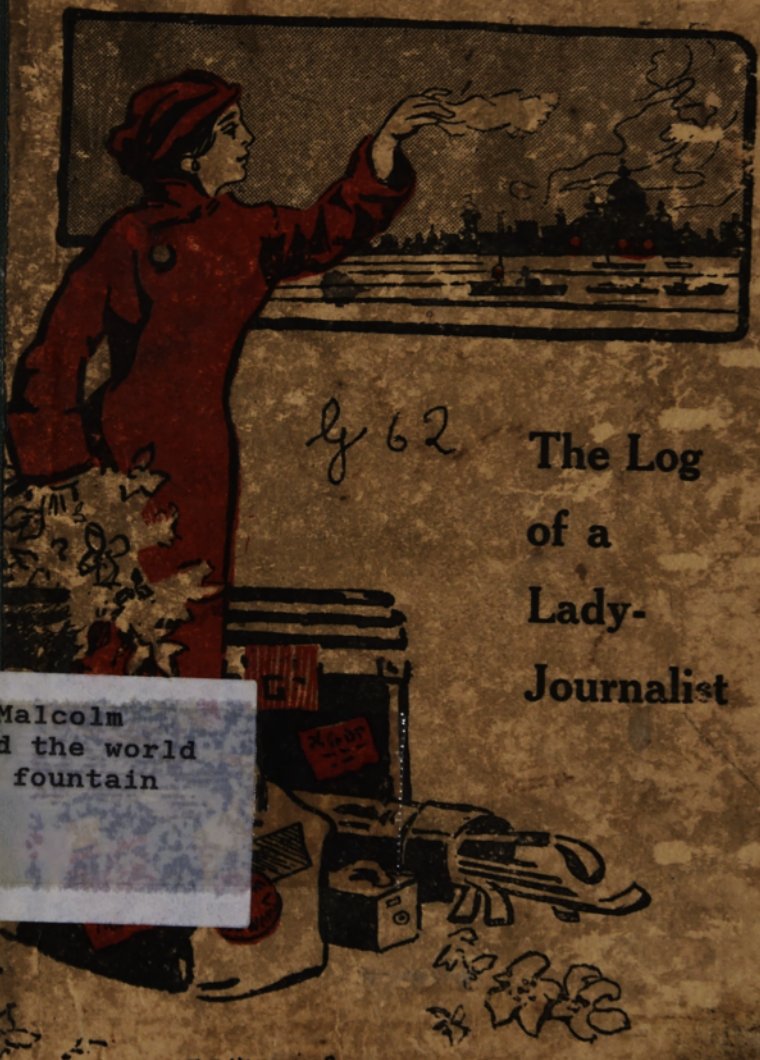
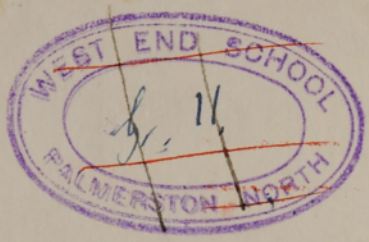
# ROUND THE WORLD with a Fountain Pen

By MRS. MALCOLM ROSS



The Log of a Lady-Journalist



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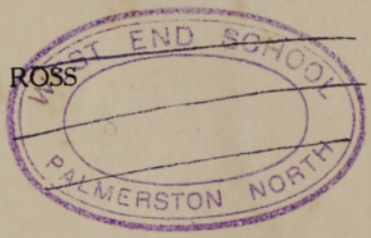
BY

MRS. MALCOLM ROSS




The Log of a Lady Journalist

WELLINGTON:
Printed by Blundell Bros., Ltd., Willis Street.
1913.

TO MY HUSBAND,
WHOSE ABSENCE
WAS THE ONLY
CLOUD OVER THE
SUNSHINE OF MY
JOURNEY.

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CHAPTER I.

# COLOMBO

The Wily Cingalee—A Fancy Dress Ball—Awakened by a Wink—Adam's Peak—Man or Maid—An Enchanting Town — My First Rickshaw Ride — No Accommodation—A Bible Picture—Glorious Glimpses —A Juggler—His Charlie.

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THE night before reaching Colombo, the Malwa had been en fete. A fancy dress ball was given, and on the upper deck danced a motley crowd—Pierrots, a Zulu chief, Puritans, schoolgirls, and Cingalese belles, blent in an extraordinary harmony of tints. It seemed scarcely an hour after I had laid my tired head on my pillow when I was awakened by a light winking in at my open porthole. With an impatient sigh over the potency of the tropic stars, I shut my eyes. But the light went on winking insistently, and, peering from the porthole, I found it was from a lighthouse ; and in the dim twilight of the dusk before the dawn were other lights against the horizon, the lights of Colombo. One red star glowed steadily. It was all too prosaic—with the East a-calling—to go to bed again, so I hurriedly dressed and went on deck to find the eastern horizon aglow with saffron and rose, and the coast-line gradually becoming more distinct. Above the serrated line of the palms, gemmed at the base with the lights of the town, rose the beautiful outline—purple-grey against the flame of dawn—of Adam's Peak, the mountain that, so says legend, Adam left his footprint upon. Those who have visited the sacred shrine where the footprint is reverently displayed by priests, have been impressed with the size of boots our earliest an-

cestor must have taken. Both Buddha and Siva a accredited with having made the mark—according to th disciples of each—but Adam has apparently got the bes claim, and has given his name to the Peak, which, by th way, is the very first glimpse travellers catch of Ceylon.

The dawn came with a rush of colour and a flood sudden brilliant sunlight, and soon the Malwa had rounde the curving breakwater—a wonderful construction—and was anchored to the buoy. It was already—though on six o'clock—the very hour our captain, nine days ago, had said we should reach Colombo—a scene of picturesque bustle. The town—a delightful confusion of red and grey roofs, broken by a few spires and the tall white column of the searchlight tower—lay across half a mile of dull blue water, scarcely ruffled, though, at times, the monsoon dashes huge breakers over the harbour protection-works. A the breakwater two absurdly small engines, like toys, pu fussily, and at the wharves lay ships from many po among them a great French steamer and a stately Bri warship. On our steamer all was hurry and bustle, early breakfast, importunate passengers, worried stewards, piles of baggage. The peace and freshness of the dawn were past, and already the heat was great; although, according to the good fortune that has followed us all the trip, during our stay in Ceylon, it was never unpleasantly warm. I have known hotter weather in Sydney.

It was not long before the natives were aboard. There were eager vendors of fifteen days' telegrams of the world's news, which somehow—such is the fascination of the tropics —met with but a slow sale. Politics and business mattered little when all the East was waiting to be explored. I found what I thought was a stately native lady outside my cabin. She wore white petticoats, fashionably Directoire, a short coatee of a glorious red, and a small iron-grey chignon, her hair crowned by a semicircular comb of tortoiseshell. To my surprise, when she turned, I saw a grey beard and an imposing moustache. He had come for the washing! Most of the newcomers to Ceylon have not yet got acustomed to the ultra-feminine back view of a Cinghalese man. He is graceful, lithe, slim, with small bones and sloping shoulders, and this, added to the woman's coiffure, is quaintly misleading. Colombo was full

sent on board told us. No rooms were to be got Galle Face, and very few at the G.O.H., and passwho had relied upon getting into either hotel went with anxious faces. By this time the low coals were moored alongside, and grim black figures, no clothing except a wisp of cloth and a liberal coatf coal-dust, were scrambling aboard. Their white lls and whiter teeth were the only relief to their al blackness, and in contrast with a group of fair pean children they look like imps fresh from the pit. he resolved the exciting responsibility of steering our from the Malwa to Colombo wharf. The ropes were ly put into my hands, and my feeble expostulations disregarded. The four rowers plied with a will, and cessfully avoided ramming the battleship, or causing ropean crisis by injuring the French steamer.

shore all was enchanting, and one wished for a thousyes to watch the vivid kaleidoscope. Things one had read of or seen in pictures were here in actual being. of thatched carts were drawn by meek little bullocks dly disproportionate in size to their loads. The ricks flitted everywhere, the pullers at times—when the was a portly lady or a fat merchant—almost as unfairly hed as the bullocks were with their carts. Colour rampa t, in draperies of the natives, in the rust-red s, smo th and wide, in the huge trees thick with rose amber l ossoms, in the brick walls, and in the vivid stuff flutter d at the doors of the native merchants. The positiv ly ached with the radiance and sunshine, and sengers were glad to get into the cool hall of the .H., v ere a cosmopolitan crowd were clamouring at counte. or rooms. A large-eyed, patient, native clerk, h a we ry smile, presided and listened to threats and suasion with the same polite tired air. The hotel was l, at lea t till mid-day, and in all Colombo there seemed to e no room for travellers. A timely and substantial tip n a few cases solved the difficulty, but many Malwa pasengers gave up the struggle and slept on board, despite he coaling. Some quaint experiences were gained. One ge roo in the Galle Face was divided into two by a sixt par tion, and four men slept one side and four women the Another room was let to four men. It onl bed in it, and one of the quartette announced

his intention of retiring directly after dinner, on the principle of possession being nine-tenths of the law!

My first rickshaw ride was a delightful experience, even though by it one was taught a lesson in Oriental guile. My friend desired to hire a motor car, and the men eagerly declared they would take us to the place where he could do so. Off they trotted along the broad town roads, and then into narrower native streets where all was of absorbing interest, but where there was no sign of a motor shop. Twice we stopped them, to be told it was further on, and it was not till we had gone some miles when they brought us triumphantly to a pause in front of a motor factory. They thought my friend wanted to buy a car, or else, which is more probable, they were anxious for the extra money. Really, the right place was a stone's throw from where we started.

But it was all so lovely that no one complained. It was like the setting of an opera, or a bit from Kipling's tales. One glimpse brought keenly to remembrance a coloured picture in an old illustrated Bible—a curving stream between high banks fledged with palm-trees and blue with convolvulus, the sea beyond, and on a little spit a tall figure draped in orange—the real paint-box tint—with a great brass water pot poised on his shoulder. Of the native shops I shall write later, but the glimpses of Cingalese home-life, gained through the open-fronted houses, were enthralling, though perhaps distance did lend a glamour to the scene. The great trees in some streets meet overhead, and their crimson and yellow blossoms look theatrically startling against the deep blue sky, while in the gardens—that lack the soft greens of moister climates—vivid colours, and wonderfully-tinted foliage are to be seen. Our way passed along the border of a little lake, whose shallows were glorious emerald. In it were reflected the starry fronds of the palms, and the red-blossomed branches of the same crimson-flowered trees, while some scarlet draperies laid along the bank repeated their dazzling splash of colour in the water below. Strolling about were natives, each fitting like a scrap of mosaic into a harmonious picture. Their draperies fade to the most exquisite tints of crimson, blue, and yellow, and everything seems to suit their dusky satin skins and shining black hair. As for the babies, they

are all brown dimples, black curls, and toothless smiles, while the young girls are classically graceful, and their walk is an object-lesson to their Europeon sisters. Refinement, too, is obvious in many of the older faces. At the Galle Face, reached by a glorious drive along the beach, we have a cup of tea in the magnificent verandah, which looks out on the sea. The waiters, in their graceful native costume, are perfect attendants, noiseless, quick, and eager to anticipate your wants. Beyond the railing, squatted a juggler in red turban and red and black striped draperies, handsome, keen-eyed, and nimble-fingered. His stock-in-trade was various, and included a round basket with a large cobra, a quaint native flute, a mongoose tied up in a bag, and a weird rag doll whose name was, apparently, Charlie. Its feetless legs were clad—such is the widespread popularity of things Scotch—in tartan trousers, and its other prominent features were black bead eyes and bristling black moustaches. When the conjurer desired to round off a feat, he took "Charlie" by the legs and dashed his head on the ground, making at the same time a curious squeak. We saw the mango trick, which is sleight of hand, and some excellent palming, but the contributions, though not insignificant, were not enough to let the cobra dance, and the juggler gathered his luggage and went to seek richer fields.

For days before we reached it, Ceylon had been the chief subject of talk. Hours of that pleasant idleness that prevails on tropic seas had been filled with plans for Colombo or Kandy, and hints as to purchases from travellers—made wise by sad experience—to novices ripe for the wiles of the Cingalee merchant. Verily, the same is full of guile, and cunning as a serpent. A fellow-passenger well versed in the devious ways of the Colombo shopkeeper went with his wife to get a comb—a real antique, with uncut stones set in a strikingly barbaric design, quite different from the flashy, badly-made modern work. The price demanded was twelve pounds, the value about four, but though the Englishman and the merchant had had many similar transactions, and always came to terms, the latter would not budge below six pounds. The would-be buyer at last asked why. "Your wife, she wear fine diamonds!" said the merchant. "You very rich man! You able to pay big price!" "Pooh," said the Englishman, "just Parisian diamonds!" "I give you Parisian prices for them," came the quick retort. And

do what he could, the Englishman had to go without the comb. Afterwards, he saw to it that his wife turned her diamond rings round, hiding the stones, when they went a-bargaining. Wonderful tales were told me of the clever way in which an inferior article would be wrapped up in place of the one bought. Those to whom the East was a terra incognita listened to warnings and advice attentively, and were probably, when time of trial came, little the better for it.

## CHAPTER II.

# COLOMBO

Luxuries of a Motor Yacht—East and West—Dinner at Galle Face—The Head Waiter—Native Shops—Marvellous Memories—Jewels for Sale—English Honesty—A Paternal Waiter—Dark Spots—Trade to the East.

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IN Colombo harbour was lying—while the Malwa was there—a magnificent steam-yacht, owned by Mr. Gordon Bennett, of the "New York Herald," who, every year, visits Colombo. The property of a millionaire, who possesses exciting possibilities, inasmuch as he is unmarried, the boat is most sumptuously fitted up, and carries, among other luxuries, two cows and a couple of motor-cars! Mr. Gordon Bennett had a smart party with him, and some of them were pointed out to us at the Galle Face Hotel, where surely one sees the most cosmopolitan crowd in the world. Hours fly while one is sitting in the great cool entrance-hall or on the wide verandahs that look across a red road and green grass—almost too vivid to be natural—towards the rippled ocean. Here are a couple of chattering Italians with vivid gesture and flashing eyes and teeth; three or four Germans near are conversing more stolidly; two Frenchwomen are talking rapidly not far off, and everywhere one hears native orders and the American accent. A regal-looking woman in an Irish point coat that makes one break the commandment regarding covetousness, and a miraculously slim, tall girl in a white frock cut well above her ankles, and a great Tuscan hat with the huge brim rolled up on the left side, are said to belong to the yachting party. It is the afternoon, and the girl, who has a provokingly insouciant face, and a quantity of fair, soft hair, is smoking cigarettes with an expert air. She is

the object of half-admiring, half-horrified curiosity on the part of some of our more strait-laced passengers.

But it is at dinner where the Galle Face Hotel excels itself in brilliance and fascination. The very drive to it is magical, for so warm is it that no wrap is required, and ladies are to be seen in full evening dress and bare-headed, sitting in rickshaws or in carriages. It was dark when we started, but the first part of the way lay through the lighted city thronged with people and vehicles. For a nervous woman a rickshaw ride has drawbacks, but the adventurous delight to see the little fussy-haired man dodge a tram-car, evade a motor, peremptorily order a huge bullock-cart out of his way, and zig-zag without a collision among a crowd of varied conveyances. The bell fixed on the handle rings continually, and when hundreds of rickshaws are speeding noiselessly along, save for their jingle, the result is charming. In the heart of the town rises a tall white tower that sends ever-moving fingers of light over land and sea. The stars are vivid, there is a young moon, and both are reflected in the lake along which we drive. On our right hand, the Indian Ocean sends its waves softly up the yellow beach, and hundreds of people are strolling along enjoying the cool of the evening. Ladies in ball dress, business men, fat merchants—and one rarely sees a lean native merchant in Colombo—children, all speed along, drawn by the wiry little men who never seem to tire. In some fine carriages are notables, the groom and coachman as a rule infinitely more imposing than the inmate, for they sit on their high seats with tremendous dignity, dressed in snowy white robes and turbans, the latter with vivid twists of colour. The dining-room of the Galle Face is magnificent, almost mosque-like with its white arches all round, partly filled in with exquisite pierced stone work. At the end huge mirrors reflect the brilliant scene, and all round above the arches there is a balcony with deep dusky recesses. There is no colour save the soft green of great palms and tropic plants and the wonderful decorations of the tables. The Eastern servant loves colour and decoration, and is very clever at arranging flowers. Indeed, his table decorations at times are works of art, bizarre, yet effective harmonies, like Liberty designs, made of tinted petals and dyed rice. One special table at the Galle Face was beautiful, centred with many-shaded rose chiffons, like a huge

rose. Under the folds were a number of electric lights, and a silver pink-shaded candelabra and tall crystal vases of roses completed the lovely arrangement. It was a farewell dinner for a man leaving the next day. I could scarcely eat, excellent as the menu was, for watching the gay scene. Hidden in one of the balconies a band played splendid music, and the huge electric fans whirled unceasingly. The head waiter alone was worth coming far to see. Very tall and massive, with drooping moustache, a la walrus, and fine black hair in a chignon finished with a circular tortoiseshell comb, he wore a snow-white cloth petticoat beautifully draped, and a dress coat and waistcoat of dark green, with yellow facings and gold buttons. His shirt-cuffs and collar were most impressive, and he moved among his satellites like a being from another sphere. We felt honoured when once he personally attended to us, and there was a minor personage beside, and a host of waiters all in white robes and the touch of green which is distinctive of the hotel. A tiny black boy, all in scarlet, even to his fez, might have stepped out of a comic opera. The guests, too, were worthy of their entourage. Diamonds were flashing in all directions, and lovely gowns from Paris and London were in evidence. Our slender fair-haired American wore a blush rose satin frock—so tight that it seemed impossible she could move in it—that afforded most interesting glimpses of pink and silver hose and slippers later when she mounted the stairs. Her companion had on a sumptuous black lace frock with a dazzling diamond necklace. Near us sat an Indian Rajah, with a bold dark face. He wore perfectly-cut evening clothes, some glittering orders, and—quaintest touch—a monocle. His personal attendant, a splendid Hindoo in scarlet turban and white robes, stood with folded arms behind his chair, not to serve —the waiters did that—but merely to guard and give dignity to his master. At a table beyond sat the Colonial Secretary, also with his orders on, and his native attendant. The gay clamour—a babel of many tongues—accompanied the clatter of dishes and the crash of the band. It was a brilliant memory to carry away with us.

The road to Mount Lavinia lies through avenues of the fine pink-blossomed cotton-tree and wonderful greenery bright with scarlet flowers. On either side are groves of palm-trees and bananas, and at one place a huge banyan

tree forms an island of shade in the road—a shade where native women and children are sitting. At intervals are little native houses, thatched with red pot-shreds, and indescribably chaotic domestic glimpses may be gained. The love of colour shows itself everywhere, and even the fowls are dyed. Some of them, magenta-plumed, are like animated feather-dusters. We caught sight, too, of a rose-coloured cat and a pink dog, and the white sacred bullocks, we were told, are elaborately painted for a festival. Most of all was this characteristic evident in a Buddhist temple we visited. Outside it is a low building of dull grey stone, with weather-worn traces of colour about the doors, but within it is a glory of scarlet, blue, gold, and green. A room like a pasage is entirely covered with brilliant frescoes, illustrating the life of Buddha, but though the guide offered to describe to us all the pictured history, time pressed, and we politely declined. In the chapel, at one end, squatted a huge figure of the god, with his usual placidly detached air. It was of clay, dazzling in chrome and scarlet, and in front was a wide ledge entirely covered with blossoms of a brilliant yellow flower like a cistus, and on this background, arranged in quaint designs, were laid single hibiscus flowers of burning crimson. The effect was gorgeous, and the scent and closeness made the head swim. The figure of the god almost seemed to move in the heavy air, and, recognising that a faint would have been regarded by our reverent guides as a sudden and triumphant conversion to Buddhism, we left hurriedly, after of course paying tribute. Outside a bevy waited us. It is a perfect curse this "Give, give, give"—the continual cry of the Colombo natives. The boys and girls run alongside your rickshaw, pleading with outstretched palm and lovely eloquent eyes. They are, judging from their plaints, apparently all orphans, all hungry, all poor, and all sick, and they smile enchantingly as they pour out their stereotyped tales of woe. A stump of an arm sometimes emphasises their tale. A new-comer will accept the flowers thrown in her lap with touching gratitude, but unless backsheesh is ready the donor asks for the flowers back. At the hotels the system of tipping is as bad. When leaving an hotel a throng of native servants waiting for gratuities blocks your way, your bedroom steward being probably the only man who did anything for you. Another has opened the door of the bath-

room for you, a third carried a parcel upstairs, in spite of your protestations, and a fourth is introduced as the man who blacked my boots. As I had no boots blacked, this seemed superfluous, but the tip had to be given. In a shop your parcels are, unless you vigorously resist, taken from you and carried to your rickshaw or your hotel for a consideration, and the very native who holds your white skirts away from dusty wheels or opens a door expects a monetary quid pro quo. "Nothing for nothing have" is certainly the motto of Colombo.

But we have gone far ahead from Mount Lavinia, one of the most beautifully-situated hotels surely in the world. From the cool shade of its dining-room, all white colonnades, arches, and green foliage, the sea seemed but a foot away, and across the blue, framed by the graceful arched doorway, flitted as we looked a little native boat with a golden-brown sail. The great electric fan whirred above our heads, and ever and again, harshly insistent, came the caw of the crows. These great black birds are a feature of Colombo—the scavengers, and thieves by reputation. One dear old lady painted me a thrilling picture of a breakfast in bed at the Galle Face inside the mosquito curtains, because the crows disputed every mouthful with her! We watched them flying in and out the open windows of the Mount Lavinia Hotel, and the dark shadow and guttural cry were ever present on our journeys through the town. They are here, as well as in other countries, birds of ill omen and evil reputation, and ancient grants of land, discovered in the ruins of the buried cities in the north, end with the threat to the man who does not keep to the terms of the agreement—"May you be born a crow."

The native shops are fascinating but dangerous places unless one has an iron will and a purse whose slender limits enforce economy. The merchants, standing outside, coax and wheedle passers-by into their shops, and a promise to call later is never forgotten. Neither is a face nor a name. Men who, years before, had visited Colombo were recognised and hailed by name. A lady passenger, returning after midnight to the G.O.H. after the dinner and dance at the Galle Face, was accosted, as she stepped from her rickshaw, by a merchant whom she had promised that morning to visit again in order to inspect a beautiful kimono. It was dark, and the lady was bareheaded and in evening dress, and yet

the man, from across the road, knew her instantly. That same kimono was the subject of much excitement. It was really lovely, of rich blue silk, embroidered heavily with pink roses, and, by patient bargaining, the price was reduced by about half. When the merchant finally agreed, he did so with a look of such pained remonstrance and long-suffering reproach as would have melted the heart of a less experienced purchaser. At one crisis he said, "Oh, lady, you break my heart!" with tragic earnestness. Even after the kimono was in the lady's hands, there was still need to watch the wily Oriental. The handsome obi that completed it was stealthily exchanged for another, cheaper and commoner, and it was only by infinite insistence the right one was brought out. We kept our eyes on it as it was wrapped up, knowing that at times they change the article, and, notwithstanding entreaties that it should be sent to our hotel, carried it ourselves. Even in the corridor of the G.O.H. it was not safe, for there was a brief but exciting encounter with a native who wanted to carry it to the owner's room, and it was not till it was safely on board that its possessor breathed freely. The broad verandahs of the G.O.H. and the Galle Face are fascinating places, for there come the fat jewel merchants, the lace and embroidery sellers, and the purveyors of ivory and ebony elephants. Untwisting a little wisp of soft paper, a native comes up to you with an ingratiating smile. He has no wish for you to buy—only to look at his jewels—and before you are aware his gems are in your palm, and he is enlarging on their beauty. It is useless to say you have no money. He retorts you can take the jewel and send the money from London, and he means it. For the Englishman, whether he deserves it or not, has a great reputation for honesty. Of course, the original price is as a rule twice or thrice what he expects to get. One passenger bought for £50 a ruby and diamond necklace offered him at first for £170. The merchant came back and forward constantly to the hotel, gradually lowering his price, and next day, and early in the morning, before breakfast, put into the buyer's hand the velvet case, with a heart-broken look. It is just on the cards the necklace may not be even worth the price given.

There was a paternal and picturesque Cingalese waiter at Mount Lavinia whose ministration will long be remem-

bered for the interest he took in our lunch. He looked absolutely pained when we refused the fish—"best fish in Ceylon"—and insisted on mixing my prawn curry—a speciality of the hotel—on my plate with all the seven little additions necessary. Not one would he leave out, and he watched me with intense interest as I pretended to enjoy it. The mango, too, he cut in the orthodox way, and his face lit up when I decided in its favour. The pawpaw was a failure as an experiment. It has the taste of a fruit that has not quite decided whether it will be a fruit or a vegetable. Morning tea in Colombo is quite a dainty meal. The "boy" sets a table near the bed, and lays on it a tray with teapot and accessories, toast, fruit and jam, and as a rule this is eaten in the cool of the early morning.

But it is not all sunshine and gaiety in Colombo. The city shelters dark spots, where sin and immorality are rife, and where it is still not too safe for a white woman to venture, not because of the natives, but of the "poor whites," the half-bred Portuguese, and all the mixed races. But Colombo has much improved during the last years, and it is rarely now that tourists find any trouble such as used to be common beforetime. It is a busy, bustling place, and at present the most important word in its commercial dictionary is rubber. It is owing to the rubber boom that the town is overflowing, and new companies are being formed daily. Heads are shaken over the situation, and a crash is expected by many. But in the meantime much money is changing hands. The Malwa left Ceylon in the late afternoon, and all crowded the railings to watch the picturesque huddle of houses fading out of sight. Delightful as our little visit had been, we were thankful to get back to the clean, fresh, comparatively cool ship which seemed like home. To the very last the fat merchants had paraded the decks, displaying their wares, and even when the gangway was down, from the catamarans alongside were drawn up goods at sale prices, the money being sent down in a bag. But at last we were free of all the clamour, and were heading for the open sea, straight to Aden. We had time—five days of open sea—to talk and think over our varied experiences of Colombo, and compare, admire, or regret our purchases. They are tangible proof of our peep into Eastern lands, but the memories of its glamour will last longer than they.

CHAPTER III.

# DESOLATION OF ADEN

Aden Light—Perfunctory Toilet—Picturesque Desolation—A Gamut of Colours—Its One Tree—Where Home is—The Salt Hills—British Rule—Native Thieves—Natives and Hospital—A Captive Lion—Glory to Allah—The Natives Coaling—Grotesque Ugliness.

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IT was almost dark when the stewardess tapped at my cabin door and told me Aden light was visible. There was no time for an elaborate toilet, so I bundled up my hair under a scarf, dressed quickly and perfunctorily, and hurried out on deck, to meet other early birds with more or less dishevelled plumage. That is a peculiarity of tropic early rising. The men stroll about in pyjamas—there are a few striped silk one that vie with the sunrise—and do weird Swedish exercises on deck, regardless of admiring feminine audiences, and if a girl possesses a pretty kimono, she has no objection to appearing in it. This morning, however, the view required undivided attention. It was grand. A huge headland ran into the sea, the end of a series of the most extraordinary rocky peaks, jagged like the teeth of an old saw, with here and there an isolated rock, like a great tooth, rising above the others, and breaking the flushed sky-line. There was no detail, and all the coast was deep purple, while the glory of the sunrise, rose and amber, primrose and flame, formed a gorgeous background, and tipped the ripples with colour. The light—its tower still invisible—winked a friendly welcome at us. Notwithstanding deck-washing operations that caused the girls, with shrieks, to mount on seats or gain some dry island above the flood, we watched till the full

dawn showed us rocky cleft and pinnacle, sandy stretches, and great aiguilles—all the picturesque desolation of the entrance to Aden. By that time fully-attired passengers were arriving on deck, and were casting critical eyes at pyjamas and dressing gowns, so it was time to leave.

The entrance to Aden appears to be between two islands, masses of rock, torn and upheaved, in some far-back volcanic outburst, into such forms as one sees in Dore's pictures of the Inferno. In reality, a low-lying land connects the headlands, and beyond is the desert. Those who had planned to go to the Tanks hurried ashore. A few left to explore the town, but more remained on board, and, judging from after-recounted experiences, distance added infinite charm to the quaint, flat-topped buildings, the long streets, and the natives. Aden proper we did not see, but Steamer Point, opposite which the boats lie, abounds in features of interest. The town clusters in a narrow, long line at the foot of magnificent mountains—Shum-Shum, the highest, having a flagpole upon it. These peaks, utterly without vegetation, take on wonderful colours, and are the despair of artists, never looking the same ten minutes together. Purple, gold, bronze, deep red, and the whole gamut of greys and yellows, all are needed on the palette. From the upper rocks, many of which overhang, slant steep slopes of scree to the base, and except one white bungalow, strangely solitary and insistent, there is no sign of human life on the mountains. Long, deep-balconied, flat-topped houses and warehouses alternate with a few red roofs, a white cupola, and some dark brick buildings, and a quaint, pent-house roofed clock-tower stands on a little eminence behind. Near the club is the only bit of green in the town —a row of trees, that look from the deck somewhat like giant asparagus. It is a most precious possession, gained with infinite care and labour. They say in old days one tree only was to be seen at Steamer Point, and the blue-jackets on the men-o'-war, when they came ashore, used to take turns in sitting under it. After the luxuriance of Colombo, the arid stretches of Aden are horrible. And yet the inhabitants do not complain. The officers and their wives live near the point in rows of quaint grey bungalows, which inside are spacious and comfortable, and abound in all the pathetic mementos of distant English homes. One would imagine it to be exile of the cruellest kind for a girl from an

English home—one of a large family—to be sent to Aden, but I talked to such a one, a young bride, to whom all was rose-colour, and who liked her life there. She and her officer husband, both looking absurdly young, had the evening before, starting at sunset, and returning at dawn, climbed Shum-Shum, the great rock-mountain behind the town. From it the views of desert and sierras are magnificent. Of course, the two months' furlough in each year is a compensation for much unpleasantness, but the girl had nothing but praise for place and people, and when asked if there were no gardens, pointed out a place far away on the low sandy shore where a few things were grown and brought into town, beetroot being one of them. The cheery young couple were striking examples of the splendid adaptability of the English race. Signs of the military element are everywhere. As we were entering the harbour, some strange figures were seen on a mound. Some passengers declared they were men, but, on coming nearer we found they were ventilators to a hidden fort. In the rocks, too, behind the town, are masked batteries, and indeed, Aden is said to somewhat resemble Gibraltar.

To our left from the low shore, rise conical hills, brilliantly white in the sunlight. These are the salt-hills. Over the rocky side of the mountain in front runs the walled road—a fine road too—that leads to the Tanks, those prehistoric cisterns that offer such a field for conjecture. Those who drove along the winding up-hill road—that in one place passes through a tunnel whose construction is as vaguely old as the tanks—and who visited the great aqueducts, were duly impressed with the tremendous labour that they were the result of. Even the arid rock-faces and naked peaks that flanked their journey possessed for the artistic a beauty of colouring and a grandeur of form. In bygone days, the guile of an Aden driver was a byword, and strange tales were told of unprotected females being retained among the hills until they gave up all their valuables and money to get back to their steamer. But British rule here, as in Colombo, where the improvement is even more marked, has worked reformation, and our travellers met with civility and as fair-dealing as could be expected when one is an Oriental and the other a European. But still plenty of room remains for improvement in India. There is a girl on board who had a horrible experience up in the hills. She woke up one

morning, deadly sick, to find a hole cut in her mosquito net, her pillow covered with a white powder—a native drug —and all her belongings gone, her jewels, her ball-dresses, everything of value. The thieves—traces were found of three of them—had climbed on the verandah and got in at the window which, as is usual, was wide open. Nothing was ever got back, nor were the thieves discovered, but it is certain that had she waked, or had they known she had a diamond brooch fastening her nightdress, a knife would have been brought into play.

One of the large buildings we see is the hospital, which is managed splendidly. Some time ago—he may be still there—an American doctor was at its head, and he had most interesting experiences wtih the natives. A young girl came with an abscess on her neck, but ran away screaming when she saw the lance produced. Shortly after arrived the chief of her village at the hospital. He was told she could not get better unless the abscess were cut. He asked to be shown the way, and went straight back and performed the operation, successfully, with his own knife.

The tsetse fly has been promptly and successfully grappled with by the hospital authorities. The thing to be chiefly dreaded is some epidemic such as yellow fever, brought from America by the steamers, which might work havoc among the natives, who, in turn, might carry infection and death inland beyond all reach of medical care.

One of the attractions on shore, beside the patient, dusty camels and knots of quaintly-garbed natives, was a real lion, a king of beasts, brought to a sorry pass. He was being washed when he received his guests, and he seemed as averse from ablutions as a Soudanese, for he growled horribly, and showed magnificent teeth when his valet poured the water over him and curry-combed him. Then, at the end of a chain, he was brought upstairs and out on to a balcony where he terrified a small boy passenger out of his childish wits. He wailed loudly, quite agreeing with Bottom that "there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living." The lion had been caught three years before, and was the property of a firm of merchants, who kept him in what most people would think was a very careless fashion.

Arabs selling feathers, tobacco, and baskets, came on board. They are gloomier, more taciturn, less persuasive,

and less easy to bargain with than the Cingalese, but their wares were readily bought, though as regards the feathers an experienced traveller recommended instant and thorough baking for sanitary reasons. On a steamer alongside an Arab was kneeling on a strip of red carpet, turning towards Mecca, and at intervals touching the ground with his forehead. His fellows were working around, cleaning and pulling ropes, sometimes falling over his feet, but nothing interfered with his devotions. At last he rose, and to our intense interest took up his red praying rug, and with a few dexterous twists, converted it into his turban.

Surely there are few lower types of humanity than the natives who do the coaling at Aden. They seem scarcely human,—a squirming mass of black bodies and grimy rags, with the occasional flash of white eyeballs and wonderful teeth. A man as grimy and as half-clothed dispenses justice and injustice with a rope's end constantly, and there is perpetual high-toned chatter as of strange wild animals. A piece of money is thrown from the upper deck, and immediately among the coal-dust is a writhing mass of creatures, snarling and squealing, to be dissipated by the rope's end of the head man, who pockets the money. Once a coin was secured by a gaunt black man, who untied a knot in his grimy waist-cloth, and put the money into it. It was the equivalent of the rustic handkerchief in which the penny for the plate is tied. One huge, bony negro—ugly enough to haunt one—danced a wild fandango at one end of the barge to attract attention and gratuities, and when the coaling was over, all joined together in barbaric cries and rhythmic clapping of hands. But their grotesque ugliness and frank dirt gained for them few pence. We left Aden in the pitiless light of the afternoon sun, and were soon steaming past the gaunt purple cliffs and dreary yellow beaches on our way to Perim and the Red Sea.

CHAPTER IV.

# THE CANAL AND PORT SAID

The Red Sea — Jewelled Suez — Mysterious Craft — A Woman Health Officer—Arabian Nights—The Battleship Ahead—On the Bank—Picturesque Port Said—The Popular Scot—A Toy Tramway—Street Scenes—A Native Juggler.

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CONSTANT change of scene and incident keep monotony and ennui at a safe distance along the P. and O. route from the Antipodes to England. Australia with its continental cities and continental wastes recedes in the ship's wake. Colombo arises in the night like a new constellation, materialises with the dawn, and becomes a memory. Arid Aden and lonely Perim approach and vanish, and we are steaming through the Red Sea. The children are disappointed to find that it is blue. Ahead lie the Canal and Port Said. A glorious moon—which had risen a brilliant yellow from behind the misty hills of Arabia—makes sable and silver of the sea as the Malwa comes to an anchor opposite Suez.

An irregular row of topaz lights, terminating in one flashing ruby, was all we could see of the city. Great were the lamentations over not reaching the port in daylight, but, after some experience of the East, one finds moonlight poetises and beautifies it exceedingly, hiding much that is squalid and tawdry. There were many vessels at anchor near us, dark masses starred with lights, and little ruby and emerald-lit launches darted about us while we waited for the Health Officer. Even this personage was not ordinary in this quaint world, for she was a lady, and—a fact which New Zealanders mentioned with pride—an Aucklander,

Dr. Grace Russell. This was rather disbelieved by some of the passengers until, stepping up from the official launch, followed by two red-fezzed men, came a slight woman in a dark coat and skirt and a hat with a scarf twisted round it. She was tremendously business-like, too, and had little patience with some attempts at frivolous applause during the ceremonial of "passing the doctor"—which is surely somewhat of a farce. Those who had not undergone the ordeal were gravely instructed in their duties by joke-loving friends. They were told, at the sound of the bugle, all tongues were to put out, and some innocent old maiden ladies were considerably relieved when they discovered they had only to rise, when their names were called, and pass through the door where the doctor stood. Some irrepressible spirits started clapping when a well-known or popular name was called, but Dr. Grace Russell would have none of that, and demanded, through the lips of the purser, silence and order. Even though it was about nine o'clock the hawkers came on board with their wares—Turkish delight. silver-embroidered shawls, embroideries, and postcards—and the pretty girls in their dainty evening gowns made a quaint setting for the taciturn, dark Arabs in sombre draperies, who proffered their goods.

We waited for some time for two steamers to emerge from the canal. The soft brilliance of their searchlights as they came nearer and nearer we could see easily. It was nearly midnight before we started. Few passengers stayed up to watch what was perhaps the most wonderful sight of the trip—the entering of the Canal that joins the West to the East.

The narrowness of the Canal struck one forcibly as the steamer noiselessly, except for the throbbing, passed along the buoy-bordered waterway. Scenes from the "Arabian Nights" in finest etching in Indian ink lay on either side, just the fascinating haunts which Haroun al Raschid, on such a night, might have frequented in disguise. Above the soft dado of palms and cypress, or nestling in among the dusky foliage, were flat-topped houses of mother-o'-pearl and silver. Probably in the strong light of day they would have appeared hopelessly garish and weatherworn, but the moon made them mysteriously lovely. Our searchlight revealed an ever-varying cinematograph of houses, banks, shrubberies, until Suez was passed and nothing was

to be seen save the sandy shores and some depressed scrub dotting them. Behind us another huge searchlight came, and looking back we could see nothing but a dazzling glare. But we knew this was at the prow of a great battleship, the Andromeda, on her way to England to recommission. When morning came we saw her huge grey bulk creeping along behind us, with her pennon, extraordinarily long, streaming behind her. Ismailia, picturesque exceedingly, was passed at dawn. Here the isthmus is connected with a host of famous names. In the times of the Pharoahs, the canal was in existence, and it was upon it that Antony and Cleopatra sailed in the golden barque. Traces of this old canal were visible, and were utilised by Lesseps' workmen.

It was midday before Port Said was reached, but the morning was filled with interest. Ever in the panorama that slipped so slowly by was something new. The little trains went puffing fussily on the bank, so close that one could see the red-fezzed and turbaned occupants. From native huts, most primitive and ephemeral, made of a handful of brushwood and a little yellow clay, came tiny naked children and petticoated elders, and from some of the stations, set in a few trees, white women waved their handkerchiefs and aprons to the smiling faces over the railings of the liner. . At a ferry was waiting a crowd of vividly dressed Arabs, and three times we passed a vessel tied up, and interchanged greetings with folk to whom we had never been introduced. Sometimes we passed lakes just separated from the Canal by a narrow strip of sand, and on these sat serried rows of flamingoes, rising in flashes of ivory and melon-pink, as the steamer neared them. Pariah dogs crept down to the edge of the shore and eyed us doubtfully, and some mules and donkeys were engrossed in feeding. We saw no camels, and listened with envy to the passenger—who, at the Caravan-crossing, had once seen seven hundred waiting to be punted over. Mirages were frequent. Along the horizon were found lakes and bordering shores, islands and stretches of yellow sand, and flat-topped houses, so real that it needed strong testimony—generally their disappearance—to their want of substance. Indeed, so bewildered did we become between real and imaginary that when the buildings of Port Said rose up ahead novices refrained from comment until assured it was not another mirage. The Malwa did the trip through

the Canal in thirteen hours, an improvement on the time when it took three days, and the vessel was tied up each night to the bank, while the passengers went for an evening stroll in the desert. The engineer told me of the stoppage caused by the Chatham's going ashore. It was laden with dynamite, and when, later, it had to be blown up, it made a great hole forty feet long in the bank.

