

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.1]

CHAPTER I

Birth at Windsor - Queen Victoria's recollections of the Tapestry room - Godparents p.1. Grandparents house at Darmstadt - New Palace built - Princess Irene's christening 3. - Summer spent with Prussian relations in 1867 - Visit of the Khedive of Egypt 4. - First visit to the opera - First lessons - A seance at the photographers 5. - Little Willem 5. - Birth of the Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig 6. - The war of 1870, 7-8-9-10. - The old Grand Duke Ludwig III - The three Flecks 12. - His numerous country houses and his hobbies 13-14. - Prince Charles of Hesse and his wife 15-18. - Prince Gustaf Wasa 19. - The Old Landgravine Elisabeth of Hesse Homburg - Sleighing parties 20. - The Mayence Prince Carnival 21. - Princess Alice plays with Brahms 22. - Her intellectual and social welfare interests 23-24. - Nurses trained in accordance with Florence Nightingale's advice.

1863

I was born in the same room at Windsor Castle (in which my daughter Alice was to be born) on Easter Sunday, April 5th, 1863. The day is supposed to be a very lucky one and those born on it are said to be able to see fairies and find hidden Treasure - neither of which I have ever done.

The bedroom I was born in was alongside the "Tapestry" room - looking straight on to the Long Walk. I remember my grandmother sitting with me in the latter after Alice's birth and saying: "I detest this room." She told me that in it she had been terribly scolded by her mother here, who had accused her of making up to King William IV at the dinner he had given for her birthday, when he had drunk her health and had insulted the Duchess of Kent.

I had a heap of godparents; I was given the names of Victoria, Alberta (after the Prince Consort), Elizabeth, after my [p.2] German Grandmother, Matilda, in memory of the old Grand Duchess of Hesse and Marie - one of my godmothers being Queen Marie Amelie, widow of Louis Philippe, King of the French, who died a short time after my birth. (d.1866). She gave me a locket (which the Bolsheviks have) - a little round one with a pavé of pearls, separated by little brilliants, which contained a lock of her hair. The interesting thing is that Queen Marie Amelie was the real niece of Queen Marie Antoinette being the daughter of her sister, Queen Caroline of Naples, who was the friend of Nelson and Lady Hamilton.

I have heard from Princess Françoise, wife of Prince Christopher of Greece, that the little locket originally belonged to Marie Antoinette. I do not

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

remember who my godfathers were - one of them was Uncle Bertie, Prince of Wales.

During the first three years of my life, my parents lived in an Annexe of my grandparents house in the Upper Wilhelminenstrasse then still in the village and parish of Bessungen. There was a vast garden in front reaching down to the Heidelberger-Strasse and behind the house another large garden. There was a tiny hidden staircase leading from my father's room to my mother's room upstairs and my baby impression of this staircase is so strong, that I often dream I go up little secret stairs. The fascination of such small staircases was kept up [p.3] by there being one in my grandparents house too, leading down from its nurseries to the alcove of their bedroom and continuing from the other side of the alcove to my grandfather's room on the ground floor. I and my sisters lived in these nurseries one winter which was spent by my mother and the Empress Frederic at the Riviera.

1866                    In the year 1866, the New Palace, which was built for my parents was ready and we moved into it. - I remember dimly my sister Irene's christening there after the Civil war of that year. My father commanded the Hessian cavalry brigade and the whole brigade stood godfather to her - the name Irene (pronounced as in French) was given as it means Peace in Greek

1867                    In 1867 Orchie, our dear old nurse came to us. Under her was a German nurserymaid by name of "Katrinchen", and an English one, Emma Bailie. From 1869 onwards all my recollections are much clearer. We spent that summer with our Prussian relations. (The Empress Frederic was my mother's eldest sister.) The Emperor William II was then 11, Charlotte 9, Henry 7 ½. I remember a parade of the I Garde Regiment in which William appeared in the complete uniform of a lieutenant. He was so short, that his hand was held by a tall sergeant during the march past to keep in pace with the men.

[p.4] Dr. Hinzpeter, the boys Tutor, we were very much in awe of. All his interest was in the heir and Henry was rather shoved aside. However, as Henry was destined for the Navy, in the afternoon he climbed a full sized mast erected in the grounds under the supervision of a sailor and I was much disappointed at not being allowed to do so too. There was much formality at the Prussian court and we were always followed by footmen in livery wherever we went. Whilst we were there the Khedive of Egypt came to Berlin with his small son and Charlotte and I attended a ballet in their honour. The Khedive's son was dressed in a little frock coat with a grand cross and star, and wore a fez on his head. He was about 9. He sat between Charlotte and me. As we could not talk to him (he only spoke his own language) to show our goodwill, we took turns in kissing his

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

little yellow cheeks. - He looked solemn and greatly bored. - The performance was my first acquaintance with the theatre. I could not make head or tail of the subject. I was so puzzled why the women on the stage hopped about between orange trees wearing such short skirts. The second time I went to the theatre was on the occasion of a matinee performance at Darmstadt in 1870 for the re-inauguration of the old theatre as the big one had been burnt down. In this theatre in the XVIIIth century Ludwig VIII died in his box from a stroke. The opera *Titus* was given and as I had begun [p.5] reading Roman history, I was much disgusted at the heroes singing instead of speaking. Of the subject I understood nothing while my sister Ella - she was 6 at the time - thought the actors were wound up wax figures, like those at Madame Tussaud.

From Potsdam we went to Fischbach, my Grandmother's Silesian property and though I have never visited the place again it is still very distinct in my memory.

My lessons began when I was 5 and I could read German at 6 quite easily and English at 7. I recollect reading every book I could lay hands on, only understanding a quarter of it sometimes. One day all of us children had to be photographed. This was then a very lengthy proceeding. An iron support was put behind your head and one behind your waist to keep you quiet while the photographer counted up to ten very slowly for the exposure of the plate. As there were four of us, and after a group, each had to be done separately besides, the whole forenoon was spent in the operation. I read a little book most of the time which had lain on the photographer's table, of which I only remember there was a picnic party during which pancakes were made. So vivid was my recollection of that scene, that many years afterwards, when as a grown up woman I read Theodor Storm's *Immensee* I found the scene and knew it to be the book I had read!

1868 In the sixties my mother had a little black servant, [p.6] called Willem. He wore a fez, a blue embroidered Zouave jacket and wide trousers. He served at table and sat on the seat behind my mother's pony-carriage when she drove herself. Willem was taught by the master Herr Geyer, who gave me lessons. As the boy was quite illiterate, he had composed a book of simple Bible stories for his benefit which was passed on to me. Poor Willem died of consumption before 1870. In 1868 my brother Ernie was born and I remember the excitement when after the twenty five guns for a princess, the salute continued, "It is for a brother", our nurserymaid said. We were listening in the nursery, my sister Elizabeth - called Ella in the family - and I. She was next in age to me; there was a year and a half between us and we shared a bedroom until my marriage.

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

Ernie's double name of Ernst Ludwig was born by a landgrave in the 17th century who had had a Saxon mother, and thus the Saxon Ernst came to be joined to the Hessian Ludwig. History had repeated itself, a Hessian Prince having again married a Princess of Saxon blood, the Prince Consort being a Saxe-Coburg.

Our nurseries in the New Palace were at the top of the house over my parents' rooms, looking out into the garden, and where my brother lived later on, the new nurseries being made after the war of 1870, next to my parents' rooms, when the huge ballroom, which had never been completed was cut up. [p.7] I still remember it though in 1870, when it was used as a Depot for hospital supplies and all the ladies of Darmstadt came to make what was called "charpie". Old linen was cut up and threads pulled out to produce the substitute for cotton wool, which was, apparently, non-existent at the time.

In that year (1870) Ella and I left the nursery and went back into the rooms overlooking the Platz which became our school-quarters.

1870

I have many recollections of the war of 1870. My father commanded the Hessian division during the campaign. At the beginning of the war we were living at Kranichstein, the old shooting box the Grand Duke Ludwig III generally lent to my parents for the summer. It was then really a peaceful summer resort, now it is almost a suburb of Darmstadt. Grandmama, Queen Victoria, had given us a small pony carriage and two Shetland ponies. A coachman drove them, walking along-side the carriage, while the nurse followed behind, but after the outbreak of the war we were escorted by a gendarme besides, as gypsies and the riff-raff of the big towns were flooding the region to follow in the wake of the armies and loot on the battlefields.

A bitterly cold winter set in very early and caught the swallows before they had left. Orchie used often to warm them up in our nursery till they were fit to fly away. We [p.8] stayed at Kranichstein till November.

Our first governess had come to us shortly before the war broke out. She was a Prussian of noble family, was proud of her origin and always wore a signet ring with the family crest. Fraulein von Eckensten was very enthusiastic and taught me many patriotic songs and verses such as the "Wacht am Rhein", which we sang and recited with great gusto. My mother was very busy with Red Cross work and regularly visited the wounded, both German and French, and I often accompanied her. Darmstadt being so near the frontier an enormous lot of huts were built to lodge them. Some were in the Orangerie garden and numbers of huts were on the Exerzierplatz, which was the French prisoner's camp. I do

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

not believe there was any barbed wire round them, though sentries stood on guard. Towards the end of the war the prisoners were allowed to go into town for work and afterwards heaps of little Darmstadt boys ran about wearing Képis, presented to them by the French prisoners. I fancy no French officers were detained at Darmstadt. Parole seems to have been given during that war, but I have heard, was frequently broken. In the New Palace my mother had two wounded officers, neither of them Hessian. One was very ill with typhoid and the younger had a shattered leg and liked to show us bits of bone he kept in a pill box.

The winter being so very cold, there were large soup kitchens for the poorer population, which my mother visited, [p.9] taking me with her. (In that winter I had my first chilblains). I was proud to help by carrying bowls of hot soup and once as I was in a great hurry I collided with another helper and badly scalded my hands! - I also accompanied my mother to the railway station where ladies distributed refreshments to the troop and ambulance trains.

My father brought back three pieces of loot from the war: a fine French cavalry horse, which lived to a great age and which I have often ridden, a little blue double-breasted jacket, which he picked up in a chateau where he was lodged, and the door knocker of a house at Orleans in the shape of a woman's hand holding an apple which he brought back as a souvenir for my mother. My father said that the French troops lost their morale and their confidence in their leaders after the first battles. The cry of "nous sommes trahis", raised no one knew by whom or where, unnerved the soldiers. Some of the South German troops met with little animosity among the French population, and when in 1877 my father and mother, just when he had become Grand Duke, passed through Paris, they officially called on the President, Marechal Mac Mahon and his wife, whom they had known before the war. I cannot say that the same feelings prevailed in France towards the Prussians.

1870

There were great illuminations when peace was signed. On the window ledges of the New Palace there were little [p.10] saucers with wicks floating in grease. I can still remember how nervous we felt when our nursery-maid Katrinchen climbed onto the window ledges (third floor) to light them. The return of the troops, their helmets decorated with oak leaves, and the bands playing, thrilled us. The ranks were somewhat broken, the women and children clinging to the men as they marched past. Many captured cannon and mitrailleuses were brought to the town - the latter, the first quick firing guns in use in the armies, spoken of with awe and interest. Two guns with N and the Imperial crown over it stood for a long time on the terrace of the New Palace. Germany then and for many years afterwards was full of tales of the atrocities

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

committed by Franc-Tireurs. According to the rules of war, as my father told us, any body of men, registered as auxiliaries and distinguished if but by an armet were considered combatants and taken prisoner. When the peasants took up arms independently and started a guerrilla warfare they could be shot offhand. - It was a very natural movement on their part but led to a great deal of private ambushing and sniping. I am convinced the old tales of the Franc-Tireurs led the Germans, during the Great War to be extremely nervous when they heard unaccounted shots going off believing them to be due to snipers.

I do not think that the after-care of the wounded and disabled could have been as good as it is now for after 1870 I often met invalids selling haberdashery in the streets, [p.11] unable to earn their living otherwise.

My grandmother, Princess Charles and my mother were at the head of all the charitable institutions of Hesse.

I must explain the family situation at that time. The head of the family was the old Grand Duke Ludwig III. He was a childless widower. His wife, who died just before my parents' marriage, was the Grand Duchess Matilda, the daughter of King Ludwig I of Bavaria of Lola Montez fame. She was a Roman Catholic and is buried in the Katholische Kirche at Darmstadt. Uncle Louis had two brothers: Charles and Alexander. Prince Charles married Elizabeth daughter of Prince William of Prussia, cousin of the old Emperor William I. Her mother was a Princess of Hesse-Homburg, - these were my grandparents. Their children were: a) my father, afterwards Grand Duke Louis IV; b) Prince Henry, who was in military service; c) Prince William, who was a passionate Wagnerian, did nothing and was the spoilt child of my grandmother; d) there was one daughter, Anna, who married the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg Schwerin as his second wife, and died in childbirth. They had only one little girl, Annchen, who died at 16. This was a very delicate and nervous child. We used to play with her when she paid her yearly visit to my grandparents but we were so much more robust than she and so wild that my grandmother used always to forbid us exciting her.

[p.12] The Grand Duke Louis III was immensely tall and stooped very much when I knew him. He had two little stiff curls over his ears. Uncle Louis and my grandfather were most severely brought up. When as children they refused spinach and it was not all eaten up for dinner it was served for supper cold, and if some remained, it reappeared at breakfast the next day. To go to their rooms at night they had to walk unaccompanied down a long unlit passage and suffered agonies of terror from a tame raven which sometimes popped out on them.

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

Uncle Louis still used the old fashioned mode of address to the lower orders in the third person "Er".

An amusing incident was told me in connection with this custom which occurred to the Grand Duke of Saxe Weimar, the son of Goethe's patron. He was driving from one of his castles to another and on coming to crossroads his coachman did not know which was the right turning. The Grand Duke seeing a man standing by, addressed him: "Which is the way to Eisenach?" "You must take the turning to the right and drive straight ahead". "Muss, muss", the old Prince fumed. "Er glaubt wohl er ist der Grossherzog - dumm genug ist er dazu". (Must! must! - he thinks he is the Grand Duke - he is stupid enough for it)

Louis III's personal attendants were three brothers Fleck who ran him and his household. One was his Major-Domo, one [p.13] his valet, and the third his coiffeur, and without them he never went anywhere. He visited Marie Erbach, my sister-in-law soon after her marriage at Schöneberg, his carriage having been preceded by another containing his three Flecks. At lunch, unfortunately he wanted to use his handkerchief - had not got one, and in spite of the offer of a handkerchief on the part of his host, he continued sniffing until his valet, who was walking in the garden, came and produced one of the Grand Duke's own (the size of a small tablecloth).

He was a great collector of pipes, and watches, which were daily wound up. He made them into heirlooms in his Will. His valet smoked the meerschams for him till they were the right colour. He had the great merit of having put all the family country houses, which he had found in great disrepair, into a proper state again. Besides the Schloss at Darmstadt, where he lived and the Alte Palais, there was the Pavillion in the Prinz Emil Garten, the Braunshart, some miles from the town (which was sold by my brother), the Palace at Mayence which had belonged to the Teutonic order, the big shooting box at Wolfsgarten, the Schloss at Friedberg, a shooting box called Konradsdorf which my father pulled down, Kranichstein, the Fürstenlager at Seheim and the Fürstenlager at Auerbach, also the old castle at Romrod. In all these houses, except the latter which my [p.14] father restored, Uncle Louis arranged a little apartment for himself which he never allowed anyone else to occupy, the bedrooms of which were identical in every house - dark green wallpaper, mahogany furniture upholstered in green rep. A small collection of novels and memoirs bound in black, as well as a musical stand for cigars, and a packet of papyrus - stale tobacco wrapped in rice paper. By the time I took to smoking as a girl, and tried them, they tasted as if made of dust. All these places were visited by the Grand Duke in turn, usually for one night, and in summer he gave

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

his Sunday family dinners in those that were not too far distant from Darmstadt. These dinners my mother was greatly bored by. They took place at 4.30 p.m. and spoilt the Sunday, when my father was free of his military duties and we our lessons. We often had to appear at the end of them, beautifully got up and were presented with finger biscuits by the old gentleman, my mother having protested against free distribution of sweets.

We were amused, but also rather terrified by a series of grimaces our uncle produced for our benefit.

In his latter years he married his housemaid, who was kept discreetly out of sight. She was an unassuming, kindly body and my mother befriended her after his death. I remember her coming to tea to our mother and speaking of him as "Der [p.15] gute Herr." She had received the title of Frau von Hochstätten - Ludwig III was popular in the country and a good honest Constitutional Sovereign, but of that I have no personal knowledge. - He was a firm believer in Kaspar Hauser being the lost Prince of Baden.

My grandfather, Prince Charles, had always been delicate, suffering all his life from bronchitis and frequent migraines. He was very much of an invalid when I knew him and my grandmother took the greatest of care of him. They were a very devoted couple. He was a gentle person, lived a retired life and was very old fashioned in his habits. He was a good-looking man with a clean shaven face framed by side whiskers. He wore high cravats like stocks and fancy waistcoats and generally a frock coat. Out of doors in winter he always wore a black silk "respirator" over his mouth. He had a passion for collecting all kinds of odds and ends. He had a cabinet in his dressing room which was filled with all sorts of collections: in one drawer were seals cut off from envelopes (in old days most letters were sealed) - When enough seals were collected they were melted down for a new stick of sealing wax. In another drawer were used postage stamps and I was told that the missionaries employed them in China - the Chinese were supposed to paper the walls with them. In a further drawer were old capsules from wine bottles and [p.16] silver paper off chocolates. From this lead spoons for orphanages were cast. He had also a number of small bon-bonnières which contained rolled bread crumbs with which he fed the goldfish in his garden pond. When in his little house in the Rosenhöhe, he used to walk down a certain avenue after lunch sucking a caramel, the coloured paper wrapper of which was always thrust into the same hole in an old tree. He was devoted to birds and had several cages with exotic birds in his room. In the winter evenings, he and my grandmother sat at a round table under the Holbein Madonna. He cut out pictures for scrap books. - It was a great honour when one was allowed to assist him, - and my grandmother knitted or read aloud. He was



**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

very kind to us little girls and we were fond of him. My grandfather died only three months before his brother the Grand Duke and so my father succeeded the latter as Grand Duke Louis IV.

My grandmother, Grossmama, we were rather in awe of when we were small, as she was always afraid our behaviour would be too uproarious for our grandfather. I only learned to appreciate her when I grew older, after my mother's death. She was very good to us, and we saw her often but she never interfered in our education carried on on the lines laid down by my mother. She was even shyer than my grandfather, very reserved, and deeply religious. Old fashioned in her views, [p.17] she could be tolerant with young people's ideas. I can remember her listening with an amused smile at my lecture on Home Rule for Ireland and the advantages of socialism when I was about 16!

My grandparents were very badly off, according to modern ideas. Her dowry as a Prussian Princess consisted of 3,000 Thalers - about £450, but she received the usual vermeil washing set on her marriage. I was always interested when she told me about her young days. She was born on the day of the battle of Waterloo, and Field-Marshal Bluecher [Blücher] and the Duke of Wellington were her godfathers. Prince William of Prussia, her father, had lived for a year in Paris as a hostage for Prussia in Napoleon's time. He was a great collector of pictures and the fine Madonna of the Cologne School and the still more famous Holbein Madonna were inherited by my grandmother from him and are to this day precious heirlooms in the house of Hesse.

She left me a cross, which I always had admired when it lay on her writing table. It has a gilt outer case with an emerald in the centre, and a Bible verse on it, given her for her confirmation. When you open the case, a smaller cross, given her for her baptism, is within it. It is of enamel set with stones, the front centre having a medal commemorative of the battle of Waterloo. On the reverse under a little cover was a splinter from the coffin [p.18] of St. Elizabeth. This splinter, I, unfortunately, lost, but when Ella visited the Prince of Solms Braunfels, in whose possession is a dress of the Saint, the Prince gave her a little piece of that dress and my sister gave me a snippet to put into the cross instead of the splinter.

St. Elizabeth, born 1207, died 1233, daughter of King Andrew of Hungary, was married to the Landgrave Ludwig IV of Thüringen and was one of the first followers of St. Francis of Assisi. She is known to legend by the miracle of the roses. She died at the age of 26, worn out by her austere life, devoted to the service of the poor and was sanctified two years later. Her tomb at Marburg was a celebrated place of pilgrimage. Her descendent, Philip the

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

Magnanimous, landgrave of the whole of Hesse and ancestor of all its branches, was a strong adherent of Luthers and had her body removed and secretly destroyed to put an end to what he called: "the idolatrous worship of saints", but nevertheless, she has always been held in great veneration by our family.

My grandmother still drove out in a calèche with a footman sitting in the rumble. This was a dangerous proceeding [p.19] as the old coachman was nearly blind and had nobody seated beside him. Her family was very anxious about this but she only laughed: "Er wird schon gehen".

I remember that weeks on end my grandparents were afflicted by the visit of my grandfather's cousin Prince Gustaf Wasa, who seemed to me to be a very dull old man, with a moustache stained a bright yellow by the cigars he unceasingly smoked. As Grosspapa was a non smoker, my grandparents suffered much from the smell of stale tobacco which pervaded the house during his stay. This Prince was the son of the last Wasa heir, who was turned out of Sweden when Bernadotte was officially adopted as such. The line died out with Queen Carola of Saxony, the only child of Prince Gustaf Wasa. The gentleman and lady in waiting of my grandparents were also extremely old-fashioned. My grandmother told me that my grandfather, though such a gentle person had plenty of pluck. - When a certain Prime minister during the turbulent days of 1830 was very unpopular amongst the populace of Darmstadt, my grandfather deliberately walked to his house through the streets carrying a bouquet, to congratulate him his birthday.

My father told me many anecdotes of the times of his [p.20] youth. One was the visit of the Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg to Darmstadt (she was Elizabeth, daughter of King George III). When the carriage drew up at the front entrance where the family and Court had assembled, - for of course she drove from Homburg to Darmstadt, - his surprise was great to see a little round ball of a lady emerging backwards from it, she not being able to get out otherwise.

The line of Hesse-Homburg died out in 1866, when their lands fell back to our elder line, only to be annexed by Prussia a few months later after the war of that year. Some of the anecdotes told me by my father I heard later from my father-in-law, Prince Alexander and it amused me to note the small differences in the telling. Divorces in those days were not so infrequent as one imagines. One of the anecdotes was about two couples who had divorced and married the respective divorcee of the other. They used to meet at the Darmstadt parties and play whist together and sometimes the husband would tell the wrong wife it was time they went home.

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

When I was a child there were several very cold winters and sledging parties were a great amusement. Some twenty sleighs would collect at a rendezvous, and with a great jingling of bells would drive off to some spot in the neighbourhood where a picnic tea took place, the party returning [p.21] when darkness fell. Fancy dress balls and dominos were the fashion during Carnival and I remember being rather frightened at seeing my parents wrapped in dominos. - There was always a large ball held at the Casino. -

At Mayence, when I grew up I saw the great yearly Carnival procession to which we were invited. Prince Carnival and his Court were received by my father who treated them to Champagne and was in return invested with a grand cross, Prince Carnival seeming more embarrassed than my father by the mock ceremony.

Other amusements of the grown ups in my childhood were private theatricals of which my future mother-in-law, Princess Battenberg, was one of the best organizers. We were allowed to look on at rehearsals and as most of the actors were known to us, we thoroughly enjoyed it.

My father's time before he became Grand Duke was mostly taken up by his military duties, the command of the Hessian troops. My mother was passionately fond of music and played the piano remarkably well. No distinguished musicians ever came to Darmstadt without her seeing them and often playing with them. I can remember hearing her play with the composer, Brahms, an uncouth, shy man. She used to take us children to rehearsals of big concerts on Sunday mornings and I can remember my brother as a small boy absolutely thrilled by the performance of Schumann's *Paradise and Peri*. My father [p.22] learned to appreciate music through my mother and did much to cultivate good taste among his subjects both at the opera and concerts.

He and Aunt Vicky patronized and assisted at the Haendel festivals given at Mayence in the eighties before the Bayreuth season opened, at which several famous English singers took part. The head of the musical publishing house of Schott at Mayence was an old lady, much painted and bewigged. She was a friend of my mother's and when she found that her nephews and heirs did not show capacity for carrying on the business well, she consulted my mother as to whom she could take into it with a view to a future partnership. My mother recommended a young Herr Louis Strecker, the son of Frau Strecker her right hand in the "Aliceverein". He did so well that all the later Wagner operas were published by the house of Schott.

My mother was interested in every kind of movement in her time and

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

knew many of their leaders. I have seen Professor David Strauss, author of the *Life of Jesus*, who dedicated his *Life of Voltaire* to her. He was a very thin, dried-up looking man, whom I saw when he came to read his Voltaire in manuscript to her in 1870.

1872 She was also greatly interested in the woman movement and there was a woman's conference at Darmstadt in 1872. I remember a Mrs. Carpenter who was one of the guests at our house for the occasion, one of the initiators of the movement for [p.23] the education of women in India. I fancy it was also then I saw Miss Octavia Hill whose educational work among the poor is well known, her centenary having been recently celebrated. Women's Welfare associations had already been started in Germany, but my mother founded the "Alicefrauenverein" for Hesse, the chief branch of which was the training of Red Cross Nurses. She consulted Florence Nightingale about the work and the first matron of the Alice Hospital, their centre, was trained in London under Miss Nightingale.

Another branch took over the supervision of destitute orphans, provided for by the town rates, which by my mother's advice were given homes in respectable working men's families instead of being assembled in orphanages. When my mother married, there was no provision in the country for idiots and it was she who persuaded the State to take over the idiot Asylum she had started with money collected by means of bazaars, which we children attended, having been supplied with money for our purchases.

She founded a shop called "Alice" Bazaar, where poor ladies could be given work, which they sold. She further created a school where girls were given training as clerks and teachers of handicraft and needlework. This school has been taken over by the town and has now become a technical school for women-workers. For the "Alice Verein" Frau Strecker was my mother's Vice-President and carried on [p.24] the work under my father's patronage and with his assistance after my mother's death till I was nineteen and he made me President. I continued to hold this post until I found I spent too little time in Germany for this and the Grand Duchess Eleonore, my brother's second wife, relieved me of it and ran it marvellously.

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.25]

## CHAPTER II

Death of little Prince Frederick (Fritz) 25. - School-room routine 25-26. - The Akaziengarten 27. - Little "Boxer" chases wild boar 28. - Life at Kranichstein 28-29. - Our playfellows 30. - Our governesses 31-32. - Studies 33-34. - Stay at Blankenberg 35. - Houlgate 35-36. - We meet the Duchess d'Alencon and the Queen of Naples 37. - Prussian cousins and we meet at Eastbourne visit Compton Place 38. - Whooping cough at Buckingham Palace 39. - My uncle's toys 39. - Stay at Windsor Castle during the Prince of Wales illness and games with the Wales cousins 40. - Visit to the Grand Duchess of Baden at the Mainau 41. - Visit to the King of the Belgians 43. - The Mayor of Ostende 43. - Comte and Comtesse de Flandres 44. - Railway travel in the '70 44. - The English Colony at Darmstadt 45. - The Darmstadt theatre Jenny Lind sings 46. - Some old people I have met 47-48. - We fall ill with diphtheria 49. - Death of the Grand Duchess Alice 50 -

1874

In 1870 the first stage of my childhood was over and Ella and I had a schoolroom, a governess and a Swiss maid, Carmela. In 1874 my sister Irene joined the schoolroom party (though she still lived downstairs with the little ones). As our studies advanced, naturally lesson hours grew longer. The first sorrow that clouded our happy childhood was when my little brother Fritz, who had been born in the latter part of the war of 1870, and was a very pretty winsome child, died in 1874. His death was tragic and it nearly broke my mother's heart. On a sunny morning in early summer, Fritz and my brother Ernie were playing in my mother's bedroom while she was still in bed. Both the windows were open. The elder boy had run into the sitting-room next door and did not answer when my mother called to him. Fearing he was up to some mischief, she got out of bed to see what he was doing. Meanwhile the little one must have tried to look out of the window. He overbalanced himself and fell out on to the landing of the steps that led [p.26] from the garden to the room below, fracturing his skull. My mother, finding he was gone, looked out of the window and seeing him lying on the flags, ran downstairs. When she reached the landing the child was not there! Our old housemaid, who was cleaning up downstairs, had picked him up. What followed that awful moment I do not know. I believe he, Fritz, was unconscious from the fracture of the skull and died the same day. Perhaps his early death saved him from a semi-invalid life, for he suffered from haemophilia.

