UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY
OU_216189
UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Call No. 928/L93L Accession No. 20086

Author Lucas, Audrey

Title Lucas: a portrait - E.V.

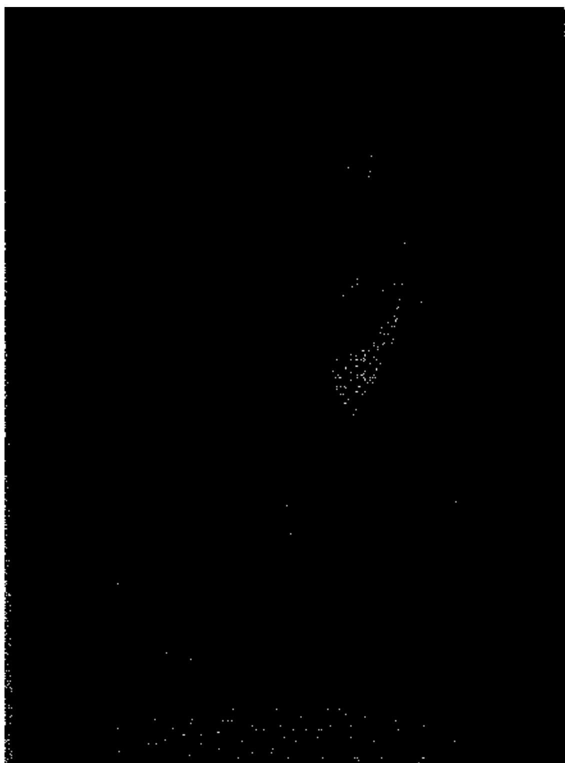
This book should be returned on or before the date last marked below.

1939

E. V. LUCAS:
A Portrait

By the same Author

DOUBLE TURN
FRIENDLY RELATIONS
LIFE CLASS
OLD MOTLEY



Howard Cosier

A portrait, taken in 1931, in E. V. L'.s office overlooking Fountain Court, Temple

E. V. LUCAS: A Portrait

by

Audrey Lucas

With 8 plates

Second Edition

Methuen and Co. Limited, London
36 Essex Street, Strand, W.C.2

First Published . . . February 16th 1939
Second Edition . . . 1939

To

E. V.'S FRIEND

TOMMY

Lord Horder

FOREWORD

IN no sense is this small book a biography of my father. It is simply a collection of haphazard memories. He wrote of himself in *Reading, Writing and Remembering,* and of his Quaker forebears in *The Old Contemporaries,* and although, on the question of a biography, he never decreed, like Thackeray, let there be none of this when I am gone*, he would, I believe, have found the notion of a lengthy and detailed Life tiresome, and a little comic.

His work has been appraised too often and too recently for me to speak much of it now; the latter part of his life, lived mainly in his clubs and among many friends, is fresh in the minds of all who knew him; his character at many points is beyond analysis. But his earlier years, before the War drew a sharp dividing line across his existence, are less familiar to the world in general, more familiar to me. It is of these therefore that I have mainly written.

A. L.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FOR permission to quote from the essays and letters of E. V. Lucas, I am indebted to his executor, Mr. J. E. H. Wartnaby, and to Messrs. Methuen. I am obliged also to Major the Hon. Maurice Baring, by whose kindness I am able to print the letter on pages io-n; to Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson who have allowed the use of a poem by the late John Drinkwater; and to the Macmillan Company from whose *Letters of the Mozart Family,* edited by Emily Anderson, I have made a small quotation.

To the following, who have permitted me to use their original comments on my father, I am sincerely grateful—Mr. James Agate, Mr. A. A. Milne, and Mr. Alan Dent. Also to Mr. C. L. Graves for the inclusion of his hitherto unpublished verses; Mr. Stephen Gwynn for his poem on Froghole; Mr. Nicholas Llewelyn Davies for the Cricket Match photograph; and to Mr. H. G. Wells for his delightful drawing.

Various personal recollections of E. V. L., I owe to my Mother, to my aunt, Mrs. Bryant, to Mr. Herman Finck, to Doctor Leopold GofFe and to Sir Seymour Hicks.

And, above all, to Douglas Clarke/Smith for his invaluable help in correcting my proofs.

CONTENTS

page

I. THINGS *1*

II. JANE AND ALFRED LUCAS 15

III. THREE HOMES 33

IV. WANDERING **103**

V. SUSSEX AGAIN AND THE WAR **117**

VI. E.V. **137**

ILLUSTRATIONS

A PORTRAIT, TAKEN IN 1931, IN E. V. L.'S OFFICE OVERLOOKING FOUNTAIN COURT, TEMPLE *Frontispiece*

FROGHOLE *facing page* 34

E. V. L., JOHN AND ADA GALSWORTHY, AT FROGHOLE 42

CHARLES GRAVES AND E. V, L. AT FROGHOLE 54

A SERIES OF SKETCHES BY MR. H. G. WELLS *page* 59

E. L., A. L., AND E. V. L., 1904 *facing page* 68

FRONT OF KINGSTON MANOR 84

E. V. L. WITH 'BEETRICE', CHARLIE TUPPEN, AND OTHERS 100

DOWNE HOUSE CRICKET MATCH, 1913 118

LETTER FROM E. V. L. TO AUTHOR *pages* 152, 153

I

THINGS

A. A. MILNE, writing of E. V. L. after his death, said this... 'one would save for him the little gleanings of the week; ridiculous things, odd things, damnable things: heard, read, discovered: thinking, "I must tell E.V. that," knowing that his comment would give just that extra flavour to one's own emotion/

No one else has better described that particular quality of mind which gave to friendship with E.V. the ultimate touch of fascination. The man always ready with something good to say or to describe is welcome; the man always ready to receive the good sayings and descriptions that are brought to him is doubly so; and many people who knew my father well must have found running through their daily thoughts, the tag, 'I must tell E.V. that'; many people who knew him well still do. Sadly, maddeningly, the 'things' crop up. Now they must be wasted; put on one side altogether or else taken to some other market. And this last entails a risk. If comment should fall short, should fail 'to give just that extra flavour', remembrance must become the more wistful.

E.V. was so hospitable to what one told him; so

ready to give *it* shelter in that vast index—his mind; so quick to use and to repeat what had pleased him. But never without credit given. He never stole. He would say '——told me the most remarkable thing the other day,' or 'the most astounding thing has just happened to——,' but never would he wrongfully claim a story, an occurrence or an opinion. His own wit had plumes enough; there was no need for him to borrow any.

He had that charm, too, in a widely read man, that he had not by any means read everything; it still *res* mained possible to put in his way some discovery of one's own, some prize from the second/hand book' seller's shelves which he would greet as a novelty. He was not selfish in his love of finding out; he was as eager for information given as for information per' sonally delved for. His Is that really so? I never knew it', was the best kind of'praise from Sir Hubert'.

Under the heading of'Things' should come, I think, all those small games which both in talk and in letters, so very many people besides myself must have delighted in playing with E. V. A favourite one of our own was the simultaneous reading, or more frequently, re reading of books; and this must have started very early in our acquaintance, for, in an old postcard album of mine, filled mainly by E. V.'s contributions, I have found a coloured card, dating back to 1908 and

bearing merely the laconic assertion 'Miss La Creevy is a dear'. Not E. V.'s first reading *of Nicholas Nickleby* by any means, but it must surely have been mine. And, on his last summer holiday, in 1937, he sent me various bulletins of his progress, for the perhaps twentieth time, through *David Copperfield.* From Sweden came postcards stating briefly that Doctor and Mrs. Strong were bores; Martha altogether unbearable; Mr. Dick as joyous as ever; Micawber still a tower of strength, and so on.

A Highland holiday was once devoted to the Donvbey family, who were discussed by letter, and notes compared, without however finding any solution of that problem which exercised us both and still does exercise me—as to whether, on that gloomy elopement of theirs, Edith Dombey and Mr. Carker, the Manager, ever had any fun at all.

It was not only Dickens who provided this mutual diversion, although I doubt whether E.V. returned as happily or as often to any other writer. But there were several books which seemed almost to belong to us and which we knew practically by heart. *The Experiences* and *Further Experiences of an Irish* R.M. were among these; *The Diary of a Nobody;* also *The Fairchild Family;* and all of Jane Austen. We would discuss the characters in these books as earnestly, with as much appreciation or malice, as if they were real people. In fact, I

remember somebody once asking us plaintively, 'Who *is* this awful fellow Fairchild?'

Just now I am re reading the Barsetshire novels. These would have made a fine reason for an exchange of postcards, or for talk. I am also reminded of the first time I read them and why. I had a long illness just after the War and spent some part of it in a nursing home in Paris, where I read *Madame Bovary,* most of Zola and all of Guy de Maupassant. A little vain of the achievement, I wrote reporting it to E.V., who, replying most trenchantly that my choice was the worst one possible for an invalid, ended his letter with the words—Tor God's sake learn to play Patience, and read Trollope!'

This advice, very wise in the circumstances, implied no lack of admiration for the great French writers; he had, on the contrary, a limitless amount of it. Mau passant was his literary hero, as he must be, I think, of all lovers of writing. And E.V. has himself men tioned how, as a young journalist, he spent many of his evenings translating the Frenchman's stories, not for publication, but as practice in style. It would be hard to find a better one.

The very last time I talked with him—it was at the Royal Literary Fund dinner on June 2nd 1938—I told E.V. about a new life of Maupassant,[1] which

[1] ***Guy de Maupassant* by Stanley Jackson (Duckworth).**

I had just read and, knowing that of very late years my father's superb memory could sometimes falter, I re ferred to a few facts about the French writer on the fairly reasonable assumption that E.V. might have forgotten them. He had forgotten nothing; not one known detail of that brilliant, heartbreaking life; not one story; not one outstanding point of excellence in one particular story. Yet it must have been a great many years since he had either read. Maupassant, or of him, because, fired by the conversation, he declared he would begin to do so all over again. But he had no time to.

He was the very best adviser possible when it came to reading, making, even when I was very young, no prohibitions at all; he read aloud to me a great deal and always seemed able to produce a fresh suggestion just when it seemed, as it so often does to children, that all possible books worthy of their attention have been read. He gave me *The Sowers* when I was twelve, following up its success by the rest of Seton Merriman's novels, presented one by one in a slim, blue edition, until I possessed the whole set. He recommended Marion Crawford and Anthony Hope's *Prisoner of Zenda,* which I shied at for a while, believing it, for some strange reason, to be a story of the Indian Mutiny, and having a stubborn dislike to all stories of the Indian Mutiny. How wrong I was! And is any

book in the world so irresistible on first acquaintance unless it be, perhaps, *Rupert of Hentzau?* Dumas was E.V.'s suggestion too; and for gentler fare the stories of that fascinating, but I fear now little known writer, Juliana Horatia Ewing.

Some of his recommendations were failures. I could never really enjoy *The Children of the New Forest,* or *Treasure Island* either, while Ballantyne, a writer for boys and an early favourite of E.V.'s own, I positively detested.

I was mistaken in saying there were no prohibitions. There was one. I had discovered somewhere in the house, a curious volume called *The Reader s Handbook,* which, compiled by an industrious clergyman, was nothing more or less than a complete Who's Who of fictitious characters. One could, for instance, look up Weller, Sam, or Teazle, Sir Peter, and could also [it was this which brought about the prohibition] so well acquaint oneself with plots and characters from famous books that there remained no urgent need to read them. Of this tabloid method of reading, E. V. disapproved so strongly, that, after failing to be impressed by my quite false knowledge of writers I had not read, he put his foot down and *The Reader's Handbook* on the domestic Index. But he derived enormous amusement, on the other hand, from my familiarity with *Lempriere's Classical Dictionary,* from

which in all innocence I was fond of quoting passages of a quite alarming frankness.

He made a great point of the value of learning poetry by heart. And this was often a trial. L'*Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Lycidas* still repel me; although *The Scholar Gipsy* (no mean task) has gained in beauty. *The Forsaken Merman* was of course lovely even at the time. Shakespeare had glamour on account of actors. Browning stood the test fairly well, mostly because he was supposed to be incomprehensible and was there/fore a rather impressive poet to display knowledge of. Indeed, on looking back, only Milton has suffered.

A 'thing', too, was the endless trouble E.V. would take in collecting details, stories, and information on any subject in which a friend was interested. When, for a novel, I needed as much matter about Quakers as possible, I did not actually ask E.V. to supply it; there was no need to ask him. Two or three letters would come each week. Sometimes they would mention a book worth referring to; sometimes they would contain a story or some fact which I would have been most unlikely to have found for myself; once an envelope had in it a little gold seal, the property many years ago of Elizabeth Fry. And I do not think E.V. would regret that I have since given this seal to Lord Horder.

His willingness to help any one who wrote has been

spoken of again and again; but it was not only the willingness that counted; it was the solid value of the help. He had, when it came to style, one very definite creed; as definite as this advice of Flaubert to Mau' passant: 'Whatever the thing we wish to say, there is but one word to express it, but one verb to give it movement, but one adjective to qualify it/ E.V.'s creed was as follows: in every sentence there is a preordained place for each word; in every sentence there is a preordained place for that part of the sentence which is of most significance. I have a copy of a novel of mine, which unfortunately he did not read in proof, but which he has marked all through on these lines. There are, I am afraid, a great many marks!

His principle of arranging a sentence is simple, on the surface; once grasped, it is even elementary. But to grasp it so that it becomes, as it was to him, auto matic, is far from simple. Here is an illustration. My sentence was this: 'She left the house and began to walk briskly in spite of the heat*; E.V.'s transposition is: 'She left the house and in spite of the heat began to walk briskly.'

Obvious, you will say; the 'heat' is the important part of the sentence, it fortifies the 'briskly'. Easy! Well, it is certainly obvious, once pointed out, but easy? Not in the least.

All our 'things' were not about books and writing;

there were dozens of small jokes and phrases which will neither stand the test of repetition nor amuse any one else. Except perhaps one rather heartless pleasantry which, originating from Harry Graham, went on between E.V. and myself for ever afterwards. Many years ago a certain well/known comedian was mur dered by his father. Harry, who shared in common with E.V. a detestation of X, another well-known comedian, still living to/day, sent us a telegram which simply said: 'I wonder if X has a father.' This then became a kind of code phrase, in which E.V. and I used to express disapprobation of performances in the theatre or music/hall, and later, on the screen. I could, but will not, make a list of celebrities about the existence of whose fathers E.V. wondered. Had he ever made the mistake of listening to wireless he would have wondered even more often. But he never did make that mistake.

It was only very recently that E.V. introduced me to that strange and fascinating language invented by Maurice Baring. One day last spring he arrived at lunch and handed me a small piece of paper, asking, What does that mean?' On the paper were written the words, 'Dumble's Umble Cumble Shumble'. By way of explanation, E.V. told me that he had for some time been sending to Maurice Baring books which, so as to be light and easy to hold, were bound

up in very thin sections. Maurice Baring supplied the titles of the books he wished to read, always writing them in his own language. As a model, E.V. cited 'Bumble's Dumble Jumble', more commonly known as Byron's *Don Juan,* and added that in the present problem 'Dumble's' very probably stood for Dickens's. We struggled with it all through lunch, but the 'Umble' maddened us; me especially, because the word so strongly suggested Uriah Heep that I could not push that obsequious creature out of my mind. I was indeed completely floored; E.V. not quite; for at last, although still fretted by the 'Umble' he did order a suitably divided up copy of *The Old Curiosity Shop.* He was correct. And I quote here Major Baring's letter of thanks which E.V. sent on to me, with the comment: 'Maurice Baring on a difficult etymological point.'

HALF/WAY HOUSE,
STEYNING ROAD,
ROTTINGDEAN
April 27th, 1938

My dear E.V.,

The book is perfect. You interpreted the order correctly.

The rule of the language is that if a word begins with a vowel you either translate it Umble or leave it in its original form. There is another general rule,

which is this. You are not obliged to translate *every* word. You constantly leave some in the ori ginal. You are guided in the application of both these rules by the context and by your knowledge of the person you are writing or talking to. The greatest masters of the language are those who use the maximum tact and discretion in what they leave untranslated. In this case I knew you would guess right. You never change the initial U for any other vowel. By far the greatest scholar of the language is Ronald Knox.

I am very thankful for the book because the only edition I have is the first, which is a huge quarto, Master Humble's Clumble.

Yours,

Mumble

Besides the jokes and the favourite books; besides the points and problems discussed by letter, there was, as A. A. M. says, the pleasure of collecting 'the glean ings of the week, a pleasure which added considerable vividness to one's daily round. It did not matter in the least whether E.V. merely stored the gleaning up or whether he ultimately surprised and flattered one by retelling it in print. The point was that he liked it.

I have said that these gleanings must from now on be wasted. But perhaps not. Perhaps they show the

way to the erecting of a quite private and personal monument, not of marble, but of thoughts; or, more simply, of'things'. Perhaps there is no need really to stop collecting them.

For that matter, of course, they go on collecting themselves. In France, last July, just too late in fact, there was a 'thing' which E.V. would have welcomed most warmly. It was at a circus in a seaside town; a rather third-rate, extremely enjoyable circus; the kind of circus where the young woman selling programmes suddenly disappeared, to be seen next in the ring perilously swinging upon a trapeze; and where the strong man (the Star turn), added to his income in the interval by selling photographs of himself, doing, I am glad to say, a brisk trade among little boys.

Sitting not far away, I noticed two men. I noticed them at first because of their tremendous, almost childlike absorption in the performance. They were together, and with them were two young women, their wives presumably, and a child or so. Like most Frenchmen by the seaside, they were dressed in flannel trousers and singlets, and it was partly because of their clothes, but even more because of the rapt pleasure on their faces, that I did not at first recognize them. Then suddenly I did. They were two *croupiers* from the Casino; men, who, when at the tables, wore

on their bodies evening dress; on their faces expressions of an utter world weariness; a lynx-eyed suspicion of everybody; an all/embracing disgust of human nature; a frozen denial of the very existence of enjoyment. Yet here, in a stiflingly hot circus tent, listening to the antique jokes of a clown, watching some by no means superlative feats on a trapeze and the languid tricks of a horse, they were intensely, innocently, almost ridiculously happy. Not only happy but full of the simplest admiration for their fellow men. A *croupier's* holiday, but not a busman's.

'I must tell E.V. that.'

II

JANE AND ALFRED LUCAS

E.V., always regarded as a Sussex man, and claimed by his favourite county as its own, was born in Kent.

He was born at Eltham in a house which my grand' parents, to commemorate their Italian honeymoon, had named the Villa Stresa. Edward Verrall was the second child of Jane and Alfred Lucas, and very soon after his birth this Quaker couple moved from Eltham to Brighton.

Of his mother's mother E. V. has written in *The Old Contemporaries*—' . . my maternal grandmother, *nee* Pattison, I knew well, for her long and useful life continued after I was grown up. There must be many left in Luton to remember Mrs. Drewett's treatments and cures. She was celebrated there and in the neighbourhood as an unqualified doctor, and three of her remedies were famous: her cough medicine, her rhubarb mixture (amazingly unpleasant), and, above all, her ointment—Grandma's Ointment as we called it . . . . I remember very clearly my grandmother in her black dress and white shawl and her quiet, unhast ening, efficient way; always doing something, baking

her wonderful brown bread, making a pork pie (shaped like a turnover and completely obsolete in these inferior days of juiceless meat and plaster of Paris crust), mixing with secret rites her ointment.

My grandmother, whom I used to visit until I was in the late twenties, had an old servant named Ann, with a high Bedfordshire voice, with whom like so many elderly mistresses with elderly maids, she was continually bickering; but never to any real loss of temper. Ann, I must admit, was very trying, for her memory was short where my grandmother's was exact; but she was not spared.

At breakfast my grandmother would suddenly ring the bell—a copper bell with a loose handle.

Enter Ann, a little flustered.

"Look at the table, Ann," her mistress would say, "and see what thee have forgotten."

Ann would look and look, while I was longing to prompt her. "Ann, you old duffer, the salt," I wanted to say.

After a while Ann would give it up. "I'm sorry, m'm, but I don't miss nothing."

"If thee look in the cupboard, Ann, thee'U find the salt."

Although Mrs. Drewett preferred Josephus to the Bible, she was no rebel, and indeed the simplicity of her trust in verbal scripture often perplexed me. She

believed, for example, as her daughter, my mother, did, that on that distant reuniting day we should actually and physically reassemble for judgment, and this macabre idea struck her as "nice". "Nice" was indeed one of her favourite words. She thought certain articles of food "nice"; she also, I remember, thought it "nice" that Jesus Christ should have been crucified between two thieves.'

Jane Drewett, a daughter of this interesting old lady, became E.V.'s mother. Her husband, Alfred, was the son of Edward Lucas, and might, but for the fact that he was both spoiled and lazy, have succeeded to a partnership in his father's bank at Hitchin; as it was, he merely muddled about as an agent for various Insurance Companies and Building Societies; went off whenever he felt so inclined on long trips abroad; and kept his family short of money.

E.V.'s eldest sister, trying to recall some early memories of him, writes that her very first is of Edward, aged six years old then, a little senior to herself, laboriously engaged in making a red wool background to a black cat for a kettle holder*. The adverb is striking. With all his amazing industry E.V. was never outwardly laborious; the word is too heavy; his work seemed to flow from him easily without effort. But then woolwork is not writing; it comes rather under the heading of pastimes, and at these,

E.V., who found work the very best of them, *could* sometimes be a little laborious.