Port Said—"the last of Asia, and the first of Europe, where we change our minds, our skies, our clothes"—is a mixture of French civilisation, albeit tawdry and unkempt, and Orientalism. There were the open-air cafes, where men were absorbed in games of dice and dominoes, with their glasses of eau sucree beside them. A few French women, trim, and bare-headed, and black gowned, were seen in the streets, and one caught sight of the shapeless figures of the Egyptian women, their large dark eyes, bright under the pent-house of their head-wrap, Turks, negroes, Jews, Arabs, all mingled in picturesque confusion, and here and there were the quiet, composed resident English—one group of girls and men with tennis-racquets. The streets are dirty, and one needs to walk warily, and the buildings look as if they were made of rejected cards and children's bricks that had been badly treated, so tottery, flimsy, and tawdry are they, with shuttered balconies, which, when open, afforded fascinating glimpses of domestic life. Port Said has a bad name. It is a place where justly a visitor may be "afraid to go home in the dark," but it is improving, and is no longer so lawless or disorderly. Probably, behind those shutters, much wickedness still exists, and certainly dirt and disease are evident in the people. Scarcely a child —and the children lack the plump cuddlesome beauty of the Cingalese—has healthy eyes, and many of the girls and boys look half fed. They pester you to buy—chains, necklaces, spoons, but they lack as a rule the persuasive tongue of the wily Ceylon merchant. Scotchmen will rejoice in the fame in which their nation is held in Port Said, where every tourist is supposed to hail from the Land o' Cakes. A hawker will dash up to a passenger and say: "An hoo are ye, Mester Macpherson, and hoo's Aucher-muchty?" in perfect Scotch. In one instance the man addressed happened to be a Jew, who thoroughly appreciated the joke.

The Port Said tramway is altogether diverting. The width between the rails is absurdly narrow, and the rails

themselves scarcely noticeable in the unevenness of the badly-kept streets. The car itself is antediluvian and rickety and small, driven by a dishevelled Arab, and drawn by one moth-eaten, depressed mule, too afflicted with the sorrow of its lot to even kick. As the car goes along the driver sounds a blast upon the horn, and the populace scatters leisurely.

In every direction there are odd sights. Here two small Arabs bear home the dinner from the cookshop. Nondescript scraps of roast meat—a butcher's shop in Port Said is enough to induce a cannibal to turn vegetarian—float in greasy gravy, surrounded by baked potatoes, and the imps are absorbedly, as they trot along, picking out as perquisites the brownest and most savoury morsels. Near by a hurdy-gurdy man trots along, his instrument being turned by another man who runs behind. Strange grass water-barrels are drawn by dusty mules, and victorias, more or less in disrepair, are driven furiously about by the Turkish coachmen. Tobacco and curio shops are many, but more interesting are the open-fronted restaurants, the bakers' shops with the deliciously brown loaves, and the shop where rows of huge jars of olives and weird, dull-pink, dried cuttlefish are for sale. For those with long purses and artistic tastes there is a shop where treasures of Eastern art are on view, wonderful bronzes and ivories from Japan and embroideries from China. Even when the ship was regained there was much to see, for the upper deck had been converted into a bazaar, and pasengers were haggling blissfully. One old Australian—who was going to England after a sixty years' absence—made a sporting bid for a trayful of jewellery, and was embarrased when his offer was closed with. The Turk called him "Mr. Father," and presented him with a tiny brass mummy for luck as he stuffed the bangles, necklets and belts into his pockets. A French artist did rapid and clever caricatures for five shillings. They were wickedly like, but more appreciated by the onlookers than the victim. A juggler, too, was the centre of a group who watched chickens torn to pieces and put together again, and eggs and corks materialise in the most mysterious fashion. Somewhat of a jester, too, was this conjuror in dust-coloured rags, for he called to attention anyone with a wandering eye, giving her some name such as Mrs. Tommy Dodd, Mrs. Lily Langtry, or Mrs. Gertie Millar!

At last the last trick was played, the last bargain driven, and the ship was cleared and moving out of the port. Beside it was a little boat with some musicians, who played popular airs, and begged for pecuniary return to be thrown into an open and battered parasol. As we left the water-front, we passed in front of a large hall with two sides entirely open to the road. There were men and women rinking, and in front were little tables where groups were playing dominoes and drinking. The last memory of Port Said was the splendid statue of Lesseps on the breakwater. Of great size, it was outlined against the gorgeous crimson of the sunset, its outstretched arm pointing to the Western peoples the pathway of the East.

CHAPTER V.

# BRINDISI TO MARSEILLES

The Coast of Italy—A Forbidden City—Wondrous Panorama—Reggio and Messina—Pathetic Ruins—Scylla and Charybdis—Stromboli—An Impressive Pageant—Perilous Straits—A Rough Night.

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THE coast of Italy seemed to grow out of a turquoise and ivory sea as we neared it. From a delicate violet haze it became a distinct coast-line, low, with serrated edges that meant trees, and soft greens and russets where there was cultivation. Soon the white faces of the houses and the yellow beaches could be seen, and the soft white trail of steam from a passing train. Brindisi had been variously described to us as a "dirty hole," and as a place rich in historical interest, and it was with deep disappointment we heard no one—save those who were going overland—was to go ashore. Immediately, like all forbidden fruit, the city became fascinating, and the house where Virgil is said to have died, and the column that marks the end of the Appian way, the only things that we yearned to see on our trip. However, needs must when the Italian Government, plus the P. and O. Company, decide, and the view from the deck was charming. On the right curved a cliff, ending in a castle fort of great blocks of stone, discoloured and crumbling, of vivid tones of cream and ochre, dazzling against the sapphire sea. The picturesque huddle of the town lay in front, a stately tower rising aloft, and on the left swept a gracious stretch of fair country, vineyards, still russet,

olive groves, densely blue green, and emerald grass, crowning a long sloping terrace to the water's edge. Nestling in a cluster of dark trees was the most charming pink-washed villa. A sudden scurry of rain dimmed the shore and ruffled the harbour. Far towards the south, where the distant land had been deliciously blue, a storm was raging, and for a quarter of an hour zig-zags of lightning alternated with peals of thunder. Soon again came sunshine, and touched into fresh glory the bronze and emerald of vine and turf. Some men from India gloated over the freshness and beauty of the scene. The very solidity of the houses delighted them, after long residence in bungalows, where a nail, driven in the wall, goes right through, and probably disturbs a nest of snakes in transit! The tender left, filled with passengers taking the overland route. Among these were Lord Edward Cecil and Sir Richard Garstin, both personages in the administration of the Suez Canal. The only communication we had with the shore was by means of a bag, which, pulled up, contained postcards, and, let down, held their price. A few boats, with romantic-looking officials in brigandish cloaks and green-plumaged caps, came about, and an Italian doctor paid a brief visit, but that was all of Brindisi we came in near contact with.

The next day was one of enchantment. There was no time to waste on deck games, cards, or work, for the most wonderful panorama was passing. The South Italian coast slipped by, its great snow-peaks now and again emerging from the wreathing clouds, its clustering towns ivory-white in the sunbursts, and its beautiful hills of all tones of green, purple, and russet. So near were we that without the glasses we could see the train creeping along the coast, and the wide rivers, yellow and swollen from recent rains, rushing down between their narrow gorges and widening out as under their bridges they joined and discoloured the blue sea. The wonderful industry of the people was shown in the terraced hills—so steep that hand labour must have been employed—cultivated to their summits with vines and olives in symmetrical rows. With glasses one could even see the caleches waiting at the stations as the train stopped. One little town nestled many hundreds of feet above the coast, in a cosy hollow at the foot of a huge three-peaked aiguille of rock. It, like so many Continental towns, owed

its position to the fear of inroads from robbers and pirates, and with its back against its rock, down which ran a cleft from top to base, it could defy any foe that came a-climbing up the steep approach. The little clustering town, its white church spire highest against its rock that towered above it, and beyond still the great mountains melting into the clouds, made a picture that will long be remembered.

Soon came into view the ruined cities of Reggio and Messina. The former showed still great evidences of the catastrophe in roofless houses, piles of debris, and shells of warehouses. All along the beach were ruins, and long, hideous rows of tiny huts marked the new dwellings of the refugees. A flat-topped corrugated iron hut was another blot on the landscape, but it is to be hoped these are merely temporary. Messina is still a beautiful city, spreading over much country, with lovely villas set far up her background of green hills and stately public buildings. A careless glance would see nothing, but a second showed rows of fine buildings in ruins, great empty places where once fine houses stood, piles of debris everywhere. Here, too, the shock appeared to be felt most along the water-front, where rows of high buildings were broken and deserted—many in actual ruins. Most pathetic were stately country houses, set in lovely old gardens, their walls with huge holes in them, or their roofs partly off, while, of others, mere piles of stone remained, with some chimneys rising from the debris. Even to the very point—the sand-spit where was the famous Charybdis of the ancients—the shock had been terrible, and the very lantern on the stone light tower had a jaunty and insecure tilt. Just across the strait, narrowest here, is the little town of Scylla set above the rock from which it got its name, and which was the alternative terror of the ancient mariner. We took our lunch—such is the advance of civilisation—with Scylla on one side and Charybdis on the other, trusting in Providence—and the Scotch engineer. The only flaw in an altogether enchanting morning had been the refusal of Etna to show itself. Every now and then some anxious and assiduous watcher would imagine he saw a peak or shoulder of the mountain, only to find it was cloud. Our disappointment was all the greater because it had just been in violent eruption.

Stromboli, however, made up for Etna's want of consideration, and for some hours we had glorious views of it;

first as a pale purple cone with its smoke-drift against the horizon, then nearer, showing its fire-scarred sides and cleft top, and nearer still, when the little white houses where the sulphur-workers live stood out clear among the sombre green of the trees that fledge the small cape and hollow at the base. A lonely little village it must be, although, from its situation, scarcely wanting in excitement! Only by scrambling along the beach can the inhabitants reach the town on the other side of the island, and on their right their way is barred by the ever-moving stream of lava that pours down from the crater. Huge volumes of steam came puffing out in quaint shapes, rising in clouds above the cone, and in the setting sunshine the volcano took on glorious tones of bronze, rose, and purple. Next day we passed—in fog, alas, that prevented our seeing anything but a grey loom of land against a paler grey sky—the Straits of Bonifacio, that divide the birthplaces of two great men—Napoleon and Garibaldi. But just afterwards, out of the fog there grew into form, magically and mysteriously, four great battleships, moving in line. They were British, and the leader was a first-class battleship, the Bacchante. With silent majesty they passed along the horizon and disappeared, leaving in the minds of those who saw them a thrilling sense of silent protection and of patriotism. The Straits of Bonifacio are not without peril. Our chief engineer, twenty years ago, met with one of his quartette of wreck experiences there in the P. and O. Tasmania, when twenty-nine lives were lost, the captain being among the drowned. It says much for those in command that all the women and children, numbering over 100, were saved, even though it was rough weather and in the gloom of early morning.

A tempestuous night was the prelude to Marseilles. The good ship groaned and creaked, and almost squealed in protest against the great waves that dashed over her and buffeted her sides, but she rode through the storm bravely. Some nervous passengers—who had just heard by wireless of the wreck of the Pericles—said good-bye to the Malwa with great pleasure. Of Marseilles—that ancient port—more hereafter.

CHAPTER VI.

# MARSEILLES TO LONDON

Romance and Poverty — Fascinating Shops — Courtesy and Kindness—A Charming Friend—P. & O.—A Famous Restaurant — Little Cafes — Costly Fare — Women and Chiffons — A Striking Dish — The Wharves—Gibraltar—Along the Coast—The Palace of Penha—First Glimpse of England.

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MARSEILLES—my first taste of Europe—for Brindisi was only enjoyed from afar—proved altogether fascinating. It is a city of contrasts, of splendid buildings and the most squalid hovels, of riches and poverty, luxury and misery. Everywhere one sees settings for Stanley Weyman's novels, narrow alleys with tall stone houses on either side, so close together and so high that only at noon can a blink of sunlight pierce the grimy dusk below, where half-clad children play and quarrel, and unkempt women gossip. Nine and ten-storied are some of these houses, and many have seen happier and more prosperous times, for they still have traces of elaborate carvings and remains of exquisite iron balconies. Looking up some of these dark alleys—which seem the very places for an assassination—one sees a paved court-yard, centred by a ruined fountain and surrounded by the same tall stone houses with their many balconied windows, secretive, shuttered, and mysterious. Those near the quays are now, apparently, given up to the very poorest class, and from windows where famous belles and nobles may have leant, protrude poles with the scanty family washing hanging on them, of such colour and scarcity as would horrify a New Zealand housewife. The town itself, too, is a medley of narrow and wide streets.

Some roads are so narrow that the tramcar monopolises all but the sidewalks, and yet in these are to be found fascinating shops with romantic names; one hat shop was called "Le Desir de Dames," and there, for five francs or for ten —only two prices—one could buy quite smart French chapeaux. The confectioners' windows were marvellous arrangements of fish, fruit, flowers, and vegetables—all in fondant or chocolate—and the French pastry was indescribably delicate and dainty. There were so many cooked provision shops that the average Marseilles matron must surely stint her work in her kitchen. One window contained rows of little brown and white pipkins with cooked savoury messes, of anchovies, rabbit, sardines, oysters—each daintily garnished and duly labeled. At the back was a pile of delicious golden-brown rolls. Stalls on the pavement were piled with shellfish of every kind, aranged deftly with an artistic eye to colour and effect, and on other stalls, all sorts of vegetables were for sale.

The tradespeople were civility itself, and did not force their wares. Indeed, the courtesy and kindness of all were noticeable. Even on our first tram ride, the working men and women, quick to discover we were strangers, took a friendly interest in our well-being. They told us what to pay, where to go, and in the intervals talked about us freely and shrilly. When we rose to get out at a place they thought was not central enough to begin our sightseeing, there was an excited chorus of "Non! non!" and we had to sit down again till our self-imposed guides allowed us to leave. One old man—very imposing in fur-lined overcoat and top hat—actually got out of one tram to put us into another, and a fascinating young Frenchman, with charming manners, stopped me, as I began my faltering question, with, "Madame, I spik ze Englese."

Perhaps the most charming person we met was an old French lady. She was dressed in shabby black, and had on her scant grey locks an archaic cap of chenille and bugles with strings that tied under her chin. Over her shoulders she wore a woollen crossover. Her face was a yellow network of tiny wrinkles, but her fine black eyes were bright and clear, and her expression was most serene, while, at the suspicion of a joke, a brilliant smile broke up all the wrinkles. She carried a large purple and yellow silk handkerchief carefully, and when she caught us looking at the

mysterious bundle, she chuckled gleefully, and undoing the knots, showed, nestling among fresh grass, four little guinea-pigs. She regarded them lovingly, and was as delighted as a proud mother when we found suitable adjectives to express our admiration. A smart Frenchwoman on her other side was not so sympathetic, but shrank away from the bundle, and the old woman laughed merrily and patted her precious pets consolingly. A peppermint lozenge cemented our acquaintance, and she poured out rapid information as to buildings and streets. Only once did her cherry old face grow sad, when a funeral, the coffin hung with hideous artificial wreaths of purple flowers, passed. She crossed herself and closed her eyes as the procession filed by. Nothing would content her but she must see us safely on the right tram to the quay, and so we waited on the footpath—she, I and my friend, and the guinea-pigs. Such simple courtesy and delightful sense of humour are rarely met with, and I felt certain our old lady's ancestors must have lived in one of those grand old balconied houses, and rustled in velvets and brocades.

Apropos of directions in a foreign tongue, two or our passengers had an amusing experience. They told their coachman in French to drive to the P. and O. Company. After some time the carriage stopped before a large establishment, and their polite driver opened the door and ushered them into a piano shop! They had to explain painfully they desired to go to the Peninsular and Oriental Company's wharf!

Far down the Corniche-road—that wonderful highway made by the Romans—there is a world-renowned restaurant, said to be the Ritz of Southern France. There kings and queens and hosts of minor personages have dined, looking out from the many French windows of the salle-a-manger on a wondrous view. Round the coast curves the narrow white road, with its low stone wall, beyond which the waves of the Gulf of Lyons dash, white-foamed against the pebbled beach. Here and there, like nests against a cliff, cling little cafes and restaurants, where, on summer evenings, the Marseilles folk can enjoy the sea, the music, and their wine or coffee. Each cafe has a name—one is called "Le Chalet du Bien-Etre"—and on rock platforms outside the picturesque buildings are set chairs and tables. On the other side of the road, some wonderfully beautiful villas

nestle in among luxuriant gardens that climb up a steep hillside. From one point in the road can be seen the Isle d'If, with its castle famed in history. Who has not read of the man with the iron mask? There he was imprisoned, there Dumas placed his Count of Monte Cristo, and the old ruins must know of many tragedies.

But to return to our lunch. The great, many-windowed facade of the Palace Hotel stands on a high cliff, and in front of the entrance are set chairs and tables, and over a low stone parapet one can look down a dizzy height to the road below. The visitor approaches on the other side by doubly-curving steps, decorated with fountains, statues, and palms. The dining-room is not large, but elaborately decorated in Empire style in tones of pale tan, gold, and green, with intricate embossed curves and arabesques that surround large panels on the ceiling, where blue sky and clouds are painted. The only pictures on the walls—Vive l'Angleterre—are those of the King and Queen of England. The bill for our simple, three-course luncheon—delicious fried sole, omelette with asparagus tips, and chocolate souffle—was enormous, but presumably the elaborate decorations, the associations and the prestige, had to be paid for, and certainly the meal, delightful as it was, was the smallest part of the entertainment. Charming music was played by a string band on the corridor, the nimble waiters skipped about under the eagle eye of the manager, and people came and went, each one of interest to us. The women were so smart, but all so frankly artificial as regards complexion. They did not attempt to deceive with the opaque pallor of their faces and their darkened eyebrows and reddened lips, but they had a curious fascination, especially when to the piquant face was added a perfect figure, perfectly frocked. Nearly all were in tailor-mades of exquisite cut, little trimming, and dark tints—prune, blue, garnet—and the long slim lines were accentuated in every way. The hats, on the whole, were small, but one very smart woman wore a large black velvet Napoleon hat, the wide brim turned sharply in front and behind, with rosettes, and a strap of dull pink velvet, that also covered the crown and upper brim. Another girl, of wondrous pallor, scarlet lips, and heavy-lidded dark eyes, had her hair brought in flat bands over her ears, and wore a turban, pure and simple, of swathed purple silk, with a little bunch of white feathers

towards the back. This was set at such an angle as to conceal her right ear and almost touch her shoulder. It sounds bizarre, but it was curiously attractive. Worn by anyone but a French woman, probably it would have been appalling! The French dishes were novel. A waiter darted up with a long silver dish containing an omelette, with a dramatic gesture dashed rum over it, struck a match, and impressively lit the spirit. Then reverently, but with haste, he carried the foaming omelette to its appointed table. Strawberries, of lovely size and colour, were ranged in rows in boxes, and the salads were most extraordinary blends of colours and ingredients.

I have written much, and yet said nothing about Notre Dame—the Cathedral that so impressively, on its rock-pinnacle, dominates Marseilles. From it a wonderful view can be gained, and crowds of passengers made a pilgrimage up to it. We found the life of the city itself more fascinating. The wharves are tremendously extensive, and ships of every nationality lie at them. Forests of masts and funnels bristle for miles along the waterfront, and, by night, those narrow streets, bordered by tall houses, near the quays, must be full of possible adventure and men of many conflicting nationalities. The Malwa's passage in and out of the labyrinth of vessels was fascinating. At first there seemed no space at all to get in, but two little tugs set to work—on either side—and, with judicious persuasion, guided the great liner, towering above them, first to its haven, and later to where it could start on its own steam for Gibraltar. The Rock—which resembles closely a lion couchant, guarding the gates of the Mediterranean—is of magnificent outline, and one comes upon it with dramatic suddenness. On the peninsula clustered the white town, and on the left, on the green terrace below the purple hills, lay Algeciras, exquisitely peaceful and picturesque. Men-o'-war, large steamers—including the Ophir eastward bound—and a bevy of steam yachts and smaller craft, were all about us. But a rough sea and limited time made landing a doubtful pleasure, so few left for the shore. The apes on the Mount are too shy to venture into sight, the fortifications were closed owing to some military operations, the shops were not worth seeing, and everything seemed in favour of remaining on the Malwa. One would have liked to have seen the trained dogs smuggling tobacco across

the boundary into Spain, but it was not to be, and by midday the Malwa was speeding towards the Bay of Biscay. Gibraltar, by the way, was in a state of siege, and every night there were attacks by land and sea. The night before we arrived half the crockery in the town was smashed, owing to the guns, and the other half was set on the floors for fear of further disaster. The evening we left the big guns were to be fired, and the consequences were awaited with considerable anxiety. One hears that the War Office and the Admiralty were to receive shortly a number of bills for broken dishes! The Malwa took away from Gibraltar Admiral Hotham—a bluff, weather-worn burly man—a retired P. and O. captain, Seton-Karr, the big-game hunter who visited New Zealand some years ago, a large contingent of military men, and a sprinkling of titled folk.

The African coast is very impressive, great cliffs forming gateways to charming green valleys and upland grassy country—just the land for sheep, declared an Australian. Beyond, tower huge purple mountains, Apes' Hill the highest peak. Ceuta, a huddle of white and red houses, lies on the coast. But it was those great green valleys—so unlike one's idea of Africa—that were most impressive.

Very lovely, too, was the coast of Portugal, as we sailed along in the historic waters that had borne the ships of Columbus, Drake, and Nelson. The mouth of the Tagus was distinctly seen, and one of the heights to the north was crowned with the beautiful towers of the Summer Palace of the King of Portugal, Penha, its copper roofs gleaming in the fitful sunshine. It is magnificently situated on a little hilly peninsula, high above the lovely town of Cintra, and surrounded by glorious gardens and forests. A passenger who had been there described the situation and view as unrivalled, but the palace itself a trifle overladen with decoration, and lacking somewhat in antique funiture, though the tapestries and stamped leathers were magnificent. He had been asked to Windsor, to the performance given there in honour of King Manuel, and was much impressed with his boyish gaiety and charm. King Manuel sat, at supper, beside Queen Alexandra, and appears, when sitting, so small that she seemed a head taller. At this supper—a gorgeous repast, in keen contrast to the frugal refreshments of Queen Victoria's entertainments—all the splendid gold plate made a dazzling show. The men were

expected to wear knee-breeches ending in large bows at the knee, white waistcoats, dress coats, and shoes with bows—a picturesque variation of modern dress clothes.

On Friday morning the Malwa passed the Eddystone lighthouse, quaintly white in a waste of grey sky and greyer sea. England—our first peep—grew out of the mist a little later, a lovely cape, with rose-red cliffs, red tilled fields, and woods creeping down to the yellow beaches. There, among the trees, was set the white castle of the Earl of Mount Edgecumbe, whose nephews live in Auckland. The steamer passed along the South Coast of England, which was almost hidden by the envious mists. The wind was biting, and the sky and sea were coldly grey, and altogether the prospects of fine weather seemed dubious. But one lady, who appeared on deck in a green oilskin bathing cap—plus, of course, the ordinary garments—carried her pessimism too far. Our voyage was over, and no one grieves. Even "doing nothing in long pleasant intervals, with meals for commas and nights for periods," palls after a time, and those of us to whom England is an unvisited land have already felt its glamour, when Devon's rose-red cliffs and tree-crested capes grew out of the grey horizon.

CHAPTER VII.

# GLIMPSES OF LONDON

Leafless Trees—Buckingham Palace—Daffodils and Fog—A Cheerless Approach—The Flower Girl—Breathing Spaces—Love of Flowers—London Spring-cleaning—Nell Gwynne's House—The Duke of St. Albans—Waterlow Park—Cromwell's House—A Woman's Club—Courteous Guards—The Beloved "Bobby."

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TOO early for England! So we were told by folk who, gathering their gear, hurried off from the Malwa to the Riviera and Italy. But New Zealanders should—if they can—always arrive here to see the spring. They should come when the trees look absolutely dry and dead, and watch the magic of their resurrection. Londoners smiled at my delight in the leafless trees, which embroidered all the distances with the delicate sepia and umbered fretwork of their branches. The form of each is so stately, and through masses of them can be seen blue distances that are invisible in summer. Thus I gained a charming glimpse of Buckingham Palace that soon will be hidden by leafy screens. Then, too, one can watch the magic of the spring here. Even since I came—only a week ago—the trees are hanging "all their leafy tassels out." A mist of green is flushing the elms, and the oaks are budding golden-brown. On the commons the blackthorn is pearled with buds, and the gorse—much smaller and less glorious in colour than ours—is abloom. From the top of a 'bus, lovely glimpses are caught of the parks. One gloomy afternoon—when hot tea and toasted crumpets seemed the only desirable things in life—we rode along the edge of the Green Park. The fog blurred all the landscape, and the leafless trees, in delicate vistas of grey, melted into the distance. Over the pond lay a blanket of fog, from which the brilliant green of the grass gradually

grew until, close at hand, it was vividly startling in contrast to the huge, dark trunks that rose from out its soft setting. A host of golden daffodils starred the turf, thousands and thousands of blossoms, and the harmony of green and gold, grey and umber, viewed from the top of the 'bus, was altogether lovely.

However, a traveller arriving at Tilbury must expect to have her ideals of the beauty of England rudely shattered. Apart from the pandemonium of the Customhouse sheds and the anxiety over luggage, the special train that takes her from the chill and the discomfort to the warmth and welcome of a home or a hotel, is the slowest about London. It stops on every pretext. We wisely refrained from comment. Had we said what we thought, the English family in the same carriage might have been annoyed. As it was, they permitted themselves to be sarcastic over the eccentricities of their railway. One of the many stopping-places was opposite a field where some boys were playing rounders, and the remark was made that we stayed to watch the game. Then rain came on, and when another pause followed, the man of the party asserted the driver was putting the cover on the engine! The country from Tilbury to London, too, is not inspiriting, but grey, gloomy, and sparsely strewn with buildings, a sorry introduction to the excitement and picturesqueness of the city.

At present many of the streets are gay with flower baskets and barrows, piled high with glorious roses, wonderful Neapolitan violets, masses of daffodils, wall-flower, and primroses, and sheaves of white lilies and May-blooming tulips. They are all arranged with taste, in zones of colour, and above their beauty rises the head of the flower-girl, such a contrast to the flower-girl of our fancydress dances! She is generally a frowzy, and often fat, old woman, with a dissipated black bonnet and a shawl, and a general air of having slept out all night in Covent Garden, which, presumably, is possible. However, one wants to buy the flowers, not the vendor, although one of our passengers was eager to take home to New Zealand the whole show of a coster—neat barrow piled with flowering plants, the most charming little donkey, and the man himself in regulation velveteen and pearl buttons. He offered a price for "the whole cabuse," as he called it, but the peripatetic

merchant regarded him with cheerful contempt, mixed with pity, and wondered whether he was an American millionaire or a lunatic.

It is strange how much green there is about London. The strips of garden most houses possess are tended with care. The houses are nearly all at present covered with a dingy fretwork of dead creepers. Soon they will be glorious with the trailing green of Virginia creeper, or the purple wisteria. Already the crimson flowers of japonica may be noticed embroidering many brick houses from floor to roof, and ivy everywhere covers ugly outlines. Even in the poor quarters, where squalid shops and shabby tenements crowd upon one another, a magnificent tree may now and then be seen, rising like a glory of green from out the grime and poverty, or a broken-down building may be beautified by a luxuriant covering of some creeper. The window-boxes of the larger houses—which are at present in curl-papers, society not having come to town—are being filled with flowers, wonderfully tended and arranged, a dwarf yellow broom being largely in favour. One particular charming residence boasted window-gardens of hyacinths and primroses, shielded by curving glass from the outer air and wind. But as yet these additions to London houses are not in their full beauty, and ladders and paint-pots are the usual appendages. Probably these houses are renovated every spring, for in London the grime and dirt that gather on buildings are indescribable, giving an appearnce of age that is quite deceptive. It is wise to be silent until one knows, sometimes in London, and so avoid an attitude of reverent admiration before a building that looks as old as the Restoration, but which is a mere infant of fifty summers.

There are, however, plenty of authentically older places for a New Zealander—fresh from ephemeral residences of wood and corrugated iron, with no associations and no beauty—to be charmed with. Such is Nell Gwynne's house in Highgate, a suburb of London, somewhat far away, but full of historical interest, and so elevated that the sundial in its park is on a level with the dome of St. Paul's. I was taken to Nell Gwynne's house on Sunday afternoon—a grey, quiet day, with sudden stealthy gleams of sunshine, that glorified the beautiful gardens where Charles II. and the charming actress used to dally. Lauderdale House—it belonged to the Duke, but was lent by him to the mon-

arch—is two-storied, with the first floor slightly overhanging. It is of rough cast, with small windows, some bay-shaped, and many opening out on the terrace, from which it commands a lovely view beyond its wide grounds. Inside, one can see a scrap of Nell's marble bath. Evidently she had advanced ideas, which some Londoners of to-day might be instilled with advantageously. So, certainly, would think an indignant but cleanly New Zealander who is paying eight shillings every day for the ablutions of himself and his family! It is from the windows of this house—so says legend—that Sweet Nell held out her baby son as the King was passing by, and declared that if His Majesty did not give him a name she would fling the child down. Charles dubbed him the Duke of St. Albans. Truly the two lovers had a pleasant place to stroll in, for the gardens abound in wide stately walks, magnificent trees, a great pool, in whose still, silver waters were reflected the banks golden with daffodils, and stone steps ending in little pillars crested with stone eagles, battered with age and weather. A great brick wall was draped with ivy, and out of its thickness was scooped a little niche in which was set a seat. The gardens are now a public park, given by Waterlow to Highgate, and on fine days the people flock in thousands to hear the music and enjoy the flowers and the fine view. A number of old women, in a uniform of checked grey shawl, little black bonnet, and black dress, were strolling about admiring and commenting cheerily. These were from the workhouse, and, though New Zealand is fortunate in not needing such institutions, the old dames certainly looked well fed and contented.

Opposite Nell Gwynne's house—its stern flat red brick front in as keen a contrast to Nell's quaint residence as were the owners themselves—is Cromwell's house, built for his son-in-law, Ireton, and now used as a hospital for children. Just along the wall that bounds Waterlow Park, a white lintel stone may be noticed by a keen eye, set into the bricks. Above it is a tablet setting out that this is all that is left of the house of Andrew Marvell, wit, poet, and dramatist! Still one more interesting relic we passed, the milestone where Dick Whittington slept on his way to London, and where he heard the bells prophesying his coming fortune. It is inscribed and railed off, and was decorated with half-a-dozen loafers, who were waiting for the publichouse

doors to open, so our interest had to be somewhat fleeting.

A visit to a women's club—the Lyceum—was noteworthy. It is a splendid building, overlooking St. James's Park, and, sitting in the fine diningroom, from the great bay windows one sees nothing but vistas of trees and green grass, while the birds perch fearlessly on the sills. It might be a country house, far from the noise and grime of London. Miss Wintle, secretary of the Victoria League, was the speaker of the afternoon, and made a most eloquent plea to further her newspaper scheme to supply lonely ranchmen, lumbermen, and back-block settlers with news of the Empire. It met with generous support from those present, among whom were Lady Stout, Mrs. Downie Stewart, Mrs. Corney, late of Suva—with her came Miss Thurston, daughter of the late Governor of Fiji—and Mrs. Lindsay Miller, who writes under the name of Mary Gaunt, and whose latest book was unnecessarily—so most think—censured, and is consequently a huge financial success. At the meeting was a very noticeable person, with short grey curling hair, strong features, and a kindly, humorous expression—the head of the College for Training Women for the Colonies. A tour through the rooms showed how well London women look after themselves. The billiard-room and library were empty, but the smoking-room, tea-room, and lounges were crowded, and men were being entertained in numbers. Many of the women were smoking, and the sight of one quiet old lady puffing away was unusual, and a trifle surprising, for she must have been brought up in an age when such things were anathema. However, I was told that a few women journalists—who are evidently the most advanced and daring—enjoyed their cigars, and, later on, a man recounted that he had seen some women—visitors, but not members—smoking pipes. At the Lyceum there are bedrooms for members, a room full of exquisite needlework and art work by members on exhibition for sale, a little art gallery where a painter can show pictures, and a luxurious Silence Room for reading or writing. Footmen in neat liveries, lifts, a gorgeous hall-porter, and a dapper buttons to open carriage doors and hold a large umbrella over smart hats, all are in evidence at the club, which is, I hear, justly popular and prosperous.

The courtesy and civility of the London officials—in spite of the whirl and rush in which they move—are striking. My

first experience was of an old white-bearded guard at Waterloo Station, who looked after me with quite paternal interest, and seeing the labels on my trunks, welcomed me to London. He was a trifle mixed up in his geography, and thought New Zealand a sort of suburb of Australia. He had been out in Australia forty years ago, and was somewhat disappointed when I told him I had only read of the Kelly gang, whom he had known personally. He clung to the carriage door, and confided to me that if he were younger he'd be off to the colonies. England was no place for a working man since the Boer War. But, courteous as the railway officials are, it is the London policemen who win all hearts. They are quite the most charming men in the city, and there is absolutely no need for anybody to go astray when one is near to guide and advise. They must be asked thousands of questions in a day, but all are answered with infinite patience and politeness. They are so good to look at too, stalwart, handsome, and well-groomed, of most impressive size and dignity. I had always wished fate had made me a leader of an orchestra, and last week I heard Henry Wood conduct marvellously his orchestra in the Queen's Hall, and was much impressed; but really there is more compressed power in a London "bobby." Nothing can exceed the dignity and grace with which he stops the traffic—lumbering 'buses, puffing motors, splendid carriages, and huge drays—to let the foot passengers across. Sometimes he actually leads you over, and I got quite a thrill the first time a policeman caught my elbow and conveyed me to a haven of safety from the roaring turmoil of Piccadilly. There is one man at the Waterloo Station who is known far and wide for his good looks and his delightful courtesy. Girls are said to run the risk of losing their trains to ask him futile questions and see him smile, and residents always show him off proudly to new-comers. Only once since I came have I seen a policeman looked undignified, but two frivolous girls were stroking his chin and making rude enquiries as to his last shave! When he caught my eye he blushed and stood at painful attention as the giggling girls scurried away. A quaint story was told me of a policeman who was accosted by a Scotch lassie who said, "I want the Guildhall." "You can have it, miss," he said politely. "It's no use to me!"

CHAPTER VIII.

# LONDON SNAPSHOTS

Old Tyburn—A Popular Amusement—Old Roman Road—A Cheery Undertaker—Buxton—The Queen's Rheumatism—Poole's Caverns—A Busy Lad—Bluebells.

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I AM living in a London street near Hyde Park, a street of neat-windowed and trim-doored boardinghouses—quiet, clean, and eminently respectable. One would never dream of Romance in connection with the uninteresting vicinity. But it is redolent of history—for this was Tyburn, and not far away stood the Tyburn Tree, the grim triangle where suffered so many. The place was fixed on because it was on the highway to Oxford and quite out of London. The condemned were brought in carts from Newgate, presented with a bouquet of flowers at St. Sepulchre's Church, and given a bowl of ale at St. Giles. Then the cart was driven under the gallows, the noose adjusted, and the victim left hanging. Sometimes it was a quarter of an hour before death ensued, and several recovered after they were cut down. It was a public spectacle, and, as I stood on the spot, I tried to level all the high houses, and throng the space with thousands of spectators. Pepys' favourite diversion was a hanging, his next was the theatre, and though generally he came away disappointed with the latter, he always seemed satisfied with the former. To the jaded palates of those frivolous days, when Pleasure reigned supreme, the sight of a struggle for death was infinitely diverting, and all the morbid details fascinating. And the chief actors often rose to the occasion. One, Jonathan Wild, even picked the parson's pocket on his way to the gallows—just to keep his hand in.

He stole a corkscrew—an indispensable appurtenance to the clergymen of those days! Perkin Warbeck and Jack Shepherd—who had a record attendance of 200,000—died here, and here were buried with obloquy the bodies of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton, their heads being set on poles at Westminster. Yet such is the whirligig of Time that the great Protector's statue now stands, a magnificent guardian, in front of the Houses of Parliament. It was to Tyburn that Earl Ferrers, in his wedding suit, took his last drive, leaving Newgate in his own landau and six horses, and meeting his ignoble death with calm philosophy. Not so long ago the iron balconies still remained from which the sheriffs used to watch the executions. Not far away is the Edgeware Road, now a wide, busy, thoroughfare with many shops. But it, too, is interesting, because it follows unswervingly the old Roman road to St. Albans, and where 'buses and taxi-cabs now rumble and snort the Roman legions rode along. In the damp gloom of one afternoon I came suddenly upon a brilliant house here. It was painted a spotless ivory white, with railings and decorations of vivid vermilion, and it positively gladdened the landscape. Someone with an Oriental love for colour must live there, I decided, and actually crossed the road to see. Over the window was "Funeral Furnisher and Monumental Mason!" Whether the mourner would feel aggrieved or cheered by the artful alliterations and the hilarious decorations, it is hard to say, but it was certainly a very grateful bit of brightness.

One week I spent at Buxton, the well-known sanatorium up among the Derbyshire fells, going, not because I needed the waters, but to see fresh country and gain new experiences. My friend, who had been there before, did undergo a course of peat baths—thick, brown, and of much tonic virtue—alleging that she might have rheumatism if she did not take them! There are hundreds of cripples about Buxton and files of invalids in bath-chairs sun themselves, or gather into knots and discuss Roosevelt's latest vocal bomb, or their fresh symptoms. But, as well, there are crowds of visitors who come for the pleasure they gain in the great hydros that are built in the town, and for the clear fresh air, the fishing and the golf. It is not always easy to distinguish between the invalids and the pleasure-seekers. I heard a lady say to a man, who was enquiring anx-

iously after her husband, "He's so depressed. He tossed about all night." I felt entirely sympathetic until she added, "You see he never won a single game yesterday. He simply couldn't drive!" These immense places are most luxurious. Where we stayed there was a glorious ballroom, delightful music afternoon and evening, amusements of all kinds, and a crowd of more or less interesting folk, who wore smart frocks and evening clothes at dinner, and were pleasant and sociable. Buxton is historical, for the Romans used the baths there, as relics of coins and weapons testify, while the Roman roads are still in evidence. Later on Mary Queen of Scots came there to get rid of her rheumatism. It is difficult to connect such a commonplace complaint with such brilliancy and beauty. But as proof of her visit a great stalactite in Poole's Caverns—into which we penetrated half a-mile, the infant Wye whimpering in a tiny channel beside us—is called Mary's Pillar and marks the place she reached. The cave, or series of caves—for fissures extend in all directions—was the hiding-place of Poole, the highwayman, who secreted his spoils there, and who at last was hanged. It rather spoils the romance of the place to have the guide turn on gas-lamps as he precedes you, but it is infinitely safer and of course the wonders would be invisible otherwise. Even as it is, one hurries after the leader with an uneasy feeling in one's ankles, for fear some prehistoric monster should stretch out from a dark opening a grisly claw and haul you to his lair. Bones have been found far in the caves, as well as Roman coins and scraps of pottery. Except for safety, the dark dampness of the cavern seems to have been a poor exchange for the loveliness without, great trees rich in golden-green foliage, and velvety stretches of brilliant turf right up to the grey stone walls. Stone here is much in evidence, and the purple-grey cliffs are in wonderful harmony with the vivid verdure of spring. The railway journey, after the grey gloom and huddle of London is left behind, is enchanting, for the train slips along through beautiful country, meadows golden with buttercups, threaded with silver ribbons of streams, widening here and there to calm pools, in which are reflected great May trees, like Japanese carvings in ivory and coral, and lovely laburnums, whose yellow blossoms touch the water. Further away rise curving uplands crowned with woods, with perhaps a

peep of some grey historic house among the trees. It is most restful and peaceful. No one seems in a hurry, the boy calling the cows, the girl loitering along with her milk-pail, the ploughman turning up the rich brown soil, the very golfers and the fishermen move leisurely, as if there was time enough and to spare. Even our train seems to have followed their example, for it, too, loiters, and we arrive half-an-hour late. But the trip has been too pleasant to complain of such a trifle. The third-class carriage is more comfortable than our first-class in New Zealand. It is cushioned softly, with large windows, a table that can be set up at will, a bell to order tea, and heating apparatus ready at a touch. I got my tea at Derby—a neat tray daintily set out even to a tiny covered pot of cream the size of a large thimble, and the enjoyment of it lasted several miles, for the tray can be carried on. The passengers, too, are always interesting, and I was much amused with a prim schoolboy, who, as soon as he sat down, took out his crochet—a strip of rather elaborate design! He ate chocolates while he worked, with probable disastrous effect to the crochet.