I might here mention certain fixed rules for our life, which my mother had adopted from those used in her youth. We rose early. When I was about 13, I remember my sister Ella and I getting up in winter by candlelight and starting lessons at 7. We breakfasted with our parents at 9 o'clock, and had an hour's exercise out of doors, after which we had what we called "little lunch" consisting

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

of milk, fruit and biscuits at 11, and at 2 o'clock we lunched with our parents. I would mention here that my mother adhered to the diet Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort had instituted for their children. We were never given spiced or rich food, simple dishes being served up for us. We never objected to anything given us at home, but the awful bread and butter puddings without a raisin in them or the stodgy tapioca pudding full of lumps we got in Queen Victoria's houses I still remember with a shudder of disgust. On the rarest of occasions were we given a sweet or a bonbon, but we were always allowed a lump of sugar if we wanted something sweet, and so to this simple fare I attribute my excellent [p.27] digestion in after life.

After lunch we again went out for 1½ hours in all weathers and had schoolroom tea at 5. This over, we went down to my mother's room where we played about with the younger children. We went to bed at 6.30, later on at 7. When preparations took more time. Morning walks were taken together with the smaller ones, in charge of their nurses, when the pony-carriage always took out two or three little ones, for after my brother Fritz, two sisters were born, Alix and May. The favourite place for our walk was the Akaziengarten which has long since disappeared. It had been made on the outskirts of the town by Louis II, to give occupation to unemployed, and was, strictly speaking, no garden at all, but consisted of plots of unkempt grass intersected by sandy paths, and of a sandy mound, planted with acacias. There the little ones ran about in safety and the elders got into the pony-carriage and drove about at a galop round and round. I remember taking a corner too sharply and upsetting the carriage, and the violent efforts I made to right it again, before the groom could come and discover what had happened.

In the field opposite the Akaziengarten, during the war of 1870 there was a temporary English hospital for German wounded, staffed by English doctors, the chief of whom, I remember, was called Dr. Mayo. Money for expenses of running it were sent to my mother from England. We generally remained at Darmstadt until the summer months, which were spent at Kranichstein or Seheim, lent to my parents by my great uncle, and the freer country life there was a joy to us. At [p.28] Kranichstein we used to take long walks in the woods, each of us girls leading one of the Shetland ponies and my mother's fierce little bull-terrier, who had a mania for chasing the wild boar in the park and was very strong. He generally fell to my share. Wild boar are very dangerous animals when attacked and "Boxer" once had his whole flank ripped open by one. I can still see him lying on a wooden table in the nursery, held down by a footman, while "Katrinchen" was stitching up the wound. These walks with animals only took place when my father took charge of the caravan. When I was still in the nursery, stout Cousin Mary of Cambridge, afterwards Duchess of Teck, paid us a

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

long visit at Kranichstein, and on leaving presented my father with a light English boat for the lake, instead of the clumsy old thing hitherto in use on it. In later years I often rowed myself about in it, and if there was a breeze employed a large Japanese parasol as a sail.

It was at Kranichstein I learned to ride on a medium-sized pony "Dread" named after a figure in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It lived to a ripe old age of 23. It was handed over to us by my Aunt Beatrice, who had grown too old to ride ponies any more. (Aunt Beatrice is only 6 years older than I.) Both my parents were keen and good riders. My mother used to go out with the paperchase, and we all were taught to ride at an early age, taking regular riding lessons at the Darmstadt riding school in the old Marstall. Whilst on this subject I would mention, that Queen Victoria had a horse on which the [p.29] small children were taken down in panniers to Frogmore, the weights being equalized by little sandbags put beneath the feet of the lighter child. Strapping and bridle were all of red Morocco.

My father was a great lover of animals. We had a small roe-deer he brought us when we were children, later dwarf sheep and dwarf goats in the garden. Off and on, a baby wild boar, which never got tame and had to be set free when it got bigger. A fox lived for many years in the New Palace garden - and smelt abominably - and a lamb, which grew to be a big sheep, which we used to lead about by the collar and which did not always want to go in the direction we intended, coughing shockingly when it was half strangled in the tussle. One day I had the happy thought to lead it by a string tied to its leg, as the throat seemed to be more and more sensitive. To our surprise and great amusement, when the dissention about the direction to be taken arose between it and us, the sheep immediately produced its usual strangled cough! We had heaps of white rabbits and guinea pigs we kept in a small artificial warren in the Palace garden and my brother had horrible Turkish ducks with bald necks, which snapped at us. We used to beg at the kitchen window for salad and stale bread crusts to feed our pets - a great many pieces were regularly eaten by my sister Irene and my brother.

An old retired sergeant gave us gymnastic and drill lessons. At Osborne I remember being drilled in the corridor by a sergeant [p.30] from the regiment at Newport. I confess having taken much less pleasure in our dancing lessons which I thought a feeble and affected form of exercise. I was decidedly a tomboy up to the age of 14 and my ideal was the hero of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. I ruled all the younger with a rod of iron, though my sister Ella being nearest my age, would rebel sometimes against too much ruling. So we ended by dividing the authority over the younger ones between us.

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

It was a source of anxiety to my mother and irritation to the nurses and governesses who feared that my authority was more powerful than theirs. At the age of thirteen, I was no longer allowed to go out with the others in the morning but spent those hours in the summer sitting in the garden in company with my governess reading and drawing and such-like maidenly pursuits.

On Saturday afternoons we always had a half holiday and our playfellows, the daughters of my mother's secretary, Dr. Becker, and those of our successive physicians, Drs Weber and Eigenbrodt, came to play with us. Our greatest amusement on Saturday afternoon was to go to the Prince Emil Garten, if the weather was fine. It had a sham ruin in a little shrubbery near the house. We used to divide into parties, one led by me, the other by the strongest guest, one party defending the ruin, the other attacking it. The year before my mother's death, Lord Charles Montagu, the son of my mother's friend the Duchess of Manchester (later of Devonshire), a youth of about seventeen, who was at Darmstadt to learn German, used to join [p.31] in these games. He invented marvellous new dodges I had never thought of, and would fiercely champion my sister Ella, with whom, I think, he was very much in love. The sedately brought up Darmstadt girls would become almost as wild as we were, but had a tendency to cry when they got hurt, for which I cordially despised them.

When we three girls went for a walk with the governess, the custom was to go in pairs. On the way out I would walk with the governess and Ella with Irene. On the way back Ella and I changed places. Each of us told Irene long stories of our own invention, but Irene was sworn to secrecy about the story the other sister told her, and it was only when we were grown women, Irene told me what Ella's stories were - very nice little girl stories, while mine were made up about brigands and knights. I was a passionate admirer of the Homeric heroes and those of the Round Table, and we used to play long games in which we were knights, and one of our patient governesses, Fraulein Kitz, of whom we were specially fond and who suffered greatly from sick-headaches, played the passive part of King Arthur, as she sat on a bench with a wreath round her neck, propping up her aching head on her hand.

We had a series of governesses, the first, preceding Fraulein Kitz, was the Prussian lady of noble birth I have mentioned earlier. Fraulein Kitz was some four years with us and retired owing to ill-health. She was succeeded by a gushing woman called Hasters whom my mother found to be a [p.32] fibber, so that her reign came to a premature close. She was followed by Miss Graves, the daughter and sister of retired naval officers, and whom we were fond of, but who took too great a fancy to me for comfort. She must have suffered from persecution mania, and ended in an asylum. In the summer of 1878, three months



**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

before my mother's death, Miss Margaret Hardcastle Jackson came to us, who had been finishing governess to Lady Mary and Lady Maud Herbert (afterwards Lady Maud Parry). On Lady Herbert's conversion to Roman Catholicism, Miss Jackson left the family. She was a strong British conservative. Though she had been such a short time with us before my mother died, she religiously carried on every rule and suggestion my mother had made and it was only when I was a grown woman that I came to appreciate her fine character to its full worth. Her last post had been with the Duchess of Connaught before her marriage, and she left us after my sister Irene married, as Alix, being so much younger, had not been entirely under her. On her retirement Grandmama gave her apartments at St. Catherine's in Regents Park. She only died during the Great War, luckily not surviving the downfall of the Russian and German Empires. She was so devoted to us all, that she had our photographs placed in her coffin. It was from Miss Jackson's dislike of gossip that we never took any interest in local tittle tattle.

I would like to say that our nurse Miss Orchard, called "Orchie" who came to us in 1865 always remained with my sister [p.33] Alix and accompanied her to Russia, only leaving her in 1905, when the weakness of age overtook her. Orchie's birthday was always a great fete. Several days before it she stirred her own birthday cake after an English recipe, at which performance we always managed to be present, and on the day Orchie gave a big tea, to which we were all invited.

Our chief instructors were not the governesses, but various teachers from the Volksschule or Gymnasium. We were given by them arithmetic, geography and history lessons. Our religious instructor was Pfarrer Sell, D. D. who became a Professor of Theology at Bonn and always remained in touch with Irene. One of our teachers of history, who also gave me latin lessons (the others learned no latin) being an authority on classical Greek subjects was summoned to Brazil by the Emperor Don Pedro to prepare him for his voyage to Troy, where the Emperor and he assisted at some of Dr Schliemann's excavations. My brother had his own set of teachers, but always came for English lessons with our English teacher or governess. He was not very devoted to his tutor. My sister Alix's principal teacher was Fraulein Textor, who had a boarding school for English girls at Darmstadt, and who had been selected for her by my mother just before her death. Both Alice and Louise were taught German literature by her.

My mother was friends with Professor Max Mueller, and on his advice, decided that I should pass the Oxford examinations [p.34] for younger girls, which had just been started in England. She did not realise how difficult it was for a girl of thirteen suddenly to work up a lot of subjects in English which she had learned in German. I had to work up the first book of Virgil with an English

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

teacher at Darmstadt and had to, learn the English pronunciation in Latin, and a system of parsing which I had not been taught by the German teacher. English literature was no trouble to me, as I knew a good deal of it.

To the present day I am well up in the books of "Kings" and "Chronicles" which I had to work up for my examination. I would here interpolate that we were all taught our English catechism. I learned a lot of English, German and French poetry by heart, as I had a very good memory. My sisters having a less good one, learned less. Our French teachers were always French people. The first one was a Mlle de Maupassant - whether related to the author or not, I do not know. We used to take walks with her to practice our French. Another was Monsieur Grandjean, who was a teacher of mathematics in his own country and who persuaded my mother it would be a good thing if he taught me and one of the Eigenbrodt girls geometry, which was a dismal failure as far as I was concerned. I never grasped the simplest problem, though I was considered quite a shining light in ordinary arithmetic by my German teacher.

[p.35]

My mother's musical talent was only inherited by my brother, but we all learned to play the piano and later took singing lessons.

Every other year at least we went to some seaside resort with our parents, where we bathed and played on the sands to our heart's content. Blankenberghe, then a modest little place with a couple of big hotels on the "Dunes" with a town behind them was one of the places we went to in the '70. There was a fish market and a couple of shops, where one could buy little men made of lobster claws and boxes ornamented with shells. We went into the sea in a horse-drawn bathing machine which bumped and rocked as the driver always shouting "hue" to his horse, encouraged it to enter the water. We used to make excursions on donkeys to the little fishing village of Heust and play croquet with three boys a little older than us, the Comtes d'Assche.

Both my parents were very good swimmers. One day when my father was bathing in very rough weather he saw a Scotch lady whose expert swimming he had always admired, apparently in difficulties some way off. There was no boat or anyone near, my father swam out to her assistance and reached her just as she was giving up the struggle she had been seized by cramp. He managed to bring her on shore though himself very much exhausted. Papa always said that had she not kept her head and remained immovable when he got hold of her, they would both have been drowned. Uncle Leopold of the Belgians [p.36] gave him the Belgian life-saving Medal for this action.

In 1879, just after my father had become Grand Duke, my mother took a

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

villa at Houlgate, a quiet French "plage de famille", a good distance off from the fashionable Trouville, to which my mother sometimes went. We played with many children of the Breton and other French nobility who were there. All their nurses called them by their Christian names, and being somewhat of a snob, I was rather horrified at dear old Orchie following their example and dropping the "Princess" before our names.

During our stay at Houlgate Ella and I went with our governess for a two day's visit to a former French governess of Mama's, Madame de Coningk at Havre. There she took us to see a transatlantic steamer and a cotton weaving factory. Many of her relations came for lunch and tea, which we did not enjoy, as they were full of polite phrases, and our French, we felt, was not up to the mark. The house stood on the ridge at Havre and from their little garden one looked straight on to the High Road. There we saw a stoutish old lady being driven past in a pony carriage by a small dark- moustached gentleman, and we were told that the lady was Ex-Queen Christina of Spain, mother of Queen Isabella. I cannot say that she looked particularly queenlike.

We revisited Houlgate with my father when I was engaged to be married and then we lived in a very nice villa. It was there I met the Queen of Naples and her sister, the Duchess [p.37] d'Alencon - rigidly upright figures, who pointed out to Miss Jackson that we did not hold ourselves as straight as we ought.

They were the sisters of the Empress Elisabeth of Austria and Queen Marie of Naples was the heroine of the siege of Gaeta. The unfortunate Duchess was burned to death in the "Bazar de la Charite" in Paris; her poor charred remains were only identified by her wedding ring, and by her dentist recognising her teeth.

Neither of the sisters, though good-looking women were as handsome as the Empress of Austria, their senior in age, whose acquaintance I made at Windsor, where she came after she had been hunting in Ireland. I was struck by her going about with a fan in daytime - I have heard that she even hunted with a fan attached to her belt, sheltering herself from inquisitive looks behind it.

On our first visit to Houlgate we brought all the necessary bed and table linen with us from the Schloss at Darmstadt. My mother, passing through the servant's hall, saw some narrow, coarse table-cloths in use, ornamented with scenes out of the Old Testament. On looking closer, she saw they were valuable handwoven linen from the XVII century; of course, they were never used again.

Off and on we went to Osborne in the summer and the last year of my

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

mother's life we went to Eastbourne. Here we met the children of my mother's friends and the younger lot of [p.38] Prussian cousins, who also had been sent over for sea-bathing, and who ranged in age with Irene, Ernie and Alix. My mother was not in good health that year. The people mobbed her pony-carriage and us all terribly and the only thing I really enjoyed - being at that difficult age of 15 - were our afternoon visits to Compton Place belonging to the old Duke of Devonshire (the politically celebrated Lord Hartington's father), where the Duke's sister, Lady Fanny Howard and her large family lived. My mother enjoyed her stay at Eastbourne much, as she met so many of her old friends, such as the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn, whose numerous family visited them in turns. It was at Compton Place that I really learned to play lawn-tennis, then a fairly new game. There also I saw Alice White, later Lady Leicester for the first time. When she died we had known each other for sixty years. She was a particularly charming woman and Louis and she had been great friends ever since the time he was serving in Uncle Alfred's ship *The Sultan* in Malta.

The longest consecutive time we spent in England in my mother's lifetime was in 1871, from September till the end of January 1872. We were all at Balmoral at first, while Uncle Bertie and his family were at Abergeldie and we children saw a great deal of each other. Unfortunately, all the children of both families contracted whooping cough there and I remember spending a dismal November at the top of Buckingham Palace shut away, coughing my head off. We were sometimes visited by my mother's old "Grande gouvernante", Lady Caroline Barrington [p.39] a tall and thin old lady with flaxen hair and a very gentle and refined voice and manner. We found in the former nurseries strange sorts of bicycles with saddles and adorned with horses' heads and tails, which had belonged to our uncles, and on which we careered down the corridor. The old royal nurseries were on the same floor and there we discovered a toy which fascinated us. It was a lion and when you turned a crank it swallowed a figure - either a Russian soldier or an Indian Sepoy - I do not remember which.

During my stay at Buckingham Palace I read a number of books, which had belonged to my aunts, one of which, I remember, was a story of early Tasmania and the destruction of the natives. It was during that November that the Prince of Wales was dangerously ill with typhoid, and my mother stayed at Sandringham to assist Aunt Alix in nursing him. When we were over the worst of our whooping cough, the Wales cousins and ourselves were moved to Windsor. We were not old enough to understand the anxiety Grandmama was going through when her son was at death's door, and were a very merry party of children. Our wild romps in the great corridor, in which Aunt Beatrice, a girl of 13, joined, were often interrupted by one of the pages bringing a message from the Queen that she would not have so much noise. In age, we formed a regular

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

scale, Eddy (Duke of Clarence) coming between me and Ella, George (King George V) between Ella and Irene, while Louise Fife still really belonged to the nursery party, Irene, Victoria, Maud and Ernie. Our greatest ambition when we were [p.40] with the Wales cousins, when no nursery dragon was in the room, was to steal lumps of sugar from the nursery store and melt them in the lighted candles. The result was burned fingers, an awful smell of burning wax and no caramel. We also used to go to Uncle Leopold's schoolroom for round games, he not being able to romp about with us on account of haemophilia. On Twelfth Night we all dressed up in costumes that used to belong to the Aunts. Aunt Beatrice wore a "Vivandierre" dress, which she sometimes also indulged in during our romps, wearing the cap and barrel of it.

There were lovely corners and curtains behind which one could hide and leap out in the dark. Outside the Queen's room there was always a table with lemonade and water and a dish of biscuits which we used to pilfer secretly.

My father was in Germany most of the time, but came back, I believe, for Christmas. When my uncle's convalescence set in my mother returned to Darmstadt with us. Several times we came over in the early summer and then stayed at Windsor with the Queen, whilst my parents stayed at Marlborough House during the London season. Once when Alix was a baby, we paid a visit to the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Baden at the Mainau, an Island on Lake Constance, not far from the town of that name. My mother ventured to point out to the Grand Duchess the very dusty state of the furniture, which found its explanation in the fact that the housemaids employed in the castle lived on the Meersburg side of the lake, [p.41] coming across for the day in rowing boats, weather permitting!

We children amused ourselves digging on the shore and collecting pebbles. The latter occupation led to much rivalry between my cousin Vicky (afterwards Queen of Sweden) and myself, she collecting yellow and red pebbles, the Baden colours, I white and red for the Hessian, the red being, of course of equal value to both of us. Once returning from the beach walking in single file through a young plantation, Vicky was sauntering along with her iron spade over her shoulder, Irene absent-mindedly trotting behind her. At a given moment Vicky turned round to make a remark and her spade caught Irene over the bridge of the nose, making a deep cut. She bore a red scar for many years as a result and it spoilt the shape of her nose.

From the Mainau we moved on to a Swiss resort called Heyden in the Canton of S Gallen. Fraulein Bauer, the former German governess of my mother was with us, replacing our own who was away on holiday. The hotel was of the

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

most primitive kind. There I had an accident and cut my seat and spent most uncomfortable days lying on my stomach, my wound being covered with large pieces of sticking plaster, which had been applied by the local doctor after he had well moistened it with his tongue. Of course, this plaster was not strong [p.42] enough to keep the wound shut. When I got up and moved the edges tore apart, and yet he did not stitch it up, but renewed the plaster applications. It is amusing that my daughter Alice had the same accident at about the same age, after which I had nothing but enamelled nursery utensils for the children. Speaking of these utensils, I saw a queer survival of old Georgian times at Windsor: a cupboard, behind a screen, full of them for the use of gentlemen guests in a room adjoining the big dining-room - there were no such things as lavatories in Georgian days.

I cannot specify what we did or where we went during the years 1873-1877. I remember that after our visits to England Queen Victoria generously sent us over to Antwerp in the Royal Yacht. On one occasion we were delayed for 24 hours by a thick fog in the mouth of the Scheld. Until I married, my idea of a British man o' war was based on the Royal Yachts (all of them paddle steamers). At Antwerp I remember visiting the picture gallery with my mother and being thrilled by seeing an armless artist painting a copy of one of the pictures with his feet. I have been told, he was not a bad painter.

From Antwerp we several times paid a visit to King Leopold II and Aunt Marie of the Belgians, stopping an hour or two at Laeken. Dimly I recollect seeing his eldest child and only son, Prince Leopold, on one of these occasions, [p.43] lying on a sofa. The boy died when he was eleven years old. Of the three daughters Louise afterwards married to Prince Philip of Coburg-Kohary, was several years older than me. Stephanie, who married the Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria was about my age. Clementine was a great deal younger. The stern manner in which the parents treated their daughters, and the fear in which they went of their parents seemed very strange to us, who were accustomed to more affectionate treatment. "Cousin Leopold" as my mother called the King, was a tall thin man, with a nose nearly as long as Cyrano de Bergerac's and his slow, drawling voice seemed to proceed from it. His big, square-cut dark beard, the monocle he kept dropping from his eye, his limping walk, gave him a singular appearance. Everybody knows he was the creator of Ostend and worked much for its improvement with its Mayor. He once presented him to my mother as "Mon ami et colaboreur", adding in an equally polite and loud manner, but in German, "Er ist aber sehr langweilig". My mother was under the impression that the mayor never understood his remark and considered it a continuation of the compliment. The Queen, whose life was not an easy one, got on very well with my mother and was touchingly kind to me when I visited Brussels for the last time, as a newly married bride.

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

The King's brother, the Comte de Flandres, was excessively deaf and his wife's mother, the Princess of Hohenzollern, was almost deafer than he. I felt pity for the [p.44] poor Countess, when she had to shout alternately into the ear of one or the other. Their children were very merry and natural, the little girls being great romps. The boys Baudouin and Albert, afterwards King Albert I, we did not see much of - I think they were kept rather out of sight of their uncle, who after his only son's death was jealous of their existence.

The railway journey from Brussels to Darmstadt was very lengthy, and was sometimes interrupted by a night spent at Cologne, as Queen Augusta of Prussia expected my mother to pay her a duty call at Koblenz, where she resided part of each summer. She was very much offended if anyone passed down the Rhine without coming to see her, actually complaining to my grandmother, when Uncle Leopold had failed to do so. He used to call her, after that, "The Dragon of the Rhine".

When we were young there were no sleepers in existence and few through-going carriages. My parents used to have a first-class compartment and we a second-class compartment adjoining, but could not pass from the one to the other as there were no corridors. The first time we travelled in a sleeper was in 1877 from Paris to Mayence - I believe they were quite a novelty then. No carriages had any heating in my childhood. It was long after it had been introduced on the Continent that it was installed in England. Even after I married there were only footwarmers on several lines, generally with tepid water in them, which were shoved into the carriages, [p.45] everyone travelling with a railway rug.

My mother was in poor health during three years before her death. She had always been very fond of water-colour painting and worked a great deal during these years with Colonel MacBean, who, when he retired from the army, had settled in Darmstadt with his family. There was quite a small English colony at Darmstadt at that time, the number of which grew considerably when Colonel Wilkinson's Army Crammer School was moved there. Darmstadt having then no sort of High School, was little accustomed to young men's pranks and the Darmstaders were horrified at some of their youthful feats. Their football games were watched by all the youth of the locality, football not then being played in Germany. The old Grand Duke had already permitted the use of his court Chapel for English Services, and our mother used to take us very often to evening service.

The people of Darmstadt were very jealous of my mother's interest in the members of the English colony, but my father, after her death, remained its warm

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

patron and protector. A quaint-looking old Mr. Bengough came to read Shakespeare with us at the time the Emperor William was a student at Bonn. William was much in love with Ella, I believe and would spend his week-ends at my parents' house. Well do I remember his taking part in our "part reading", when he and Mr. Bengough outbid each other in emphasis and what I considered, false pathos.

[p.46] For my wedding, the English community presented me with a gilt bouquet-holder, an object even then somewhat out of fashion. Talking of bouquets, when I first was at Malta, you still met with a large, flat old fashioned arrangement, surrounded by an ornamental paper edging and finished off in the centre by a high spray of Pampas grass - the latter embellishment was peculiar to Malta.

My parents were interested in the theatre and the one at Darmstadt was good. It was a Court Theatre, largely subsidised by the reigning Grand Duke and under his immediate control. When I was 13, I was taken to one or two Wagner operas. My father was intensely interested in the theatre, and later we went to performances of either plays or operas three or four times a week. It was great fun when we went to rehearsals. We have amused ourselves going down traps and producing terrible thunderstorms, startling the actors who were rehearsing by these unexpected effects.

This love of the theatre was traditional in the Hessian family. My brother with his artistic tastes, carried on the family interest.

Many a celebrated artist and singer came on tour to Darmstadt and it was there I saw the Duse in an Ibsen play.

Speaking of the stage, reminds me, that I have actually heard the celebrated Jenny Lind, (then Mrs. Goldsmith) sing as a very old lady. She was a great friend of Aunt Helena's [p.47] and was present at my cousin Helena Victoria's confirmation in the Park Chapel near Cumberland Lodge, to which I came. I was struck by hearing a very clear and beautiful old lady's voice behind me, singing during a hymn, and was told on inquiry that the singer was the great Jenny Lind - perhaps the most feted Prima Donna of the nineteenth century.

Among the great artists I have heard at Covent Garden in my young days was Adelina Patti, whom I heard again when during the Great War she sang in a concert in aid of the Red Cross, her last public appearance.

Looking back I would mention here some people belonging to a Past



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

greater than my own, whom I have met.

In 1878 Ella and I were shown over the House of Lords by the Usher of the Black Rod, Sir Augustus Clifford, the illegitimate son of the Duke of Devonshire, whose wife was the celebrated Georgina. Sir Augustus had been present at the battle of Trafalgar as a little midshipman aged about twelve. I have also called in 1885 on Sir Provo Wallace, then in his 101st year, who fought in the action of the Shannon and Chesapeake in the English-American war in Napoleonic times and took his ship out of action.....

When we were at Eastbourne, I met an old Mlle Denin whose father had for many years been a prisoner in one of our hulks off the Isle of White, and was born over here I believe, during her father's captivity.

Speaking of centenarians, nearer to our own times, in [p.48] 1918 in Rome, I met old Count Greppi, 103 years old, a small living skeleton, but perfectly clear in his head, who still attended the opera regularly and called on some friends of ours after an evening performance, dressed in evening clothes, leaning on a gold-topped walking stick, that had been presented to him by the ladies of Rome on his 100th birthday.

He died in the following year. His own aunt had married as a girl of fifteen the 70 year old Duc de Richelieu, who had been a page of Louis XVI!

Among the scientists of my youth was Professor Owen, who showed us around the Natural History department of the British Museum, and the Professor Hooker, the great Botanist, who took us round Kew Gardens. He told us one of his gardeners had recently tried one of the fly-catching plants with cheese but had, unintentionally, poisoned it with it.

Of the many artists and literary people my mother knew well, I saw very few, as she did not allow lessons to be interrupted if they came in those hours. I never saw Carlyle, nor Tennyson either, though he visited Grandmama during one of my stays at Osborne. He had, as usual, stipulated that he had rather not meet any one of the family or Court. Though my mother was friends with Ruskin, who had painted some blue water-lilies for her to illustrate a subject they had discussed, I never met him. A person who [p.49] aroused my curiosity in my childhood was an Ashanti negress called Alice, goddaughter of my mother, who was saved from being the victim of one of the great sacrifices in that Kingdom by the British troops in the first Ashanti campaign. Her husband who accompanied her was a negro missionary. As a child I have played at Windsor Castle with Prince Alamayou, son of the Emperor Theodore of Abyssinia, who was being

MS62

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educated at Eton - he died young.

