sonderman and her husband did too and also Katharine Brownlow. You wouldn't believe how different each picture is.

I will bring it with me to Malaya and we can have all your friends there sign it too.

Much love from Muriel

Lahat, Perak

October 23rd

Muriel,

I don't know what to say. I am so disappointed and hurt. I feel like you are rejecting me in order to be with your parents. I feel like your life with me is very much put in second place by your parents' needs – or so you say. They are grown up people. Your father knows your mother's weaknesses and problems as well as if not better than you. Are you saying that he is not only willing to let you put your life on hold, for his selfish ambitions, but to almost demand it of you?

I do love you, and I do want to marry you, and I have told the Manager that I will now not as planned be leaving at the end of the next month for my wedding.

I'm only wondering what the excuse will be next year. What if he decides to be Mayor for 2 years? What if your mother becomes ill? What if she dies? When will your life with me take preference over your life in Worcester?

I must not rave on more, but you wanted a quick response and you have now had it.

Harold

*****

November 8th, 1906

Lansdowne Crescent

Dear Harold,

I was so shocked when I read your cold letter. I was sure you would understand my feelings. I was sure I had your support when I explained how I felt I had no choice – that even though it seems as if I am putting my parents above you – it is only for one year and only because I feel somehow that it is my duty to do so.

I don't even know if you want to know about the election. But perhaps by now you have had a change of heart and will be interested. The election was held on November 1st, and my father was standing for St. Martin's ward – along with Mr. Philips and Mr. Moore, both of whom are of the Progressive party. My father won, and he polled 724 votes, with Mr. Philips getting 662, and Mr. Moore 610. As you know it is the first two names that get to be councillors.

There was a rather disappointing result for Mr. Tree, Margaret and Jessie's father. He was in the council last time, but this time in St. Peter's Ward, with 4 candidates standing, Mr. Wood topped the poll with 809, Mr. Whitefield had 794, Mr. Tree got 585 and Mr. March 516. So he is not going to be in the council for the time being.

As he had expected, when the new council first met on the 8th, my father was appointed Mayor, by unanimous wish of the council.

There were quite different reports on the election from the *Chronicle* and *Burrow's Worcester Journal* on Saturday the 3rd. I have written them out for you to read for yourself.

Municipal Battle Worcester

Sweeping Victory: Enormous Majority

Electors have not only defeated, but have routed those who have fought under the false banner of "purity and progress." The results which were declared last night are due punishment of Radical malignity in speech writing and action. They are an overwhelming reply to the base accusation that the Unionist predominance in this City was won and maintained by corruption. They have administered a crushing blow to those who have done their worst against the Conservative party and against the city. They manifest the citizens' feeling with respect to the venom of so much that has been said and the vindictiveness of so much that has been done. They most emphatically express the citizens' detestation of trickery, hypocrisy and falsehood.

One of those Radicals who have vilified the Conservative party must have anticipated such results – sweeping defeat of the Radicals, if not such great majorities – when he uttered the words of desperation with regard to abandonment of party hope and endeavour in the hope of failure of a general assault on Conservative strength, after the issue of petition and commission, Mr. Harben has an exceedingly plain answer. He has asserted that he was elected last January "by a clear majority of the honest citizens of Worcester." He has joined in Radical appeal to the city's honour and now he tastes the cup of deep humiliation.

In the course of the contest we referred to the "Radical raid". A speaker at the "mass meeting" on Tuesday night said he preferred to call it "Radical lead." Very many citizens remember the times when the Radicals did lead – in political debauchery. There is now a small survival of that widespread corruption. There are men of the lowest class who have continued to look for drink or money in small amount in order to get drink, for the purpose of celebrating the occasion. Some of them became informers, and were enriched for a time with Radical money, which we may be sure was not purely spent. Some of them were instigated by Radicals to get what they could from the few over-zealous Conservatives, and then, no doubt they voted for Mr. Harben, who should take the fact into account before he talks about the honest majority. Such scoundrels were witnesses, not merely with respect to wrong doing, but against innocence and public worth. There would not have been such intense indignation throughout the city amongst all classes had their not been such sharp resentment; if there had not been, on Radical part, such loud profession of virtue which has not been practiced, such abominable imputation on the Conservative party, and such persistent effort of malice and humbug.

Let Radicals call it what they please - raid or lead. They know what it is now – a smashing defeat. Unionist can boast a sentimental triumph. Something has been said about a Radical "order" to fight all along the line. Whether the order was given in Worcester or sent along the line from another place we do not know. If it was sent, there is now a good answer, and the pill, big and bitter as it is, must be swallowed.

Six Conservative wards were attacked, while one was yielded, not by weakness but by the misfortune which compelled Mr. Sigley to retire when there was not time for finding another candidate. But the Radicals decided to fight, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, and the result is that ten Conservatives and only two Radicals are elected. Of the two Radicals, one holds a seat where a Conservative had not a candidate ready and the other holds his seat in a ward in which only one Conservative candidate was brought forward. It is pretty certain that if two more Conservative candidates were in the field, not a single Radical would have been brought forward.

Under circumstances that might have appealed with less force to party spirit, Mr. Tree would probably have retained his seat. If Mr. Loach had not been attacked, Mr. Tree, whose character and ability are widely known, we have no doubt would have been returned without opposition.

In St. Martin's, Mr. G. Williams King was a capital candidate and he has banished the illusion that Rainbow Hill was a Radical stronghold which could not be successfully assailed.