It was delightful to turn one's back on London, sorrowful and gloomy and dank with driving showers of rain, and get into the country among the fields and woods. I went one day to Thatcham, a quaint little village beyond Reading, delightfully picturesque and old-fashioned. On either side stretch wide upland commons and lovely woods, where one, at this time of the year, can wade ankle-deep in bluebells. Never could I have imagined such a royal largesse of blossoms as spring has cast here. In the hazel copse, under the delicate green, silver, and umber of the trees, the ground is covered with flowers, and, bending down, they are to be seen reaching far away, like a blue mist, delicately lovely. You can gather them in clothes-baskets, and none would be missed, and their fresh loveliness gladdens London streets and brings pennies into many empty pockets, for tramps pick them for the market; and we found what looked like a bed of fern and leaves in the copse, where some man had slept in order to wake early and get the blossoms. Of course, these woods are not public property, and those who gather flowers stand a chance of being chided by the keeper. But as a rule it is allowed. Dogs, however, are accursed, and in the country, therefore, one's dog is apt to mysteriously

disappear, never to be heard of again. He has met the fate of many of his kind by the gun of the keeper, who gives him decent burial in the woods where he was discovered trespassing. That seems so strange to colonials.

But other treasures lie around us besides the airy bluebells, the stellaria, delicate anemone, Solomon's seal, and primroses in masses, and every step, tread we ever so carefully, is on purple violets, vivid but scentless. Bright blue forget-me-not, too, is discovered, and our basket is brimming over before we come out of the wood on to the breezy uplands of the common. From here a wonderful view of blue hills, undulating meadows framed in trim hedges, and wood-crested ridges can be obtained. Here and there, nestling among their trees and shrubberies are beautiful houses, and even more picturesque are the farms that are set in the dimples around the outskirts of the common. These are held by ancient right from the three ladies of the manor, to whom every year the tenants pay a tribute rent. This takes place in a little inn near by, and some tenants bring a penny, some a goose, and some a lighted candle—according to the conditions of their leases. On the way to Thatcham are some wonderful flower-farms of Sutton's—carpets of gold, blue, crimson, and rose blossoms, in a vivid patchwork. Near the railway, also, is a delightful old red brick house—a moated grange, where Cromwell and his soldiers quartered on their way to the battle of Newbury.

CHAPTER IX.

# THE KING'S DEATH

Heartless Spring—The Midnight Call—Pathetic Mourning—A Smart Dressmaker—A Historic Fitting-Room—A Brilliant Spectacle—An Old-time 'Bus—Amusement or Instruction—His Teddy—The Kaiser's Plans—Ally Sloper.

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AS I am writing London is plunged in gloom, for the King lies dead in Buckingham Palace, and the city mourns his loss. There is no music in the streets; people—most of them already in mourning—go about quietly, and speak in subdued tones. The beauty of the spring seems only to make more poignant the sense of loss. The bursting leaf-buds and the masses of vivid colour in the flower-beds in the park are almost heartlessly brilliant when he who had loved London so well, and who had done so much to make it more beautiful, was lying still, blind to its fairness. As an old man said to me a few hours after the news became known, "It's cruel 'ard, mum. 'E'd got through the bad winter, and now the summer's 'ere, 'e was cut off like this!"

I shall never forget when first the news reached me. All the day before the air had been rife with rumour, and people went about with anxious faces. At a dinner that evening little had been spoken of save the King's illness, and each added his quota of heavy tidings to the last gloomy bulletin. No one had the heart to be amusing or to be amused, and the remembrance of the sick-bed at the Palace filled up all the pauses. It was early—for London—when I went home, and I had been asleep for some hours, when I

woke suddenly with a voice ringing in my ears. Again and again it called from the darkness of the street, "The King's Death! The King's Death!" Across the silence the dreadful cry fell like a thunder-clap, and was followed by a moan of wind and a spatter of rain against the window-panes. It was about two o'clock, but instantly the quiet street wakened to life. Doors and windows were flung wide, eager voices called for the specials, men rose, dressed, and went out to gain further tidings, and carriages and cabs dashed about. And still up the street went that chanting voice—resonant, insistent—uttering the fateful words. It was a grim awakening, and it will be long before I forget the cry in the darkness.

And when, in the forenoon, one went into the city, already signs of grief were universal. A little shop-girl, when she heard the news, hastily slipped into a doorway, and tearfully pulled the roses out of her hat. The very crossing-sweepers had scraps of black at their throats, and wisps of crape fluttered from the whips of the 'bus-drivers. It was marvellous what a change had taken place in the shop-windows. Only the day before they had been brilliant with summer tints and materials, hats of vivid colour and rainbow scarves, gorgeous plumes and masses of lovely flowers. Now they were filled with mourning, sombre black, or grey, or violet. And how busy the milliners and modistes were! I went with a friend desirous of getting a black frock to a smart dressmaker, who wrung her pretty hands over the rush of orders for mourning that were coming in, and the loss she would sustain over her beautiful French model gowns, which would not now be bought. She was a most interesting personality, this same dressmaker. She breeds Shetland ponies, and designs the loveliest gowns. She showed me a glorious train of net over silver tissue, all worked with trails of faint roses and foliage in soft pinks and greens. It was destined, alas, for the Court that will not now be held till next year. Her very workrooms are fascinating, for they are in an old house belonging to the Salisbury family. It has a superb marble staircase, which is boarded up and not allowed to be used. But one of the fitting-rooms has a lovely ceiling painted with classic figures by Angelica Kauffmann. In the big salon there is a ceiling all heavily frescoed in gold, and both possess the most exquisite Adams mantelpieces of white marble. It certainly

is an interior that ought to inspire beautiful gowns; but, alas, one cannot help mourning for the pass to which these stately apartments have come. Indeed, in London, many of the old historic houses have fallen on evil days, and the want of money has compelled their original owners to give them up to strangers.

In the middle of the forenoon a sudden hailstorm smote the city, falling white on the streets and causing hurried rushes for shelter into doorways. Then burst out blinding sunshine, and up the street came a detachment of Horse Guards, glorious in their steel and silver and scarlet—magnificent men and noble horses. In the midst was the flag, dropping listlessly from its pole, draped with crape, and many eyes filled with tears as they watched it pass by.

The shock had made the people nervous and restless, and of course all engagements were cancelled. Melba's first concert in the Albert Hall, a treat which thousands were anticipating with keenest delight, was postponed, and society was literally at loose ends. I decided to go to Holborn to see the fine old houses which date before Charles Second's time, and I hailed a horse 'bus, for the motors go all too fast for sightseeing en route. I scarcely hoped to have the good fortune to get a talkative 'bus-driver—there are few left now in London—and though I took my seat close to him, I dared not begin to talk, for the traffic is tremendous, and a London Jehu requires all his wits and his senses to thread his way. He was a lean, red-faced, youngish man, a pure Cockney, with a pleasant smile, and a turn for repartee when he met an acquaintance, and flourished his crape-decked whip. But, like the rest of us, his heart was full of one thought, and he at last half-turned to a dapper man behind him and said: "This ere's the greatest loss England 'ave ever seen, sir! It's a big blow to London—an' all the world, sir!" I leant eagerly forward, keen to hear more, but the passenger merely murmured acquiescence, and asked the way to the British Museum.

"I'll show yer, sir, when we comes to it. Look, they've closed all the theayters. I'm glad of that. No, I expect the Museum'll be open. Ye see that ain't a place of amusement. It's more for instruction, like."

After the unresponsive passenger's feet had been set fairly in the direction of the Museum, I turned on the tap

of this eloquence by a sympathetic reference to the King. "Ah, 'e were a good sort, Teddy. There'll be none like 'im for a while. 'E waited for the job, too, a long time, and when it came, mind you, 'e did it well. The next 'un isn't like 'im."

I ventured to say the King himself was not so popular when he first came to the throne; but, as he dodged in between a huge furniture van and a motor 'bus, he retorted, "they jus' loved 'im, mum, 'specially as 'e so nearly pegged out. An', mind you, 'e did 'is little bit while 'is mother was alive. 'Ave I ever seen 'im? Often! W'y, I nearly turned him over once with my 'bus. 'E was drivin' with no footman—but that was Teddy's way—an' the coachman never seen my 'bus. It was entirely 'is fault, but my 'eart was in my mouth like for a moment. W'en I acknowledged 'im, 'e nodded 'is 'ead back at me with a smile same as I'd been a dook. No stuck-uppishness about old Teddy. An' what pluck! We never knew. It was a shock to us, but 'e knew all the time, an' faced it like an 'ero; that's wot 'e did."

At this point he choked, and while we were in apparent imminent peril, beset by vehicles on all sides, he fished a red handkerchief out with his spare hand and blew his nose with emphasis. For a time he was busy getting through a block in Oxford-street, and, though I longed to hear more, I did not feel justified in imperilling the lives of the other innocent passengers. But, once in more open country, the sight of a one-legged blind beggar moved him again to eloquence:

"Jest to think that there chap is left and Teddy gone! Well, well, it's a queer world!" Catching sight of a poster with "The Kaiser's Plans" on it in enormous letters, he burst out again: "An' tell me what 'is plans are, anyw'y? 'E wants to be King of Hengland, that's wot 'e wants. But I don't think!" and he flicked his whip with an expression of infinite contempt.

He was altogether an instructive companion, and I picked up odd scraps of information as we trundled through the city. He showed me the Inns of Courts, and the hostel where, when the suffragettes came out of gaol, they were entertained at breakfast. "They are driven up," he said, "by 'orses all tied up with ribbons, very showy, but a' haw-

ful obstruction." Where the gates of London used to stand he also showed me, and not far off pointed out the statue of "Poor old Teddy's father." Here all the roads had been improved and raised, so much so that, instead of going up to some of the wonderful old churches, one goes down. Not so long ago this part of London, as well as many other parts, was most insanitary, owing to the crowded churchyards. Indeed, a City man distinctly told me he recalled the awful odours that used at times to rise from the soil. Now that is all a thing of the past. A gnarled old tree, fledged with vivid green, stood walled round by quaint black buildings—a pathetic scrap of spring amid the roar and grime. "The ground it's on is worth a pot o' money," said the driver, "but an old cove left word in 'is will it 'ad to be cared for." Fleet-street, where all the newspapers are printed, was close by, and my guide showed me a little narrow street where "Ally Sloper" hails from.

But the dead King was still in his thoughts, and suddenly he turned to me with: "Did you know that 'e 'ad a winner w'en 'e was dyin'? Jest think o' that, now. 'Ard lines for 'im, as loved to win, and allers run straight." I wish I had known then—as I learned later—that on the day the King died, just before he lost consciousness, they told him of his winning horse, and he smiled and nodded.

"Poor old King William on the statue," and the dome of St. Paul's were shown me. My friend once paid threepence to go up, but never again—unless, perhaps, he was given the threepence! Mappin and Webb's fine jewellery shop, where there was a great robbery, was the next point of interest, and close by was the little gloomy lane where the murderer of William Whiteley lived. My driver had a taste for horrors, for he was also anxious I should notice Henry Heath's shop, "The King's 'Atters," where one of the Heaths was killed not so long ago. The fair road, "The King's Way," made by Edward VII. out of insanitary slums and narrow streets, he pointed to with pride. It was almost his last drive through the streets he knew so well, for in four days the John Bull horse-'buses were to be taken off the line. He shook his head and shrugged his shoulders when I asked him what he would do. " It'll be 'ard to get work," he said, "specially now Teddy's dead. P'raps I'll learn to drive a motor-'bus; narsty job that is."

With a cordial farewell and a tip I left my airy perch, where I had spent so pleasant a half-hour. If his information was scrappy and necessarily—owing to the exigencies of London traffic—staccato, he had deeply impressed me with the intense love the lower classes had for the dead King. "Old Teddy" was no term of contemptuous familiarity, but of fervent affection and keen loyalty.

CHAPTER X.

# FUNERAL PAGEANT

Edward the Peacemaker—A Splendid Pageant—Kings and Princes—"Our Maud's 'usban'"—The Crowd—Proclamation of King—Ambulance Work—Westminster Hall—The Lying-in-State—All Sorts and Conditions—Prices for Seats—The End of the Day.

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IN no other country in the world could such scenes be witnessed as occurred in connection with the death and burial of Edward the Peacemaker. The grief, and at the same time the quiet restraint of London's millions, and the splendid orderliness of the crowds, would not be possible with any other nation under similar circumstances. In the midst of it all one felt proud to be a Briton, and could not help agreeing with Lord Kitchener that the nation is not decadent.

While the splendid pageant with the King's body on its way from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Hall curved down the Mall, gleams of fitful sunshine struck breastplates and helmets, gold trappings, and brilliant harness into dazzling glory. By rare good fortune, three of us—all New Zealanders—had stationed ourselves in a place where we got perhaps the finest view of everything, by the Palace gates, a position which, though we did not know it, the morning papers had pronounced dangerous. No soldiers were set in front of us, and only a thin line of friendly policemen separated us from the procession as it passed through the great gates. True, we had to stand three hours, an ordeal that induces one to long for more than two legs; but so interesting were all the happenings that

the time seemed wonderfully short. There were always notable figures passing into the Palace courtyard—women in black with veils to their feet, and men in uniform, luxurious private motors and electric broughams. Then came the soldiers, wonderful bodies of men in brilliant uniforms, marching with such precision that they seemed automata worked by the quick, sharp word of command. The cavalry were glorious—men and horses perfect—standing in an immovable line edging the dense crowd. We even saw an accident—one of the splendid horses attached to a Royal omnibus stumbling and falling on the slippery road. There were but a few moments of confusion, two wonderful beings in scarlet and gold got out of the carriage, the police as usual came to the fore, and the harness was cut, and the beast got on its feet. But the accident caused some apprehension. Long ago you have read of the marvels of that Royal progress—its centre the coffin, strangely small for its deep significance to the nation. What most impressed me was not the splendour of the cortege, though the magnificence was far beyond my imagination, but the dignity of the King as he walked, a step ahead of his two little fair-haired sons, behind the coffin. He is not tall, but he looked every inch a king. There were sobs heard in the crowd as the coffin and its Royal Guardians passed by. "There's our Maud's 'usban'!" a blear-eyed woman in dingy black cried out. I wondered how any relation of hers could figure in that brilliant group of Kings and nobles until I found the tall thin form of the King of Norway and remembered with what tender familiarity Londoners speak of their rulers. It was "Teddy" with the 'bus-driver, and "Our Maud" with the red-faced shabby old woman. Surely it implies a very close human affection.

Another thing that struck me was the silence and sympathy of the crowd. Even when nothing was happening, during the wearing hours of waiting, it was subdued and obedient to orders, and after the Royal salute of muffled drums grew from a mere heart-stirring vibration to a roar, and the coffin passed through the gates and came into view, there was a silence so profound that low sobs could be heard here and there. There was kindly consideration shown, too, for women, at much inconvenience, took their hats off and held them—a matter of peril and difficulty—and those in front stood with bent knees so that those behind could see

There was only one ill-conditioned person near us, who refused at first to remove her aggressive headgear. She was a foreigner, and it was suggested pityingly that she could not be expected to understand British courtesy. The sarcastic remarks had at last the desired effect. We were so near that we could recognise our heroes, though I had never seen Lord Roberts or Lord Kitchener before. The delicate profile of the Queen-mother was clear-cut against the carriage window, as she leant and looked at her sympathetic people. I heard later that she had insisted on wearing a thin veil, and had said she would let her dearly-loved people see her face, even in her sorrow. The Princess Victoria, Queen Mary, and the bright-haired little Princess Mary, all were quite to be distinguished. It was a magnificent and thrilling spectacle. Indeed, the time is crowded with wonderful experiences which it is a sad privilege to undergo.

By a curious chance, I heard the proclamation of the new King from the steps of the Royal Exchange. With no further motive except to get to the Bank, I found myself with about fifty city men, pushed out into the heart of an immense crowd, and there we all had to stay. Fortunately it was orderly, but it was impossible to avoid crushing, and one felt no more could be endured without internal injury. However, even then we managed to open out a gangway for a woman in a fit, whose horrible screams haunted me all day afterwards. The ambulance work done by the police and the ambulance corps is marvellous. In some wonderful way, the sufferer is got by the police out of the crowd—in some cases passed above the heads of the people —and stretchers and all appliances are always handy, to say nothing of doctors and skilled nurses. On Tuesday little corners were kept clear for "cases," and one tiny hospital we came across had half-a-dozen fainting men and women in various stages of limpness and pallor. While in the midst of the dense throng in front of the Royal Exchange I heard the fanfare of trumpets that followed the proclamation, the shouts of the people, and the clash of steel as the salute was given. By standing on tip-toe, I could see the splendid Horse Guards, the quaint heralds—so like the knaves on playing-cards—and the magnificent coach of the Lord Mayor of London. It was well worth the discomfort, and was another wonderful memory added to the wealth of London recollections.

By special favour I saw the Lying-in-State without having to join the queue. The great hall of Westminister is rich in historical recollections. It is so old that it was built by William Rufus, and in it have been enacted great tragedies of bygone centuries. There Sir William Wallace was sentenced, Charles the First's mock trial took place, Perkin Warbeck sat in the stocks, and the Duke of Hamilton was beheaded. Above the stately doorway—where the scarlet-caparisoned mule of Wolsey used to wait—Cromwell's head was set, not far from where now his dignified statue looks across the crowded busy square. Until George the Third's reign, all the Coronation banquets were held there. Now King Edward holds sad state, guarded by his soldiers and his Beefeaters, with huge candelabra burning at each corner of his coffin, and all the gorgeous panoply that love and revenue can display. The hall is so immense that the great chestnut roof is lost in shadow. All the light is centred on the pall, where Crown and sceptre are lying, and in the draught from the great arched doorways the candles flicker and gutter and at times go out. At one end of the hall there seems a great slanting mass of black and white which gradually resolves itself into a dense silent mass of people waiting on the broad steps to move on in fours. And really the people were deeply interesting. I watched them passing, old and young—so old that one's heart ached to think of the seven-mile walk and the weary wait, and so young—mere babies held up that their mothers might tell them afterwards they were at the Lying-in-State. There was scarcely a scrap of colour in any dress or hat, and the very poorest had a wisp of crape—done duty, poor souls, for nearer sorrows—or a rag of ribbon. Their boots were white with dust, and many of the elder men and women were sorely tired, and tottered by on the arms of sons or daughters. I saw several in tears, and no one spoke in all that dense crowd. Only the low-toned "Move on, please" of the policeman came at intervals, and met with an instant response. One old lady was transfixed with fascination at the motionless guardsmen, and put out a finger to touch one to see if he were real. She was called to order by a scandalised grand-daughter, but she had my sympathy, for I never saw human beings so absolutely still. Even the white plumes from their helmets never stirred, and their white-gloved hands were rigid. In the reserved enclosure

outside the space for the queue were notable people, including the Duke of Connaught, Mr. Asquith, and later on, when the doors were closed to the people, came the Royalties. At ten no one else was admitted and the queue had to disperse. One poor maid had walked in the line for five hours—on her much-prized afternoon out—only to reach the doors as the hour struck, and they were closed. It was a sore disappointment.

The prices asked for seats to view the funeral are exorbitant. A large drapery shop in the Edgeware-road has let its upper floor, which is being enlarged and is open to the road and at a corner that commands a fine view, for £6000 to a syndicate that expects to make money out of their bargain. The poorest seat on the stand is a guinea; windows, holding four, were let for thirty and fifty pounds; and a lodginghouse keeper on the route has turned out her boarders and has given up her house for the day for £250. Never have such prices been gained. They are, in many cases, double what were demanded at the late Queen's funeral. It certainly is an ill wind that blows nobody any good! As I write it seems likely that many people will stand or sleep about the streets to-night. The streets are blocked with traffic, and a 'bus-ride is a fearful joy at present.

And now the pageant is over. It has been a perfect day —with vivid sunshine and a tiny breeze, while rain in the night laid the dust and made the parks dazzling in their verdure of blossoms. The pink may-trees were all aflush with flowers, and the air was scented with lilac as I walked to Whitehall in the early morning. Words, written or spoken, are all too feeble to express the marvellous cavalcade that convoyed the illustrious dead. Nine Kings have never before met in any kingdom, and to-day, with their georgeous retinues, they passed through the crowded streets. The throng was silent. Only twice cheers broke out; first, when, in quaint contrast and in glorious uniforms, Kitchener and Roberts rode up to the Hall to join the cortege; and secondly, when the veteran Chelsea pensioners went by, brave in their scarlet and cocked hats. The most touching feature of the procession was the King's little white fox-terrier, trotting along beside the young Highlander who followed the riderless charger. The wee dog never looked right or left, and many scarcely re-

alised that it had been the pet of King Edward, and that it nearly broke its little heart searching for its dear dead master. The horse walked along with drooping head as if it realised its loss. We were in so good a position that we could recognise familiar faces—the Kaiser, the Battenbergs, Roosevelt, King Alphonso, King Manuel, the King of Norway, Admiral Fisher, and all the Royal ladies. In the window of the Colonial Office where I stood was old Lady Strathcona, who stood the whole time, watching. Her husband, with Sir William Hall-Jones and Sir George Reid, rode in one of the State carriages.

The streets were solid with people when we tried to make our way back; and what in ordinary times would have taken half an hour to walk, occupied two hours and a-half. Oxford-street, packed from side to side and all its length, was the sight of a lifetime, and that was only one of the crowded thoroughfares. The very air seems exhausted with the many lungs that are breathing it in, and it will be pleasanter and safer when the crowds return to their homes, rich with the memory of the most magnificent of spectacles, and proud to feel they belong to a nation that can exhibit such glorious loyalty and affection, and yet at the same time show such dignified decorum.

CHAPTER XI.

# KENSINGTON PALACE

A Grey Day—Oasis of Spring—The Gathering Bell—Scraps of History—Two Kings—Where One Wooed—The State Staircase—Queen Mary's Gallery.

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WHILE Edward VII. was lying in State at Westminster, and London was still shrouded in sorrow for his tragic death, I went to Kensington Palace. It was a grey day—as befitted the mood of the nation—but the gaiety of spring was irrepressible, and the pink may and lilac were in glorious flush of blossom. Under the sombre sky the grass looked vividly green, and the trees were in their first fresh verdure. The great chestnuts lifted their spires of creamy flowers, and flashes of silver water could be be seen between their dark trunks and beyond the stretches of grass. Kensington Gardens is the playground of the children. Here they scamper with their dogs, sail their boats on the pond, trundle their hoops along the wide walks, or lie in wide-eyed content, in their luxurious carriages, watched by careful nurses in trim uniforms, sometimes an important small scion of a noble house requiring two attendants to guard him. But old men also choose this lovely oasis of shade and freshness to rest in; tired girls snatch a half-hour from monotonous toil in crowded offices; and, even here—a reminder that there are other things than gay youth and peaceful age—are to be seen the derelicts, face downward on the turf, hopeless heaps of rags and misery, too indifferent even to beg. By an avenue of chestnut trees one reaches the Palace—an unpretentious brick building with the most

modest of entrances. It was bought by William III., who fancied his asthma was better in the purer air of Kensington, which then, by the way, was so rural that on Sunday evenings a bell was rung to gather visitors from London together so that they might return in a band to town—a very necessary precaution in those times of highwaymen and Mohocks. William, simple in his tastes, loved Kensington Palace, which he improved and added to, Wren being the architect. Its rooms are full of history. There William and Mary were nearly burnt in their beds; in one of the rooms Mary, thinking she was dying, sat up all night burning personal papers; into another, after Mary's death, Anne, unable to walk, was carried in a sedan chair to comfort her desolate father, and there, where he had known such sorrow and happiness, died William. It has always been the dwelling-place of Royalty. Queen Anne held high festival here, the gaiety all the more unrestrained because it was then far from London, and here she died. George II., just as he was about to walk in the gardens, was stricken fatally with apoplexy. The Palace was the scene of the birth of Edward, Duke of Kent, Victoria, and our present Queen; and some of the apartments are occupied still by Royalty. Princess Henry of Battenburg and Princess Louise make their home here. Thick matting was recently obliged to be laid on the floors of the State apartments to deaden the constant tramp of sightseers from the ears of the residents on the lower floor. From one of the wide tall windows in the great hall, as I kneel on the oaken window seat, I can see into the great flagged courtyard, on which some of the private windows look. A belltower, with a white-faced clock, arches the entrance, and on one side—where the Princess's rooms are—the grey-red wall is hung with creepers, and the window-boxes brimming over with golden blossoms. A magnificent motor and a carriage are waiting, and, were not time an object, I should like to watch and see who comes out, for the Palace shelters two Kings just now—guests of the Princesses—King Manuel of Portugal and King Alfonzo of Spain, who have come over to pay the last sad tribute to the Monarch and the friend who was always so good to them. King Alfonzo knows Kensington Palace well, for it was the picturesque mise en scene of his courting, and from some of the windows a year or so ago the

amused and sympathetic eyes of globe-trotters and sight-seers used to watch the Royal love-making in its preliminary stages, for they could see down into the pleasant private gardens where Princess Ena used to stroll. The State staircase is not allowed to be used. We enter by the small door and go up a narrower stair. But it is full of interest. What notable figures must have walked up it—kings, queens, courtiers and politicians, soldiers, and men of letters. Up these steps came the Archbishop of Canterbury that grey morning, years ago, to tell little Princess Victoria she was Queen of England. By leaning over the elaborate iron balustrade one can see a quaint little sedan-chair standing, dusty and desolate, in the hall below, perhaps the very one in which Anne was carried on her mission of consolation to William. On the walls are painted figures of courtiers leaning over balconies as if gazing at those passing up and down the stairs. These simpering ladies in brocades and feathers, and these dandies in velvet and satins, are portraits of well-known people at the Court of George I. Now, poor creatures, instead of watching a gay throng pass up and down, they look on an untrodden way and a desolate hall, and have to listen to rude criticism —much in the broadest American—from the sight-seers on the landing above. But, indeed, it is many years since Kensington Palace was the scene of gaiety. The last time the grand staircase was used was at Princess Ena's coming-of-age ball, when the King and Queen were present, and the great hall echoed once more to the rhythmic tread of dancing feet.

The rooms are all named. In Queen Mary's Gallery there is a wonderful marble chimney-piece by Wren, with a quaint mirror set in tarnished gilding that must have reflected brilliant scenes in bygone years. A few tabourets and couches, of uncompromising shape, are covered with faded tapestry and brocade. The great windows break the monotony of the oak panelling, and are all diamond-paned, with deep wooden seats that betray the thickness of the walls. Queen Charlotte's drawing-room, if it be a reflection of the taste of the royal lady, shows that she had little, and that bad, for the heavy paper of grey with red pattern, and the painted gaudy ceiling are in keen contrast with the refined simplicity of the oak-panelled hall we had just left. It is hung with oil-paintings, so

shiny that one's own face is seen more easily than that of the distinguished subject, and so badly stretched that wrinkles, not of nature's drawing, deface the noble countenances. But there is one fascinating portrait that haunts me still—a baby just able to stand. Indeed, so stiff and full is the little skirt, set over a miniature crinoline, that I don't believe the child could sit down. She has a tiny straight white apron, a close white cap with a jaunty feather springing from a blue rosette on one side, and the loveliest wide brown eyes and parted lips. The portrait has no name, and there is no one except a policeman to ask about it. But it is quite enchanting.

If Queen Charlotte's drawing-room was hopelessly inartistic, the next apartment—the Cupola Room—is the acme of gaudy absurdity as regards decoration, and the mere idea of living in such an interior is shuddersome. It has ugly gilded statues in niches around the walls, a fireplace like a marble sarcophagus, and huge gilt candelabra on stands. Here Queen Victoria was christened. There is no furniture in it now except an immense musical clock, so overlaid with ornament that the trouble is to find the dial. It is with a sigh of relief one passes through the door into the King's Drawingroom—a stately panelled apartment, with the loveliest view from the great windows. Close by are lawns, "rolled for hundreds of years," of dazzling green, set with jewels of flower-beds, and bounded by shrubberies and huge trees. Further still shines the silver water, flecked with tiny yachts. Nestling among the trees on the further bank are white tents, where at present soldiers are stationed in readiness for all the sad pageants to come.

Next we come to the scene of Queen Victoria's childhood—the chief attraction to most visitors to Kensington Palace. Her nursery had the same fair outlook—lawn and flower-beds, stream, and woodland—and one can picture the little child kneeling on the broad oaken window-seat and gazing out into this lovely corner of the beautiful land she was to rule over in later years. There are many mementoes of the little girl. On the mantelpiece are tiny wooden dumb-bells, and a large glass case in the centre of the room contains some quaint garments, so simply made and so plainly cut that the fashionable mother of to-day would be horrified at them. The little uniforms are, however, brilliant. The scarlet coat has such little sleeves and narrow shoulders—

she must have been a tiny child when she wore it—but it has a brave gold sash, with tassels and gold buttons. With this was worn a black cloth riding-skirt and a jaunty little beaver hat with scarlet and white plumes. Next came a hideous tartan velvet frock, and then the frock dressed in which she held her first council. Either the label lies, or the artist of a large picture of the scene on the wall close by has given rein to his imagination, for in that the young Queen is in flowing white. The dress in the case is the dingiest shot silk, brown and blue. It is of course hand-sewn, and is short-waisted and scanty-skirted, the bodice having puffed sleeves and low neck. The only scraps of prettiness about it are the tiny embroidered lace cuffs and collar. Victoria's wedding-bonnet hangs next—a modest coalscuttle of corded silk, extravagant in nothing except its size and the really lovely lace veil. A miniature Windsor uniform of scarlet and blue and the first pair of shoes—the tiniest, absurdest scraps of black satin and kid—are the rest of the exhibits in the case. Mothers with an eye to the improvement of their little daughters never fail to point out what a careful child the little Princess was with her toys. They never seem to think it might have been a survival of the fittest. However, judging from her books, she was most careful. Her doll's house is built somewhat in the style of Kensington Palace, of red brick, with a green door, but it has only two rooms, which are furnished lavishly. Both, by the way, have kitchen grates, and in the upper a coffee-pot, too large for the table, is set on the floor, and a bird-cage, gilt and gaudy, is the most prominent article in the room. An enormous knife-box—enormous, of course, comparatively—fills up the little dresser in the kitchen, on which a nutmeg-grater is the largest piece of furniture. Here are two dolls, male and female, the man leaning against the fireplace in an attitude that bespeaks a recent orgie. Other toys are in glass cases—marionettes, a little shop with tiny things for sale (both contents and goods made by Victoria herself), dolls' clothing with fairy stitches, a loom, a little tent, a coach, a headless horseman, and a pair of small battledores.

In the next room is her library, very dissimilar to the books girls read now. On the shelves are Sandford and Merton, Holy Living and Dying, the Despatches of the Duke of Wellington, memoirs, biographies, travels, works

in French, Latin, and Italian. Her first account-book has a touching little preface written by her mother, who gave it her. It is open on the first page, and the entries are exquisitely neat. It is to be hoped there are some blots further on, for such perfection must have been alarming to her guardians. Among the items is £1—"put in the purse for poor people"—a large proportion out of her tiny income. Her affection for her mother is vivid in the inscriptions in many of the volumes, and she constantly writes herself as "her devoted and affectionate daughter." Some of the books were given on the day of her confirmation. Miss Edgworth's Rhymes for Children, Rhymes for the Nursery, The Footsteps to Mrs. Trimmins's Sacred History—all these have the name of the little Princess written in her childish writing. Much less interesting are the presentation volumes, magnificently bound, some in tartan velvet, others in gold and morocco. In another case close by are the gorgeous coronation robes of stiff gold brocade and crimson satin, emblazoned with roses, thistles, fleur-de-lis, and eagles, in richest embroideries. It is hard to tear oneself away from these touching records of Victoria's simple girlhood, and peaceful, happy childhood, the prelude to a long reign, whose grief and joys her early training enabled her to meet with dignity and faith. The new century has brought many wonders, but modern educationists might learn much from these rooms in Kensington Palace, where little Princess Victoria played and studied, and passed her sheltered days before she had to face "the fierce glare that beats upon a throne."

CHAPTER XII.

# MELBA IN PARIS

The Glamour of Maytime—Blossoming Chestnuts—Sunday in Paris—Studio of a Modiste—An Expert at Work—Melba's Taste—The Morning Crowd—Versailles the Lovely—French Traffic—Exquisite Decorations—Coaches and Carriages—Madame Marchesi—Wedding Parties—A Fascinating Picture Memory.

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IT is not easy to write of one's first impressions of Paris without seeming exaggerative and hysterical, for it is a city of extraordinary beauty and wonderful picturesqueness. Among my keenest memories are the exquisite vistas of trees—chestnuts, mostly, lifting aloft their creamy candelabra of blossom—converging to some building or monument. The grand avenue of the Champs Elysees is thus blocked by the Arc de Triomphe, surely one of the finest memorials in the world. On a Sunday afternoon this great street is thronged with vehicles and foot passengers, but it pales in popularity beside the Bois de Boulogne, which is the favourite rendezvous for all classes on a holiday.

Paris under any circumstances must prove fascinating to a visitor from the Antipodes; but when one has for guide, philosopher, and friend, one who knows her Paris and its people as does Madame Melba, the visit becomes more than doubly interesting. It was an old promise that we should meet in Paris, and Madame, who forgets nothing, hearing I was in London, had telegraphed me to come over and be her guest. In the Boulvard Malesherbes—bordered by trees, mainly chestnuts in full bloom—she has a beautiful flat, full of treasures in the way of pictures, china, old

furniture, and antiques, and the most beautiful and rare flowers sent by her many friends—for Madame is a queen in Paris as she is in London.

It is difficult to remember it is Sunday in Paris, for the shops are open, the street-booths gay with flowers and vegetables, and the theatres and racecourses are most patronised. It is the gayest day of the week. But a Parisian crowd is, in point of colouring, gloomy, for mourning here is carried to excess, and the women, in preference, dress in black or dark tints. The elder women are rarely seen in anything but black, and the contrast between a Sydney and a French throng is thus most marked. The scarcity of pretty women, too, is noticeable. Probably the haute noblesse are rarely seen afoot in Paris—although in London one rubs shoulders with duchesses and countesses in many of the streets where be the smart shops—but still, though there is a subtle fascination about the Parisian, and her figure and carriage are often irreproachable, she is wanting in the fresh bloom and regular beauty of the English girl, who also overtops her in point of inches. The Parisian, however quietly she may frock herself, lets herself go in the way of hats, and some marvellous creations were visible on Sunday in the Champs Elysees, chapeaux of enormous size, with plumes that waved over the back of the automobiles, and flowers that looked like huge bouquets.

I had a rather unique opportunity of watching the methods of the Parisian modistes in one of the great ateliers, whose name on a frock is a hall-mark of smartness to women. Madame Melba was getting her gowns for the London season, and few who gaze with admiration at the lovely dresses the great singer wears realise that the beautiful result is only arrived at by patience, and even fatigue. For three hours that morning Madame Melba stood, while artistic and nimble fingers pinned and draped, folded and fitted. No less than fifteen dressmakers came in at different times, and once there were six hovering about a specially lovely and intricate toilette. In Paris they specialise: one woman makes the collar, the other the sleeve, another the bodice, while a presiding personage surveys all and dispenses enthusiastic praise or eloquent blame as each is deserved. Their rapid French, aided by fluent gesture, is charming, and their hands touch the

beautiful materials with reverent daintiness. There was one thrilling moment when Madame Melba, who has the artist eye for frocks as well as the artist ear for music, undid a drapery that hung ungracefully, and the pretty head modiste re-arranged it, and waited for the verdict. She knew she had a customer who not only understood what she suited, but who resolved to get it. Several times did Madame Melba make naught of the work of their hands, and in one case a whole bodice was re-made under her directions, an immense improvement in the way of originality and grace resulting. She will submit to no arbitrary and absurd rules of fashion, and the prevailing narrow skirt—in which women toddle and which only yesterday, in Paris, was the cause of a bad accident, the wearer falling as she stepped out of a motor—is anathema to her. She knows the value of unrestrained flowing lines on a stately figure.

There is magic in the fingers of the head modiste as she drapes long straight lengths of chiffon into a tunic. A touch here, a fold there, many tiny pins, and the material uncut hangs in exquisite folds over the clinging satin. This gown was of peach bloom, with tunic of chiffon of softest mauve, lined with rose-colour, the sleeves and bodice draperies of chiffon, hemmed with brilliants, opening over a little triangular vest of silver and brilliant embroideries, folds of the same embroidered chiffon falling below the narrow belt of chiffon. On each sleeve was a ribbon of closely-sewn brilliants, ending in tassels at the elbow. Another lovely gown was of softest black satin, lined with bleu de corbeau, a peculiarly lovely and brilliant tint. It was extremely simple, the long over-skirt just allowing a hint of the colour to be seen with movement, and a broad band of gorgeous Oriental embroideries crossing the bodice. One of the most noted dressmakers in Paris is a beautiful woman, tall, very graceful, with charming features and masses of auburn hair. Indeed, she has been sketched by many painters, and only the day we left Paris I saw an exquisite drawing of her in one of the shops.

Paris is full of fascination to a visitor, and one cannot go a yard where something of interest is not to be noticed. The barrows and booths, piled high with flowers, fruit, and vegetables, are a feast of artistic colour, especially when presided over by a buxom country woman, who adds her picturesque comeliness to the group. The nurses, many

in the quaint national costume, too, are charming figures in the gardens and in the avenues, and the French peasant, in his blue blouse, is attractive. Very dapper and debonair, too, are the trim girls who hurry along, their beautifully-dressed black hair uncovered, and their black frocks marvels of fit, although of the simplest mode. It is among these that one finds the prettiest faces, regular-featured, clear complexioned, although somewhat colourless, with lovely dark eyes and shining hair.