There were seven children altogether. Far too many for so irresponsible a man as my grandfather. The eldest was Alfred. E.V. came next. Then the sister who has remembered the kettle holder and who was given the queer Quaker name of Benjamina. She was thus christened to please a wealthy aunt of that name, who, far from accepting the compliment graciously, scolded the baby's parents for having so afflicted her. And the name was softened to Mina. Then came Mabel; Wilfred; Percival, always called Percy; and Dora.

My grandfather, as I have suggested, was a curious and by no means agreeable man. He was blatantly selfish without possessing any noticeable charm or brilliance to balance this; and indeed except for one or two demonstrations of egotism, which are almost magnificent, he has but the smallest claim to distinction.

It is certainly awe/inspiring—especially looked back to from this present day age of child idolatry—to learn that my grandfather made a habit of taking his children to Brill's Baths in Brighton, not, as might be supposed, to teach them swimming, but in order that they, from an upper gallery, might witness the fun which he was himself having in the water. And what force of character it must have taken to coerce E.V. and his

elder brother Alfred, as small boys, to bowl to him every summer morning before breakfast without ever being given the chance of an innings themselves!

It was perhaps to compensate for such cricket with Papa, that the children made up for themselves a thrilling indoor version of the game played in a long passage which had a door at the end and three along the side. 'If the ball,' says Mina, 'passed the first door it scored i; the second 2; third 3; and if it went along the hall beyond, 4. It was a most exciting game and never palled. The scoring was fast.'

But neither this private version of cricket, nor the wilfulness of Alfred Lucas marred his children's en/ thusiasm for the real thing. The whole family, girls and boys, went to the Sussex County ground when ever they could and talked as eagerly of famous cricketers as children now talk of film stars.

If Alfred Lucas's triumphs of parental authority can induce some envy, some wistful admiration even, there is, in his character as a whole, very little else to admire. He carried his spoilt/child selfishness to sorry lengths, allowing it to lead him, as selfishness generally does, into utter irresponsibility; into repeatedly putting his own comfort before that of his wife and children. It was because his father, although having sufficient money, hated to spend it on any one but himself, that E.V. was sent to as many as eleven schools and was

removed from most of these because of a controversy about the bill. The same attitude threw the onus of completing his education on his uncle, Samuel Drewett. The same selfishness again, as my grand father grew older and life emptier, turned him to hysterical outbursts of religion and an embarrassingly public adherence to the Salvation Army.

Papa then was difficult; but his faults lay more in the direction of neglect than of over/surveillance and the Lucas children managed on the whole to have a pretty good time. They were fond of organizing enter tainments; plays; nigger minstrel shows; and especially bouts of conjuring. E.V., who never grew too old to be fascinated and bewildered by the professional magi cian, seems to have shown considerable ingenuity along those lines himself, and his sister has described some particular tricks which were his own invention. 'A pack of cards was hollowed out into a sort of box and a live mouse put inside, whole cards being at the top and bottom of the pack. One of the audience was asked to hold the pack on his or her hand and the bottom card whisked away. Sometimes the mouse was a stuffed one, if a live one couldn't be found, but the effect was the same. Another trick of his (E.V.'s) that always mystified me, was when he munched a candle, and not for years did I discover that it was cut out of an apple and the wick was a tea leaf!'

But as a father Alfred Lucas was a failure; his life a fairly worthless one. Yet he was an intelligent man with a fine gift of irony—a gift unappreciated by his family, naturally. He had a genuine love of travel; an aptitude for extracting the best from life as he saw it.

There is a clear link at these points, if not an actual resemblance, between father and son; even a clear proof of a revulsion from much witnessed and endured at home which places some few pieces at least in the bewildering jigsaw of E.V.'s character. His father's ruthless self love which overrode everything must have been infuriating; yet enviable as well, for this quality nearly always is enviable when exhibited by others. But the ruthlessness of Alfred Lucas was on a mean scale; without grace; without *panache.* When his son later came to live, or to appear to live, exclusively for himself, he did so in the grand manner. For manner one should perhaps read pose; E.V. secretly was far less selfish than he led the world to imagine. But by the lavish, carefully regulated comfort of his later years, he must I think, even if unconsciously, have felt that he was scoring off his father, showing him in fact how the thing should be done.

He says himself in *The Old Contemporaries, 'I* got from my father very little but knowledge of what to avoid. I may have got much that I could not help, but, consciously, from his selkprotectiveness I learned

something different, and from his piety without works to be too much the unbeliever.'

Either from extreme honesty or because the task was beyond them, my grandfather's family, after his death, made no effort to deify his memory. I was very often in my grandmother's house as a child, but the elder Alfred Lucas never took shape in my mind save as a tinted photograph in a plush frame. This hung on the wall, honourably placed, but never favoured, as was the picture of my Uncle Alfred, who had died in South Africa, with a vase kept freshly full of flowers. Conversationally the late head of the family was ignored; not self/consciously as families ignore a black sheep, but automatically because there was so little to say about him which was either attractive or pleasant. Other departed relations were discussed freely enough; they were referred to as dear Uncle This or poor dear Cousin That. But dear Grandfather never. Nor poor either. And if a man has died without inspiring either affection or pity there is nothing much that *can* be said about him.

My grandmother, small, neat and very deaf, was fortunate to survive her husband as she did for many years. For her life as a widow became a pleasant one. She was much considered by her children and devoted to all of them. But E. V., whom she called Verrall, represented romance. His success and his unfailing

affection for her were the compensations for a married life which can at no time have been happy.

She had in appearance a sort of compact charm, was always amazingly tidy and wore queer little oval/shaped caps made of lace over a wire frame, and heavily embellished with bows. The word vigorous is too rough for her, but she had a quick, bird'like energy and walked sturdily until the very end of her days. Not a striking woman, in no sense a matriarch, she had much gentle stubbornness, some humour, and intelligence in all matters she could understand. What she failed to grasp she distrusted, but quite inoffen sively; she was indeed too active and too content in her own sphere to step out of it.

She was always busy, and when her daughters married and she lived with one or other of them, she placidly replaced household duties with all sorts of other quietly important activities. She gardened, pre pared meals for birds, exercised her dog, knitted and made a vast number of scrapbooks for children's hospitals. She read aloud most delightfully, and this, as she had fourteen grandchildren, almost amounted to a profession, as did the playing of'Snap' and 'Beggar my Neighbour', and the reverent displaying of her own dolls—astonishing relics of wood, porcelain and kid—which she had treasured and kept intact through so many years.

She was far more at home in the country than in London; an enthusiastic searcher after blackberries, primroses and mushrooms, and capable even of a sort of fierceness should her particular pitch be invaded by others. And like so many of her generation she wrote and received enormous quantities of letters.

Only her deafness prevented her from being a completely happy woman; but the infirmity, very grave in her case, gave her at times an air of aggrieved resignation, a sort of 'I know I'm out of everything' expression which was distressing. And it was this, I think, which drove her more and more to seek the society of children, for the very young seldom need any urging to shout; nor are they seized with self/con/sciousness on being asked to repeat some utterly valueless remark. In fact, they rather like it.

Over this deafness of his mother E.V. occupied himself persistently. He was, in his efforts to help her, lavish of time and thought and money. Dozens of different appliances were tried. I remember particu larly the elegant *canne acoustique,* recommended by Louis N. Parker, which was sent for from Paris. There was a box/shaped affair, too, discarded on account of its ill-mannered habit of 'making noises in church*. And many more. E.V., in the hope of finding a solution, would always turn out of his way for the chance of consulting with an

expert, or with some person who had been relieved of deafness.

He never did find it. And the secret, really, was this: none of these appliances, so costly most of them, and all so eagerly given, were such a help to his mother's hearing as the long, black, serpent like ear trumpet which she carried with her in a velvet bag, and which was, if a trifle cumbersome, genuinely efficacious. But only for the *tete a tete.* And here again the grandchildren scored, for the thing was so amusing to use that we did not, like older people, find it an embarrassment.

This failure to bring his mother into closer touch with life and conversation turned E.V., as an alterna tive, into her most faithful and entertaining correspond dent. How faithful and how entertaining I never knew until I came the other day to go through the contents of a bottom drawer filled with the letters he had written to her, and which, in their neat, faded packets, had been returned to him after her death. The skill with which these letters are written is not self/conscious, it is a skill that comes from the heart; yet in the selection from his everyday life of those little incidents, stories and happenings most calculated to delight her, the anthologist is at his best.

Mixed in with the news and gossip are numerous references to family affairs; scraps of financial advice;

many instances of generosity to brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces of which I am certain only my grandmother and the people directly concerned were aware.

The letters, by their frequent mention of his grander friends, play up to that mixture she had of naive snobbery and pride in her son; and they tell in some detail the history of many encounters with the formid able Mrs. Abbey, E. A. Abbey's widow, who had commissioned E.V. to write her husband's life, a task requiring almost phenomenal tact, which he got through, all things considered, extremely well.

It is interesting to see, also, that although my grandmother, on the whole, gloried in what must to her have seemed E.V.'s very worldly and exciting life, she did now and then remonstrate with him on the score of extravagance. His election to Brooks's appears to have been an instance of this and he refers twice to the matter as follows:

'My dearest Mother,

'I was taken by surprise over Brooks's but no man in his senses would refuse such an honour, and no club is dearer than another once you belong. They are, in fact, all cheap; the principle being that no profit is made. Don't worry about that.

Tate seems to have decided that without any

effort on my part I am thrown among men of social standing, but they do not change me. . . .'

And again

'. . . You will see that to refuse the Brooks's election (which was done behind my back by two friends there) would have been very foolish. It is perhaps the best address in the world.'

Whether or not my grandmother did continue to worry about Brooks's I do not know; but E.V. was certainly right in saying that, as far as family affections and loyalties were concerned, neither this nor any other club changed him.

In one letter is an apology for what he alludes to as a 'cocktail' article in *Punch.* My grandmother, who was a most uncompromising advocate of temperance, had probably scolded him for some flippancy on a subject she can never have found even remotely funny; the subject of alcohol. She did scold him sometimes, but always with a faint hint of admiration behind her strictures. One habit of his she never ceased to find most serious fault with, however—billiard/playing on Sundays.

My grandmother's views on temperance were shared by most of the Lucases and their immediate relatives;

the majority of Quakers, in fact, in spite of their prowess at brewing, being strict teetotallers.

An effort once made jointly by myself and E.V. to respect this prejudice ended in comic unexpectedness. It was at the little house at Tillington in the early days of the War. My mother was in France and the house in charge of an old woman called Mrs. Webb—or Webby—a brilliant, but wildly extravagant cook, to whom any talk of food restrictions meant as little as the whim of some foolish child. Even her less adventurous dishes, rice pudding, for instance, glittered with butter; the commonest form of stew was dark, rich, and anything rather than economical.

A family of Quaker cousins were one day invited to lunch, and I, in my nominal position as housekeeper, for of course Webby did as she chose, was told to order something nice and warned by E.V. to clear from the dining-room sideboard all bottles containing stimulants stronger than lime/juice or ginger/beer. This was done. The cousins arrived and the first course was eaten. The second, consisting of an apple pie and a trifle, came in. The trifle, adorned with far more cream than was patriotic, had an attractive appearance and was chosen by all the guests; and by E.V. While I, with a matronly thought of second helpings, took apple pie.

It was after his first spoonful of trifle that E.V.

looked at me. His expression was odd. So odd, that I looked anxiously at each of our four strictly teetotal visitors. They were eating their trifle. They were eating it with concentration, one might almost say with enthusiasm.

'There can't,' I thought, 'be much the matter with that.' And, this doubt settled, I offered to all four second helpings, an offer which was by all four accepted.

The trifle was accordingly disposed of without my having had an opportunity of tasting it; and it was not until later in the day that, with the most unholy satisfaction, E.V. told me the truth. In spite of our care over the bottles, Webby had not been warned to omit from this sweet, a speciality of hers, its most important ingredient. And when Webby put sherry into a trifle she was no niggard. Nor, incidentally, did she use cooking sherry. She would have scorned to. Haifa bottle of the best had been consumed that day, the greater part of it by Total Abstainers; and, in the American idiom, 'had they liked that trifle, or had they liked it?' This incident gave E.V. a great deal of mischievous pleasure, but I doubt if he described it to my grand' mother.

Over and above writing regularly to his mother, he saw her a good deal and was very fond of organizing

on her behalf small London treats. These generally began with lunch at Jules' in Jermyn Street, where, in the correct season, the same comedy would be played between E.V. and my grandmother on the subject of plovers' eggs, which were put in their inviting little basket upon the table and regarded by the guest with a mixture of guilt and innocent gluttony. The same thing always happened. While she began her set piece about reckless extravagance, to say nothing of injustice to the female plover, E.V. would be placidly shelling the bones (or eggs) of contention, making a little mixture of salt and red pepper to dip them in, and, as the last words of protest died away, he would slip the results of his labour in front of his mother who would then eat them with considerable placidity.

After lunch the treat would vary. A picture gallery sometimes, or the Zoo; and very often the 'movies' which, still silent, were an admirable form of entertainment for a deaf person. The theatre was of no real use to her, nor, I think, did she entirely approve of it; although, when the wartime revue, *Business as Usual,* in which E.V. collaborated, was on, my grandmother went twice to see it and was introduced to Harry Tate. In the language of her mother, Mrs. Drewett, she pronounced that this grand comedian was 'nice'.

When Jane Lucas died a few years after the War

something quiet but of great value went from E.V.'s life. She died as she had lived, unobtrusively; she died in her sleep. She had troubled no one, least of all the son she called Verrall, but her hold was so strong that E.V., a man with a distaste for relics, for hoarded letters, for lookings back, preserved in that bottom drawer a gentle, intimate memorial to her.

That 'macabre idea' of Judgment Day found no favour with him at all; with her it was a genuine and simple belief. One of them must be mistaken. If it should prove to be he, E.V. will, I am sure, be ready to admit his mother's superior knowledge.

III

THREE HOMES

KENT, 1896-1908

THE cottage called Froghole,[1] once a small work' man's dwelling, with, at first, the roughest, most unimaginative of gardens, stood, and still stands, as if poised upon the hillside. Before it, far/reaching and lovely, lies the Kentish Weald.

At the beginning there were two workmen's cot/ tages, semidetached, and E. V. had only the one; but a very little later he bought the second and by means of some simple architecture had the two knocked into one. Froghole was the first solid possession he acquired and he chose supremely well. The garden, which, when discovered, had contained little else besides potatoes, grew through one happy addition after another, into utter perfection. First came the long tiled path, which, running slightly downhill between herbaceous borders from the cottage door, seemed finally to disappear into the Weald itself; next the round croquet lawn, laid out so that an old apple

[1] I am reminded by a letter from the present owner that the actual cottage is called Spark How. This traditional name E.V. for some reason disliked, preferring Froghole which was really the name of the hamlet.

tree formed its centre; the little terrace for meals; the rose-garden; the rockery. The potatoes went. We had, in fact, no vegetables in the garden at all, but arranged that these should be grown for us by people called Barnet, whose son Mike did odd jobs among the Froghole flowerbeds. It was of this garden that Stephen Gwynn wrote the verses:

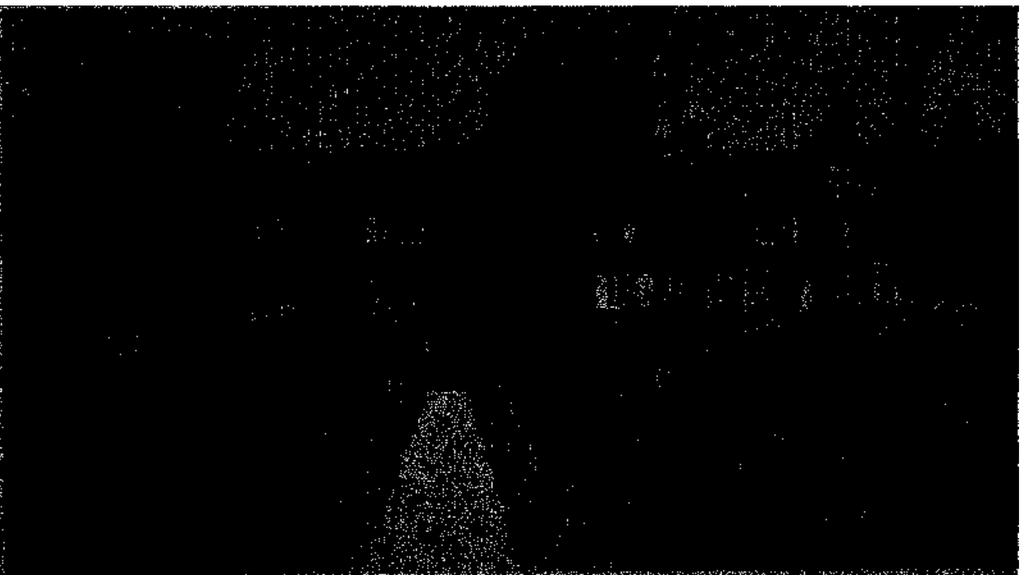
A FRIEND'S GARDEN[1]

Genius of the quiet hours,
Of June nightingales, and flowers
Steeped in cool delicious air—
Of hop gardens, and the rare
Mist from meadows lifting slow—
Guard a cottage that I know.

Underneath the pincclad crown
Of the topmost windy down,
Oaks, with hazel/scrub beneath,
Fringe about the purple heath.
There this cottage, hung with leaves,
Looking, as from under eaves
Birds look, out across the plain,
Nestles in a Kentish lane.

Here dwells Beauty, still devising
Beauties that, emparadising
Her small close of garden ground,
Deck the year as it goes round.

[1] *Poems* by Stephen Gwynn (Blackwoods).



Frogbole

Three Homes: Kent

Cloud/pale iris; silver stemmed
Poppies; lupins rain/begemmed;
Larkspurs bright as sea or sky,
Deep as lapis lazuli.
Pink and gold, rock/roses small
Tumble from the terrace wall;
Tall strong growths and trailing graces
Thrive in their appointed places;
All that cluster, all that climb,
Come obedient to their time;
Not a colour but she uses,
Not a fragrance she refuses;
Roses riot everywhere
Near demurest lavender.
And all things that for her grow
Spread and burgeon out, although
Set with sweet deliberate care,
As if Nature flung them there
Lush and tangled like a brake.
—Draw the curtains when you wake,
Through the lattice thrust your head
And behold the garden spread
Jewelled in the morning dew,
Born afresh, and born for you.

Thus she dwells in her domain
Paramount—long may she reign-
Busy till late autumn ends
Storing sweetness for her friends,
Like a bee, in fragrant cells:
And with Beauty, Quiet dwells.

Wherefore, Genius, of your grace
Guard the secret of the place.
From this precinct turn away
All unworthy; rather, say,
Let none thitherward repair
Save those whom Beauty welcomes there.

Inside, Froghole was uneven and unexpected, but by no means cramped. Because it had once been two cottages, there were two staircases, and although on the ground floor a passage had been knocked through, the only method upstairs of passing from the main bedroom, which was in one building, to the best spare room, which was in the other, was through a trap door, too small to accommodate any but an extremely juvenile form. On the whole, however, there was plenty of space—four or five bedrooms at least; a living/room; a study; a big whitewashed kitchen and a kind of playroom which was, I think, an addition.

From a housekeeper's point of view the place, perv haps, had drawbacks; difficulties over catering and over lighting; long distances from good shops and railway stations; no telephone; and a distinctly arduous method of obtaining bath/water. Weather draw backs there may also have been, although in recollect tion the barometer seems always to have stood at Set Fair and the succession of outdoor meals to have been

unbroken. There were breakfasts and lunches on the terrace when, to soften the sun's glare, a green in preference to a white table/cloth was used; dinners with candles on the table, the scent of tobacco plants all around and, as a kind of nightly entertainment, the regular departure from under the eaves of innumerable bats. Rain there certainly was, the good, hard splashing summer rain which did its work thoroughly, drawing the sweetest smells from the earth and leaw ing the. garden drenched and healthy. But was there week after week of that greyness, that cold or stuffy weather, which we now patiently accept as summer? I think not.

If drawbacks need to be referred to at all, I believe that the only really grave one was—or were—Hoppers. The country was rich in hop/gardens and in a few of these the bines were stripped only by local people; but in the majority, pickers were imported from the poorer parts of London, and, however generously one may in theory make East Londoners free of the country side, it is useless to pretend that in practice their presence there improves it.

I do not know from what exact portion of the public hoppers are drawn, but noisy, raucous and dirty in the Froghole days they certainly were. They drank and fought; they left wherever they went a trail of dirty garments, newspapers and old tins behind

them; they frightened people; they brought with them astonishing hordes of children, and among no section of the community were they more heartily despised than by the resident hop-pickers, who, as if to protest against the unpleasing though necessary aliens, invested their fascinating occupation with an extra/special amount of dignity and of respect for the conventions. In other words, people like the Ingrams, the Barnets, and others picked hops, but they were not, most emphatic cally they were not, *Hoppers.*

I used to pick hops myself with these respectable amateurs, and, fun though it was to strip the bines, to get brown and dirty, and to bounce up and down in the big, sharp-smelling bins, there was always at the back of my mind a fearful craving to mix with the tougher professionals, hear their strange oaths, and discover at first hand just where the secret of their undesirability lay.