RESULTS OF THE POLLING

Amid scenes of excitement almost equally those which attend a Parliamentary election, the results of the contests in the six wards of Worcester were declared last night. High Street was crammed with people, particularly before the Guildhall, from eight o'clock till eleven, but there was not much colour about, the prevailing tone, however of what there was being red. The counting took place in the Old Council Chamber, the South Room, the Police Court, the Green Room and the Sessions Court, and the first result, that for All Saints, in which Mr. Palmer and Mr. Simes were returned was announced about 10 o'clock. The rest were announced with intervals of a few minutes. A considerable number of the "city fathers" and others had congregated at the Guildhall and there were frequent cries of "What about the purity brigade now?" and similar expressions as the results became known.

Mr. Maund was much in evidence. He fairly went mad with delight tearing about the hall, up and down the stairs, and shaking hands effusively with is political associates. As each result became known he and Alderman Aldicott fairly rushed at each other and did all but embrace. Mr. Fairbain was in the midst of it all, cracking jokes and returning a jocular answer to all sorts of badinage on the part of his opponents. Every now and then the crowd outside burst into cheering. All the beaten candidates took their defeat like men and several of the expressed intention of fighting again.

November 10th – The Worcestershire Chronicle

MAYOR for NEXT YEAR

Mr. G. Williams King, grocer and provision merchant, The Cross, having been asked to allow himself to be nominated for the office of Mayor, consented to accept same if it was the unanimous wish of the Council.

Mr. King, who is a leading Conservative, headed the poll in St. Martin's Ward on Thursday week. Nearly 20 years ago he held a seat in the City council, but retired through press of business. He is president of the Chamber of Commerce, and a prominent Freemason, being Past Senior Grand Warden of the Province of Worcestershire.

While on the Council, the new Mayor, thought he did not often take part in the debates was a member of several committees including the Finance committee, and did useful work. He takes a keen interest in Church work and was for a time churchwarden of Holy Trinity parish, in which he resides.

Mr. King is naturally of a retiring disposition, and for this reason, has seldom featured in the public eye, but he has sound business ability – a very useful asset in the Chief Magistrate of a city, as has been emphasised in the case of the present Mayor – and is much esteemed by a large circle of friends, and may be relied upon to maintain the dignity and traditions of the important office, the responsibility of which he will this week take upon his shoulders.

We are so pleased by Father's success, and as I told you, I have promised him and mother my support during this year in whatever way I can. I do feel that I have already made some small contribution as we, by appealing for women to come forward to vote, have succeeded in raising the total of women who did vote by a considerable number.

I feel so lost without your love and support. Please let me know that you understand and still wish to marry me.

My sincere love from Muriel

Mayor George Williams King

THIRTY FIVE

Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester

January 25th

Dear Harold,

It has been nearly two months since I heard from you, and then it was a letter of such coldness. I know that if all had gone according to plan, we would have been married and en route back to Malaya. Can you not accept that it was not the right time for us? Cannot you give me the benefit of knowing that I am not rejecting you – only asking you to wait for one year, while I fulfil my very important promise to my parents?

Our social life in the Guildhall started out rather spectacularly. We had the Mayoral Ball at the Guildhall on January 14th, followed by the Fancy Dress Ball on the 16th. Both went surprisingly well, and were enjoyed by all.

Father then decided to flaunt convention and have a party, which he said was mostly for me, at the Guildhall on Saturday January 19th. He invited all my friends and made it much more light hearted. The newspaper reported that "Surprise must have been felt by the absence of members of the corporation and a predominance of the younger generation. More of a dance for his daughter than an official function, red baize covered the wide staircase. Rugs were laid on each landing – and chairs were grouped. At the foot of the stair a palm was surrounded by a cluster of plants. In the window were shrubs and creepers, sweet mimosa and orchid. In the Assembly room there were more plants. The Front Hall and the supper room were decked with white and yellow narcissi and mimosa."

Names that you will recognise amongst those at the dance were Mr. and Mrs. J.C.R. Day, Mr. R. and Miss Needham, Mr. and Mrs. E. Needham, Mr. A. Needham, Mrs. and Mr. T. Stinton, Mr. F. and Miss Tree.

The dancing was glorious – a mixture of polka, valse, 2 step, lancers, and John Peel. For one of the waltzes we had the music from *Chinese Honeymoon*, the musical of which you may remember that May and I and also Charlotte and Dot went to with your brother John in London in 1901 – five long years ago – before we were sweethearts. I so wish that you had been at the dance with me. Father was hoping to cheer me up, as I have been very depressed with your continual silence.

Then on the following Wednesday evening, Father organised a Children's Fancy Dress Ball in the assembly room. He and mother stood at one end, and the children in lines of 4 came forward to be presented, curtsied or bowed to them, then separated in twos, and went around the outskirts of the hall again. The children were delightful in their costumes. Those of us who were helpers wore Georgian fashions with our hair powdered and styled as they did then. The children were dressed as Dick Whittington, Heralds, Spanish Matadors, Cavaliers, Japanese Geishas, Indians, Hiawatha, etc.

You might like to know that Master Bob Day dressed as Tommy Atkins. Miss Elgar was a Normandy Peasant. Master William Needham was Pierreaux, Master Tree was an Old English Gentlemen, Betty Webb was an Early Victorian and Miss Williams was Margarite.

Our list of activities seems endless. Mother is so grateful for me standing with her for support. She has her first "At Home" as Mayoress on Tuesday next from 3-6 and needless to say I will be with her.

We are also going to attend *Cinderella* at the Worcester Theatre – a pantomime which has been very successful this year.

As far as political things go, Father did me one real favour in return for my help. He has got the council to agree to set up a committee in connection with the Women's Suffrage issue. On the committee are the Bishop of Birmingham, The Countess of Carlisle, Mr. Israel Sandwell, Mr. Richard Whiting and the Hon. Mrs. Arthur Lyttleton.