Versailles was most enchanting, and the road to it, overhung with blossoming lilacs and shaded with chestnut trees in full wealth of ivory spires of bloom, a series of exquisite pictures, despite the cobblestones that make us bounce in the motion like india rubber balls, and the exciting possibilities of an immediate and untidy death owing to the reckless driving of the other Jehus. It is a marvel that Paris is so densely peopled, considering the perils that beset the wayfarer. There are no rules of the road recognised, and where many streets converge—as in the "Places"—death may come darting on you from eight different directions, and, not having a spider's peculiar vision, you may meet a sudden and fearful fate. Even if a reckless driver does run over you, you have no claim upon him; on the contrary, he can sue you if your dislocated bones have scraped the paint off his cab. We saw traces of accidents every time we went out—disabled motors, smashed traps, and broken-down wagons, but, fortunately, if there were victims they had been removed before we came on the scene.

The authorities have tried to remedy this. They sent policemen to London to learn of our famous police the mode to grapple with traffic. They remained some time, and returned to Paris primed with knowledge. But the first man who held up his baton and bade—like Canute—the tide stop, met with as little success as that monarch, and with a worse fate, for they simply drove over him and killed him—a martyr in the cause of law and order! After that, a Parisian policeman probably thinks it safer not to meddle, and two friends, separated by the space of a street, may wait for ever apart before anyone would think of helping the one across to the other. It is told of an old and nervous lady that she always took a taxi to go across the street. She said it was cheaper than a funeral!

But this is a far cry from Versailles, and, indeed, in its beauty and peace, the drawbacks of the twentieth century are forgotten, and we could almost believe ourselves in the romantic time of the Grand Monarque, peopling the lovely terraces with fair ladies in brocade and powdered hair, attended by nobles brilliant in satins and velvets, coquetting the sunny hours away. To the quiet pools set in their marble borders, on which are fine statues, one goes by great flights of stone steps from the wide terrace. Everywhere are wonderful groups of trees in delicate spring verdure, turf of dazzling green, and flower-beds set like gigantic gems on emerald velvet. Beyond are more fountains, and more trees, bluer and bluer as they reach the horizon. The palace, too, is full of memories, though there is little left of its luxurious appointments save some fine tapestries, a little old furniture, and many pictures of various degrees of merit. But the extravagant splendour of the rooms baffles description. The immense chandeliers of rock-crystal—some faintly tinged with purple or rose-colour—are priceless and most exquisite. The mantelpieces of carved marble, with huge dogs and andirons and cavernous fireplaces to hold the great fires needed in these huge rooms, are each of different magnificence, while we got severe cricks in our necks from admiring the wonderful ceilings, where airy goddesses and cupids, in skies always summer-blue, disported with French Kings and Queens in cheeriest mood. The colours were brilliant, the gold still bright, and much of the painting was glorious—however misplaced one might think the art.

But there is no space or time to tell of all the wonders, of the great courtyard surrounded by the stately windowed walls, and of all the coaches and harness shown in an adjoining building, carriages in which Louis and in which Napoleon sat; sleighs quaintly made like swans and bears, to hold the gay Court ladies on their winter drives; and, daintiest of all, the little sedan chairs. There was one of dark rifle green—undecorated save for a gold crown on the side, and lined with a faint pale shade of silk—that was exquisitely refined, in contrast with the gaudiness of the Napoleonic trappings, overlaid with ornament.

I had the pleasure at Madame Melba's house of meeting the Comte de Lesseps, son of the famous engineer whose mag-

nificent statue stands at Port Said, pointing out the East to the West through the canal he accomplished by his genius and his determination. I also met Mr. Rupert Bunny, the clever Australian artist, who had this year pictures in the Salon and in the Royal Academy.

Another interesting experience was lunching with Madame Marchesi, who, wonderfully young and vivacious in spite of her many years—indeed, she is still "un peu coquette"—dispenses stately hospitality in her large house, which is filled with musical treasures. All are tributes to her, pictures and photographs bearing affectionate inscriptions signed by world-famous names, and among them are many portraits of Madame Melba, whom Marchesi adores. The tie between old teacher and pupil is of the sweetest, and it is touching and amusing to listen to the scraps of reminiscences of bygone times. The old butler is himself a study. He has been in Madame Marchesi's house for years, and is as perfect in his courteous service as, with his clear-cut, clean-shaven features and grey hair, he is charming to look at. It is a pleasant visit, and I carry away a signed photograph of the Marquise de Marchesi, as well as the memory of a vivid and fascinating personality.

At the risk of being too prolix, I must, out of the crowd of happy recollections, tell of two. The first was the procession of wedding parties that passed us as we came back from Versailles. It was Saturday, and the thrifty Parisian workman chooses that day to be married on so as to interfere as little as possible with his regular employment. They are married by civil law, and then comes the breakfast, whereat they eat and drink heartily. The drive through the Bois after is an essential part of the ceremony, and it was then when we saw them. Some were all together—the happy pair, relations and guests, all cheerily blended in one laughing, singing crowd in a char-a-banc, the bride in white veil and orange blossoms. Sometimes they all carried little sticks with whirling windmills of coloured paper, and waved them as they drove along. Some pairs had carriages all to themselves, the parents, generally stout, hot, and beaming, and the guests, following in other vehicles. We counted twelve brides and bridegrooms in all stages of bliss—some rather shy, others fondly kissing each other, with supreme disdain for the amused eyes of the world.

One other memory will not soon fade. It was blue twilight in Madame's lovely boudoir all soft dull rose-colour and ivory, and rose-shaded lamps gave a flattering light. Mademoiselle Sassoli was playing the harp, a charming figure in her soft white dress with its pale blue girdle; her beautiful dark hair and great dark eyes shone in the soft glow, and behind her rose a wonderful arrangement of blossoms—a great rustic basket tied with flame ribbons and filled with masses of china-blue hydrangeas, orange azaleas, and feathery foliage of asparagus, smilax, and copper maple. It stood five feet high, and had just arrived from Jean de Reszke, at whose house Madame Melba had sung wonderfully the evening before. All—the gracious girl figure, the glowing blossoms, the beautiful room, the charming music, and the little group of entranced listeners—made up a remembrance not easily erased, one of the many that the magic word Paris conjures up for me.

CHAPTER XIII.

# HAM HOUSE

A Fascinating Walk—Richmond Town—Envious Grey Walls—Enchanting Country—A Historic Gateway—A Link With New Zealand—Romance and History—Grinling Gibbons, his Mark—Gorgeous Decorations—The Ideal Housekeeper—Wonderful Cabinets—The Act of Boundary—The Picture Gallery—The Cabal Rooms—Secret Staircase—Tea and Farewell.

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"IT'S a long walk to Petersham," said the policeman at Richmond when I got out of the train, and enquired the way to Ham House. "I'd advise you to get a cab." But the brilliant day and the enchanting country demanded more deliberate enjoyment, and I set off cheerily, armed with directions to go straight ahead. Richmond town itself is a fascinating place, with twisting, narrow roads and gabled shops and tantalising glimpses of glorious green over high grey walls. In one of the shops still may be bought the same dainty cheesecakes, "maids-of-honour," which were so in demand in Elizabeth's reign, and got their name from their most frequent customers, some of whom always were in residence in a house in the town.

Leaving the bustle and traffic behind, one gains a shady road, almost an avenue, for great trees shadow it gratefully from either side, towering above the high grey walls that shut out such beauty. At every gate, some emblazoned, carved, and gorgeous with armorial bearings, I linger and look at the blaze of colour in the turf, and the flowers, and the wonderful wealth of creepers that muffles the old houses. A boy recommends me to strike across the fields to Ham House, and I pass between stretches of grass towards a

dark belt of trees with glimpses of buildings beyond. On the right is the river, silver grey, and smooth as satin, the distant trees dreamily blue, the nearer vivid green, a barge with red-brown sails slipping silently along, slashing the dull silver into tiny ripples. There is a delicious hush and languor, such a contrast to the turmoil and fever of London. The swish of the scythe, the carol of birds, and the gay laughter of a knot of children at the river brink, are the only sounds. The scent of the new-cut grass is strong, and beyond a hedge there is a very field of cloth of gold enamelled with butter-cups, and the silver stars of daisies are thick in the meadow that slopes to the water. To gain the avenue I have to pass through quaint narrow ways between high brick walls draped with creepers, a gate affording glimpses of brilliant gardens, and at last I reach the famous double row of trees that stretches from the picturesque lodge that arches over the great gate-way, to the magnificent iron entrance gates. The avenue seems never-ending, but it is dense shade under the interlacing branches, and for that I am grateful. But when the shut great gates —of marvellous iron-tracery—are reached, the trodden path has become lost in thick grass which grows high up to the hinges. Beyond there is no road, only wild grass where once was a wide gravel track, and, mystified, I turn back and find entrance by another side. Later I learn that these gates were shut when Charles I. left the house for the last time, and have never been opened since.

Ham House is not a show place, and there are many in London who long in vain to see its treasures. But in many Aladdins' caves there is an open sesame in London in the password, "The Colonies," and, thanks to an organisation for entertaining guests from the Empire beyond the seas, and to the kindness of the Earl of Dysart, its owner, the privilege of seeing over Ham House was added to many others enjoyed by colonial visitors. To New Zealanders the name of Tollemache is well known—indeed, there is a cousin of Lord Dysart's, I believe, at present in the North Island. The present Earl, who is not a strong man, has no heir, so the property will devolve on one of his numerous cousins. Mrs. Cooper, a cousin, acted as chatelaine for the Earl on our visit, although the latter welcomed us after our tour of inspection while we were taking tea in the portico.

Ham House is an historic mansion, and at one time belonged to the Duke of Lauderdale. It is here where the famous Cabal held its secret meetings, and the old house is redolent with romance and legend, and has entertained and sheltered many famous people. The stately facade is reached by a curving wide gravel walk about a large grass plot centred by a statue, and a pillared colonnade is crossed before reaching the splendid hall, all panelled with dark oak, and on three sides surrounded with galleries. The wide staircase has magnificently-carved balustrades, wrought richly in designs of armour and cannons, the work of Grinling Gibbons, whose signature, I was told, is a split pea, and invariably to be found, by diligent search, on his artistic carvings. He must have been a most industrious and long-lived man to do all the work ascribed to him, and one cannot help fancying that in some cases, the keenest eye could not discern the split pea. But in a mansion like Ham House there is no question of authenticity, and though it is unusual to pass to reception rooms through emblems of war, the decoration is magnificent.

And what glorious rooms are entered from the gallery above, one apartment leading into the other, as is the mode in these great palaces. The decorations are gorgeous. The walls are hung with the most wonderful tapestries, marvels of patient industry, all faded to a delightful harmony of tints, although the gold thread used is as brilliant as when first applied. The ceilings are so gorgeously frescoed that one gets a crick in the neck admiring them. The colours were as fresh and gay as if the painter had just laid down his brush. Blue sky—more Italian than English, alas—forms the background on which chubby smiling cherubs float on white clouds, and over the border of the centre circle lean lovely women, all filmy draperies and waving tresses, in ever-complacent scrutiny of the more unpicturesque generations that come and go beneath them.

Everywhere are priceless treasures. Indeed, the riches that are to be seen in these great houses take the breath away. It is little wonder the stately housekeeper—who is just the ideal of what we read about, dignified, courteous, and devoted to the family with whom she has spent most of her life, and wearing the correct trailing black silk and lace collar—keeps an anxious eye on stragglers as she guides us. She wears a little diamond brooch, given her

by Princess Louise, whose husband, the Duke of Argyle, has ancestors in the picture-gallery whom he and his wife visit ceremoniously now and then. The cabinets alone in Ham House are of incalculable worth, and marvellous specimens stand all down the picture gallery and in many of the rooms. One, in particular, is of ivory, tinted by age to a mellow, cream hue. Its workmanship is exquisite, all wrought in a basket-work pattern, and the doors, when open, show a maze of tiny drawers and recesses. This was found not so long ago in a state of disrepair in a lumber-room, and it took experts six months to put it right. The finest examples of Chinese red lacquer cabinets are said to be at Ham House, and there are some priceless buhl and sheraton, and some examples of English marqueterie that are marvels of skill, patience, and art. A little room is hung with many miniatures of kings, queens, and personages, political and literary, of past generations. Here, too, was the vellum roll with rows of signatures and fringe of hanging, misshapen seals—the Act of Boundary between Scotland and Ireland—the seals of the Scottish lords dangling on one side, and those of the English nobles on the other. So precious is this historical relic that no outsider's finger is allowed to be laid upon it.

In the long picture-gallery, where still stand the chairs, covered with patterned crimson damask, used when Charles the First was wont to visit Ham House, there are many portraits of notables by famous artists. The Duke of Lauderdale looks down, handsome, gloomy, and taciturn, Charles is melancholy and picturesque, Henrietta Maria stately and black ringletted, while ancestors many and various gaze at one another from the oaken walls. One lovely girlish figure in rustic hat and white muslin I admire fervently, and am told it was a bygone countess who was sixty when the painter flattered her.

Of all the rooms the great apartment where the Cabal held its secret meetings is perhaps the most interesting, and is all the more so because it is just left as it was when the wily politicians used to confer. The chairs, covered with silver tapestry, patterned with large red velvet roses, are what they sat on, the magnificent table was where their papers were strewn and where, probably, their elbows rested, and at the grand fireplace they probably warmed their aristocratic feet and poked the

fire with the very fireirons, all wrought silver, that rest before the silver dogs and andirons. All the fireplaces in the rooms are works of art, but this is especially wonderful. The very back-plate is richly embossed, and the curb and even the bellows are silver and shining with much polish. One would never imagine they were centuries old. Set in a massive frame above the mantelpiece is a beautiful Holy Family by Andrea del Sarto—a particularly lovely Madonna —and an American exclaimed with delight when he saw it, and informed us he had long known where two of Del Sarto's Holy Families were, but until now had never found the third. In this room, as in the others, the floor is worth admiration had one time to give it, for it is of finest parquetry work, with the arms of the family and the Tudor rose appearing in the circles and squares.

A small room was given up to china, which, in endless variety, had overflowed the tables and the cabinets, and was set on the floor. One vase was said to be worth £3,000, but by this time money was of no object to us, and we heard the huge values of the things around us without unseemly exclamation. One of the armoires in this room was made of transverse pieces of young laburnum branches, and was absolutely enchanting in colour and design. In one room there was a secret staircase down which Charles the First, hearing Cromwell and his soldiers on the stairs, is said to have escaped to the hall below. We went down it, and it was so dark and so perpendicular that I nearly put my foot on the smart hat of my American friend who preceded me. We rounded off our interesting visit with tea perfectly served—as English servants do serve it—in the covered portico in front of the entrance. The Earl and Mrs. Cooper were most kindly and hospitable, and it was with heartfelt thanks for the great pleasure he had given us that we said goodbye to the owner of the treasure-house. It is infinitely more interesting to see relics of bygone times set in the surroundings and atmosphere to which they belong than to stare at them in a museum, and we appreciated our privileges.

CHAPTER XIV.

# HAMPTON COURT

A Charming Drive—Historic Mansions—The Frog Walk —Wolsey's Palace—A Vast Household—The River —Where Mary Sewed — A Haunt of Queens — A Gracious Gift — In Lilac-time—The Great Vine — Wolsey's Kitchen — The Grand Staircase — Quaint Rooms — Antique Furniture — The Cartoons — The Great Hall.

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ON a delightful day in May I went to Hampton Court, that most romantic of palaces, round which clusters thickly memories of many kings and one great Commoner. We started from Barnes, that lovely suburb, despite its unromantic name, with its wonderful elms and picturesque common, and its old houses smothered in greenery and embosomed in gardens. Barnes is dear to me for one happy memory in particular. The grey dawn had waked me, and I went to my open window to look out. In front towered the great elms, massed dark against the silver and rose of the east, and the garden below was in shadow, and faint perfumes of unseen flowers floated up to me. There was absolute silence; then came, from the dusk foliage, the silver notes of the cuckoo—again and again—the same sweet dissyllable like a fairy alarum clock waking the birds to their matins. The cuckoo may be a bird of ill-character —I was brought up to believe the worst of him—but he has all the fascination of a rake.

But long ago our 'bus, for it is by such commonplace methods we visit Hampton Court, started from Barnes and drove through its curly village street and past its gleaming pool, in which the reflection of the elms lie quiet. We sit

aloft, and the soft sweet air—there is no wind but what we make—fans our faces and carries to us the scent of new-cut grass and hawthorn. Through such narrow lanes we pass that the branches from the trees in the gardens brush our hats and whip our faces and at times we have to bend low. But the safety of an inside seat is ignobly tame compared to the glorious freshness and exciting possibility of the top. From it we can see over the stone walls into the bewilderingly lovely old gardens, catch sight of the historic grey mansions, and get peeps, beyond the sloping fields, of the Thames, silver and steel, with slowly-moving orange sails. Before we enter the Palace we see beyond the curving wall and old hostelries, a green space divided from the Palace grounds by a dark-red brick wall, and next to this, on the roadside, is a broad walk shaded by magnificent trees. This is called the Frog Walk. This quaint name is supposed to be a corruption of "frau"—German for woman, and in the times of Mary, wife of William III, it was a favourite promenade for her and her maids of honour. Now, where powder and patches, sacques and farthingales—probably attended by peruques and laced coats—used to saunter, hurries along a commonplace stream of sightseers, eager to see everything in the shortest possible time. It is perhaps illogical to sigh for the lovely leisure and romance of those days when we have ourselves an inexorable 'bus to catch in a few hours! At last, we draw up before the iron gates of Hampton Court—exquisite tracery of ironwork towering high between two immense lion-crowned stone pillars.. A step beyond the great gates leads us into the wilderness garden, where, under careful control, plants and trees are allowed to grow at their own sweet will. It is a place where the tall grass is dappled with sunlight filtered through the leafy boughs o'erhead, a flash of rose or yellow blossom lighting up some dusky nook. The wild beauty of this part is a cunning contrast to the formal magnificence of the gardens that front the Palace—great stretches of turf smooth as velvet and of dazzling verdure, terraced to a silver lake, set here and there with statues, and intersected by broad golden gravel walks. Its stiffness and formality are fascinating, and one can only picture farthingales and velvet coats, cocked hats and powdered hair in such surroundings. Our modern dress seems sadly out of place, and the hobble skirt more hideous than

ever. Set among the dazzling green are mosaics of flowers, gorgeous in scarlet, blue, amber—a very blaze of tints artfully harmonized. Looking back, the great facade rises against the grey sky, a wonderful mass of masonry in red and white and grey. It is not picturesque, but rather solid and squat. Alack, in an evil hour, the quaint magnificence of Wolsey's Palace, with its cupolas and towers and battlements—the great cardinal had a mania for building and a pretty taste in architecture—was pulled down by the worthy William the Third, and this erection set up. However, we must be thankful that he spared two courts—the smallest—of all Wolsey's gorgeous palace, which was so huge that it accommodated a retinue of one thousand servants. At one time he entertained four hundred visitors—the French Ambassador and his suite. Times are changed now. The modern hostess trembles when she has to put up two or three guests. But the arrogant churchman ruled his vast household with an iron hand, and the wealth of his establishment may be imagined when it is recorded that all these guests had silver ewers and basins and candlesticks in their rooms. The head cook of his household wore satins and velvets, and a gold chain about his neck—a fitting garb for the artist who designed such lordly dishes as a besieged castle—with guns, soldiers, and all appurtenances in marzipan—and a chessboard, with all the pieces cunningly modelled in coloured sugars. It is consoling to the ambitious mind to remember the lord of all this magnificence was the son of a butcher! Those were romantic times when Wolsey, in his crimson robes, used to pass to the Thames—just by the way we are walking now, through Queen Mary's Bower to the river's brink—and there board his magnificent barge to go to visit the King.

The river at Hampton Court, how lovely it is with its rushy banks, bending willows and forget-me-nots, its picturesque old ruins and the silver-grey satin of the water! In that particular year the houseboats were shorn somewhat of their glory, because of the national grief, but we still saw a few wreathed with brilliant blossoms and gay with brightly-dressed girls. The insistent murmur of the weir rose above the laughter, the clank of rowlocks, the distant roar of traffic, and the rumble of a passing train.

Queen Mary's Bower is a long avenue of wych-elms, the "perplexed turning of whose branches"—as Evelyn terms it

—is extraordinary. They form a roof overhead, and it is rather an arcade than a bower, for it extends for a hundred yards. Here, as the name tells, Queen Mary Tudor—who spent her honeymoon here with Philip of Spain—sewed that marvellous needlework that is still shown in the Palace, miracles of patience and skill. As she sat among her maidens, what sad bitter thoughts may she not have stitched into her embroideries! Philip—so record tells us—was not a satisfactory lover, and a still less desirable husband, and if one can judge by his pictures, he was obstinate and sullen, imperious and ill-natured, and two such tempers must needs have come to conflict. The memories of many unhappy women haunt Hampton Court. Perhaps, when the sightseers have gone, their gentle ghosts slip down the grand staircase and out into the gardens, pacing the walks and lingering about the lawns in the kindly darkness or the dreamy moonlight. There was Anne Boleyn—her initial is still to be seen intertwined with that of her kindly and easily-consoled lover; Henrietta, who spent here with Charles some happy and some terrible days; Queen Anne, Elizabeth —all are associated with Hampton Court. Here Jane Seymour died, and in one of the apartments, Catherine Howard was married to Henry, only fifteen months later to be arrested in the same room for high treason and hurried to the Tower. From here Charles I. fled to the Isle of Wight one dark stormy night, attended only by one servant. Their way led through woods, and the King, knowing the place in happier times, acted as guide. These were his last hours of freedom, for this brought to a climax the rupture between himself and the Parliament.

Hampton Court has been fortified, though never besieged, and, in quaint contrast to the brilliant gaiety of the Stuart Court, Cromwell for a time lived here in staid sobriety. At the accession of Victoria the Palace was thrown open to the public, and the favour has been hugely appreciated, vast numbers taking advantage of the privilege. A writer of half a century ago notes the arrival at the Palace, on a brilliant Whit Monday, of twelve spring vans, all a-flutter with red, white and blue streamers, filled with holiday-making servants and artisians, with their sweethearts, and ever since a fascinated procession has been passing in and out the Palace and wandering among the lovely gardens.

But it is noticeable that little damage is done. It is not only because the surveillance is excellent, but because also the English people appreciate and reverence their historic treasures. Fifty years ago a scratch on the grand staircase brought forward a reward of five pounds for the detection of the criminal, but he was never discovered.

But for a time we must linger in the lovely gardens, where the softly glimmering statues are set against dusky green shrubberies, which again are backed by magnificent trees in all their spring glory, their vivid tints melting into dreamiest blue, against the horizon. It is what Noyes calls " lilac-time in summer's wonderland." The trees are massed with purple and ivory spires, and the tiny breeze shakes the perfume as from censers. The chestnuts are in full beauty, and the tulips gorgeous in colour and in size, while everywhere the scent of the may-tree floats. Never have we seen such splendid may-trees and such wealth of blossom, red, rose, palest pink, and white.

Of all the grounds there is one part I loved the best—perhaps because I had to look at it from afar, for it is barred from the general public. It is a little sunk herbaceous garden, cosily shut in by high-clipped yew hedges, and in its quaint formal beds, divided by narrow gravel paths, bloom all the sweet old-fashioned flowers our great-grandmothers loved —an embroidery of old-world tints. In a deep niche in the yew stands a graceful statue of Venus. It is a very lover's garden, for little time-battered cupids keep watch at the corners. Perhaps King Hal—with one of his various spouses—had soft dalliance in this quiet, scented nook, or Henrietta and King Charles strolled about, surrounded by their gay and extravagant courtiers. But with the gardens of the Palace one does not associate gaiety. One thinks of bitter, disappointed Mary Tudor, of gentle, sad, Jane Seymour, of Catherine Howard, hurried away from her flowers to the Tower and the block.

The private apartments must be keenly sought after, and the glimpses we got of them were fascinating—the old-fashioned oaken-panelled rooms, the scraps of garden, the lozenge-paned windows, set in lovely foliage. There are forty-five of them, each comprising from fifteen to twenty rooms, the entire number of rooms in the Palace being one thousand. Before we leave the gardens for the interior of

Hampton Court, we have to see the great vine, now aged nearly a century and a half. It is enormous, its greatest girth being four feet, and its principal branch over a hundred feet in length. But it is not the largest in the world, or even in England, for one of its own shoots, growing at Cumberland Lodge, has outstripped the parent vine. The old Tennis Court is interesting. It was built by Henry the Eighth, himself a player, and for three-and-a-half centuries, tennis has been played in it. King Edward himself used it, and not so long ago Pettitt, the American player, defeated there Lambert the English champion.

The Base Court, with its surrounding buildings, is the most interesting part of the Palace, for here it was that Wolsey had his rooms and held his state. The vivid green grass is in fine contrast to the grey and red of the windowed walls that enclose it, and the great gate-house with its splendid oriel window above the arch, makes an imposing entrance. Here, but not shown now, if it exists at all, was the curious circular detached kitchen—not unlike a dark lantern—wherein were made those marvellous dishes that were set on the Lord Cardinal's table. Here, too, is the strange astronomical clock, found twenty years ago in a shed, and made to go again, after fifty years' silence.

We go inside out of the sunshine, and so low seems the arched doorway that one almost stoops the head as one passes through. Up the staircase we climb, not the grand staircase, but one of minor importance, with oaken steps worn with centuries of feet. The grand staircase is magnificent, with elaborate frescoes of court beauties, gods and goddesses, and the twelve Caesars—all in one wild medley. It is very gorgeous—though the ladies are of the simpering expressionless type, and the goddesses are sadly in want of a course of banting—but it is not half so fascinating as a little winding stair that is barred off, and which leads to what used to be some of the older rooms. For this is haunted by the headless ghost of pretty Anne Boleyn, who moans—despite her decapitation—as she glides up and down at mirk of night. It is all delightfully creepy, and, really, in these romantic surroundings, I am fast acquiring a belief in spooks.

The rooms are filled with pictures, very few of insistent merit. They are mostly courtiers, men and women, and have a singularly family likeness. No lines of character show on their smooth, smirking, self-satisfied faces, and the women below the goodly display of shoulders are shrouded in draperies. They are monotonous and stiff, and possess little spirit or charm, although one portrait—that of Miss Pitt—is a hauntingly lovely exception. One cannot help believing, as one stands before the canvasses of Lely and Kneller, that we can do better in the way of female beauty in this century. More interesting than the pictures to us were the quaint rooms themselves, with their lavish waste of decoration in their ceilings, their huge cavernous fireplaces, latticed windows, and deep window-seats. We wondered who of the pageant of sad and happy women had sat on these oaken seats and looked at the lovely view each window framed, and we longed for some kindly ghost to tell us a little of the gossip that had circled about the wide hearth in winter, when curtains were drawn and the Court made merry. Perhaps, if history be true of the mad gaiety of the Stuart entourage, it may be as well we are ignorant! But it is so easy to fill these long dim galleries with beaux and belles in satins, velvets, whose vivid colours send down reflections into the golden-brown parquet-floor, and whose jewels gleam in the soft light of the hundreds of candles in the cut-glass and silver sconces of the great chandeliers. One can almost hear the tinkling music of the spinet and the tap of the high-heeled shoes.

But unfortunately the commonplaces of everyday destroy the illusion, and a band of turbaned Hindoos fills the places of the long-dead courtiers. Clustering together in dumb stolidity, they are being shown the glories of Hampton Court by a guide, who rounds them up and drives them from room to room like sheep, halting now and then for voluble explanations. Quite close two Germans are gutturally admiring some pictures, and a knot of gesticulating French women are exclaiming over the beauty of an old fautenil.

The pieces of antique furniture are certainly fascinating. In William the Third's bedroom there is the State bed of Queen Charlotte, a great dim sarcophagus that looks haunted with evil dreams. It is very

high, and in case of a hurried exit, caused by burglars or fire, there would be a certainty of a sprained ankle. Dusty feathers wave at each corner of the heavily-moulded tester, and it has faded curtains whose violets and roses time has turned to faint lilacs and soft pinks—delicious tones on the ivory damask background. It is all needlework, embroidered for the Queen by the little orphans of clergymen. Poor little fingers! How tired they must have got over those tiny stitches and the interminable piece of work. The task was enough to make them all turn anarchists.

Of course Raffaelle's cartoons are among the most interesting treasures. They are huge sheets of paper, painted with magnificent scenes in still vivid tints. These were designs for the Arras weavers, who were to copy them in tapestry for Pope Leo X. But his assassination cut the contract, and the cartoons, unused and unpaid for, lay for years until bought by England. Even them, for a century, they were stored at Hampton Court, still in the pieces in which, for the convenience of the weavers, they were cut, and it is not so very long ago that they were restored and hung in what is called the Watching Chamber, that opens from the great hall.

Of the latter much has been written. It needs to be seen to be appreciated, for mere words cannot picture its splendid proportions, its jewelled windows, its rich panelling and carving. It has been the theatre of many dramatic scenes since the early Tudor times, and Shakespeare himself acted in it, and, later, witnessed his "Hamlet" performed on its stage. Here King Hal, the much-married, witnessed and took part in many masques and mummings, and here were all State functions held, including the proclamation of Catherine Parr as Queen. The minstrel gallery is exquisitely carved, and is supported by a magnificent carved screen, in which are two entrances, used in old times by the actors, for here the stage used to be erected. It is a most impressive interior, but even more fascinating to me—because it was so intimately feminine—was Queen Anne's bedchamber, with the great bed, the little stools and stiff brocaded chairs. Here slept, or lay awake alas, perhaps oftener—poor Princess Caroline, wife of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Second. The ceiling shows Aurora rising out of the sea, and is magnificently painted by Thornhill, and the chandelier is a mar-

vel of delicate silver work with hanging glass balls. In the ante-room, against the wall is what we imagined was a holy-water basin of rather large size. But, later, we found it was the Queen's bath. She must have bathed by sections, for it could hardly hold more than her feet at one time.

Just across the road from the Palace gardens is Bushey Park, with its avenues of chestnuts holding aloft their spines of ivory and rose bloom, and its charming pond—the Diana Water—centred by the graceful statue. The deer roam about the copses and wide lawns, and rarely—though the gates are ever open—are foolish enough to leave their lovely demesne for the dust and din of the outside world. And we, like them, long to linger in these enchanted gardens peopled by the romantic figures of the past. But London, with its myriad voices, calls us. Our prosaic 'bus is waiting, and we have to go. But, until an envious curve hides it from us, we keep our eyes on the Palace embosomed in its enchanting gardens.

CHAPTER XV.

# LAYCOCK ABBEY

A Ruined Nunnery—Tudor England—Antique Treasures —A Little Heirloom — The Priest's Hole — The Abbey's Foundress — Cheerless Rooms—A Riot of Blossom—An English Juliet—The Abbey's Cauldron —In War and Peace.

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FEW ruins of nunneries are to be found in England, although of monastries, either converted to latter-day uses or in picturesque dilapidation, there are many. One of these nunneries, Laycock Abbey, it was my good fortune to visit, in company with a man who, about such things, was as enthusiastic as I was, and much more learned. It was a soft grey day, and our pleasant pilgrimage to the abbey was a delight as our motor whirled along through blossoming hedgerows, under the spreading foliage of great trees, with cornfields russet and golden just beyond, and, further still, the soft-swelling green of the Wiltshire Downs curving against the sky. To get to the gates, one has to pass through Laycock, which is one of the best-preserved Tudor villages in England, so little changed from its primitive state that our motor seems a wicked, noisy intrusion in its quiet narrow cobble-stoned streets. It is far from being pretty or attractive, for its houses, black-timbered and grey-stoned, with the quaintest gables, and odd little low windows with diamond panes of greenish glass, press close on the roadway, with no gracious gardens brimming over with colour and fragrance. No wealth of greenery clings to walls, and the general impression is sad and sombre, the brightest bits in the picture being patches

of orange and rust-red lichen on the stone, or the emerald of the tufts of grass that crest some of the walls. But it is intensely interesting, for here we are literally in Tudor England. A magnificent black-beamed house, with fine latticed windows, having armorial bearings on their panes, stands high above the meaner cottages. The inn, now tenanted by a lady who gathers—and sells—antique furniture, is exceedingly picturesque. One enters the low door, with its swinging golden angel sign, by a dog-gate, much resembling that which in earlier days preserved us from dashing out our brains at the foot of the nursery stairs. The rooms of the inn lead one from another, and are oak-panelled and quaint-shaped, and filled with the strangest assortment of furniture, curios from China and Peru side by side with Charles the Second chairs and Jacobean tables, and old lustre ware rubbing shoulders with Sevres and Dresden. Sometimes a villager will bring something she has had for years—and her fathers before her—and which, now that gentle folk are so absurdly keen to buy old rubbish, may add to the family purse. Such was a little apron of hand-spun silk, amber-tinted, and so old that it had to be handled with care. But the tiny stitches and delicate threading of the flower-wreath across it were marvellous, an object-lesson to the needle-workers of to-day. A great carved bedstead, richly carved, had just arrived, and was lying disjointed on the floor, for its stately tester was too tall for the low rooms. In one of the upper rooms the present occupant, in renovating, had discovered two windows, closed many years ago, probably to avoid the window-tax. She had also found the "priest's hole"—a hiding-place in times when a Roman Catholic was an outlaw. We went into another little inn with low-browed doors and windows and great oaken beams. Post cards formed our excuse, but the good woman, flattered by our interest in the village, showed us into her little back parlour, bright with flowers, art being represented by glass cases of stuffed birds, and the sweetest view of a cottage garden through the long-latticed window—a cheery sight after the sober melancholy of the village street.

Laycock is mentioned in the Doomsday Book. There it is written that it had a certain number of acres of vines, and there has been considerable controversy over this entry, for now no grapes will ripen out-of-doors in Wilt-

shire; yet in many places the hillsides are terraced almost to the top, and in such a way that suggests cultivation rather than defence. So, perhaps, as many districts are mentioned in the Doomsday Book as possessing vines, the climate of England may have changed since the Conquest.

But we are long in reaching the nunnery, for the village is a fascinating spot to linger in, with its old-world air, and its narrow, curving roads and ancient houses so delightfully out of drawing. Before we reach the gates of the abbey we pass the long, low tithe barn—a goodly receptacle for the taxes levied by the abbess on the peasants. Inside the gates the splendid grey stone front of the abbey, raised on its grassy terrace, faces us. It looks very old, but scarcely its age—nearly seven centuries. Its foundress was the Countess of Salisbury, who married the son of Fair Rosamond and Henry II. The latter's tomb, by the way, was only recently discovered at Fontevrault, in France. Presumably Ela—for that was her charming name—found that her husband possessed the captivating qualities of his mother, for after his death his widow refused a host of other suitors, eager to annex her wide lands. She was made—a great honour for a woman—Sheriff of Wiltshire, filled the position with tact and firmness, and, while still in what women of to-day would consider the prime of life, became abbess of the nunnery she had founded. In that capacity she ended her eventful life. She is buried there, and we saw in the cloisters the carved grey stone slab that covers her tomb.

When Henry VIII. started his crusade against monastic houses, Laycock Abbey held only fifteen nuns. And really, as we pass in and out of the chilly cheerless stone-walled rooms and damp narrow passages, it seems likely that they were the survival of the fittest, and that consumption and pneumonia must have claimed many victims. The mere idea of getting up in the middle of a winter's night and kneeling in the frigid little chapel on uncompromising stone flags, causes a shudder. When the abbey was empty, one Sir William Sharington bought it—or was given it for services rendered—by Henry. It was he who pulled down the church that was attached to the nunnery, and perhaps the very stones that echoed to so many praises and prayers have been converted to such base uses as the building of the stables and outbuildings. These include, by the bye, a

most interesting example of a Tudor brewhouse, vats, stands, and boiler complete, all made of oak beams joined together, without the use of a single nail. Doubtless it was sore sacrilege, but, as we stand in the great courtyard and look round at the beautiful old black-beamed and gabled buildings that surround it on three sides—the abbey itself bounding it on the fourth—we feel thankful to the old knight for having left so picturesque a relic of Tudor England. Creepers, white-starred jasmine and fragrant honeysuckle, ivy and virginia creeper already flushing at the approach of autumn, cling and clamber to the very twisted chimneys, and a late rose splashes pink blossoms on the rough grey blocks, and peers into the quaint attic windows under the frowning eaves.

It is midday, and the clock in the stable tower clangs out noon, but except ourselves—and even we instinctively hush our enthusiasm—there is no sign of life in the great courtyard that in old times must have been the setting for such vivid gaiety and busy activity. Now a bachelor, Mr. Talbot, a relation of the Earl of Shrewsbury, occupies the upper part of the abbey, and his rooms are full of interesting relics of bygone times—old furniture, fine china, and good pictures. Surely, the ghosts of the nuns must walk below the empty cloisters, and their Aves must sometimes be heard rising from the little chapel. It was Mr. Talbot's ancestress who, an English Juliet, loved a son of an enemy, and used to talk to him from the battlements of the abbey. One night, impatient of the distance between them, she leapt down to him. The chronicler quaintly tells how, but for her coats holding her up, she would have been killed. As it was, she fell upon her luckless lover, who was taken up for dead. After some time he recovered, and her old father consented to their union, saying testily that as she had nearly killed him, she had better marry him.

By low-arched doorways one enters the various rooms that open on the cloisters surrounding the inner court. The steps that lead into the chapel are worn with many feet into hollows. The abbess's sitting-room contrasts quaintly with the luxurious boudoirs of the modern woman. It is set low below the courtyard, and the low roof is vaulted, and rises in columns from the rough stone floor, where still are remnants of faintly-coloured tiles. The little, pointed

windows are placed high up and sunk deep in the immensely thick walls, and the wide, open fireplace is the only cheerful part of the room, which in winter must have been always in a dim, religious gloom. The nun's refectory is larger and a little more cheerful, and has a high stone window-seat reached by steps. The outlook gained is only the courtyard and the cloisters, but the worn steps show that even this recreation was in demand. A huge cauldron stands in the centre of the room. Not long ago it was in the grounds, but some miscreants endeavoured to break it up—it is of bell metal, and stands three feet high—and it was put here for safer keeping. This was part of the cooking utensils of the nunnery, and would hold a side of bacon and a sack of peas, as well as various minor ingredients. It is three-legged, in the shape of the Irish skillet, and bears a Latin inscription to the effect that it was molten or made by Peter Wagherens, of Mechlin, in the year 1500. "Praise to God and glory to Christ."

Traces of frescoes are visible on several of the walls, faintly coloured—the incident depicted in some quite unrecognisable—so that perhaps the grey monotony may not originally have been so general. Opening from the nun's refectory are tiny dark rooms, where perhaps refractory novices were put until penitent. The groined roof of the cloisters is beautifully carved, exquisite designs centring each group of arches.

It is pleasant to leave the damp dusk greyness of the Abbey and reach the grassy terrace where once the chapel stood. Magnificent trees cluster about a great square fish-pond, where the nuns perhaps caught their Friday's fare, and beyond, through lovely stretches of meadow and copses, are the silver loops of a quiet stream. It is the very personification of peace, this great grey building in its wonderful setting of green and silver, and yet its walls have echoed to the sounds of war as well as to the voices of prayer and praise. In the Civil War, it was garrisoned for the king and taken by the Parliamentarians, but time brought back to it its original owners. To the present lord of the manor, who loves and cares for his precious possession, and yet is generous in allowing the outside world to see it, much gratitude is due. These object lessons in English history impress us deeply with a sense of reverence and a greater love for our Mother Country. Lay-

cock is out of the general route of the tourist, and it was delightful to find not one critical American hustling along, Baedeker in hand, "doing" this scrap of Tudor England en route to half-a-dozen other sights. We had the romance all to ourselves, and could people the exquisite grounds with black-robed white-coifed figures, set the bells of the Abbey a-swinging, and listen to the Angelus floating out from the chapel. The deserted village street was a fit setting for Shakespeare's vivid folk, and it was easy to imagine Queen Elizabeth, with her gorgeous retinue, passing between the quaint houses to taste the hospitality of the Lord of Laycock Abbey.