One thing was, I suppose, missed equally by both the just and unjust pickers, and that was the beauty of a Kentish hop-garden in the working season. True, the lovely young green of the bines has by this time yellowed a little; but there is beauty in the long lines of laden poles, in the brown bins, in the bright-coloured cotton of the women's dresses, the bronze of the men's bare arms. There is a dusty film over the activity of a hop-garden and through this the sun

shines warmly gold. The scent of the hops is acrid and very clean; nostalgic, too, if one has once helped to pick them.

Writing this, and having for so long neglected Kent, I realize that hop picking may possibly have been affected by that dull thing called progress. Is it possible that the bines are now stripped by machinery? This can hardly be so, although once men become machine/minded, one can put nothing past them. But what a hideous thought if true![1]

Froghole was altogether rich in things which are eternally pleasing. There was a well, a very deep, cool, dark one; there were water/butts which have as objects an inexplicable but abiding charm; a steep, sloping orchard where, among apple and pear trees, grew bushes of most delicious hazel nuts, and a swing between two tall elms, which, in retrospect, has made all other swings seem unromantic and pedestrian.

[1] It is not true. But the following, from the daily Press of 1938, shows that times have indeed changed.

'Hop-picking-de-luxe is the rule in Kent this year.

'The pickers are housed in two-storey homes. They have car parks, for though most of them went down by train, in motor-coaches or in lorries, numbers travelled in their own cars.

'At Messrs. Whitbread's garden at Beltring, where there are 6,000 pickers, there is a milk bar. Pasteurized milk for the children is available every morning and evening in pint cartons. . . .

'In these days hop-picking is a highly organized affair. Medical services, with a special eye for the burns, scalds and other accidents of 'camping out', are supplied. Clinics, dispensaries and first-aid centres are established by the British Red Cross and other societies.'

Even the walk to the nearest village, Crockham Hill, was different from other walks to other villages. The way, after leaving Froghole by the back gate, led down a winding flight of steps—known locally as Bottle's Steps. I no more know why than the reason for calling a certain steep place renowned for wild flowers Bodger's Bank. Bottle's Steps led down to a tiny thatched cottage lived in by Mr. and Mrs. Ingram, a very kind, very nutcrackery old couple, and there divided, one fork leading to a little spring of exquisitely pure drinking water, the other to the first of the four stiles which must be climbed while crossing the meadows to Crockham Hill. These meadows, dedicated to hay, were the cause of much conflict, for in the long grass grew marguerite daisies, a dullish flower really, but one which no child can resist; and there were many battles waged with the owner of the hay/fields when he found his crop trodden down by the small but sturdy feet of village children, and also, on more than one unfortunate occasion, by my own. It was perhaps the sense of adventure, the joy of outwitting the farmer which set the value of these insipid daisies so high above the price of rubies. There was also a roadway into the village, but no sensible pedestrian ever dreamed of using it, unless forced to.

Crockham Hill, a straggling, rather ordinary

village, had its interests, notably the general shop, kept by Mr. Gooding, and the cricket ground where matches were played on Saturdays, and which is largely associated with the admirably thin cucumber sandwiches always packed in our tea-basket.

E.V., although never rising to be captain of the local Eleven, was a very ardent member of it, as was also the Vicar of Crockham Hill, a stout and genial man, not inappropriately called Stubbs, whose com fortable Vicarage had a garden standing high above the road like a battlement.

It was Mr. Stubbs who, walking home one evening with E.V. after a Crockham Hill triumph, virtuously dragged himself from the fascinating subject of cricket and ventured to inquire, 'How is it, Lucas, that I never see you in church?' To which question, E.V.'s unhesitating answer, 'Well, you see, I've only lived here eleven years,' caused no ill-feeling between these two enthusiastic brothers of the bat.

The Crockham Hill Eleven naturally played a number of matches away from the home ground. They would all start off together very cheerfully in a brake and return more or less cheerfully according to the result of the game. It was one of these matches which gave rise to an outburst on my part of filial loyalty; on hearing E.V. remark that he would not be bowling that day as the Captain did not think

his form good enough, I settled down to write (in large capitals) an exceedingly offensive letter to this gentleman, accusing him of every kind of idiocy and injustice; a protest ending, I remember, with the inconclusive and impolite exclamation, 'So there!' While on the envelope, I added peremptorily, 'Kindly answer'.

It must have been well past my bedtime before the cricketers returned, but I was waiting. At the first glimpse of E.V. in his flannels, tired but not obviously downcast, I tore madly up from the garden demanding, 'Is there an answer to my letter ?'

'There is.'

'Where is it ?'

'The answer is,' said E. V., 'that I bowled.'

The only part of this incident which now escapes me is whether or not the victory that day went to Crockham Hill. But it is pleasant to think that it did.

Because I was very young then and because to young children a parent is too familiar a figure to stand out clearly, the Froghole memories of E.V. incline to be hazy. I did understand, of course, that he wrote books; I even believed, until rudely dis' illusioned, that I could obtain these free of charge from booksellers; but, as was natural, he registered with me then more as a father than as an author. He

E. V. L., John and Ada Galsworthy, at Froghole

was a little strict, I remember, but, as might be expected, his strictness took an original turn; while it was pos sible to get away with a good deal of conventional wrong/doing under his very nose, he would become, touching his own pet theories, a very martinet. He made my life a positive torment, for instance, on the unlikely subject of Bread. It has gone rather out of fashion now to put beside each place on the lunch or dinner/table a slab of perfectly dry, perfectly unelaborated bread; racks of toast have happily intervened, rye/vita, too, and, rising up the scale of elegance, increasingly exotic biscuits or rolls. There is even a notion that to eat with one's meal large lumps of household bread, is, digestively, a mistake. But E. V. in those days held other views. To him, so far at any rate as the juvenile stomach was concerned, bread was the veritable staff of life, and I might with out undue resentment say that he made it the rod as well. Certainly bread cast a blight over the lunch table, for, whether I was happily stuffing myself with the more interesting part of the food, or merely brooding vacantly over my plate as children will, he would suddenly and startlingly bring me back to earth and bakery with a stentorian monosyllabic *'Bread!*[9]

There was yet another brief and violently uttered word, of which at Froghole, and, indeed, wherever

else E. V. lived, one had cause to beware. This word, either rapped out like a military command or reaching a positive bellow of agony, according to the state both of his exasperation and the temperature, was **Door!* it being the very height of offence to leave such a thing open in any room where E. V. happened to be sitting. He had the utmost horror of catching cold and in spite, or rather, because of this phobia was, all his life, continually catching one. The common cold could, according to E.V., be caught anywhere, at any time, and at any season, and it was in this connexion that he was fond of making a certain gloomy pronouncement to the effect that 'on only *one* day in the entire year was it safe to sit on the grass'. Not only gloomy, but also unhelpful, for he was never once heard to indicate on which day out of the three hundred and sixtyfive allowed us this terrific risk might be taken.

And here I include a comment from a letter written in 1764 by Mozart's father, which would have com pletely enchanted mine. 'I must tell you,' explains Mozart senior to a Salzburg friend, 'that in England there is a kind of native complaint called a "cold"/[1]

On the subject of draughts E.V. was an expert, in fact almost a conjuror, having the capacity of producing

[1] ***The Letters of the Mozart Family,*** **vol. I, edited by Emily Anderson (Macmillan).**

diem, like rabbits, from nowhere. Although his verbal grasp of the French language was, despite his knowledge of it, distinctly weak, I am quite sure that the two words he really did master were *courant* and *d'air;* and on the very rare occasions when he could find no draught for himself he would not hesitate to fasten one upon others, suffering most acutely from it by proxy.

I was dining with him once not very long ago at a little club in King Street, St. James's. There were two or three other guests, including Ronald Squire, and it was he who, a little way through dinner, whispered in my ear that he felt a draught, but since such fragility in a man seemed absurd, would I make the complaint for him, being careful to explain that I was the one in distress. In short, Mr. Squire, if he will forgive me for saying so, had not the courage of his own draught. I claimed it and could hardly have wounded E.V. more had I questioned the freshness of the oysters. How, he asked, almost tear fully, could any guest of his have endured silently, through at least two courses, a *draught?* Could I not see that such foolish stoicism constituted a direct abuse of hospitality? A draught! *Brrh!* The result was that the whole party began to feel cold and we moved to another table. But never, until now, have I betrayed Ronald Squire.

This dinner was very far, in years, from Froghole, but there, too, the fight against draughts went on, waged with rubber tubing along the foot of doors, with baize under carpets, with fires kept furiously in, and with the resounding battle-cry of *'Door!*[9]

Whatever domestic problems as a residence Froghole may have presented, the servant shortage was not among them; young women born and bred in the country had not yet learned to forsake it, and for many years two friends, Rose Wood and Annie Palmer, presided over the household. Of the two, Rose Wood was by far the stronger and more definite character. She was ample and red-faced, suggestive in appearance of Clara Peggotty, although in disposition by no means the equal of that famous and most desirable of nurses. Far from it. As a cook, however, she was inspired, capable, too, of much *bonhomie* until such all too frequent moments when she considered herself crossed or slighted. The link between herself and Annie was mainly Rose's brother Ernest, or Ernie, Wood to whom Annie was engaged, and may indeed, if she and Ernie are alive, be engaged to still; for Ernie, a gamekeeper, like his father, was so strikingly unambitious by nature, that his aspirations never carried him beyond 'walking out', and even this exercise he took, I fancy, sadly.

All the purposefulness of the Wood family seemed to have gone into Rose who, while poor Annie con'tinued fruitlessly to roam the lanes with Ernie, lost no time herself in becoming both engaged and married to the jobbing gardener, Mike Barnet.

With intervals, she still continued our cook, even at other houses, balancing a fiendish temper with angelic *souffles,* and never allowing her supremacy to be in any question whatever; like many other good but tyrannical servants, she showed to the man of the family more deference and affability than to any other member of it and I doubt whether E.V. through a long career of epicurism ever found cooking that stood comparison with Rose Wood's.

There was also at one time at Froghole, but this was earlier, a certain Mrs. Kitchen, once my nurse and afterwards cook, who was much reverenced on account of having been George Meredith's house'keeper at Box Hill. She left us, unless I am mistaken, to return there. To me this meant very little, although I was mildly interested in a photograph Mrs. Kitchen had of the novelist's house, or more probably in its silver frame. But E.V. out of his vast admiration for the author of *The Egoist* was very proud of the link and would speak of 'our cook who was Meredith's house keeper' almost as vaingloriously as the Marquis de Boissy, after marrying Countess Guicciola, would

present her as '*ma femme, l'ancienne maitresse de Milord* ***Byron.***

Animals we had at Froghole, of course. There were at one time two white Persian cats of wonderful beauty. Also a stout black and white spaniel, rather like a china one, whose name was Quince. He had arrived answering—more or less—to Prince, a name E.V. so disliked that, in order to avoid confusion in the dog's mind when called, he rcchristened him after either the fruit or the carpenter—Quince. He was not, however, conspicuous for taking notice of either. It was Quince who ate in its entirety the salmon, an all but-unobtainable luxury, which, first cooked with difficulty over an open fire, had then been placed on the lunch/table in readiness both to impress and to feed some important visitor, a publisher probably, or perhaps an editor. Whatever his profession he got no salmon.

I had of my own a pretty, rather ill tempered King Charles spaniel, the selection of whose name was a minor tragedy, for, being like all right-minded persons of eight, an impassioned Royalist, it did seem hard that E.V., having bought me a dog of a breed so closely favoured by the Stuarts, should have insisted on calling him Oliver; not, it is true, after the Lord Protector, but because the animal's domed forehead reminded him forcibly of a certain famous man of

science. But, as a name, Oliver even if followed by Lodge, not Cromwell, stuck in a Royalist's throat.

Later on, however, Oliver was renamed, this time by Maurice Hewlett, who, having been kept awake the better part of one night by my spaniel's barking, ordered that he should, *in* future, be called Macbeth. Students of Shakespeare will, perhaps, know why.

But of all the dogs kept at Froghole, the most important and the most charming were the Aberdeen terriers of one of whom E.V. himself has written:

> 'I am only just beginning really to understand the nature of the Aberdeen. My last Aberdeen was a very ingratiating little bitch, full of affection and roguishness, who, however, was with me for so short a time, and during that time was so occupied *in* thoughts as to how to evade vigilance and be getting on with the true business of life—becoming a mother—that I never had the undress material workings of her mind at all. Even when most coquettish and endearing, even when putting in motion all the machinery of lovableness, with her head on one's chest and the ridiculous boot buttons which she called her eyes yearning into one's face, her brain, to a keen observer, was manifestly busy over one matter only, and that the old topic.

'Precautions had to be taken, because there were two very sound reasons why Betty ought not to have puppies yet. One was that she was far too young, being herself but a mere chit; and the other that the neighbourhood contained no husband of equal birth. But one might as well attempt to stop the tide as control these affairs. A male Aberdeen mysteriously appeared within call, and Betty's face assumed an expression of amused satisfaction. . . .

'Her owner, however, who became wise only long after the event, had no suspicion. . . .

'One day she disappeared, and was absent for so long—nearly a week—that I gave her up completely. And then one evening she suddenly was in the room again, very thin, very demonstrative, but also very nervous and restless. She ran to the door and back again. She whined all the time.

'There is a story in a book that I read far too many years ago, at school, which tells how a merchant, who was travelling with a large bag of money, sat down by the roadside to rest, and on resuming his journey forgot (as merchants do in stories, but nowhere else) his property. His dog, however, perceived the error, and, by jumping up at him and barking, did its best to impede his steps, make him think, and drive him back. The

merchant endured this annoyance for some time, and then, persuaded that the creature was mad, and having tested it with water, which it was too unhappy to stop and drink, drew his pistol and shot it. The poor thing, bleeding horribly, crawled away and disappeared. Some hours afterwards the merchant at last missed his bag, hurriedly retraced his steps to his resting/place, and there found it safe and sound—with his dog's lifeless body stretched across it.

'True or untrue, this story made a great impression on me, and I remember determining never to be so foolish as to disregard in the unimaginative *mer* cantile manner the dumb gestures of any animal; and, therefore, when Betty had run to the door and back several times, I lit a lantern, tied a long string to her collar, and expressed my intention of going with her wherever she might lead, no matter how far.

'She took me painfully at my word, dragging me at a gallop down an almost vertical bank, thick with brambles and very wet with dew. On and on I went, slipping and sliding and torn, until she suddenly disappeared as thoroughly as if the earth had swallowed her. As it indeed had, for she had entered a large deep hole under the roots of a tree. With great difficulty I hauled her forth again

and stretched my arm into the hole as far as it would go, but could feel nothing. Meanwhile Betty was so pulling at the cord and fighting to get back again that I allowed her to do so, listening the while very attentively; and I was presently aware of a faint whimpering in the remoter recesses of this planet, and knew the secret of her absence and her retreat. She had puppies, and in her pride of motherhood had chosen to make her own home for them. No one should help. It was only because hunger had conquered that she had returned to the house.

'Her pride, however, was not stubborn, and when the puppies were extricated with a rake and placed comfortably in a basket near the fire, she was the happiest mother that the Granite City ever sent forth/[1]

The great pleasure of Froghole at first was its isolation. People came to stay, of course, a great many of them, but they came when invited and generally for week-ends. Small though the cottage was, there were two spare bedrooms; one large double room and a little slip of a single one.

Familiar visitors at Froghole were the men who, with E.V., had formed a little circle of friends at University College; Arnold Foster, Charles Goring,

[1] ***The More I see of Men,* . . . by E. V. Lucas.**

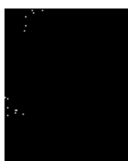
Doctor Goffe, known to us all as Dobbie, and the big, delightful Tasmanian, Lyndhurst Giblin. During their time at college these five had been inseparable, and it was on behalf of his friends and of himself that E. V. once hit upon a most original means of saving money. None of them were rich, the contrary in fact, and one of their communal amusements was to go out to Epping Forest together on Saturdays or Sundays, to walk and talk there, sometimes varying this with a little informal cricket. The talk so often turned both on the shortage of spare money and the extreme difficulty of saving any, that one day E.V. made a collection from every one present of such few pennies as they could spare and concealed the result in a vast and hollow tree. After this, on each visit to Epping the hoard was added to, the rule being that any member of the party finding himself short of funds, might take from this common store. For safety's sake the money was put into an old glove.

This scheme worked well for quite a while, until one day, a long time having elapsed since the last visit to Epping, Dobbie went out to the Forest and being low in funds decided to visit the tree. But the landmark, a cottage, had been demolished; he lost his bearings altogether and never succeeded, although he came to many hollow trees, in finding the right one. Nor from that day to this has any one—unless it

be an interloper—ever again discovered that woodland savings bank.

Of this little group Charles Goring, the alienist, died many years ago, and Giblin, except for fighting all through the War, has spent most of his time in Australia. But he was in England last summer, when, together with E.V., Dobbie, and Arnold Foster, he attended a re union lunch party; and it was Giblin who, calling to inquire for his friend only two days before he died, sent in by the nurse this simple message: 'Tell him I've been walking in Sussex, and the Downs still look all right.'

Very often at the cottage, on business and pleasure mixed, were Charles Graves and George Morrow, collaborators with E.V. in *Quoth the Raven, Wisdom While You Wait* and the other books of that series. Morrow was always a shy man in a very charming way; I do not remember him well in those days except for a set of characters he made me for my toy theatre. The play was *Midsummer Night's Dream* and I was ungrateful enough to complain that the little figures were not pretty enough. Certainly they had what E.V. would have called 'Morrow faces' (he once, in a crowded tube train, looked around him and said to me, 'all these people seem to have been designed by George Morrow*) but they were very amusing. I wish now that I still had them, but at



Charles Graves and E. V. L. at Frogbole

the time, with most atrocious taste, I preferred the 'Tuppence coloured' sets of characters which could be bought ready to use from a toyshop.

Charles Graves was very kind to me, too. I am afraid I persecuted him by insisting on being read aloud to; but he never complained, and patiently went through whole chapters of *Little Men* and the *What Katy Did* books, delightful to me, but which can hardly have appealed to his own taste very strongly.

Theirs was a happy collaboration and Graves wrote these verses in its honour.

As senior partner of the Firm
  Whose frivolous collaboration
Has prompted what I'm bound to term
  This terrifying demonstration,
Though easily the very worst
  Of ante or post prandial speakers,
It falls to me to answer first
  The greeting of your lifted beakers.

But stay, I hear you ask, Why choose,
  In speaking to the toast, a medium
So calculated to diffuse
  An atmosphere of endless tedium.
The simple fact is this. We tossed:
  Verse for the loser; prose the winner—
And I unfortunately lost,
  And spoiled my appetite for dinner.

E. V. Lucas: A Portrait

My case is hard, as you'll agree,
  For nineteen times at least in twenty
I make a helot of E.V.
  And choose myself the sweet *far niente.*
But here his industry and skill
  For once were not to be commanded,
And so this screed, for good or ill,
  Had to be written single-handed.

'Twas somewhere about '92
  That Lucas, burning to enlighten
An audience fitter and less few
  Packed up his traps and quitted Brighton.
He gravitated to the Strand,
  That haunt of impecunious scholars,
And straightway joined the struggling band
  Who drive the painful quill for dollars.

I met him first upon the *Globe*
  —Forgive me for becoming shoppy—
Where with the patience of a Job
  He daily furnished me with copy,
Purveying epigrams and 'pars'
  With such astonishing facility
That I could only thank my stars
  For my assistant's versatility.

But wearying of the Tory code,
  Resenting editorial fetters,
One day he took the Open Road
  That **led** to liberty and letters.

And I, deserted by my ghost,
  Just when my prospects were the poorest
Was thankful to accept the post
  Of'Spectatorial' sinecurist.

You know the sequel; how he took
  To Lamb and Punch, a dreadful diet,
And publish'd every month a book
  Until his system craved for quiet.
Then, realizing that his mind
  Was overcharged with mere frivolity,
A second time he came to find
  In Graves his complemental quality.

And that, as you will understand,
  Is our collaboration's basis:
I furnished him with lots of sand,
  And he provided the oasis;
I acted chiefly as acconv
  Panist when we performed our duet:
He was the ornamental plum,
  And I the necessary suet.

He made a joke; I wrote it down;
  Occasionally, too, I pruned it.
He was the coruscating clown,
  While I discreetly pantalooned it.
With him I burnt the midnight oil—
  But to continue these confessions,
His was the lion's share of toil,
  Spite of his Lamblike prepossessions.

It grieves me sorely to dispel
The view so flattering, though misguided,
Fostered by friends who wish me well,
That Lucas did no more than I did.
But Truth can be suppressed no more,
Though partisans would suffocate her—
In short, he always took the floor
And I was always the spectator.