1878

Early in November 1878 I fell ill with diphtheria. Well do I remember the Saturday half-holiday when, in spite of a very sore throat, I read aloud parts of *Alice in Wonderland* to the little ones. That night I had high fever and, the illness being recognised, Ella was moved downstairs to Irene's room. When the latter in her turn developed the disease, Ella, still not showing signs of it, was sent to my grandmother and remained free of it. All the other children and my father went down with it in turn. My father was very ill and so was Ernie, and my poor little sister May died of it on November 16th. The disease was very virulent that year, and of course no serum existed at that time. Slowly the others all recovered and rooms had already been taken for us at the big hotel above the old Schloss at Heidelberg to convalesce. Then my mother fell ill too and we children were all moved to the Schloss at Darmstadt, only my father remaining at the New Palace with her. She had no strength left to resist the disease, thoroughly worn out as she was by nursing [p.50] us all, and died on the 14th of December, the anniversary of the death day of her beloved father.

The 16th of November was the day my little sister died and Ernie's little Elisabeth, and on the same date in 1937, my sister-in-law, Honor, Cecile, Don and their little children met their death in the flying accident at Ostende.

That same winter of 1878 Aunt Vicky in Berlin lost her son Waldemar, the playfellow of my brother Ernie, of the same illness, but no other member of her family developed it.

My mother's death was an irreparable loss to us all and left a great gap in our lives. She had, indeed, been the mistress of the house, a wise and loving wife and mother, whom we respected as much as we loved her. The best likeness of my mother in her latter years is the head of the portrait Angeli did of her.

My childhood ended with her death, for I became the eldest and most responsible of her orphaned children.

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.51]

## CHAPTER III

Stay at Osborne in 1879. - Duke of Albany 51. - Stay at the Mayence Palace and visits to the Prussian relations at Wiesbaden 52. - The Empress Marie Louise's visit to Mayence 53. - Aunt Louise and Aunt Helena stay at Wolfsgarten 53 - Freidberg and Nauheim 54. - Cesarevitch Alexei's shopping 54-55. - My confirmation 56. - The Household at Darmstadt 56-57. -The Grancy family 57-58. - Trip to Italy in 1880 59-61. - Queen Victoria's objection to smoking 62. - First ball in London 62. - Wedding of Princess Victoria of Baden to the Crown Prince of Sweden 63-64. - The old Weimar ladies liking for high oysters 64. - Prince of Baden courtship of Princess Elizabeth 65. - Stay at Arolsen 65. - At Chantilly as guests of the Duc De Aumale 66. - Kaisermanoever near Frankfurt in 1882 67 - King Alfonse XII of Spain 67. - King Carlos of Portugal 67. - His tragic death 68. - Silver Wedding celebrations of the Emperor William I and of the Empress Augusta 70-71. - William I and Field Marshal Moltke II engagement 72. -

1879

We all went to Osborne to the Queen in January 1879. The real affection she bore my father, which my mother's brothers and sisters shared with her, was a great comfort to him. He felt as if he really was a member of his wife's family. They were closer to him than his own brothers. My Uncle Leopold, later Duke of Albany, returned to Germany with us when we left Osborne and repeated his visits every year until he married being often laid up for weeks in our house with haemophilic haemorrhage in the knee, often brought on by getting out of the high stepped railway carriages, then in use in Germany. He was a delightful uncle to us all, only ten years older than myself - I, 16 and he, 26 - inventing games for us and firmly looking after our manners. He was the most cultivated of the queen's sons and influenced our growing taste in art and literature, besides understanding my father very well. He used to make [p.52] peace between the warring factions of ladies-in-waiting, governesses, tutors and nurses. My poor father was somewhat lost as the head of the household of growing children, as his military and, later, State duties had occupied him most of the day, and all these cares were born by my mother.

Of course we had a family physician who came when any of us was not well, but Orchie looked after our little ailments. My father had three standard remedies, with which he was inclined to treat all ailments: tincture of bark "if you felt run down", quinine for all feverish symptoms, and tincture of rhubarb for the stomach. Rhubarb was a loathsome medicine specially when given in the form of a powder, stirred up in water. Orchie's system for punishing lying in the nursery, was to put a pinch of rhubarb powder on the tip of the tongue, the conveyor of the lie, but she progressed with the times, and with the younger lot, a pinch of

MS62

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quinine replaced the rhubarb.

On the whole, we were a healthy family and not given to coddling.

1880 In the years immediately after my mother's death it so happened that we really saw less of our Prussian cousins than before, for the almost yearly visits that the then Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia paid to the Schloss at Wiesbaden after the army manoeuvres, had ceased. They had usually come for a few days to visit us, and we went to see them at Wiesbaden. We used to form a large party when we [p.53] walked in the "Anlegen", four parents and eight children, two liveried footmen, whose presence was obligato at the Prussian Court, closing the procession, carrying cloaks and umbrellas. In 1880 my father spent about a month at the Palace at Mayence, taking us with him. It was a drive from there to Wiesbaden, when the great bridge over the Rhine was ready. Then it was still under construction. It crosses the river on the site of the old Roman Bridge, and numbers of its oak piles with an iron point were dredged up and we were given samples of them as souvenirs. In my childhood, though there was a railway bridge, there was only one pontoon bridge in use for ordinary traffic, and I have still seen the last of the watermills, above it on the Mayence side, which are a feature in all old prints of the town and dated from the Middle Ages.

In my young days, the railway ran between the Palace and the river, only separated from it by a street, and the passing trains shook the house. Old Mr. Wernher, the uncle of Sir Julius and father of my father's general A.D.C., has told me that the Empress Marie Louise lodged in the Mayence Palace when she travelled to France to marry Napoleon. The town was French then, and was all illuminated in her honour, and old Mr. Wernher remembered his standing in the street in his uniform of "Lyceen" and seeing her coming out on the balcony to be cheered. A dressing table draped with white and surmounted with an erection of white "Mull" topped with white ostrich feathers was still in the house, and dated from [p.54] that visit.

Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort stopped at Mayence when my father was a little boy and he was taken by his parents to see her. His maternal grandfather, Prince William of Prussia, was at one time military governor of Mayence, which after the Treaty of Vienna (1814) had alternately a Prussian and an Austrain governor, though the town itself and the so-called Rhein Provinz had become part of Hesse in 1816.

Returning to the subject of our English relations, almost every summer Aunt Louise or Aunt Helena with her family paid us long visits at Wolfsgarten.

MS62

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We only spent the summer at Wolfsgarten after my mother's death, my father gradually making the whole house habitable and laying out a lawn tennis court in the wood nearby. He was very fond of the game, as we all were, and my father's Jager German used to be very put out by his "wasting his time" playing, instead of shooting roebuck.

We rode a great deal, being a numerous party. Once on the return of a ride Aunt Louise and I having galloped on ahead, were dismounting in the courtyard, when Ernie, whose horse had bolted, came crashing into Aunt Louise's - Both riders flew off in opposite directions - an alarming sight though they sustained no injuries.

In movement and manner Aunt Louise was the one of my aunts who reminded me most of my mother, while Aunt Vicky had such a similar voice to hers that, as children we never [p.55] used to be sure which of them was calling.

Uncle Arthur with Aunt Louischen have stopped with us at Wolfsgarten too, and once they were our guests at Friedberg for the great Cavalry Manoeuvres. The residence of Friedberg, adjoining the town and a short distance from Nauheim, was a free castle of the Holy Roman Empire and there was still an old fortified gateway and a portion of its walls in existence. The town itself had been one of the Imperial Free Cities and great jealousy had existed between castle and town. Both only came to Hesse when the Holy Roman Empire came to an end. Fairly often we stayed at Friedberg, the last occasion in my brother's time when Aunt Alix and Uncle Nicky with their children were his guests (in 1911) during Aunt Alix's cure at Nauheim. From Friedberg, Uncle Nicky and Uncle Ernie used to go to Nauheim to play tennis in the afternoons and were gaped at through the wire enclosure like animals in a zoo.

As Nauheim was a watering place, it had some quite good shops, which the children patronized. Little Alexei proudly bought his father a drinking glass for mineral waters and told him when he presented it, how kind the shop keeper had been, for not only had he given him the glass, but a lot of money besides, when he had only given him one piece for it (1 mark) he was only 6 at the time. That same year, when the boy was at a toyshop at Darmstadt with his nurse and sailor attendant, he fell in love with a toy engine but had not [p.56] enough money left over to buy it. A young Russian student from the Technische Hochschule overheard the nurse telling him so and shyly offered to pay the missing sum which the boy gratefully accepted. This is probably the only time an heir to the Russian throne has been financially assisted by a subject.

We were all at Friedberg, for your father was on leave, and Alice came

MS62

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with her two little girls. Dickie and Louise were with us and Georgie came for his summer holidays. Ella too joined us there in her nun's dress. The whole party moved on to Wolfsgarten when the cure was over. Ducky, Uncle Ernie's first wife, had loved Wolfsgarten and helped him to embellish it and after their divorce their child, little Elizabeth, used still to come there for the summer.

The old castle of Romrod in the neighbourhood of Giessen, was one of the oldest possessions of our family. It was barely habitable before my father internally reconstructed it. It was a good centre for his winter shoots and also for many visits to the mediatised Princes and for army manoeuvres which we followed on horseback.

One of my father's closest friends since their student days was Prince Hermann of Solms Hohensolms Lich, Aunt Honor's father. I remember well an awkward episode that happened when we were expected to lunch with them at the end of a day's manoeuvres. We three eldest sisters had followed them on horseback. Thanks to faulty generalship the manoeuvres ended [p.57] miles away from Lich and my father sent us on by carriage when he stopped for the general critique. Our poor hosts and the whole population had been waiting for two hours in the little town to receive my father, and the arrival of three girls in dusty riding habits without him was a somewhat disappointing sight.

1880

In the Spring of 1880 my sister Ella and I were confirmed in the Lutheran confession in the Schloss-Kirche Darmstadt and Queen Victoria came over for it. The Hessian family belonged to the Lutheran branch of the Reformed Church the one that is nearest to the Anglican Church. We were instructed in the shades of differences in the various reformed churches which now only theologians trouble about, and we were always struck when my Hessian grandmother, who like the Prussian family belonged to the Reformierte branch took the wafer at the Sacrament into her hand and placed it herself in her mouth.

After confirmation, according to continental ideas we were considered grown up, but we did not come "out" till the year 1881. As in the preceding year in 1880 Ella and I accompanied the Queen in her spring visit to Scotland. That summer was a very enjoyable time at Wolfsgarten where my Uncle Leopold made a long stay. Our usual entourage consisted of: the Hofmarschale Herr von Westerweller, who had been the master of my parents' household since their marriage. Though a pious Roman Catholic, he had a special dispensation [p.58] to accompany my father to the Protestant Church ceremonies. The Oberstallmeister (master of the Horse) was Ferdinand von Rabenau his general adjutant was Paul Wernher, who as I have said was nearly related to Sir Julius Wernher. His was a good old yeoman family in Rhine Hesse. Encouraged by my

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father, he would not accept a title of nobility and was about the only German not noble at a German Court. His remarkable honesty and outspokenness is also unusual at Courts and he was highly respected by everyone who really knew him.

My father's aide-de-camps were worthy but not very brilliant men. General von Herff who accompanied us three girls and our governess Miss Jackson on our trip to North Italy was a poor linguist and in Venice when he was out with us in a gondola on a very smelly canal surprised the gondolier and distressed Miss Jackson by saying to the former: "Molto stanco ici".

Wilhelmine von Grancy, Wilhelmine we called her, remained with us after our mother's death as our lady-in-waiting and later on at Uncle Ernie's Court until her death in 1915. She, Miss Jackson and Herr von Rabenau were all exactly my father's age. Herr von Grancy, Wilhelmine's father, was a Swiss who had entered the service of the Grand Duke Louis II, and had been equerry to the Grand Duchess Wilhelmine. He was the putative father of my father-in-law Prince Alexander and of the Empress Marie - but "honi soit qui mal y pense"! His sister Marie Anne had brought up the Empress Marie and [p.59] accompanied her to Russia. Grancy had a little cottage at the foot of the Heiligenberg near the church, and one of my earliest recollections is a sledging expedition we children made with my parents to take tea with him and his family.

Wilhelmine's younger sister Marie together with Christa von Schenck zu Schweinsberg were appointed my mother's ladies-in-waiting on her marriage. After the war of 1870 Marie married my father's chief of staff, General von Hesse. Wilhelmine made frequent and long stays with my mother until she became her regular lady-in-waiting in 1877. Her younger sister Constance spent a whole of one winter at the New Palace when she lost her parents and my mother took her out. She and I that winter were sent out for walks together when I indulged in many philosophical conversations with her. She was a charming person who married a Herr von Oertzen and two of her daughters have been ladies-in-waiting of Aunt Irene. The elder married Admiral von Haxthausen, and Lori von Oertzen is still with Aunt Irene.

Wilhelmine was a great figure in our house and we were all devoted to her. She had very precise, rather old fashioned manners, but was most broad-minded and took a motherly interest in us all so that we could rely on her advice. Christa Schenk ceased to be acting lady-in-waiting [p.60] in 1870 owing to a long illness, but was given the title of an honorary one. She often visited us especially after my mother's death. We delighted in these visits for she was a high spirited amusing person and the way she would chaff Miss Jackson and my brother's tutor Herr Muther as well as "Liebes Wilhelmielchen" was a great joy

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

to us. She was a marvellous story teller who made every fairy tale thrilling and delighted us with her reminiscences of old times.

1880

The trip to Italy I have mentioned above, took place I believe, in the Autumn of 1880 when, an almost yearly occurrence, my father with Alix and Ernie was at Balmoral. We travelled through the Gothard tunnel which had been opened only a year before and it took us fifty minutes going through it, half stifled by engine fumes. After three days at Milan we went off to Florence. There was a great connoisseur widower of a Darmstadt lady, proposed acting as cicerone to us, but as he, Miss Jackson and Herr von Herff had different views of what one should admire, especially in the picture galleries, once we got into one, the party broke up. I was taken round by the cicerone and shown the pictures he considered the best. Ella went round with Miss Jackson to admire the pictures the latter remembered from a former visit, whilst Irene fell to the lot of General von Herff, who, Baedeker in hand only looked at the pictures marked with a star. There were heavy floods in North Italy that year so some of our [p.61] plans had to be altered and to the despair of General von Herff the idea of visiting Rome "even if only for one day" was given up and Venice was substituted. Unfortunately when we got as far as Modena, the train proceeded no further and we had to spend the night in that sleepy town. The nearest hotel was at the other side of a great dusty square across which we walked, clad in the then fashionable long fine cloth coats. We three had claret coloured ones, Miss Jackson's was bottle green. The young cadets of the military school had just come out from work and closely studied "Gli Inglese". Ella who was very pretty, especially attracted their attention. Their loud remarks which Miss Jackson, who spoke Italian, understood, made her highly indignant, so Ella was ordered to keep close to her side.

The hotel proved anything but clean and Miss Jackson found blood marks on her pillow case where her predecessor had been crushing mosquitoes or bed bugs. It poured incessantly at Venice and to get there we had to cross a railway bridge on foot, getting into another train on the other side. General von Herff, who had charge of the money for the trip kept it all in notes in his vest pocket instead of following Miss Jackson's advice and leaving some of it with the hotelier even when going for solitary strolls at night. I remember secretly smoking up chimneys and out of [p.62] the windows at the hotels. Though my father did not object to my smoking Miss Jackson did, authorised thereto by Grandmama. A propos of my smoking it was the Emperor William who first trained me to the habit when, as a student from Bonn, he always offered me cigarettes.

Ella never cared about smoking but even Queen Victoria could not break



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

me of the habit. On one of my visits to Balmoral, before my marriage, guessing that I probably had cigarettes with me, and the midges being especially annoying she bade me smoke to keep them away and even took one of my cigarettes giving a few puffs at it. She declared she thought the taste horrible! Of course we might not smoke openly in the house and one of the young maids of honour, Amy Lambert, who though a smoker herself had come without any cigarettes and whose room was below ours, was supplied by me with a few at a time let down by a piece of string from window to window!

1881 My sister Ella and I went to Balmoral in Spring 1881 and in June with my father we visited Uncle Bertie and Aunt Alix at Marlborough House where we spent a week and were taken to our first ball at the Cadogans on July 12th. We wore full white muslin dresses trimmed with acacia sprays which Aunt Alix gave us. I can't have been a great success at the ball for what with the heat, the strong scented flowers [p.63] gardenias and stephanotis which filled the fireplace before which we stood and the giddiness which overcame me when waltzing in the crowd, I felt quite faint. Though we had just had supper Uncle Bertie seeing the state I was in insisted on my going with him to the supper room again, and I was given champagne at the supper table where we sat down with friends. I had the feeling that everybody must have thought me so greedy that I needed two suppers.

That was a busy year for we attended the manoeuvres near Friedberg and then on to Karlsruhe for the wedding of Vicky of Baden to the Crown Prince Gustaf of Sweden - the present King - on the 20th of September. It was the silver wedding day of her parents and the Grand Duchess was dressed in silver with a wreath in her hair. The old couple approaching the altar after the young couple had been married to receive the clergyman's blessing. - There was a large gathering of near and distant relations. - King Oscar and Queen Sophie of Sweden were accompanied by all their sons and we were struck by the good looks of Charles, two years older than me, in his light blue and silver cavalry guard's uniform, and by young Eugene, aged 16, in a Hussar uniform, looking extremely French with his dark curly hair. Aunt Vicky, Uncle Fritz and all the elder Prussian cousins [p.64] also assisted at the wedding and we used to breakfast together, and I am afraid, made jokes about some of the funny customs of the Baden Court such as the incessant shaking of hands before and after each meal. The big wedding banquet was marred by the lobster's being high and not only perfuming the whole hall but the rubbish heap near which we passed on our walks two days afterwards. I was well punished for mocking at this, years afterwards, for at the reception at Darmstadt on the eve of Alice's wedding we had a buffet on which there were lobsters which also were high. The old Grand Duke of Sachsen Weimar and his daughter Elizabeth, an elderly maiden, were

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

there too and very amiable to us, as he had hopes that my father might marry her. He presented me with a bell in the shape of a silver rose which he said he had had especially made for me. Here I would interpolate an anecdote about two old ladies in waiting at his parent's Court who when the first railway reached Weimar were asked if they did not think it a very pleasant innovation. "Yes", they said, "it is very nice to be able to get about so quickly, but the oysters that now arrive by train have lost all flavour!"

There was a traditional friendship between the Courts of Darmstadt and Baden on account of the frequent intermarriage in the families.

My parents much appreciated the Grand Duke and Grand [p.65] Duchess, the latter having many interests in common with my mother in art and charities. The Grand Duchess was the old Emperor Wilhelm I only daughter. It had been a mutual wish that the eldest son Fritz (the last Grand Duke of Baden) should marry Aunt Ella. Matters came to a climax on a visit to Berlin when he formally asked my father for Ella's hand. My father replied that he never would oblige any of us to marry against our inclination and Ella told Papa that she found Fritz much too good and solemn a person for her taste. Fritz took the refusal well - but unfortunately the old Empress Augusta was bitterly disappointed, especially as she had quite the old fashioned ideas about princess's marriages and considered my father's action in the matter extremely weak.

On the evening of that day at a party at the Empress Augusta's, she had planned the engagement should be announced. Ella and Fritz found themselves placed at the same little marble table, the Court not knowing how matters stood, and the Empress cut Ella and me dead.

The Grand Duke Mikhail Nicolaewitch (Uncle Misha) was also at the Baden wedding, he being an uncle by marriage of the bride's with his son Misha (two years older than I) Nada's father, with whom I had a great flirtation.

The Prince and Princess of Waldeck with their daughter Helen of Waldeck just out, were there too. She was about [p.66] my age but as she belonged to the Swedish side of the relations, we did not see why she should join our cousinly group, little thinking that a few months later she would be engaged to my Uncle Leopold. Their engagement took place in the following January and Papa and we two were invited to Arolsen by the bride-elect's parents. Arolsen was a quaint little town. Round the squares were clustered the church, the town hall, the hotel, the Court apothecary's shop, etc. Each painted another colour and reminding one of the Nürnberg toy houses.

MS62

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The Schloss had a very fine approach and the Prince who had built it in Louis XIV time had dreams of making a small Versailles of his residence, but only miles of chestnut avenues ran through the fields, there never having been enough money to complete the palace and the extensive gardens.

The State Bedroom which Ella and I slept in was hung with very fine tapestry; at night the mice scrambled about behind it.

My future Aunt was touchingly attentive to Uncle Leopold who unfortunately was laid up with a bad leg and spent many hours by his bedside reading aloud to him. Their marriage took place in April 1882 at Windsor Castle and I and my father attended it.

We returned from Windsor to Darmstadt via Paris where the Duc d'Aumale invited us to spend the day at his castle of Chantilly and attend the races which took place in his [p.67] property. It was lovely weather and the Duc was a most charming host. There was a big luncheon party and each guest found a ticket for the grand stand on his plate. He showed us his remarkable picture gallery and the fine old stables which contained beside his hunters, the kennels of the Chantilly hunt. The races were the first and only big races I have ever attended in my life, for I have neither seen the Derby run nor been at Ascot. I never was tempted to do so, perhaps because of the painful accident I witnessed at Chantilly, when three of the jockeys collided with each other round the corner and one was killed. Among the guests was the Duke's sister-in-law, the deaf and dried-up Princess de Joinville, widow of the naval son of Louis Phillippe and elder brother to the Duc d'Aumale. The Duc de Nemours I believe was there too. My parents were friendly with the whole Orleans family, as they had known them during their long exile in England. At his death, the Duc d'Aumale left Chantilly to the Académie Française a member of which he was, for a summer residence for members. During his lifetime everything was run in old fashioned princely style.

1882                    That autumn of 1882 the big so-called Kaisermanöver took place between Frankfurt and Homburg. For the occasion my father accompanied by Ella and me took up residence in the Hessische Haus in "The Zeil", which Ernie sold and which [p.68] has been pulled down. There was one room in it with wood panelling and a fine old stove, called the Melanchton room, as that theologian had been lodged there in the time of Luther.

1882                    The Emperor William and the Empress Augusta lived in the Schloss at Homburg where Aunt Vicky, Uncle Fritz and several foreign Royalties were their guests. Every forenoon we attended the Manoeuvres which ended with a grand parade and then went to Homburg for the big dinner parties. The poor Empress

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

Augusta was already in such bad health that she was in a wheelchair which was decorated in red or blue plush and pushed by the Grande Maitresse who was clad in a dress of the same colour as the chair. Two of the young Sovereigns Alfonso XII of Spain, a very chic personage and Carlos I of Portugal who looked like a very fat cheerful cupid, managed to spend their afternoons at Frankfurt and came to tea, the latter to flirt with us, so that we thoroughly enjoyed the four days the manoeuvres lasted. Carlos was a great "blagueur", but many of the startling stories he told us proved afterwards to be true in essence. One of the true ones was how he had been out riding with a lady he greatly admired and who as they were passing a quarry, defied him to jump into it. He took up the challenge and though his horse was badly injured, he escaped unscathed. I saw him again many years afterwards with his charming wife Amélie, daughter [p.69] of the Comte de Paris, when they were on a visit at Windsor to Uncle Bertie. There was a big shoot in the park and when Carlos proved to be a remarkably good shot. He was however so stout that though the weather was cold, he only wore a thin little jacket, explaining that his arms were too fat to raise his gun to his shoulder if covered by anything thicker. A tragic fate awaited Carlos, for he and his eldest son were shot dead in Lisbon in an open carriage in which he and Amélie were driving with their two sons. The younger, Manoel, was saved by Queen Amélie throwing herself across him to shield him.

The Court completely lost their head after the terrible event and the bodies of the King and his son were left unattended in the Royal Chapel until some officers of a British man of war took it upon themselves to stand guard on the first night.

Your father had long leave that winter having just finished his world tour in the *Inconstant* - and spent most of it with his parents at Darmstadt so that we saw a great deal of each other and danced at many balls together. - We considered him our "English Cousin" and I have never forgotten how kind he was to Ella and me years before when we were schoolgirls and he was a young sub-Lieutenant studying at Greenwich and lodging at Marlborough House where he had a room [p.70] every time when he came up to London. He was a very smart man about town yet found time to call on his two young cousins at Buckingham Palace. Our great ambition had been to go in a boat on the Buckingham Palace Lake but our governess would not allow it if we had not an experienced person to take charge of us. Louis' visit was not an opportunity to be missed, and though he was in his best town clothes, he good-naturedly agreed to take us out for a row.

1883

In February, my father, Ella and I were invited to Berlin to attend the silver wedding festivities of Uncle Fritz and Aunt Vicky. The chief feature of these was a great costume ball organized by some of their artistic friends which

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

took place at the Schloss. The period chosen was the second half of the XV century the reign of the Emperor Frederick III, the last German Emperor crowned in Rome. There is a celebrated illustrated book of the period called *Weiss Kunig* and the chief personages in it were personified by guests in costume according to the illustrations. My father represented the Emperor and suffered much under the heat of the dress and fur-brimmed hat. Ella and I wore the pointed caps of the period called "Hennin". A feature in the procession which opened the ball was our cousin William's wife later the Empress Victoria Augusta who, to save her from undue fatigue, as she was in "the family way" was carried [p.71] in a sort of litter surrounded by young men and maidens.

We lodged with my uncle and aunt and were invited to tea by the Empress Augusta in a diminutive over-heated room. She was generally gracious to us as she liked my mother and must have got over her disappointment at the "marriage manqué" of her grandson. The Empress' face was always heavily made up and with less art than one is accustomed to at the present time. She wore a palpable brown wig and her voice was extremely monotonous. Whilst we were at tea the old Emperor came in to greet my father bringing Field Marshall Count Moltke with him. The Emperor had a pleasant face and was a good looking old gentleman. His baldness was disguised by a long lock of hair on the one side of his head which was carefully laid over the top of it where it was attached to a shorter one from the other side by a little piece of thread which was still dark, though his hair with years had become quite white. I was again struck by the stunted first finger of his right hand which had been injured by a rifle accident many years before. On Angeli's portrait of him this finger is to be seen. Field Marshall Moltke was no great talker and only smiled when the Emperor recalled his first meeting with him as a young officer who had just joined the Prussian Army. "I do not think much of that young Dane" the Emperor recalled saying about him. The Moltkes are an old border family between Schleswig and [p.72] and Denmark.

In spring grandmamma had as usual invited Ella and me to go with her to Balmoral but I was not keen about it. The onlooker proverbially knowing more than the actor, Ella said to Papa; "If Victoria does not go with me to Scotland she will become engaged to Louis Battenberg." She was right, and we became engaged in June, when I was at Seeheim and Louis at Heligenberg

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.73]

CHAPTER IV

My parents-in-law 73 74 75. - Heiligenberh 76 - Games with Prince Franz Joseph 76. - Marriage 77. - Morganatic marriage of Grand Duke Louis IV 78. - Marriage and wedding breakfast of the Princess Elizabeth of Hesse Cassel 79. - The Royal yachts 80 81. - Wedding of the Princess Elizabeth to the Grand Duke Serge at Peterhof 82 83. - Birth of Princess Alice 85. - Christening of Princess Alice at Darmstadt 85. - Marriage of Princess Beatrice 86. - Hauptmann von Schwarzkoppen speaks of the Dreyfus affair 86. - The Prince prints his first book 87. - Revolt in Bulgaria 88 89. - Prince Alexander of Battenberg's abdication 90. - King and Queen of Wuerttemberg, Grand Duchess Vers 91. - Engagement of Princess Irene. Costume Ball at Darmstadt 92. - Typhoid 93. - Queen Victoria's Jubilee 93. - Losses and recovery of jewellery 93 94. - Crown Prince of Prussia consults Dr. Morrell Mackenzie 95. - Ducal residences at Dessau 96 98.