No matter how exciting all this is, I only want a letter from you telling me you still love me. Perhaps you can just send me a quote, if nothing else. Mine for you to identify is this, 'The thing I hate about an argument is that it always interrupts a discussion.'

Much love from Muriel

30th January 1907

Lahat, Perak

Dear Muriel,

Of course I still want to marry you. I can't pretend that I am not still hurting and thinking that you have not been fair to me, but I am trying to understand how your sense of responsibility for your mother's welfare in particular has influenced your decision.

I find it hard to think of things to write just at the moment. I wish you well with your various official activities. I am pleased that you are keeping in contact with my family.

I have been working hard, as usual, and there is in the air a promise of a promotion and a new venue for my work if this year continues to be as successful as the past ones have been.

I see you have been borrowing from Chesterton again, knowing that I couldn't resist.

'To have a right to do a thing is not at all the same as to be right in doing it.'

Love from Harold

Lansdowne Crescent

20th February, 1907

Dearest one,

Oh Harold, how wonderful to hear from you, even though you sound as if you have not completely forgiven me. But you do say you love me still and still want to marry me. I have so longed to hear those words. I can now continue with my work this year with a lighter step, knowing that I haven't thrown away the best thing that has even happened to me – being a partner with you.

And I did recognise the Chesterton, you quoted, and agree with the sentiment. And I know that you are still questioning the rightness of my decision, but I feel in my heart that I have done the right thing. Only time will tell.

'The men who really believe in themselves are all in lunatic asylums.'

On the social side, this week has had the Worcester Choral society concert, which was poorly attended for some reason, but was excellent all the same.

Father and Mother and I gave prizes at Holy Trinity last Wednesday, at the Infant School and it was such fun seeing the little children in awe of the Mayor in his fancy robes. Father told them about how he had a special feeling for this school as he had been involved in raising funds for its building some years ago.

I am very sorry to have to report that Mr. William Elgar died on the 12th of January, but he was aged 84, so he had a very full and long life. I went with Father to his funeral.

Do you still want me to tell you some bits of newsworthy happenings that don't directly relate to the Mayor of Worcester and his family?

I will go back to what happened in January. In France, a new Darracq racing motor car achieved a speed of 108 miles per hour. Can you believe that anything could go so fast?

In Berlin, Isadora Duncan was forbidden to dance in public. Also in Germany, the Zeppelin LZ 2 airship was destroyed in a gale.

Please tell me more about Ipoh and Malaya in general, and what happens there especially the medical care.

Much love from Muriel

THIRTY SIX

Lahat, Perak

April 10th

Dear Muriel,

I think perhaps we have about exhausted all that Chesterton has ever said that was quote worthy.

My heart, which is so full to overflowing, has often been solaced and refreshed by music when sick and weary.

I won't pretend that there is much medical care in Lahat compared to England, but there is a health clinic in Batu Gahaj, and in Ipoh there are many medical facilities.

Lying close to the equator, Malaysia has a tropical climate. Temperatures are usually between 68-86°F, humidity is usually 90 per cent with an annual monsoonal season blowing southwest [April to October] and northeast [October to February]. Rain, when it comes, generally interrupts the sunshine only briefly; most of it falls in short, strong bursts.

There are 8000 species of flowering plants in Peninsular or West Malaysia alone, including 2000 tree species, 800 different orchids and 200 types of palm.

A favorite night time activity with Malayans when the unrelenting heat of the day lets up a little, is to take a leisurely stroll in the local pasar malam [night market].

I hope you will have a happy birthday.

Love,

Harold

Lansdowne Crescent

June 1st

Dear Harold,

Since I last wrote to you, we have had the wonderful news that May and John have had their baby, a boy that they have called Thomas Duncan Day. I had thought they might name him John, after both his father and grandfather, but May had her way and he was called after her father. But John managed to get his second name in for his son as well.

Father hasn't been feeling very well lately. He gets very tired, and has quite a swelling in his throat. His voice sounds very rough, and although he says he doesn't have a sore throat, that is what it sounds like. I keep telling he must see the doctor, but he says he is too busy. I tease him that he should try some of the Pink Pills which are advertised in the newspaper each week for people who tire easily.

Father recognised your quote as coming from Martin Luther, and I think we will make note of it and make sure that Father listens to as much good music as we can find. I am too upset to find a quote for you just now.

I am dreadfully worried about him, but he just continues with his very full schedule.

Love,

Muriel

*****

Lahat Perak

July 1st

Dear Muriel,

I'm sorry to hear your Father is not well. I hope he does go to the doctor soon, as it might be something serious that could be treated if it is caught soon enough. You must insist that he goes, even if he is unwilling. Make the appointment for him if you must.

Nothing much to report on from here. I think I have about exhausted the subject of Ipoh and Perak and you now know as much as I do about it.

Love from Harold

August 15th

7 Lansdowne Crescent

Dear Harold,

Father finally saw a doctor who has suggested that he might benefit from treatment at a Spa. He implied that the problem might be a serious one, but that many miracles can be wrought by the use of herbal and other remedies.

Father doesn't complain, but he is so tired that he has often had to cancel his sessions of Mayoral work of late, and we haven't been out for a social event for several months. Luckily the Under Sheriff is very pleased to stand in on these occasions. And occasionally Mother and I do "At Home" sessions which were really meant for him to do.

His voice is more grating than ever and I think the lump is growing. I cannot tell you how concerned we are, but perhaps once he has gone to the Spa, things will improve.