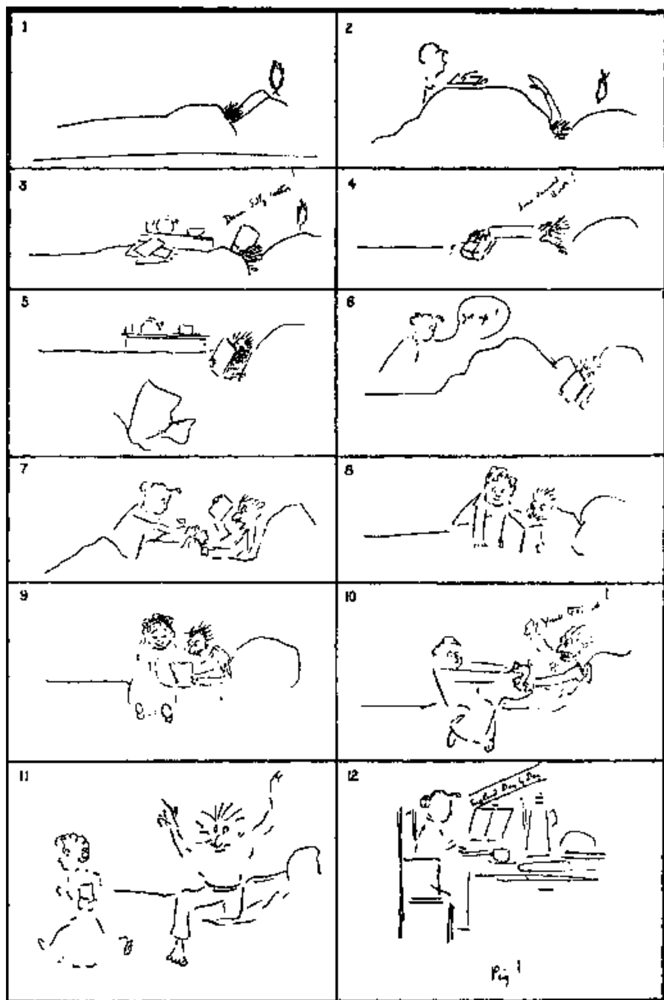
Still, when I designate our joint
Prolusiones as duetting,
One cardinal and crucial point
I am in danger of forgetting.
Then let me for us both admit
How often we were fain to borrow
Fresh inspiration from the wit
And pencil of our friend George Morrow.

February, 1907

Another memory of those most successful little books is the story told in pictures, which H. G. Wells drew, and which is reproduced here.

Once, a most exciting interlude this, Harry Graham brought Ethel Barrymore, to whom he was then engaged, to spend the day with us. She played croquet on the round lawn, dressed all in white, and was, I suppose, the most fascinating and exotic visitor that Froghole ever knew. Her engagement ring, a big amethyst set in tiny diamonds, was so beautiful that

A CRUSTY DAWN.



A SERIES OF SKETCHES BY MR. H. G. WELLS

Showing the enthusiastic reception given in his household to Mr. E. V. Lucas's 'England Day by Day immediately after its arrival*

E.V. had one made like it for my mother, who, later on, when Harry Graham's engagement was broken off, was constantly worried that Harry Graham might notice the ring and be distressed by it. We went on seeing a great deal of him, and I remember his repeating some of his early *Ruthless Rhymes* to us; the first, I think, was:

> In the drinking well
> Which the plumber built her
> Aunt Eliza fell.
> We must buy a filter.

In spite, however, of hospitable instincts and many friends, I think that my mother and E.V. really valued their isolation at Froghole; also, in the very early days when money was scarce, and a nurse the only servant, guests meant a great deal of cooking and hard work. In his *Experiences of a Literary Man* Stephen Gwynn complains that, after my mother stopped preparing the meals herself, the food was never quite so delectable; but he must, I think, have forgotten Rose Wood.

Partly because they liked the cottage to themselves and partly because of the extra cooking, my mother and E.V. once betrayed somewhat unseemly joy at the departure of an old friend, although they were both extremely fond of him. This was W. J. Craig, of whom E.V. has written so tenderly in his essay, *A Scholar's Funeral.* Mr. Craig, having spent a

couple of days at Froghole, left early on a winter's evening with the intention of walking to Westerham to catch his train, and, his back once turned, his host and hostess began to revel in their freedom from party manners and conversation. When supper^time came—just such a pleasantly untidy supper as might be served after a guest had left—they were celebrating their solitude by dancing a kind of polka round the living' room. But in the very middle of the dance came a knock on the door. It was opened and on the threshold stood poor Mr. Craig who, having lost both his way and his train, had returned to Froghole for the night.

Neighbours at Froghole were charmingly few and far between. Half-way up the lane, which led to the main road, stood the farm which was for a time owned, or rented, by a most engaging character called Godfrey Robinson. He was what is usually known as a gentleman/farmer and he did no doubt farm to a certain extent; but above all other things he rode, taking delight in the wildest and most formidable of horses, who would plunge and rear under him to the extreme terror of every one except himself, and who invariably fared worse in any difference of opinion with their rider. Godfrey Robinson was a handsome young man. He was not a conversa tionalist, although his command of a certain kind of language was both masterly and picturesque. In

what consisted his charm for my elders I do not know, but they certainly felt it; and to me he was a veritable idol. I would, if permitted, have spent all my time with him and, when missed, could generally be found either in his small farmhouse parlour where I would sit, in his own words, 'gassing away', or else even further afield trudging beside him while he toured his meadows and hop/gardens.

On his mantelpiece he kept one isolated photograph of a woman and this I both admired and disliked, having an uneasy fear that the original might one day make her appearance at the farm as Mrs. Godfrey Robinson, bringing with her all sorts of spoil-sport tidinesses and restrictions. But the lady, whom I afterwards discovered to be that famous actress, Miss Evie Greene, was tactful enough to keep her distance. This one photograph of a musical comedy favourite, whom he had probably never even met, was the only concession to frippery which Godfrey Robinson, a recluse except for the companionship of his groom, his housekeeper and ourselves, was known to make.

After having been our friend for some years he left the neighbourhood for the Shires where he was, no doubt, far more at home, and we had lost sight of him for years, when War broke out and we heard that, among the first to go out to France, he had been killed

there. I don't think we had any details of his death, but it was surely a gallant one, giving the lie to those gloomy persons who had enjoyed prophesying that he would, sooner or later, break his neck. Frankly, I do not believe that the horse capable of throwing Godfrey Robinson existed, and it was probably this skill, this cool courage of his as a rider which so fascinated E.V. One is inclined to admire passion/ately that which one cannot do, and although E.V. always hankered after riding and later in Sussex took to it, the 'friend of man never became to him more than an uneasy acquaintance. He remained, indeed, just about as apprehensive of horses as was Godfrey Robinson of words.

Besides the farmer, our near neighbours consisted merely of the old Ingrams, the Barnets and, from time to time, that famous old lady, Miss Octavia Hill, who, with her friend, Miss Yorke, used to stay in a cottage, partly a converted oasthouse, just opposite our front gate. Too far away to be called neighbours but within walking distance were Edward and Constance Garnett and their son David, for whom, on account of his sex, I used to save applccores, having been assured, probably by Rose Wood, that although girls could not eat this part of the fruit, boys could. I forget whether David appreciated the courtesy, but should think it doubtful.

In so attractive a neighbourhood, so rich in building sites, isolation could not be hoped to last indefinitely. Nor did it. In fact, although far from disliking the first of the invaders, with whom, on the contrary, we became excellent friends, it was the building which ultimately drove us away. For what is bitterer to the discoverer of loveliness than to have it rediscovered and then rediscovered again? I believe it was just because he had loved Froghole so much that E.V., when the move came, sold the cottage outright in preference to letting it. He had, I am sure, loved Froghole far more than he came to love any other house, and with good reason, for the cottage which had begun so humbly, grew step by step with his own career, each addition to its charm or comfort represent ing an improvement in its owner's bank balance. Not the least reason for its hold upon him was, that after some years of living there all the year round—a fairly stern existence—a house for the winter months on Campden Hill became possible, leaving to Froghole only the spring and the summer and those early months of autumn, which can be the sweetest of all the year, and which in that countryside of beeches were a blaze of coppery beauty. The second house was a decided gain, for Froghole, lived in through the winter, meant slush and damp; long evenings lit only by lamps and candles; struggles over

lighting fires, and cold walks in search of forgotten necessities.

This last was incidentally a very serious matter; Crockham Hill, even by the fields, was a mile and a half away and there was not so much as even a sweet' shop any nearer. One day in the very first year of E.V/s married life when there happened on a wet winter's afternoon to be a shortage of bread, he and my mother walked to Crockham Hill to buy a loaf. By the time they started back it was quite dark, and so muddy that they came round by the road, which was a much longer way; and, walking back, either because of the weather, or vexation about the bread or some other matter, they began an argument, which became a dispute and was, by the time they had reached the lane, a very brisk quarrel indeed; so brisk, that my mother who was carrying the precious loaf threw it in sudden exasperation at E.V.'s head. It missed him and fell into a puddle. And, such was the shock of having probably ruined so valuable an object, the labour of finding it with the help of matchlight, and the task of wiping the mud off with their handker chiefs, that the quarrel was quite forgotten and peace automatically restored.

Such disasters, then, might happen at Froghole in bad weather, but the cottage looked forward to through the dull, but civilized London winter was

different altogether. It meant sunshine and flowers, cricket and admirable week/end parties; and, in the beginning, a stronghold against interruption as secure almost as moat and drawbridge could have made it. But when the building began, when neighbours, how ever congenial, arrived, when they adopted that in sidious practice of 'dropping in,' when, in place of one unobtrusive, taciturn Godfrey Robinson, half a dozen friendly families settled at its gate, the cottage began gradually to lose its greatest charm and, losing it, emerged as being after all a little too small, a little too inconvenient, a little too primitive, a little indeed of all those things which Kingston Manor was not. But this house, which came next, never held in E. V.'s heart so high a place as its predecessor. It was an experiment, an adventure, a toy, a place where it was fun to play at being Squire, to organize beanfeasts for rather unappreciative villagers, to ride, to offer hospitality to slum children, to entertain with a kind of careless elegance. But it was not Froghole.

LONDON, 1904-1908

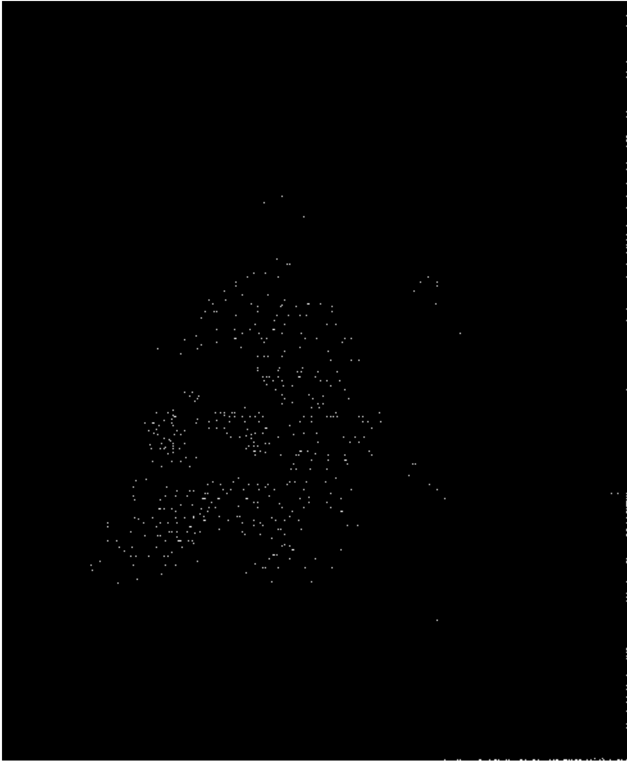
Number Two Gordon Place stands on the corner; is confusing to cabmen on account of having its front-door in Campden Grove, and is, not for that reason only, a sort of odd house out. It is larger than the other houses in Gordon Place, is, or was, white, and does not form part of a row. It is semi-detached. And a may tree grows in the tiny space which passes for a front garden. I doubt if the rooms inside are as large as I remember them to be—nothing ever is—but Number Two is spacious and airy. A pleasant Kensington house.

Campden Hill, which even now is wonderfully unspoiled, was before the War one of London's happiest districts. And very quiet. The traffic, mainly tradesmen's carts and an occasional hansom or 'growler', was negligible; it was safe for children to go alone on errands and for a reasonably level-headed dog to walk without a lead. True, Quince, the spaniel, a habitual blunderer, did one day contrive to get himself run over, not once but twice, by the same four-wheeler, the only vehicle at large in an otherwise clear road. But because his clumsy, lovable character was not hall-marked for tragedy he

escaped with mere bruises—thanks, no doubt, to his portliness.

When I say an occasional hansom, I speak of the daytime. At night, around the hour of seven-thirty and again between eleven o'clock and midnight, these jaunty cabs abounded. Four-wheelers, too, for the less debonair, or the more numerous. Ours being a social neighbourhood whose inhabitants frequently entertained or dined out, no evening sound was more familiar than the shrill whistle with which, all along the road, parlour-maids summoned cabs for their employers or for departing guests. And late at night the jingling bells of 'after the party' hansoms would echo gaily over Campden Hill.

But to one small girl, awake when she should have been asleep, in the top bedroom of Number Two Gordon Place, there was no gaiety in these bells. They were to me a chorus of forlorn hopes. I had a dread, kept, like most childish fears, too rigorously to myself, that my parents, going out at night, would meet with some fatal accident and never return, and this dread, strangely blended with the harsh cries of newsboys and with fog, transformed such evenings, spent alone except for the servants, into apprehensive vigils. The earlier hours were not so bad, offering as they did, an opportunity for forbidden reading in bed; nine might strike or even ten without my



E.L.

A.L. *E. V. L.*

1904

becoming alarmed. But towards eleven, the hansom bells would start, the quiet road would resound with the brisk tap of horses' feet. And as each cab ap' proached I would listen breathlessly, willing it to stop, praying that it would not tinkle callously on, towards Airlie Gardens and the top of the hill. So many hansoms passed, each of them first reviving, then killing hope, that I was too spent with anxiety at last to hear the right one stop, hardly knew 'they' were home, until the front door slammed and the customary row about my light being on began.

Secure and pleasant by contrast were the nights when people came to dinner; no nightmare cabs then, only the much superior excitement of raiding dishes as they were brought from the dining-room or peering through the banisters at evening dresses.

The Conrads often used to dine at Gordon Place; in fact, for a short time, they actually lived there, having taken rooms only a few doors away from Number Two. Joseph Conrad, who was always in and out of the house, amused himself greatly I remember over an immature *affaire de coeur* between myself and his elder son Borys. He used to tease Borys about the number of calls he made on me, and accused him of carrying a cake of soap, by means of standing on which he acquired the extra height necessary to reach our doorbell.

James Barrie and his pretty wife were at our house more often than not. They lived then at the charming Leinster Corner and, in the summer, at a cottage called Black Lake. Mary Barrie had an immense Newfoundland dog, Luath, whose appearance sug' gested the Darling family's Nana. Not long ago, reading the Diaries of Macready, I found that the tragedian also had a dog of this odd name and wondered whether the later Luath had been called after it.

With the Barries came Arthur Llewelyn Davies and his beautiful wife, who was George du Maurier's daughter. Beautiful, as a word for Sylvia Davies, is all but miserly, yet what other is there? Hers was a beauty so arresting and so rare, that even now, as one exhibits some old photograph album, there is no need to apologize, to say of her 'She was considered lovely then, but, of course, clothes *were* so un becoming*. There is no need to apologize at all. Sylvia's clothes were never, by any fashion or standard, unbecoming. She contrived without any suggestion of artiness or affectation to dress in a style most ex quisitely her own. Her hats were never absurd; she never imprisoned her neck in whalebone; never wore the then hideous blouse and skirt; nor a tweed tam o'shanter, cumbersome forerunner of the beret and capable of turning the prettiest woman into a guy.

She did sometimes wear a boater, but with a grace which might have inspired an earlier Michael Arlen to write a book about a different kind of hat.

Another beauty among our more intimate friends was Margaret, the wife of Professor J. W. Mackail. Often her father's model, she might easily, by the ignorant, have been accused of 'trying to look like a Burncjones' and she, too, like Sylvia Llewelyn Davies and like my mother, managed to avoid most skilfully the uglier fashions of the day.

Sidney and Frances Colvin, friends of R. L. S., often dined at Gordon Place. The Will Merediths came, Charles Tennyson, the Colefaxes. Maurice Hewlett, William Archer, A. E. W. Mason, Charles Graves, George Morrow, Philip Agnew, Lawrence Bradbury. And many more.

Sometimes, and these were thrilling occasions, E. V. would give a dinner for men only. I suppose what seemed at the time to be veritable banquets were only fairly simple meals for eight to ten guests at the most. But, when the man of the family plans such an entertainment, what a whirl can a household be in! Our ordinary dining room, far too small to accom modate all the gentlemen, was used merely to serve from, the table being laid in a sort of general living/ room separated from the other by a curtained archway. The guests were received in, and afterwards retired to,

a large room upstairs, which would, in a less literary house, have been the drawing room. In ours *it* was used by E.V. as his study. I do not think he would have allowed it to be made over to social uses for any but an all/masculine party; but for men, there was no need to tidy away papers; to tuck books of reference into shelves or to place flowers where pens and pipes should rightly be. Such men as came to Gordon Place to dine were at home in studies, anyway.

The food was always excellent—for E.V. it had to be—and there were generally scallops. But the guests have receded in my mind—all, that is to say, except G. K. Chesterton, who could never do this. He, I know, came hugely to several dinners and E.V. had a joke with me, disrespectful but perhaps excusable, that if one were invited to take a drive in a hansom with G. K. C. it would, in fact, be necessary to take a drive in two.

It was to Chesterton that I wrote a very strange letter, expressing my distaste at the unromantic way in which people then dressed, and asking whether he could perhaps make suggestions or use his influence to improve the present fashions and reintroduce conv pulsorily the dress of Shakespeare's day. I remember very well writing that letter. It was composed secretly in the kitchen at Gordon Place and was exceedingly full of blots. Chesterton's reply was prompt, long, and

delightful; full of sympathy with my grievance; doubtful whether anything on general lines could be done, but suggesting that he and I might, as individuals, show the way. Falstaff was his choice as a sartorial model; for me he proposed Titania. E.V. was naturally anxious that this letter should be kept, but by an unfortunate chance I put it in the pocket of a blue cotton frock. The frock went to the laundry and Chesterton's letter with it. A great pity, for I do not think many men would have so carefully and courteously answered the surprising perplexities of a child; and the proof of it should have been treasured.

On one most particular evening, instead of listening for nocturnal hansoms I drove, nocturnally, in one myself. It seems, as I remember it, on the very spur of the moment that I was taken, muffled against the fog in a Shetland shawl, to see Adeline Genee dance in *Coppelia* at the Empire. This was E.V.'s idea. He said, rightly, that Genee was too exquisite to be missed and believed, also rightly, that a small child once having seen her dance would never quite forget her. Nor have I forgotten her. The ballet in detail is now a blur, but, as a kaleidoscope of light, gaiety and colour, a kind of sparkling framework to an entrancing dancer, it still retains clarity. Very clear still, too, is my mother's warning not to mention to the children at school where I had been. What heads

would have shaken over the gossip, 'The Lucases take their child to the Empire!*

But if it was only to see *Coppelia* that I went to a music-hall, E.V. needed no such excuse; for it was there he found his favourite kind of entertainment, nor did a poor bill succeed in daunting him, for he went provided against it. Dark though the auditorium must have been, he would always, should a turn prove dull, take from his pocket whatever work he was engaged upon and continue to do it.

In spite of his love of music-halls, and odd though it may seem in one who later became the intimate of many actors, he held in those days rather rigid views about the stage. Actors were detrimental, they were 'rogues and vagabonds', they painted their faces in the daytime. An odd phrase this, related to that stock remark of the landlady who says, 'I don't allow no gentlemen callers after dark.' As there is no fixed hour really either for illicit love-making or for the application of grease-paint, E.V.'S objection to the theatrical profession would seem valid only at matinees.

As a matter of fact this attitude of his about the stage, due unconsciously to his Dissenting blood, was probably less inelastic than I then believed it to be, for, hearing him talk since, I realized that there were very few plays in London then which he did not see,

while I find in his own reminiscences a confession of how he worshipped Miss Julia Neilson from afar and sent her verses. But he was, as far as I was concerned, genuinely strict. I saw Shakespeare and very little else. This, however, was far less grim than it sounds. There was plenty of Shakespeare to be seen, from the lushness of Tree at His Majesty's to the slightly educational simplicity of Benson at the Coronet. It was good Shakespeare, too, all of it, and taken so much as a matter of course that the excuse for freakish exhibitionist productions had not yet, happily, been found. People did, of course, complain that Tree smothered the plays with over elaborate scenery and dresses. Perhaps he did, though it would be gross ingratitude on my part to admit this. I was struck dumb by the apparently real grass in his *As You Like It,* can see now, in *Henry VIII,* Laura Cowie in her dress of shimmering pink satin dancing upon the table. Besides, over/elaboration is not the same thing as affectation; in the earlier years of this century Shake speare was at least robust.

Shakespeare's, then, with a few exceptions, were the only plays I saw. One of these exceptions was *Peter Pan,* not described as 'a children's play done every Christmas', but as 'the children's play Mr. Barrie has just written'. That play had been read aloud in manuscript by its author to my mother, and

to E.V., who admired it enormously, though he did grow a little cynical about it later and objected even then to what he called a grown woman declaring that she wanted 'always to be a little boy and have fun*. E.V. always admired Barrie and had this definite loyalty to him, that, although sometimes personally impatient of his touches of over sweetness, he would accept no careless criticism of J. M. B. from the lay man. Even over the comparative disaster of *The Boy David* he was steadfast, denying stoutly, though he missed seeing the play himself, that it was a mistake. 'Jimmied he said, 'has never made a complete mistake.'

About Peter Pan in his first gay youth no one was cynical. He had most definitely not grown up; nor, I think, can any one who saw that play in its early freshness, who recalls the truly Etonian Hook of Gerald du Maurier, Nina Boucicault's elusive Peter, the real little girl Hilda Trevelyan made of Wendy, ever learn to sneer at *it*.