CHAPTER XVI.

# ACROSS THE SOLENT

An Old House—A New Town—Romantic Carisbrook—The Sea Trip—The Castle Gate—Walk on the Walls—The Moat—A King's Garden—Little Princess Elizabeth—The Ruins—A Lotus-Land.

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FOR two weeks London, with its hustle and turmoil, has been to me merely a memory, and I am now revelling in the freshness and beauty of the English country. Eastleigh was my first halt. It is a comparatively new town, made by extensive railway works, and when, in the evenings, the men and boys pour out into the streets, it is quite impressive, if not picturesque. Many of the workmen have come with their families from the East End of London, and as yet the children have not got the roses into their pale cheeks, while the women still keep the haggard, worried, unkempt look that is not seen in the born and bred country woman. The house I stayed at is the oldest residence of any size there. In fact, the farm it has evolved from was mentioned in the Doomsday Book, and the outhouses are centuries old. The house itself is quaint, with red purple tiles and walls of "dropped" slate, almost hidden by luxuriant creepers, and the rooms inside are up and down and full of picturesque angles and windows. It takes time to find one's way about some of these old dwellings. In an inn I stayed at on the borders of the New Forest, three steps led down into my bedroom after I opened the door, and my usual entrance was ungraceful and sudden, for I generally fell down into it.

A most charming day's excursion from Eastleigh was to Carisbrook, the romantic castle, rich in history and legend, that stands in the Isle of Wight. It was a perfect day of brilliant sunshine, and the little sea trip from Southampton was delightful, and made most interesting by a fellow-passenger who knew all the varied craft that lay in the harbour. He pointed out the great white liner, the Balmoral Castle, that was to carry the Duke of Connaught to South Africa. It was evidently being renovated, for only one of its funnels had been painted, and men were busy at the other. Several transports, waiting for the season to arrive when the soldiers should go abroad, were lying idly on the water, and great liners and fussy little ferry steamers, oil-launches, yachts, and red-sailed yawls, were going in all directions. The Germania, a magnificent yacht, owned partly by Krupp, is the finest of all the beautiful sailing craft, and not far from her lies the Enchantress, the old Admiralty yacht, her busy days over, for now she has no engines. These were taken out of her some years ago, and she has been converted into a clubhouse for yachtsmen. She is most elaborately fitted up, and has under her wing a flotilla of smaller craft at the bidding of members. The low shores curve for miles on either side, and on our right Netley Hospital nestles among its trees. Not far away is the towered mass of Netley Castle, where, only a few days ago, a daughter of Colonel Crichton was married to a son of Admiral Fanshawe. At Cowes, leisurely and quaint, all its gay regatta over, we take a lazy little train that, after several ineffectual starts, takes us to Carisbrook. It is not necessary to ask the way, for the great grey mass of the castle looms up above clustering woods crowning a hill just beyond the little village, with its narrow twisting streets and low-browed houses.

To reach the foot of the hill we pass through a churchyard, down steps into the street, round the corner of the charming old castle inn, and up a lane where, on either side, are tea-gardens, tempting in their luxuriant shade and blaze of blossoms, the houses most romantically thatched and draped with creepers. In the window of a cottage there is a ticket notifying that inside are guide-books to the castle, and I got one from an old lady, whose bedridden husband wishes me a cheery good day as he lies at the

flower-wreathed window. Grassy slopes lead to the tree-crested heights, where the grey walls are guarded to-day by no armed retainers but by a faded old woman in black with a portmanteau of post cards, and a blind man with a wheezy concertina, who pours down embarrassing blessings for the ill-deserved penny. Through the outer gate, built by Queen Elizabeth, for whose industry and love of travel I have an ever-growing respect, we pass to the bridge over to the moat—now a very lovely wilderness of creepers and trees. That gate saw many wonderful sights—the Royal progress of the virgin Queen, the entrance of King Charles, a fugitive, his exit to his trial and execution, and the funeral of his fair little daughter Elizabeth. Pageants, processions, the turmoil of war, the return of the victors, these grey old gates have framed; and now only a stream of sightseers pass through.

Beyond the moat stands the principal gate, said to be one of the finest of its kind in England, built in the 15th century by Anthony Woodville. Here still are traces of the portcullis, and narrow doors on each side lead to little cells, the prelude probably to the castle dungeons. Beyond is a romantic sight, the grey façade, bounded by ruins set in riotous verdure, the grand sweep of the walls encircling all, and the frowning tower of the keep rising at the back. One can walk all round on the top of the walls, each embrasure yielding an enchanting picture of gently-curving green hills, wide meadows, the clustering houses of little towns, and the sweep of the grey-blue water. Directly below is the wide moat, filled with trees and shrubs, and on the other side beyond a tangle of traveller's joy—a most appropriate plant—and perfumed honeysuckle. One looks through the branches of the tall trees to the gardens below; there is the very bowling green, its brilliance enhanced by tall yew hedges and grey stone bases, where poor Charles with his little daughter Elizabeth used to pace up and down, trying to soothe his anxieties by reading religious manuals. There they played bowls, and, perhaps, the tall rose-red hollyhocks and vivid scarlet geraniums are descendants of the flowers that brightened their prison-pleasance. In the ruins there is a window far up, through which the royal prisoner used to gaze towards the mainland, and where he made a desperate effort to escape by cutting through the bars.

The Baronial Hall is a place of desolation, roofless, with broken walls and melancholy relics of carved stone and gorgeous iron railings. But Time, though it has wrecked it, has adorned it, too, with trails and tendrils, floored it with grasses and mosses, and canopied it with leafy branches. Traces of the little room where the sad, brief life of little Princess Elizabeth ended are to be seen, and in the ruined kitchens the great hospitable fireplaces and goodly ovens are still plain. Of course there is a ghost. It walks at mirk of night along the dark passages and into the deserted ruined apartments, but legends differ as to its form. Some declare the little Princess Elizabeth wanders pitifully about looking for her father.

If one walks around the walls to the back of the castle the keep is reached, and, to most who know something of history, this is the most interesting part of the ruins. From it is gained an enchanting view, which includes Royal Osborne, Newport, and the Solent, and here was the last retreat of the besieged in time of war. It is evident that there have been several rude rooms here at one time, and here, too, is a well, now choked up, but the centre of much legend. It was not merely a water-supply in emergency. It afforded an escape, so the tale goes, when the enemy had burst the last barrier, for in its sides opened subterranean passages leading to store-chambers, and one, a mile long, to an outlet. It is to be feared that there is nothing of truth in the tale, or it would, in these days of research, have been proved. But the story is fascinating, and, standing at the head of the narrow steep steps leading to the keep, one can picture the hurried flight from the castle, the women terrified, the children frightened, to this last refuge. Somehow the sunshine, pouring down on the pathetic ruins where men strove and suffered, and women loved and sorrowed, intensifies the sadness that hushes the tones even of the bustling Americans who are systematically "doing" Carisbrooke.

There is a curious well-house, where a donkey turns a wheel, but even the Isle of Wight train sometimes goes up to time, and we must descend to the town. As it happened, the train was late, and we grudged the time on the hot platform which we might

have spent in the castle. But the Isle of Wight is a sort of lotus-land. No one hurries, and there is a languor and a leisurely peace in the air that is the antithesis to London. It seemed quite fitting that, as our guide-book told us, the Isle was the last place to embrace Christianity. But, though it may not hustle, it is a place of gracious beauty, swelling downs, soft hills, charming old-time villages, and winding romantic streams, and its suzerain—the Duchess of Battenberg—must feel proud of her domain.

CHAPTER XVII.

# HADDON HALL

Its Owners—Quaint Bakewell—Manners and Vernons—The Old Church—First Glimpse of Haddon—Its Courtyard—Ancient Kitchen Utensils—Good Queen Bess—The Ball-room—The Chapel—Cheerless Rooms—On the Tower—Marvellous Views.

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HADDON Hall is alone worth coming half across a continent to see, so wonderfully has the atmosphere of romance and medievalism been preserved. It says much for the Dukes of Rutland that they are so generous in regard to Haddon, and throw it open to the public. The family takes keen delight in their magnificent possession and, though they live at their more magnificent Belvoir Castle, are often to be seen at Haddon. The Duchess is a very brilliant woman, and her daughters exceptionally clever, one possessing a wonderful voice, and all—mother and daughters—being passionately musical.

To get to Haddon one drives from Bakewell—a quaint little grey stone village little altered from Dorothy Vernon's time, with flat-fronted squat houses with bowed windows, the ceilings so low that, when we sat at lunch in the first floor of the little inn, I could, by reaching a long arm out of the latticed window, have touched the hats of those walking on the pavement. The village abounds in tokens of the Manners and the Vernons, and in the fine grey church are the tombs of the great families. Dorothy Vernon, sedate and old—with little resemblance to the passionate high-spirited beauty whose footsteps we trace at Haddon on her way to meet her lover—kneels with hands folded, opposite her handsome husband, who has the debonair comeliness of an

Elizabethan courtier, even to the pointed beard and the straight features. Below them are ranged four little puppets, carved and coloured, their children, who, if the figures resemble their sitters, do not possess their parents' beauty. One, indeed, looks a shrew and a confirmed old maid, but doubtless they are libels. Other fine tombs, too, are here, black marble lords and ladies stretched in calm repose on their great slabs of stone, and other kneeling figures, one in armour.

Against the church, outside, are leaning two stone coffins—such as are often dug up about here, and a fine Runic Cross, covered with inscriptions and carving, stands near the beautiful old oak door. The first glimpse of Haddon Hall is seen when driving along the broad white road shaded by the great elms and oaks. Its battlements peep above the wealth of verdure in which it is set on the side of a hill, and above it rise dense woods. The Wye—grown since we saw it, a baby, in Poole's Cavern—flows in a curve about the Hall and down through the park. We drive across the bridge and gain the custodian's cottage, which is as ancient as the Hall, built of grey stone, and set in an old-world garden filled with flowers, old-fashioned, too, holly-hocks, London-pride, lupins, sweet William. In front the yew-trees are quaintly carved, two of them into the crests of the Manners and the Vernons. Here we leave the carriage, and climb the little hill to the door of the Hall, of heavy oak, bleached with time and weather, and studded with great nails. The stone threshold is worn a foot deep with the tread of centuries of feet, and by a stone-flagged archway we gain the courtyard.

One can imagine the armoured knights in this quadrangle and their lady-loves watching from the windows that look down on it. Some vivid rose and scarlet tulips make a startling splash of colour against the grey stone walls. By an arched doorway, so low that the tallest of us has to stoop, we gain the kitchen. No modern maid would stay a moment in the great, dark, stone-floored room, with its small, dim windows and its primitive accessories. But perhaps when the huge fireplace was aglow generously, and delicious odours of capon and sirloin floated out into the room, this kitchen might have been cheery. The two housewives of the party are intensely interested in the relics of the utensils. There is the mincing-block, a solid trunk

cut at a convenient height and scored with a million marks. Near by are the mixing bowls—two hollows in a thick, long block—one worn into a hole by centuries of cooks. The pantries are dim dungeons, the bread-oven a hole in the thick wall, but the long oak table still holds the centre of the room.

It would take too long to tell of all the romantic apartments we were taken through—all too hurriedly, alas! I was always last, loath to tear myself away from such fascinating surroundings, and the cicerone eyed me suspiciously, as if I belonged to those tourists who break off noses of statues and cut bits from old hangings as mementoes. But some things impressed me deeply. In one of the tapestried bedrooms was the dressing-table and looking-glass used by Queen Elizabeth, the top of the one and the frame of the other of tortoiseshell set in tarnished gold. A spinet, a quaint carved cradle in which the first Duke of Rutland was rocked, some old tabourets, a wonderful bed with draperies embroidered exquisitively by one of the dead duchesses—tiny stitches that did credit to her patience, and damage, surely, to her eyesight—and a washing tally. All were of intense interest. The latter was a board with rows of little disks, with names of garments—quaint names, such as half-hose and shifts—and numbers, so that, by moving the latter, it could be seen at once how many and what articles were sent to the wash. From the ball-room—all carved oak, shining floors, and emblazoned oriel windows—there is a glorious view across the gardens, which are terraced, the terraces supported with great brick walls of delicious colour, with huge buttresses covered with ivy. Velvet lawns made fair settings for brilliant blossoms, and beyond were woods, while a glimpse of the old pack-horse bridge—a narrow, grey stone span across the Wye—can be seen among the trees.

From an ante-room just outside the ball-room Dorothy Vernon escaped out into the garden to meet her lover. I followed her, trying to picture the scene as she stole under the dark yews to the gate. But the daylight and the American girl behind (who had one beloved epithet—"stunning"), somewhat blurred the romantic picture. The chapel—some of it 700 years old—is grimly uncomfortable, but most enthralling, especially the squint-hole in the roof—where the service could be watched by those who preferred fresh

air—the stone font, and the high carved pews where the nobles sat. In the banqueting hall, which has a carved minstrels' gallery, a dais, and the worm-eaten table where the personages sat, there is ring fixed to the wall in which the wrist of a guest addicted to the unfashionable vice of temperance was locked, and the liquor he refused to drink poured down his sleeve. We climbed right up to the top of the tower—Peveril's tower—first by a corkscrew stair that showed doorways that led to the pages' and soldiers' rooms, now unsecure and never ventured into. In one we saw the remains of an old wardrobe, the great rows of pegs still sticking out from the wall. What cheerless quarters they must have been with their rough stone walls, and tiny windows like slits!

After getting out on the platform we had still to climb an outside stair to the very top, and there we saw a wondrous view—a wide panorama of the loveliest scenery in England. From there, in bygone times, the sentinel watched for the enemy. What we saw was a peaceful, pleasant, sunlit country, full of gracious curves and smiling dimples, with nothing to tell of the times when war overran the land, and men went about armed. Now the golf-club and the fishing-rod have taken the place of the pike and the sword, and, except for the thickness—some five feet—of the walls, and the forbidding, almost windowless face it turns to the side from which it might be attacked, there is little to connect Haddon Hall with bloodshed and strife. It is rather haloed with romantic memories of Queen Elizabeth and her gay court, of fair chatelaines sewing tapestries in the oak-lined rooms, listening meanwhile to the spinet or the harpsichord, and of dainty Dorothy and her gallant lover.

CHAPTER XVIII.

# CAMBRIDGE

Cobblestones and Vivid Songs—The Undergraduates—The Blazer—The Jungle—Crooked Cam—A Bump—A Tense Moment — Exquisite Surroundings — The Gates of Caius—Concert at St. John's—Dangers of Sleep in Church—A Lovely Window—Quaint Shops —A Tram Ride—Outside the Town.

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CAMBRIDGE is charmingly old-fashioned. Its streets are winding, very narrow, and of cobblestone so much in evidence that no resident who drives much in 'bus or motor car can suffer from a sluggish liver. The noise of the traffic along the roads always reminded one of the line in the Pauper's Funeral: "Over the stones, rattle his bones." Our boardinghouse had its front of grey stone almost covered with creepers, facing the noisy street, but its back windows overlooked the loveliest woods, the great trees pressing so close to the house that the branches almost brushed the panes. These are the grounds of Downing College, and, after the boat races were over, I lay at midnight and listened to wild shouts of merriment, songs, and cheers coming from the college, which presumably had made a bump and was rejoicing. Though those sounds were inspiriting, it was pleasanter still to wake in the early dawn and hear the birds at their matins; many with unfamiliar notes, among them the insistent cuckoo and the hoarse rook.

Cambridge exists for the undergraduates. The shops depend on their support, most of the houses let rooms to them, and the population generally lives and has its being in or about the university. The young men, mostly bareheaded, swing along the streets with an air of possession,

fine stalwart lads, bronzed and fresh-faced, their tattered gowns—it is not at all the thing to wear a gown that shows no signs of wear or tear—floating carelessly from their shoulders. If they wear their trenchers, these are generally sadly shapeless. Sometimes a knot of blazers makes a lively splash of colour, and among these the scarlet of St. Margaret's is finely conspicuous. It is to the colour of this college that we owe the term "blazer." In the evening, many undergraduates are to be seen in immaculate dress clothes, oddly draped with their ragged gowns and crowned with their disreputable trenchers. Among them are many Hindoos, and each year the number is increasing. There are so many in one college that it is known as "The Jungle." They are treated as comrades by the others, but I heard that they are not, as a rule, brilliant scholars, and are content with scraping through with their examinations. What they are going to do with their university education is a question that is much debated, and some pessimists consider that England, in many of these students, is making weapons to be turned against herself, and assert, moreover, that the fees of many of these Orientals are paid by the seditious party.

The crooked Cam beyond the picturesque bridges that span its course through the lovely grounds of the colleges is a gay sight when the boat races are on. One shore is thickly fringed with craft of every kind, filled with girls and men, content to wait hours for the brief minutes when, tense with excitement, they watch the beautiful boats, like huge water-flies, go speeding past, their oars flashing, and each little coxswain the image of feverish anxiety. Should a bump occur close to where the crowd is gathered, there is tremendous excitement; but even if it does not, the air is rent with cries and shouts of encouragement to the different colleges. Mascots are held up and colours flaunted, and the excitement is great when the head of the river boat comes past, each man's hat wreathed with flowers. It is all very gay and interesting, and the tea, so deftly made in the boats—the spirit lamp miraculously poised and guarded from draughts—was nectar. But it was on the return journey that the keenest excitement was felt. For ten minutes our boat was the centre of a dense mass of whirling and twisting craft, so massed together that there was no room to use the oars, which were mere impedimenta.

Each temporary captain's object was to get out of the seething mass and get into the comparatively clear water beyond, and no means were considered unjustifiable to accomplish this. I have still a memory of a great red-faced man lying full length over the bows of his boat, gradually propelling it along by clutching at the sides of the craft in front or beside him, which narrowly escaped being capsized. There were yells and shouts and crashing of timbers, and even women shoved and clung and pushed—with much danger to fingers as the boats grated against one another. One boatload did overturn, and some girls in summer frocks got an unexpected bath, but it was all in the day's work. A small steamer was utilised as an unwilling tug by many of the boats, with the consequence that their weight swung its nose into the bank, and it was left stuck, greatly to the annoyance of its passengers.

The "Backs" are perfectly beautiful, even when the carpet of spring flowers has given place to stretches of vivid turf. The grand old trees, the grey and red walls, all embroidered with creepers, the stately quadrangles, and the romantic bridges—one, at St. John's, is a model of the Bridge of Sighs—all make exquisite pictures. The twisting narrow alleys that lead to the great gates of the colleges are full of interest, and the gates themselves most impressive. In Caius College there are three symbolic gates—the first of Humility, by which the student should enter college life, the second of Virtue, in which he should continue his career, and the third—the exit—of Honour, which leads to the Senate House, where the degrees are conferred. Many of the colleges are set in gardens, old orchards, and lawns where are brilliant flowerbeds and quiet pools in which are reflected masses of scarlet geranium. There is an enchanting atmosphere of peace and rest about the grounds—an atmosphere the high spirits of the students often succeed in dissipating. From the open windows come shouts of mirth, music from gramophone, violin, and piano, the latest comic song, and all the various sounds of jovial masculinity in holiday time. Sometimes their spirits get the better of their wisdom, and one evening in May week the bonfire, lit by one of the undergraduates, was fed with a piano and various other pieces of furniture. The next day a man was "sent down," and a solemn procession wended its way to the station, playing weird instruments, wearing crape weep-

ers, and generally taking possession of the town and the railway station.

At a concert held in the beautiful old hall of St. John's we heard remarkably fine music and saw a great number of pretty girls and handsome old ladies, and the latter are not common nowadays. Supper was served in the Combination Hall—a beautiful panelled room, with fine pictures, lit by exquisite silver sconces, each worth three hundred pounds. In the chapel the seats fold up at an angle against the back, and on these the monks were made to sit upright and still. The slightest nod or jerk, and the seat would fall, and the wrathful eye of the abbot be directed to the culprit. The fellows of the colleges, it is needless to say, do not follow the rigid example of their predecessors, but sit at ease on the lowered seats. In the ante-chapel of King's College, Queen Elizabeth once sat till midnight at a torchlight comedy by members of the university. The play rounded off somewhat inappropriately the Sunday evening service! In Peterhouse Chapel there is the most wonderful window of Nuremberg glass. Its soft tones of greens and blues are hauntingly lovely, and it is all the more interesting because during the Reformation it was buried in the grounds. Two small holes show that every scrap was not regained, but its rich beauty makes the modern Munich glass in the side windows look crude and garish.

I have not space to write of the quaint old shops—there are two establishments, one kept by Sadd and the other by Grief, side by side—of the old-fashioned fair, where at booths you can buy everything, from a pot of musk to a second-hand dress coat; of the continual chimes that ring out from many towers and spires in melodious discord; of the tennis championship meeting, where we watched Doherty play wonderfully; of the visit to Ely Cathedral, that must be reserved for a worthier place and more time.

With one little experience I shall end this chapter. One afternoon, in reckless mood, I mounted a motor-bus and went in it as far as it rumbled, out beyond the town and eight miles into the country. We passed little villages, with thatched cottages, wreathed in creepers to the eyebrows, and moss-grown churches set in grounds where ancient tombstones leant at many angles, half-buried in rich growth of flower and shrub. There were old inns with creaking

signs of quaint names—The Red Fox, The Green Man—the walls lopsided and deliciously out of drawing, with low, latticed windows and tiny attic windows like eyes under the thick brow of the overhanging thatch, all red, yellow, and brown in the sunlight. One cream-washed cottage bore the date 1748, and near it, at cross-roads, stood an old stone cross minus an arm. Far back from the road, in dignified solitude among their wonderful parks, were grey stone country houses. Little lanes curved and twisted in all directions, their hedges gay with briony and wild parsley. The cottage gardens were brimming over with flowers, and the few people about walked leisurely and stopped to talk to any neighbour on the slightest excuse. Only one person I saw who clashed with the delightful indolence—a red-faced, dishevelled girl who had cycled to London and back that day—ninety-one miles—and was resolved not to do it again. Even then she had not reached her home, and our 'bus passed her later as she toiled wearily along in the dust, her wide, rose-wreathed hat over one ear, and her white blouse more and more perilously bagging at the back. The delights of London are sometimes dearly won.

CHAPTER XIX.

# ENGLISH SCENES

To the Woods—Among the Pines—Where Meredith Lived—A Country Church—Lord Curzon at Home—Luxury and Art—The Victoria League—Henley Regatta.

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IT is wonderful to leave smoky, bustling London, where one feels—as E. V. Lucas says in his delightful "Listeners' Lure"—"So damned anomymous, just one of a white-faced, hurrying crowd"—and, in an hour or less, to stand in the great woods, where all is peace and rest, the silence broken only by the song of the birds and the rustle of the wind among the branches. Especially is a pine wood impressive. The great trunks rise in endless vistas like columns in a cathedral, dusk-brown from their heaps of needles or their carpet of rich bracken, and, above, their dense green branches make a fretwork of the blue sky. Here and there, in quaintest contrast to the grim pines, stand delicate silver birches, the tree which, when Orpheus summoned with his lute all the forest, was tardy in donning her white satin dress, and came too late, so was condemned always to wear it, in picturesque rags. It is at sunset when a pinewood looks most wonderful, for then the level beams turn the trunks to columns of flame, and the bracken to dazzling golden-green. Oxshott Woods, where we wandered, have been painted by Holman Hunt and Burne-Jones, and written about in his Sandra Bellona by George Meredith, who lived not far from them. In the beautiful memorial edition of his works, there is an exquisite picture of these woods. My hostess had met the great man in his quaint square-faced house on Box Hill—such a house, he told her, as a child might build, so simple

is its style. He was then too great an invalid to mount to his chalet at the top of his garden, where he used to write, but, though deaf, he was a vivid and brilliant talker on almost any subject. As an old man, too, he was splendidly handsome. A young couple, ardent admirers of Meredith's, now live in the house, and keep the garden just as he would have it when he knew each plant within its high box hedges.

Just on the outskirts of the wood, shaded partly by the pines, we came upon a tiny thatched cottage with latticed windows set in ivy and climbing roses, and a little porch beside which grew seven-feet-high delphiniums of vivid blue. It was strangely familiar, and then I remembered it might have been the very fairy tale cottage where the old witch lived. Not long ago, two Pucks of children did live in that cottage, and people passing through the woods in evening dusk used to start when two golden heads were pushed up, with impish cries, from the bracken, where they were hidden. Even residents lose their way in these woods, and on winter evenings they go through like giant will-o'-the-wisps in snow shoes, with lanterns, and together, for there are many tracks and one part is confusingly like another. Just beyond the woods I picked my first sprig of purple heather, opening in imperial contrast to its neighbouring golden broom. We went to church on Sunday morning through the most enchanting lanes, with huge trees on one side and on the other wide fields, scarlet with poppies among the pale green corn. Against the horizon were outlined, in misty blue, the Dorking Hills. The Church of Stoke d'Abernon is old, and belongs to a manor-house, so we walked through the lovely avenue and into the grounds to reach it. The great house, set in its wide, river-threaded gardens, is divided by no railings from its church, where lie the former squires and their ladies. Into the grey walls are built red Roman bricks, and within are some of the oldest brasses known in England. It is a peaceful, simple service. The very faces of these country folk are more restful than those of Londoners—and there were no huge hats nor tube frocks to frivolously divert attention. The best-dressed man in church was a footman—handsome, slim, tall, and immaculately groomed, with a black livery and shoulder knots. Some of these men-servants are remarkably fine-looking. He came in with the lady's maid,

a demure little person in a tiny black bonnet and neat black coat and skirt.

Lord Curzon gave a large at home, and though Basingstoke is over fifty miles from London, a number of guests went from London. Hackwood Park belongs to Lord Bolton, from whom Lord Curzon leases it, and is of immense size, the old house, part of which dates from Elizabethan times, standing in wide gardens, where herds of deer roam. Our host, who is not unlike a younger edition of Sir Charles Bowen, received his guests on the lawn, the very type, in soft hat and light tweeds, of a genial country squire, with a cheery word for each person, and a proud appreciation of his treasures. His three little girls were also in the garden. The house is full of art-treasures, and the guests were taken through in parties by a man who explained the chief attractions. The first room was hung with marvellous Flemish tapestry, and lit with large Indian silver electroliers. The old furniture and fine pictures were interesting, the large Romney, "Mrs. Milner," being a famous and beautiful example of the work of that most charming painter. Exquisite pale blue brocade covered the walls of the next room, which were hung with landscapes by well-known artists. Each picture was lit by footlights, concealed by a narrow brass bar set about a foot from the canvas. The effect was extraordinarily wonderful, a sunny glow being given to the foreground. Here, as in all the rooms, were many pictures of the lovely dead chatelaine, sad, smiling, alone, and with her little daughters. The most wonderful was in the library, on an easel, and is by Lenbach, the German artist, a hauntingly beautiful portrait in tones of ivory, gold, and bronze, the delicate oval face looking out from the canvas with a half-smile, and the finger on the lip—reminding me of Romney's lovely Lady Hamilton. Lord Curzon owns one of the finest Gainsboroughs, a beautiful portrait of Lady Impey. Everywhere are tokens of his Indian viceroyship—gorgeous carpets and hangings, gold and silverwork, and skins of wild beasts. An immense tiger skin is a trophy of his own rifle, and opposite it lies a lion skin, one of the largest ever obtained.

The large saloon is the original bit of the house, the Elizabethan hall, where the Virgin Queen and her merry court used to breakfast after the hunt. Round it has been built the rest of the fine house. The huge dining-room

has been divided by tapestries. But the part now utilised is very large, and the round table set with silver and roses, and with one pathetic chair ready, seems quaintly small in the wide space. Here are hanging lamps of the wonderful Blue John, the Derbyshire spar, so rare and so gloriously marked. Here, too, the Chippendale sideboard is loaded with gold plate and glistening cut-glass. There is no limit to the wealth and taste displayed, and it shows confidence for Lord Curzon to leave about such priceless treasures on cabinet and table. Grinling Gibbons' carvings are in many of the rooms, extraordinary in detail and design Italian workmen came to England to carve the ceiling in the dining-hall, India and Turkey furnished their choicest carpets, the curtains are heaviest satins and brocades. In the hall—near an old Belgian font of brass that is used for flowers—is a great organ that may be played by hand or by electricity, and the billiard-table is covered with the most gorgeous of Indian carpets—all crimson velvet and gold embroideries. There was so much to look at one almost missed the enchanting views from the great windows of brilliant lawns, set with flower-beds of scarlet, blue, and gold, and the dense background of huge trees. Tea was served on the lawns under an immense Eastern tent of red and blue embroideries, and a band, unseen in the wood, played delightful music. Though all day the rain seemed imminent, it kept off till our train neared London, and then we found it pouring down. But the afternoon had been too pleasant to grumble at little trifles like that, and our thoughts were busy with the infinite contrasts of great England, as we passed the blind, and lame, and halt, and poverty-stricken on our way from such riches and luxury.

This is Henley week, and the weather has been discouraging—damp, dreary, and dull, with, on Wednesday, heavy showers that made the meadows quagmires, and the merry-makers in the punts muffle themselves in waterproofs and rugs. Really, as yet, England has had no summer. It is all too cold to think of muslins or linens, and fires are welcome in the evenings. In fine weather, Henley Regatta must be a wonderful scene, for the setting—the broad river with its grassy banks and great trees, its picturesque boat-houses and quaint grey bridge—is lovely, and is made more charming by the innumerable craft of every kind, filled with gaily-dressed girls, and men in blazers and flan-

nels, while wreaths of flags flutter everywhere along the shore, and the barges are beautiful with flowers. We had tickets for the Balliol Barge, and, though the day was far from pleasant, were most comfortable, awnings protecting us from the wind and occasional showers, a luxurious lunch breaking the day most agreeably, and interesting people about, while in front of us, over the railing massed with white lilies and scarlet geranium and bonfire salvias, passed the fascinating panorama of the river ever changing. The races were evanescent thrills in the entertainment—a moment of tense anxiety and hoarse cheering as the magnificent boats sped by with their straining crews bending to the flashing oars. Quite as interesting to me was the river-life, the variety of types and combinations, the pretty girls paddling while the handsome man lay luxuriously at full length on the cushions, the family parties, father wearing his rowing blazer and tie, mother with a matronly eye on the hamper, and the son eager for years to fly and let him join the contest. The veteran oarsman is a delightful type, upright, bronzed, well-groomed, and keen as mustard, and the young Englishmen one sees here—the out-of-door breezy men, firm-lipped, clear-eyed, lean—are splendid.

Towards mid-day, tables were laid in the punts, and we watched numbers boiling their kettles and eating chicken and salad, with draughts of beer and claret. All along the banks were thousands making picnics, to the accompaniment of music of sorts from the river minstrels, of whom there were many. We might have been sitting in a music-hall instead of on a barge overlooking the Thames, for conjurers, ventriloquists, solo singers and choruses, nigger minstrels and gipsy fortune-tellers, all paddled up and did their little turns for our edification, concluding their performances by passing a long rod with a bag at the end along their audience for contributions. There was not a dull moment.

To some Canadians near us, however, the most exciting event was the race in which the Winnipeg men, rowing magnificently, won by a length. This was "the crucial moment for sure," as one of the men explained, and they had come a long distance to see their men win, he guessed. When it was over, they all pranced round and shook hands emphatically with each other, apologising later for their wild shrieks of encouragement and their elation.

It was not in accordance, they said, with English custom, to show any emotion! The excitement was infectious, for we all yelled too, to the boat as it passed, driven by the rhythmic powerful strokes. Eton, too, came in for hearty cheering as it won—the boys are huge favourites. But the small Canadian refused to cheer with his relatives. He said he had been obliged to wear an Eton suit, and he bore deep animosity to the college generally! When the Germans, rowing for the Diamond Sculls, forged ahead, not a voice was raised. The dressing was—in view of the imminent rain—very quiet and sensible, though here and there one saw a huge, flower-wreathed hat or a gay frock. Quite a number of sunbonnets looked melancholy when the rain came down, and the trimmest girls wore blanket coats or knitted golf coats with small neat hats to match in colour.

CHAPTER XX.

# VARIETY OF LONDON

Romance and History—An Alfresco Entertainment—Glass Houses—In the Slums—A Social Club—English and Scotch—Dinner in the House—The Fate of the Franchise Bill.

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ONE cannot help imagining that London is like Cleopatra in that "age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety." Dr. Johnson says: "He who is tired of London is tired of existence." That is certainly the idea that goes with the fresh eye that sees with delight the wonderful passing show of London streets, that finds beauty in the grime and mist, and discovers romances and histories in dull streets and turbulent highways. From the top of a 'bus one afternoon, as it trundled down a common-place road, I was pointed out the modest, yellow-faced house where the immortal Toole lived, the great studio where Gilbert, R.A., painted his famous Shakespearian pictures, and the lordly mansion, embowered in fine trees, built and owned by Arthur Roberts, comedian. Everywhere in London there is fascination to the enthusiast. Even a weary wait at a pit door has its compensations, for it is beguiled by the quaintest alfresco entertainments. Itinerant performers hurry from pit-door to pit-door, where the queues are standing, and arrive sometimes so hot and out of breath that it is difficult for them to play their parts. There are singers, of sorts. One man had a voice such as one might imagine a werewolf to possess. He howled like a dog, throwing his head back in excess of emotion when a high note was required, a signal for unbridled mirth from the crowd. He got, however, a few pence, and gave an encore, egged on by some hilarious urchins. Another man, old, red-faced,

with a scarlet muffler round his throat and tattered, colourless clothes, suddenly burst into song—a weird ditty about helping a poor, lonely brother and making life a pleasant dream. It was pitiful music, but the singer persevered through about ten verses and then took up the usual collection, in the shapeless cap he had been twisting all the time as he warbled. Then came a young man—breathless with running—who tied himself up into intricate knots on a sack on the road, and later on a clever boy took his place, and with a piece of felt—the brim of a hat—transformed his face into all sorts of characters, from a nun to a Napoleon. A small violinist, accompanied by his proud mother, played really well, but a concertina and a penny whistle were instruments of torture, and a gramophone on a perambulator, owned by a blind man, gave forth appalling sounds. Besides these we had boys with chocolates, fruit, newspapers, and fans—some of these latter emerging unexpectedly from penny rolls or cigars—and quite a number of blind beggars were led along the queue, their companions holding out tins or bags entreatingly, with "Pity the poor blind, kind miss!" Hurdy-gurdies and organs added to the general chorus, and it was with sighs of relief we gained the calm of the theatre, richer for experience, but poorer by many pennies.

In the heart of the poorer part of London—beyond Blackfriars Bridge—there is a Women's University Settlement, and there I was invited to dine, and afterwards to go to a young folks' club, the last gathering of the season, and therefore of much importance to members. Two houses, flatfaced, grimy, and dismal, have been thrown together to accommodate the self-sacrificing women and girls who give up ease, gaiety, luxury, and all the advantages of cultured society, to labour among the submerged. But they are bright-faced and cheerful, full of hope and enthusiasm, and in their large sitting-room upstairs, made by throwing into one several small rooms, are books, easy chairs, and a piano for their scanty leisure. The windows look out on a grassy plot, three back yards in one—a splash of scarlet geraniums and some trees making a grateful oasis in the desert of brick and mortar. Just beyond the grass and the high wall there is often pandemonium, fierce drunken brawls and sordid drunken rows making night

hideous. The front of the house looks out on Nelson Square—an open, gravelled space with magnificent trees, where children play and where old men and women sit and dream in the infrequent sunshine.

The club, held during the year, with a vacation of two months just now, is most popular, and its numbers are steadily increasing. The social part is merely a side-issue, for it aims at raising the boys and girls from the slough of despond they are apt to sink into, and night classes of all kinds are carried on. I talked to many of the girls, and they were specially enthusiastic over cooking and laundry work, while the boys praised up the gymnastics, a sample of which, excellently performed under the direction of a young fellow who had been there eight years, formed part of the evening's programme. The club is held in a large schoolroom, and to get to it we passed through narrow, muddy alleys, pent with high tenements, where slatternly women lolled on the doorsteps and dirty children squabbled in the gutter—in poignant contrast to the exquisite neatness and luxury of the houses and their owners in Park Lane. Many of the girls at the club had refined, delicate features, clear, pale colouring, and beautiful hair, which they did in the approved coster coiffure, parted and rolled in great lumps over their ears, the rest lightly plaited and turned up like the tail of a cart-horse. They had pathetic ideas on finery, and the paste comb, the string of large pearls, and the collarless flowered muslin blouse, were to be seen on all sides, but the tube skirt was, to their credit, not approved of. Indeed, they like their skirts made to give full play to their ankles, and they danced with grace and vigour. But their voices! They are strident and loud, with such an extraordinary accent that at times they are not easy to interpret. Apropos of the English accent, I was much amused at a lad from Aberdeen who had come to sit for his examinations in London. His tongue was braid Scots, and the people on the streets and in the car turned to look at him when he spoke. He told me he had sat next an Englishman in the class-rooms, and struck an acquaintance with him. But it was some time before he could fully understand what he said, owing to the English accent! I find the upper-class man has not so much accent as a weary tone, a languid drawl, much in keeping with some of the limp, willowy young men with their tightly

fitting morning coats and tall hats on the backs of their heads, but quite absurd when coming from the lips of the splendid young athletes who are in abundance here.

But this is a digression from the social, where there was much unconventionality about greetings and farewells, and unbridled enthusiasm over the songs and the other items on the programme, which was supplied by the girls and boys themselves, one vastly important youth acting as chairman. The directors like to put responsibility on them, and find it does good. It was a great night to many, for there was dancing, the girls mostly taking the floor, and—to round off the gaieties—tea and cake. One little girl, enjoying herself hugely, said gravely, when I told her I had come from New Zealand, 16,000 miles, "Jist for ternight, miss?" It was almost too pitiful to smile at. Another tall, fragile girl got up to dance, and sat down directly with a sigh. Asked what was wrong, she said she had had a bad foot for months, at first just a cut through a broken boot, but it had spread across the instep. Hospital did no good, and she had to stand all day at the factory. But, at any rate, she could sit and smile wistfully at the others dancing and enjoy the rest of the entertainment. Though many were from the roughest class, and many evidently desperately poor, there were none disreputably untidy, and no bad conduct. One tall girl received many congratulations on her new blouse of blue muslin, finished ten minutes before she left home, and adorned with tiny rufflings of the stuff, very neat and pretty. My escort through the Blackfriars Road and the New Cut was a committee boy—a lad who played, from ear, any air on the piano, but who confessed to me that, when someone started to teach him, scales sent him "fair barmy," and he "chucked it." I assured him of my sympathy. He made surgical instruments, and often got his nimble fingers cut and bruised. His brother was his chief topic of conversation, and was the most travelled chap in the place—had been on the Continent as a valet, in Capetown, all over England and Ireland, and now was off to Rhodesia. The little pig that stayed at home spoke with envy and admiration of the rolling stone. The New Cut and Blackfriars Road were a blaze of electric light and naphtha lamps, and, although it was 10 o'clock, women and children were busy shopping at the stalls that bordered the footpath,

and that sold everything from a rusty dress-suit to a penn'orth of shrimps. The streets were crowded, children everywhere, barefooted and bareheaded, ragged and dirty, and women loitered and gossiped and quarrelled.

In the midst of the crowd came the dash of the brilliant fire brigade engine, gold and scarlet flashing in the light, the splendid horses galloping furiously. It was vivid life, and I was glad I had seen it, though I was more impressed than ever with the sad contrasts of London, where a 3000-guinea vase may stand in a cabinet scarcely looked at, and men starve for want of a shilling.