I went this weekend to Warwick to visit with John and May and to see new baby Tom. He is a delight, and looks very bonny, now that he is over three months old. He can smile and looks as if he is very happy with life. May is a very contented mother, and dotes on him. I think she will spoil him rotten. She confided that she had really hoped to have a daughter, and has great plans for any future female babies in making sure that they are trained in the ballet, as she had always wanted for herself, but she had neither the shape for it, nor the backing of her mother. But for the time being she is very happy with her son.

Love from Muriel

September 30th

Lahat, Perak

Dear Muriel,

What Spa did your father go to, and did it have any effect? I know how worried you must be, and only wish that I could be there to help you through these difficulties. I do miss you so much, and even miss your long chatty letters, as you now seem to be too worried to write about frivolous things like quotations.

'The most astonishing thing about miracles is that they happen.'

Love from Harold

*****

November 1st,

Lansdowne Crescent

Dear Harold,

Father spent three weeks at Ventnor in the Isle of Wight and is much improved. He wouldn't let us come with him but took his cousin George Williams, and we replaced him whenever a Mayoral function was held that we could attend.

Whatever they did for him has given him a new lease of life. He says they made him have 20 glasses of their spa waters a day. He also took Essiac which is a sort of herbal tea that improves the ability of one's body to fight cancer (which is what the doctors are now saying that it is). He took mistletoe therapy which stimulates the immune system to fight it. He also took a tablet made out of a substance found in the pits of apricots.

Father brought back the advertising leaflet from Ventnor and I now quote from it. "Ventnor as a health resort started when Sir James Clark extolled the beneficial healing qualities of the climate and waters and the population went from 100 to almost six thousand by 1900.

Father praised the Bay as "the most picturesque spot along the coast" and describes thatched fisherman shacks along the shore with an old corn and grist mill high above fed by a stream which today still flows gracefully down to the sea below.

His main symptoms are a swelling in his neck, his voice being very rough, and great lethargy. The doctor thought it might be caused by smoking, which of course he does a lot. After his treatment, his voice was much clearer and he was not so tired.

It is too soon to talk of miracles, as in your quotation from Chesterton, but at least now we have hope. I'm afraid I cannot think of quotations at the moment. My mind is too full of the here and now, and what is being said about Father.

He still takes it quite easy and only does the most important of his functions, but we are so pleased that he is on the mend. He was asked if he wanted to carry on as Mayor for another year, and he declined, as he always intended to. He will take on the role of Deputy Mayor, as is the custom for retired mayors, and feels that as it is a less arduous role, he will have the energy to perform it well.

I mislaid this letter and have now found it, which is just as well, as I can now report to you that Father has successfully handed over his chain of office. The new Mayor is John Stallard.

This is what *The Chronicle* had to say about it:

*The Mayor (*Father*) said he had great pleasure in proposing Mr. John Stallard as the Mayor of Worcester for the ensuing year. Mr. Stallard, as many were aware, was on the council from 1884 to 1895, a period of 11 years and part of that time was Chairman of the Finance committee when the formation of Corporation stock was so successfully carried through, mainly owing to the time and attention he gave and the energy he displayed.*

Mr. Stollard came from a family which had been very been very much mixed up for three generations at least, with the municipal affairs of Worcester and the speaker felt sure that all present would agree that in proposing him as his successor he was he was proposing a man who was well worthy of office, one who would carry out the duties in an efficient manner and at the end of whose term of office the Council would feel good and proud that it had had him for Mayor.

The words are almost exactly like the ones the previous mayor made last year when Father was welcomed into the office. I think they must have a prewritten sheet, that only varies in the numbers of years of experience one has had.

The article goes on but I won't quote it all. When Father put the chain around Mr Stallard's neck he said, and I paraphrase, "You sir, come of a family that for three generations at least has been very intimately concerned with the municipal affairs of the city.

Your grandfather was a member of the Old Corporation and your worthy father and uncle, Mr. Josiah Stollard and your cousin Mr. William Stallard have also filled the office of Mayor to the satisfaction of all and I feel sure you will do the same."

Do you get the impression that this council is rather an old boys and family network?

Then there was a vote of thanks for Father.

THANKS TO RETIRING MAYOR

Ald. Knott in proposing a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor said they had noticed the excellent way which their late Mayor had performed the duties of his important office. At times the duties had encroached somewhat upon his health, but on the whole they were glad that his health had enabled him to discharge the duties as well as he had done. The functions had been carried out in as handsome a manner as upon previous occasions. Their thanks were also due to the Mayoress (applause) who had given her assistance to every good work. (applause)

Ald. Cook seconded and associated himself with every word that had been said. Those who formed the minority in that council shared the thanks he was uttering to the fullest extent. Mr. King rendered splendid assistance to the citizens of Worcester.

They regretted very much that the Mayor had been ill but he was now much stronger. (applause) The assistance of the Mayoress had been most readily given. She had associated herself with ever good work. (applause)

The Mayor admitted that his health had unfortunately not been so good during the past few months. Had it not been for that he had hoped to have done more work than it had been his privilege to do. When he was appointed Mayor, the Mayoress said to him, "Well, we are the property of the citizens of Worcester and whatever they want us to do we must do it." Applause, "And" added the Mayor, "We have done it, not only because it was a duty but because it was a pleasure." (applause)

Of course there were other articles as well. As Mayor, Father had also been Chief Magistrate, and so now they had to induct the new Mayor into that job. I won't copy out all the waffle as it is even hard for me to read it all, but I will put in the part about the vote of thanks for Father.

Clr. Sharman Wood said he had great pleasure in proposing a cordial vote of thanks to the ex-Mayor for the services he had rendered during the past year.