I went myself, not to the first performance, which was probably at night, but to the first matinee. I went with George, Jack, Peter, and Michael Llewelyn Davies (Nicholas being too young), and so imposing in size was our party that we drove to the theatre in one of those private buses which used to be hired by large families to take themselves and their luggage to railway stations. We sat in a box, in two more

likely, and we loved the play, as all children not only did, but, if the evidence of one's ears and eyes is to be believed, still do. Hook had become one of us, the Jolly Roger had cast its spell, Smee was to become a household word, to fly a burning ambition. On the way home George demonstrated his excited approval by pretending to fall out of the bus.

Yet another exception was a charming play called *The Cherry Girl in* which Ellaline Terriss and Seymour Hicks played together, a successor, I think, to *Bluebell in Fairyland.* To this, too, we went with the Llewelyn Davies boys, and I scored heavily over them during an interval when Miss Terriss sent up to our box a doll dressed as herself for 'the little girl who clapped so much'.

To such plays as these E.V. always came, too; to Shakespeare he did not, for he held the opinion that the poet lost by being acted and was better read, a perfectly tenable theory, but one which, from a child's point of view, is the merest bosh.

We did once see one of the tragedies together, and although this happened some years later, it fits in here well enough. It was in Venice. We went, together with my mother, to see a performance of G. Shake speare's *Amleto,* given by an Italian touring company. In the title role was an actor whose name I have, perhaps fortunately, forgotten. He was evidently

popular, for the small theatre was crammed with eager and attentive Venetians, and I particularly re member, in a box on the first tier, three black/bearded sailors who, looking like pirates, were not any the less ardent Shakespearians because of this.

As it is useless trying to explain just why some things are so unbearably funny, it must be taken on trust that Signor——'s Hamlet was one of them. He had, to begin with, arranged that the Prince of Den/ mark, who has admittedly been provided with enough to say as it *is* said a great deal more; so much more indeed that there was no other male member of the caste who might not have complained with justice, as Macready did once, that he was merely 'a damned walking gentleman'. What exact speeches this too leading man purloined I cannot remember, but it is no falsehood to say that in this Venetian version it was Hamlet who gave fatherly advice to Laertes. And, as if masculine lines were not enough, he robbed Ophelia too, and might even have drowned himself were it not for this disaster occurring too early in the play.

Signor———was by no means young and he was operatic in figure. To those who were used to his ways he was probably terrific; but as it was, and no doubt against his better feelings, E.V. began to laugh —that peculiar silent, shaking laugh of his which ended in tears. A laugh which cannot let other

people alone. So I, too, began to laugh, agonizingly as one does in church, but not, after a certain point, silently. When it became obvious to the enthralled Venetians, including the pirates in the box, that people were laughing, the Venetians, since *Amleto* was not to them a funny play, became annoyed and a storm of very ominous *shushing* broke out. You cannot, of course, *shush* a person who is laughing and expect good results. The more indignant the audience became with us the more, out of pure nervousness, E.V. and I laughed, until, obeying at last imperative signs from my mother, who, even though amused, was able to behave decently, we crept still laughing from the theatre. We were lucky, E.V. said, to have escaped without a stiletto in our backs.

Looking back on that strictness of his with regard to plays and players I wonder whether it was less a matter of principle than of cunning. He was always clever enough about life to estimate the extreme value of a treat; to understand that too much of anything is the swiftest destroyer of glamour. Cer tainly, children of to/day, who visit theatres and cinemas practically at will, can never experience that sense of almost suffocating excitement that I did, when, after a preliminary moment in the dark, the curtain rose and the play began; nor would they, being all

too welkacquainted through the newspapers with every intimate domestic detail about the stars, literally tremble, as I did, with emotion on chancing to find myself, by the bookstall at Lewes station, standing side by side with Mr. Lewis Waller. I had no knowledge, you see, of whether he had been married once or five times, of what his hobbies were, or who his favourite novelist. I could not have stated glibly whether or not his favourite dish was macaroni cheese. For that matter I should have found it hard to believe that he ever ate at all. Mr. Waller merely bought a paper and strolled away, but as the song says 'My heart stood still', a very enjoyable sensation and owed in some measure to a father who believed, or affected to believe, that all actors were 'rogues and vagabonds'.

But whatever of genuine prejudice there may have been in this attitude of E.V.'s was lost at Brighton during the early days of his friendship with Harry Preston. This extraordinary man with his pink, bald head, his misshapen ear—a legacy from the prize ring—and his attendant bull'terriers was the close friend of so many actors that no familiarity with him was possible without meeting them. It was part of Harry Preston's power that he could do the impossible by making oil and water mix, and the secret of this achievement died with him. Some strong attraction

for all sorts and conditions of men he certainly had, but this could hardly have lain in his conversation, for he had none. An affectionate greeting, an invi' tation to drink champagne, and Harry had shot his bolt. Yet every one admitted to the circle of his friend/ ship preferred to stay there.

It was at the Royal York that I first made the rather saddening discovery that actors have ordinary human weaknesses. One evening a few tables away from ours a man was dining alone. 'That,' E. V. whispered to me, 'is Seymour Hicks.' I was all eyes, of course, no doubt staring abominably, and towards the end of dinner was privileged to hear this fascinating actor speak. His words were addressed to the waiter (for tunate man) to whom he said, 'If you don't take these dates away I shall be ill.'

E.V. and Seymour had not then met; it was not, in fact, until 1915 that they began their long, contented friendship which was only broken last June. From a host of good stories springing from this friendship the following is typical. Seymour, writing from Australia to E.V. to complain that he was homesick, received in prompt reply this cable: 'Have just dined with Barrie. We decided new countries are not for old gentlemen.'

Brighton, closely connected with Gordon Place, because of the many winter week-ends spent there,

always fascinated my father; very largely, I think, because the Brighton of the Royal York, of the Hippodrome, of the Miss Cheeseman's oyster parlour, was so very different from the bleaker Brighton of his boyhood. Whatever qualities my grandfather was conspicuous for, a sense of fun and love of lavishness were not among them; and besides which, residents in a pleasure resort have a way of holding themselves chillingly aloof from the town's lighter moments. So, to E. V., returning to his old home as the friend and guest of Harry Preston, enjoying good wine and good talk, putting Brighton, indeed, to the gayer uses for which the Prince Regent intended it, must have had a feeling similar to that of revisiting as an old boy some strict school, and finding himself treated as man to man by a once intimidating headmaster.

SUSSEX 1908-1912

AT the foot of the Downs, the last house in a village street which dwindled into a sheep'track, Kingston Manor, with its walled gardens, could boast an un assailable grace of position. Kingston, a little less than three miles out of Lewes towards Brighton, is in fact a *cul de sac.*

The Manor was a jumble of periods. The back, by far the handsomest portion of the house, Queen Anne, greyish in colour with a roof of Horsham stone; the front, white and very trim, suggesting occupation by one of Jane Austen's less wealthy characters; the modern stables, with rooms above them, red, con venient and exceedingly ugly.

The garden like the house varied in character; at the back, protected by grey walls, *it* had a gracious formality, the front was mainly grass with small flowerbeds dotted about. There was one really large lawn and an attractive, shady, narrow one with a magnificent walnut tree at the end of it. There was a drive, too, of which since we had never before had a drive, we were exceedingly proud.

A smiling house in fine weather, Kingston Manor in the winter became frighteningly bleak, for the wind

came tearing down upon us from the Downs and howled round the house most desolately; to walk was to plough through mud; the central heating system, so triumphantly installed, inclined to be temperamental.

It was, when he remembered it, a whim of E.V.'s to regard himself, since he lived in a Manor House, as a squire; and little outbreaks of this fantasy occurred from time to time; in the presentation to every cottage on Christmas Day of a highly decorative canister of tea and also, rather fitfully, in Sports. The tea was doubtless drunk, the empty canisters joining others of their kind upon the mantelpiece; the Sports were apathetically patronized, and the inhabitants of Kingston were not, I think, impressed. Either they clung to their own notion of what a genuine squire should be or else were grateful to be free of any such dictator. They continued to regard us as 'people from London', and were not, with the exception of the shepherd, Jack Tuppen, and his brother Charlie, noticeably friendly.

This shepherd was the most admirable acquaintance; a handsome, humorous old man who uncompromis' ingly resisted all efforts to exploit him as a 'character'. He was a good bit over sixty and had once, when *in* charge of some sheep, had occasion to journey by rail from Lewes to Brighton; when asked for his opinion of this town, which was about eight miles distant, he

Front of Kingston Manor

explained that he had not found it worth while in between trains to leave the station. This, he added, he had thought very little of. Nevertheless, as he always himself maintained, he had, in a manner of speaking, travelled.

Jack Tuppen once confessed in a burst of intimacy to E. V. that he had not washed his feet for thirty years, but he must during that period of time have walked through a good deal of water on them. He was a great shepherd, tirelessly devoted to his flocks, without ever verbally expressing the slightest affection for them, out in all weathers and at all times, a skilful accoucheur, a wise doctor, a shrewd, monumental man, uneducated, but knowing whatever there was need to know. In his aged clothes, a strange battered hat, bowler-like in shape, upon his head, his face freslvcoloured, his beard short and grey, Jack Tuppen was a very noble figure.

He lived with his daughter in a small, over fur nished cottage, where among all his treasures the apex was a two/headed lamb which had been stuffed and adorned the parlour in a glass-case. So highly was this lamb thought of, so reverently regarded, that it was with real annoyance the other day I read in the newspaper of the birth of a similar phenomenon. A deplorable case of plagiarism it seemed to me, while Jack Tuppen, who could not read anyway, would

never have believed it. His two headed lamb was *the* two headed lamb.

As we ourselves enjoyed quite a warm degree of friendship with Jack it was difficult to resist showing him off to visitors; it was also unwise. He had great dignity and quite enough intuition to know whether he was being talked to on his merits or merely as a dear old rustic oddity. He could always tell, and, to any one who was enjoying him as a type, was invariably as rude as he knew how to be.

Jack and his brother Charlie, a less definite but very lovable character, were both entirely toothless and as entirely inconvenienced by the fact. Jack indeed disclaimed all use for teeth. He preferred gums, he said. And at a certain feast given in honour of King George V's coronation he demonstrated the soundness of this point of view; so did Charlie, but it was Jack who, in this, as in all other matters between them, was the leader. He consumed five plates of cold meat and pickles as against his brother's four.

Kingston, a very small village, was inhabited almost completely by villagers. There was a church but no vicarage. The living went in with the neighbouring one of Iford, the same clergyman attending to both and giving alternate morning and evening services. Our lawn adjoined the churchyard and I believe the regular click on Sunday mornings of croquet balls

gave some offence, although this did not prevent the vicar calling sometimes and being called on. His name I forget, but before taking orders he had been a professional tea taster, a fact which, for some reason or other, E.V. found exquisitely comic.

There was a farmhouse in Kingston which had a garden, not surrounding it as most gardens do, but on the opposite side of the road, an attractive custom often to be found in Sussex. And there was of course a farmer, whom we knew, but who, as I can remember nothing whatever about him, can evidently have been no Godfrey Robinson.

Beyond the farm was a cottage used at week/ends by Mr. Wilkinson, headmaster of the preparatory school in Kensington which was attended by the Llewelyn Davies boys. He used to arrive on Saturdays with his son Geoffrey, and with Mrs. Wilkinson, a charming little lady who was very deaf and a genius at cake making, and I was very fond of going to tea with them. Mr. Wilkinson, known to his pupils as Milky, was a most genial man. At any rate I thought so; but, whenever Peter and Michael Davies happened to be staying with us and were also asked to tea, a marked change came over their demeanour. They were posi' tively subdued and never, in spite of Mrs. Wilkinson's cakes, quite natural again until we were well out in the road with the front door shut behind us. So, as I was

inclined to respect and envy boys almost to the point of grovelling before them, my own aplomb in the presence of Milky was a cause for much selkgratification.

It was at Kingston that E.V. began the practice of spending the middle part of each week, Tuesday until Friday to be exact, in London, and it was there that his life first spread away a little from a purely family existence, becoming double, not in its usual shabby sense, but meaning rather a definite split of interests and activities; a split caused as much as anything else by the growth of that desire, which he afterwards indulged to excess, for an unquestioned independence; and being a man who could work anywhere he had no need to be tied to a desk even, much less to a household.

The week/ends invariably meant a full house. It was at Kingston that I first remember visits from Arnold Bennett and his wife, Marguerite, of whom I was very fond and who, being, I believe, distressed by having no children of her own, always paid particular attention to me. She was very handsome and wore alluring French hats. John and Ada Galsworthy were often there, Barrie as a matter of course, and at first Sylvia Llewelyn Davies, then a widow; but only at first, for while we were still living at Kingston she died, leaving in the lives of every one who knew her a gap which has never yet been filled.

Barrie's great friend, Charles Turley Smith, most delightful and elusive of men, came, but by no means often enough, to Kingston; and it was of him that the shepherd, referring to the attractive criss-cross of lines around Turley's eyes, remarked, 'That gentleman's powerful wrinkled.' But it was not meant uncivilly, for Jack Tuppen approved of Turley.

An eccentric and exciting visitor was A. E. W. Mason, exciting because one never quite knew whether he would arrive when expected or not. And, when he did arrive, one never knew at what time he would come down to breakfast. He was reputed to read his letters in the bath but as, on a week/end visit, his correspondence cannot have been a very large one, he must presumably have read something else; judging by the time he occupied the bathroom, whole volumes. But if he was always very late, he made up for this by being always very amusing.

Hugh Walpole and Alan Milne, who seemed generally to arrive together, would lie in deck/chairs talking of the great things they meant to do. I used to sit listening avidly. They talked and talked while I gave them my mute, unobserved attention; unobserved, that is, except at such times as I would fetch from the house long, cool drinks for these thirsty, prophetic conversationalists.

Alan, very fair and handsome, knowing exactly

how to talk unpatronizingly to a child, was, with one great exception, my favourite among all the visitors. This exception was Maurice Hewlett, whom I loved, in spite, perhaps because of, his diabolical habit of teasing me. I have already mentioned how he saddled the King Charles spaniel, Oliver, with the name of Macbeth; and his next torment was linked up with Oliver's breed. He attempted to shake my allegiance to the Stuart kings by the information that Charles the First was so undersized as to be in actual fact a dwarf. It is true, of course, that the unfortunate man was very short, but I took a long time to believe it, and Maurice's taunts on the subject drove me into a fury. 'Well,' he would say, 'any more discoveries about the Royal Dwarf?' or 'Still devoted I suppose to that little *tiny* king?'

E. V. used to join in, until I was scarlet with indig nation and almost in tears, but it was he who helped me to concoct a sort of retaliation on Maurice, the source of which is hazy. It had some connexion with the contemptuous phrase 'pink wash' which, in a newspaper article, had been used to describe an impassioned speech about something or other which Mr. Hewlett had made. And whenever the *Use majeste* regarding Charles the First had gone beyond limits, the words 'pink' and 'wash' were brought into action, both verbally and also written on scraps of

paper which were put in significant places; on Maurice's pillow, inside one of his shoes and some times in envelopes which were addressed to him and sent through the post. Insult for insult.

My mother must, I think, have been a most accom plished hostess, for the feeding of so many guests cannot have been too easy. All provisions had to come from Lewes; once again we had no telephone; yet I can never remember supplies running out even on a Sunday. No doubt most visitors were expected and arranged for; dropping in at that distance from London was far less frequent than it is now; but there was one occasion when unexpected callers caused her extreme annoyance which must, as the sequel shows, have been most artfully concealed.

One summer evening when nobody was expected, and very shortly before a smallish dinner was about to be eaten in the garden, there descended from the sky, or from the Downs rather, two dusty, hungry and thirsty young men—John Drinkwater and a friend who were on a walking tour. This arrival, although for no personal reason, seemed to have exasperated my mother so much, the dinner to her way of thinking was so wretched, her hospitality so cool, that she was aston ished a few days later at receiving from John Drink water the following 'Collins' in verse:

A PICTURE

Two candles oaken/set upon blue folds,
No other light save the unclouded stars,
Their clusters broken by the scented downs
Massed up above us in the southern sky.
Two candles oaken set upon blue folds,
Sending their little light along the board
Laid out beneath a honeysuckle hedge
In the cool dusk, with hospitable fare.
Blue folds clear-cut along the table's rim,
Until they meet the delicate blue robe
Of one who sends soft laughter through the hush,
Her face the haunt of clear repose and swift
Ripples of humour, gracious, mellowing.

We shall remember in the barren days
Blue folds and raiment, little oaken lights,
The moth stars flitting through the ghostly dusk,
Fair brow and slender throat and kindly speech,
A hermitage of leaves and shadows, set
In the deep hollow of the Sussex hills.[1]

Enchanting coals of fire indeed!

The garden at Kingston was of a size that made it both possible and pleasant to give really large parties. And one year E.V. invited the whole staff of Methuens to come for the day. As usual in those summers

[1] **From *Collected Poems* of John Drinkwater. (Sidgwick and Jackson.)**

before the War, the weather behaved so perfectly that both lunch and tea could be eaten out of doors. We played games, bowls and croquet; some of the party walked or cycled on the Downs; a good deal of photography went on; and every guest carried away a bunch of flowers. Lavishness with her garden was always my mother's way; she not only pressed the loveliest armfuls on all departing visitors, but every summer sent away box after box of flowers.

Another very special event in the way of enters taining took place regularly on the 5th of November, a national anniversary which was then kept up in Lewes (and may be still) with tremendous enthusiasm. The fireworks were terrific, processions marched through the town, effigies were burned, and it was only a little while before we had moved into the neighbourhood that the thrilling, if perilous, custom of rolling blazing tar barrels through the streets had been abolished. It was great fun, on the 5th, to dine early, spend the earlier part of the night in Lewes watching the fun, and to return about midnight to a cold supper and a private firework display of our own. The Lewes celebrations, although extremely amusing, were looked on coldly by the local gentry, and it was, I believe, our own patronage of them that gave rise in Kingston to the rumour which so entranced E.V.—that 'they're a rough lot up at the Manor'.

Lewes on any other day of the year was not rich in distractions; there was no cinema then and the height of frivolity was a visit to the confectioner's for ices; or a tour of the Castle, which, if not in itself very exciting, could be made slightly more so by the practice indulged in by myself and my own friends of signing the Visitors' Book, not with our real names, but with those of famous people—Shackleton, Kitchener, Marie Lloyd and so on.

There were also the races; but I do not remember ever going to them, although we were often at the Brighton Meeting, where one day E.V. exhibited a most touching, surprising and, for him, expensive faith in human nature.

We had gone on the Downs, not to any of the enclosures, and had there got into conversation with one of those small, perky, red/faced men who appear to spring up on race courses like mushrooms. This one was amusing, full of good stories and possibly good tips; and less shifty/eyed evidently than most of his kind, for E.V. suddenly handed him a sovereign, commissioning him to back a certain outsider. The outsider won. So, in a way, did the small, perky man, who was never seen again. And E.V., who had simply been asking for it, was too deeply hurt by this defection ever to mention the incident again.

Every now and then he was caught like this, which

was odd, because he was always the first to warn other people against being done, and one had only to men' tion some rashly charitable intention for E. V. to express disfavour of it. Yet once in Italy he lent to a man, an alleged waiter, sufficient money to take him and his wife and child back to England. I forget now what story the 'waiter' told; but I know that his distress, his gratitude and his promise of repayment convinced E.V. absolutely. My father's grief at never hearing from the man again far outweighed his annoyance at losing the money, and this, too, was an experience he very much disliked to speak of.

There were at Kingston two horses—a mare named Brighton, as gentle and obliging an animal as one could wish to find; and a young, smaller horse called, on account of his fiery, red/gold beauty, Apollo, whose disposition, at a rough estimate, left everything to be desired. My mother, a real horsewoman, could ride anything, but it was unfortunate from my point of view that Apollo was not considered up to E.V/s weight; more unfortunate still that, although capable of feigning every kind of malady rather than get across the turbulent creature's back, I could never quite string myself up to an admission that I was afraid of him. As long as E.V. was away in London all was well. I rode the gentle mare with perfect confidence and no nerves whatever. But week/ends were a

misery. With his usual thoroughness and desire to do a thing as it should be done, E.V. hit upon the sinister plan of having a riding-master down from London every Saturday to Monday. This man was, or so I thought him, gloomy and unimaginative. He himself rode on a hired horse—I am perhaps malicious in declaring it to be a docile one; E.V. had the mare; my mother who had no need of instruction remained at home; I was mounted on lovely, hateful Apollo.

I loathed that horse; he perhaps loathed me, too, or perhaps his feeling was merely one of contempt. There was certainly no form of bucking, rearing and shying which he did not indulge in. He was not a horse with whom one could get on any sort of terms; the riding/master was unsympathetic, and E. V., serenely carried by Brighton, saw nothing to worry about. Or rather nothing *else* to worry about; he was never at ease in the saddle and handled even that gentle creature with a nervous concentration. And so, as I remember it, riding, usually the pinnacle of a child's delight, was not on those Sussex Downs a success.