Irene, Ernie and Alix were overjoyed at the acquisition of a prospective brother-in-law and Louis and I rarely had the occasion of being alone together. Grandmama was at first not very pleased at our engagement as she wished me, as the eldest, to continue looking after the younger ones and keeping my father company. Nor had she seen much of Louis before that time; however seeing that I would always be able to spend the time Louis was at sea at my father's house, she consented to the engagement on condition we did not marry till the following year. Soon after Louis was appointed as lieutenant to the Royal Yacht which gave him his promotion to commander two years afterwards - a few months earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

I think this is the moment to speak of my parents-in-law who welcomed my engagement to their beloved eldest son. My great uncle Alexander was still, at that time a very good looking man. He had served as a young man in the Russian [p.74] army as a Chevalier garde under the Emperor Nicholas I. As the brother of the then Cesarevna, he was one of the members of the Emperor's family circle and also saw active service in the war against the Caucasian leader Shamil. We still possess the Koran which Shamil lost after one of his defeats. Uncle Alexander had been a great success in Petersburg society, but having fallen in love with the Empress Alexandra's young lady-in-waiting, Countess Julie Hauke, he eloped with her in 1851, being obliged to quit the Russian service. Nicholas I died four years later.

My mother-in-law was the daughter of Count Hauke, Minister of War for the then semi-independent Poland, who was shot dead in the street at the outset of the Polish revolution of 1830, while trying to pacify the insurgents. His wife, née Mademoiselle Lafontaine, was left a widow with a number of small children.

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The Empress had my mother-in-law and her sister (afterwards married to Baron Stackelberg) educated at the Institut de demoiselles Nobles de Smolna. When they were grown up, she appointed them maids of honour and they lived in the Winter Palace at Petersburg. Your grandmother hardly had a grey hair in her head when she died at the age of 69 and lost, perhaps one of her white teeth. She was much amused when she had to see a dentist a few years before her death, at his presenting a little bowl of water to her and when she inquired for what purpose, he said: "to put your false teeth in". Her German, tho' fluent, was not [p.75] grammatical. My father-in-law and she always spoke French together and she always spoke French to all her children and to me. She was the kindest and most discreet of mothers-in-law, which became very noticeable after the death of Uncle Alexander, when she spent the summer with us at the Heiligenberg, when she was no more the mistress of the place. She was a very affectionate grandmother especially to Alice, who adored her.

My father-in-law was not very observant of small things, being much occupied with his Numismatic collection, and she used to raid his rooms for small, and to her mind, ugly ornaments, which she would give to bazaars and the loss of which he did not discover till weeks afterwards.

Your grandfather's gift to him of a few British Naval medals started your father collecting these.

The Heiligenberg was, originally a farmhouse, bought by the Grand Duchess Wilhelmine wife of Louis II and at her death she left it to her two youngest children, my father-in-law and his sister, the Empress Marie Alexandrovna, wife of Alexander II of Russia. She contributed largely towards the aggrandisement of the place, making a country house of it, and every second year she came with her children often accompanied by the Emperor, to spend the summer there. Marie Erbach describes these visits in her recollections. Alexander II influenced William II after '66 to abstain from claiming part of Ober Hessen.

Ellen and I spent a month at the Heiligenberg as children [p.76] at the time of Alix's birth. My brother-in-law Francis Joseph - Franzjos as we called him (b. 1861) who was eleven and two years older than I, was not yet at school. He was a delicate boy and was brought up on strictly ladylike lines by the governess of his sister, Adele Bassing. Our tomboy ways rather distressed him. He was very fond of reading and to prevent us from disturbing him too much, he suggested we should play Robinson Crusoe, he filling the part of Crusoe, Ella and I being two men Fridays, whom he incessantly sent away on important duties, while he remained in the improvised hut, reading in peace. He was good-natured,

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

however, and I remember his helping us to search in the hay for a lost hair ribbon - a fruitless quest on his part, as he was very short sighted. These hair ribbons were tied to the ends of our plaits and if we lost more than a meter in a month, it had to be paid for out of our scanty pocket money. Needless to say, it was I who lost most of them! Ella, even in the most exciting moments taking some care of her clothes and appearance, whilst I became utterly reckless. I was always dirtying and spoiling my dresses. One summer I remember scrambling through a hedge in my best frock, tearing great holes in it. My mother, to impress greater carefulness in future, obliged me to wear the darned frock when visiting the Empress of Russia's family at Heiligenberg.

Sometimes on a Sunday afternoon in our young days, my father would propose taking us crayfishing with him, in the Kranichstein Park. This consisted, on our part in wading in [p.77] the small brook and turning up stones under which crayfish lay hidden, which we then pounced on and carefully grabbed with our fingers. It was a somewhat wet amusement. My father suggested we should wear any old clothes for this, but my mother firmly decreed that as we messed enough dresses on week days, we should learn to take care of our Sunday clothes and if we were unable to do so, had better not go crayfishing. She used to look on, superintending the arrangements for tea.

1884

Ten months after our engagement, Louis and I were married at Darmstadt on April 30th 1884. My uncle Leopold Albany having died suddenly at Cannes in March, the wedding was postponed for four weeks, but had to take place before May, by Queen Victoria's wish as she had a strong superstition about the unluckiness of May marriages, she herself, with Aunt Beatrice and all the Wales family came over for it and Aunt Vicky and Uncle Fritz and most of their children, including William were also present.

Louis was naturally married in his British naval uniform. My father had placed him a la suite of the Hessian Artillery Brigade and had given him the Ludwigsorden and its chain just before. Previous to this he and his brothers all had only the Philipsorden. Immediately after the wedding breakfast we went to the Heiligenberg for four days. The evening of my wedding day, my father was privately married in a room in the Schloss to Countess Alexandrine Hutten Chapsky, divorced from [p.78] M. de Kolemne who, as Russian Charge d'affaires had been two years at Darmstadt with her, the couple separating as soon as the ceremony was over. Influenced, I fancy, by Madame de Kolemne's dread of opposition to the marriage, nobody had been told of it, except his children and prospective sons-in-law. Tho' Louis and Serge were in despair about it, they gave their promise to keep the secret. We others quite liked the lady, who was full of attentions towards us, and I hoped my father would feel less lonely when married



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

to a woman he was much in love with.

On the next day the secret came out. The Prussian family, by order from above, left immediately. My Grandmother and Uncle Bertie persuaded my father to have his marriage annulled, as they convinced him, that the lady's past and reputation were such as to make it impossible for his young unmarried daughters, Irene and Alix, to grow up under her care. The annulment took place almost immediately, she retaining the title of Graefin Romrod and receiving a large yearly allowance until her death, many years later - she survived Uncle Ernie - tho' in the meantime she had got married to a Russian diplomat M. de Bacharach. The whole episode was a nine days scandal in the whole of Europe and a painful one to my father and us.

Grandmama went back to England taking papa and Ella with her. This was Ella's last visit to her before she married for she was then engaged to Serge and married him that summer. [p.79]

1884

Between her wedding and mine the wedding of our relation and friend Elizabeth of Hesse Cassel (eldest sister of Uncle Fischy) took place at Schloss Phillippsruh, not far from Frankfurt which her father, the Landgraf, had recently rebuilt and refurnished. Papa and Ella attended the wedding at which all the Hessian and Danish relations, including Aunt Minnie of Russia and Aunt Alix of Wales, were present.

The Landgraf, who was a very excitable man, was nearly off his head at having to lodge and entertain so large a party of guests and his speech at the wedding breakfast was a remarkable one. It began: "I do not thank (Ich danke nicht) the Empress of Russia, my dear niece, I do not thank the Princess of Wales, my dear niece, I do not thank etc., etc." - names of all the guests present - "for being here today, - No, I thank all! everybody!" - and, in a loud aside to his neighbour as he broke into tears - tapping the pocket in the back of his uniform; "my handkerchief, my handkerchief!"

1884

When we left the Heiligenberg we went for three weeks to England where Louis had taken for the duration of his service in the Royal Yacht, the lease of Sennicotts, a small house between Chichester and Adsdean. When Grandmama was at Osborne, the *Victoria and Albert* lay regularly off Cowes and all the officers were on duty. At other times the crew were employed in the lofts of the Royal Dockyard at Portsmouth and the officers had quarters in the little [p.80] *Royal George* the hulk of George IV's sailing yacht, which still had a very ornamented stern. One of the two lieutenants were alternatively on duty there. Grandmama kindly lent us Kent House close to Osborne, whilst she was in

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

residence on the Isle of Wight, a couple of months in summer and the same at Christmas time. She left the Kent House estate to my Aunt Louise who, instead of leaving it to me as she first intended, made me a gift of it early in 1914.

The old *Victoria and Albert* was a paddle yacht most comfortably arranged. The crew consisted of petty officers, who for the time being acted as able seamen, known as riggers. They wore white badges on their "blue frocks". Straw hats were still in use in the navy when I married and jumpers were only worn for work, frocks on Sundays. I think I remember when I was a child blue jackets with brass buttons being worn over the "frocks" on some occasions. The name "blue jacket" is derived from this part of the seamen's dress, and the jacket survives to this day in the German navy. In the Royal Yacht the men wore pumps and the hats had long ribbons. Three sub-lieutenants were appointed for six weeks duty in summer, their appointment resting with the Queen: they were promoted to Lieutenant at the end of their service. There were a number of Royal yachts besides the *Victoria and Albert* as long as Grandmama lived; all paddle steamers. [p.81] There was the *Osborne* which was permanently lent to Uncle Bertie, though when he did not require her, she was used to take other relations to sea. She took Uncle Alfred and Aunt Marie for example, to Cronstadt for Ella's wedding and Louis and I returned in her afterwards. Then there was the *Alberta*, smaller than the preceding vessels, in which Grandmama regularly crossed from Portsmouth to Osborne. She also could be used for guests. Last of all was the little *Elfin* which fetched the messengers and the provisions and was, in fact, a dispatch boat. It was customary for such relations who were staying at Osborne in summer to be taken round the Isle of Wight for a day's cruise in one of the bigger yachts and I joined in many a pleasant one. Uncle Bertie with his family always lodged on board the *Osborne* for the Cowes week even before he owned the *Britannia*, - his famous racing yacht.

1884

Early in June we rejoined my father at Darmstadt and together with him, Ella, Irene, Ernie and Alix we went to Russia, stopping at Peterhof for a week before Ella's wedding. We were lodged at the Big Palace and there was always a large family gathering for dinner at "Alexandria". This being the season of the long nights, we afterwards made up a party in many carriages and drove about the parks. Uncle Alfred and Aunt Marie were living at the "Ferme", another of the houses on the Estate, the design of which was copied [p.82] by Willy and Olga of Greece for his country house at Tatoi. Aunt Marie took us to see all the different sights of the neighbourhood. So that Ernie should be in uniform for the wedding my father, though Ernie was only 16, put him a la suite of the Hessian infantry guard regiment, in which he afterwards began his military career.

Alix was a pretty little girl of 12 at the time, and with her loose hair and

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

smart frock looked very well at the wedding. She was led in to the ceremony by the immensely tall Nikolasha who had to stoop down to talk to her. We met him and many members of the Russian family for the first time on that occasion. Serge, of course, we had known since our childhood, as also his brother Paul, they having been so often at the Heiligenberg with their mother and it was one of Serge's standing jokes against Alix to remind her that he had seen her bathed.

1884

The orthodox wedding took place in the Chapel of the Big Palace and was followed by the Protestant wedding in one of the drawing rooms. Ella did not become orthodox till 1891, and Serge, although a fervent adherent of his church, never pressed her to do so. The carriage, in which the bride made her entry into St. Petersburg, was a beautiful gilt coach of the Empress Catherine, adorned with paintings by Boucher and was drawn by six white horses. Her wedding dress was the Russian Court dress, all white and cloth of silver and, [p.83] according to custom, the Empress was supposed to "coiffe" her on that occasion. This consisted in handing some hair pins to the coiffeur and superintending the placing of the tiara and the Grand-Ducal Crown on her head, as Ella sat in front of the vermeil looking glass of the Empress Anne I. The diamond tiara, Crown, necklace and earrings to match, had all belonged to the Empress Catherine and were worn by every bride for her wedding. The earrings were so heavy, that they had to be suspended by a wire round the ears and this wire gradually cut into the flesh. A further discomfort to Ella was that the "garcon de noce" (bridesman), in order to bring luck to the Bride, had put a gold 10 rouble piece in her right shoe, which dug into her toes.

From old times, the Tsar's sons were presented with a cloth of silver dressing gown with cap to match trimmed with sable, and a silver night pot! - which later Serge presented to Ernie as a souvenir.

The bride was provided by the Empress with a complete trousseau. As Ella had nothing to do with the choice of the dresses, they were not half as becoming as the outfit Ella brought from home. There was a big wedding breakfast after which the bride and bridegroom went to his house, the former Beloselsky Palace on the Nevski Prospect, opposite the Anitshkoff, where they were received by the Emperor and Empress [p.84] representing the bridegroom's dead parents, with the usual bread and salt. On the following day the whole corps diplomatique came to congratulate, and Ella made use of the few Russian phrases she had learnt before she married in speaking to the Chinese Ambassador, who only knew Russian besides his own language. My mother-in-law had given her some Russian lessons during the winter.

1884

We returned to England, as I have said, in the *Osborne*, stopping for a few

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

days on our way to Copenhagen. Some of the officers well instructed by former naval visitors to that town betook themselves to a stationer's shop where they made a few purchases insisting that these should be wrapped in paper with the shopman's name on it. The name was:- W. C. Stinks!

We visited the sights of the town and had tea with the then Crown Prince, later King Frederick VII and his wife. We had beautiful weather for the whole trip - and there was a mirage over some of the Baltic Islands, a reversed picture of them standing in the sky.

1885           Early in 1885 Louis and I preceded Grandmama to Windsor Castle in expectation of Alice's birth, who was born as I have said before, in the tapestry rooms on February 25th. I was taken for solemn drives in a well-sprung phaeton known by the [p.85] name of the "Ivory" phaeton - I believe it had belonged to George IV. It was driven a la Daumont. Years afterwards soon after the death of Grandmama when we visited Uncle Bertie at Windsor he and I took a drive in it.

1885           On March 6th Liko arrived at Windsor, Grandmama having consented to his being privately engaged to Aunt Beatrice. On the 21st of March my German Grandmama died after a short illness. She had been looking forward to seeing her first great grandchild and prospective godchild and never saw her. Louis went with Liko to her funeral at Darmstadt. Baby and I arrived there on April 3rd and Grandmama with Aunt Beatrice on the 23rd. On the 25th Ernie was confirmed and Alice christened. Her godparents were: Grandmama, Ella, Louis' mother, and Marie Erbach and Papa. Ella and Serge had also come for the occasion on May 1st. I went back to England with Grandmama, Louis having returned before this to his duties in the yacht. We spent a couple of months at Sennicotts, where we visited neighbours and drove about the country, making use of tricycles for shorter trips. Louis had thought it would be very convenient to go

1885           to his work at Portsmouth by tricycle but the trip was too long and tiring and he only did it once. We moved to the Isle of Wight in July and Aunt Beatrice and Liko were married at Whippingham on the 23rd of that month. The *Alberta* had fetched him [p.86] and our Hessian family from Flushing a few days before and they had had a shockingly bad crossing. Many relations were at the Isle of Wight that summer, including the whole Edinburgh family at Osborne Cottage of whom I saw a great deal. We gave up Sennicottes that summer and I went to my father in August. Whenever Louis was away at sea or had longer leave, I would go to my father and visit my parents-in-law for a few weeks. Louis' time was up early in September in the yacht, when he was promoted to Commander. He went on half pay and joined me at Darmstadt, where we spent the winter together. We were alone at the New Palace for a few weeks while Papa and Irene went to Petersburg. Ernie remained behind as he was working hard with his military

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

tutor Hauptmann von Schwarzkoppen, of the General Staff. He, Schwarzkoppen, was a pleasant, intelligent man who became military attache at the German Embassy in Paris at the time of the first trial of Dreyfus. I saw him a couple of years after that affair when, in my presence, he assured Ernie that Dreyfus had never had anything to do with the German Embassy and that the actual traitor was Esterhazy.

1885-6                That winter Louis and I amused ourselves in printing a pamphlet for the "Kunsterverein" and some recollections of Aunt Marie Erbach's visit to Bulgaria, and in 1889, and when he was again on half-pay, we printed extracts from his letters to his father, describing his visit to Japan in 1881. For this [p.87] latter booklet Louis cut out the Royal Chrysanthemum on a wooden die which we printed on its cover. Louis had learned printing as a boy it being then still the fashion for young Princes to learn some handicraft. We bought a good little hand revolving printing press and after Louis had set up the text, he manipulated the machine, whilst I slipped in the sheets of paper, which rested only against some pins and needed careful placing. The superficial knowledge I then acquired of the compositor's work has been of use to my literary friends.

1886                That summer Louis attended some courses at Portsmouth and I spent part of it at Cumberland Lodge, the home of Aunt Helena and Uncle Christian. Uncle Christian was the Ranger of Windsor Park and Cumberland Lodge was a delightful old house to live in in the middle of Windsor Great Park. Aunt Helena was a very cultivated woman and lent me many interesting books to read, English and French. She was, however, a busy woman and must sometimes have done her novel reading in a hurry. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* had just appeared and I found that Aunt Helena had not realized that they were one and the same person. She and her family had made long stays at Wolfsgarten. The sons were at home that summer; Christel, who died of typhoid in South Africa during the war, and Abby (who later on entered the German Army beginning by serving in the Hessian dragoons, he being the prospective heir to his [p.88] cousin, the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein Augustenburg Line, brother-in-law to the Emperor William II). Cousin Thora was nearly grown up and Louis was still in the schoolroom.

We had great fun together. I had Alice with me who was just beginning to walk - Aunt Helena's faithful lady-in-waiting, Emily Loch had a little niece of Alice's age to tea one afternoon and we thought it would be nice for the babies to play together. This idea was not a success, for after crawling towards each other, they proceeded to poke their fingers at each other's eyes and grab hold of each other's hair. I fancy each thought the other a live doll!

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

After a visit to Balmoral I returned to Germany.

1886

On August 22nd the news that a revolt had broken out in Bulgaria reached us, and Louis hurriedly arrived from England. The army had revolted and captured Sandro and Franzjos, who was staying with him and nobody knew what had become of them. At the outbreak of the Bulgarian-Serbian war, Franzjos wished to join his brother, but did not receive permission from the German authorities to do so unless he resigned from the German army, in which he, like his brother, had been serving. In the hope that he would be reinstated afterwards which, alas, did not happen he accepted this condition and entered the Bulgarian army, being placed, on Sandro's staff. On his return from Bulgaria, he was placed by my father a la suite of the Hessian 115th Regiment and Sandro was allowed [p.89] to continue a la suite of the "Weisse Dragoner" in which he had begun his military service.

On August 25th Sandro sent a telegram from Reni in Russian Bessarabia and Louis left to meet him at Lemberg. From there Sandro was recalled to Sofia, the mass of the people, backed by the government not being on the side of the military insurgents and having clamoured for his return. He found the situation an impossible one, as the Emperor of Russia was not prepared to back him, and on the 6th of September Sandro abdicated. He had been Prince of Bulgaria since April 1879. His uncle and godfather, Alexander II had suggested his election for Sandro was a great favourite of the Emperor's. He had been attached to his head-quarters during the Russo-Turkish war of '77 as a result of which Bulgaria had been made an independent Principality. As long as Alexander II lived, Sandro had his strongest support, but after his death this failed him. Alexander III, who had no personal liking for his young cousin, treated him with the greatest mistrust fostered by the influence of those who were working for Sandro's downfall.

Sandro had none of the born politician's subtlety and his talents were decidedly military ones. [p.90]

1886

This he proved during his victorious campaign against the Serbs in 1885. Though Sandro had been warned by an anonymous letter that a military revolt was threatening, he received so many of that kind of letter he took no notice of this one. In the middle of the night of August 21st, he was awakened by the noise of troops who surrounded the palace, and on looking out of the window was fired at. In vain he and Uncle Franz Joseph tried to leave the Palace, they were captured, placed in two separate carriages under military escort, carried off to the banks of the Danube where they were hurried on board his yacht. They had nothing but the clothes they stood up in and were kept close prisoners in a

MS62

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cabin, the heat of which was unbearable in that summer weather and when they tried to open a window the sentries threatened to shoot them. The steamer proceeded down the river till they came to the town of Reni where the prisoners were set on shore. It was only there that they were able to communicate with anyone and telegraph to their family. Not being allowed to remain on Russian territory, they had to proceed to Lemberg in Galicia, where they arrived in a very exhausted state and penniless. On September 10th, Sandro and Franzjoseph arrived at Darmstadt from Sofia, after the abdication, and were enthusiastically received by the [p.91] population. They joined us at Heiligenberg, where Liko arrived the same day, and Marie and Gustaf Erbach came over for a couple of nights. It was the first time all the brothers and sisters had lived together in their old home since more than twenty years.

1886

We went to Stuttgart for two days that October to visit King William and Queen Olga, a charming old lady, daughter of Nicholas I of Russia. She had adopted her brother Constantine's daughter, Vera, younger sister of Aunt Olga of Greece, who had been the Cinderella of the family, being a very plain and naughty little girl. In her new home, under her kind Aunt's influence she grew up a clever and pleasant person, though inclined to be somewhat eccentric. In spite of her cropped hair, mannish dress and a permanent pince-nez on her nose she had a decided, though ugly, likeness to her lovely sister. She married Duke Eugen of Wurtemberg but was left a widow a few years afterwards. Besides twin daughters she had a baby boy who died young, it was said, partly as a result of his doting mother having dressed him at [p.92]

**MS62**

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[Footnote]: All the details of his reign and the rebellion are described in the Adolf Koch's book *Furst Alexander von Bulgarien* Darmstadt 1887. Koch was a decent man and had been correspondent of the Koelnische Zeitung and received first hand material for his book from Uncle Sandro. Louis translated this book into English.



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

six months old in a little military uniform to be shown to her regiment at a review. Vera was almost a maniac on soldiers, having made a study of every stripe and button in all the armies of the world. At the same time she was given to writing poetry. When she had to attend a Court function her tiara was secured to head by an elastic and the instant the ceremony was over, she would pull it off and toss it on the sofa, like an old hat

1887                    That year Ernie came of age on his 18th birthday on November 25th and began his military service in the 115 (Leibgarderegiment). He and Louis hunted with the Darmstadt draghounds that winter and joined in many shooting parties. Amongst the various guests who came to shoot with my father was the old Duke of Nassau, whose country had been taken by the Prussians in 1866. He and my father-in-law were friends since their youth and in his old age the Duke inherited the throne of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, on the extinction of the male lines of Nassau Orange with King William II.

1887                    The year of 1887 in January Irene became engaged to our cousin Henry of Prussia. In February Papa gave a costume ball at the Alte Palais at which he and I wore our dresses of the Berlin Silver Wedding Ball, whilst Louis and Alex were dressed in costumes of the time of Charles I - she was only 15 - During that time Sandro was laid up in his parents' [p.93] house with smallpox which he must have caught at Marseilles while he was making a trip in the South of France. He lived with his parents all that winter and later at the Alte Palais. In April Louis and I went to Frankfurt for a couple of days for the "Reunion of the Standesherrn", a social meeting of these Princes and their families. There I was infected with typhoid and went down with it early in May. Alice was taken by Papa and the sisters to the Schloss during that time. I was laid up for a month, unable to see anything of Serge and Ella who had come for a visit. I was, however, sufficiently recovered to be able to go with the others to London for Grandmama's Jubilee, 15th of June. We lived at Buckingham Palace but little Alice and her cousin Feo Meningen were lodged by the Mistress of the Robes, the Duchess of Buccleugh in their old home in Whitehall, the garden of which extended to the Embankment, and they witnessed the Jubilee procession from there. Louis rode and I drove in the procession. Among the many relations present were Ella and Serge, Ella's Grand Maitresse pro.tem. Princess Zeneide Youssouppoff, lost a historical and very valuable diamond at the Mansion House Ball, but it was luckily found and returned a few days afterwards. Speaking of lost jewellery I have been told the tale of a great emerald drop belonging to Madame Sheremesteff (daughter of the Grand [p.94] Duchess Marie, daughter of Nicholas I), which she lost at a ball at the Winter Palace. More than a year afterwards it was shown to a jeweller in Petersburg who recognised it. The emerald had apparently been picked up on

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

the morning after its loss by one of the parquet polishers amongst broken bits of chandeliers. The man died months afterwards and when his wife was turning out the pockets of his coat, previous to selling it, she found the bit of green glass and showed it to a lady's maid who was taking tea with her. The maid having some knowledge of jewellery, realised it was not glass and they took it to the jeweller, who notified Madame Sheremeteff. I too have had a lucky experience in that line. Serge had given me a bracelet made of little linked pearls forming a chain and ending in a larger one which could be snapped on to the chain at any length desired. This bracelet I wore at a dance at the Club in Malta and discovered on the next morning that I had lost it. It was not found at the club and we sent a description of it to the Maltese jewellers. Some ten days afterwards one of them brought the clasp which had been shown him by a woman who wished to know if its setting was real gold. It appears that a workman passing in front of our house had picked up the bracelet and taken it home. It being carnival time, he thought it was some sham ornament and gave it to his children to play with. They fastened it round the neck [p.95] of their little dog and when it broke, the mother, looking at the clasp thought it might be of some value. Luckily only a small part of the linked pearls were lost and I was able to wear the bracelet again when the remainder was returned to me.

I shall not describe the Jubilee procession, Grandmama's grandson-in-law, Bernhardt Meiningen, Louis and Serge were given the Civil Grand Cross of the Bath on Jubilee Day. Except the procession and the Service at the Abbey, I saw nothing of the festivities in London as I was not strong enough yet to take part in them and joined Grandmama at Windsor instead. All the foreign relations in turn came to Windsor for lunch or dinner. Uncle Fritz's throat was troublesome already and though he looked well and handsome on horseback in the Jubilee Procession, he consulted Sir Morrel Mackenzie, the great English throat specialist on account of his persistent cough and hoarseness. I shall not enter into the vexed question of Sir Morrel Mackenzie's subsequent treatment of his illness, nor the violent discussions with the German specialists who had no doubt it was cancer, whilst Sir Morrel, for long, held the opposite point of view. Can it be wondered at that Aunt Vicky believed in the more favourable diagnosis? Papa has told me many details of the ugly political intrigues that went on during Uncle Fritz's illness, with the object of preventing him from succeeding to the throne. (The old [p.96] Emperor only lived half a year more.) It caused a sad dissension between William the heir and his parents.