They knew that he had on every occasion he had been in Worcester he had attended and assisted in the administration of justice and had carried out his duties in a most admirable way.

Mr. Evans seconded, saying it needed no words of his to second such a vote.

Mr. Tree said he wished to support it on behalf of the solicitors. He was glad to have an opportunity of acknowledging the very great courtesy they had received from Mr. King during his year of office. There had been unfortunately, during the past year a great amount of crime, and a great increase in the cases.

Once the Mayor had sat as late as nine o'clock; another time till eight, and several times late in the afternoon. He hoped crime would diminish during the next year, (The Mayor, "So do I.") and that there would not be such a large number of cases. Mr. Tree proceeding said the Mayor had referred to his reluctance in passing sentence so he would venture to remind him that during his term of office he would have had the opportunity of trying a new experiment in criminal procedure.

On the first of January the New Proclamation of Offenders Act would come into force and under it a probation officer would be attached to the Court. Under the beneficent provision of that Text magistrates might deal with any suitable case that came before them by releasing the offender with or without recognisance and commit him to supervision for three years by the probation officer whose duty it would be to advise, assist and help the offender and endeavour to find him suitable employment. That had been carried out to some extent by the Police Court Missionary, who was not an officer of this court. Might he suggest that that was a very good illustration of the very humane spirit which now dominated the administration of Justice in England, because under this Act, an offender who years ago might have been sentenced to death for a trifling offence could be released and committed to the care of a probation officer. It was giving practical effect to the principle that was so well expressed by the King at the opening of the new Central Criminal Count: "It is well that crime should be punished. It is better that offenders should be reformed."

Mr. King in reply thanked them very much for the way they had spoken of him. When he took office he had made up his mind to do his duty to the best of his ability, and if in striving to do that he had met with their approval, he was more than amply rewarded. Mr. Southall referred to the fact that between the police and the Magistrates there was no friction.

He must say that during his term of office he had very much struck with the straightforward way the police force had given their evidence. He knew that the Chief Constable told the men to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and he thought that order had been carried out.

The men had always struck him as being reliable and truthful witnesses. He wished to thank the Magistrates Clerk, the chief of Police and the solicitors, for the kindness and courtesy extended to him. There had also been an absence of friction between the Magistrates and the solicitors. There might have been difference of opinion but they had differed pleasantly and it was a very great satisfaction to him to think that things had gone smoothly while he presided over the court."

All for now my love.

From Muriel

THIRTY SEVEN

7 Lansdowne Crescent, Worcester

January 5th, 1908

Dear May,

I so much need a friend at the moment. Why do you have to live so far away? How are we going to cope without my father? I have copied out the newspaper articles for you. It doesn't tell the whole story. It doesn't say how much we all thought he was getting better again, and how when he collapsed only a few days before he died, we couldn't believe that it was the cancer at fault. We thought he had been cured of that, so we blamed overwork, stress, having a cold, those sorts of things. And when the doctor came and shook his head and said he couldn't do any more, even then we didn't think he would die. You lost your father not very long ago, so I know you will understand how I am feeling. Mother is even worse. She couldn't cope with going to the funeral. She doesn't get out of bed, or get dressed or make any attempt at carrying on with life. I thought she might be interested in going to the graveyard, but not at all.

Here is the article from the paper from the Saturday after he died. It was actually the Saturday of his burial but of course it was too late in the day for it to get in that day's paper.

From Worcester Chronicle Saturday December 28th, 1907

WORCESTER'S EX-MAYOR
PASSES AWAY ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

It will be difficult for citizens to realise that the ex-Mayor passed away on Christmas Eve. We record the fact with deep regret. Most of those who observed the stalwart figure of the late Mayor when he was invested with the chain of office in the Worcester City Council Chambers little more than a year ago would have been inclined to take a lease on his life.

And even as recently as the 9th of last November when he in turn invested his successor with the chain of office there was nothing to indicate outwards the near approach of death, although everyone was then aware that Mr. King had been unwell for some time. During the later part of his year of office Mr. King had presented ill health from attending regularly to his Mayoral duties and he went away for a few weeks to a health resort without, however beneficial result. To the dismay of his family and friends it was recently recognised that the disease from which he was suffering was cancer at the base of the throat and it as realised that there was no hope of recovery. Until nearly the end, Mr. King was taken for a drive daily by his devoted wife and daughter, but all the efforts of medical men to save him proved vain, and he passed away, as stated, at his residence, Lansdowne Crescent, upon a day when most of his fellow citizens were rejoicing at the advent of the festive Christmas season – a sad coincidence. He bore his terrible illness with great fortitude.

Mr. King was head of the well know grocery and provision business at the Cross. A leading Conservative, he headed the poll for St. Martin's ward immediately before his election as Mayor. Before this his connection with municipal affairs was almost a memory to most citizens as it was nearly 20 years since he had held a seat in the city council. He then retired through pressure of business. He was president of the Chamber of Commerce and a prominent Freemason being Past Senior Grand Warden of the Province of Worcestershire. Until his year of office, Mr. King seldom figured in the public eye, being of a retiring disposition, but it was recognise that he had sound business ability and this served him in good stead.

He was esteemed by a large circle of friends, and acquitted himself well during his year of office, devoting much time to public work when he was able, and assisting every good work in the city by his presence when health and business permitted.

In these duties he was materially assisted by his wife and daughter. It is recalled that Mr. King said that he was influenced to take the office of Mayor by the remarks made in a sermon at the Cathedral by a well-known local clergyman, who urged upon leading citizens that it was their duty to make personal sacrifices in order to undertake public office for the benefit of their fellow citizens.