If tea on the Terrace is an experience sought after by visitors to London, dinner at the House is still more to be desired, and it was my good fortune to be a guest at such a function on a most interesting evening—when the fate of the Women's Suffrage Bill was to be decided. There are great precautions taken in the English Parliament to avoid undesirable strangers from entering, and the gathering place for guests is generally St. Stephen's Hall. Beyond this, without their hosts, they cannot go, but they can look through the great arched doorway, guarded by sturdy policemen, and see political personages moving about cheerily. There is no dinner-hour in the House of Commons. It never rises till 11, and members slip in and out at will, having their meals at what time they please. I understand that an adjournment was once tried, but members did not come back, the social attractions of London proving too strong a magnet!

We dined in the hall that opens on the Terrace, and through the French windows—wide open to the soft evening air—we could see, above the mass of roses on the adjoining table, the picturesque silver-grey silhouette of the buildings across the Thames. Later, when we sipped our coffee out on the Terrace, the night had come, and a semi-circle of lights, like a topaz necklace, spanned the horizon beneath the dim outline of the great warehouses and beyond the dull silver of the river. Clusters of yellow stars flitted round the curve—fairy-like and exquisite, but merely humdrum tram-cars and motor 'buses. A ruby and an emerald moved over the water—a tiny tug—and each light sent quivering reflections into the Thames, golden swaying pendants to the curve of gems. At our backs rose the huge mass of Parliament, the Speaker's house closing in the

Terrace on the left, and the large windows were gorgeous as the lights flashed through ruby, sapphire, and emerald glass. It was an enchanted scene. There were many dim groups at the tiny tables, all along the tesselated pavement, and graceful women in lovely wraps of satin and chiffon walked up and down with their cavaliers, or sat and talked —perhaps of lighter themes than politics—while the scent of cigars and coffee floated out. It was hard to believe that, not far away, men were earnestly debating a question of which the answer, outside the House, throngs were waiting to hear. Upon the attitude of Parliament towards their demand depended much, and more than one covert threat has been uttered as likely to be enforced if the bill were lost. Up and down the Terrace walked, for a short time, sturdy John Burns, in solitary meditation, but the members were mostly in their seats. As we had been waiting to go in to dinner, Christabel Pankhurst came hurrying out, and just before we left there were gathered in Westminster Hall many prominent suffragettes, anxious to hear the fate of the Bill. It was a motley gathering in that historic, stately hall—stern-faced, plainly dressed women, girls in elaborate evening gowns and sumptuous filmy wraps, society dames in diamonds and velvets, with a goodly mixture of men of various ranks and conditions. A murmur of excitement rippled down the hall, broken across by the call of the policeman when the divisions took place. I heard no bell, only the cry crescendo as it passed from one policeman to another, and was finally repeated by the nearest, who guarded the steps that led into the forbidden but much-desired precincts. That night there were an extra number of policemen on guard, a disturbance being feared; but there was none, although open disappointment and disapproval were expressed. Standing among the other suffragettes was Mrs. Drummond, who has been several times in Holloway. The rigours of Prison discipline have not lessened her plump sturdiness, nor damped her ardour, for, when a sympathiser said, "Better luck another time," she answered cheerily, "We'll go on trying." A surging but quiet crowd met us outside the gates, and as we drove home the eastern sky was red with flame—some great warehouse on fire in the city.

CHAPTER XXI.

# THE PASSING SHOW

In the Parks—Carriages and Motors—Her Grace on Foot—The Cavaliers—Dog and Man—Mob Orators—At the Trocadero—Lewis Waller—Luncheon at Lyceum for Lady Reid.

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THOUGH the parks have lost their freshness and their flower-beds are not so brilliant, they are most interesting now that, as in bygone times, they are the resort of wealth, fashion, and beauty. The smartest carriages, their horses stepping as if their dainty hoofs disdained the ground, and their footmen and coachmen most irreproachably turned out and, as a rule, exceedingly good-looking, pass up and down the wide drive, and magnificent motor-cars and electric broughams buzz along. Sometimes the carriage draws up, and Her Ladyship or Her Grace takes the air on foot, not trailing her dainty skirts as in past summers, for, whether she affects the tube frock or not, her gown is always short, inches indeed above the ground, displaying a liberal amount of lace silken hose and the most piquant of buckled patent leather shoes. Many tight skirts, barely a yard and a half in circumference, are to be seen, but their owners, waddling like ducks and usually half extinguished under their enormous hats, do not belong to the best-dressed set—the small select coterie whom she who is wise watches for hints as to fashion. As a rule, black is largely in proportion to colours. Probably Englishwomen are realising how becoming it is to their fresh colour and charmingly-coiffured shining locks. Ninon is in huge favour, often veiling a Paisley foulard, and one charming gown of Irish crochet lace had a tunic of black ninon almost reaching to the hem and knotted loosely at

the back. Conspicuous this afternoon among the black gowns was a satin frock of golden banana tint, the long coat with flat falling panels elaborately braided with the same tone. Almost every woman wore white kid gloves, and at least every second one a large black hat, with white wings, black feathers, or ospreys. There is tremendous similarity at present among the leaders of fashion, and many of their smart cavaliers, too, absurdly resemble one another. They are slim, with well defined waists and often, alas, sloping shoulders, on which their black cut-away coat fits without a wrinkle. Their tall hats are worn far back, their monocle is generally in their eye, and their grey suede gloves, the glimpse of white waistcoat above the dark one, the grey tie and pearl pin, are all hall-marks of the gilded youth.

Much more interesting and much more pathetic are the dogs that are led by so many women and men. There are few sights more depressing than that of an immaculately garbed man, with all the signs of cultured intellect in his face, taking out an infinitesimal poodle on a chain for an airing. Dogs of all varieties are to be seen—the great Borsoi, the King Charles spaniel, the French poodle, the toy terrier; and all are treated with deference and consideration by their attendants and with absurdly inordinate affection by their owners. One wonders what the little ragged beggar-child, barefooted and hungry, must feel as she watches the pampered poodle on the carriage seat, wrapped in his cosy coat, with india-rubber boots on his feet, should he care to walk, and the prospect of the dainty breast of chicken for his luncheon. There is a shop in the Burlington Arcade where the quaintest articles of canine apparel are sold. I noticed motor goggles, pocket handkerchiefs, and, absurdest of all, little stand-up linen collars and neckties. In Prince's Restaurant a smart woman at an adjoining table kept her pug under her arm as she ate her luxurious luncheon, and only the other day a querulous mite of a lap-dog turned on a waiter and bit him. The lady, with somewhat grudging interest, enquired if the dog had hurt the man, and soothed down the ruffled pet with tender caresses and the scraps off her own fork from her own plate! The French poodles are preposterously coiffeed, shaven in patterns, and decked with vivid bows, not only at their necks, but on their backs

and tails. Quite a number of women are occupied as kennel-maids, attending and exercising pet dogs, so that after all the fad provides employment for many. But the length to which some women go in their affection for these animals is ridiculous.

At the Marble Arch end of Hyde Park on a fine afternoon there are always collected groups of people, the centre of each being some orator discoursing on various burning topics. On Thursday, after leaving the crowd of society men and women lounging in their carriages or on their chairs, softly speaking and wonderfully dressed, it was a change to find oneself among a throng of working men and women, many poorly clad, but all listening to the various speakers with, on the whole, silent interest. Tariff Reform, National Defence, Christianity—all had their exponents, generally illiterate and ungrammatical, but passionately earnest. Their audience pent them up so closely that it was not easy always to find the speaker, especially as often some opponent was hotly arguing with him. The speakers were not always men. Mounted on an impromptu platform a pleasant-faced woman in violet urged the claims of Female Franchise, and kept her temper in spite of interruptions, which she parried with some wit. The nucleus of another group was a black-browed Irish girl, who was beset by jeering lads, and who did not improve her position by telling them they had no sense, and wanted the taste of a shillalah over their heads and a dip in the Shannon. I listened for ten minutes to the rude and senseless repartee between the angry orator and her audience, and got not the smallest hint of her mission. Whatever it was, it did not gain by being entrusted to an ignorant and ill-tempered Irish girl, who showed none of the winning qualities of that delightful and eloquent people.

Dinner at a smart restaurant and a theatre to follow is a charming way to pass an evening in London. The Trocadero is wonderfully artistic. The great entrance hall, exquisitely decorated and filled with banks of flowers —when we were there rose verbenas and grey-blue hydrangeas were combined in artistic harmony—and the dining-hall is surrounded by a wide gallery, where also are set little tables, glittering with glass and silver, each centred with rose-red carnations. The orchestra that plays during

dinner is one of the best at any London restaurant, and the first violin is a noted musician ; so the music was exquisite, and greeted with applause by the diners, who, if they choose, can ask for some selection. On every table there is a programme of music, as well as menus and wine-cards, and it is said one absent-minded guest once ordered in mistake a little Samson and Delilah! Smart women, in elaborate evening gowns, and immaculate cavaliers are seen at every table, and heavy scents rise above the delicate clove perfume of the carnations. The waiters, all gold buttons and dark uniforms, flit about noiselessly, and the buzz of many tongues and many languages blends with the music. A Turk in dark surtout and red fez serves the delicious coffee with dignified condescension. The glow of light, the brilliant room, the music, the fascinating groups of people, the dainty menu —in which each dish is decorated out of all knowledge, and where a Maraschino sorbet sandwiches the joint and the entree—all combine to produce a very contented frame of mind, in which we move on to see Lewis Waller, the idol of feminine London.

CHAPTER XXII.

# THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

Tourist or Suffragette—An Open Sesame—The Women's Cage—Irritating Restrictions—An Imposing Ceremony—Snub for Churchill—The Colonial Office—A Famous Restaurant.

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I HAD no idea, until I mentioned casually that I had been to hear a debate in the House of Commons, what an envied privilege I had enjoyed. Since the militant suffragettes started their campaign, tickets have been got with more and more difficulty, and lately only lady relatives of members have obtained admission. Eager enthusiasts have managed to circumvent this order, and I heard of one girl who had gained entrance by purporting (with the member's permission) to be a member's wife—the sixth wife that particular politician had got into the gallery! "Are you a relative of the Speaker?" asked one old lady who had been trying for a month to get a ticket. I explained politely I came from New Zealand—a reason she seemed to think quite inadequate. Really I owed it to a letter from our Speaker to Mr. Lowther. Unfortunately it was a dull afternoon—the lull before the storm in the evening, when the Prime Minister made his pronouncement concerning the position of the Government, followed by the scene between Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Lloyd-George. But to me it was most interesting.

Even getting to the House was fraught with amusement, for every policeman of whom I asked the way looked at me with deep suspicion, scenting a suffragette. I grew so tired of these stern glances that I at last produced the Speaker's card, with magical result. From a courtyard, which is gained by passing through a magnificent vaulted stone hall, with dim stained-glass windows, one reaches the gallery by

means of a tiny cushioned lift that can only hold three people perpendicularly. It opens into a wide corridor with large notices of "Silence!" set about. A knot of women were gathered about the door, each with a little ivory disc, numbered. After a short wait a wonderful personage came out of an adjoining room. He wore evening clothes, knee breeches, and a gold chain with a large gold ornament on his chest. His manner was most impressive, and his fair hair absolutely glittered. So did his eye when he called in, by number, each of the waiting women, and bade her sign her name in a large book. This is a new rule, probably to ensure that any disturbance can be sheeted home to the right person.

I had no disc, and waited till the last frock whisked round the corner, when I meekly showed the Speaker's card. Evidently that ensured my respectability, for I had not to sign the book, and was ushered into a tiny gallery—Mr. Lowther's private gallery—where, in a stealthy whisper, I was bidden to take a front seat, which, so dark was it, I found mainly by sense of touch. The order paper was of little use, for it was too dark to read except by holding it close to the gratings which bar off the voteless women from the rest of the House. One feels horribly like a wild animal as one peers through the diamond-shaped apertures, and an old lady beside me—gorgeous in sables and rustling in silks—thrust her aquiline nose right through a hole in her efforts to see. Another lady used a pair of opera glasses quite openly. There were only four in the little gallery, and one—with delicate refined face and grey hair, wearing no hat—was pointed out to me as the wife of the Speaker. She was keenly intent on what was going on, and never took her eyes off the various speakers. Only the day before Queen Alexandra had sat in this same little gallery, in the dusk and behind the bars. An advanced New Zealand woman voter who, if she be the wife of a member, can, from her seat in our present House, tap her husband on the shoulder if he waxes unduly garrulous and tell him to come home, must resent these undignified restrictions.

The opening ceremony each day is more impressive than ours. The Speaker, whose wig is of more modest proportions than that which Sir Arthur Guinness wore, but who is an imposing figure in his black silk robes, walks to his place—also

less ornate than the elaborate canopy that overhangs the New Zealand chair—down the whole length of the great hall, preceded by the Sergeant-at-arms with a mace and the periwigged clerks. A chaplain, Canon Wilberforce, reads collects and prayers, and while the latter are being read the members turn and face the wall.

It is very confusing, in the sea of faces below, massed so closely—for there are no desks—to distinguish individuals; but I found, to my delight, Mr. Balfour, lazily graceful with his long legs outstretched, his hands in his pockets, and his white hair in keen contrast to his dark moustache. Mr. Austen Chamberlain, too, I both saw and heard in a most eloquent speech on the effect of the Budget on the brewing industry, listened to by Mr. Lloyd George with nose turned up into the air and his feet propped against the centre table. Indeed there is much unconventionality in the House, and more noise at times than I ever heard in the New Zealand Parliament at its wildest moments. The Irish brogue is predominant on these occasions. I watched a pink flush spread over Mr. Winston Churchill's bald head when he was rebuked by the Speaker for going out of bounds in his expressions. He is so perfectly certain of himself—this same Minister—and so aggressively superior, that a looker-on rather enjoys seeing him snubbed. When a small majority for the Government was recorded after this little episode, there were loud and ironical cries of "Resign!" from the other side.

New Zealanders who remember the tall Mr. Wason in the New Zealand Parliament will enjoy a story I heard apropos of his electorate. He is member for Shetland, and in those stormy isles travelling from one little group of constituents to another is difficult, and even dangerous. It is not an electorate that one would care to represent unless one were physically strong. While the last election was proceeding the Unionist candidate was asked by a friend what chance he had of winning the seat. His reply was prompt and to the point—"None, thank God, unless Wason gets drowned!"

The Colonial Office is a fine building, looking most venerable, but a mere baby of seventy years. But one of the rooms contains a relic of bygone days—a fireplace that used to be in a room which witnessed the only meeting between Nelson and Wellington. There, too, I was shown

the table, pen, and inkstand used by the King in signing the Commission for the United African States. I saw, too, the Commission itself and its magnificent silver and scarlet seal with heavy silver tassels. The King has the prerogative of signing documents on the top and at the beginning, and there was his signature clear and decided. The pen was of gold, exquisitely wrought, the inkstand also of gold, and the table was a beautiful model, in walnut inlaid with brass, of a Louis Seize table in the Louvre. It was specially made for the occasion, and, with commission, pen, and inkstand, went out with Lord Gladstone to the opening of Parliament at Capetown, as presents from England. From the windows of Downing Street office one can catch a glimpse of Whitehall, and see, too, the very plain unattractive front of the Premier's residence, which blossoms into beauty at the back—as, indeed, many London houses do.

Last week I lunched at a historic restaurant—the old White Horse Cellar. Leaving behind the bustle and noise of Piccadilly, you descend a wide flight of stairs and find yourself in a most luxurious underground white hall, exquisitely decorated in dull gold, rose, and flame-colour. One peculiarity of it is its low ceiling, traversed by heavy arches. It is so deftly lit that it is difficult to realise it is not sunlight that is flooding the charming place and glorifying the brilliant glass and silver, and it is still less easy to remember we are lunching in the cellar of one of the most famous hostelries of Old London, given its name in honour of the accession to the English throne of the House of Hanover. The rumble of traffic above reminds us we are below one of the busiest thoroughfares of the great city. This cellar is all that is left of the famous inn from which the London mail coaches started for the West of England, and where on summer evenings the rank and fashion used to gather to see the mails clatter off for their long and then perilous journey. Hazlitt has described the scene vividly—the enthusiasm, the brilliance of brass, scarlet coats, sleek horses, the blast of the bugles, and the front of the hotel studded with hundreds of multi-coloured lights. Many of these coaches were driven by peers. The immortal Mr. Pickwick visited the White Horse Cellar. In the fifties coaching came again into fashion, and there are still a few Londoners who

remember the pleasure trips that started daily from Hatchett's. Now the old place has been conformed to the strides of so-called civilisatioin, but a link between the past and present remains in the old waiter—in the service of Hatchett's for thirty-four years—who can recall vividly the good old times. The daintily-set tables in the restaurant soon fill, and as one delicious dish after another is served and tasted the popularity of the place does not surprise us. The suavity and courtesy of the waiters who bring each dish for inspection before deftly carving and dividing it, the delightful music, the scent of the flowers, the smartly frocked women and well dressed men, the trim "buttons" who pushes about the wheeled table with the many varieties of "smokes"—all combine to make up a pleasant experience. Perhaps the ghosts of the beaux and belles of long ago—in shadowy brocades and laces—haunt the place, and criticise the manners and fashions of to-day. They will probably condemn unreservedly the woman who finds difficulty in getting up the stairs because her frock is tied in about her knees, and the other misguided female who scratches the nose of her good-looking escort with the brim of her huge hat as she leans forward to whisper to him. The latest story regarding tight skirts may, because of the economy it inculcates, appeal to New Zealand women. A man looking over his wardrobe was throwing away a pair of old check trousers. "Don't do that," said his wife, "they'll make me two nice skirts."

CHAPTER XXIII.

# A SUFFRAGETTE DEMONSTRATION

Preliminary Canters—A Varied Crowd—Casual Vendors —Violet and Green—A Joan of Arc—Mother-in-laws —Mrs. Despard— Eloquent Chrystabel—A Languid Audience—New Zealand and England.

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FOR days before the suffragette demonstration in Hyde Park — and surely demonstration has too active and impulsive a meaning to be used for such an organised and deliberate a meeting— Londoners had walked over chalked entreaties to be present, enthusiasts had carried violet and green banners through the streets, and human sandwiches had paraded Westminster in legal but defiant remonstrance to the indifference of Parliament. Fortunately the day, for a wonder in this turbulent summer, was fine, and the park was looking lovely though not so exquisite as in its spring freshness and wealth of blossom. Always there is a haze about London that poetises even the most commonplace streets, and makes the vistas of splendid trees melt into the grey-blue distance. Standing on the long walk that leads straight across to the great open space—the entrance to the Route de Roi, which custom has demoralised to Rotten Row—one sees only a few picturesque house-tops and a spire or two above the tree-tops. Queen Anne's Mansions tower up, the highest dwelling-place in London, for since it rose a law has been passed forbidding the erection of such lofty buildings. I took tea in its tenth flat the other day, sitting in a great bay window which looks to three sides of London—a wilderness of roofs, gables, towers, chimneys, and spires, with here and there

an oasis of green or lines of trees. The grey ribbon of the Thames flashed in openings, and the mass of the Crystal Palace stood sturdily on the horizon. At night the scene must be mysteriously lovely.

The Suffragette procession was split in two, one half entering the Marble Arch, which now stands outside the park, and the other by Hyde Park Corner. I stationed myself within the railings to await the latter division. It was a gay scene, for the public was making holiday with children and lunch baskets, and the Suffragette demonstration was by many evidently treated as a side show, on a piece with Aunt Sally and Punch and Judy, though, perhaps, of not so thrilling a character. Curiosity had drawn many, interest others, and the desire to turn an honest penny a host of men, and boys, and women, who shouted their various wares—programmes, papers, chocolate, gooseberries: "'Ere's a bag of all right, jest a penny," cried the vendor of the latter. Badges, more or less hideous, and buttons were to be had for a trifle; the usual "Suffragette procession on a pocket-'ankercher," was to the fore, and one aged female paraded about in a green and violet paper sun-bonnet and offered others for sale, trusting apparently to the fascinating effect she had produced. At our backs the Park band played sad music, the policemen interchanged pleasantries, and a group of boys argued hotly on female franchise, the dispute ending in threats of summary punching of heads. The violet and green banners of the booths, forty in all, fluttered against the leafy background. Suddenly the Marseillaise was heard, a strain of defiance and enthusiasm, a quaint choice of airs for the women to march to, one would think, but in the procession that kept time to it there were representatives from all countries. Ahead rode mounted policemen, many with an expression of amused tolerance, a queer twist to their lips as they recognised the humour of the position. Immediately following them was a beautiful girl with a flag, bearing it with the air of a modern Joan of Arc. Tall, fair, slim, with delicate features and colouring, she was all in white save for a sash of green and purple, and, artistically speaking, she was the most charming feature of the procession. She was Miss Marsden, who was one of those forcibly fed in Holloway, and later on I heard her speak with some eloquence. An endless

crowd followed, marching in halting time to the various bands. Here and there were a few men, but there were all sorts and conditions of women in all styles of dress, bare-headed, capped and gowned—one woman in scarlet robe and velvet cap made a fine splash of colour—feathered and flowered and furbelowed, or severely plain. Even the tube skirt was represented, and met with some plain criticism from the crowd, who, however, on the whole were quiet. One man behind me was rather irrepressible, and said: "By Jove, what a lot of old mother-in-laws!" but he was glared at, and subsided into silence.

The general expression of the women was that of determination, especially those who struggled with the wind for the mastery of their banners. Very soon each little platform had its group of women, and for the next hour I was going from one to the other, keen to hear the leaders, if only for a few minutes. It was odd to remember, amidst all this franchise struggle, that I possessed what these women were fighting for. There were others, too, present who shared the same privilege. On the New Zealand and Australia platform sat Miss Hodge, the chairwoman; Lady Stout, very enthusiastic and charming in appropriate violet; Mary Gaunt, the authoress; and Dr. Chapple, M.P. for Stirling. The latter was earnestly explaining the benefits of the female franchise as I reached the platform over which the New Zealand and Australian flags waved. Lady Stout had spoken, and Mary Gaunt followed Dr. Chapple. Mrs. Searle Grossman was also another eager champion of the franchise. As I turned away a man said: "She's up! Come along!" and I followed in his wake to an adjoining crowd, the focus being a most beautiful elderly lady, with clear-cut pale face, white hair draped with a black lace mantilla, and a thrilling voice that never seemed excited or strained. Mrs. Despard is the sister of Sir John French, and has suffered, like so many others, for her cause. It seems incredible, that that gently-bred, delicately-refined woman should have been twice imprisoned, and be even now under threat of arrest for refusing to pay taxes. She is a most arrestive speaker, persuasive, clear, and moderate in tone, and it was little wonder that the crowd about her was one of the largest on the ground. The degrees of popularity were keenly marked by the size of the audiences, and some inferior speakers had few listeners. Mrs. Pank-

hurst, of course, was amongst the most popular, although her daughter Christabel attracted almost as many. Indeed, she is a better speaker than her mother, and her youth, of course, adds to her eloquence. Above her black gown, floating out on the breeze, her tossed fair hair and eager flushed face looked fine against the misty blue of the distant trees, and her voice rang out with no uncertain sound. She is quick and apt at repartee, as some in the crowd discovered. On Miss Marsh's platform sat Lady Constance Lytton, a delicate-faced, anxious-eyed little woman, simply dressed in a white dress, white golf jersey, and white three-cornered hat. Her hair appeared too early grey for her age, and her spirit too eager for the body, but she is one of many such types in the ranks, whose strength seems unequal to the struggle. Miss Annie Kenney—the sweet-faced, fair-haired factory girl, who was foremost in militant tactics—was another speaker, and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence was so tremendously earnest that a nervous person would not care to differ from her openly. She uses much vehement gesture, and her voice rings out like a defiant clarion. The wonderful organisation was the admiration of everyone, and there was not a hitch in the proceedings. As far as one could judge, the various audiences were interested, but not enthusiastic, and the cheers that were called for after the resolution had been taken were pitifully feeble. And during all the fervour and eloquence children played about on the grass, and derelicts—mere heaps of dingy rags—lay face downwards, indifferent to anything about them, losing in sleep, perhaps, for a time their hunger and weariness. They looked like dead bodies as they lay there, absolutely motionless, blots on the beauty of summer grass and flowers. If a limited women's vote can do anything to solve the question of the London poor —and it is claimed for it that it can—then it would be well to grant it. But if, as one is told on all sides, the limited vote is merely the introduction to universal female franchise, then the outlook for England would be dark indeed. Whatever New Zealand may come to, at present she cannot be compared to England when the question of female franchise is discussed, and there so many upholders of the reform make a mistake. In New Zealand we have no surplus women, nor have we, for which one offers heartfelt thanks, the submerged population that is to be found in

England, in whose hands a vote would be most dangerous. One speaker declared that, in New Zealand, the reform had been gained by just such a strenuous struggle, but that is a statement that is not borne out by fact. We gained our franchise easily—indeed, it came upon many women as a surprise, and we wear our privilege —as the princess did her learning—"lightly, like a flower."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

# THE NEW FOREST AND MANCHESTER

Walter Tyrrell—Misty History—Rufus' Tomb—A Tree Cathedral—In the Forest—Its Gipsies—An Ancient Inn—The Plague Stone—The City Gate—A Museum—Attractions of the Town—The Cathedral—St. Swithin's—By-gone Kings—The Repairs—On the Roof

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IN the days of long ago, when history was a dull task, illumined by a few romantic and exciting incidents, the New Forest was to me a place of enchantment, for there Walter Tyrell, gallant and handsome, not at all a regicide in the topsy-turveydom of a childish mind, killed cruel William Rufus. The horror, too, of the making of the New Forest, the razing of churches, the destroying of villages, and the devastation of miles of fair country for the pleasure of a king who loved sport, was also vividly impressed on her pupil by a conscientious teacher. But one has to come to England to find many youthful illusions dissipated, and to correct one's impressions. To begin with, the widespread desolation and suffering caused by the planting of the New Forest—now so old—was tremendously exaggerated. The country there was sparsely populated and the plantations were set over miles of unoccupied land. Then, again, it is denied by some authorities that Tyrrell shot the King. Rufus had a host of enemies, and it is believed by many that the wound was not accidental, but deliberate, and came from a lurking assailant, Tyrrell flying in desperate horror for fear of suspicion. At a smithy in the neighbourhood he had his horse's shoes set backwards, so as to elude pursuit. Descendants of the charcoal-burner Purkiss, who discovered the dead king and bore him on his cart to

Winchester, still are to be found in Eastleigh, and Rufus's tomb—a severe, undecorated slab of grey granite—is set in the chancel of the magnificent cathedral in Winchester. He is in royal company, for, on the top of the exquisite carved screen that bounds the chancel on either side, are, in quaint oaken chests, the bones of Canute, Hardicanute, and other olden kings.

Though Rufus may have levelled churches for his whim, he has given to England a great gift—a cathedral where tall trunks are stately columns, waving boughs the roof and walls, and the birds the choristers. It is impossible to describe the solemnity and the grandeur of the New Forest. Not very far into the depths did I venture, for there were stories told of hapless strangers benighted in its bewildering mazes of tree-bordered tracks. But only a stone's throw—or more appropriately, a bowshot—from the road, one seems miles away from motors and all the other doubtful modern blessings, and could almost expect to hear the clear notes of a bugle resounding, and see, galloping down that wide, grassy aisle, a band of lords and ladies on gaily-caparisoned horses, eager for the chase. Everywhere are cushions of pine needles, soft and odorous, and with my back against a friendly trunk I sit and look down the long grassy drives to where the vista ends in dreamy blue. A bird is singing its heart out in the branches above, and now and again a cone drops. These are the only sounds. The lovely depths of foliage, dense blue-green in shade, rise far above the brilliant emerald of bracken that clusters about the red-brown trunks.

It is in autumn, they say, the woods are most glorious, for then the beeches are golden and the bracken bronze and sienna, a dazzling combination of colour when the sunlight streams down the long drives. A rabbit scampers across the grass, and a litle gipsy child appears shyly from around a tree. Gipsies are still plentiful about the New Forest, and a van is anchored, just beyond the nearest gate, among the grass that borders the road. When I passed it the man was smoking leisurely, and the woman, bareheaded and bare-armed, was washing clothes in a tub propped on some sticks, while a cauldron bubbled over a little gipsy fire close by. Under the van a baby in a basket sent forth discontented remarks on an unfeeling world, and two elder children

rolled in the grass like kittens at play. The romance of the gipsy has gone with his Romany tongue. He has to obey the law, which obliges him to move on. This he does by transferring his belongings across the road. Some of them gain a precarious livelihood by tinkering and selling trifling articles, and they eke out their meals with spoils from the forest—acorns, beechmast, hedgehog, squirrel, and, as a bonne bouche, salted snails.

I walk back to my romantic little inn, set on the outskirts of the Forest, over wide spaces of purple bell-heather, the daintiest of blossoms for a breast knot. The inn is comfort personified, encircled—except on one side, where its door offers hospitality to the wayfarer—by lovely gardens, and clothed with creepers to the very chimney-pots. A regal purple clematis peers into my window, and the jasmine odour floats up into the room. Old furniture, old prints, and old china—all are to be seen here, and the dining-room is beautiful with summer flowers. I eat my dinner, looking out across a mass of pink rambler roses, lovely against a clipped yew hedge, to a sky that saddens from daffodil and flame to royal purple. My bedroom, scented with the jasmine, is reached by many twisting passages and unexpected steps, and even when the door is opened three steps leading down into it are apt to make my entrance undignified and hurried. But a lavender-perfumed pillow, a good conscience, and just enough weariness to make rest delightful, plunge me into a blissful oblivion until the sunshine and the birds awaken me again.

It seems fitting that, having seen where Rufus's ill-spent life was brought to an untimely end, one should see where he was buried, and there are a thousand other reasons for a pilgrimage to Winchester Cathedral. It is most impressively magnificent, and is situated exquisitely among encircling hills, each with a history. We entered the city by a stately gateway, but just outside of which stands the stone where, when Winchester was plague-stricken, the frightened peasants used to set food for the citizens, taking for it money from a dish of vinegar for fear of infection. Now a cross crowns the stone. The gate is finely imposing, and still has the slit down which the portcullis used to fall and bar out the enemy. On either side in the thickness of the walls are little cells, dark, dismal, and constructed for old-time culprits, and above the gate there is a large stone-

walled room, where, from the narrow arrow-slits, we can look down the hill, our view constrained by houses. In former days the enemy, pent in by the hills, crowned by the fort and castle, remnants of which still remain, met with but a sorry reception as they neared the gate, for, besides the deadly arrows, they had to fear the boiling lead and oil that the women used to pour on them from the battlements. The room is a museum of antiquities—armour, blackjacks, old measures and weights, and a great chest with three huge locks (obtained by the town when, long ago, the then huge sum of £80 was stolen). There is also the prow of a Viking ship, which was captured—so the story runs—by Alfred, who executed the invaders on Giles Hill, not far away. There is also an iron frame, in which evil-doers, after being executed or hanged, were set as warnings to kindred spirits. "This," said our guide, who, from a stealthy glance, had discovered we came from New Zealand, "is what sent thousands to the colonies!" The great fireplace is large enough to roast an ox whole, and the narrow winding stair, and the long slit where the portcullis fell, are all of absorbing interest, did hastening time not urge us on. There are so many places to linger over in Winchester—the quaint old black-barred house called "God-be-got," the splendid statue of King Alfred, the old rectory, now turned into a curiosity show, and the beautiful closes where are set, muffled to their own roofs with greenery and blossom, the picturesque houses of the clergy, steeped in an atmosphere of peaceful leisure. In Winchester lived Jane Austen, and there she wrote her charming stories.

But it is the Cathedral that is the heart of the city, and we reach its stately grey stone facade through a wonderful avenue of old trees. It was here, outside, that St. Swithin, who was bishop and the humblest of men, desired to be buried rather than in the stately sanctity of the Cathedral. He lay for many years among the poor he loved, until some inconsiderate hand moved him into the church, whereupon the rains fell in torrents and the weather of Winchester became full of vagaries. The Restoration did much damage to Winchester, and the tomb of the miracle-working saint naturally received special attention, so now his figure is to be seen in pieces among a host of fascinating fragments full of artistic possibilities. Near by is Queen Mary

Tudor's chair—a seat of uncomfortable and severe type—in which she sat when she was married to Spanish Philip.

Looking from the chancel rails, the interior is of great magnificence, the jewelled windows, wonderful colonnade of pillars, the brilliantly frescoed roof forming an exquisite scene. But the chancel, with its gorgeous altar, its splendidly carved oak screen, pulpit and pews, is even more impressive. Here, under a plain grey granite slab, lie the bones of William Rufus, and the quaint painted chests that stand on top of the screen hold relics of even earlier kings—Ethelwulf, Canute, and Hardicanute—names of our childhood, and of such visionary folk that it seems strange to see their resting-places.

It is, truly, a royal burial-place, this stately fane, with its spears of jewelled sunshine falling on grey tombs and oaken carving, and the music of its organ rising up into the misty dome. Far too quickly we have to pass along the tombs, and I, for one, am generally yards behind our courteous verger. I find a beautiful window to the memory of the gallant dead of the King's Rifles in South Africa, and among the sadly long list of names are Redvers Buller, the Earl of Munster, and Prince Christian Victor. There are figures of stately bishops in scarlet robes and mitre, cadavers, more hideous than skeletons, grinning their ghastly smiles from dim recesses, brass tablets set into the floor, and a hundred beautiful or dreadful souvenirs of the dead.

Down in the crypts, where there are extensive repairs going on, the water having risen and imperilled the supports, we are shown an ancient well, which is said to date from Druid times. Now its water, ever limpid and fresh, is used for christenings. From there we mount by circular narrow stairs to the priest's gallery that runs along the front of the chancel, and from which the priest used to conduct the services. Up, up, up endless steps to the roof, where we gain a glorious view of Winchester, set in her encircling hills and threaded by her silver Itchen—a historic and lovely city, which, though dimmed is her early splendour when she was capital of England, will always be dearly reverenced in the hearts of all true Englishmen.

CHAPTER XXV.

# DUNGANNON

Erin in Tears—Poverty and Rain—The Great House—Deserted Mansions—Factious Strife—The Ranfurlys' Home—By Ancient Ways—A Dead Hero—Northland House—Charming Gardens—A Fairy-tale Cottage—A Ghostly Battle—The Original Home—Devotion of Dependants.

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IRELAND, true to her character, greeted me most uncomplimentarily with copious tears, and continued to be in a lachrymose mood until the steamer swung off for Glasgow. But even in rain the country is fascinating, and the sunshine is doubly valued because it is so rare. I write country advisedly. There is nothing charming about Belfast on a wet day. The streets are muddy, and there are so many poor that one not accustomed to beggars and poverty gets quickly heartsick. In sunshine, perhaps, an Irish colleen, with shawl over her head and bare feet, is a romantic addition to the landscape, but there is no poetry in a bedraggled, dirty woman, with haggard, melancholy face framed in dingy black, and with shapeless figure, wrapped in faded clothes. The children, too, make the heart ache, for many of them are only half clad, and seem wholly neglected. My last memory of Belfast was the sound of children's voices mingling with the torrents of rain, heard in the cold darkness outside the cosy saloon. They were playing on the wharf when all home babies should be tucked up in their little beds, fast asleep. But, true to their Irish character, their laughter rang out under depressing surroundings, to be changed into a pitiful appeal for a penny as a passenger, likely to be moved to give, came up the gangway.

But this is in a large city, and in the country, though poverty may be as great, there is more space and freedom and healthier surroundings, to say nothing of kindly charity and care from the "great house" that stands near. Alas, many of the latter are either shut up or only occupied by a caretaker, for landowners either cannot afford nowadays to live on their property, or else they have sold it to aliens, who occupy it for a month or two in the year and have no patience or sympathy with the Irish peasant. Many splendid old places, rich in historical interest, are vacant and silent, the tide of life that filled them in bygone days having ebbed and left them in a backwater of desolation and sadness. The good old days when the great house was the home of the lord are gone, and with them much of the comfort and happiness of the peasant. It is not easy to forsee brighter things, either, for Ireland.

But the country has a soft beauty of its own—not so brilliant nor so gracious as that of England, nor so romantic and stern as Scotland, but delicately appealing in contour and colour, and full of exquisite harmonies and vistas, where woods beyond woods melt into dreamier blue, and soft grey ranges blend with the sombre sky. My little train journey from Belfast to Dungannon was memorable for various new experiences. One was the sight of snowy lengths of linen lying out on the green grass slopes, bleaching in the soft air and gently falling rain. Another was my first peat bog, glorious in tones of chocolate, sienna, umber, and purple, each ridge crested by the royal violet of the heather, and with steel-grey pools gleaming here and there. It was a wonderful combination of colour. Still another feature of my journey was the brogue of the young man who sat opposite me, and who supplied my aching void with scraps of intelligence. Portadown, he told me, was far from dull, for there the feeling between Protestants and Catholics was so acute that, when the latter went an excursion, the former lined up on the platform and threw stones at the train. The Catholics retaliated when opportunity offered, and matters grew to such a pitch often that firearms were discharged and men were wounded. This hostility is sadly general, and evidences of it are common.

Dungannon itself is rich in history, and, of course, interesting to all New Zealanders, because it is the home of the Earl and Countess of Ranfurly, who are so affec-

tionately remembered in the Dominion, where they lived seven years. There is little danger of forgetting that Lord Ranfurly is the Lord of the Manor, for the iron gates of almost every field are centred with a large R., and the town abounds in signs and symbols relative to the family. Dungannon was once a seat of O'Neill, the daring spirit who, in defiance of English authority, proclaimed himself King of Ulster and ravaged the country all about. With a keen eye for a strategic position, he established himself on a hill that dominates the country, and there built his castle. Of it nothing remains except the subterranean passages that burrow underground for miles, and were probably used as retreats in time of attack. Lord Ranfurly and I made a pilgrimage to the place on the most lachrymose of days, the long lush grass far above our ankles, and the mud slippery and abundant, but enthusiasm and old clothes—Lord Ranfurly declared that his own coat was the oldest thing in the house—triumphed over conditions, and we crested the hill, looked at the wide stretches of view, limited to us by envious mists, but at happier times showing nine counties. We tried to picture the stirring scenes of long ago, when O'Neill was ousted from his stronghold by three doughty English knights—Hill, Chichester, and Charlemont—and the town of Dungannon began to cluster about its central stronghold. But the O'Neill made one last desperate effort to regain his fort, and celebrated his success by massacring all the inhabitants of castle and town, both of which later were destroyed by fire. Although now four picturesque ruined towers crown the hill, and ignorance might easily imagine them part of the old castle, really there is nothing left of the original building but the underground passages, and they are dangerous and in many cases blocked up. There seems a curse on the spot where so much blood has been shed, for the towers are all that remain of a mansion which was burnt before it became a home, and now the place is given up to picturesque desolation. One of the subterranean passages, which were lined with brick, is said to lead to the old castle at Castlecaulfield, a romantic ruin not far from Dungannon, where the ancestors of Lady Ranfurly lived. There I was shown a beautiful old church, where is buried the warlike parson, the Rev. George Walker, who was the hero of the siege of Londonderry, and who,

in times of peace, tutored the children of the Ranfurly of those days. There, too, lies Wolfe, curate of the parish, who wrote "The Burial of Sir John Moore."