We returned to Germany with Ernie in July and in August Louis was appointed Commander of the battleship *Dreadnought* in the Mediterranean, of which Sir Harry Stephenson, Uncle Bertie's friend was captain. He left for Malta on the sixth of that month. In October, I paid a visit to Cousin Elizabeth

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

Anhalt at Dessau. She had lost her husband two years after her marriage and her only child Antoinette, was half a month older than Alice. None of the members of the Anhalt family were there at the time of my visit and I only made the acquaintance of her youngest brother-in-law Aribert, after he had married Louie Holstein. Dessau itself was a tiny town with a big Schloss in its centre. There were many small "Schlosschen" and pretty parks belonging to the Duke, in the neighbourhood. Elizabeth lived in one called the "Georgium". She took me to see those various places. The principal one was Worlitz, dating from the XVIII century. There were many souvenirs of Lord Nelson in the house; Lord Nelson with the Hamiltons on his return from the Mediterranean to England had travelled down the Elbe from Dresden. The river flows through the Principality and Dessau lies almost on the banks of the river. The then Duke, who had previously visited England, was a great admirer of Nelson's and had offered the party refreshments in a pavilion he had on the banks of [p.97] the river. The park of Worlitz had been laid out by English gardeners who had planted the then fashionable shrubberies in it. The Dessau people still spoke of these plantations as "Die Schrubbe". A quaint thing in the park was a small artificial hill with a shaft going up the centre in which on occasions Bengal lights were burned, thus giving it a resemblance to a volcano. Near another place was a lake where the last beaver colony in Germany existed. They were, of course, carefully protected. In this house was a collection of small trees that they had gnawed through. This house, the name of which I forget, had been inhabited by an eccentric bachelor brother of Nelson's admirer. The old Prince was in the habit of riding out every morning followed by a string of grooms mounted on all his riding horses. In his small bedroom he used to assemble a number of the villagers whom his aide-de-camp had to give lessons to, whilst he sat on his bed with a whip in his hand with which he lashed any peasant who showed signs of falling asleep.

Elizabeth knew that once the old gentleman had been bound and robbed by burglars, so that when we visited the house, she asked the custodian for some details. "Well", he said, "It was like this; the burglars got into the Princes' bedroom at night and bound him and the housekeeper, whilst they gathered up all they could lay hands on". Elizabeth much puzzled asked him how the housekeeper came to be in the [p.98] Prince's room, which was explained in a frank and natural manner by the custodian, leaving Elizabeth aghast, while I burst out laughing at the innocence of her question.

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.99]

## CHAPTER V

The P & O Boats in 1887 99. - First impression of Malta 100-103. - Cholera 7 sham death 103-4. - Our Maltese house 105. - The Edinburgh cousins 106. - Officers of the *Dreadnought* 107. - Christmas at San Antonio Launch of the *Melita* 108. - Maltese society 110. - Prince falls ill with Malta fever, Taormina 110-111. - Wedding of Princess Irene of Charlottenburg 111-112. - Prince Alexander of Bulgaria's engagement broken off 112-113. - Princess Bismarck laments the Emperor William's ingratitude to her husband in a conversation with the Empress Frederick 113-114. - The castle of Friederichsof 114. - The Empress and her children 115.- Bayreuth in its early days 115. - Trip on the Eider Kanal 115. -Illness and death of Prince Alexander of Hesse 116. - Cold winter of 1889. Princess Henriette of Hesse-Cassel and her husband Professor Esmarch 117. - Death of Queen Marie of Bavaria; her sons, King Ludwig and King Otto 118. - Mixed marriages 118. - Sunday service in the Royal Chapel at Athens 118. - Madness of the Bavarian King 119-120. - Princess Louise of Coburg's burned hat 120. - Birth of Princess Louise 120-121. Medical etiquette 122. - Princess Louise's Christening and Godparents 122. -

1887

On the 18th of October I left with Alice for Malta. We first went to London and I went to say goodbye to Grandmama at Windsor. We embarked on board the P & O *Coromandel* on the 20th having just heard that Louis would not reach Malta before the middle of November but it was too late to alter my plans. The P & O liners were still somewhat old-fashioned in their arrangements. There were no separate switches to the electric lights in the cabins. In the evening at 10 p.m. a warning was sounded and at 10.30 the lights were turned out. When the weather was bad, as it was on our departure, the sea sick passengers lit candles in the wall brackets. We only stopped for half an hour at Gibraltar which we reached on the 25th. On the following day, in the Gulf of Lyons, it blew a gale and the washing stand, which was of the old-fashioned kind, a semi-circular little cupboard with a jug and basin only hooked [p.100] on to the wall, bodily lifted itself off the hooks and joined all my belongings rolling about on the floor. Of course the crockery was smashed and the same thing went on in most of the cabins. We had a lot of iron girders for Malta on board and as these began to shift we had to lie to till they were secured.

I made the acquaintance of a few of my fellow-travellers. I remember two little Miss Latouches, a Captain and Mrs. Fortescue and a very nice Miss Stuart Wortley, all on their way to India. The latter's sister-in-law Mrs. Frank Stuart Wortley (later Lady Wharncliffe) was also on board going out to meet her husband serving as lieutenant in the Mediterranean fleet in the *Colossus* under Captain Cyprian Bridge. The couple were very badly off and she made many of

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

her dresses herself. We often saw each other at Malta and her husband was one of my regular dance partners.

1887

After a nine days voyage we reached Malta on October 29th. There I was met by Colonel Slade who took me to the Palace where I stopped with Sir Lintorn Simmons, the Governor and his wife and daughter, known to everybody at "Totty". Sir Lintorn was a distinguished artillery man and a friend of the Empress Eugenie's. He was a fine looking old man with bushy side whiskers.

Malta has not much changed since that time I first saw it 53 years ago, in its general features, and the goats were perhaps more numerous and met with in every street. The changes have all been to the good but life was more leisurely there [p.101] than now, as of course, motor cars did not exist. There were not many private carriages, though a good many people had pony carts, and "carozzas" were used by rich and poor alike. Food, on the whole, was bad, refrigerating stores were introduced a good deal later by the Army Service. Fresh meat was imported in the guise of little grey cattle brought from Odessa - it was generally very tough - and fat tailed sheep used to be kept in the so-called "ditches". Nearly everybody drank goat's milk, but Malta fever must not have been so prevalent or virulent then, as it became later. Now, after very able research work, it has been discovered that the goats were the carriers of it and no English would dream of drinking their milk. Little care was taken to keep the goats clean and, as a result, milk and cream had a very goaty taste. The flavour of the small strawberries, which nobody objected to eating then and which were plentiful in spring, was ruined if you put cream on them. It was difficult to get good white bread, the ordinary bread was very sour, though nothing compared to the bread of Sicily and South Italy. Vegetables were plentiful, but there were no nursery gardens where you could buy nice flowers. Wild flowers, some violets, simple red and cream-coloured roses were all you could buy. I used to get the latter from the gardener of the big cemetery and Aunt Marie bought fine violets from the madhouse. The gardens of San Antonio and of my friends the Prices at Villa Frere, however, were plentifully stocked with a variety of flowers which were generously given to acquaintances. [p.102] The public and private gardens were mostly planted with the ordinary red geraniums, though if one tipped the Custodian one could get something better from the Botanical Gardens.

Uncle Affie had returned with the fleet (except the *Dreadnought*) the day I arrived. On November 1st I moved to San Antonio, which was his residence then, as it had been when he was Captain of the *Sultan* in the seventies, and his second girl was named Melita, the old Latin name for Malta. Aunt Marie and the family only arrived on November 8th. Uncle Affie and the Simmons were helpful advising me about househunting, but I was very grateful when on

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

November 2nd my father's aide-de-camp, Albert von Grancy arrived. When Papa heard that Louis would not be at Malta when I got there, he dispatched him to my assistance. Having until then, never moved about without a lady-in-waiting or a gentleman to accompany me if Louis were not there, I was quite inexperienced in practical shopping and shy of calling upon people.

My first day at San Antonio was marred by the complaint that so frequently attacks English people coming out to Malta and which goes amongst them by the name of "Malta tummy". Cholera had appeared for the last time, and only in two villages, in Malta that summer. The last of the few fatal cases having been taken place just before I landed, Uncle Alfred was worried about me and gave me a strong anti-cholera mixture to take every evening. It did not have the desired [p.103] effect and it was not till Aunt Marie arrived, who prescribed a large dose of castor oil before going on with the mixture, that I was cured.

A propos of Cholera it is a well known fact that people afraid of it can succumb to a kind of sham cholera, chiefly due to the effect of fear on the nerves of the stomach. A case in point was an old Maltese lady, who had fled from Valetta to her country house where she locked herself up and took every precaution against infection and died of sham cholera. The people who succumbed to cholera had to be buried quickly. Cases have been known, when they have revived after the profound syncope which attacks the patient. The fear of being buried alive, which has haunted so many people, but is on the decline, is due to the tales of people having been buried alive in times of cholera. During this last outbreak in Malta a woman, apparently dead, was taken from the hospital and placed in the ordinary rock-cut grave. The wooden coffin (wood is expensive in Malta) being removed as usual. When they were going to put the stone slab over the grave the corpse came to life, leapt out of the grave and ran away shrieking, only to be recaptured and reinterned in the cholera hospital.

A custom, which I think has now quite died out in Malta, was to convey the dead in an open coffin to the cemetery. The hearse was open too and was driven at a smart trot. I [p.104] remember meeting the funeral procession of a young girl, whose face was not even covered, she looked very peaceful, but her folded hands were shaking due to the jolting of the road.

Many years afterwards, the able German doctor who was attending Dolla at the birth of her first child, at which I assisted, told me of his experiences during the great war when cholera broke out amongst the troops in Poland. A Russian prisoner suffering from cholera was brought into his hospital and clamoured for a drink of boiling water. He drank tumblersfull of it and recovered. This was the remedy, he explained, used in his village where cholera

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

was apparently endemic. The doctor came to the conclusion that this treatment was absolutely right. Cholera drains the whole body of its fluid, depression of circulation and heart failure follow in consequence. The boiling water, taken in quantities, replacing the lost liquid and the heat of it raising the body temperature thereby stimulates the circulation. The doctor made use of this discovery in the treatment of a number of cases with great success.

1887

On November 17th Louis arrived at Malta in the *Dreadnought* and on the 21st we moved into our furnished house Number 1 Molino Avento, which I had found in the meantime. It was a little corner house and as there was no room for a nursery in it we rented a flat next door, breaking a communication to it through the wall. Maltese landlords are still very accommodating on this point, as all inner walls are [p.105] built of stones, easily taken out and put back. The furniture was of the scantiest in very bad taste and in worse repair. When a guest came to tea one day, all four legs of the little arm chair on which she was sitting broke away and she and the seat of it came down on the floor. The rooms were lit by gas and in Louis' little study the ottoman which filled up one wall, had a straw mattress covered in red twill, very hard to sit on. Staircase and landing were so narrow that when we had a few guests to dinner, they had to follow each other in single file from the drawing room upstairs to the dining room on the ground floor, the door of which could not be shut till the last guest had drawn his chair up to the table - and we could only seat six persons.

The situation of the house was a dusty and draughty one, as all the sand from the rampart and little public garden before it was blown into our windows. The old windmill from which the street took its name still stood wingless on the neighbouring bastion.

Our coachman, an Englishman reared in an Austrian racing-stable and not taller than a jockey, had been with Louis since our engagement and joined us in Malta with his family the following year when they lived in the "Molino".

Louis' work as Commander kept him most of the day on board but I often went to San Antonio for some hours or the Edinburgh picked me up at Valetta. Maurice Burke son of the Lord Mayo, [p.106] who was murdered as Viceroy of India, commanded the Admiralty yacht the *Surprise* and acted as Aide-de-Camp to Uncle Alfred. He was a great friend of ours and how much he was beloved by the Edinburgh family, Missy (Queen of Rumania) has told in her reminiscences.

The flag lieutenant was Colin Keppel, son of the little old Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Harry. The Admiral's secretary was Mr. Rickard, who had been his secretary for years. Uncle Affie's flagship was the *Alexandra* and George of

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

Wales (King George V) was then serving on board as a young lieutenant. All his free time he spent at San Antonio or playing polo on the Marsa.

I often took the three Edinburgh cousins out riding on their lovely ponies that used to gallop along the hard roads while I followed at a sober trot, as my pony had so hard a mouth that I never dare let him go into a canter for fear of his bolting, when I could not have pulled him up.

Ducky, my future sister-in-law, the second of the girls, was then thirteen and somewhat farouche, as she was shy. Missy, a remarkably pretty girl was a year older, Sandra a chubby little thing, and Bee just a year older than my Alice. These two infants used to play together in the private garden, where Aunt Marie and I generally had our tea for it was a very fine autumn and winter, rain only falling at night generally. [p.107] It was a painful moment for the two mothers when one day Bee set up an awful howl, crying out that Alice had bitten her - which, unfortunately was true. What they had quarrelled about could not be discovered. Bee was somewhat critical at that early age already, declaring that Alice ate butter and bread, not bread and butter.

Of course I knew all the officers of Louis' ship well, and especially the first Lieutenant Mr. Wingfield and Mr. Woods, the parson, who rose to be chaplain of the Fleet before he retired. Louis' great friend, since they had served together in the *Inconstant* was the second surgeon on board, Dr. Gipps. The first Lieutenant of the *Surprise*, also a friend of ours, was Seymour Fortescue, for many years naval equerry to King Edward and King George.

Early in December the *Dreadnought* recommissioned and Captain N. Digby relieved Stevenson in command. Colonel Slade, who received me on arrival and his wife, were near neighbours of ours at Molino Avento, and another couple we often met that winter was the Lieutenant Governor and his wife, the Walter Hely Hutchinsons. Uncle Affie as Commander-in-Chief gave many dinner parties, but always at San Antonio. Louis and I were almost invariably asked to these, besides often dining en famille.

We went out a great deal at Valetta that winter, attending the balls at the Palace and those at the Club. [p.108] Hardly anybody we knew lived at Sliema, which in those days was still a comparatively small place, one country house, surrounded by a large garden where now the Sliema Club and lawn tennis courts are. It was inhabited by the Hughes Halletts, two bachelor brothers - one a retired colonel, and the other a retired captain (Royal Navy) and a spinster sister. In the only half-way comfortable hotel Aunt Louise and Uncle Lorne took lodging when they came out to Malta for some weeks early in January. We saw each



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

other almost Daily.

Christmas Eve we spent merrily at San Antonio where there was a large Christmas tree and Aunt Marie loaded everyone with presents. Of course I went aboard the *Dreadnought* for service on Christmas Day and round the mess decks afterwards.

It was during that stay in Malta or the following one, that I was present at the Launch of the third class cruiser *Melita*, the last British man-of-war built in the Malta dockyard. Crowds assembled to witness the scene and in true Southern fashion clapped vigorously instead of cheering. Aunt Marie performed the launching ceremony and afterwards there was a big lunch in one of the dockyard sheds. Uncle Alfred had to make a speech. There was a painful moment when he stuck in the middle of it and the company got up, thinking he had finished and at his bidding had to sit down again to listen to the end. [p.109]

1888

On New Year's Day Louis and I went by train to Citta Vecchia on the new and only railway line in Malta. We kept up this custom whenever we spent a New Year's Day in Malta. That evening we drove out to San Antonio to dinner, seeing every village and church illuminated in honour of the Pope's Jubilee. Soon afterwards the *Dreadnought* sailed for a four weeks visit to Greece. Louis was back by Carnival week. There was the usual big fancy dress ball at the Palace and a masked ball given at the "Borsa". Carnival now-a-days is not what it was then. Not only the whole population of Valetta, but the peasants from all the neighbouring villages crowded the streets during three days the Carnival lasted, dancing not only on the Palace Square but in the streets too, some of them to the music of the native bagpipes, the bag being the inflated skin of a pig. There was the usual procession, battle of confetti which we witnessed from the Palace balcony. Many of the Maltese nobility did not, habitually mix with the English community, but all of them made a point of attending the Palace fancy dress ball, where a number of them danced old Maltese Square dances. Some of the Maltese families we met more frequently and whom I liked were the Testa Ferrata Olivier. The Baroness was a very good looking woman. The [p.110] Testa Ferrata Arbelas and of course, the fascinating little Baroness Marie Inguanes (premier noble of Malta), her sister who later married Captain Chesney and their mother, Baroness d'Amigo, an Englishwoman. The "little" Baroness, as she was then already called, is still alive at the moment I am writing, as is also my old acquaintance, Mrs. Price. She and Captain Price, a retired naval officer, were the owners of the Villa Frere, whose delightful gardens I have already mentioned. The present Lord Strickland, whose mother, a Maltese lady was still alive then, was a young man, who used to appear in Oxford volunteer uniform on certain occasions. His name could be found in the Army list under Della - his

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

title being Baron Strickland della Catena.

The chief link between the Maltese and the English community were the Dingli. He was the chief Justice and his wife, Lady Dingli was an Englishwoman, a Charteris by birth. She played a leading part in society and was an entertaining, well-read woman and an excellent tell of ghost-stories, the scene of some of which lay in Malta.

1888 Towards the end of February, Louis fell ill with Malta fever which ran its usual wearisome course; the fever was very high for the first weeks, then became more or less intermittent. Hoping that a change of air might put an end to it we went on March 21st for ten days to Taormina in Sicily accompanied by Dr. Gipps, where we put up at an hotel, Bellevue [p.111] the old Dominican convent had not yet been converted into an hotel. There was a good deal of brigandage still in Sicily at that time and the authorities had sent some carabinieri to see that we were not molested. The change of air, however, did not rid Louis of his feverish attacks and it was decided that he should be given leave to go to his parents for a more complete change. The Commander-in Chief has the power of giving leave to his officers to visit any part of the Continent of Europe. To return to England the Admiralty's permission must be asked. We left on April 11th with Alice. Alfred Alfred Edinburgh who had spent his Easter holidays with his parents, he living at Coburg for his lessons, went with us as far as Rome. We broke our journey at Florence where we spent the day with Grandmama and Aunt Beatrice at the Villa Palmieri.

After a month at the Heiligenberg, Louis was at last sufficiently well again to rejoin his ship, whilst I spent the summer partly with my parents-in-law and partly with papa.

1888 On the 24th May I assisted at Irene's marriage to Henry of Prussia at Charlottenburg near Berlin, where Uncle Fritz and Aunt Vicky were living. It was a sad wedding. Uncle Fritz was in the last stage of his illness. He attended it in uniform, but with the collar open, as he had to breathe through a tube. He was quite unable to speak and would write anything he had to say on little slips of paper. [p.112] The recently widowed Empress Augusta was also in a bad state of health. Shaking all over with palsy, she assisted at the wedding in a bath chair.

1888 I had been charged by Sandro with a private mission to William for the former's situation was a very awkward one at the moment. With the more than cordial agreement of Aunt Vicky and the consent of Uncle Fritz, he had become privately engaged to their daughter Vicky, some time before. Prince Bismarck,

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

however, supported by William, was firmly opposed to the marriage. It would take too long to enter into details on the subject. Tho' poor Aunt Vicky still dreamt of a marriage taking place at what was, practically the deathbed of Uncle Fritz, Sandro had quite realized the impossibility of it, but he could not withdraw from the engagement with a girl who was deeply in love with him, unless he could prove to her and her mother, that marriage with him would place them both in an impossible position. I had the desired interview with William, and he agreed to the suggestion I made him, that as Uncle Fritz' life was very near its end, when the moment came he should write Sandro a letter declaring, that he, William, could under no condition agree to the marriage. This letter Sandro could then forward to Aunt Vicky, withdrawing from his engagement. Unfortunately, immediately after Uncle Fritz' death (on June 15), in the high and mighty Hohenzollern fashion, William sent the Prussian diplomatic [p.113] representative to my father-in-law to announce that all question of a marriage must be at an end, as the Emperor would never countenance it. My poor father-in-law was furious at the impertinence of such a message being delivered to him, as he had never asked for the hand of a Prussian princess for one of his sons. The letter Sandro received from William ignored the fact of the engagement and was, therefore, no help to break it off in the desired manner. Grandmama with whom Sandro had become a great favourite and who was full of sympathy for Aunt Vicky, was privately equally indignant as was Uncle Alexander.

How badly William treated his mother after his father's death is no secret to the world any longer. I can recollect how William had been her favourite son in his youth and how well they understood each other until he, the future heir to the throne, came under Prince Bismarck's influence. When Prince and Princess Bismarck called on Aunt Vicky to take leave of her after Bismarck's downfall, the Princess lamented to her how ungratefully this loyal servant of the throne had been treated. Aunt Vicky has told me that her reply was :-

[p.114] "When one has trained a young man to have no respect or regard for his parents, how can one expect him to treat his ministers with more consideration?" The Prince remained silent during the whole of this conversation with his wife.

Aunt Vicky after her widowhood went to live at the Schloss at Homburg whist she was building Friedrichshof and laying out of it's grounds. There she assembled all the art treasures she had collected with love and understanding. Often have I visited her there where Sophie, Tino and her beloved Greek grandchildren would stop with her nearly every summer. The only drawback to staying at Friedrichshof was, that Aunt Vicky so loved her beautiful things,

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

which were distributed all over the place, even in the guest's bedrooms, that one hardly dared sit down on a sofa for fear of spoiling it. Tino was specially irritated by her instructions not to damage anything in the rooms. One day when Ernie was there, he challenged him to break the spell by turning somersaults over the priceless XVIII century bedspread. After the performance, Tino said he felt a freer man. When Henry once sat down recklessly on one of the valuable chairs, which broke down under him, Aunt Vicky was nearly reduced to tears!

[p.115] Tho' she became, afterwards, more or less reconciled with William, having so many interests in art, science and literature in common, she was sincerely devoted to her second son, and speaking once to me, said: "Tho' Henry often provokes me, he has a good heart, and alas, William has no heart at all."

Charlotte, the eldest of her daughters, was very severely brought up and married young. The three youngest girls Aunt Vicky adored. Mossy was the most unselfish of them.

1888

Ella and Serge returned with us to Seehein after Irene's wedding, Alix was now the only unmarried girl at home, and as Miss Jackson had left us, Fraulein von Fabrice of good family and still young, who for a short time had been governess with the Holstein cousins was appointed by Papa Alix's lady-in waiting in order that she should be a guide and companion, to her. They became very good friends and even after both of them married continued to correspond regularly.

With Papa I went to Bayreuth that summer, to hear *Parcifal*. These were still the early days of electric appliances and the "Graal" was lit up by a bulb inside it, the green string carrying the wire being visible against the singer's coat. I have never seen Bayreuth again. [p.116] In September I paid a short visit to Irene at Kiel during Henry's absence at sea. She was newly established at the Schloss in a set of rooms with a dull outlook, in a wing facing the Entrance gates. The fine, big room overlooking the harbour, had always been reserved for the Emperor, but Henry had the right of using them whenever he gave a big party. Whilst I was there Irene took me for a trip in a launch up the old Eider Kanal, which wound prettily, almost like a river, through the country. When the Kiel Kanal was made, the little old canal was filled up.

That August my father-in-law began to complain of a pain in his back and began to steadily lose weight. Sandro persuaded him to see a good doctor, who confided to Sandro, that he feared that his father was suffering from cancer in the kidney. The illness made steady progress, tho' luckily he did not suffer much pain. Luckily both he and my mother-in-law did not know much about

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

physiology and they believed the doctor's explanation that his suffering came from a floating kidney so that his death came as a terrible shock to her, for they were a most devoted couple.

1889 Louis got a month's leave in October to see him, but as it was inadvisable to alarm my father-in-law by his prolonging his leave, he returned to Malta, taking me and Alice with him. We were recalled already in December and arrived just before my father-in-law died, on the 15th. [p.117]

1889 Louis had so much to do arranging family affairs, that he had to go on half pay in January 1889, and we spent the winter with my father.

1889 It was a very severe one. On the 8th of February Louis and I started for Kiel, but got no further than Frankfurt, owing to the railway lines being blocked by snowdrifts. It was not until the 11th that we were able to travel and on our arrival at Kiel we were met by Henry and Irene in a sleigh. Louis had to go straight on to Copenhagen, as it was advisable to go before the ice made the crossing of the steamers impossible. (He had to return my father-in-law's Elephant to King Christian IX). In Copenhagen too, snowdrifts prevented his departure for a while. At Kiel the schoolboys were skating round the battleships lying in the harbour before the Schloss. It was during that visit that I made the acquaintance of Uncle Christian's elderly sister, Princess Henriette and of her husband Professor Esmarch, the distinguished physician and surgeon, author of the best book on First Aid. He was a charming man and had a very pleasant clever daughter by his first marriage, whom Aunt Vicky was very fond of. Princess Henriette and the Professor seemed devoted to each other and she was a doting mother to their only child, a son, who, as is so often the case with children who have been spoilt in their youth, was no particular credit to them. [p.118]

1889 Spring and summer we spent at the Heiligenberg. In May that year my grandmother's youngest sister, Queen Marie of Bavaria died. I have seen her in my childhood. She had married King Max I, of Bavaria, and their two sons were King Ludwig II, the patron of Wagner, whose latter years were clouded by madness, and King Otto I who had been insane since his youth. King Otto succeeded his brother, his cousin Prince Luitpold was Regent until he succeeded him at his death. In the early days when the Queen was married, the rift between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant churches was not as great as now. She was a Protestant and only turned Roman Catholic after her sons were grown up. Princess Elizabeth of Bavaria, her contemporary, married King Frederick William IV of Prussia, she being a Roman Catholic and he a Protestant, this being reversed in the case of my great uncle the Grand Duke of Hesse and his

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

wife and none of them changed their religion. Another case in point was that of King Otho, the first King of Greece, the brother of King Max of Bavaria and his Protestant wife, Queen Amelie. Andrea's father has told me, how the Palace chapel at Athens was used by the King for Mass every Sunday morning, after which the Queen had her Protestant service in it. This obliged the King's Priests to reconsecrate the chapel every Sunday afternoon.

[p.119] My father's brother, Uncle William was about the age of King Louis II and a great admirer of his. He never would believe that his cousin was really insane and declared the latter's sad and mysterious death - he and the doctor appointed to watch over him were found drowned together in the Lake which surrounded the castle in which the King was interned - was all due to the machinations of Prince Luitpold. The madness of those two Bavarian Kings was considered to have come into the family through their Grandmother, Louis I wife, a Princess of Saxe Hildburghausen [Saxe Hildburghausen], the last of that branch of the Saxon family, in which there had been several cases of madness. Undeniably, however, there was a certain streak of eccentricity also in the Ducal branch of the Bavarian family, though it never amounted to madness.

1889                   The poor Empress Elisabeth's eccentricities are well known. Her son, the Crown Prince Rudolph's tragic end, together with Baroness Vetzera at Mayerling, took place in January of this year. I have no first hand information about these details.

I knew Stephanie, his wife, since our visits to Brussels in our childhood. I never considered her clever then, or after I had seen her again many years later did I find cause to reverse my opinion. Her elder sister Louise, whose husband Philip of Coburg was the brother of the later King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, was an amiable tho' strange person. Her life [p.120] ended in great poverty after she had spent all her large fortune and gone off with a man no better than an adventurer. At one time she was interned in a sanatorium where, to her disgust, she was greeted by a young and mad relation with the words: "Tiens, Vous aussi ici ma Tante!" Some of her queerness can be explained because of a bad accident she had had falling down a cliff in the Tyrol, which had brought on severe concussion. She had a passion for hats, and once, when on a visit to Aunt Marie at the Rosenau, there being no place any more in her cupboard for them, they were pinned up in rows to the curtain while the best one was placed on the top of an iron stove. Unfortunately the weather, turning cold, the stove was lit and the hat came to a smelly end.