The late Mayor was not a native or Worcester but he succeeded his uncle, Mr. J. J. Williams, in the business which he has carried on so successfully for many years. He was a member of the Worcester Grocers' Association from the time of its inception. A strong Churchman, Mr. King was one of the leading members of Holy Trinity Church and was for some time churchwarden.

Mr. King who following the custom, had on retiring from the mayoralty accepted the office of Deputy Mayor will be much missed by his colleagues on the City council and by a large number of friends in the city.

He was regarded with affection by a considerable number of citizens. To anything in which he took an interest he applied himself with vigour and determination. The scheme for securing a health commissioner for the city was one instance of the concern he felt in the welfare of the city. It was during his Mayoralty and largely due to his sympathy and cooperation that the scheme was started and put on a satisfactory basis. Messrs. J. J.Williams and Co.'s business was carried on in the early part of last century in what was then called Goose Lane by Messr. Archer and Williams. Mr. King for several years past has as partner Mr. Johnson. Mr. King was 58 years of age.

Then we had the Rector giving his sermon on the Sunday. The paper reported on that too.

PULPIT REFERENCE

Preaching at Holy Trinity Church on Sunday morning, the Vicar made a short but very sympathetic reference to the death of the deputy Mayor. "Your thoughts and mine, are today filled with the great tragedy that has befallen the Faithful City during last week. I dare not trust myself to speak of it today.

We have lost one who, to all human appearance was in the hay day of life, who but 12 months ago, was as hale and as cheerful and as devoted to duty as anyone was. Yesterday we laid his body in the grave with all the honour due to him, and those of us who witnessed the congregation here yesterday afternoon will not soon forget it.

The respect in which the Deputy Mayor was held was fully borne testimony to. It was my privilege to minister to him during the last days of his life and I never met one who was so absolutely certain of the future life."

The day of the funeral was cold and bleak. When I sat there in church, numb and still in shock, do you know what I thought? I remembered us sitting in the Cathedral in February, 1901, for the Queen's memorial service. The same men filed past in their fancy dress outfits. The Bishop wasn't there, but all the other town dignitaries were. They were more interested in getting their names in the paper for attending than they were in showing any real sympathy or regard for my father. I thought, "From the death of a Queen to the death of a King" all in a very few years. She had many years to enjoy life – he was taken far too soon. I wonder if he hadn't been Mayor and had all that extra stress if he would have lived longer.

I wonder if we could have recognised the symptoms earlier and had made him go to the doctor. He hated going to see the doctor, and always felt that he could cope with whatever was wrong with him. Anyway, I will append the article, and several others that followed it in regard to the views of the political figures who spoke. The only one who I was pleased to read was the one from Mr. Tree. He spoke nicely of father when he finished his office too. Most of the aldermen and councillors just felt that he was a puppet brought in to get them off the hook from the scandal and now someone they could do without.

January 4, 1908 *Worcestershire Chronicle*

THE LATE MR. G. WILLIAMS KING –

LARGE COMPANY AT FUNERAL

The circumstances that the death of the ex-mayor (Mr. G. Williams King) should have occurred so soon after the termination of his year of office rendered the funeral, which took place at Astwood Cemetery on Saturday, peculiarly sad.

There was general sorrowing in the city, and nearly every shop had a shutter up as a tribute of sympathy. It was a striking tribute to the memory of the ex-Mayor that despite the bitterly cold east wind, the Mayor (Mr. John Stallard) and nearly all the members of the Corporation attended the first part of the funeral service, which took place at Holy Trinity Church

. The building was quite filled by those who attended to pay a last mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

The wreaths were so numerous that they almost hid from view the two carriages in and on which they had been placed. By request of the family no list is published. The service at Holy Trinity Church was at 1.15. At the request of the widow (who was not present at the funeral) the beautiful white flowers with which the altar, chancel and other portions of the church had been decorated for Christmas were left in position and these served to add a touch of brightness and hope to the mournful service. The surpliced choir was in attendance. The organist, Mr. A. Parry, opened with O Rest in the Lord by Mendelssohn.

The funeral cortege was met at the gates of the churchyard by Canon Wilson and vicar of Holy Trinity, Rev. G.H. Hough and the robed Corporation Canon Wilson read the opening sentences and the 90th psalm was then chanted by the choir. The hymn The Saints of God was sung by the choir and congregation and the lesson was read by the vicar, after which the hymn Peace, Perfect Peace was sung, the service concluding with the Dead March impressively played, the Nunc Dimititis sung as the cortege left the church.

The mourners were: Miss King (daughter) Miss Foulkes, Messr. Brindley, Sondermann, Bromley, Hilditch, Wood, T. Bates and H. Johnson.

I will just interject here how pleased I was that Otto and Gertrude Sondermann came for the funeral and were there to comfort mother and me. Otto is German, you know, and a Professor of Music and they live in Bath.

Among those present at the church or the graves side were the following members of the Corporation. The Mayor, the High Sheriff, Mr. H. Long, The Chamberlain, Mr. G. Radford, Aldermen, A. Knott, H. Day, W.Caldicott, J. Millington, H. Leicester, W.H. Price, J.S. Wood, W. Stallard, J.A. Steward, C.J. Whitehead, J.S. Cook, Counsellors, A.H. Constance, G.H. Loach, J. Jeff, A.H. Whinfield, A. Usher, H.W. Little, T. Wintle, W.H. Caldicott, H.K. Hogdben, R. Haughton, T.G .Dobbs, W. Webb, J. Gray, W. Watts, W. Moore, E.A. Burgess, W.H. Buck, E. Sallis, F.A.W. Simes, J.G. Armstrong, R.R. Fairborn.