Northland House, the seat of the Earl of Ranfurly, is situated close to the town, though its magnificent grounds stretch for miles across the country and one may drive or walk for hours through its splendid woods. The house is stately, with a colonnaded front of great width, and large, beautiful rooms. The halls, from the centre one of which springs a wide stone staircase with graceful iron railings, are of tesselated white stone and black marble, and the newcomer has to learn by experience that the marble affords treacherous footing, and, if wise and warned, will take care to step on the great skins—lion, zebra, bear, and tiger—that are spread on the floor. All of these have been shot by men of the family, a large proportion by Lord Northland. But the mansion is a perfect treasure-house of valuable and interesting things, and every room —and there are seventy-five of them—holds something that has old associations. It took nearly a forenoon to go through the house, and even then we did not penetrate into the huge cellars, which a hundred years ago, when servants were not so well cared for, were the kitchens, storerooms, and sculleries. There are two galleries into which the bedrooms open, and the walls are so thick that most of the rooms have double doors. Up in the nurseries the large night nursery has a square hole cut in the wall between it and the adjoining room, and in the aperture a light is fixed. This, a century ago, was the arrangement a resourceful mother made so that the head nurse could look at her sleeping charges without disturbing them by going into their room. But Northland House, with all its wonderful contents, is too big a subject to touch at present, and must be reserved for another article. Centuries of brilliant, cultured, artistic men and women have gathered together fascinating stores of treasures, and their present chatelaine is versed in all their histories.

The park—or rather parks, for there is an inner close about the house and an outer, where the Dungannon people are allowed to come—is full of delightful surprises. Beyond the fair wide slopes of lawn that front the house and that curve into a series of silver lakes where swans and cygnets have their home, are the most romantic walks,

avenues of sunshine and shadow, beeches, oaks, chestnuts, limes—in autumn a glory of gold, bronze, and crimson. Even now the laburnums—and the park is noted for these—are showering largesse of gold at our feet, and here and there in the woods a chestnut tree is splashed with scarlet and russet. It must be indescribably gorgeous in full flush of autumn, and in spring we are told the wild flowers are wonderful. The bluebells lie so thick that they look like scraps of the sky, and yellow primroses and violets carpet the ground under the great trees. There is one approach to the house, where the motor goes for a great distance between sloping walls—thirty feet high—of rhododendron, a mass of glorious bloom in their season ; and in the outer park, beyond the gardener's cottage—a charming little red-gabled house fit for a fairy-tale picture—is a magnificent lime-tree avenue, the immense trunks rising in stately ranks on either hand and their graceful branches interlacing far overhead. Down this avenue, across the rustic bridge that spans another lake, and up the hill through the woods beyond, the country folk hurry, even when the sun has not quite set. At night, unless driven by dire necessity, they would not venture, for the spirits of the dead wander moaning and wailing among the trees. We walked miles through the park in the most dreaded spot, where ghosts are to be met with nightly. Here, in a dip, is the ruin of a great tree, called the " spotted doe," marking an old battle-field where terrible slaughter took place. The details are lost in the mists of ages, but it was so long ago that then no woods had been planted. At any rate, any belated traveller—and I was too delighted to find anything out of the commonplace to disbelieve my serious guide—can hear there all the terrible conflict, the groans of the wounded, the shouts of the victors, the clash of arms. Everyone, by the way, believes in ghosts in Ireland, and an apparition is as common an appurtenance—and maybe commoner—to a large old house as a high-pressure boiler or a croquet lawn. I have listened fascinated, with a delicious creeping down my spine, to a hard-headed, shrewd man recounting his weird experiences with a ghost he never saw, only felt, and have met a lady who owned a banshee that was never at fault when occasion required.

At the end of an upward vista of exquisite foliage is an opening, and there on a grassy knoll is an old windmill,

its sails gone and its picturesque outlines blurred with luxuriant ivy. Not far is the original house of the Knox who came from Scotland hundreds of years ago, and bought Dungannon. Now it is the residence of some of the employees, but it is impressive in its stern, square solidity, grey-stoned, small-windowed, and massive, with a great courtyard at the back, and close by a huge old walled fruit garden, whose trees are gnarled and bent with age. A stroll about the park is full of enchanting surprises. One morning we came upon the quaintest summer-house, half concealed in the dense trees, close to the edge of the lake. It had tables, benches, and a firepalce in it, and long ago the ladies of the house used to do their embroidery or read there. Now, in winter—when the lake is frozen over—it affords a cheery shelter for the skaters, who make merry picnic in it.

Lord Ranfurly allows the people of Dungannon to come and go in the outer park, where they play cricket and other games. The privilege is much appreciated and never abused. The inner and outer parks are connected by a stone tunnel under the public roadway, and the arch frames the loveliest of landscapes as one emerges from the chill dusk. In one part of the ground is a stone cross, which once formed part of the church, but which met with such severe Protestant criticism that it was taken down before its threatened destruction took place.

The employees seem devoted to their master and mistress. One old man, upwards of seventy, but still in his own opinion of infinite use about the house and grounds, declared proudly that he had served only two masters—Queen Victoria and Lord Ranfurly! He had been in the service of the latter for twenty-seven years, and before that he was a soldier. We may be progressing as the years go on, but the old times in Ireland, when the " great house " mothered and fathered the lesser folk about its doors, and its sympathy, charity, advice, and kindly feeling were rewarded by passionate devotion and whole-hearted service, had their advantages that have not been replaced. There is much of this interchange of feeling existing still in Dungannon.

CHAPTER XXVI.

# JAUNTS ABOUT TYRONE

A Motor-ride—Linen-mills—The Bad Old Days—Coney Island—A Pioneer Lady Doctor—Picturesque Armagh—The Aged Primate—M'Clinton's Soap—A Treasure-House—Venetian-point Hangings.

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A MOTOR ride about Dungannon is fraught with exciting possibilities. To the country folk a car is still a novelty, and they run to doors and windows to see it passing, while numerous small boys cluster about it in wide-eyed curiosity when it stops. The animals, too, are innocently fearless of the strange vehicle, and all sorts of creatures have to be chevied out of the way. Hens scutter about, ducks waddle leisurely in front, and dogs and pigs seem to court instant and untidy death. Those in the motor endure agonising moments until the danger is past, while a man beside the driver generally has to wave his arms and shriek wildly in order to clear the way. Often the compensating shilling, no matter how careful the driver may be, is necessary, but as a rule the animals escape scatheless with much flurry and fuss.

Apart from the excitement, motoring in Tyrone is full of fascination. The air, even when it is raining, is exquisitely balmy; the roads, though somewhat uncertain as to quality, are picturesque; and the people are interesting. They are weather-beaten, rugged, downright, with little of the soft suavity of the southerner. The whitewashed cottages look comfortable, even cosy, and often little gardens surround them, while clean curtains and pot plants make many windows attractive. The mills, of course, give employment to many, and one morning we

were shown over one of these. It was not unpicturesque with its grey stone veiled by ivy and the little stream running through the ground. The various processes were most interesting. We had seen the bundles of flax lying in the fields after having been taken from the water holes, where they are laid to rot off the green. Even if we had not seen them we should have smelt them, for they have an eloquent odour, which, I was told, is quite relished after a time. Dirty, dark bundles they look, too, an extraordinary contrast to the delicate snowy linen which is made from them.

Thousands of people are employed in the Dungannon mills, and earn good wages. A number of the workers were quite old white-haired women, but these are experts in their own line, and though it seems hard to work at such an age, they would probably die were the regular routine disturbed. Not many beautiful girls were to be seen, though a number had wonderful auburn or yellow hair. But it is in the south of Ireland where the black-haired, blue-eyed loveliness is plentiful, and, after all, these northerners are Scotch. To this, probably, they owe their greater prosperity and independence. Nowhere, on our outings, did I see the typical broken-down cabin of the Irish hovel, with the pig in possession. Indeed, many of one's ideas have to be jettisoned when one visits Ireland. A ride on a jaunting-car, however, proved to be all, and more than, my fancy painted it, and but for timely warnings I should inevitably have been shot off at the first corner which our driver took jauntily on one wheel. After a few minutes of unorthodox clinging to any fixed safeguard I found it quite exhilarating, and was able to enjoy the skilful way we threaded through the whirls of traffic in the Belfast streets.

The most wonderful memory I have of Tyrone is Benburb Castle. We reached it one afternoon—a day of brilliant sunshine alternating with lowering clouds. The picturesque ruins, grey, mouldering, and hung with ivy, crowned a limestone cliff that rose sheer from a great sweep of the Blackwater River. Woods and turf bordered the water on the other side, and, fortunately, the later-day house, very modern and unromantic, was hidden among the trees. It is historic ground there, and though, in the calm afternoon sunshine, with no sounds save the song of

the birds and the murmur of the river, it now looks so peaceful, it has been the scene of tragic happenings. At the end of the 16th century the English met with a deadly repulse there, and many gallant horsemen perished in the concealed pits digged for their downfall by their wily foes. Later, when O'Neill built the castle, there was a great battle, in which the Irish were again the victors. The river was so choked with the bodies of the flying British that it was possible to walk across it, and later on, when, as was the cruel custom, the dead were stripped of clothes and accoutrements, the naked corpses, says an old chronicler, "were afar off like a herde of small cattle." Under the ruins are deep dungeons that could tell terrible tales of suffering. Now the only slaughter that takes place in the lovely valley is that of the salmon that lurk under the green banks or leap in the peaceful reaches.

Viscount Charlemont, Lady Ranfurly's father, owned much property in Tyrone. He lived mainly at Drumcairne, his beautiful property on the shores of Lough Neagh—of whose lovely waters we caught fleeting glimpses from the woods in Dungannon Park. The original Coney Island is in this lough, and was owned by Lord Charlemont, who built a charming summer residence there. The tiny island was visited, tradition says, by St. Patrick, and is the setting of a quaint romance in which a lady doctor figures. She lived in a lonely cell on the mainland, but, failing to cure a wounded O'Neill chief, was carried off by his followers and forced to live on Coney Island. There she continued her profession, apparently with success, for the ruins of a tower in her memory are still pointed out.

Coney Island, near New York, was called after this spot by some emigrants from Tyrone, and a greater contrast between the unromantic bustle and noise of the one and the peaceful loveliness of the other cannot be imagined. In Tudor times Coney Island became a penal settlement, and many executions of rebels took place on a mound that still is shown, although the kindly woods have almost hidden it. From the island, on a clear day, all that remains of O'Connor's stronghold, a ruined tower on Derrywarra Island, can be seen. The delicate blue outline of the Mourne Mountains, the Belfast Hills, Dungannon clustering about its wooded castle-crested rise, the

mountains of Slamish, where St. Patrick tended his sheep —all can be seen from Coney Island. The lake itself is said to have a fabulous origin, springing from a magic well which a woman—another case of "cherchez la femme" —left uncovered, defying the threat that, if it were left uncovered, it would drown the land. Still, it is said, steeples and round towers may be seen, on clear days, under the water.

Roxboro Castle, a splendid place, surrounded by lovely woods and gardens, is another property of Lord Charlemont, situated near Moy, where the great horse and cattle show is held every month. Some idea of its magnitude can be gained by the fact that, though there is stabling for 2,000 horses in the town, its resources are often strained.

To Armagh we motored one afternoon and visited the old, grey cathedral that crowns the highest hill in the town, though its supremacy is threatened by the fine new Catholic Church close by, on which an enormous amount of money is being spent. St. Patrick founded Armagh and built the original cathedral, bits of which, including the old bell, are still preserved inside the later erection. Here, too, Brian Boru—who has not heard of him?—was buried when he and his son fell on the battlefield. Not so long ago, when the neighbouring great families lived more in Ireland, and London with its gaieties was too far away to visit often, they had their town houses in Armagh, and the old city saw many a brilliant season. In those good days it ranked next to Dublin. Now the fine old houses, large and splendidly decorated, have fallen on evil days, are shabby and dirty, and are given up to poor tenants with a multiplicity of children.

The Primate of All Ireland, Bishop Alexander, a relation of Lord Ranfurly, then lived at Armagh, in a quaint, flat-faced Georgian house set in a charming park, where are the picturesque ruins of an old monastery. We found the old man, who, though over ninety, was charmingly vivacious and courteous, sitting by the fire in his beautiful drawing-room, which was a perfect bower of sweet-peas. Outside in the large square hall his portrait hung side by side with those of his predecessors in office, and on the great stained glass doors the clear space was waiting for his coat-of-arms to be painted when the night fell on his most peaceful eventide.

A delightful little village not far from Dungannon is Donaghmore, which, by the way, dates as far back as the fifth century, and at one time held an abbey founded by St. Patrick. Of this only the beautiful cross, wonderfully little the worse for wear, remains, and it has been set up where the village street forks and merges into the hedgerows and fences, which here, as for miles about Dungannon, are broken by the great iron gates with the large R centreing the bars. The drowsy antiquity of Donaghmore a hundred years ago was roused by an energetic manufacturer. A brewer was the first Prince Charming that woke the Sleeping Beauty, and now soap is its staple industry. Who has not heard of McClinton's soap? The inhabitants of the Irish village in the White City have come from Donaghmore, sent by the soap manufacturers who promoted this potent attraction to the exhibition.

One wet afternoon, when the mists were blurring all the loveliness of the woods, where chestnuts, beeches, and limes were all too quickly flushing into orange and crimson, I was shown some of the treasures of Dungannon House—only a few of the beautiful, curious, and valuable things with which the place is filled. Among the many priceless things is a set of Venetian point bedroom hangings and covers. These comprise the entire furniture for a large tester bed, including curtains, coverlet, the great design for the back, and the smaller wreaths for the valances. Then there is the lace for the chair-backed seats—imagine coming in from a wet walk and sitting on such delicate needlework!—besides a quantity of other wreaths, motifs, and sprays whose meaning could only be surmised. Each scrap is sewn, with infinite pains and tiny stitches, on immense sheets of fine linen, each part in its proper place to form the design intended. Probably satin was to form the background for this exquisite lace. Such a quantity was there of it that the sheets, when folded, made a goodly pile, and when one remembers that a mere scrap of Venetian point is costly, this collection must be priceless. It has a history, too, for it belonged to Mary of Modena, and was, perhaps, part of her wedding dower when she came to England to be queen. She left it behind when she fled to France, and it was probably sold with other Royal effects by those who did not love the Stuart Kings.

CHAPTER XXVII.

# GLIMPSES OF EDINBURGH

Mine Romantic Town—Enchanting Glimpses—Poverty and Beauty—In the Close—Scottish Laddies—Mons Meg — A Dog's Cemetery—Pious Margaret—The Dinner-hour—A Queen's Bedroom—Americans in Crowds—The Crown Jewels—High Street—Unhealthy Washing—A Queer Pair—Queen Mary's Horses.

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WHEN only a child, I can remember my mother, with all the wistful love of the exile, speaking of her native city, Edinburgh, as supreme in beauty, and I resolved, if good fortune ever brought me near, to see for myself the town that was affectionately enshrined in her memory. Few of my anticipations have been disappointed. England itself has far exceeded in gracious beauty my preconceived ideas, but Edinburgh will be the most vividly romantic of all my memories. Fate was very kind to us, for, after an uncertain dawn that presaged rain in Glasgow, we reached Edinburgh as the sun was just breaking through the mist-wreaths. The railway journey is monotonous, but the generally flat country intensifies the beauty of the scene that faces the visitor as he steps out of the station. Surely Princes Street must be one of the loveliest of thoroughfares, bounded as it is on the one side by beautiful gardens that meet the great cliff on which the Castle stands. The sun was piercing through the grey mists behind the Rock, and all the details of the wonderful silhouette of turrets, walls, and bastions were lost, but stray beams were stealing down the cliffs and turning the grassy slopes to dazzling emerald. All along the skyline

was the romantic outline of towers, spires, chimneys, and the indeterminate huddle of roofs—far above the great sweeps of velvet lawns, the jewelled flower-beds, and the rush of traffic. But always the eye came back with fresh delight to where the crag fell precipitately and was crested by the Castle. "The storied height, lying grey in sunshine," is worth all its eloquent praises that have been said and sung.

But, after all, a day—even if one starts at dawn and goes on till dark—has only a certain number of hours, and it behoved us to hurry. So we mounted to the Castle, up the cobble-stoned hills, and through a close to gain High Street. This close, entered by a worn, narrow staircase, widened into a large court, surrounded by picturesque, tall, gabled houses, with overhanging, frowning galleries and little outside stairways. At one time this was one of the Park Lanes of Edinburgh, and though, lucky pioneers, we had chanced on it by accident, it was redolent in romance and history. No sooner had we gained the top of the stair than we were surrounded by a horde of wild-haired laddies, three shouting together in an incomprehensible tongue and pointing eagerly about. Fears of wild bulls or garotters flitted across my mind, but by degrees I found out the language was Scotch and they were giving us information as to the various buildings. They reeled it off without expression and with no full-stops. With my most imperative manner I stemmed the torrent, and told them very slowly and distinctly—as one would speak to foreigners—that unless only one was the spokesman there would be no bawbees forthcoming. We narrowed them down to one big boy as soloist, the others acting as shrill chorus, and though it was not easy to follow, they gave us considerable information. It was Lady Stair's close we had wandered into, and there, in a house restored by Lord Rosebery—her descendant—and presented by him to the town, she had, centuries ago, lived her eventful life. Scott takes her for the heroine of one of his tales. But Burns had his lodging in a close near here in a gable far up, with a frail balcony and an outside stairway. The boys grew indignant when we enquired who "Robbie Burrns" was, and said, "Ye ken the mon wha made poetry?" To fix the fact on our minds the elder boy made a dart into a dark passage and pro-

duced a red-headed urchin, introducing him as "the laddie wha lives in Robbie Burrns's hoose." We asked him if he wrote poetry, and hoped he appreciated his advantages, and parted in a most amicable manner, with the interchange of courtesies and pennies. The small Edinburgh boys are more diverting guides than the ordinary uniformed kind that hurry you through most show-places.

It was our lucky day, for we gained the Castle and the Half-Moon Battery just in time to hear the mid-day gun fired by electricity—a most impressive and mysterious process, watched by the usual crowd of short-skirted, trim-hatted Americans. We were told the discharge of the gun would affect our watches, but we noticed no results. It certainly made a fox-terrier, a pet of the kilted Highlanders, howl dismally, and his melancholy solo was accompanied by skirls on the bagpipes. "Mons Meg"—the huge gun that fought for the Stuarts, burst in the 17th century, was kept in the Tower, and at Sir Walter Scott's request was transferred to the Castle—was more interesting to us than its modern prototype, and its bulk is highly impressive as it dominates the crest of the ramparts and points its ineffectual muzzle across Edinburgh. Over the stone battlements we leaned and saw the city spread out below in the sunlight—Arthur's Seat, the old town, and even, in misty dreaminess, the Fife shores and the blue Grampians—a fair prospect. Just below, a little nook in the ramparts, round which curved the grey stone walls, was brimming over with flowers, and set among the blossoms were many little headstones. It was a dogs' cemetery—the pets of the garrison. One inscription read: "In memory of Pat, who followed the 2nd Highlanders in peace and war."

Not far away was St. Margaret's Chapel, so small and unecclesiastic that we found it with difficulty among all the other buildings. Margaret was Queen of Malcolm Canmore, and in this tiny place, now empty and dusty, but free from the reproach of being used as a storehouse, thanks to the efforts of a patriotic Edinburgh man, she and her handmaidens worshipped. The remains of the piscina and the steps, worn and broken, of the tiny altar, are still there; but the dim stained-glass window shows only dust and loneliness and rough stone walls.

The apartments, shown to visitors, open on to a large square courtyard, across which strayed soldiers in various

unforms—mainly Highlanders. The dinner bugle sounded, and we stopped a moment to watch the red-faced cooks swinging out from the galley-door the heavy cauldrons of steaming pea soup—savoury, though somewhat heating for so warm a day. A few of the younger men—mere round-faced boys, some—were bartering with an old fruit woman for oranges and bananas. But all the busy commonplace routine of life was forgotten when we found ourselves in Queen Mary's room, where James VI was born. On the panelled wall, with the Scottish Arms above, is an inscription, dated 1566, committing the young prince to the care of Christ. What a contrast between this royal bed-chamber—small, ill-lit, gloomy, its only cheery feature the wide fireplace—and the splendid luxury of the sleeping room of the mere society woman of these days. But what one does not know one cannot want, and the dearth of a high-pressure boiler or electric lights troubled Queen Mary not at all. The banqueting hall is a magnificent room, the roof arched and splendidly carved, the floor parquetry, the walls set with stained-glass lancet windows, and the immense fireplace rising almost to the roof, with huge dogs and andirons of brass. But it has now lost much of its impressiveness by being converted into a museum for arms and armour, and, interesting as the collection is, one would rather see the grand old hall empty save for thronging memories, tragic and romantic. As usual, the Americans were here in crowds, one little band eagerly buying hat-pins headed by regimental buttons.

The Crown jewels were more interesting than impressive. One is rather apt to become exigeante about diamonds in England—they are so much in evidence, real or paste—and, after all, when a jewel is above a certain size, it may as well be much larger. So the huge pearls and diamonds in the inartistic crown were not so enthralling as the story of the regalia. It was almost forgotten for many years, being locked away at the time of the Union, and, thanks again to Sir Walter Scott, the great chest in which it was supposed to be was forced open, the keys having been long since lost. There it was found exactly as it had been hidden over a century ago, the sceptre having in 1707 done its last office by ratifying the Union of Scotland with England.

But, fascinating as the Castle was, there were other enthralling places in Edinburgh to visit, and with a peep into the old State prison in the Argyll Tower, we descend from the batteries, pass under the portcullis, and out into the Lawn Market, between tall, flat-faced houses, which in old times belonged to famous Scottish nobles, and many of which, though they have fallen on evil times, still have armorial escutcheons graved on their walls. In one—the old house of the Duke of Gordon—a cannon-ball is embedded in the gable wall. High Street is full of horrible fascination for the visitor from a newer, cleaner country. It is wide, but looks narrow, because the grim, tall houses pen in its cobblestones and grimy pavements. At one time, doubtless, these buildings have been mansions, but now most of them seem crammed with the very poor, the windows dirty and curtainless, and the lowest storey generally an untidy unattractive shop or publichouse, which can only be enticing in comparison with the squalor of its patrons' homes. Out of many of the windows are stuck long poles with washing of so doubtful a hue that one shudders to think what it was like before it saw the tub, and weird unhealthy-looking under-garments fill and flap with the wind, and look like bloated corpses. Women block up most doorways, gossiping, untidy, and dishevelled, and children swarm everywhere; generally insufficiently clothed, and totally unwashed, but irrepressibly happy. They do not beg, but they are willing to earn a penny when occasion offers, and I saw a handsome young Highland soldier striding along with a tiny boy trotting behind carrying his parcels. Only two garments did the urchin wear, a red shirt and a pair of knickers, and in the seat of the latter was a great hole, out of which the crimson stuff waved and fluttered. We followed the queer pair some distance, and were diverted to notice that, when once the small boy forged alongside his employer, he was ordered to the rear with an imperative gesture.

Every here and there, we passed the opening to a close—a low archway or steep stone steps, and got glimpses of dusky squalor and decay. The poverty in Edinburgh is not the cheery poverty of Ireland, or the picturesque want of the English villager. It is dismal and dirty, and the women seem to have no strength to battle with the situation. So they find their relaxation at their doorways, and

keep a casual eye now and again on their grubby offspring in the gutters. The children, too, look unkempt and ill-cared for, but they are shrewd and quick.

In the White Horse Close—a place that would delight an artist, but horrify a sanitary inspector—we were again attacked by the small boy guides, who told us Queen Mary lodged in the old, tall, gabled house facing us, which was then the most famous inn in Edinburgh. One of the boys said: "I live in the room she slept in. There's my mither peepin' out of the window." And a slatternly red head was pushed out of the very window where, centuries ago, the beautiful Queen had sat. "She kept her white horses in the stables," said a wee boy shrilly. "There's the stables under that arch." "We'd like to see the horses," we told him. He shuffled about his bare toes in the dust, and said: "Ou, ay; they're in Lunnon." But a bigger boy fiercely turned on him: "Ye bletherin' eediot, they're been deid these hunner years!" We passed through the dusky archway to the stable-yard, and saw the great doors that once held Queen Mary's white steeds. Our small retinue followed us, still prattling of Queen Mary, and took leave of us lingeringly. We dispensed toffee among them—the largest pieces to the smallest—and we politely remonstrated with one particularly dirty boy on the state of his hands. "He washes them himself," the elder lad told us with a grin. "His mither hasna' time!" But the attractions of a day in Edinburgh are all too many for one chapter, and I must leave St. Giles's, the Sanctuary, Portobello, and, loveliest of all, Holyrood, for another time.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

# MORE GLIMPSES OF EDINBURGH

The Old Tolbooth—St. Giles—Robert Louis Stevenson—Jenny Geddes—John Knox's House—The Debtor's Mark—Convent and Palace—Its Lovely Ghost—Rizzio's Murder—A Delightful Policeman—Queen Mary's Mirror.

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I WAS left standing in High-street, Edinburgh, watching the women gossiping at the dusky openings of the closes, and the barefooted children playing in the gutter or chasing one another across the street under the very noses of the horses. The tall, grimy, flat-faced houses were decorated with weird domestic draperies—the day's washing—and out of some of the upper windows untidy women held shrill animated converse with neighbours on the pavement below. The street widened into an open space centred by a statue of the Duke of Buccleugh, and, facing us, grey and stern, was St. Giles, whose beautiful spire we had seen from Princess-street, fretted against the blue and white of the sky. Just in front used to stand the old Tolbooth Prison, and we searched about on the paving stones—regardless of amused glances—till we found the little heart that marks the site of the gallows where so many brave men died.

We paid threepence to enter St. Giles' Cathedral. It is gloomy, and its impressive size is lessened by its many pillars, stout and solid and severe, as is the general effect. Of colour there is little. Only the faded flags broke the curving lines of the roof, and from the east window came jewelled lights piercing the gloom. But some well-loved names are commemorated here. We found the tombs of Mrs. Oliphant, of William Chambers, and a touching and beautiful bronze to the memory of Robert Louis Stevenson. In it

the author is lying, book in hand, on a wicker lounge, a rug across his knees, and under are the pathetic words he desired should be on his tomb:—

"Home is the hunter, home from the hill,
And the sailor home from the sea."

A great monument, with many names, was in memory of those who died in the Indian Mutiny, and not far away from it was the stately statue of John Knox, in his furred gown and square cap. In St. Giles lie Montrose, the great martyred Marquis, and the Regent Moray, who was assassinated at Linlithgow. We discovered, with some difficulty, the brass tablet set in the floor that marks the spot where Jenny Geddes flung her stool at the dean when he introduced the service-book of Charles the First. Either the church must have been altered, or the stool must have had a boomerang-like power, for now it is almost impossible to even see the pulpit from the place where the dauntless woman sat. It is to be hoped Jenny's spirit does not haunt St. Giles, for, if so, it must be sorely tried when the great organ peals out, and the ritual is read—so different a service from the simplicity and severity of the praise and prayer she championed.

From the Market Cross, whose restoration the Scots owe to Gladstone, we passed on to the Cannongate, which abounds in interest and romance. The tall old houses here were varied by picturesque gabled buildings, some timber-fronted and many red-tiled, a glorious tint against the blue sky. Here was Allan Ramsay's shop, and, only a little further on, was John Knox's house, familiar to us from many post-cards. It is a fascinating building, with tiny-paned projecting windows, and an outside stone stair. One little triangular window is set at the angle of the wall, which here juts into the street, and from that window John Knox is said to have preached. Further on the street narrowed, and here the houses—now unkempt and dreary—used to be occupied by the nobles who clustered about Holyrood Palace. We knew we were near the debtors' sanctuary, and were speculating as to its whereabouts when a comely woman standing arms akimbo at her shop-door, broke in with apologies and information. She was versed in the matter, and actually took us back along the street to show us the line across the cobblestones which

marked the division between a prison or freedom for the delinquent. The Abbey Courthouse, where they took refuge, was close by. It looked most interesting, and had a magnificent entrance, but our guide told us that, though she had once been in, the "leddy who kept it was a verra stiff wumman, and could not bide strangers." It was amusing to imagine the broken-down gentlemen flying before their angry creditors and gaining the safety of the sanctuary, while their baffled pursuers were obliged to toe the line. Sunday was a day on which no arrests were made, but, like Cinderella, a man had to be careful to leave the town betimes if he valued his liberty.

Just across the wide square, lovely gardens bordering it on one side and the swelling downs of Queen's Park and Arthur's Seat rising behind, lay Holyrood, most romantic of palaces. It was a convent once—as its name signifies—which saintly King David of Scotland founded in gratitude for being saved from a furious stag who fled before an uplifted cross. But it is Queen Mary whose memory haunts its quaint rooms—Queen Mary, whose brief life was filled with tragic happenings. It was in Holyrood that Rizzio was murdered, and we stood in the little supper-room where he and his queen took their last meal together, and we tried to picture the scene. It is the tiniest of apartments, oak-panelled and queer-cornered, with one small, deep-sunk latticed window. The conspirators, headed by Ruthven, entered through Mary's bedroom—out of which the supper-room leads—by a secret door, which now is quite visible behind the great mouldering bedstead. Rizzio clung to the folds of Mary's gown, but was forced apart, stabbed, and dragged through the bedroom to the door of the audience chamber, where he was killed. So dire was the hatred and eager vengeance of the nobles that no fewer than fifty-six wounds were in his body. Of course, we were shown the stain of his blood, but it is neither very marked nor very convincing, and the tragedy was as real to us without that somewhat theatrical exhibit. It is the little personal touches that are fascinating in Holyrood.

The picture gallery—which contains about a hundred portraits of Scottish kings, most of them done, thirteen to the dozen, by some sign-painter in the 17th century—is a chamber of horrors. Lord Darnley's rooms are interesting and contain some fine tapestries and some odds and ends of

old furniture. But it is to Queen Mary's room that the crowd flock to linger and gaze at the sadly few relics. Queens were sparingly housed in those days. The audience chamber is stately and exquisitely panelled, but the bedroom is not large, and is badly lit, and the great bed takes up much of the space. In the window recess hangs a mirror—the very first, a delightful policeman told us, ever brought to England. Queen Mary had it among her treasures when she came from France, and we gazed into its dull broken surface with deep interest. There is little reflection left after all these years, but doubtless it was a cherished toy when new. "Ye can say ye hae luiket i' the same gless as Queen Mary," said our policeman; "Ay, and hae seen a happier face, I daur say!" At the head of the bed was a square opening in the thick stone wall, through which anyone on the winding stairs outside could watch what was going on within the room. On the wall of the little supper-room hung a blackened mouldering square of tapestry, the only scrap left of the needlework with which the rooms had been hung. We wondered if anyone was brave enough to visit these rooms at night. There must be unquiet spirits that haunt them, and, twentieth century though it is, we confessed to each other that we should not dare to face the weird possibilities of the darkness there. It is a sad place, though from the deep-sunk windows lovely glimpses can be got of green hills and fair gardens, and, beyond, beautiful Edinburgh. Treachery and tragedy seem lurking in every dim corner and behind each low oaken door, and the bright sunlight that is pouring down on the city—even penetrating into the squalor of the wynds and closes—never seems to dispense the gloom that fills the rooms. It seems a dour setting for so bright and gay a creature as Mary Scots.

The Chapel Royal is a picturesque ruin, more dilapidated since the futile attempt to roof it in. Parts of it date back to the twelfth century, and the early English portion is most beautiful, with exquisite carving and the remains of noble columns. We had to crawl over planks, for workmen were busy preserving and restoring, and heaps of debris and scaffolding hid several of the monuments. Here, in the Royal vault, are buried several Kings of Scotland, and here Darnley's body was laid. Rizzio was buried in the passage leading to the quadrangle, on the skirts of

consecrated ground, and on the wall of the chapel we saw a monument to the Bishop of Orkney—a Bothwell—who celebrated the marriage of his kinsman to Queen Mary in the great hall of the palace. There are a few modern graves, one being that of the Countess of Caithness, who believed that Queen Mary's spirit lived again in her. Here, in the ruins of the Chapel Royal, where long ago there was such pomp and pageantry, the sunlight streamed down on the crumbling stones and through the broken windows, and outside a bird was singing its heart out in ecstasy as it swung on the bough of a silver birch. Lawns, trees, and vivid flower-beds were as welcome as the bird's carol after the pathos and the gloom of palace and chapel.

Fascinating as our visit had been, we felt we wanted a fillip after our depression, and though the contrast was perhaps startlingly crude, we mounted a car and hied us to Portobello, the Margate of Edinburgh. Here all was gaiety and life, though perhaps the Scotch enjoyment is not so whole-hearted as that of the English coster. Even the children are more restrained in their mirth. But all the seaside attractions, the shows, and tea-gardens, the merry-go-rounds, switchbacks, skating rinks, abounded along the sea front, and hundreds of people and thousands of children were there. One did not notice the latest fashions—though there were a few caricatures of them—but it seemed a hearty, healthy crowd, enjoying the sea breezes and the fair prospect of beach and sea. The last, alack! is not the sea we have on New Zealand shores. Though the sky was blue and the breeze light, it was a dreary, bilious green. It scarcely seemed akin to the glorious sapphire stretches of a New Zealand bay. But, indeed, I have as yet seen no deep, blue sea here. At Brighton the sea was a vivid green—a high, keen breeze fretting it into sullen waves, and the Irish Sea and the English Channel were alike wanting in rich, deep colour. We got back from Portobello in time to sit for a little in the Waverley Gardens, and, turning our backs on the whirl of Princes Street, we watched the lovely silhouette of castle, spires, roofs, and towers far above us, growing duskier purple against the flushed sunset sky. It had been a day of days, perfect to its close—even a moon peered out of the deepening blue—and its fascinating memories would intensify when we had returned to our newer and less romantic country.

CHAPTER XXIX.

# GLIMPSES OF THE HIGHLANDS

Romantic Charm—Its Gay Freedom—A Dower-House —Sunshine After Rain—The Fairy Knoll—Inverary—Postcards and Americans—Doon Castle—A Garrulous Ancient—The Herring Fishery—A Cheap Home—By the Loch—A Highland Dance—The Beauty of Loch Lomond.

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IT is little wonder that down the ages such passionate devotion has been displayed for the Highlands of Scotland. The romantic charm of loch and glen, the vivid or delicate tints of moor and hill, the old world villages, and the ruined castles rich in legend, even the vagaries of the weather—all are enchanting, and fully explain the great crowds of visitors that flock there in the summer and autumn. To the season-worn London woman, and the blase clubman, a trip to the Highlands is a fixed item in the year's programme. There the former can wear short tweed skirts—or none at all, if it pleases her —and gun in hand can roam over the moors, drinking in the delicious air, till it is time to return and put on her daintiest chiffons for dinner. For in the Highlands no elaborate variety of costume is needed. Tailor-mades, severe and limited as to stuff, alternate with most elaborate evening frocks, perhaps with the interregnum of a filmy tea gown for that fascinating hour, when the sportsmen get back for tea, and, if the bag is good, blissful content reigns supreme.

I stayed in an old grey-stone house—of severe architecture, except for a frivolous annexe with a great bay window built in later days. It was old, and had been, it was said, the dower-house of the Maclachlan, which personage lived some miles along the shore of Loch Fyne

at Castle Lachlan. The picturesque ruin of the ancient castle was not far away, close to the edge of the water. The journey up to the loch was undertaken in driving rain, and all the glories of the trip were hidden behind dense mists. But just as we neared the old castle, the clouds broke, and there against the soft green and purple of the hill were the crumbling tower and the ruined walls. Beyond, a lovely wooded glen cleft two great heathery hills, purple and russet, one sweeping in a grand curve to its highest point, the Fairy Knoll, where the little folk hold high revel when all the foolish humans have left off disturbing them with their guns and their dogs. From there the beautiful shore-line curves into miniature bays and juts into tiny wooded promontories, the beach, a glory of great purple rocks and seaweed-tangle of wondrous orange, scarlet, and emerald. Here and there a white-washed cottage shines out among the trees, but there are wide spaces where there is nothing but moorland, and it is a refreshing change from congested London.

From my bedroom window I could throw a stone into the loch, which I watched in every mood—the first grey shimmer of dawn, the calm of noon, the glory of sunset, when the sky above the hills was scarlet and flame and little rosy ripples whispered up the beach. On some pensive days the reflections were extraordinary, and it was difficult to tell the real from the image. Miles across, a tiny red-roofed house, a yellow cornfield, range beyond range more dimly purple the further away, the silver ribbon of a waterfall, the creamy gash of a quarry, all were repeated in the lake, and our boat broke up the reflections as it passed to the fishing ground. At the head of the loch lay Inverary, and one brilliant afternoon we took steamer and went across with many Glasgow folk a-holiday-making to that picturesque little town. The castle, although it is not old, nestles charmingly among its clustering woods, and the village is strangely old-fashioned, with low-browed doorways, and tiny bowed shopwindows, where motley goods are shown. Postcards seemed to be the most popular commodity, and hustling Americans, with no time to waste, bought, wrote on, and posted quantities of these inexpensive souvenirs. We watched them in the streets scribbling messages on their postcards up against a wall or on their knees, and then hurrying on, eager to miss nothing. The

tiny village—so quiet when free from the rush of tourists —used to be a scene of great strife, and the streets have often echoed to wild cries and piteous shrieks for mercy. Its romantic history is easy to imagine, for Inverary is not much changed from what it used to be in old times of feud and faction, and the memory of its quiet loveliness and picturesque charm will linger long.

A more charming route to Inverary is by the head of the loch, albeit the roads are bad, and over one part—named with discrimination Hell's Gate—the nervous passenger has many qualms. The road winds along the shore, the great trees, tinged with orange and red, in some places almost meeting overhead. One little headland, crested with pines and bordered with silver sand, curves caressingly round a tiny bay, where stand cottages set in gardens riotous with blossoms—dahlias, marguerites, irises, and pansies. Across the loch are the ruins of the original "Doon Castle," where Wm. Sharp, "Fiona Macleod," laid the plot of his romantic tale. Sharp was a Loch Fyne man, and lived at Strachur, the tiny village not far from his house. The row of quaint little cottages winds round the shore, and between them and the water lies a wide green, where the children and fowls divert themselves, and the old men wander about in the sun. For in Strachur there are several ancients who totter about, pass the time of day, and generally supervise village affairs.

With one of these I talked on a lovely morning. He leant on his stick, and became most voluble, though it was not easy to understand him, owing to his broad accent, and his utter want of teeth. I gathered, however, that he had been a traveller, and fifty years ago had visited Auckland as a sailor. Then things were hard for the man before the mast, but all his experiences were glorified by distance, and he declared it was a grand life, and New Zealand a grand country. He'd have liked fine to have gone out again, but he ended with a little sigh for the might have been, and the good old days. Loch Fyne was a busy place years ago, when the herring used to come, but lately the fishing has been a failure, and except for a few days at the beginning of the season, no herring have been caught. In bygone days the fishing fleet was in full swing, and Strachur itself sent out many boats and men, who worked all night and day feverishly to gather the

rich harvest of the sea. Sometimes, in those good old days, herring were so plentiful that the market was overstocked, but now some of the fishing villages are entirely deserted, and many of the men, finding no employment, go to other countries. It had its dangers this herring fishing, and, peaceful as Loch Fyne looks at times, it can rage and rave. One night a boat load of fishermen, seven in all, was lost just near Strachur, and no trace ever found, for what the loch claims she keeps. Their relatives only knew they left Inverary one stormy afternoon late, and never arrived at the little village further down the loch.

The tiny cottages, delightfully out of drawing, and full of soft colouring with their creepers and lichens and tiles, are let for £3 a year, which includes enough ground for a cow. Doubtless the sanitary arrangements and the general comfort of the cottages are in keeping with the rent, and in the long winter they must be dreary and dismal in the extreme.

A curving road—full of surprises to a chauffeur—leads up the hill under an avenue of pines, past the little village store, the quaint old church, a few cottages, and then on to Loch Eck, surely one of the loveliest spots in beautiful Scotland. It nestles among the great purple and russet hills, the dark pines, in places close to the water, casting gloomy reflections into its opal and silver surface. Here I found the very trees that Rackham draws, with huge roots, from which the water had washed the earth, grotesque, fearsome, and mysterious, just where pixies and fairies might be expected to hide, peering out at the queer folk with their spirit-lamp, and afternoon tea basket, motor veils, and snatches of the latest musical comedies. Just to complete the picture, a tiny, red-funnelled steamer passed, with a soft grey banner of smoke and a trail of silver wake. It was crowded with excursionists, and a girl was at the helm, and all looked curiously at the picnic tea-party on the shore.