1889                   I spent the summer very quietly. Elisabeth Anhalt with her little girl Antoinette (later Princess Frederick of Schaumburg Lippe) paid me a short visit

MS62

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1889 and left the day before Louise was born. The baby appeared a fortnight too soon, as a result I think, of driving on a rough road to the Felsberg with Elisabeth. The nurse, Mrs. Patterson, whom Grandmama kindly sent out to me, had only reached Darmstadt on the previous evening. Louis sent the carriage post haste at night to fetch her. The old coachman had great difficulty in rousing anybody at the New Palace. He rang and insistently banged at the door. At last Anna Barbenich, the housekeeper, [p.121] came down and hurried off to call Mrs. Patterson. In the corridor she met Frau Von Seckendorff, Irene's lady-in-waiting, who was also lodging there (Irene was at Seeheim with Papa) and whom the loud knocking had awakened. Both she and Mrs. Patterson were stout women. Anna Barbenich in her excitement, told Frau Von Seckendorff, in English, to go at once to the Heiligenberg. The lady had some difficulty in convincing her, that she was not the person required. Mrs. Patterson was a trained midwife and a delightful character. She attended me also at the birth of Georgie and Dickie. Grandmama, who was much displeased at the way Aunt Vicky was mismanaged at Berlin when William was born with a twisted and powerless left arm - had a prejudice against German Accoucheurs and nurses and always had sent an English doctor and nurse to attend to Mamma, when her children were born. She did the same for me, paying all expenses. She sent Dr. Champneys, who also attended me for Georgie and Dickie, but he did not arrive till two days later on this first occasion and meanwhile our family physician Dr. Eigenbrodt had brought Dr. Hoffman from Darmstadt to assist at the birth.

1889 Conforming to correct doctor's etiquette Champneys could not take me over from Hoffmann though he lived in the house and Hoffmann in Darmstadt. Hoffmann would solemnly [p.122] come to me and offer "the Herr Kollege" also to feel my pulse. Champneys was a renowned and busy gynaecologist in London and left as soon as he was sure everything was all right.

Unlike Alice, who was a fine sturdy baby, Louise was rather a miserable little object, and the nickname "Shrimp" which Louis gave her remained attached to her during her childhood.

On August 9th she was christened by Hoffprediger Bender in the Terrassensaal, where my sister May had been christened before her. Her godparents were Papa, Sandro, Aunt Marie Edinburgh and Irene.

Uncle Bertie came from Homburg to dine with us that summer. Every year, during his cure there he used to visit Papa and go to the Rosenhohe, where he placed a wreath on Mamma's coffin. Some of us visited him regularly for lunch at Homburg.

**MS62**

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## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

[p.123]

## CHAPTER VI

Prince appointed to the command of the *Scout* 123. - Winter at Malta 124. - Grand Duke of Hesse and Princess Alix come on a visit 124. - Francesco Zanotti the butler 125-126. - Return to Darmstadt 127. - Stay at Illinskoje 1890, 127-128-129-130. - The Illinskoje neighbours 131. - Archaeological research 132. - Winter of 1891 at Malta - The Duke of Cambridge attends a concert 132. - Sports at Malta 133-134. - Officers of the *Scout* 134. - Stay at Balmoral in 1891 - Launching of the *Sicilia* at Venice 136-137. - Mrs Savoury meets King of Italy 138. - "Battenburg course indicator" 139. Sudden illness and death of the Grand Duke Louis IV 140-141. - Prince Henry and Prince William of Hesse and their wives 142.

1889

On October 1st Louis was appointed to the command of the small cruiser *Scout* and went to England before joining her at Malta. As we thought the baby too young for such a long journey I left both the children at Darmstadt and started off alone for Malta on November 6th. I travelled via Marseilles, continuing my journey from there in the French steamer *Canrobert* which lay for a day at Tunis. Terence Bourke, Maurice Bourke's brother, showed me over the town and gave me lunch in his Moorish house. As we had not yet taken a house at Malta, Admiral Sir Alexander Buller, superintendant of the dockyard, put me up in his Admiralty House. I stayed with him and his family for nearly three weeks. The eldest son, Henry, who later on commanded the King's yachts for many years, was a midshipman in the fleet, the only daughter a very attractive young girl and very popular. She afterwards married Captain Turner, a military man, and I am the godmother of their son Victor, who is called after me.

[p.124] Uncle Affie was no longer Commander-in-Chief. His successor was Sir Anthony Hoskins, whose flag lieutenant was Mark Kerr. The *Scout* was not yet out of dockyard hands and the officers were living in the old hulk, the *Hibernia* which lay in the Dockyard Creek. The *Hibernia* was in charge of a commander, who, with his wife had quarters on board her, an inconvenient arrangement, as they had to clear out of the after cabin every time a court martial was held on board.

Louis was very proud, of course, of his first command, and I got to know the officers and even most of the crew very well. His first lieutenant was "Bertie" Savory, who in the following summer married Miss Kate Worthington, the niece of the American Consul at Malta. She and I have been friends since those days.

1890

In January influenza broke out in Malta - the first appearance of this

MS62

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epidemic in Europe - since the middle of the century. It started in Russia and Ella wrote me that half Petersburg was down with it and that it attacked people so suddenly that their legs would give way under them and they would have to sit down in the street. It was pretty bad in Malta and the sister of Mrs. Barron, whose husband was a colonel in the artillery and whom I knew died of it. Louis too was laid up with it and several of our servants.

Several of the relations were at Malta that winter - [p.125] Liko, who was yachting in the Mediterranean, spent a week with us end of February. Henry, who was in command of the cruiser *Irene* arrived with Irene on board on the 2nd of that month from Port Said. He left before Irene, who stayed on till March being lodged at the Palace.

1890 On February 13th Papa arrived with Alix, accompanied by Wilhelmine and her brother Albert Grancy. I was able to put the two former up in the quaint house we had taken that winter. It was a one story building high up on the ramparts on the road over the Porta Reale called Strada Regina. It was one of the few houses in Valetta that had a garden. The entrance door was in a high wall pierced by shuttered windows, but when you came up the staircase, you were in the garden, the house lying quite at the back of it. There were some nice old pieces of furniture in it, some of which we bought before leaving, and I possess them to this day.

The large chimney opened straight on the roof and the full moon shone down mine and I could not make out at first why the grate seemed lit up by a ghostly light, till bending down and looking up, I saw the moon. The garden was a great pleasure to me and it was there I began to take an interest in gardening. Francesco Zannotti, our faithful butler, had a much luckier hand than I. Anything he planted grew. Francesco was a native of what had been the Austrian Tyrol, of the part inhabited by [p.126] Italians. He had entered my father-in-law's service as a soldier servant when the former was commanding Austrian troops in what is now North Italy. When his military service was over he remained with my father-in-law as a footman, and when Louis and I married, he was promoted and became our butler. He had been wounded in the arm by a lance thrust at the battle of Solferino, which he would dramatically describe to us with many truly Italian gestures. He was a good-looking man with black, afterwards grey, side-whiskers and was enormously strong.

The children adored "Bando" as they called him. He married Franz Josef's English nursery governess, who was superior in class and education to him, for "Bando" always remained a true peasant at heart. They had two daughters one of whom became my ladies' maid later on, and married Louis'

MS62

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naval valet Mansfield, the other, Madelaine, was Alix's maid under Orchie and remained her maid when Alix became Empress of Russia. She followed her to Tobolsk but was not allowed to see her in captivity there.

Madelaine escaped from St. Petersburg on her return from Siberia having gone through the Bolshevik form of marriage with the old French Court Coiffeur Delcroix. As soon as this "French" couple reached Paris they separated again and Madelaine, ultimately, became Ernie's housekeeper at the New Palace. [p.127]

1890 I think Papa and Alix enjoyed their stay at Malta. We were asked out to many dinners and dances, picnics, etc. Mark Kerr used to be lent by the Admiral to make himself useful to my guests and Alix nicknamed him "her Malta aide-de-camp."

The new governor of Malta Sir Henry Smythe and his wife arrived on March 1st. His predecessor, Torrens, I had seen nothing of, as his term of office was a short one and he had returned to England, where he died. Papa and party, together with Irene, left Malta on March 3rd in the *Surprise* in which Sir Anthony Hoskins kindly sent them as far as Naples. I accompanied them there and Louis was given leave to do so too. We arrived at Naples in a heavy snow storm, and spent three days together, visiting the town under the guidance of Mr. Rolfe, the Consul general, a great friend of Uncle Affie and Aunt Marie's, who knew the town and all its sights and art treasures inside out. Early in April Louis was sent off in the *Scout* to fetch Eddie (afterwards Duke of Clarence) in Egypt and take him to Athens, and I left on the 4th for Darmstadt via Brindisi. In those days the outward bound P. & O. used to touch at Malta and then Brindisi, where they embarked or disembarked the Indian Mail passengers. It was very convenient for me, for the steamer would be fairly empty on the trip, and I have gone that way several times with all [p.128] the children. Brindisi was yet more dull and dusty then than it is now. Alice was delighted to see me once more, but little Louise was rather shy for a couple of hours.

1890 I deserted them again at the end of August when I went with Alix to Illinskoje, Serge's country house near Moscow. We were accompanied by Gretchen von Fabrice and Moritz [?] Riedesel, Papa's Master of the Horse after Rabenau's death. Papa was already in Russia, invited by the Emperor to see the Army manoeuvres. Serge was then serving in the Preobrajensky regiment. We travelled in an Imperial carriage from the frontier to Odinzovo, this station was three quarters of an hours drive from Illinskoje, where Serge met us on September 1st. It was lovely hot summer weather, but the air was full of smoke from a great forest fire near Moscow.

MS62

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1890                    Illinskoje lay on the left bank of the Moskva, west of Moscow, at a distance of about an hour and a half's carriage drive from there, and it was connected by the only metalled highroad in the neighbourhood. All the other roads were merely broad sandy tracks. I speak of Illinskoje in the past, for after Serge's death, when it passed to Dimitry Pavlovitch, the main house was pulled down and most of the park sold. Almost opposite, on the other side of the river, lay Serge's other property, Oussovo, where he was then building a stone house, as the house at Illinskoje, like most [p.129] of the pavilions in the park, was built of wood and you could not risk heating it. The main building was a two-storied house, flanked on both sides by terraces and broad sloping approaches or arches, which were called "les pentes douces." The entrance faced away from the river and had a pillared portico. On the river side a broad balcony ran along the first floor, on which we used to have breakfast and sit after meals. The house stood on the high bank of the river which you reached by a small winding path in a minute. The opposite bank was flat meadowland. A number of boats were moored at the little landing stage just below the house, and were in the charge of two sailors of the "equipage de la garde". Boating and fishing were one of our chief amusements, as also bathing. The river was full of shallows and sand banks and many a time did I get stuck on one and had to step into the water to push off, especially when using a quaint water conveyance which consisted of two broad poles pointed at either end connected by a raised seat on a platform. It was convenient for fishing but not for rowing. Another amusing thing to go about on the river in was a round inflatable rubber punt, with two rubber leggings let into the bottom. This Serge had brought in England where in places it is used by duck shooters.

1890

[p.130] The park consisted mainly of lime and oak trees and large shrubberies. Dotted here and there were small villa-like houses where a great number of the guests were lodged. Some of these were sufficiently far away to make it necessary, when it rained, for a carriage to go round and pick up the guests for dinner. There were always a number of visitors coming and going that first summer that I was there. Besides our family party and suites, there were half a dozen young Preobrajensky officers, and, not to forget, the tall and overpoweringly stout Masha Wassiltchikoff, a great friend of Serge's and Ella's who spent much time with them every year. She was a very entertaining, good-natured person, the life and soul of the party.

1890

Everybody was allowed to amuse themselves as they liked in the forenoon, and in spite of the hot weather much lawn tennis was played. Often in the afternoon all went out driving in every kind of carriage from Ella's little two-seated pony-cart up to the "Lineika" - a long sort of backless Irish jaunting car on four wheels which held 4 people a side, seated back to back. Often we

MS62

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visited neighbours, amongst these were Prince and Princess Youssouppoff, in their fine palace-like country house at Arkhangelskoje, which had been built by the Princess's eccentric old grandfather in the time of the Empress Catherine. He laid out the grounds near the [p.131] house in French style with clipped hedges, fountains and plaster statues. There was also a building with a charming XVIII century theatre, where a performance was given in honour of Nicky after his coronation. On the model farm Prince Youssouppoff had erected a wonderful modern piggery, where the pigstyes were lit up by electric lights.

Somewhat further off lived two branches of the Galitzine family at Nikolskoje, an old Princess with her two unmarried daughters, and at Petrovskoje another lot of Galitzines with a large family of children. A granddaughter of these Petroffsky Galitzines is now the wife of Vassili Alexandrovitch. In the direction of the station of Odinzovo lay the property of a General Veriguine, Podoushkino, where he had built himself a French chateau. His wife, who went by the nickname of "Podoushkina" literally cushion, was a plain-featured little person, with a very good figure. The story went about that a man known for his admiration of women walking behind her said "lead us not into temptation" but on passing her and seeing her face added "but deliver us from evil".

Ella's fete day, St. Elisabeth, fell on the 17th of September, and was celebrated by a big luncheon party and a dance in the evening. In the afternoon she had a big lottery for the peasants in the village and many presents for guests and servants.

[p.132] As Serge knew that Papa and I were interested in archaeological research, he arranged for the opening of three "Kourgan" (funeral mounds) on the Nikolsky property. Pot sherds, bronze bracelets and armlets, as well as plated necklaces and horse-trappings were found. Serge made me a present of several of the pieces, and I afterwards presented them to the Darmstadt museum. Papa had been a member of the Hessian Archaeological Society for years and under the guidance of a very able member of it, Herr Kofler, had been present at many excavations to which he used to take us also.

In Malta too I assisted at various excavations. Only the winter before, Count Strickland had opened some graves on his property and had invited me to see them.

1890

From Illinskoje we went for a long day's sight seeing in Moscow, where Serge took particular pride in showing us over the new Historical Museum. With Papa and Alix I returned to Darmstadt on October 5th and on the 21st taking the two children with me I started for Malta via Brindisi, and settled down in our last

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

year's house.

1891                That winter passed much like the preceding one. Uncle George Cambridge came out in January for ten days. He inspected the fortification, held a review, also a levee at the Palace, and attended many dinners at which we were present. He was very active still, but showed his age by dropping [p.133] asleep at unexpected moments. After dining with the general, at the Castille, he was present at a concert arranged in his honour and fell asleep after the first item in the programme. The last piece being performed, the general roused him, saying that the concert was just over. Uncle George, quite refreshed by his nap, declared he had not heard all the pieces and demanded that one or two items which he thought attractive should be repeated for him!

                    At that time, the Governor's military secretary was Captain Baden Powell, now so celebrated as the founder of the Scout movement.

                    He was a most versatile man, equally good at singing as sketching, and would perform the parody of a whole opera alone, singing both women's and men's parts.

1891                A Tandem club had been started that winter, which we joined. The members used to drive out to some pretty spot where we picnicked. Baden Powell went one better than the rest of the party, for instead of two, he drove three ponies ahead of each other. As the streets in the villages are extremely crooked and narrow, it is a marvel how he managed to get round the corners without running over anybody.

                    The winter races were put off that year on account of the bad weather, as is usually the case at Malta. I rarely went to them or to see polo played, and, in fact, I hardly ever went to the Marsa. The whole place is wonderfully improved since then, when there was only the race course, one football [p.134] and one polo ground, and the whole of the centre was still taken up by a market garden, with an open smelly drain running through it.

                    There was a lawn tennis club whose grounds lay in one of the Ditches below Floriana. Corradino is also much altered to what it was then, when there was only a very stony drill ground there and a solitary house with a large garden, generally inhabited by a military officer and his family.

                    As to proper recreation grounds or canteens, they were non-existent. On Corradino itself occasional naval parades, field gun competitions, naval sports and races took place. One of the events of the latter was an officer's seniority

MS62

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handicap race. Louis entered for it, but of course did not win, though he trained for it by running in one of the unfrequented Ditches outside Valetta, while I superintended with a stop watch in my hand. The Commander-in-Chief's staff secretary, Mr. Giffard, won easily as due to his seniority, assisted it is true by his long legs; he started from half way round the course.

1891                   It was a stormy winter and a small schooner was wrecked at the foot of the Marsamucet steps, where now the landing place of the Sliema ferry is. Of its crew of three one was drowned.

Lord Walter Kerr was second in command of the Fleet at that time, and his wife Lady Ambel was a very friendly, [p.135] but absent-minded woman. The *Victoria*, who came to such a tragic end, joined the fleet as the new flagship. I went on board the *Scout* for church at various times. It was hard work for Louis, as he not only read the clergyman's part but played the accompaniment to all the singing on a harmonium; the first time that Mrs. Savory was present, her husband had to read the first lesson, which was all about Esau and the savoury mess of pottage, which the congregation enjoyed more than the Savorys did.

The ship rejoiced in two clerically-named officers Mr. Abbot and Mr. Bishop. The doctor was Doctor Porter, an able and very nice man; he was also in the *Drake* with Louis, and held an important post at the Admiralty later on, I believe. The 2nd lieutenant was Mr. Quartano Carr - very proud of his descent from a Corfiot family whose name was entered into the *Golden Book* of Venice, he said. He was an ardent freemason and Savory, who had become a renegade, used to terrify him by threatening to reveal the secrets of the society to his messmates, and did show off Carr's treasured insignia to visiting women.

1891                   I returned to Germany on May 15th and Louis and the *Scout* went to Zante where, as I noted in my diary, "they were massacring Jews as at Corfu". On the 19th I went to London and [p.136] spent a few days there, and with Papa and Alix went on to Balmoral in time for Grandmama's birthday. During the 3 weeks I spent there I did a certain amount of fishing and the household entertained us with some private theatricals which Grandmama greatly enjoyed.

1891                   She had been a passionate lover of the theatre in her youth and these private theatricals which took place from time to time and in which Aunt Beatrice and Liko would also take part, were a favourite amusement of hers. We returned with Grandmama to Windsor in June and at the end of that month I rejoined my mother-in-law and the children at the Heiligenberg for a couple of nights and then went on to Venice, where the *Scout*, *Benbow* and *Phaeton* had been sent to assist at the launching of the first, and I believe last, Italian man

MS62

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o'war built in the Arsenal dockyard of the old Venetian republic. (*Benbow* - Captain Rawson, *Phaeton* - Captain Custens). The *Scout* was anchored opposite the Giardino Publico. The Duke of Genoa was admiral in command at Venice, and was living with his wife and children at the Palazzo Reale. King Umberto and Queen Margherita arrived on July 5th and on the following day the launch of the *Sicilia* took place.

1891 The whole town was en fete. The nobility had all their gondoliers in their family liveries with knee breeches and hard round hats. The Syndacos of the various boroughs of [p.137] Venice were rowed about in their state gondolas, and their tailed coats and tall hats clashed with their richly ornamented craft and its costumed rowers.

The King and Queen were taken round to the dockyard in the State barge, an imitation of the Bucentauro. I had gone privately with Mrs. Savory to see the launch, but they recognized me on the stand and I had to climb over several barriers to join their party, to the great amusement of the other spectators. On the opposite side of the dock stood the Bishop of Venice, afterwards Pope Pius X, with the clergy. He performed the blessing of the ship, after which the King launched it. The King and the Bishop took no notice of each other, as the King was still under church interdict.

The dock was a very narrow one and the space in which the ship was to be launched was very restricted. In their anxiety that she should not take the water too rapidly, the authorities had not sufficiently greased the runway. Under the pressure of the hull, the wooden slips caught fire and the *Sicilia* took the water enveloped in a volume of smoke, only getting half way down, after which she stuck and was not fully launched till late that night, without further ceremony. The spectators seemed to find nothing amiss in the performance and clapped vigorously to the "Feuerzauber".

The day ended with a display of magnificent fireworks. On the 8th of July the King and Queen with the Genoas and their [p.138] suites, lunched on board the *Benbow* lying at Malomoco. They were over an hour late in arriving, as their launch was badly steered and kept running into shallow water. King Umberto was a rather formidable looking personage with his large heavy moustache and Mrs. Savory, who with her American inexperience of Courts, had been very worried at having to make a curtsy to him, was so embarrassed that when he asked her in a fierce voice and in French how long she had been married, she answered "Une heure" instead of "un an"! The King looked very surprised and she pretends he said: "Comment? Why, we have been on board for two hours already!"



MS62

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All during lunch the King was so preoccupied with the speech he had to make afterwards that he hardly spoke a word and kept nervously crumbling his bread and glancing at some notes that he had laid beside his plate. The heat was tremendous and poor stout Captain Rawson, buttoned up in his full dress, nearly melted away.

I took Mrs Savory back with me to the Heiligenberg, where we arrived on Louise's 2nd birthday. I remained more than three months at home, Aunt Helena and her family making a long stay with Papa. We amused ourselves that year with tableaux vivants and staging a small play.

1891 Franzjos accompanied the children and me back to Malta, where he spent three weeks with us. We arrived on the 2nd of November and the *Scout* on the 17th. In that winter Louis [p.139] was busy designing the "Battenberg course indicator", which is still in use. Some years later, when I was present at Russian Naval landing manoeuvres in the Baltic, Admiral Essen showed Nicky an instrument he had got in England and which he thought would be useful in the Russian Navy too. I recognized the "Course Indicator" and Nicky, prompted by me, explained to the Admiral that it was my husband who had invented it!

During that winter too we made the acquaintance of a Mr. Cook, who was doing geological research work in Malta, and we spent very interesting days whilst he was excavating the Har-Dalaam Cave, rich in fossil remains of dwarf hyppopotami and elephants.

Sir George Tryon came out as Commander-in-Chief, as successor to Sir Anthony Hoskins. The last day of that year brought us welcome news that Louis had been promoted post Captain.

1892 On January 29th 1892 Captain Goodridge took over the command of the *Scout* from Louis, who went on half-pay, and the *Surprise* took us as far as Brindisi. At Darmstadt we settled down in our new apartments at the Alte Palais Papa had lent us, which I had been busy furnishing all the previous year. They were on the ground floor, to the right of the entrance from the Louisenplatz and the nurseries were upstairs, looking out on to the Wilhelminenstrasse.

[p.140] I did not find Papa at all well on our return. His heart was giving him much trouble and the doctors had forbidden all strenuous forms of exercise.

1892 On the 4th of March, immediately after lunch, I went to see Abbie Holstein, who was laid up with a bad cold. Abbie was at that time serving in the Hessian Red Dragoon Regiment, and had lodgings in the Bismarckstrasse,

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1892 formerly Promenade. Whilst we were playing Halma, I was sent for to go up to the New Palace immediately, as Papa had had a stroke during lunch time. By the time I got up to the house Papa had been put to bed in the library. The stroke had affected his whole right side, and he was very restless. On the next morning he was quieter and drowsy, but his breathing had become heavy and irregular. Irene and Henry arrived that night and Louis on the following afternoon. Every day my father's condition grew slowly worse, and he could only be roused with difficulty. Ernie, who was in the South of France, arrived on the 7th and Papa recognized him but could not speak. On the 9th, when Ella and Serge arrived, we were able to rouse him sufficiently to know them, but on the 13th of March he passed away peacefully. His body lay in state for some days and the Hessian mourning for him was universal and sincere. He was one of the kindest-hearted and most just men I have ever known. He was as liberal as he was fair-minded and did not approve of Bismarck's "socialist [p.141] laws". My father understood his people well and they him. To give an instance of this, when he drove himself home from a long day's shoot through very socialistically minded villages, the peasants, on hearing the tramp of his Hungarian "jucker" team, would put their lamps in the window sills to lighten up the streets.

1892 Little Alfred Edinburgh-Coburg, who had come with Uncle Affie to Papa's funeral fell ill and was laid up at the Schloss for almost a month. His mother, Aunt Marie and her girls came to keep him company. As soon as he had recovered, we, with little Alice, Irene, Alix and Ernie went to Coburg to spend Easter there. Grandmama with Aunt Beatrice and Liko visited Ernie for a week in spring. This was to be the last time that Grandmama came to Darmstadt. That summer Ernie and Alix took a cure at Schwalbach, where I went to see them. Ernie had just given his consent to my Uncle Henry's second marriage with an actress from the Darmstadt theatre (to whom Ernie agreed to give the title Baroness Dornberg)(not to be confused with Doernberg). Uncle Henry's first wife had been Caroline von Willich, a Darmstadt society girl, who received the title of Graefin Nidda and who died a month after my mother's death, on giving birth to a son at Trier, where my uncle was commanding a brigade. He now had retired from the army, his last command having been the Hessian division [p.142] and had gone to live at Munich with his second wife. He was a somewhat shy man and spoke so indistinctly, that as a child I had difficulty in understanding what he said. He was a martyr to sick headaches. By his second marriage he had a son. Uncle William was married to a girl from the Darmstadt "corps de ballet", and as he was a well read man, she became a well educated woman under his influence. Her title was Frau von Lichtenberg and they had one son. I have never met him nor my Uncle Henry's second son. As to my Uncles, I was never really intimate with them, though I saw them regularly at the family dinners which were a weekly Sunday institution in my father's time. They never

**MS62**

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came to stop with him, as our English relations did, and though perfectly friendly with their brother, they lived their own lives. I have yet another relation by marriage, who came from the Darmstadt theatre, and that is Sandro's widow, Countess Hartenau, nee Fraulein Loisinger, an Austrian by birth, a charming singer and very good-looking in her younger days.

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.143]

## CHAPTER VII

Fire at the Heiligenberg 143-145. - Prince George of Wales studies German at Heidelberg 146. - Prince George born 1892 - His Christening 147. - Wedding of the Duke and Duchess of York - Likeness of the Duke to the Cesarevitch 148. - Eccleston Square 149. - Death of Prince Alexander of Bulgaria 150. - At Elmgrove 151. - Tourist invasion at Heiligenberg 152. - Marriage of the Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig at Coburg 153. - Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg and his wife 153. - Engagement of Princess Alix to the Cesarevitch 154. - Their stay at Elmgrove 155. - Death of Alexander III and marriage of Princess Alix to the Emperor Nicholas II 156. - The Palace of the Polish Kings at Warsaw - 1894. - Picnic at Malta in the "Happy Valley" 158. - "Imperator Nikolai II" calls at Malta 159. - Death of Princess Battenberg 160. - Hot autumn at Malta 161. - Prince Henry and Princess Irene come to Malta for Christmas 162. - Death of Prince Henry of Battenberg 162. - Visit to Princess Irene at Posilipo - Stay with Queen Victoria at Nice (spring 1896) - The Emperor Franz Joseph arrives too early 163. - His informal call on the Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig at the Hofburg 164. - The Queen and the French beggars 165.

1892

I spent most of that summer at the Heiligenberg with my mother-in-law, as Louis was away for part of it, having been given the command of the *Andromache* for the naval manoeuvres. Whilst Aunt Beatrice, Liko and Drino, as well as Mrs. Savory were on a visit to us at the Heiligenberg, a fire broke out at night in Aunt Beatrice's bedroom - due to her and her maid hunting for mosquitoes with a lighted candle, near the mosquito curtains of the bed. Her rooms and the roof of the pavilion to the right of the clock tower were destroyed and several others damaged by water as well as fire. There was not a breath of wind that night, otherwise the whole house would have been burned down. By 5 a.m. the fire was completely extinguished thanks to the assistance of the

1892

newly-formed Jugenheim fire brigade. Many a funny scene had taken place [p.144] in the courtyard. Aunt Beatrice was walking about in a night-dress, covered by a cloak of my mother-in-law's. Half the inhabitants of Jugenheim appeared on the scene, being more of a hindrance than a help; indeed, when the fire showed signs of being under control, young women strolled about with linked arms uttering suitable ejaculations of dismay while pointing to the burning house, which strongly reminded one of a scene in the opera Mignon. Franzjos, who was living with us at the time, had forcibly to prevent a zealous onlooker from dragging out all the pictures from the Verwalter's house, the pavilion furthest from the fire and piling them somewhere or other. Another, an

1892

important Government official on holiday at Jugenheim I solemnly presented to Aunt Beatrice, who afterwards reproached me for doing so when she was not in proper get-up. Mrs. Savory, flooded out of her rooms just under Aunt Beatrice's,

MS62

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appeared in her dressing gown with her best hat and a box of matches in one hand and with a Bible and her husband's photograph in the other. Her temporary maid, a Frenchwoman had put on her best black satin dress with a train over her nightgown and wandered sadly about the courtyard, lamenting "J'aurai une bronchite!" in spite of the combined heat of the summer weather and the fire!