The corporation officials present were the Town clerk, Mr. S. Southall, Magistrates Clerk, Mr. F.B. Dingle, The Chief Constable, Mr. T.W. Bryne, the Engineer, Mr. T. Caink, the Librarian, Mr. T. Duckworth, The Elementary Education Secretary, Mr. F. T. Spackman, the Electrical Engineer, Mr. C.M. Shaw, Weights Inspector, Mr. R. Harper. The Worcester Charity Trustees were represented by Messrs. F. Barnett, E.P. Evans, J. Sigley, and J. Livingston Wood.

The chairman Ald. E. Day apologised. Mr. H. B. Kenward represented the St. Swithin trustees, of which Mr. King was a member. The following members of the Chamber of Commerce attended. F.G. Jones, W.B. Needham, H.M. Bennett, A.G. Spreckley, F. Webb, W. Webb S.T. Harris and E.C. Corbett. Mr. T. James, president, represented the Worcester Grocers' Association of which Mr. King was a member. Mr. C. Giss represented the St. Martin's Conservative Ward Committee.

The late mayor was a prominent Freemason, and junior warden of the Mark Masons, as well as a member of the 280 Lodge. Ald. Cook also attended as Worshipful Master of the Lechmere Mark Mason Lodge plus others.

There were also present. Rev. Canon Claughton, J.D. Day, Warwick. G. A. K. Simpson, G.F. Williams, Drs. Crowe, Bates, Mabye Read, Bennett and Coombs. Mrs. A.G. Rowe and W.C. Abell, W.R. Higgs, J.C.R. Day, G.D. Day, T. Wintle, H. Coombs, W. Bannister, J.H. Williams, J.J. Underwood, H.E. Toney, J.G. Shield, P.G.J. Baldwin, A.R. Underwood and H. Cox presenting the Holy Trinity Working Men's club, etc. The following employees of the firm J.J. Williams attended. A.J. Hudson, W. Edge, J. Callow.'

I skipped out a lot of the names as they weren't really his friends but only there for show. I was so pleased that John came and gave his support. If only Harold could have been her

MAGISTRATES VOTE OF CONDOLENCE

He (the Mayor) said, "A loss has been created and certainly there has been a great gap made during the last week through the death of Mr. G.W. King. Although not a native of this city, I think he treated the city of his adoption with great respect. Mr. King was perhaps known to most of you more intimately than he was to me, as I have seen very little of him outside public life, but from my experience of Mr. King, his character was of a John Bull type, who I think feared nothing and prepared to discharge any duty however irksome or unpleasant in a most honest and straightforward way.

Mr. King came, I believe to Worcester some 25 years ago, and very soon after entered into public life as a member of the City Corporation. Although he only remained for a very few years, he showed them that he had a great ability and painstaking industry to discharge the more important duties than that of a councillor.

He was absent from the Council for some 15 or more years and then returned about 14 months ago as representative of St. Martin's Ward. His sterling character was at once recognised and within a few days after his election he was asked to allow himself to be nominated at Mayor of this city and on November 9th last year was elected to that office. During his 12 months Mr. King showed great business capacity and although during the last few months of the year ill health often attended him and he had more or less to slacken his business, we all recognised that in Mr. King's death the city has incurred a great loss, and has lost one of its adopted citizens of whom we shall feel proud in years to come. Mr. King was a man of great business capacity and carried on one of the chief trades in the city since the resignation of Mr. J. J. Williams.

In various other capacities, I believe, Mr. King showed an Englishman's grit and you gentlemen know better than I the manner in which he discharged his duties on the bench. I believe he was not a J.P. but he would now be acting as ex-Mayor. I must leave it to Mr. Day to place on record the manner in which he discharged those duties. We have lost a deputy Mayor who most willingly a few weeks ago undertook the duties which he must then have understood would be more than ordinarily arduous. He undertook them with such readiness that I thought Mr. King must have come to the conclusion that his health was in a far better state than many of us had any hopes. I have to move: "that the Justices of the Peace for the city desire to place on record their expression of deep regret at the loss which the city has sustained in the death of Mr. King who filled with conspicuous success the office of Mayor and chief Magistrate of the city during 1906-7 and to offer to Mrs. King and Miss King their sincere sympathy in their heavy bereavement."

Ald. E. Day seconded, remarking that he was sure he would echo the views of his brother justices and of all in court in saying how deeply their deplored the loss of their late Mayor. Those who had had the privilege of his acquaintance for many years looked upon him as a dear friend.

The peculiar circumstances of his decease appealed very strongly to all the citizens. It was only a few weeks ago that the speaker had an interesting conversation with Mr. King and then he hoped he would be soon restored to complete health. If any one had asked Alderman Day a short time ago as to Mr. King's future life he would have said, "You may take a lease of very many years."

He had the privilege of knowing Mr. King when he was a member of the Corporation many years ago, and since that period he had always found him very upright and a strict business man. As the Mayor had said, Mr. King had performed his duties without fear, and had won the respect of everyone with whom he had come into contact.

Ald. Day thought it was a very pleasant feature that in the latter part of his life, Mr. King came forward with such cheerfulness and kindliness to take the position of Chief Magistrate of the city; and it was a very pleasant ending to a busy man and a citizen to find he had terminated his life in an act of duty to his fellow citizens. The speaker said he could not altogether express his feelings because Mr. King's death was so sudden: he did not know anything which he had felt so much in his life as the loss of a friend and brother justice. That feeling was shared by all and they had greatest sympathy with Mrs. King and her daughter.