A Highland dance was another delightful memory. It rounded off a concert, which was most successful, but not nearly so popular as the dance, to which all the village came—the girls in short stuff skirts and light blouses, the men in decent tweeds and heavy boots. The few who wore the Highland costume were the young lairds and their visitors. They were much admired by the Sassenach girls.

But the dancing of all was a lesson to the more careless English, who do not dance with that whole-hearted abandon and precise grace. Even the hob-nailed boots were worth watching, so deftly and delicately they kept time to the music of the fiddler. Conversation there was none. The men came up, took their partners, danced in utter silence, and returned the girls again in good order and condition. There were many comely faces, but the belle of the ball was a bright-faced lassie who the day before I had seen bringing in the cows, and who, at other times, served in the little store. We left in the small hours, but we were told that, on the principle that it is best to make the most of opportunities, it would be daylight before the dance broke up.

One other little picture of the Highlands before I close. Loch Lomond was looking her very loveliest the day we went up to the head. The great Bens were softly purple, the nearer hills glorious russet and wine-colour with heather and bracken, and each little island and wooded headland exquisitely beautiful. The little towns that lie on either side were charming. We came back in the sunset, our steamer breaking up the amber and rose of satin-smooth water. The hills were veiled with a luminous haze, and the grassy shores gleamed golden-emerald and bronze. At one little landing-place, where the great pines pressed down to the tiny wharf, their trunks columns of flame in the level sunbeams, three motors were waiting, and we watched the fortunate girls and men getting in and whirling off into the dim vista of the avenue-like road. They, luckier than we, were not being carried away remorselessly from such loveliness. But, though one's glimpses of the Highlands were all too short, and there was much left to be seen, one is thankful to carry away memory-pictures of such glorious scenery, viewed in perfect autumn weather.

CHAPTER XXX.

# AUTUMN IN ENGLAND

Glorious Colour—A Naboth's Vineyard—The Great Moor—A Silver Derwent—Haddon Hall—A Perilous Road—Dulwich School—Its Founder—The Virginian Creeper—Winter Ahead—A Tragic Figure—Extremes of London.

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IT is autumn fairly in England just now, and the beauty of the country is indescribable. To one who has never seen the glory of the fall—who comes from a country where each year Nature has no brilliant death and wondrous resurrection—it is a miracle of loveliness. September has been genial, bringing calm days and brilliant sunshine, too late, alas, for the crops, but much appreciated by the many who have grumbled through June, sneezed through July, and shivered through August, and who are looking forward to months of chill and gloom. At the beginning of September I journeyed down through the centre of England one brilliant afternoon. Part of the way we passed by woods just turning colour. Here and there a gorgeous tree blazed with orange, bronze, or scarlet, but autumn had only touched them lightly, and the wealth of bracken below was but a more golden green. The woods about Chatsworth were still unchanged, and the magnificent trees rich in wealth of lovely leaf. We motored through the park—the Duke and Duchess were in residence, and the house was not open to the public—and we were pointed out the tiny plot of ground—a very Naboth's vineyard—that is the only spot within the gates the great duke cannot call his own. A little old cottage stands in the enclosure, pent in by a tiny orchard and old-fashioned garden, and the miniature property is held by the owner by ancient rights, which, in spite of all persuasion and induce-

ments, he refuses to forfeit. It is refreshing, in this mercenary age, to find that money is not omnipotent. Our motor whirled along Froggatt Edge, on the borders of the Moor which swept above us in great grass and heather slopes, with huge purple rocks, like ruins of a castle, set here and there, some so threateningly poised on the edge of the high bank that we heaved a sigh of relief when we had passed. Far below, beyond charming woods and meadows, ran the silver Derwent, slipping quietly between its low green banks, and slumbering in placid backwaters where water-lilies and bulrushes grew. Who would have believed that, only an hour ago, we had been in bustling grimy Sheffield?

Haddon Hall, nestling against its wooded hill, looked like a fairy-tale picture, in tones of grey and green, gold and blue. The little village of Eyam was pointed out to me, a cluster of houses set among trees and meadows. It had a sad history, for, far as it is from London, it was decimated by the great plague. Some old clothes were sent from the capital down to the peaceful little village, and the fatal plague germs they carried killed all but one inhabitant. So the tale runs, but it is hard to realise the horrors of that time as we look at it, peaceful and picturesque, set in its fair foliage, and bathed in the afternoon sunlight. Before I came to England, I imagined English roads to be ideal for motoring. As regards surface, they are wonderful, but they curl and twist like agonised serpents, and hairpin bends are quite usual. One's course is accompanied by much hooting, which may calm the fears of the nervous and ignorant, but which is generally recognised to be quite inaudible to a motor coming in the opposite direction round a sharp curve. There was one tense moment when, crossing a narrow stone bridge at right angles to the road, a great car came dashing upon us round the corner. By skill and quickness, an accident was averted, but there was one second when visions of an untidy death skipped across the minds of those in our motor.

Of English autumn memories one has many. Once we drove along the edge of a wood, the dark trunks of the trees rising from golden and russet bracken. As far as one could see were the purple columns and the vivid carpet, bronze in shadow, ruddy gold in the sunshine. Near the road were crimson splashes of blackberry foliage, and

ahead, the ivory-grey ribbon merged into delicate blue haze of dreamy misty branches. A lovely old garden I saw in its autumn colouring was at Dulwich, which, until I had been there, I had thought of as a common-place suburban town. But it is charming and full of interest. In the 17th century, one Alleyne, an actor, lived there, and amassing a fortune, he bought land and founded a college for poor boys. Now the latter-day boys —no longer necessarily poor—have a grand new building on part of the wide estate he gave, and the old college is used as alms-houses. But it is set in glorious gardens, monarchs of trees, velvet lawns, and old brick walls, their mellow colours almost hidden under the crimson and rose of Virginia creeper. Tradition says that some of the trees here were planted by Shakespeare, who was a friend of Alleyne, and used to visit him. The portrait of Alleyne and his first wife—he had three, which makes his wealth more remarkable—hangs in the art gallery which is part of his munificent gift. She is the quaintest person—in a pointed stomacher and a tall witch-like velvet hat, her pale face and timid light eyes perhaps giving rise to the pet name her husband called her—"My sweet mouse." By the way, at Dulwich lived my Lord Thurlow, and though there is no trace now of the old mansion, one of the quaintest houses in the place is what used to be its lodge. In the grounds about it is all that remains of the river Itha, which at one time flowed into the Thames and up which Queen Elizabeth used to sail in her State barge when she visited Dulwich. Now, perhaps disgusted at the common-places of life, the river has disappeared, and all that is left is a series of small pools.

This autumn the Virginia creeper has been superb. There is a street at Streatham that slopes down a little hill—a street of commonplace small houses, tragically alike and hopelessly prosaic. But the lovely climber has made each exquisite, and a month ago, before the winds shook off the frail beauties, it was a sight worth travelling miles to see—a vista of delightful tints of rose, russet, deep red, and lemon, the luxuriance draping the very chimneys and peering into the windows. Its autumn glory, spring loveliness, and summer beauty, make up for its distressing appearance in winter, when it crawls and twists over the houses like a dead, dry network.

Town, too, has its cheerful signs of autumn. Crumpets are in the shops, and yesterday I saw my first hot chestnut vendor, with his red-eyed stove and delicious-smelling wares. One wily merchant—E. V. Lucas tells us—anxious to lose no business opportunity, used to combine an ice-cream barrow with a roast chestnut outfit, and the happy purchaser could, if he wished, imagine himself by turns in Spitzbergen and Calcutta. The flower-girls—though so far I have seen only frowsy elderly women behind the baskets—have glorious chrysanthemums, which make splendid masses of colour in these grim, grey days. Smart women have donned their furs and velvets—such luxurious furs, ermine coats, and sable capes worth much fine gold. I saw a set of sables the other day—a great muff and stole of such delicious softness they could be held in one small bundle between two hands. They cost the happy but anxious owner £800, and were valued at £1200. Such possessions bring with them much responsibility, and the humble coney seal—mellifluous name for rabbit—is as warm and more useful. Half the women in London seem wearing short black cloth or velvet coats and skirts, velvet hats and dark furs, as though even the lengthy period of mourning did not urge them to vivid tints. The London girl, whose complexion is clear, if not always rosy, knows well how dark tones become her.

Delightful as London is to the visitor, it, like all great cities, has its underside of seams and frayed edges. Walking through the Park yesterday, in a mood of calm pleasure at the crisp clear air, the fitful sunshine through the half-leafless trees, the delicious blue vistas and the grey and silver sheen of the Serpentine, I passed a bench where a man was sitting. He was an old man, with a figure and face that had once been jaunty—a soldier, perhaps, and perhaps a gentleman. His clothes were mere rags—a threadbare frock-coat, and can any garment be more tragic? —a thin pair of dress trousers, gaping boots showing the bare feet, a battered hat, and, round his thin, corded throat, a wisp of a black tie. He had no shirt nor collar, and the cool breeze that made me hug myself in my furs must have pierced him to the marrow. Perhaps I should have scarcely noticed him—one gets sadly accustomed here to poverty and suffering—but as I passed he lifted his eyes, and they met mine. All day I was haunted by that look of misery

—impotent and weary misery that made me feel a callous brute for being warm and happy and well-fed while others were cold and hungry. There is much being done, I know, to solve the great problem of poverty. Self-sacrificing men and women spend their lives, their energy, and their money, to lessen the evil, but it has eaten deep into the heart of London, and to unaccustomed eyes is terrible. What must it be in mid-winter, when even seasoned Londoners, with every luxury and safeguard, dread the cold and fog and damp? The sorrow and suffering of the great city—keener, doubtless, for the extraordinary luxury and riches—makes one glad that in our newer, happier land such conditions are unknown. I am told by Englishmen of experience that it is a mere matter of time before we, too, have slums and all this hideous under-world of vice and crime, but surely wisdom and forethought can prevent such contingencies.

CHAPTER XXXI.

# FROM LONDON TO VIENNA

A Great Station—Violets and Good-Byes—My Companion—A Lonely Traveller—The Flushing Train—The Charm of Holland—Welcome Soup—Railway Meals—A Happy Pair—A Regal Official—The Austrian Switzerland.

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A KEEN contrast, Victoria Station—blazing with light, crowded with busy people, noisy with cries and chatter, the shriek of engines, the clang of bells—and the chill, silent darkness into which in ten minutes our train had glided. On the platform were to be seen many farewells, some tearful, for there were friends going far and for long years. We watched the impassioned good-byes of a stout Frenchwoman to her stouter husband, who sought to calm her sorrow by rubbing her gently across her shoulders. A weird foreigner with tan boots, no hat on his almost shaven pole, and a luxurious fur coat, also kept a sardonic eye on the couple, and a girl, evidently parting from her fiance, was smiling through her tears. A chorus of good-byes, parting words, and handshakes, a flutter of handkerchiefs, and the train steamed off. Our carriage was fragrant with great posies of violets—an echo of the kind farewells. They kept their perfume till Vienna was reached. It was sad to leave London with all its fascination and attraction; and regretfully I watched the red glow grow fainter—that glow as a newcomer I imagined was a great fire, but which was the reflection of the heart of the city. Two hours' journey, through country gripped in keen white frost, brought us to Queenborough, where we boarded the boat. My companion in the carriage was an English governess in a Berlin

family, come over to England to find a boarding-school for her more advanced pupils. She was eloquent of the kindness and consideration she had met with, and the good time an English governess has in a really high-class German family, where she shares in all the pleasures and diversions.

It was a bitter trip—though one of the shortest—from train to boat. The sleet whipped one's face, and it was difficult to avoid slipping on the ice-glazed planks. So the warm comfort and spotless cleanliness of the ferry boat was grateful, and I snuggled into my berth with intense pleasure. My cabin-mate was a lonely person, who had never travelled by herself before, and was as helpless as a baby. She wanted to sit up all night, but the stewardess did not encourage her doing so in any place but her own cabin, so she resolved to remove her hat—wide, and with many plumes—and sit in her berth until daylight came. At first I thought asthma or heart trouble might be the reason, but by sympathetic questioning found it was a horror of burglars! She clung to me apologetically next morning until we were on the railway station, and then—as our paths diverged—we had to part. But the last glance I had of her she was drifting tearfully about, looking for a friend who had not turned up, and without whom she appeared to be completely at a loss to proceed.

We boarded the Flushing train in the dark—the dark of a winter morning—and for a time nothing could be seen but a few blurred lights as the train whizzed by the stations. My small bag played me a trick that served to pass the time, for it firmly refused to open, and it was not locked. The only other occupant of the carriage—a wild-eyed girl, who had been everywhere, and was on her way to teach English at a school to get money for further wanderings—tried with me to open it, but we failed, with bruised fingers. So I sallied out in search of a man, and soon four—all talking different tongues—a Babel of German, French, Russian, and a strong brand of American—were wrestling with it, producing absurdly inadequate keys, and making all sorts of suggestions. The German finally succeeded, and left the carriage with many hat flourishes, and a recommendation to me not to close it again, for fear the Customs, scenting something contraband, might break it open.

As the dawn came—grey and dreary—the wide, flat expanses of Holland grew out of the mist and gloom. It is monotonous ; but it has a charm of its own with its still stretches of grey water, its green fields silvered with frost, and its glorious trees still in their golden and bronze autumn garb. I saw repeated constantly that well-known Dutch avenue painted by a famous artist—whose name I forget. Reproductions of it were familiar to me, long before I saw the original in one of the London galleries, and now came the same beautiful vista of tall trees, enclosing a narrow raised road with borders of grass, the quiet grey water lying on either side. Even now, Holland has kept much of its autumn foliage and colour, and some of the pools, surrounded by rushes and tall beeches, which threw quivering golden reflections into the silver, were subjects for artists to rave over. There was very little sign of life. As the day grew, a few peasants loitered along the road—shapeless and lumbering in blue blouses and clumsy breeches—and a knot of children, moon-faced and fat, watched the express as it thundered across a road, but the few houses were silent and smokeless, and one saw little of the Dutch picturesque beauty and quaintness which we gain a la postcard. A great field of red and purple cabbage made a grateful splash of colour in the prevailing green and grey and bronze, and an occasional windmill broke the straight horizon. Now and then the train passed through woods of beeches, but oftener there was little to see save fields and long straight roads, and continually water, in ditches, canals, and pools. At Uden the brightening dawn showed us a line of trees, their branches carefully arranged like fans, their golden leaves like a brass fretwork against the grey sky. Here, too, were vistas of trees planted in straight lines, and calm pools with islands of emerald ooze—lovely but insanitary. Pepper-pot towers of churches sometimes rose faintly in the misty distance, and cosy, red-tiled, low-browed farmhouses lay among their multitude of outbuildings. At one station a woman—absolutely a round bunch of "petties and bodices"—brought on the train a smoking jug of bouillon, and served it, to all who wished it, for a small price.

At Wessel snow was falling, and a troop of market-women, bare-headed and huddled in shawls, were filing along a parallel platform. It was very grim and gloomy,

and made us thankful for our warm carriages and general comfort. The meals on the train were fairly good. No one could dispute the excellence of the rolls and butter and cheese, but my British soul longed for something more substantial, and the weird dish they called bacon and eggs was most unappetising. Coffee was good, but tea was what one expects in foreign countries—weak, and with an indescribable flavour caused by the preserved mik. But it was all well served and clean, and the picturesque cinematograph we watched from the windows added to the pleasure of the meal. At one station a number who were disembarking in Germany had to have their luggage passed through the Customs. One girl had to pay 5d on a cake she was carrying to a friend, but the others escaped scot-free, and a newly-married couple, who inundated the carriage with trunks and sat calmly under the rack, groaning with its load, in perfect bliss, clasping each other's hands, got their belongings passed without question. As the day grew on, the pair became more affectionate, and I might have been a door-knob or a cushion for all they minded. I looked out of the window, but found it acted as a mirror, and, seeing my gaze averted, a kiss was snatched. Before they got off at Dresden she had her head on his shoulder and his arm was round her waist, and both were fast asleep. The extraordinary thing was that she was American, though he was German, and the lovelorn phase is not, as a rule, one that belongs to a trans-Atlantic bride. I was all alone when they left, and a long night was before me. As far as I could see, I was the only woman in this division of the train, and men of many nationalities, except English, occupied the other carriages. However, a friendly guard piloted me to a tiny, one-seated carriage, all to myself, and showed me, with much pride, how I could pull down the little velvet cushions, push up the seat-arm, and make myself a comfortable bed. It was little use attempting to sleep until the Austrian frontier was crossed, for there my luggage was to be examined. At half-past eleven we reached Tetschen, and there I shivered out on to the damp, cold, dark platform. The stations, both in Holland and Germany, are quite lacking in any attractions. They have no bright book-stalls, no flower-stalls, no automatic machines, no newsboys, not even posters. And they are badly lit, also, so it was with a degree of

trepidation I found myself the only woman on Tetschen station at that time. But the wind is ever tempered to the shorn lamb, and I discovered, in my extremity, a friend—a huge, white-haired, red-faced man, in gorgeous uniform, gold and scarlet, cocked hat, and flowing cloak—who, I fancy, now in the light of common day, must have been the stationmaster. He looked like an archduke, at least, and had a tremendous air of authority with him. But he was proud of his small stock of English, and piloted me through the toils of the Customs, reassured me when I saw my beloved box speeding away on another train into the unknown dark, and restrained me from an early grave when my own train steamed away, ten minutes before its time. "It come back, madame," he said, as he clutched me firmly; "it only go about ze rails. Madame wait with me, and it come back." I was relieved when I found myself again in my carriage, surrounded by my belongings. They were, I discovered later, fewer than when I left them, for some one had been ransacking my bag. A little present I was carrying to a friend had been taken, as well as two apples, and my small morocco-bound address-book—an extraordinary theft the last—until I learnt that the acquisitive person must have, in the hurry, thought it was a note-case, with money.

There was no lock on the carriage door, and, moreover, however firmly I fastened it, it had an uncanny habit of jerking open, and moving slowly back, while the grey curtain fluttered weirdly, and I fancied I saw an evil face peering in from the darkness of the corridor. Three or four times I rose and shut the door, peeping out to see if anyone was really there. But all the other glass doors were closely curtained, and in the lulls of train noises a variety of snores could be heard. I dozed fitfully, opening my eyes once when a guard came to the door. I woke when it was just grey dawn, and saw low hills curving along the horizon, a knot of small houses clustering about a spired church—like chickens about a hen—and hedged fields with knots of tall beeches and poplars. A herd of black cattle ran away as the train whizzed by. Streaks of crimson grew more vivid in the east, and the hills became mountains as we entered the Austrian Switzerland, where great sanatoriums stand high against the snowfields. All the white summits were rosy and the pine-trunks columns of flame

as the glow intensified. Rarely have I seen a fairer scene—sunrise and snow, forest and field, picturesque towns, and the glint of a stream through tall tree-trunks. Faintly came the peal of a church-bell, sweet and clear, adding to the charm, and two blue-bloused peasants just gave the finishing touch to the picture. The sunrise had passed as, with many whistles and screeches, our train steamed into Vienna, crossing—before it entered the station—the wide, yellow flood of the Danube.

CHAPTER XXXII.

# VIENNA

First Impressions—A Viennese Home—Our Austrian Maid—A Street of Palaces—An Archduke—Gorgeous Uniforms—Money and Marriage—Wives and Housewives—St. Michael's Church—Wonderful Tomb—Maria Theresa—The Hearts of Royalty—Napoleon's Bride—The Capuchin Vault—The Tomb of the Empress—A Faithful Servant—The Little Duke—A Masked Corpse.

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MY first impressions of Vienna, as I saw it in early morning, were of a grey, tearful sky arching over tall buildings, somewhat grim and forbidding, and wide streets paved with cobblestones, over which my crazy fiacre bumped and jerked until I thought at any moment I and my belongings would go through the bottom. London, with its friendly policemen and familiar sounds, seemed at the other end of the world, and quite a little time had been spent before I had gathered my luggage together, wishing that Providence had seen fit to supply me with more than one tongue, two eyes and two hands—and had engaged this ramshackle vehicle, the only one available, gained by much gesture and my best French. Three villainous-looking men, supporting a post, laughed consumedly. They gave my driver much amused advice, and commented freely, I felt sure, on my appearance, which—after thirty-two hours of travelling—could not have been up to the Bond-street standard. As I was thrown from side to side, my driver shouted to his steed, and my suit-case banged against my ankles, I reflected what might happen if my directions had not been sufficiently explicit. The dial on which the fares were marked was broken, and I wondered whether my Jehu would turn and rend me if I offered him too little money.

All sorts of vague discomforting possibilities flashed across my mind, and when at last the cab drove up with an extra jerk, and I found, on enquiring, no such person as my hostess lived in that place, it was only what I had expected. But eventually I got to my destination, paid the cabman—over-paid him, judging from his wide grin—and was welcomed into the little flat which for some days sheltered me so kindly. Half the people in Vienna seem to live in flats, gained by wide doors, a flagged hall and great stone staircases that go up and up seemingly to the skies, and make one shiver after the heated air of the rooms. A concierge lives on the ground floor, and keeps a cautious and friendly eye on the residents, and beyond the tiny halls that lead to the various suites of apartments, the flat-dwellers live their own lives, quite independent of their neighbours. As in the great London caravanserai, your dearest friend or bitterest enemy might live under the same roof as you, and yet you might never know. Winter was coming on apace in Vienna, and the air was chill, but to our hardier British notions, the temperature relished by the residents is unpleasantly high. Nearly always there are double windows, and heavy pads stop every chink and cranny, while a tall stove, with its red glowing eye, radiates warmth. But when—as happened later—the snow fell and all the streets were deep in slush, it was delightful to pass from the chilly dampness of the stone hall into the cheery warmth and comfort of the flat, welcomed always by the charming Austrian maid, with her quaint kissing of your hand. At first, as she took my fingers and smilingly put her lips to the back of my hand, I felt very embarrassed. But I soon got to love the graceful greeting which is, I was assured, the hall-mark of a well-trained Vienna servant. But Resi was quite out of the common. She was frank, humorous, clever, clean, and the most exquisite of needlewomen, flitting from one kind of fancywork to another, and doing each with marvellous skill. She was pretty, too, with her large dark eyes set far apart and dark hair parted on one side and twisted into a picturesque knot.

My hostess proved an ideal cicerone, for she knew and loved Vienna, and could tell fascinating tales of the great nobles who lived in the palaces. For in Vienna there are not two or three palaces, but streets of them, great stone flat-faced buildings with numberless windows, rising

straight from the pavement, often with nothing imposing about them save their size and their finely carved entrance, which is generally a wide stone-flagged passage that leads into an inner courtyard. But it is at the back that these huge buildings blossom into beauty. There are their gardens—terraced—and shrubberies and flowerbeds, and there the great nobles, turning a contemptuous back to the rabble, live their stately lives. For Vienna is a city where birth and breeding counts, and where money is not omnipotent. The Court circle is exceedingly exclusive, and as all the children of an archduke are all archdukes or archduchesses, it follows that it is continually enlarging its numbers from within, and has no need to include outsiders—whatever may be their passports.

After all, archdukes and archduchesses are very like ordinary folk. I was close to an archduke in the Opera House. Though he was the son-in-law of the Emperor, and a person of much distinction and wealth, he was by himself in his box, and looked rather bored and weary. Olive-complexioned, dark-haired and eyed, he had a decidedly interesting appearance, and of course his uniform was most gorgeous. But this brings me to the most decorative feature of Vienna—at least its most decorative peripatetic feature—its officers. They are really magnificent. To begin with, they are mostly tall and handsome, and discipline has perfected nature, while their uniforms are splendid. I never knew whether I loved the pale blue cloaks or the white ones best, as their wearers swaggered by with clank of sword and jingle of spurs. If a London nursery-maid pays eighteenpence for a guardsman for her afternoon out, she surely would cheerfully give a week's wages to walk with one of these beautiful creatures. Their manners are perfect, too. One exalted being took charge of us at the opera, and though his English was a minus quantity, he was delightfully attentive. One hears that many of these young officers sow heavy crops of wild oats, and then, to recoup themselves, must marry money. Indeed, the regulations of the Army make it compulsory that the girl must have a good dot. So that, naturally, in many cases, leads to complications and domestic tragedies.

It is on Sunday on the Ring—Vienna is encircled by two magnificent promenades—that one sees the women of the upper middle classes in all their glory. Not the nobility

be it understood, or those that, although not noble, ape them, for they do not promenade on Sunday. But the great street—which has really two wide roads, three pavements, with double rows of magnificent trees shading each—is filled with the Viennese getting an appetite for their midday meal, the wives with their husbands, for even if they are never together other times, they go abroad on Sunday. And woe betide the woman whose spouse is not immaculate, for in Vienna a wife is held responsible for her husband's appearance, and may be seen giving the finishing touches to his boots with a duster before he starts. There is a wide field for the Suffragette in Vienna, where the wife is really the Haus-Frau, and shamelessly proud of playing second fiddle in the domestic orchestra. Even the great ladies may be seen, in apron and sleeves, busy in the morning superintending their households, or even doing housework, and though a woman of the artisan class may, and often does, spend her afternoon in the cafe with her friends, she must be home in time to see that the evening meal is ready for her good man. Sport for the women there seems little, and this accounts, perhaps, for the overblown appearance of many. In their tight tailor-mades—the Viennese tailors are the best in the world, and the Kaiserin sends from Berlin to Vienna for her tailored gowns—many of them look at bursting-point, and one pictures the relief with which they slip into their loose gowns when they get home, and set their tortured anatomy free.

The first place I visited in Vienna was St. Michael's—a small quaint church, where the nobility go. As we entered—for people come and go through the service—a flood of glorious singing was poured down from a gallery, from a choir of the best voices in the opera. The church is filled with smartly-dressed men and women, very attentive and reverent. The sunlight streams through a great jewelled window on to a wonderful monument, and as the priest intones his Latin, my eyes stray to what, afterwards, I learn is one of Canova's masterpieces, and so touchingly beautiful that the tears rise as one looks at it. There, in the tomb—to the dark opening of which the great winged angel is tenderly leading the drooping girl figure—lies the best-loved daughter of that Queen Elizabeth of Austria, Maria Theresa, a woman who has stamped her impress deeply on her country, and who, for all her ambition and her state-

craft, found time for the tender domestic arts. She at one crisis saved her people from a foreign foe, leading them to victory, although she had but newly-risen from a sick-bed, and her baby was but a few weeks old. And yet, she sewed exquisitely her children's clothes, and was a model wife and mother. But one learns much of Queen Maria Theresa here in Vienna, and I shall have more to write about her.

In this church of St. Michael's are the hearts of the Hapsburgs. Across from where we stand the wall is niched, and a silver urn is set in each. Each urn holds a royal heart, and the largest has, together in death as in life, those of Maria Theresa and her husband Francis. Even the stormy undisciplined heart of Rudolf—about whose death at Meyerling still hangs a veil of mystery, only to be lifted, it is said, at the Emperor's death—is there at rest, one hopes, soothed by the floating incense, the glorious voices, the prayers of his people. Who knows? In this church Marie Louise was married, by proxy, to Napoleon, and hurried off, weeping, to meet the bridegroom whom she thought of as a ravening ogre. Though the hearts of the Hapsburgs lie in St. Michael's, their bodies are in the Capuchin vault, which is below the Capuchin chapel. We wait in a stone passage before a low nail-studded door. Presently it is opened, and a monk in brown habit, rosary, a venerable grey beard, and spectacles that seem horribly anachronistic, leads us down into the crypt. Here is the last home of the Kings and Emperors and their royal kin. The oldest coffers—like huge bronze and iron cases on feet with lids—are severely plain, and the ornamentation increases until, in Maria Theresa's tomb, it almost approaches bathos. For the great Empress and her spouse are both sitting up in their couch, and she is pointing with one outstretched arm. Her crown is on her head, and her Imperial mantle about her shoulders. An elaborate coverlid drapes the lower part of the couch, which forms the top of a huge monument, absolutely incrusted with ornament, quaint allegories, a skull crowned with laurel, a broken sword, a tiny weeping Hymen with an extinguished torch, a death's-head grinning through a vizor, all the weird panoply of art, war, love and death. It was overpowering, and yet the love that prompted it was touching. Francis died years before Theresa, and she used—

while the tomb was building, and before they enclosed his coffin—to be let down to pray and sorrow beside him. Very pathetic, too, is a plain coffer that stands between two small ones. In it lies the body of the faithful governess to Maria Theresa's children, Countess Fuchs, still keeping watch over the little ones that death made wiser than she. She is the only civilian in all this Royal throng, an honour for her faithful service. It is characteristic of her Royal mistress that she could thus traverse conventionality. The great sarcophagus of Maria Theresa lies behind a railing, and beyond, with the low curves of the crypt roof arching above, there are many coffers.

It is dreadful to learn how many of them are the sad postscripts to unhappy lives and tragic deaths. Here is a simple coffer that holds the body of ill-fated gallant Maximilian, Archduke of Austria and Emperor of Mexico, best-beloved son of the old Emperor. Not very long ago there still lived in Vienna the physician who accompanied him to Mexico, and who brought his remains back to rest with those of his house, and the old man was never weary of recounting instances of Maximilian's courage and loveableness. With a pile of exquisite flowers before it and many scented candles flickering, is the coffin of the lovely Empress Elizabeth. It is her name-day, and tender hands have laid these tokens of affection before her tomb. Close by is the simpler coffin of Marie Louise, and here is the tomb of her son and Napoleon's, the Duke of Reichstadt. The French are even now agitating to get back his body, but the Austrians shake their heads and say, "Let the lad be. He is better beside his mother," or else, "Give us our Austrian Princess Marie Antoinette, whom you murdered, and we may think of letting you have the little Duke." It is said that Napoleon, on his last visit to Vienna, shut himself up in the crypt and that, when he came out, his face was terribly sad. Not far from the late Empress is Rudolf, in a plain coffer. My hostess, with thousands of Viennese, went to his lying-in-state, and noticed that his face was covered with a mask, because, it was said, he was so terribly disfigured in the wild fight that followed the orgie. Poor old Emperor! It scarcely seems that one heart could bear all the trouble his has had and not break. Who knows what sad thoughts come when he is alone in his great palace of Schonbrunn?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

# MORE ABOUT VIENNA

Schonbrunn—Its Ghosts—Empress Elizabeth—A Deserted Playground—A Place of Music—Gay Carousals—The Scene of a Tragedy—The Graben—His Wanderjahr—A Miraculous Picture—The Market—My Keenest Impression—A Lovely Statue—A Poem in Marble—Fragments of Memories—The Great Empress.

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WE visited Schonbrunn one day—a grey, still day in early winter. Before we reached the great Park gates the snow was falling, and when we got inside the grounds it had spread like an ever-whitening carpet, and the marvellous great walls of clipped trees were like bronze fretwork screens set on ivory. It is at Schonbrunn—the lovely country palace outside Vienna—that the Emperor lives, driving in every day to do his work in the Bourg Palace in the city. The great gardens and huge house, many-windowed, and built in imitation of Versailles, is haunted by ghosts—Maria Theresa, the great Empress; Marie Louise, weak, selfish; Napoleon's son, the Eaglet, with all the will, but no power, to fly, and later, the stately Empress Elizabeth, cold and impetuous, impatient of court routine, and loving all sport and action. We came to her bath in the grounds, a large inclosed space with huge trees over-arching the water, where she and her ladies used to swim. The playground, where the little Royal children were wont to sport, is deserted, though still the bars and swings are standing waiting for those who have put away childish things for matters much less innocent. The grounds are

wonderfully picturesque, divided as they are by the straight-clipped trees and ornamented with many statues and fountains.

One likes to remember Napoleon's son enjoyed some happy years here. Among the shrubberies, they tell us, he built a hut, and played at being Robinson Crusoe, "Monarch"—if of nothing else, poor lad—"of all I survey." He was only twenty-one when he died of consumption, and it was as well, perhaps, for the peace of Europe that he did not live longer. Brilliant, erratic, beautiful, self-willed, he owed many of his worst qualities to his bringing-up. Nearly all his childhood he was surrounded by weak and shallow women, who vied with one another to humour his every whim.

To the Gloriette we climb up one of the wide snow-covered paths that—separated by a mute fountain, whose figures are all muffled up for the coming winter—unite at the top of the hill. Just where we have climbed Maria Theresa used to walk, and from the quaint colonnaded building look over her fair domain. Here, too, she used to play at simple life, and eat her frugal breakfast on the balcony. The old Emperor still makes this his lonely morning stroll, when the Park is empty and still, save for the birds and fountains. The rooms in the palace are magnificent, the Royal apartments particularly fine. In Maria Theresa's bedroom the great bedstead is draped with dark velvet embroidered with gold and silver, as gloomy as many of the sad memories that cluster about the palace. But it has had its gay years too, when Mozart and Beethoven wrote music for its dances, and when a thousand guests attended its masked balls. There have been wild carousals and quaint pageants in those immense silent rooms, and masques when the Empress Maria Theresa rode on horseback around the ballroom, followed by her courtiers in carriages. The prize given to the most magnificent equipage at one of these pageants was a service of rock-crystal set with diamonds and mounted in gold.

What glorious music echoed through the now silent rooms! Schubert, Gluck, Brahms, Beethoven, all made melody there, and there for the first time the witching cadences of the "Blue Danube" were heard. Strauss's violin, its strings cut, is still to be seen in one of the rooms.

In one afternoon's stroll we reached the place where once stood the Ring Theatre, which was burnt down, with terrible loss of life, years ago. There was hardly a noble family in Vienna that did not lose one or more in the terrible conflagration, and my hostess herself had seen the screaming people, as the flames, which were impossible to check, snatched them down to a horrible death. Vienna was in mourning for a long time, and the Emperor, who did not escape in the general castastrophe, for some of the Royal House were killed, built on the spot a huge building of flats, whose rents go to support the many orphans.

The most fashionable street in Vienna was once the moat that surrounded the old fortified town. Hence it is called the Graben. In old times when the pest raged, a column was set up there to which the monarchs used to make humble pilgrimage, and where they offered up prayers in hearing of the populace. At one point in the street there is an extraordinary tree stump, stuck full of nails. It is a relic of bygone days when each locksmith before he started on his wanderjahr, or year of wandering, had to drive a nail into this old trunk—the lonely and defaced survivor of all the great forest that encircled the old town. What a wonderful array of shops there are in the Graben, glittering gold and silver and gems, dainty feminine wear, brilliant confectioners all decked with Christmas goodies, and windows full of most luxurious furs, for the winter is fairly here. Not far is St. Stephan's old church where there is the miraculous picture of the Virgin Maria von Potsch, from which recently some valuable gems were stolen. This picture is said at times to weep real tears.

Always on my way to the Ring, or home, I passed the market, the grey linen umbrellas set close together and looking absurdly like a group of discoloured mushrooms. It was ever fascinating to me to stroll in and out the narrow lanes between the booths and see the various wares, the wonderful cheeses of every shape and kind and smell, the piles of gay-tinted fruit, the paper-flowers mixed with fir branches into weird posies, the meat and the poultry, and the piles of vegetables. Even the conglomerate smell was attractive, and the quaint country women, shapeless and buxom, always smiled in a friendly way. Where the booths now cluster tournaments were held in the old days,

and high revels, and a Temple of Joy centred this place of busy traffic. Here, too, were witches burnt in the dark Middle Ages when little more save extreme age and the possession of a black cat seemed necessary to stamp an old woman as having sold herself to the Devil.

If I were asked what most impressed me in Vienna, I should at once say the statue of the Empress Elizabeth in the Hofbourg Gardens. It is hauntingly lovely and divinely simple. She must have been exquisitely beautiful, extraordinarily tall, extremely slender and graceful, with wonderful features and complexion, and hair that almost reached her feet, great auburn plaits as thick as a man's wrist. To the beauty-loving people of Vienna, she should have been a constant delight, and yet she hated being stared at, and often used to stand at a function with a fan hiding her face. In Court dress, blazing with the gorgeous Austrian jewels, she must have looked a fairy queen. But after the Meyerling tragedy, she wore only black, and that absolutely plain. One reaches the statue by a lovely little enclosed garden, of which it is the very heart. The doubly-curving path between flowering shrubs leads you to the figure, and you will be scarcely human if its beauty does not fascinate you. There she sits in marble, on a simple seat, the absolute plain draping showing the elegant lines of throat and waist and limbs, and the small head bent a little as if over-weighted with the imperial diadem of braids. Not a jewel, not an ornament, mars the exquisite simplicity of the figure. The delicate long-fingered hands lie upwards, one under the other, in the lap, and, as I gazed, a tiny bird poised itself on the slender wrist and drank of the little pool that had gathered in the Empress's palm. Where she faces are the palace windows of what used to be her own apartments and the balcony where her people used to see her come out to gaze at the fair prospect. A semi-circle of marble and lace-like iron work surrounds the statue, and on the railing is a tender inscription. Sweeter still are the forget-me-nots that even now, in the snow, are pressing their dear blue blossoms against the pedestal. It is a lovely memorial of a most beautiful and unhappy woman.

But so many memories of Vienna come rushing across my mind that I must cry halt for fear of wearying my readers. I loved the quaint unusual life—the early morn-

ing roll and coffee, in peignoir and slippers, with the snow falling outside and the great stove glowing and snapping. I loved the cafes with all their quaint types to watch and strange dishes to sample, and the streets by night, vivid with light, crowded and noisy, were quite fascinating. Our very baths were interestingly novel, for few of the flats in Vienna have bathrooms, and the residents go out when they require a bath. Snow was on the ground and still falling, and it was with some misgivings and two heavy coats I set out with my hostess. Visions of pneumonia flitted before my mind. But nothing happened except that for a small sum I got an excellent hot bath in a tiny room with a little dressing-table, one chair, some pegs and a list of tremendously imperative-looking regulations, which I could not read, and therefore probably broke! One peculiarity was—and I experienced it also in Switzerland—the lining of the bath by a large linen sheet, absolutely spotless, but of course rather unpleasant to touch. I noticed when we came out into the large hall there was a great demand for the glasses of filtered water by those who had had their baths. It was delightful to walk briskly through the snowy streets and get home to supper and the stove.

Another vivid memory is that of the huge monument to Maria Theresa that stands in the great square between the two museums. Though the Viennese woman is essentially the housewife, and does not trouble her head about her right to vote, it is the name of an Empress that blazes highest in its historical annals. She must have been a wonderful character. She was never idle, and never permitted anyone else about her to be. She was most unselfish—a rare gift in one with such strength and beauty—and she fostered music and the drama. In private she dressed simply—in the country she and her maidens used to wear peasant costume, a fancy followed by her daughter Marie Antoinette in her happier days in Paris—but at functions she blazed with jewels and rustled in brocades. Happy in her own marriage, she was fond of matchmaking, and gave doweries to penniless girls so as to ensure their gaining husbands. Her regal figure towers high on its pedestal, about which stand the picturesque figures on horseback of her leading generals and statesmen. It is a huge monument, and one learns without surprise that it took fifteen years to build.

And now I have finished.

Such delight I found in my wanderings, and such pleasure in writing my scattered memories, that I have ventured to collect them in a book, with the hope that it may induce others to study this "many-pictured world." It is but a simple chronicle of "golden instants and bright days," but it forms a gallery that I would wish all could possess. By its magic one can see the miracle of an English spring when pent within dull walls, and leave the trivial commonplace and the weary round for the glamour of the East. When travelling days are done, and one creeps to the comfort of the home fireside, age makes only brighter such happy memories.

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Ross, Malcolm
Round the world with a fountain pen

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