The Kingston dogs, when one counts various litters, were so plentiful that I can hardly remember all of them. There was a black Cocker called Shadow, whose wife, Biddy, was a tremendous swimmer and was often taken on hot summer days to Seaford to indulge this hobby of hers in the sea. For a short time

there was a bob/tailed sheep/dog, almost impossible to keep clean and groomed, and who, alleged to be pining for his natural occupation, was given to Jack Tuppen and proved, I believe, the most inadequate sheep dog in Sussex. My mother had an enchanting little Pekingese called Tai T'ai (meaning Her Lady ship) who first gave E.V. his great love for the breed. A very cringing, unsatisfactory bull dog, presented by Harry Preston and called in his honour York, had only a short stay with us. Brief, too, was the visit of an incredibly pretty and even more incredibly amoral West Highland bitch, known as 'wee Bessie' who, after travelling back with us from the Hebrides, at once perverted the other dogs, turning them into sheep worriers and chicken murderers of the deepest dye. After much money had been paid out in compensa tion, Bessie was given away to a maiden lady living in Brighton, becoming, through this sedate association, the most exemplary animal alive. While the dogs she left behind her relapsed once more into their natural state of complete apathy where poultry or sheep were concerned. Wee Bessie, beyond all doubt, was of the species *femme fatale.*

But the outstanding dog, the very king of them, was Tony, the superb Irish Wolfhound bred by Raven Hill. He came as a puppy, all legs; and grew daily in grace and height. He was utterly without vice,

although some of his demonstrations of playfulness could be frightening; he had, for instance, the fixed idea that any person riding upon a bicycle was a toy only waiting to be played with, and his habit of knocking both cycle and rider over was more re nowned locally than it was popular.

We had in Tony's day a grey kitten with whom he would play with apparent violence, but in a manner much appreciated by the kitten, who, however much Tony would toss or throw her about, always hurriedly returned to him for more of the same treatment and miawed loudly whenever he affected to be tired of her. When we climbed every afternoon to the top of the Downs above the house, Tony would always search out the kitten before we started, carry her in his mouth to the summit, drop her there for a run, and carry her down again.

Tony's gay and loving life was far too short; he was not yet two years old when he developed rheumatism which brought on paralysis of his hind quarters, and he had to be destroyed—a tragedy all the sharper, because he was gradually acquiring those qualities of staidness, dignity and sense, which sit so majestically on the larger breeds of dogs.

From Kingston I went to school. To Eastbourne at first, from where I came back for week-ends, and later to a full-time boarding-school in Kent. From my

first boarding-school I had run away, an exploit which caused so much scolding and uproar, that I was astounded and a little hurt to find on the appearance in 1921 of E.V.'s *Rose and Rose* that he had apparently admired me. So do parents, no doubt for good reasons, wilfully deceive one!

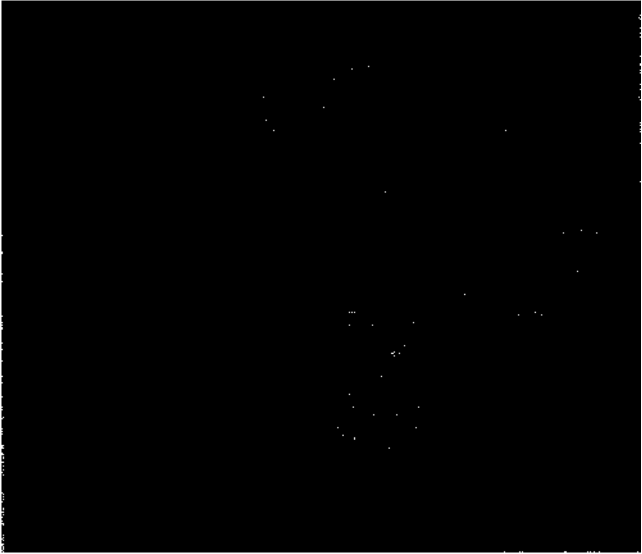
It was near the end of our time at Kingston that an important cricket event took place, not there, but at my school, which was then carried on in Charles Darwin's gracious house at Downe. The event was a match played on the school ground between two teams captained by E.V. and by James Barrie, and the first news of this project reached the school in a rather odd manner. The headmistress's name was Willis; the name of the headmistress at my former school was Wilson; and E.V., although quite able to distinguish between the personalities of these two ladies never managed to disentangle their names. One morning at Downe, when the post had just been given out, a girl called Betty Wilson rushed up to me and exclaimed, 'I say, I've just had a letter from your father. I think he must be potty!' There was a mild sensation, of course, and much bewilderment, until *it* finally began to dawn on us that the letter addressed to 'Miss Wilson', which asked permission to make use of her cricket ground, was not meant for Betty at all, but for Miss *Willis.*

The mystery once cleared up, we were all far from thinking E.V. 'potty'; the whole school indeed was strongly in his favour, as, apart from the fun of watch ing such an original kind of cricket match, the event absolutely necessitated a holiday.

The day came and not a single thing went wrong, outside of both elevens being a man or so short. But this was not serious. The gaps were filled up by Downed best cricketers, and a brother who happened to be about. One of the girls, I remember, was Brenda Mallam, the daughter of a Rugby master, whose game any boy might envy. The weather was gloriously fine; a delightful sort of garden-party atmosphere prevailed; there was a wonderful cold lunch out of doors; and, of course, no lessons of any kind.

Which side won I cannot remember; I should imagine the one lucky enough to have George Llewelyn Davies, captain of the Eton eleven, who, in his perfect flannels and pale blue cap, looked the most accomplished and handsome cricketer of them all. The favourite, however, was George Morrow, who, if not brilliant, was most endearingly industrious, and the sight of whose behind disappearing in search of the ball through a hole in the hedge gave rise to hearty cheers.

The players of this most excellent match, not count ing substitutes, were: James Barrie, E. V. L., A. A. Milne, George Llewelyn Davies, T. L. Gilmour,



E. V. L. with 'Beetrice, Charlie Tuppen and others

Maurice Hewlett, Doctor Goffe, Will Meredith, George Morrow, Walter Frith, Denis Mackail, Charlie Tennyson, Harry Graham, Barrie's nephew, Willie Winter, my uncle, Percy Lucas, and George Meredith, junior.

A summer sideline at Kingston went on in a fine old barn, which belonged to us and which was con verted simply enough into a small summer home for three or four crippled children who, selected by The Invalid Children's Aid Association, came down for a few months each year for convalescence. They were looked after by a delightful woman with the pleasant name of Mary Moppett and had, I think, a very happy time in the barn, which had been cleaned, white washed and divided into a dormitory and a large living/room. We always had quite small children, shrill, cockney and, in spite of their limps and surgical boots, extremely merry. I remember best a very pretty, fair little girl who pronounced her name Beetrice, and a solemn white/faced baby called Olive who, aged less than two years, arrived dressed all in black serge, in mourning for an even younger brother. And I re member, too, the habit these children had at bed/time of singing popular songs at the tops of their voices, as a sort of joyous winding/up of the day. *Every Nice Girl Loves a Sailor* was the favourite; Beetrice, who came down each year, the *prima donna.*

So many things at Kingston were delightful that it would be difficult to say at what point the experiment went wrong. Too much money had been spent, per^ haps, or else that restlessness of E. V.'s was to blame, or else—impossible to say from this distance, impossible really to have known, as I was only fourteen when we left there. But leave we did. Kingston Manor was the last of the homes. One other house, shared by all three of us, was still to come—Tillington Cottage. But life there was so disturbed, first by a long illness of my mother's, then by the War, that this pretty house belongs to a different category.

IV

WANDERING

TWO of the Wanderer books provided me with holidays; the first, in Florence, which in spite of all the glamour of an introduction to Italy, did not compare with the delight of the second, in Venice.

Florence is a city talked of generally with bated breath, a kind of seventh wonder of beauty and historic profusion. I went there, as it were, with outstretched hands, prepared to worship at the home of the Medici dukes about whose glories and wicked nesses I had read a book. I was thirteen at the time. But on the whole I disliked it enough to have no wish whatever to visit it again.

Our journey was broken at Rimini, where ten days of perfect bathing were possibly an unlucky prepara^ tion for sightseeing in scorching heat; in Florence the word sightseeing is of course spelt with two capital Ss; the Baedeker is rampant.

'Our Florentine visit fills me with depression. It will be hot and expensive and not quite my place either; but I suppose it must be done. Also it will dislocate life.' So E.V., writing to my grandmother, stated his own distincdy prophetic angle on the

journey which I, with reckless optimism, expected to be all 'treat'. Perhaps if I had read the letter then, in' stead of only a few weeks ago, I might have known how natural *it* was, how necessary even, that E. V., with his book to prepare and only a limited amount of time at his disposal, should have driven himself through galleries, museums and churches at such severely high pressure. He had always the power to absorb rapidly and completely; he did not appear to be easily fatigued; in any case the thing had to be done. And he had, as I now know, made the expedition a family party rather against his better judgment.

It was not altogether his fault then, that, once the first excitement of being in Florence at all had worn off, I should have envied from the bottom of my heart the townspeople, more especially the children, who, living in the place, were quite indifferent to its monu' ments, and who pursued in the streets, the shops, and cafes their ordinary life; who entered the Duomo merely to pray or the Loggia dei Lanzi to shelter from sun or rain.

Above all, these carefree Florentines were not con cerned with Old Masters. Excellent though it may be for a child of thirteen to have the freedom of some of the greatest pictures in the world, there comes a point beyond which such freedom is a bondage. A point at which the eye grows apathetic, the feet and the mind

exceedingly weary. It is deplorable how few of the Florentine treasures I can really remember. Only the Botticellis are truly vivid, and these I fell in love with of my own volition and I used to slip back to those in the Uffizi Gallery when E.V. and my mother were several rooms ahead. The Madonna of the Magni ficat was my favourite of them all. I had an affection also for Andrea del Sarto; and remember as if it were in front of me to-day that lovely madonna of Filippino Lippi's in her locked shrine at Prato. That, roughly, is all.

E.V., in Florence at any rate, did not 'wander'; the word is too pliant, too purposeless altogether. He marched, expecting his companions to keep step with him. And his step did not falter. In fact, should an occasion, even a legitimate one, for doing nothing, arise, he seemed unable to take advantage of it. He was impatient of the empty hour, never satisfied until he had filled it.

Any sort of excursion outside Florence, and some were necessary, inclined to end in disaster; at Fiesole, where one might have sat about and basked, and where there were quantities of little wild cyclamen waiting to be picked, E.V., having seen what was required, refused to linger; at Vallombrosa, a long drive out of the city, he could not be induced to stroll or dawdle; he merely regretted the absence of autumnal

leaves,[1] natural enough in August, lunched and was ready to leave. Or so it seemed at the time. There was, in reality, no essential about Vallombrosa which he had missed. It was always the same; he would arrive at a place, examine *it* in his deceptively rapid way, then give way to a sense of frustration and of curbed energy, never content again until we were once more upon the road to Florence.

We went from Rimini, I remember, to visit the strange little republic of San Marino, a tiny town perched high upon a rock, basking in sunshine and sleepy independence. San Marino has, or had, its own president and its own postage stamps (I have never noticed what Mussolini has done about this) but it has not, except as a curiosity, any kind of enter/tainment to offer. The principal inn then was a poor one, and although we had taken about two hours to get there in a hired carriage drawn by at least two horses, E.V., having eaten an indifferent lunch, was more than ready to return to Rimini and the water. This time, however, he was thwarted; on being sent for, the driver of the carriage, with a consideration rare in Latins, declared that his horses could on no

[1] 'He called
His legions, angel-forms, who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa. . . .'
Milton, *Paradise Lost,* Book i.

account make the return journey until they had rested for a further three hours. Arguments were tried; bribery even, but this most eccentric Italian stuck to his point and to his humanitarianism. So, while E. V., sulkily refusing to look any longer at a place he was finished with, retired to write in the dark parlour of the inn, my mother and I sat on the ramparts where we watched the activities of countless lizards.

This impatience, this chafing against the unoccupied moment, was symptomatic of my father's love of work, one might more truly say his need to work. Towards the end of his life, weary though E. V. must have been, he never completed the allotted term of a holiday. He was always back in London a few days ahead of time, and this in spite of the fact that he never went anywhere without taking a certain amount of work with him. A less lotus eating temperament never existed; and the luxuries with which he provided himself, which might in an idle man have been shocking, were simply the fuel necessary to keep the work impetus going; champagne, the distraction of clubs, convert sation and theatres were as oats to the horse or petrol to the motor. They were necessities, and because they were so, he preferred whenever possible to be host rather than guest, to make plans rather than to accept them. His dislike, on the whole, of being a guest was caused less by fear of a standard of comfort inferior to

his own than by fear of the effect of such inferiority on his capacity to keep going. He feared also the possibility that arrangements not made by himself might prove a waste of time, and this dread of wasting even a minute was with him all those years ago in Italy, noticeable particularly in the smaller towns which he had decided to visit. Right to the heart of Padua, of Mantua, of Pisa or of Perugia E. V. went, and once having, as it were, torn out that heart, or such portion of it as met his needs, he was done; the town, like a pod bereft of its peas, was discarded, its milder, less historic distractions made their appeal in vain. Cafes which always so delighted him in Paris did not, further south, amuse E. V. at all; from a seat at the *Caji de la Paix* he could watch the very life of France; the mere to and fro of provincial Italy was no kind of substitute. Nor, as far as I can remember, did we ever go to entertainments of any kind; never certainly to the cinemas of which there already were a few; never to the opera; never, on the Florentine visit, to the theatre. We did try a music/hall once. This was in Milan, to kill time while waiting for a train, and is memorable because each of the earlier and subsidiary turns was hissed off the stage, no pretence of order being kept until the 'top of the bill'—a very stout comedian—appeared, was greeted first with yells of delight, and then accorded the most rapt attention—an

exhibition of callousness which probably distressed us far more than it did the minor performers who must have been only too used to such treatment.

So, with no allowance made for small frivolities and very little for reasonable rest, wandering with E.V. was a feverish affair, at times even upsetting. So much depended on accurate timing, on the perfect dove'tailing of plans. Real crises could be caused by the failure of the Italian railways to remove us from a given place at the exact moment required; by the failure of that place to provide sufficient resources to fill in the time until a train should be ready to leave. Ravenna, where there is practically nothing to look at except mosaic, was a notable and painful example of a town which failed in its duty; and I well remember the arid cafe near a statue of Lord Byron where I ate ices in a parental atmosphere thunderous enough to have curdled them.

But in one Italian town the exact opposite hap'pened. At Bologna, where E.V. had planned to spend one night, he remained in perfect contentment for three. It happened like this. The hotel he had chosen was a large, cool, stately house suggestive of coaching days and the Grand Tour, such a place indeed as the Dorrit family might have visited in their days of affluence. It offered every kind of sedate com'fort, yet had no relationship whatever to what is known

as the *hotel de luxe;* and it was evident from the first that real thought went to its management, that some most definite personality lay behind its gracious conv petence. It was this personality, a gentle, elderly German called Herr Frank, who achieved what seemed to be the impossible and lured E.V. to spend four whole days in a town which, fascinating though it is, he could in the ordinary way have turned inside out in about twelve hours. More amazing still, he allowed Herr Frank to take us one evening to a concert. Such was the *hotelier's* rather touching courtesy, his belief that such entertainment must be a treat that E.V. returned good for what, to him, was evil, and sat through three hours of Mozart. Without listening, perhaps, but certainly without a murmur.

Herr Frank was wealthy; shrewd in business; simple in his admirations. He was delighted to find himself entertaining an English writer. He became a host, not in the commercial sense of the word only, and we spent at least two afternoons at his villa a few miles out of Bologna, where the amazing garden, brilliant with flowers and dark with cypresses, provided fruit for the hotel and where little green figs, hot from the sun, almost fell from the branches into one's mouth.

Poor Herr Frank was later most tragically ruined by the War; his sons were killed, his custom went, and he died unhappily in Germany, the victim of a world

situation for which he could have had no possible responsibility.

Florence, then, did not produce a very treat'like holiday,and to this city, E.V. himself, in later years at any rate, seems to have taken a strong dislike. In another letter to his mother he says of Florence, 'I don't like it. Indeed I hate it. The streets are in' tolerably noisy and dangerous, the people are hard and grasping. Everything is dirty and neglected and I am bitten anew by corrupt insects every few hours.'

But, for the shortcomings of Florence, how amply did Venice atone!

There were probably several reasons for the superior success of this next Italian holiday. I was older; it was on E.V/s second visit to Venice that my mother and I went with him; the season was earlier in the year, a very lovely May, when Venice was pleasantly warm, neither stuffy nor malodorous and entirely free from mosquitoes. Poor E.V., a helpless victim to these 'corrupt insects*, had suffered agonies from their atten tions on his first trip to Venice, which had taken place in August of the preceding year, and which, only by the mischance of my appendix, was prevented from being a family venture. As it was, I stayed be hind in Douglas Shields's nursing home, my mother stayed to look after me, and E. V. took to Venice as a companion his brother, Percy. He also took every

conceivable cure of, and preventative against, mosquito bites known to chemistry: lotions, ointments, oils, powders and even some curious pastilles which were supposed to be burned like incense in the bedroom. But he was, in spite, or perhaps because of, these remedies—which he declared should all have been guaranteed palatable to mosquitoes—bitten beyond his wildest nightmares. Even his nets, so he said, were different from those of others, having worked into their mesh the word ' "Welcome!" in Mosquito ese.'

But in May Venice was free from mosquitoes and other pests. The canals, comparatively, were fragrant; the tourists not too numerous; while the Lido, in those days mainly frequented by Germans, was almost deserted. It was quite warm enough to bathe, however; E.V., who had described the beach in August as being a solid mass of Teutonic flesh, found —miraculously when one looked back on Florence— the time to spend several hours of each day there. He found time, also, to sit placidly on the Piazza San Marco, to have drinks and ices while the band played; time to take gondolas to nowhere in particular; time for long, pleasant meals and time to eat myriads of *scampi*

Nothing as far as I can remember ever went wrong in Venice; no aching feet or heads; no strained eyes from looking at pictures; no impatience; no tearing madly from one place to another. And, for this, some

of the credit should be given to the Queen of the Adriatic herself. The beauty of Venice is so largely a matter of exteriors; is so largely dependent on sky and cloud and water; on moonlight and sunset; on the faded pinks and yellows of palace walls. It is not difficult to absorb the whole meaning of the city without ever entering a building at all. Venice calls for indolence; it is impossible to hurry a gondolier; impossible to walk fast through the narrow streets so full of Venetians; impossible not to yield to that softness, which may perhaps be decay, but which is so conducive to an alert tranquillity. This at any rate was how it seemed in the spring of 1914, when the motor gondola was not a commonplace, but an isolated outrage; when the Lido had not begun to be absurd; when a Venice credible as the retreat of Byron and of Wagner still existed, and had not become a hunting/ground for gossip writers and American barmen.

Even the more serious aspects of Venice were pleasing. The Titians and Tintorettos had a rich earthiness. There was not such a bewildering array of madonnas. There were, or seemed to be, fewer churches. St. Mark's was so pleasingly ornate; it was fun, in a slightly dizzy way, to walk along the cathc dral's upper galleries. Indeed all of Venice was fun. A lovely, languid, secular city.

In Italy a certain amount of mirth, or fury, depending on the circumstances, could be had over E.Ws in' capacity to cope with the language. He would indulge in terrific shouting matches with the natives and, in some of them, come off the victor. There was, for instance, a very good encounter on Rimini station with a porter, who, declaring himself and his colleague to have been undeMipped, hovered around us like an angry wasp holding on the palm of his hand the inadequate number of *lire*. On account of the delayed arrival of the hotel omnibus we were at his mercy for some time. He continued relentlessly to talk, and would dart up to every fresh person he saw, whether railway official, passenger or beggar, exhibiting to them with a very cascade of words the miserly recompense he had received. Then, as every body began to talk at once, whether in sympathy with him or not it was impossible to tell, he would dart back to E.V., hand outstretched, eyes flashing, still talking. Always talking. This must have gone on for about five minutes until the bus at length arrived and was ready to start. My mother and I got in, E.V., his foot on the step, prepared to follow, when the indignant porter made one last swift dart at him; with a movement even swifter E.V. snatched back from the outstretched hand the despised money, jumped into the bus and slammed the door. We

drove off leaving the porter momentarily speechless, but as we moved down the street, a veritable howl of fury rent the air.

That, I think, was the most conspicuous victory of its kind that E.V. ever won. He won it by action rather than by speech. It was a kind of mute *coup d'etat.* Attempts to argue with Italians or to keep up with their vocabulary were inclined to end in dire failure, as did a most humiliating haggle with a gon dolier whom we wished to take us out to a concert party, and from defeat at whose hands we were saved only by the intervention of a large German; at the price of sharing the gondola with himself and his even larger wife!

Set against the Wanderer Books, so graceful, so perfectly informed, so human even when treating of Italy's colder beauties, these fragments of memory seem peevish on the one hand, frivolous on the other. But they are, in all honesty, those which I have retained.

V

SUSSEX AGAIN AND THE WAR

BY the time that war broke out we were established at Tillington, a village some little way outside Pet/worth on the Midhurst road. The house, very trim and pretty, with a grand view of the Downs, was called, officially, Tillington Cottage, but, because of a sign just beyond the front gate announcing a DANGEROUS CORNER, E.V. insisted on taking this warning as the name of the house and even had it printed on his notepaper.