On behalf of the solicitors practicing in the court, Mr. Tree expressed concurrence. Only 7 weeks ago that day he had the pleasure of supporting a vote of thanks then accorded to the ex-Mayor on the termination of his year of office as Chief Magistrate, and it was now certainly difficult to realise that they would never see him on the Bench again. It was also a pleasure, said Mr. Tree, to attend the Court when Mr. King was presiding, for his administration of justice was characterised by at least 3 admirable judicial attributes – dignity, courtesy and impartiality. They would remember him as one who occupied a very prominent and honourable position in the business life of the city; everything in his public life was actuated by desire to serve his fellow citizens. The solicitors deeply deplored the loss of the city had sustained and sympathised with the widow and daughter in their bereavement, but he thought their feelings would be to some extent mitigated if they could fully realise the inspiring words of a great poet.

"This life of mortal breath

Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,

Whose portals we call death."

Then we went to the graveyard for the burial service. The grave is in a nice spot close to some huge spruce trees. Close enough to the path for it to be easy for Mother to get to it, if she ever feels up to going there. I was pleased when I saw that one of the neighbouring tombs was the resting place of two of H. H Lines' daughters. Do you remember that time when Father and I went shopping for pictures – and he wanted me to help choose them as they will one day be mine? He was so keen to get some pictures by H. H. Lines. In the end we got two of them, but I don't think either of us liked the one of the old lady in the church yard much – but it was just that it was painted by our local man. Charlotte's father used to talk about how Mr. Lines had his small shop just along Broad Street, and how he was poor and a struggling beginner then, and nobody would buy his pictures. He was almost giving them away in those days, but now they are worth a great deal of money. His daughters both died without marrying. They were listed as *H.H. Line's daughters* as if their only claim to fame was that he begot them. How sad. Surely there was something to be said for their lives other than that they had a father.

The tombstone which we have ordered is a large stone cross, very plain. On the plinth will be the words,

Ever Loving Memory of

George Williams King

Who Entered His Reward on

Christmas Eve 1907

Maybe we should have said whose son he was. Or who his wife and daughter were. Mother will probably be buried there with him some day – perhaps sooner rather than later with the way she is neglecting herself. But as for me, I fear I will be buried in foreign soil. Soon Harold will be home, and we will be married, and I will be leaving this country, my grieving mother, my father's grave, my good friends. I am so frightened of going. Sometimes when I think of how few hours I have actually spent with Harold over the last 6 years, and how I really only know him through our letters – which often are more like articles from magazines than letters.

I wish you would be able to come for the wedding, but I know how busy you are with your son Tom. I am pleased I managed to get over last summer to meet him. I hope that our children, if we have any, will be friends with him and with your children. I wish I could see into the future and see what paths lie ahead for us.

All I know is that Harold is on his way and will be here by the end of January, and that we will be married in Holy Trinity Church at 12 noon on February 13th, with as little fuss as is possible, and that the next day we will board a ship in South Hampton to take us to the other end of the world.

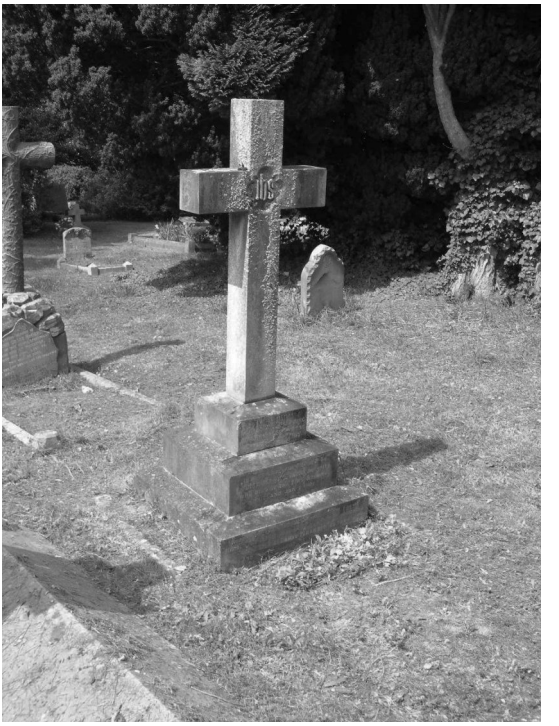
I don't know how mother will cope without me. Thank goodness your mother is close and such a good friend, and has gone through this before so she will understand and know how to help. I am pleased that the Days moved into number 6 too, as Mrs. Day is very pleasant and I'm sure will make an effort to help mother get through her difficult times. She is soon to be my mother-in-law, as she is yours, and we will be sisters-in-law and our children will be cousins. Going back to the Queen's Memorial Service, do you remember how we first met your John on that day, and how I declared that I was going to marry him. I was so sure of myself. I never for a moment thought that you would end up with him, and that I would be the one marrying his younger brother.

Remember all those quests I talked about. Most of them pretty much came to nothing. I wanted to find my royal ancestors – but never did although I greatly enjoyed the history lesson I gave myself in trying. I wanted to get my great grandmother's poetry published but I never did. I wanted to get women the right to vote, and nothing came of it – except a committee set up to talk about it. I suppose in a way I can feel that I helped my father get elected through encouraging women to vote who might not have otherwise done so. Maybe if he had lost that election, he would be alive today. Maybe all my quests are doomed to failure. What about the quest to marry Mr. Day? Please God that that one will come to fruition and that in years to come I will be remembered for having made some sort of mark on the world.

Dearest May, please pray for me in these difficult times ahead. And thank you for being my friend.

Love always,

Muriel



Grave of George Williams King