I had given myself time to dress before I joined the party and had arranged for the children to be dressed and their [p.145] belongings tied up in bundles. They sat up, wide-eyed and interested on their beds, but poor Drino, who was already somewhat frightened at the sight of the flames, I completely terrified by telling him that the firemen had come, his idea of firemen being some sort of evil imps that came out of the fire!

1892 Liko was lodging that night with a forester in the plains, where he was shooting roebuck. He arrived when the worst was over and was triumphantly shown by our coachman a neatly folded pile of clothes which Froome had salvaged from Liko's cupboard. Unfortunately, when shaken out and held up, they all proved to have been singed through the middle. Aunt Beatrice's losses were great, for the jewels she had in a little case in her bedroom were nearly all destroyed. The fine pearls, which had belonged to her Grandmother, the Duchess of Kent, were so damaged that they looked like parched peas. Some that were set in a bracelet looked all right, though their colour had turned grey from white, but when you rubbed them with your finger they dissolved into powdered chalk. A pair of lovely emerald drops were split in two. I am glad to say that Grandmama gave her another set of pearls to replace the lost ones. The fire insurance officials, dressed in frock coats and white satin bow ties in honour of their visit to Heiligenberg, turned up to make their enquiries during the day. Aunt Beatrice, whom they solemnly questioned was as [p.146] much embarrassed as they for she had to wear a hat, as her false fringe (everybody had to wear fringes at that time) had been burned and though a new one had been sent for by express, it had not arrived. We had a great hunt to collect her clothes, and found her underlinen piled up in the kitchen. I had to retire to bed for a few days after all the commotion was over, as Georgie was on his way and threatened to appear too soon.

1892 George of Wales (King George V) was at Heidelberg studying German with Professor Ihme that autumn. He came to see us for a couple of nights with the Professor. Very typically, the old gentleman brought only a little handbag with him, which George insisted on investigating whilst I was taking the Professor for a stroll. It contained a nightshirt, some toilet requisites and a book. George was a good deal bored by his life at Heidelberg and felt himself too old to start working with a tutor again - the Professor conscientiously interrupting their

MS62

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conversation by grammatical corrections, until one day George broke out "Der, die or das Sonne is really very hot to-day - choose which, Professor!" His evenings were spent with the Professor, his wife and married daughter - Frau Konrektor was her title - Georgie occupying himself with his stamp collection, which was small enough then for him to manage it alone, whilst the ladies worked and the Professor read.

[p.147] It was early in that summer too that Friedrich von Kaulbach came for a few days and did the pastel head of me.

In October Alice's first governess, Miss Robson, joined us at the Alte Palais. She had been out in India with the Connaughts as governess to Daisy and was a nice pleasant person.

1892            On November 6th Georgie was born in the room above my bedroom, lent me for the occasion. Louis was at home again, and had just been offered the post of "Naval Advisor" to the Inspector General of fortification with an office at the Horseguards. Georgie was born on a Sunday morning. My mother-in-law on her way to Church was told by her old servant Leonhart "Es ist ein Prinz im Alten Palais angekommen", and thought it very tactless that anybody should come on a visit to me just these days. She was quite overcome when Ernie and Alix greeted her with congratulations on the birth of her grandson! On November 23rd Louis went to London to take up his new duties, returning on December 18th to be present at Georgie's christening, which took place on the 21st in the Alte Palais. He was called Louis after my father and Ernie, Victor after Aunt Vicky who had told me previously she was rather hurt at not being godmother to either of my children, George after George of Wales, Henry after Liko and Henry of Prussia, and Serge after my brother-in-law.

1893            That winter 1893, I had a course of geology with Professor Lepsius, who came to my house regularly for the purpose. [p.148] On 19th March I joined Louis in London, where he had been working at the Admiralty since January, he had taken a little flat for us at St. Ermin's Mansion, Caxton Street, Westminster, where we remained until the middle of May. Louis who had also become Naval Adviser to the War Office, was away a good deal on tours of inspection with the Inspector of Fortifications General Grant, and Captain Nathan later Sir Matthew, and I paid various visits to relations among them to the Tecks at White Lodge in Richmond Park with whom I stopped a few days.

1893            The three children joined us in England in May and we took them down to Sandgate near Folkestone, where we had taken a house on the Under Cliffe for three months, Louis working in London but spending his week-ends with us. A

MS62

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very neglected bit of garden surrounded the house, which I vainly tried to tidy up a bit. Aunt Louise put us up for the wedding of George and May on July 6th at which Alice was one of the bridesmaids. Nicky of Russia was over for the wedding and his and Georgie's likeness at that time was so great, that at Uncle Bertie's garden party at Marlborough House, several people congratulated Nicky instead of George on his marriage, and one of the old English gentlemen in attendance on Nicky came up to George to tell him the exact hour at which the guests were going to assemble at Buckingham Palace on the wedding day.

[p.149] Already then the spiteful gossip that George had been married secretly in the West Indies was being spread about in society. This gossip became so insistent in later years that to squash it, legal proceedings had to be taken against a newspaper, which had declared that the marriage had taken place at Malta with the younger daughter of Commander-in-Chief, Sir Michael Culme-Seymour. I knew the poor girl and was out there when she died. George had never been at Malta at the same time as she.

Alice's bad hearing, which my mother-in-law had been the first to notice when she was a small child of four, but which I first mistook for absent mindedness, was a great worry to us. Her ears had been attended to by a good Aurist in Darmstadt, but this summer I showed her to the best one in London who declared it was due to thickened Eustachian tubes and that these are not operable. As little Louise's glands were often swollen we had both her and Alice's tonsils removed, Grandmama kindly letting us put up at Buckingham Place for the purpose.

1893 After a short visit to Germany in the autumn, I returned with the children to London and settled down for the winter at 37 Eccleston Square, a fairly cheap neighbourhood. Uncle Bertie, who had no idea of our income, was much puzzled at our taking a house in so unfashionable a square, where he declared "only pianists lived." The neighbourhood of [p.150] of Buckingham Palace garden was, however, very convenient for the children, as Grandmama allowed us to use it and we had a key to the small entrance door, off Lower Grosvenor Place. Those were pre-central heating days and the coal and gas fires made London much dirtier than it is now. The children got themselves very black and messy playing amongst the bushes, especially when they hunted for Easter eggs which we hid for them there.

1893 November was rather a dismal month. When Louis had been at Newcastle, he visited a big foundry there and a drop of molten lead splashed into his left eye. Luckily his eyeball itself was hardly damaged, only the inner part of his lower eyelid was injured. On November 17th we received the news that

MS62

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Sandro, Louis' favourite brother had died at Gratz after a few days of acute suffering, from appendicitis, and Louis was not well enough to go there till the end of the year. After William became German Emperor and there were no prospects for Sandro of his being employed in Germany nor likelihood of his return to Bulgaria, Sandro offered his services to the Emperor of Austria such an old friend of his father's, who gave him the command of a brigade stationed at Gratz. Sandro became an Austrian subject, gave up his name and title of Battenberg and my father created him Count Hartenau, under which name he married. The Bulgarian Government speaking for the people, asked that their first Prince should be buried at Sofia, to which with his usual [p.151] political wisdom King Ferdinand cordially agreed. Sandro's body was solemnly interred in the Cathedral there in the following year, his widow assisting at the ceremony. Furthermore his children were given a pension by the Bulgarian Government.

On November 16th, in our house, Louise was operated on for a gland in her throat. The doctor who cut it out was the Doctor Treves (Sir Frederick), who eight years afterwards was so celebrated for his operation on Uncle Bertie for appendicitis. We spent Christmas with Grandmama at Osborne, where she had invited us, so that the child should recuperate in seaside air. She and Georgie remained there for two months.

1894

1894 began for us with a visit to Sandringham, where I made the acquaintance of the two generals, Sir Evelyn Wood, the distinguished cavalryman and Sir Redvers Buller, whose name became so well-known in the Boer War. There I also met Professor Waldstein who in later years changed his name to Wallstone. He was professor of archeology at Cambridge.

When we left Eccleston Square in March we moved to Elmgrove, Walton-on-Thames - a roomy house with scanty and old-fashioned furniture. To get to the river on which we often went you had to walk through the little town. Once when Franzjos was with me, he being a bad oarsman, we landed Alice with a rope to tow us upstream. She ran so fast, that she continually pulled the boat's bows into the shore. When [p.152] Nicky visited us, we also went on the river. He was a good oarsman, but so energetic that by the time we got back he had taken off all the skin under the finger on which he wore his engagement ring to Alix. I remember once taking tea with us on a Bank Holiday and landing on a small island with it, although there was a notice-board against trespassers put up. The irate owner appeared while we were drinking our tea, but on Louis' explaining we would do no damage and leave no litter as we ourselves knew what it was to suffer from inconsiderate tourists on our own property, he allowed us to finish our tea.



MS62

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Indeed this plague of tourists was great at the Heiligenberg. In the old times, before cheap railway travel, the sightseers only came from the nearer neighbourhood. My father-in-law never objected to their presence, fact, it amused him to be politely bowed to and looked on with much respect. In his latter years and ours there were, often, so many excursions that some of our gardeners had to be constantly on duty, every Sunday, to keep the people from unfastening the chains barring the roads and crowding into the terrace and courtyard. They would even unlatch the gate into the little private garden and make insulting remarks when they were turned out. Three well-dressed women, I caught once inside the Terrassensaal looking at our albums. To remedy this nuisance, we closed up the terrace and made a second lower one for [p.153] the public, from which the view was equally good and another approach to it. We were a good deal grumbled at for these alterations!

1894

On April 1st Alix Louis and I accompanied Ernie to Coburg where he was married to Ducky on the 19th. Louis and I were lodged in a small house not far from the Schloss and the Villa Coburg in the park. Officially it was known as villa Number 3 but in popular parlance as "das Maitressenhaus", for Uncle Ernst's various "ladies["] who generally were appointed lectrice to his wife, had in turns been lodged there. Aunt Marie was never able to solve the problem of the Duchess' ignorance of her husband's amours. "Ernst, mein Schatz," as she called him, always treated her with much friendliness and she never showed any objection to the various lectrices thrust upon her. Being far from clever it is possible she did not realise what was going on, but as she adored him, it is also possible she wilfully shut her eyes to facts.

One illegitimate daughter of Uncle Ernest he more or less recognized. She was about Aunt Vicky's age and a friend of Aunt Vicky and Mama's, a handsome, dark-eyed woman like her father and very amusing. Her first husband, von Rentes, was killed in the Franco-German war and I remember a long visit she paid to my parents in her widowhood when she and her three little boys lived with us at Seeheim. The youngest [p.154] of these boys was to be the German admiral von Rentes during the Great War. Her second husband was Herr von Koenisegg, Uncle Affie's aide-de-camp.

1894

There was a very large family gathering at Coburg for the wedding amongst them Grandmama with Aunt Beatrice, Uncle Bertie, the Connaughts, Vladimir and Miechen of Russia, Ella and Serge, Henry and Irene and William II. Nicky was sent to represent him by his father and it was in Coburg that he and Alix became engaged. They had been in love with each other ever since she and Papa had spent a winter at Petersburg a couple of years before, but there had been many difficulties in the way, one of which was Alix's objection to changing her

MS62

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religion. These scruples William successfully overcame in a long conversation with her. He was so keenly in favour of the marriage, that though he had been furious with his sister Sophie of Greece turning Orthodox several years after her marriage that he tried to forbid her entering Germany and described her in a letter to Grandmama as "Fahnenfluechtig" - a deserter - he proved to Alix that it was her bounden duty, for the sake of the peace of Europe, to sacrifice her scruples and marry the heir to the Russian throne. Furthermore, he maintained that the difference between the two confessions were only superficial. Poor Alix who had felt very lonely after Papa's death and who now would no longer be so needed by Ernie, was as happy as Nicky when their engagement became a fact.

[p.155] Alix returned to England with us and went to stop with Grandmama at Windsor. It was there I saw the great Duse and her company perform the *Locandiera* in the Waterloo Gallery. I have also seen her act in the *Masterbuilder* of Ibsen.

Sarah Bernhardt I have seen act in London *Adrienne Lecouvreur* and in a small one act play. To my mind Duse far surpassed her. One had not the impression that she was acting at all. She was absolutely the person she represented. She was besides, much more attractive to look at.

1894 Alix had been suffering for some time from attacks of sciatica and took a cure at Harrogate against it. I spent a couple of days with her there; we had great fun going about in tricycle bath chairs, worked by a man sitting behind us. We used to urge them to race each other. When her Harrogate cure had ended Alix came back to us at Walton and there Nicky joined us for the 20th to the 23rd of June. He came quite alone with his old valet and he and Alix were free to spend as much time as they liked together. Then this private intermezzo came to an end and we four were fetched by a Royal carriage with an outrider to go to Windsor much to the surprise of the Waltonians, who never realized who the important people stopping with us had been.

We left Elmgrove for good on the last day of July and picking up Alix at Osborne crossed to Flushing on board the [p.156] *V & A*. Almost immediately after our arrival at the Heiligenberg, my father-in-law's remains, which had been standing at the Rosenhohe, were transported to the Heiligenberg and placed in a little memorial chapel we had built near the Golden Cross. There they were left until my mother-in-law's death, when both were buried together close by.

1894 We sent the 3 children for a month to Kreuznach in August. In October Louis commissioned the *Cambrian* at Plymouth and in that same month the news of Sasha's (Emperor Alexander III) health was so disquieting that it was

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

considered advisable for Alix to go to Livadia, as she had not seen him since her Russian visit with my father.

1894 I accompanied her as far as Warsaw, leaving her on October 19th, from where Ella took her on. I spent a night with General Gourko the general governor and his wife, at the Palace and was lodged in the sumptuous state rooms of the Polish Kings. The bedroom was immense, its alcove the size of a small room, the walls all panelled with polished mahogany and adorned with fine brass Empire emblems. Nothing of this is left now, I hear, since the German bombardment of the town. On our 1st November, Ella's birthday, Sasha died from kidney disease, and immediately after the funeral at Petersburg Alix and Nicky were married (November 26th), the deep court mourning having been suspended on that day.

I did not attend the wedding as on November 13th I left [p.157] for Malta with the children and Miss Robson, visiting Grandmama for the day and embarking in the P & O *Suttlege* from London. We had very bad weather till we got to Gibraltar where we went on shore and breakfasted with Captain and Mrs. Lane at the Mount. Poor Louise had got the roll of the ship in her legs so, that she staggered about as if tipsy.

At Malta Louis and I again lived at our house at 3 Piazza Regina and had rented the top floor of No.5 for the children. To enable them to reach us without going into the street, they got out of a window on to the roof of the wing where my maid lived and climbed down a stair, made by the ship's carpenter into the garden.

At that time General Sir Arthur Fremantle was the Governor and Sir Michael Culme Seymour the Commander-in-Chief. Mark Kerr was the first lieutenant of the *Cambrian*, Lieutenant Dinley the navigator and one of the lieutenants O. de B. Brock, who at the moment of my writing this has been given active rank in the Navy again, having retired as Admiral of the Fleet.

Another lieutenant and a very amusing person was Mr. Williamson, known as "the Quail". Also during that commission of the *Cambrian* 'Bertie' Hood (Sir Horace) who was lost in his flagship the *Invincible* at the battle of Jutland, served as a lieutenant. He was a particularly nice man and I can still hear his hearty laugh.

The *Cambrian* also carried a number of midshipmen, who [p.158] used to come to tea with us, play with the children and go out for picnics in go-carts. The Tandem Club, I think, had come to an end by then, but picnic teas in one or

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

other of the gullies was very popular in spring.

I remember one we gave during Henry and Irene's visit to us where the meeting place was what we had been taught to call "the happy valley" by the Edinburghs, and which started behind the madhouse. We waited in vain for the remainder of the party, who had been driven out by Mark Kerr, and at last had our tea without them. Just as we were leaving the hungry and disgruntled lost ones turned up, they having been sitting waiting for us in another valley, which Kerr declared was the real "happy valley". They had only been able to refresh themselves with a little lemonade and biscuits, their contribution to the picnic.

During Louis' command I have known so many of his midshipmen that I am no longer sure in which of his ships they served. Little Sir Compton Donville was second in command of the Fleet at that time. Friends we often met were Captain Hamilton and his wife, the daughter of Sir Harry Keppel. Their two little boys used to play with my children. The elder, nicknamed "Turtle", was before this war, Captain of Greenwich College.

1895            That winter we worked at Louis' book on *Ships' Names*. It had occupied us more than a year, for which, especially [p.159] for biographical details of foreign names, I read many books in the garrison library, to which I was a regular subscriber.

1895            On New Year's day we were present at the consecration of the colours of the Malta militia by the Bishop in St. John's church - a fine setting for the ceremony - and of course made our usual trip by rail to Citta Vecchia.

In February the Russian battleship *Imperator Nikolai I* came to Malta for a few days and on account of my being the Empress's sister we were warmly received when we visited her, and after lunch on board the officers manned the Captain's barge and pulled us on shore.

That year the children and I remained in Malta till the middle of May. We varied the return journey from Brindisi by taking the Austrian Lloyds steamer as far as Venice. Myself, the children and their nurse were all quartered in the Captain's deck cabin, where beds had been improvised. We spent three nights on board as we touched at Ancona and Bari. The weather was delightful and the cabin, not uncomfortable, but as it had windows on three sides, we had to keep all the blinds drawn when we were in it, as our fellow travellers otherwise glued their noses to them. We spent a day at Venice, to the great delight of the children. We reached the Heiligenberg on May 24th and the following day Ernie and Ducky came to lunch, bringing their baby, little Elisabeth, [p.160] with them.

MS62

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Miss Robson had gone for a holiday to England and Thekla von Preuschen, an elderly spinster from Darmstadt, took charge of Alice's lessons. On the 2nd of July I took Louise to Kiel from where she went on with Irene and Valdemar to Amrun for sea bathing, after her birthday on July 13th, while I returned to the Heiligenberg.

That summer Liko and Aunt Beatrice visited us for a fortnight.

1895 Part of September I spent at Wolfsgarten where Ella came after her cure at Franzensbad accompanied by Fafka Lobanoff. She went on with me to the Heiligenberg on the 17th, where my mother-in-law was somewhat ailing, having had the shock of being present at the fire at Schöneberg. The day after our arrival, she was found by the housemaid lying unconscious on the dressing room floor and when the doctor came he found her whole right side was paralysed. We sent for Marie and Gustaf but my mother-in-law's condition grew worse and she died early on the following day, September 19th. Her body lay in an open coffin in the so-called "Terassensaal" for a couple of days. When Georgie saw us placing flowers around it he insisted in laying a pear at hers side which he thought she would much prefer to the flowers. Franzjos, who was somewhere in Bavaria, read of her death in the papers, and came home on the morning of the funeral. Liko and Aunt Beatrice [p.161] came over for it and Serge and Paul also attended. Unfortunately, Louis who was cruising in the Eastern Mediterranean did not get back till the 26th, four days after the funeral had taken place. The weather was too hot still, to put it off till his return.

Until her death, my mother-in-law lived in the so-called Alexander Palais whenever she was not at the Heiligenberg. Now we resolved to sell it. Luckily the Darmstadt Post Office had to extended and it was ultimately bought by the Postmaster general.

1895 On the 23rd of October, our large party consisting of myself, three children, Miss Robson, nurse, maids and servants started for Malta with a mountain of luggage. We reached Basle at 6.30 a.m. and for once, Francesco, who was otherwise an excellent courier, put us into the wrong train. We had not been in it for long, when Francesco, much perturbed, appeared with the guard who told him that our tickets had been taken via Olten and this train was going to Berne, the tickets therefore being of no use. The guard advised us to get out at the next station, where we were due in a quarter of an hour and return to Basle. When we got there, there was no suitable train to Geneva, but the station-master altered our tickets and by half past eleven we once more passed the little station where we had so recently disembarked. Our train to [p.162] Marseilles was due to leave Geneva at 7 p.m. and we spent anxious hours fearing we should never

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

1895 catch it. Luckily according to programme we were to have spent some hours at Geneva with Mademoiselle de Westerweller, the niece of our old Hofmarschall. When she found that our luggage had arrived without ourselves, she made all necessary arrangements, so that when we turned up, ten minutes before the train to Marseilles was to leave, we managed to catch it. Had we missed, we should have had to spend a week either at Geneva or Marseilles as the steamer for Malta only went once a week.

We reached Malta without further adventure on October 28th and found it very hot there still - 77°F. the day we arrived and 80°F. two days later. *The Cambrian*, unfortunately, did not return to Malta until January of the next year.

Henry, who was on leave that winter, was spending it with Irene and Toddy in a villa on the shore of the bay of Naples, came with them to visit us at Christmas for three weeks. They were accompanied by Liane von Plaenckner and Kapitän Mueller, his Aide-de-camp, who later became the Chief of the Emperor William's Naval Staff. They lodged in the Royal Hotel in the Strada Mercanti. The best hotel in Malta, at the time was the Grand Hotel, at the corner of the Strada Reale and the Palace Square, but that was, as usual, full up [p.163] for the season.

All the other hotels were very second-rate and the Royal Hotel was no exception. The *Surprise* had brought them over, and the officers were very friendly with them and us. Her Captain was called Thyrrwhit and the first lieutenant was Mr, now, Admiral Goodenough. Competent critics say, that at the battle of Jutland he was always at the right place at the right moment. I realize my age, when I think I knew his mother, old Lady Goodenough, who founded "the Friendly Union of sailor's wives" of which I am one of the oldest members. The friendship that Admiral Goodenough and Irene then formed lasted beyond the war and he came to call on her at Kensington Palace on her visit to me in December 1937.

1896 The New Year 1896 began sadly for us with the news of Liko's death from fever, at sea off Sierra Leone on the 20th of January. He had joined the Ashanti expedition, being attached to the staff of Sir Francis Scott on which Christel Holstein was also serving. From the very beginning Liko had found the climate of the East Coast extremely trying and got coastal fever on the march inland only a month after landing.

He was invalided home and died on the return journey. Louis attended the funeral and in February he and I spent five enjoyable days with Henry and Irene at the Villa Gallotti on Posilipo. Whilst we made various expeditions,

MS62

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1896

Alice, who [p.164] had come there with us, and Valdemar, spent hours in a boat in the bay under the supervision of Matsen, Captain Müller's sailor servant. (His service over, Matsen, became the Fisherman for Hemmelmark lake and to this moment still works in the Hemmelmark household). That same spring the *Cambrian* was sent to Villefranche to act as guardship for Grandmama during her stay in Nice. I was allowed to take passage in her with Alice and lodged with Aunt Beatrice's family at the Villa Liserbe, close to Grandmama's hotel. Amongst the many people and relations whom I met at Nice, I remember the Emperor and Empress of Austria calling on Grandmama at the old Hotel Cimiez, where she was living. They had announced their visit towards three and the French guard, which was on duty for Grandmama had been warned. Franz Josef had however the bad habit of always arriving before his time. The officer in command of the guard was still at lunch with the household, when he heard the bugle turning out the guard and leapt out of the window to join it just as the Emperor drove up!

Grandmama too was still at table and was very much flustered as she feared she would not be able to get into her gloves in time to greet her guests. The custom of wearing gloves at the reception of guests was strictly adhered to.

Whilst I was at Cimiez in the following year, the Emperor again came from Cap Martin to call on Grandmama who had ordered luncheon earlier, not to be hurried. Yet she went [p.165] through the same worry. This time he arrived half an hour too soon! I remember Grandmama and he agreeing that they required a certain number of undisturbed hours for their work. Grandmama worked at night, when everyone had gone to bed, but he preferred the early morning hours, before people had got up. He was a very courteous person and had a great regard for the Hessian family, so many members of which for generations had served in the Austrian army. My father was an honorary colonel of an Austrian regiment and Ernie when he paid his official visit on his accession, was appointed in succession to it. It was on that first visit of Ernie's to Vienna when, at about 8 a.m., he was just shaving, the Emperor was announced and insisted in coming into his room. - An informal end to a formal call.

For Louis too as the son of his friend who had commanded Austrian troops in the battles of Magenta and Solferino, he showed a very friendly feeling. Whilst Louis was lodging in an hotel during a visit of the British fleet to Austrian waters, the Emperor, who had inspected our fleet the day before, with a suite of Hungarians resplendant but very hot in their velvet fur-trimmed costumes, he drove up to the hotel to ask Louis to go for a drive with him. - The excitement in the house can be imagined.

MS62

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It was during that stay at Nice that I visited the Monte-Carlo gambling room for the first and last time. After [p.166] lunch with the Cokes and other friends, Charlie Montagu took me into the Casino and insisted I should try my luck at the tables. Having no money upon me he lent me "une plaque" a gold hundred francs piece. At the first table I won a cheval and returned him his loan. With the remainder of my winnings I played once at every table. We spent about half an hour thus at the Casino and on leaving it my purse was as empty as when I entered!

I frequently accompanied Grandmama on her long drives in the afternoon, when she insisted on giving franc pieces to everyone who begged of her along the road. As she drove in her own carriage with her grey horses, preceded by an outrider, everybody recognized her and all the village children would come running with any flowers they could snatch up, to offer them to "Madame la Reine" and received their franc. The most persistent beggar was a detestable "cul-de-jatte" on the Cornich road, who drove himself in a little cart drawn by two dogs, which he whipped up into a gallop, as soon as he caught sight of the outrider. Pity for the dogs, even more than for him, always produced the expected dole. Motor cars were extremely rare on the road then and were a great nuisance, as they would overtake and pass the carriage, smothering one in dust. We returned to Malta in time for my birthday. It was during the spring races of this year that Lieutenant Alexander Sinclair, afterwards Sinclair, then Sinclair-Alexander, won the ladies' bracelet for me.



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.167]

CHAPTER VIII

The Coronation at Moscow 167-175. - Stay at Venice with the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess Serge 174, 175. - Emperor and Empress of Russia come to Wolfsgarten after their visit to England and France 176. - Second stay with Queen Victoria at Nice. Engagement of Prince Francis Joseph of Battenberg to Princess Anna of Montenegro 177. - Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations 178. - Nona Crichton Lady-in-Waiting 180. - Trip on the *Esperance* to Broacker and see a 'Dragoness'. The Emperor and Empress again come to Wolfsgarten 180. - The Prince's book *Men o' War's Names* is published 183. - Stay at Osborne with the Queen in January 1898 182. - Princess Louise goes to Heidelberg for treatment 183. - Grave illness of Prince Valdemar at Kiel 184. - Stay at Osborne and Windsor winter 1899. Short visit to Rome with the Prince 185. - Grand Duke Ernst Ludwig down with small-pox 185. - Short stay in Paris 186. - Stay at Sandringham during the Boer War 187. - Frogmore House 188.

1896

We all left for Germany on the 27th of April, spending half a day at Tunis on our way. Leaving the children at Heiligenberg, we left with Ernie and Ducky for Moscow on May 16th to attend the coronation. Gretchen von Fabrice accompanied me as my lady-in-waiting for the occasion. I shall not describe all the official festivities as they have often been written about. On the day of the Sovereigns State entry to Moscow, Louis rode in the cortège, but I and other foreign Princesses watched the procession from the windows of the Governor General's Palace. (Serge was Governor General at the time and put us up). Ella had joined the Imperial Family at Petrovskoje from where the procession started, but Serge, in full dress, had time to lunch with me, as in his official capacity he had only to meet the Emperor at the gates of Moscow. We had hardly finished lunch when Serge was told, that fire had broken out in his private chapel. It was lucky that it was discovered in time, for the whole of the courtyard [p.168] adjoining the chapel had been boarded over in preparation for the big ball Serge was giving a few days later. Half an hour afterwards everybody would have been looking at the procession, either from the window of the Palace, or from the Grand Stand opposite, and the whole place would have been ablaze. As it was, everything could be cleared out of my rooms and the small corridor separating them from the chapel. Serge himself took all my finery out of the cupboards in the passage and put it into his own room.