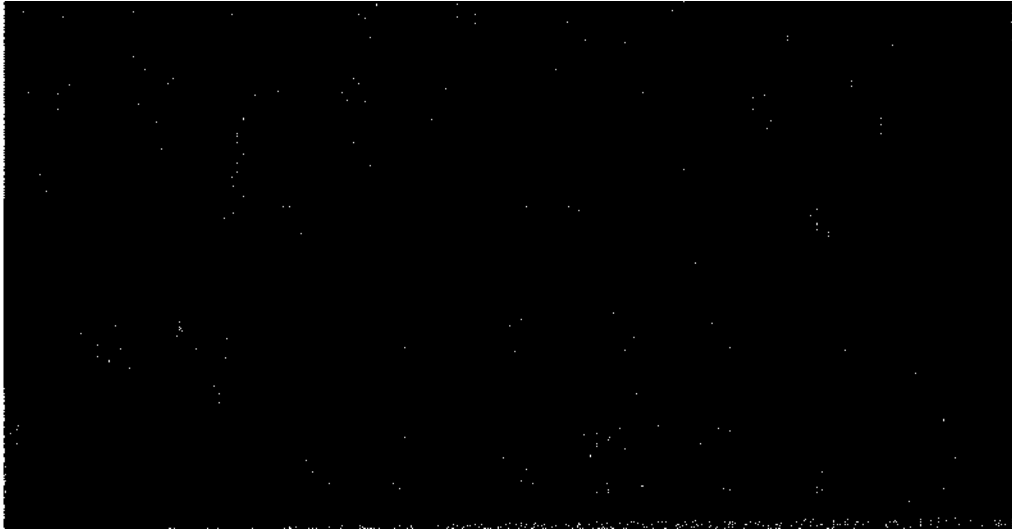
Between leaving Kingston Manor and coming to Dangerous Corner we had lived a good deal in London, while, for week/ends and for the summer, E.V. had discovered on Coates Common, near Fittleworth, a very original kind of house indeed; this was a small school/building, which had first been abandoned on account of the shortage of local children, then taken over for his studio by an artist, who, for some absurdly small sum, passed it on to E.V.

Coates studio, built of regulation red brick, was not at all pretty, but it was easy enough to make conv fortable inside, and the Common, one of the loveliest

in England, was then so little known and un frequented that the whole of it served as a private garden. Close by, was the large estate belonging to the Duke of Abercorn, the great charm of which was an emu, a proud and solitary bird, who could be peered at through a fence and whose purpose in life was to provide the local inhabitants with the neces' sary incentive for taking Sunday walks. ' Going to see the Emu' these excursions were called. There was a grim legend, possibly quite untrue, that a second emu had been bought, as a mate, but that—such are the difficulties of determining the sex of such birds—a mistake had been made, the result being a bloody conflict in which the intruding Emu had been killed by the Emu already in possession.

The artist, who had lived at Coates before us, went away, to Australia, leaving behind him a great many large, unframed oil paintings. These were as a very herd of white elephants. They were not beautiful. They took up a great deal of space, and although a friend, who borrowed the studio for the night and found that the beds were damp, slept most comfortably upon a pile of canvases instead, these were, on the whole, more of a problem than a comfort.

But at last a real, if disrespectful, use was found for some of these unappreciated masterpieces. In winter time, we seldom slept at the studio, but took rooms



Downne House Cricket Match, 1913

Top Row {left to right): George Ll. Davies, T. L. Gilmour Will Meredith, G. Meredith, jun., Denis Mackail, Harry Graham, Dr. Goffe
Middle Row: A. A. Milne, Maurice Hewlett, J M. Barrie, George Morrow, E. V. L., Walter Frith
Bottom Row: Percy Lucas, Audrey Lucas, T. Wrigley, Charles Tennyson, Willie Winter

at the Swan in Fittleworth where we breakfasted and dined, using Coates during the daytime and picnicking there for lunch and tea. It was very pleasant even in bad weather; there was a billiard table, quantities of books and, of course, most admirable fires. There were often guests, and one Sunday a party of six of us at least had been at the studio all day. When it was time to return to Fittleworth, about a mile and a half away, the rain, which had begun unnoticed, was falling in torrents. There was not a mackintosh or umbrella amongst us; as we waited, growing hungrier and hungrier, the rain grew heavier and heavier. It was a poor idea to get drenched to the skin, especially as, with the slimmest of week-end luggage, nobody had much to change into. We could hardly remain at the studio all night; there was very little food left and not nearly enough beds; if we waited until the rain stopped—if it ever did—all chance of dinner at the Swan might be past. All these facts considered, it is perhaps excusable that, finally, an odd procession left the studio, six people in all, each of us draped *in* one of the large canvases, which an enterprising guest, descended possibly from the Swiss Family Robinson, had caused to be ripped from their stretchers and a hole made in the middle of each for the wearer's head. Excellent protections they were.

It was at Coates that I most unsuitably developed the acute attack of appendicitis which prevented my mother and me going with E. V. on his first Venetian visit; and I shall never forget the feeling of intense self-importance I enjoyed when E. V., in front of an admiring audience of about one porter, carried me in his arms along the platform at Fittleworth station and laid me on the seat of a fir*st'class* carriage.

It was that same porter who made such an excellent comment upon the appearance of a certain great whisky magnate, who owned a palatial house in the neighbourhood. E.V. had just left the train at Fittleworth, and, as it passed on, he noticed Mr.—— sitting in the corner of a first class compartment, an expression of the deepest gloom on his face. 'Not a very bright-looking millionaire,' E.V. remarked to the porter, who replied with cheerful commiseration: 'No, sir, 'ee don't look very roguish, do 'ee ?'

Tillington life, which only began in 1914, was much disrupted, of course, by the War; it was a pleasant enough little place, very social—I remember a veritable stream of callers—and all local conversation centred, rather in the Trollope manner, around Petworth House and the Leconfields. For the first year or so at least we did not know them, and the only active notice taken by E.V. of the 'great house' was

in reference to chickens' livers. The poulterer supplied us with birds, admirable birds in every respect save one—they had no livers. When at last, utterly exasperated, E.V. called on the man in person to inquire the reason for this deformity, he was told that all the livers of all the chickens on sale in Petworth were reserved for Petworth House. What he said to the poulterer and whether we afterwards received any spare livers, I have forgotten; but he did, when they became friends later on, speak most trenchantly to Lord Leconfield on this shocking abuse of the feudal system!

The vicar of Tillington possessed the strange name of Goggs—the Rev. Marcus Goggs—and this caused such wild amusement to Michael and Nico Llewelyn Davies, and myself, that the parson could never be mentioned between us without such paroxysms of giggling that we all three became speechless. Then, by some strange process, difficult to explain, the name became transferred from its lawful and reverend owner to E.V. himself, and Michael ever afterwards referred to him as Mr. Goggs.

Owing to so many War comings and goings, Tillington was quite often lent or let. Once to Betty Hope Hawkins; once to the Colvins; and during the last part of the War to my grandmother and my Aunt Mina. A. E. W. Mason took a house in the

same village, but could not, I think, have spent much time there, as between 1914 and 1918 he was very active.

It was at Tillington that we first came to know the charming Eric Benson, Sir Frank's son, one of those light/hearted and gallant young men so much more plentiful then than now. He stayed with us several times, and I last saw him when he was on sick leave at the country house of some friends; I forget where; but E.V. and I had walked over on purpose to see Bennie as he was generally called. He was graver and his head was bandaged, and after that we never saw him again. George Llewelyn Davies was killed, too. He had gone from Cambridge to the Army and died before he was twenty; Peter followed him but came through safely. My uncle, Percy, later in the War, died of a combination of wounds and pneumonia.

In 1914 my mother was very ill indeed, but she made a wonderful recovery, and by 1915 was ready to embark on what, with all its hard work and occasional dangers, was a most fascinating piece of waxwork—the installation and management of a home for refugee children at Bettancourt, a little village in the Marne district.

She has written for me these few notes on its inception:

'In the early spring of 1915, Jimmie[1] gave me £2,000 to use for work among the children in France, Edward[2] and I went to Paris together to make inquiries as to how this money could best be used, and after various interviews with the British Ambassador, Lord Bertie, and his staff, we were advised to apply to the Friends,[3] who, because of their fine work during the last war, were most gratefully remembered by the French and allowed to work where no other foreign civilians were permitted.

'We stayed a night or two with the Quaker detachment at Sermaize4es'Bains, a small town which had been utterly destroyed and where the Friends were doing reconstruction work. Here we learned of the Chateau of Bettancourt, the property of an old French Countess, and were able, finally, to take this over as a kind of clearing-house and hospital for the children from the bombed districts. It was in the war zone, but considered to be fairly safe for our purpose.

'The house had been occupied by the Germans during their retreat from the Marne and had not been used, or cleaned, since! Edward and I began the equipping of the place almost alone; we bought

[1] J. M. Barrie. [2] E. V. L.
[3] Friends' War Victims' Relief Committee.

necessities in Vitry le Francois and moved in with only three spirit lamps to cook on. A number of children arrived almost as soon as we did! Edward put up, most serenely, with every kind of dis' comfort; cleaned out filthy rooms; ran errands; and amused the children. He left only after I was properly installed and a staff of helpers had arrived. And later in the summer he came back and worked tremendously hard again, generally in pyjamas, and concentrating largely on the distasteful job of sanitation. He was a most popular character among the children—by this time there were over sixty of them—and was known to them all as *Papa Lucas.'*

I was at Bettancourt, too, at first for the summer holidays, and afterwards permanently, until the whole concern, my mother having worn herself out, was handed over to the Friends. Waxwork it certainly was, and we might, I suppose, have been bombed, but my memories of that place are the gayest that I possess. The children were such good fun; the village people so friendly; the grounds of the Chateau and the country around so beautiful, that, although the guns boomed on and on, it was difficult not to regard the whole thing as a holiday. Not that there was any shortage of hard work. We were all extremely

busy, and I personally bathed ten children in a tin tub every night and gave the same ten a lick and a promise every morning. But *it* was an entertaining cheerful kind of busyness and I was, of course, extremely impressed with myself for being there at all—owing to my age, a good deal of wire/pulling had to be done to provide me with a visa for the war zone.

'The staff consisted of one fully trained hospital nurse, a number of voluntary workers—most of them our personal friends—an orderly, and a chauffeur. The last, far from being a luxury, was indispensable on account of the tremendously long distance we were from any kind of shop. Bread could be got at Ser maize, but all other provisions had to be fetched from one or other of these three towns: Vitry/lcFrangois; Bar le Duc; Chalons'sur Marne. And, as there were no distractions of any kind in Bettancourt, it became the custom for whoever had a halkday's leave to go in the car on a shopping expedition, thereby conv bining an outing with usefulness. Vitry was the nearest town and that was nearly twenty miles distant; Chalons was the furthest away.

One member of the staff I have forgotten to men tion. The old lady, from whom the Chateau was borrowed, had stipulated for a resident Frenchwoman, whose function was to keep an eye upon the older

girls and to see that none of the children, all Catholics, of course, were perverted from their faith by *the* benevolent, but undeniably protestant, English. I am afraid that Mademoiselle was not very popular. She was fussy; much given to taking offence and to long *'histoires'* about her wrongs; and, although I suppose she and the children understood each other, they gave every sign of preferring the cheerful un/strictness of the foreigners.

Mademoiselle was intensely devout, at any rate as far as the 'letter' of religion was concerned. I remem ber a battle royal she had with my mother who had offered a glass of water to one of the girls, who, about to take Communion, had felt faint. Only a sip or two of the water had been drunk, but my mother, according to Mademoiselle, had committed a sacrilege, and the child was debarred from Communion.

There were one or two servants, all of them absurdly young; the cook, Madeleine, was only twenty, a very beautiful girl who possessed the strength of an ox and a temper which nothing could ruffle. Madeleine was a kind of'angel in the house', the friend of everybody; she was big and plump, with wonderful eyes; she had a lover at the front, of course, and brothers, too; but she never showed any signs whatever of fear, or moodiness, or self/pity. In fact, judging the French

from that small village, from the refugees who came to us, and the soldiers who were billeted from time to time in our outbuildings, it would be hard to find a more gallant nation. Theirs was a realistic gallantry, with no sentimentality, no flag/wagging, no mass hysteria, and a great deal of humour.

One special joke which, when the military were in the village, never failed to crop up was this: there was a -popular legend then in France that the first Com' mander/in'Chief of her Army had been in his time *grand amoriste,* and so, whenever on our walks out with the children, we met any soldiers, one or more of them would be sure to roar out delightedly, *'Comment, Mademoiselle! Tout fa a Joffre?'*

I wish I could remember some of the inhabitants of Bettancourt more clearly, for we knew every one who lived there well. The Mayor I shall never forget, because of a wonderful feast to which he invited me and my great friend, Margaret Hogg, who was work' ing at the Chateau. I don't know why we two were so specially honoured, unless perhaps that we were the youngest of the hospital workers, but the Mayor asked only us, and the entertainment was princely. It was a most beautiful summer evening and we dined in a barn; the principal dish was rabbit, which may not sound particularly festive. But what rabbit! It must have been simmering for a whole day at least,

so rich and fragrant was the gravy, so subtle and interesting the flavour.

At the end of dinner, together with sponge fingers, was served some villainously sweet champagne; not that either Margaret or I knew whether champagne should be sweet or dry; but the sweetness so deceived us as to the potency, that when, escorted by the Mayor, his family and all the other guests, we returned to the Chateau, our legs were decidedly unsteady. It was a grand evening.

Among other Bettancourt characters was an old woman, who, having lost her only son, would go daily at a fixed time to the grave of some German soldiers, to sit there for an hour or two, knitting, while she concentrated all her thought upon revenge; a worthy daughter of the Revolution's *tricoteuses.*

Stranger than this is the story of the soldier's wife, who, coming one day to the Chateau, asked to see my mother and announced her intention of committing suicide. She was pregnant—by a German. There was no possibility either of the child's being her husband's, or of her making him believe so. She was ruined; and since her husband, on hearing the truth, would kill her anyway, much the best thing she could do was to kill herself, as quickly as possible.

Although my mother persuaded the woman not to commit suicide, she, and, indeed, every one who knew

the story (in this case the entire village), was haunted by the fear of what might happen. It was the opinion of the neighbours that the man *would* kill his wife. Of course he would. Her infidelity was a double one; she had betrayed him, and betrayed him with an enemy. What the neighbours said to my mother was, *'Que voulez'vous, Madame?*

The woman was in due course confined. She gave birth, not to one child, but to two. Twins. And here comes to this true story a twist which even O. Henry could hardly have thought of. The husband, returning on leave only a day or two after the birth of these babies, was astonished, certainly; but he did not kill his wife. On the contrary, he embraced her warmly. By presenting him, however dubiously, with twins, she had brought the total of their children to the number necessary to exempt him from further active service with the Army.

Of the gallant and delightful old cure of Bettan court, E.V. has himself left this record:

> 'Every one who has made a stay in Paris or in any French town, and has been at all observant, must have noticed, either singly or in little groups; that prettiest of the flora and fauna of Roman Catholic countries, a "first communicant" in her radiant and spotless attire—from white shoes to white veil, and

crown of innocence over all. One sees them usually after the ceremony, soberly marching through the streets, or flitting from this friend to that like runaway lilies. Prinking and preening a little in the shop windows, too; and no wonder, for it is something to be thus clad and thus important; and never will such clothes be worn by these wearers again. Mean' while the younger children envy, and little attendant bodies of proud relations somewhere in the vicinity admire and exult.

... In the spring of 1915 it was my fortune not only to know personally a bouquet of these eager little French pietists, but to be present as one of the congregation at the great event—their *premiere com' munion.* It was not in Paris, nor in a town at all, but far away in the country, in a village where the guns of Verdun could be heard in the lulls of the service. There were six little girls in all, and I saw them pass into the safe keeping of their new mother, the Church of Rome, and in visible token receive from the officiating hands a pictorial certificate so chromatically violent that it could not but satisfy any childish eyes and, under such conditions of emo tional excitement, must ever remain as a symbol of their consecration. I heard, too, the cure's address to these lambs, in which he briefly outlined the life and character of Christ and of certain of the

disciples, coming to each with much the same tender precision and ecstasy as a fastidious and enthusiastic collector to the choicest porcelain.

But what chiefly interested me was the form of the vow which the good cure—one of the best of men, who, in September 1914, saw his church reduced to ruins and most of his parish destroyed by fire by the invading Huns and never budged from his post—had himself recently drawn up for such occasions. What the usual form of such documents is I cannot say, but in view of the serious plight of France and the renaissance of patriotic fervour in the brave and unconquerable French nation, the cur£ had infused into this one an element of public duty hitherto omitted.

At the end of the *"jolie ceremonie,"* as in conver sation he called it, and as it truly was, I asked him for a copy of this admirable catechism, and here are a few of its questions and answers. The title is "A Promise to be a good Christian and a good Citizen of France":

Q. *What is the road to Heaven?*

A. *That which my mother, the Holy Roman Church, shows me. If I follow it, I am convinced that, while gaining happiness for myself, I shall increase the glory of my family and the honour of my country.*

Q. *Does the Church command you to obey the legiti mate laws of your country?*

A. *Yes: and I must be ready, if needful, to give my blood for her.* (Poor little white peacocks!)

Q. *On whom do you count to assist you?*

A. *Here, on earth, on my parents and on my in' structors. Above, on God, on the angels and the saints, and principally on my guardian angel, on the holy Saint Peter, and on the blessed Joan of Arc.*

Q. *Who are your enemies?*

A. *The enemies of France, and those who, all unen' lightened, attack the Church.*

Q. *What is your ambition?*

A. *To see France victorious and united in a bond of love with the Church, to see her add to the tri colour the Image of the Sacred Heart, and to see her take soon her place at the head of the nations.*

Is not that rather fine ? It must be to the good thus to blend religion and patriotism. I know that, especially on that soil over which the Germans had spread so devastatingly, one could not listen to these fresh young voices raised together in such idealism without a quickened heart.'[1]

E.V., as my mother explains, was not continuously at Bettancourt. Later on he worked for some time

[1] **A First Communion in the War zone.** ***A Boswell of Baghdad*** **by E. V. Lucas.**

with the Red Cross in Italy and has told that story in his little book, *Outposts of Mercy*. And for the Red Cross again he was very actively concerned with J. M. Barrie and others in raising funds in London.

He had in the Army only one close relation, his brother Percy, whose death hurt him more deeply than, in those fully occupied days, there was time to realize. Of all his brothers and sisters Percy was closest to E.V. mentally. He was a charming person, a little feckless perhaps, but always sweet/tempered. By pro/fession a genealogist, his ruling passion in life was Morris dancing, and this hobby he pursued all round England. He was so unwarlike by temperament, so preoccupied with peaceful, pleasant matters, that his action of enlisting immediately war broke out was rather surprising. But there were many such surprises in 1914. Poor Percy. I remember, only a short time before war was declared, teaching him a country dance which we did at school and which, most oddly, was unknown to him. The lesson took place on a walk, and E.V. was continually having to turn back and wait while Percy and I capered strangely in fields and lanes. After that I saw him once in khaki, and then not again.

I owe several things to Percy. It was he who first taught me to love Shakespeare. He disapproved, even for the young, of *Lamb's Tales,* and he used to

read the plays to me in full from a huge illustrated edition which he had possessed since his schooldays. I used, too, when very small indeed, to sit on his shoulder and examine minutely Maclise's picture of 'Titania and Bottom*, a large reproduction of which hung on the staircase of my grandmother's house.

Another notable service rendered me by this uncle was his invention of the very first sentence which I was able to pronounce plainly. I was exceedingly back* ward in speech; or rather in understandable speech. I talked flowingly, but in a language which only I and my closest relations were able to understand, and this, while apparently amusing, by the time I was six or so, was thought to have gone on long enough. For what reason Percy hit on the following: 'A piece of Meat will Disappear'—I do not know. But I did after many false starts succeed in pronouncing this odd statement intelligibly, and from then on, so my admiring family declared, I never looked back.

It was Percy, too, who made, in my grandmother's Brighton house, the gate at the top of the stairs which was intended to prevent me from falling down them. It took Percy five hours to make that gate and to set it in place. It took me less than five minutes to pull it to pieces.

Later in the War when I was nursing at a hospital in Paris I spent a couple of short holidays in London

with E.V., when we went to as many theatres as possible and enjoyed ourselves hugely. A great bond just then was the fact that we were neither of us frightened of air raids, and shared a strong aversion from taking cover. I do not claim that this peculiarity was a courageous one; it was probably foolhardy; but since we were both of the same opinion it certainly saved the trouble of any arguments about a descent to the cellar. Every one was not like E.V., however, and I remember an evening I spent with poor William Archer when an air raid upset our arrangements and also involved us in a mild catastrophe.

We were to dine at the National Liberal Club—or, rather, at the premises in Victoria Street used temporarily by the members—and go afterwards to the theatre. But during dinner a raid started and Mr. Archer escorted me protesting loudly to the cellars of the club. What happened down there is hazy, except that there were a great many people, and that H. G. Wells suddenly looked in, remarked that he wanted to cash a cheque and then drifted out again. It was very dull, certainly, and I am afraid I was a good deal too insistent *in* wanting to leave and go on to the theatre as planned. But William Archer was adamant.

By the time the 'All Clear' sounded, it was well after nine o'clock; too late, of course, for the play and

he suggested that we should go on a bus to Fitzroy Square, where he lived, and look at some photographs of Japan, The bus which we took, swerving half way up Whitehall to avoid another, ran heavily into a lamp'post. Mr. Archer and I, who were sitting in the front seat, were, not seriously but sufficiently, cut and bruised.

After that I went home to the furnished flat in Westminster, where E.V. and I were then staying; and when, much later, he returned full of air raid news to find me with a cut lip and an enormous bump on my forehead, we were both, I am afraid, distinctly ribald about the over/cautiousness of my escort and its unfortunate results. But over cautious on that occasion or not, William Archer was the kindest of men and the most staunch of friends. E.V. and I both knew that.

One last word of the War. In *A Boswell of Baghdad,* as I looked through it for a mention of the cure of Bettancourt, I came on this great tribute, famous in its time no doubt, to Earl Haig, which I had entirely forgotten:

> "Aig, 'e don't say much; 'e don't, so to say, say nothin': but what 'e don't say don't mean nothin', not 'arf. But, when 'e do say something—my Gawd!'

VI

E.V.

FROM the end of the War onwards, our family life, which had begun already to disintegrate, ended altogether. For a few years following 1918 I saw E.V. spasmodically; and then for a regrettable number more, not at all.

In 1931, when I began to see him again, he was physically much altered. He had been very ill; he was greyer; heavier in build; more florid in complexion. That he was older is obvious, but the ageing did not show in his mind or in his outlook. In fact, never, at any time, did it do that.

He had, by this time, perfected that standard of living which he believed suited him best. He had no domestic circle, but he was very seldom alone. He had, in London, a tiny flat, where he slept, breakfasted, and to which he returned to dress for dinner; in the country he had a small and charming house with a garden; he had a car, a chauffeur, a dog. He spent his evenings with his friends; sometimes in their houses, but more willingly in restaurants and clubs. He went to plays and to films. His life had a great appearance of luxury; he was difficult to entertain

from a fear that things might not be as he liked them, although he really minded deficiencies far less than he pretended to. At Chertsey, I once cooked him a lunch consisting of stewed steak and a rice pudding, to which he brought a more flattering appetite than to many more elegant meals. Just as long as he was put in a room without a draught, he was not fussy at all. He merely pretended he was going to be, as a sort of insurance policy.

His life, viewed with a very superficial eye, had all the appearance of rich idleness; the sort of life that starving peasants are said to groan at. Only in E. V.'s case, there was no idleness. After the latest of nights his early morning tea was brought to him at seven/thirty, and by the time breakfast followed, he had read *The Times* right through and started on his work; and it was surprising how often this professional *bon viveur* lunched on sandwiches and China tea in that room in Essex Street which looks out over the Temple.

He did, I suppose, go in for a good many of the frills of life; but at these he was quite able to laugh, almost to sneer even. Part of his house in the country had been converted from a cottage, occupied many years before by a shepherd; and E.V., telling me one day that his dining-room, which had in it a great open fireplace, and had been in the shepherd's time, the kitchen, went on to say, 'Sometimes when I'm having

dinner here, I imagine the shepherd's ghost coming back to have a look round, I suppose if he peeped in and saw me sitting here alone, in a dinner jacket, drinking champagne and being waited on by Wat/kins,[1] he would think it a disgusting spectacle.' He paused for a split second, before adding, 'as indeed it is.'

Champagne was E.V.'s tonic, his support in fact. Yet he never drank this wine until the evening; at least, I never saw him do so, except once, and that was last March on my birthday. He had been for some weeks, as he describes in *Adventures and Misgivings,* 'on the wagon'. When he arrived at Buck's Club, where he and I, Viola Garvin and D. were to lunch, he excused himself for being about two minutes late—an unheard-of thing for him—by explaining that he had called at the doctor's to inquire whether, in view of the occasion, there was anything at all he might be allowed to drink.

'Well,' we said. 'And is there?'

'No,' said E.V., 'there isn't. I can drink absolutely nothing at all—except champagne.'

It was a very good lunch.

E.V., during the last years at least, gave his friends champagne because he hoped they would enjoy it; he drank it himself because he had to.

[1] Percy Watkins, E.V.'s admirable chauffeur.

People have a way of saying, speaking of some author or other, 'How different he is from the way he writes.' This always strikes me as a more than usually silly remark. Most writers do differ from their books; to resemble them too closely would be a stepping/stone to dullness, both in the man and in the book.

Seymour Hicks told me that E.V. once described himself as a 'bedroom' author, meaning by this, that any of his works might with safety be put by the bedside of a very young girl or a very old lady. They certainly could. There is a school of critics, who, rather scornfully relegating E.V.'s work to the lavender and old lace school, do so all the more acidly, because he was not, conversationally, lavender and old lace at all. He knew all about these criticisms, of course; just as he knew all about his own limitations, and knew also that the best writing is the writing one does best.

He was fastidious; but he could be bitter and he could also be amused by what was coarse, only, as it had to be witty as well, this links up again with the fastidiousness. He was a mixture, as Alan Dent so happily said, of Montaigne and Rabelais.

There is a trend of thought to/day which inclines to condemn an author *because* he is reticent, just as in the last century the reverse of this was true; but it is worth remarking how few writers now, when practically

every Tact of life' may be mentioned, can tell a story as well as did the Victorians to whom the mention of such facts was strictly denied. That is by the way, however. E. V. did not write of what was gross or sordid because he did not wish to He did not write of passion because, self/admittedly, he did not know how to. His writing was not powerful, nor was it robust. These qualities were beyond his scope and he was too wise to strain after them. He did not agree with Browning that—'a man's reach should exceed his grasp'. He claimed to write best of the surface of life: sometimes he went deeper and then, largely because he did this so unconsciously, he was the more effective. One became so used in his writing to gentleness, that to find something stronger, anger for instance, was to be first astonished and then impressed. I am thinking at this moment of one particular essay. It is called 'Whenever I see a grey horse. . . '[1]

Just as E. V. could, in a very quiet voice say deadly things; so in a very quiet style he could occasionally write deadly truths. That he did not do this oftener was a matter of his own inclination.

In other writers he admired robustness and power; he was also quite ready to admire a type of writing which he himself scrupulously avoided. For instance, although no one can call William Faulkner a

[1] *Giving and Receiving* by E. V. Lucas.

'bedroom' author, E.V. admired William Faulkner immensely. But he profoundly disliked, classifying it as 'beastliness', what is more generally glorified by the word 'starkness'; a dreary insistence on physical details, done deliberately and unredeemed either by power or by pity. This dislike was the more intensified by his very wide knowledge of French writers who treat of such matters naturally, without even the shadow of a leer.

Above all, I believe that my father confined himself, on paper, to the urbane, the humorous and the delicate in order to protest against different aspects not of human nature only, but also of his own. By skimming life's surface he could escape, partially, from private depths. James Agate in his *Ego 3* says of E.V.: 'I have an idea that the serenity of the writer was a mask hiding the torments of a man knowing as much about hell as any of Maupassant's characters, or even Maupassant himself.'

Not only does Mr. Agate show superb perception here, but any comment of his on the subject has a special value. When, not long ago, E.V. was asked whom he would choose for his biographer, he replied with unhesitating sincerity, 'James Agate'.

For the rest, E.V. was in the writing trade—which *is* a part of the entertainment trade—and he went on writing what his readers enjoyed and had come to expect, for very much the same reason as an actor

builds up a personality and sticks to it—because he wanted to make a living.

To make a living. That is true, but it is also true that if he had been obliged to stop writing he would have had no impetus left; nothing to fall back on; nothing to live for. He would have had time on his hands, and this, as his carefully listed engagements, his meticulous filling of every hour, show, was the one thing he hoped never to have.

About a year ago his fingers were caught in the slammed door of a car. There is probably no pain in the world which is, at first, more agonizing than this. Herman Finck, who was with E. V. at the time, describes how for a minute or two after the accident, he was quite silent, his hands up to his face, rocking backwards and forwards in his distress. He looked up at last and said quietly to Herman, 'Thank God it was the *left* hand!'

E.V. would have been adrift without his work; he had, within the full meaning of the word, no home; and in spite of so many interests he had no playtime occupations. He would have liked, I know, to have excelled in some kind of sport; but such things never came easily to him. There had been no encourage ment in Alfred Lucas's household to acquire easy non utilitarian accomplishments; cricket was the only exception to this; and E.V., earlier in his life, suffered

a good deal because, longing to take kindly to riding, to fishing, to sailing, he was never able to do so.

When I was quite small we had regular sailing holidays in the Isle of Wight. We stayed at Seaview; also at a tiny place, used almost entirely by yachts' men, called Yarmouth. Eack summer E.V. would hire a boat and a couple of sardonic professional boatmen to help him; but in spite of day after day spent out on the Solent he never contrived to become pro' ficient. The boatmen knew this, of course, and despised him even though his lack of skill put money in their pockets, and I think it was a relief all round when this kind of holiday stopped. It was fun to be in a boat for an hour or two, particularly in rough weather, but I used to grudge very much the time spent away from the sands, added to which I was eternally getting in the way of the boom and being shouted at. My mother no doubt suffered from the irritability of a man who is doing something less well than he wishes to do it, while E.V., having to choose between enduring the cold supervision of the boatmen or drowning his family, wisely decided to let sailing alone.

Fishing did not come much into his scheme of things until one summer when we went to stay with James Barrie, who had rented a sort of castle with an unpronounceable and unspellable name in the Heb' rides. With this castle went fishing, said to be the

most magnificent in the British Isles. And, indeed, how any one, in those lochs, could fail to catch a salmon or at any rate a very large trout, was a mystery. The Davies boys, particularly Michael, caught so many that they completely lost count, and almost lost interest. We ate salmon at every meal, including fish cakes at breakfast and sandwiches at tea-time. There was for that matter, on that exciting but barren island, Very little else *to* eat. The other visitors—Anthony and Betty HopcHawkins were there, Alfred Mason, Lord Lucas and several others—caught fish. My mother caught fish. Even I caught *a* fish. Only E. V., going out day after day with the beautiful new rod he had bought, could catch nothing.

At last, however, the great moment came. He hooked a fish. This happened in the garden, where he was casting over the parapet for the salmon who, the burn being in spate, were leaping up over the rocks and waterfalls. When the news went round that E.V. was actually playing a fish, every one who happened to be about, including several of the very supercilious Highland ghillies, hurried to the spot. Perhaps the crowd of spectators put him off—he always said himself it was the look of incredulous amusement on the faces of those ghillies that made him nervous—or perhaps the very thrill of at last playing a fish was too much for him. When after a mighty

struggle the salmon was landed, it was foul/hooked in the side! The ghillies murmured among themselves—fortunately in Gaelic. The rest of the party, more kindly, said it was a shame. And E. V. never caught another fish.

I think that his lack of proficiency at fishing and other leisurely sports distressed him mainly because it threw into relief the difference between his own up'bringing and that of the men he largely mixed with. I know that sometimes I was puzzled by his way of referring, almost crossly, to George and Peter Davies as 'those Etonians'. This, I am sure, meant only that he was thinking of those eleven schools, some of them most indifferent; of his apprenticeship, when only half educated, to a bookseller; and of his Uncle Samuel's two hundred pounds which sent him to London University. He did not resent the fact that other people went to Eton, but there can be no doubt that he sometimes wished that the background of a public school could have been his own portion.

In the more offensive sense of the word, E. V. was never a snob. He neither despised nor ignored his old friends. He never ceased to be affectionate, attentive and generous to his brothers and sisters. He did not pursue important people, but he liked important people to pursue him—as they certainly did. He would not, for instance, have sought an invitation

from a duke, although, the invitation given, it might have pleased his vanity to refuse it. He sometimes allowed his hatred of a mean way of living to blind him to the fact that people lived meanly, or poorly rather, because they had to. He was sometimes too impatient of the petty economy to consider whether this was not merely petty, but also necessary. And sometimes, in his desire to live *en prince,* to travel as far a distance as possible from the standards of his father, he did permit himself to worship false gods. He had among his friends people whom, although they were not good enough for him, he was inclined for the wrong reasons to admire. He could sometimes be dazzled by a light which was not there.

But nobody, I think, ever influenced him as much as they thought they did; his affections could be shaken, they could for quite a while lie dormant; then he would revive them again as warmly as ever. He might, had there been time, have revived what was, once, the strongest affection of them all. There was not time; but on his coffin, with no card attached to it, lay a great sheaf of rosemary: 'For remembrance*.

That he was at times acutely aware of the emptiness of some part of his way of living, sometimes wearied of expensiveness and what he called 'preferential treat ment,' I know. He took me one night, after the theatre, to a night club, where, from the moment we

entered the door, he found something to complain about. First the table; then the supper; then the tern perature of the wine; then the service. It was a gala night, with an elaborate set supper, but E.V. insisted on having only champagne and rye vita. The more he complained the more polite the staff were to him. They dashed about to do what he wanted and they all most scrupulously addressed him as Mr. Lucas. When we left, the cloakroom attendant approached with his hat—'Your hat, Mr. Lucas'. The *maitre d'hotel* came up to say good night—'Good'night, Mr. Lucas*. The commissionaire announced, 'Your car, Mr. Lucas*.

E.V. looked very glum indeed, and as we drove away he said: 'All this Mr. Lucas! Well, I've worked for it all my life, so I suppose *Yd* better try to enjoy it.'

He was in many ways a period piece; a good period piece. He might have been created by Thackeray, or better still, by some one with more heart than Thackeray ever displayed in his writings. Not by Dickens, whose white was too white and whose black was too black, for him to have envisaged E.V. By Henry Kingsley perhaps. His character, both from its best angle and its worst, fitted more easily into the nineteenth century than into the twentieth. His very testiness with servants and waiters, which must at some time or other have embarrassed every one who

knew him, had a Regency touch; a sort of'damme sir' flavour about *it.* He clung very tightly to the old order. He hated so many of the things which the new order has brought. He hated noise and speed; wireless and words like 'hiker'; bad manners and casualness; most newspapers; the Great West Road; and he liked his car to be driven almost at the pace of a brougham.

• When he was made a Companion of Honour, he had naturally to go to Buckingham Palace to receive the Order, and he was, on the subject of himself in knee/breeches, exceedingly caustic. But if this style of dress sat uneasily on his figure, it fitted his person/ality like a glove.

All through his life E.V. was a very modest man indeed. He hated limelight. He so genuinely hated speaking in public, that when this had to be done he was nervous for days beforehand.

Last year, when A. P. Herbert was to speak in Edinburgh to the Scottish Booksellers, E.V. had arranged to go with him—just for the ride'.[1] He was looking forward to this immensely. He enjoyed above all things being with A. P. H.; there would be no responsibility; a speech was to be made, not by himself, but by some one else, some one in this case to whom

[1] 'I went to the funeral, just for the ride.
Just for the ride. Just for the ride.'
Old Music Hall Song.

public speaking came with the most witty ease; E.V. was merely going to Edinburgh to have fun.

Then the worst happened. Alan Herbert came down with influenza and the making of the address fell on E.V. There was no affectation at all about his state of terror. The thing must be done, of course, but he could neither sleep nor eat for thinking of it. He asked me plaintively what line of thought booksellers would be likely to appreciate; or not, as the case might be. He said that once, speaking to cricketers, he had tried irony, with the most dismal results. 'One can't, it seems, be ironical with cricketers/ he said sadly.

'No, I suppose not,' I agreed; and added entirely at random, 'or with boxers either.'

'Ironical with boxers!' exclaimed E.V. 'Good God, no! I shouldn't dare to be.'

Then we came back to booksellers, and later that evening E. V., with dragging steps, I am sure, got into the express for Edinburgh. The result of all this? A most brilliant and deeply appreciated speech; two days of delightful Scottish hospitality; and, of this I am positive, no safeguard whatever that he would not be just as frightened and just as reluctant the next time.

He was modest, too, almost to the point of defeatism about his efforts to write for the stage. His lyric writing for the revue, *Business as Usual,* done under the

pseudonym of F. W. Mark, was a great success; he also contributed a good deal to that most unjustly disastrous experiment of Barrie's, *Rosy Rapture*. But he never contrived, in spite of many patient efforts, to write an actable full/length play, and the criticisms which his efforts received, although he bowed to them, made him very unhappy. By the time, only last year, that he made his last attempt he was almost •pathetically anxious to please. But the play, with every grace of language, utterly lacked action. Play writing, then, was eminently not his line. But he could be a shrewd and fair judge of other people's plays. He went a great deal to the theatre, although I think that on the whole he liked films better—par ticularly American films. He loved the polish of these; the harsh wit of the dialogue; the rough stuff. James Cagney with his tremendous slogs was a favourite of his; Spencer Tracy another. And he was very fond of Paul Lukas, whom he once accused in print of misspelling 'an honoured name'!

The last time I was in the theatre with him was at the Lyceum to see the Irving matinee. What he thought of this as a whole, he most astutely refrained from saying, and his only remark during the first half of the performance was when, in the scene from *The Bells,* the Jew passed by the window. 'I could have played that part,' whispered E.V.

May 2
1958

3, ROBERTS MEWS,
EATON PLACE,
S.W.I.
SLOANE 3933.

Darling, Savoy Restaurant 1.10

I have now finished your
story Nick & found
compelling. Just at
the moment all I
have to say is that
if I were reviewing
it I should give
it marks not only
for your narrative
gift but for
its testimony
of the insight
in you & your

LETTER FROM E. V. L. TO THE AUTHOR

knowledge of life never
warping your judgement
or preventing you from
striking a true balance.
This is rare &
I am proud of you
for yourself & me.
Collins has given
you a really
beautiful page
but the preliminaries,
which are
badly printed.

AFTER READING HER NOVEL, *OLD MOTLEY* '

But theatres and cinemas were the merest stopgaps. They simply filled up hours which would otherwise have been empty. Sometimes a billiard match would perform this office instead; and in the summer, cricket, which he loved well enough to regard as a part of life. Music he never deliberately listened to and only enjoyed I think when it was joined to something visual. To E.V., Rossini meant *La Boutique Fantasque* and Schumann, *Carnaval.* He went twenty/three times* to *The Immortal Hour* and as a young man to Wagner's operas. Concerts he most studiously avoided.

But principally, these few distractions apart, E.V. went on working, and went on living his leisure hours with the same meticulous sense of arrangement that he brought to his writing. No ragged ends to sentences; no ragged ends to a day; plans carried through accur ately, like punctuation. Except at week-ends he never ate a meal alone. Nor, I think, did he ever indulge in that particularly delicious luxury known as turning in early'. Yet he must have needed to. I have heard that quite often, sitting with a group of men at the Garrick Club or the Beefsteak, he would drop off to sleep for half an hour or so. I have been with him myself when, at supper after the theatre, he suddenly seemed to shrink, to look very old indeed, and he would say, 'I'm sorry. I must go home. I must go to bed.'

The strange thing is that, growing as tired as he did, possessing as much self-knowledge as he did—seeing himself sometimes with the bleak eyes of the shep herd's ghost—he maintained the same expensive, fatiguing round day after day, week after week, month after month. Would it have been an impossibility for him to take a night off sometimes, to tuck himself up with a hot water/bottle and a book and dine off a boiled egg ? I suppose, since he never did it, it would have been impossible. The game, as far as one can guess, must have been worth the candle. Or did he play it as hard as he did in a hope, or rather in a certainty, that it was the game which would in the end blow the candle out? It did. Perhaps he meant it to.

He died as autocratically as he lived. But I shall always believe that his steadfast refusal to admit his best friends to his room in the nursing/home was because he had to the very last the will to live, the certainty that he would recover. When I wanted to see him the answer that always came back was, 'Not yet.'

I had been with him last at the Literary Fund dinner already mentioned. He was very tired and unable to eat anything at all. I sat on one side of him; on the other was a vacant chair—an arrangement he had made on purpose that he might avoid too much

talking. He came back afterwards to our hotel for a bottle of champagne, the last, as it happened, that we three shared together. To me he said good/bye cheerfully enough, but to D., who saw him into the car, he seemed to give an extra pressure of the hand and said, 'Dear fellow, dear fellow.' Then Watkins drove away towards St. James's Street.

We never saw him again.

CHERTSEY, 1938

A List of Books by
E. V. LUCAS

BOOKS BY E. V. LUCAS

Fiction

Listener's Lure
Over Bemerton's
Mr. Ingleside
London Lavender
Landmarks
Rose and Rose
Genevra's Money
Advisory Ben
Windfall's Eve
Down the Sky
The Vermilion Box

Autobiographical

Reading, Writing and Remembering
The Old Contemporaries

Essays

Adventures and Misgivings
All of a Piece
As the Bee Sucks
Only the Other Day
Saunterer's Rewards
Lemon Verbena
At the Shrine of St. Charles
Visibility Good
Traveller's Luck
At the Sign of the Dove
Turning Things Over
A Rover I Would Be
A Fronded Isle
Events and Embroideries
Luck of the Year
Encounters and Diversions
Giving and Receiving
Fireside and Sunshine
Character and Comedy
One Day and Another
Old Lamps for New
Loiterer's Harvest
'Twixt Eagle and Dove
'The More I See of Men . . .*
If Dogs could Write
. . And Such Small Deer'

BOOKS BY E. V. LUCAS-contd.

Anthologies

The Joy of Life
The Open Road
The Friendly Town
Good Company
The Gentlest Art
The Second Post
Her Infinite Variety

Art, Travel and Topography

London Afresh
•A Wanderer in London
London Revisited
Vermeer the Magical
A Wanderer in Holland
A Wanderer in Paris
Introducing Paris
A Wanderer in Florence
A Wanderer in Venice
A Wanderer among Pictures
A Wanderer in Rome
Roving East and Roving West

Miscellaneous

Dinmont Day by Day
Pekinese National Anthem
No/Nose at the Show
Life of Charles Lamb (2 vols.)
The Same Star (Comedy in Three Acts)

Edited by E. V. Lucas

The Letters of Charles Lamb
The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb

PRINTED BY
JARROLD AND SONS LTD.
NORWICH