It was in Ella's sitting room, that the Prince of Naples, (now King Victor Emanuel II) one of the guests, became engaged to Hélène of Montenegro - Ella and I discreetly having left them to themselves, and spent some half hour watching the revolving mice which Ella kept in her boudoir.

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On the evening of the 28th of May there was a great ball at the Kremlin, where only solemn Polonaises took place. These "Polonaises" consisted of a processional walk by the state guests through all the reception rooms. I was much struck, in passing through one of the smaller ones, by the strange mixture of the few people standing in it. There were some men in uniform, some in plain clothes, even one or two in peasant's dress. On inquiry, I was told that these people were all descendants of men who had saved their Sovereign's life from the old Tsar times downwards. It was an old custom to invite these representatives to the Coronation.

The Coronation itself I need not describe beyond saying it [p.169] was a very magnificent sight. Alix looked beautiful in her Coronation Robes, Crown, and the obligatory side-curls. Nicky said the great Imperial prayer in a clear and moving voice. One little thing, which has since been pointed out as of ill-omen was, when part of the Regalia carried by Count Heiden, slipped off the cushion he held and would have fallen to the ground had it not been caught up in time. Admiral Count Heiden was a remarkable old man. The son of the Commander of the Russian Fleet at Navarino, he himself as a young officer had taken part in the battle in 1827.

Among the foreign guests there were some interesting figures. The Emir of Boukhara in his silk Kaftan adorned with Russian General's epaulettes mounted in diamonds, the great Li-Hung Chang in his yellow jacket, the Bishop of Peterborough in full canonicals with his mitre and crook staff. Also, sitting among the guests, the Indian Maharadja, (a little spectacled man who assisted the following year at Grandmama's Jubilee), who was so keen to see the Russian Coronation, he accepted the condition that he must uncover his head in church, the same as the Christian is obliged to take off his shoes in a mosque. There I saw him bareheaded with his turban in his hand during the ceremony. The Papal Nuncio in his robes was an imposing figure with dignified manners. Being a true Italian, however, he could forget his [p.170] dignity when impulse moved him. Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria (later King) was at that moment very much in the black books of the Holy See. He, a Roman Catholic without any warning to the Vatican, had had his son and heir Boris, Baptised into the Orthodox Church. On his way to the Coronation banquet as he passed through the room in which the cardinal was standing, the latter, to mark his contempt, made the gesture of spitting at him, and Ferdinand, not to be beaten, spat back! At the "Court" held a few days after the Coronation, so many ladies were presented and kissed Alix's hand that it was as swollen and red afterwards, as if she had been stung by a wasp.

Perhaps the most talked of event during the Coronation has been the

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1896        terrible calamity in which 1300 people were killed and wounded in the great crush on the popular fete day, May 30th. The scene of it, the "Hodynka", was a large barren common outside the city, where bodies of troops could be exercised. It was flanked on one side by barracks and on the other a high road leading out of the town. A part of it had been railed in where the great popular feast with open air plays, dancing etc., was to take place. Outside the enclosure a row of wooden booths had been erected from which the souvenir gifts were to be distributed. They consisted of specially designed enamel [p.171] mugs, and coloured handkerchiefs with the portraits of the Sovereigns, which contained sweets and gingerbread etc. The whole arrangement of this fete lay in the hands of the Court Coronation Committee. Serge, as Governor General, had offered his services towards organising it but the officials declined his offer with thanks. It was calculated that seven hundred thousand people, mostly peasants, had assembled from all parts of the country to take part in the festivity and to see their Emperor, who was entertaining them. Nobody fully realized the danger of collecting so immense a crowd in an open space where, unlike crowds in a street, they formed a solid mass. Heaps of the people camped on the field. When, at daybreak, the Moscow workers and all the riff-raff of that great city began to stream across the space along a rough country track they knew, which led straight from the town towards the booths and would place them in the front ranks of the crowd, a rumour sprang up that the distribution of gifts had begun and the towns folk would get the most of them. Once this mass of well over half a million people got on the move, no power on earth could regulate their advance. Mounted police and troops were only then called out, but though they tried to cut through the masses, they were themselves soon lost in the midst of the crush. The common was anything but level [p.172] there were even some old covered wells and shallow depressions on it. Those who stumbled and fell in these spots, were trampled down, others falling on top of them. The barriers between the booths, unfortunately did not give way and were the cause of further casualties. All that morning we saw the dead and wounded carted past the Governor general's house. In spite of the disaster hundreds of thousands of people were still on the "Hodynka" awaiting the arrival of the Emperor.

It was considered advisable, therefore, that the programme of his visit should be carried out. Followed by numbers of the guests, the Imperial couple drove into the enclosed pleasure grounds. Though there was much cheering, I think he and everybody who accompanied him, could not shake off a feeling of profound depression.

An unpleasant episode occurred at the reception given by the large German colony of Moscow to Henry, the Emperor William's official representative, and to all the German Princes present at the Coronation. The

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spokesman of the colony in his speech of welcome, used the unfortunate expression: "The representative of the Emperor and his vassal". Prince Ludwig of Bavaria, son of the Regent Prince Luitpold took great offence at this wording and sharply pointed out, that the German reigning Princes were in no wise vassals of the German Emperor. Henry was accompanied by a very large suite all appointed by Berlin for the occasion and some of them immediately reported the Prince's words to the Emperor. [p.173] William considered that Prince Ludwig had insulted the dignity of the German Empire in public and when he returned from Moscow, the unfortunate Prince Ludwig had to go to Kiel and apologise for his tactlessness.

Though when he arrived in Moscow for the Coronation spring had barely begun, by the 7th of June when the festivities were over and we moved to Illinskoje, trees and flowers were in full bloom and the weather was quite warm. Our party there besides our hosts and us, not counting the necessary suites, consisted of Nicky and Alix with their baby, Olga, Aunt Marie and Bee, Ernie and Ducky with baby Elisabeth and Paul, who was quartered at Oussove. It was lovely being in the country after the strenuous days we had just gone through. By July the 4th all the guests had departed. Louis had already to leave on the 15th of June and Alix and Nicky left on July 3rd.

I returned to Germany with Ernie and Ducky going to see the Heiligenberg where I found the children very well. I was there only a few days, leaving with them on the 15th of July for Hemmelmark where we spent a month. The great event during our stay was the arrival of Henry's sailing yacht the *Esperance* which he had bought at Cowes and which was manned by an English crew. We went out several times in her. Irene had to keep very quiet that summer as she was expecting Sigismund (Bobby) who was born that November. This was the reason why she had not accompanied Henry to the Coronation.

[p.174] Soon after my return to the Heiligenberg my little horse "Jessie" that my mother had given me in 1878 and that I had ridden during these many years, died, from inflammation of the lungs. She was a great loss to me.

On September 1st I went with Ernie and Ducky to Munich for a few days, where Ella and Serge joined us and all together went to Venice. Ducky and Ernie Left us there after a short stay, but I remained on with Ella and Serge at the Hotel Europe where we stayed for a month and where Masha Wassiltshikoff joined us. Her immense size always attracted much notice. She had besides a loud voice which, if she tried to modify, it only became a loud hoarse whisper. Ella used sometimes to go in the morning and sketch inside St. Mark's accompanied by Masha. When begged by Ella not to make loud remarks which might disturb the

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worshippers, her attempts at whispering echoed round the church. Our stay at Venice was interrupted by a short trip to Ravenna. In Venice we often went across to the Lido to bathe, for it was a lovely autumn. Those were the days when most people wore serge bathing suits. Charlotte Meiningen, however, by far and away the prettiest of the Prussian cousins, who turned up for a few days, bought herself a thin pink silk one at Venice, which when she left the water, clung to her like a skin.

We explored much of Venice on foot. We generally split into two parties for the purpose, and there was great rivalry in hunting for antiques. Ella and I found ourselves with at [p.175] least half a dozen rather valueless pictures and frames on our hands for when we found a picture that pleased us, it had no frame, and when we found a frame we thought would be suitable it was either too large or too small and we had to find a picture for the new frame!

There was only one painting by a better artist which we bought on our own, having been told about it by our gondolier who took us to his mother's bedroom, where it was hanging.

The Russian Consul having told Serge that there was going to be a sale of good pictures which had belonged to a recently deceased German artist, we went to see them and Serge bought three very valuable ones for a very reasonable price.

As to Ella and myself we were enchanted with a small picture of the Virgin and Child, which, curiously enough, was without signature. We bought it for 500 francs as a birthday present for Ernie and it turned out to be a Sasso Ferrato. Once we went to tea to Lady Laird who showed us the late Sir Henry's fine collection of pictures, which at her death went to the British Museum. It was possible to take them out of Italy as in an old catalogue of an exhibition in England the pictures were described and it could be proved that Sir Henry had taken them back from England to Italy.

In October Nicky and Alix paid their first visit to Wolfsgarten as a married couple, bringing baby Olga with them. They had been visiting Grandmama at Balmoral and afterwards [p.176] had paid an official accession visit to Paris from where they came to Ernie. I remember Nicky once at luncheon saying to Ernie how he envied his being a constitutional Monarch on whom the blame for all the mistakes made by his ministers was not heaped. Under other circumstances, Nicky would have made a remarkably good constitutional sovereign, for he was in no way narrow minded, nor obsessed by his high position. If one could have boiled down Nicky and William in one pot

MS62

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you would have produced an ideal Emperor of Russia. His father's dominating personality had stunted any gifts for initiative in Nicky.

1896

On November the 5th I started on our usual exodus to Malta, again via Marseilles, by the Messageries Maritime Steamer. The journey was broken, as usual, at Tunis, where the children spent a happy day at Mr. Haggard, the British Consul's House, (brother of Rider Haggard) whilst I went over the ruins of Carthage once more. The *Cambrian* reached Malta a week after us, when we had already settled down in our Strad Regina House.

That winter we said good-bye to our good friends Sir Michael and Lady Culme-Seymour. He was succeeded as Commander [p.177] -in-chief by Admiral Hopkins. The children were made happy by a gift from their father of a small Maltese go-cart and harness and a diminutive Sardinian donkey to draw it, called "Rosina". As the children were getting bigger, I often took them for walks and drives, even Georgie, who was a sturdy little boy. Early in March the *Cambrian* again went as guardship to Grandmama to Villefranche, and I and Alice took passage in her. We joined Grandmama at the Excelsior Hotel Regina at Cimiez, where Alice enjoyed the company of her Battenberg cousins and I, of Aunt Beatrice and Thora, besides seeing Franzjos very often, who was living at Nice.

There too Stana [Anastasia] and Yury Leuchtenberg were staying at the time, as well as her sister Militza [Milica] and her husband, the Grand Duke Peter Nicolaiewitch, and the unmarried sister of Anna of Montenegro. Together we all made an expedition to "La Turbie" and my suspicion that Franzjos was going to propose to Anna were strengthened, when having gone after tea into a booth containing a "Camera obscura" with the rest of the party, I caught sight of them in the reflected picture of the surroundings, standing in animated conversation round the corner outside. A couple of days afterwards their engagement was announced.

By April the 8th we were back at Malta again. Captain Savory was at that time in command of the *Royal Oak*, and Mrs Savory and I saw each other often. Her little girl Doris's [p.178] nice nurse Rous was later on to become the beloved Nana of Alice's children.

1897

The *Theseus* under Captain Campbell, which had been one of the ships lent for the Benin Expedition, returned from there in April and Captain Campbell showed us the curios he had brought back from Benin, giving me a carved ivory wristlet as a souvenir. On April the 30th Louis handed over the command of the *Cambrian* to Captain Montgomery and went on half-pay, for a month. For my birthday, Alix and Nicky had given me two charming black Russian ponies with

MS62

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a Russian harness. They arrived soon after we got back to Heiligenberg in May and I drove them for a number of years.

Franzjos, who meanwhile, had been married to Anna at Celtigné [Cetinje] arrived with his bride and was solemnly received at Jugenheim. Miss Robson had definitely left us on our departure from Malta and Fraulein von Preuschen again temporarily took charge of Alice.

1897                    Early in June Louis was appointed to the *Majestic* as Flag Captain to the Commander-in-chief of the Channel Fleet, Admiral Sir Henry Stephenson. On the 16th of that month, I left with the children for London, Aunt Louise putting us all up at Kensington Palace during Grandmama's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations.

On June the 22nd the Thanksgiving Service for Grandmama's sixty year's reign took place at the steps of St. Paul's [p.179] Grandmama being too lame and helpless to mount any steps in procession. I drove in it with Daisy, Baby Bee and Louie Holstein. Alice was taken with some others of the youngest grandchildren in the Duchess of Buccleugh's carriage and Louis rode in the Procession, as he had done at the previous Jubilee. This time I was able to assist at the various functions. Grandmama, in spite of her great age, having given a big lunch, dinner and reception at Buckingham Palace as well as a State Ball, at which, however, she made but a short appearance. With the children I was also present at her garden party at Buckingham Palace. The weather was very hot and I remember at the fine ball which the Duke of Westminster gave at Grosvenor House that it was comparatively cool in the large marquee in the garden where we supped.

1897                    On the 26th of June I was present at the great Naval review off Spithead and spent the night on board the *V & A* with Aunt Louise and the Wales. They left the following morning but I had lunch on board the *Majestic* before returning to London. The Commander was Captain Scott of South Polar fame.

Having found, during my stay in Malta, that Miss Robson was asked to very few houses only having the position of governess, and also, that for official occasions I had had to borrow someone to act as Lady-in-Waiting, as it has happened at Nicky's Coronation etc., Louis and I agreed that we could [p.180] easily find teachers for Alice and that if I had a lady-in-waiting young enough to help me with the children, it would solve the difficulty. Knowing Mark Kerr's unmarried sisters had lost their old father, we thought that one of them might possibly be willing to come to me. I knew none of them, though I had seen Constance once and charged Miss Jackson to sound the eldest. Edith Kerr, as I

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now quite realise, did not want such a job, but thought the youngest sister, Nona might be willing to take it on. It has been most fortunate for me that she agreed to do so, for during nineteen years she was my lady-in-waiting and has always remained my closest friend. She acted in her new capacity during the Jubilee festivities, but remained at home, only joining me definitely on the 9th of July when the children and I returned to the Heiligenberg. Franz and Anna were living there during our absence, and I found her brother Mirko visiting them.

In the last week of July I sent the children with Nona to Irene at Hemmelmark and myself went to Weymouth where the *Majestic* was lying, remaining there till August 15th, when the Fleet left for the Mediterranean and I joined Irene. Henry was on his way to China but had given orders that the *Esperance* his sailing nyacht, with her English crew, was to be at Irene's disposal. I found Lotta Oldenburg staying there. She was the Grand Duke's daughter by his first wife, Aunt Luischen's sister and later married William's son Eitel Fritz from whom she was divorced after the Great War. We made several trips on the *Esperance*. During one we visited the quaint little town of [p.181] Broacker where in the porch of the old church we saw a very finely carved figure of a 'Dragoness!' St George had long ago disappeared. I suppose, it is the only female dragon to be met in sculpture. That autumn Nicky and Alix again came to Darmstadt with little Olga and the new baby, Tatiana my godchild, and I moved into the Altes Palace. Many relations came to visit them and the foundation stone of the Russian Chapel at the Mathildenhoehe was laid in Nicky's and Alix's presence.

Louis' book *Men o' War's Names* appeared and had a good reception going into a second edition. As for many years the book continued to be in demand, after Louis' death I seriously thought of bringing it up to date and had begun to work on it, but found it too disheartening. All countries were reducing their navies, so that one never knew which names to leave out, and some countries, like America, had already produced a book on the names of their own ships. Furthermore, the enormous number of destroyers, which all navies now included, would have required an immense amount of research work, as so many are called after very undistinguished personages.

For the French navy le Commandant (Marquis) de Balincourt, a personal friend of Louis, had been of great assistance to us and was quite ready to have helped me once more, when I took up the scheme after so many years.

[p.182] Louis had a month's leave over Christmas, which he spent with us at the Alte Palais. During that time Kaulbach did three pastel heads of him, the best of which, a striking likeness, Louise now has. Kaulbach was one of the renowned



MS62

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portrait painters of these times and he has also done full-length portraits of Ella and Alix.

On the last day of 1897 Louis had his first, but slight, attack of gout. Unfortunately it spread to both feet and when we arrived with the children and Nona at Osborne in January 1898, he was obliged to use a wheel chair. Gradually he was able to resume his duties and when the fleet left for a cruise on February 1st he had quite recovered.

Whilst at Osborne I accompanied Grandmama and Aunt Beatrice on visit to Netley Hospital where she saw some of the wounded in the campaign against the Mahdi. After a short stay at Windsor, I left towards the end of February with my party to visit Irene at the Schloss in Kiel. She was alone with her children, for Henry was in China, in command of *Deutschland*. In March we once more settled down at the Alte Palais moving in May to the Heiligenberg. During Easter week I had made a little expedition with Nona to see [p.183] the old town of Nüerenberg [Nuremberg] and Rothenburg.

There is nothing particular to mention about this summer, except that it was a very hot one and that we made good use of the bathing pool we had just had constructed in the private garden.

Louis was home for a short leave in September, the fleet being at Weymouth I took the children there and we settled in lodgings. Our chief amusement of an afternoon when Louis was on shore was to drive about the country in two pony carriages. It was during that stay that we bought the pony Chesil, which ended its days in the service of Marie at Schoenberg.

- 1898            In October, the fleet having started on another cruise, I returned to Germany with the children, to the Alte Palais. Having noticed that Louise's back was not straight, I had her examined by Dr. Vulpius at Heidelberg, who verified a slight curveture of the spine and it was decided she was to go through an eight week's course of exercises in his orthopaedic establishment. I settled her with Georgie, Hughes the nurse and the servant Valentine Schmidt at the Hotel Victoria from where she went to Dr. Vulpius for treatment both morning and afternoon except on Saturdays when Alice and I used to go and see them. The treatment was perfectly [p.184] successful and when she left her back was quite straight. Ella and Serge were at Wolfsgarten part of the autumn and we made an expedition to Munich together. In November I went to see Irene at Kiel previous to her departure for China to join Henry at Hong Kong. She had not been gone long, when I was informed by Dr. Starck, their clever family physician, that Toddy was ill in bed with inflamed glands accompanied by fever. I hurried off
- 1898

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with Nona to Kiel. Starck and the Seckendorffs, in whose charge Irene's children had been left, were a good deal worried, as an operation, which would have been a simple matter for any other child, was a very grave one for him. Of course, the Emperor William had been informed of Toddy's illness, and he sent the great surgeon Professor Bergmann to Kiel. After two long discussions with Dr. Starck, he agreed that no operation need be made at present, but that every means should be employed to cause the glands to burst externally.

By December the 17th Valdemar had so far recovered that I was able to return to Darmstadt where Louis arrived the next day and spent Christmas with us. I have forgotten to mention, that on Ernie's birthday, November 25th, we were all present at the unveiling of Papa's equestrian statue on the so-called "Paradeplatz", which is a simple and, therefore, characteristic representation of him in his ordinary military undress.

[p.185] The year 1899 began for me by a visit of myself and children to Grandmama at Osborne. They developed chickenpox and had to be isolated for part of the time. Our amusement was playing hockey, which Aunt Beatrice had taken a fancy to. The maids of honour and some of the gentlemen as well as the Clement Smith's daughters, from Whippingham parsonage, formed the team. Aunt Beatrice was a keen, but rather a slow player, and if a ball got between her feet, ordered everybody to wait till she had removed herself, as she was afraid of her ankles getting hurt. Whilst there, we got the news, that poor little Alfred Coburg, Uncle Affie's only son had died. He had been ill quite a while and when I used to go and see Louise at Heidelberg, I would visit him at a clinic where he was undergoing a cure.

On the 21st of February we returned to the Alte Palais and Louise started lessons with Fraulein Textor with whom Alice was having lessons for some years already. When a classical play or a fine opera was given that winter, I used to take Alice to hear and see it. Irene's two boys came to spend Easter with us.

1899

As the Channel Fleet was in the neighbourhood of Sardinia in April, I went for four days to Rome to see Louis. It was my first visit, and as it was impossible to see all the sights, we contented ourselves with the ancient Roman part and seeing the view over the whole town from the top of St. Peter's.

[p.186] During that summer Ernie went down with small-pox which he must have contracted during a visit to London when he went to see a native village at an exhibition. He had it pretty badly, but recovered without it's having left any marks on him.

MS62

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I occupied myself that year in copying the Journal of the "Grosse Landegraefin" for the year 1772. Whilst rearranging the books at the Heiligenberg I came across it. She had ordered all her diaries to be burned after her death and I do not know how that volume escaped that fate, or how my father-in-law got hold of it. When the copy was finished I gave it to Ernie, but the original is still in my possession at the present moment.

1899                In June that year Louis had been appointed Assistant Director of Naval Intelligence. Before taking up the post, he came home on short leave. In August his duties took him for three days to Paris, where I went to meet him. These were the hottest days of a very hot summer, so that we used to take refuge in the Louvre for coolness and did not leave the Hotel Liverpool, where we were stopping, till the evening and only once went to the play to see *La Dame de chez Maxim*.

On my return we went for a visit to Wolfsgarten, where the great amusement was to find out in what part of the grounds Ducky had secretly had supper laid out for us.

That Autumn once more Alix, Nicky and children came to pay a visit to Ernie.

[p.187] In October we joined Louis in London, where he had taken 40 Grosvenor Gardens for the winter. I arranged for a daily governess to come for the girls, a very nice person, Fraulein Lent. The Boer War had started and Nona was, of course, very anxious about her brother Freddie, who took part in it as an Officer in the Gordon Highlanders. Well do I remember how the departing regiments marched to Victoria Station the bands playing *Soldiers of the Queen*.

1900                Aunt Helena invited Louis and us all to spend Christmas at Cumberland Lodge.

New Year's day of the beginning of the new century we spent at Sandringham. There were endless discussions both here and in Germany as to whether 1900 was the last year of the nineteenth century or the first of the twentieth, but most people including Uncle Bertie considered it to be the beginning of the new one.

Uncle Bertie, who had been the kindest of uncles to me and was fond of young children, invited Aunt Helen Albany and us with our children to go to the Pantomime with him in London. As he had toothache that day, he was not able to enjoy it as much as the children did.

MS62

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Louis being pretty sure that his next command would take him out to the Mediterranean again, we decided to buy the house adjoining Admiralty House in Strada Mezzodi in Valetta and began collecting furniture for it.

[p.188] We went to many plays and war charity performances that winter and dined out with relations and friends. Grandmama took the war very much to heart. I remember how sad she looked when she inspected the Battalion of Guards in Buckingham Palace gardens before they left.

A good friend, Maurice Burke, was very ill, and Louis undertook to do his work as secretary to the First, Lord Goshen, besides his own, so that Burke should not lose his job. This took up his time more than ever, but he found the work interesting and Lord Goshen and Louis became real friends. Grandmama offered us the use of Frogmore House for the summer and we moved there the day after my birthday. My bedroom was on the ground floor, to the right of the front entrance. It had been Aunt Helena's when she lived there and Louis had the dressing room above, connected with it by a small staircase. My sitting room was next the bedroom, facing the garden. The Duchess of Kent's rooms and the big rooms to the left of the gallery were not used by us. We dined in one of the small rooms off the gallery and the children had their schoolroom in another. They and Nona lived on the floor above. We had been given a small pony on which Georgie learned to ride. Louise took riding lessons in the riding school of the castle. At the end of [p.189] the month, Grandmama, who had been paying a visit to Ireland, returned to Windsor. Soon after I saw her inspect the Naval Brigade of HMS *Powerful*, under Captain the Hon: Hedworth Lambton, who later changed his name to Meux. George of Wales' little boy Henry (now Duke of Gloucester) was Christened at the Castle in May.

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.190]

## CHAPTER IX

Prince "Dicky's" birth and Christening 190 191. - The aviary and kennels 190. - At Frogmore 192-193. - The Queen's pets 194. - Visit to the Paris Exhibition. Death of Prince Christian of Schlesing-Holstein [Schleswig-Holstein]195. - The German Chapel Royal 195. - Queen Victoria's failing health 196. - Her death 196. - Grave illness of the Empress Frederick 197. - Queen Victoria 197 201. - Mr Gladstone dines at Windsor 202. - Queen Victoria cont: 203 206. - The Munchi 204 - 205.

1900

On June 25th at about 6 a.m. Dickie was born, a healthy child, weighing over 8lbs. He was christened on the 17th of July at Frogmore House. He was Grandmama's last godson and she held him at his christening. By her desire, Albert was given him as a first name, before the Victor, Nicholas he is called after Uncle Nicky of Russia, Louis after his father and Francis after his Uncle Franzjos. The Christening took place in the Duchess of Kent's drawing room, to the left of the gallery, at 5.30 p.m. It was a very hot day and Grandmama, who always suffered terribly from the heat - she never perspired, her hands used to be like hot bricks - had given orders that the room was to be made as cool as possible. To do this, the servants had put buckets full of ice behind and underneath some of the chairs whose loose covers hid the buckets. Dr Elliot, Dean of Windsor, who performed the ceremony, walked to [p.191] Frogmore from Windsor in good time and was shown into the Christening Room, where he sat down to await the arrival of the Queen. Unfortunately, the chair he selected was over an ice cooler and he did not realize this until he felt his legs thoroughly chilled, and as a sad result, he got a sciatic inflammation in his hip of which he was never cured. He hobbled about with the help of a stick ever afterwards.

Dicky was a lively baby and to Nona's horror, as soon as she had handed him over to Grandmama, he waved one of his little arms about so violently, that he knocked her spectacles off, - and his hand became entangled in her cap-veil. This she took in very good part, however. She was not always so lenient towards the behaviour of small children. I remember when Alice was a little girl of about four, she, like many grandchildren and great grandchildren before her, refused to kiss grandmama's hand, and when Grandmama, in a severe voice said "naughty child" and slapped her hand, Alice slapped back, saying "naughty Grandmama." I had hurriedly to remove the offender. When I announced to the children that the new baby was to be called Louis, [p.192] all of them protested, saying that it was their father's name and why should the baby share it? I thereupon suggested that they might call him Nic instead. This also was not approved of, but when I proposed he might be called Dick, they accepted the idea, as it was not a name in the family. Little did they know that at times I called their father so, and that

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therefore he was being called like their father was. Not till he went to school did "Dickie" replace the "Dick".

Speaking of Frogmore and its surroundings, near the dairy is the Aviary, where, as a child I used to feed the chickens. They were under the care of an elderly Miss Pithers, who always wore a big black hat, tied with a broad black ribbon under her chin. Later on, the number of fowls was reduced and certain animals, which had been presented to Grandmama replaced them. In the summer of Dickie's birth there were two immense kangaroos kept in the runs there and a couple of large ostriches. One of these latter had a habit I had never heard of before, of squatting on the ground, fluffing out its feathers and swinging its long neck rapidly from side to side, beating its flanks violently with its head. After it had done so for at least twenty times, it would get up, a little dazed, but none the worse for the performance. That summer too there was lodged in the Home Farm a magnificent zebra from South Africa [p.193] and there also still remained poor Uncle Fritz's last charge, which Aunt Vicky had sent Grandmama after his death.

The kennels were an establishment not far off, where a variety of dogs were kept and bred. For many years, especially during the Prince Consort's lifetime, I believe they were very well managed. When Grandmama grew older, she always wished to have descendants from her own pet dogs and the results were not a success. Grandmama was devoted to dogs, all of which she spoilt, exactly like her son, Uncle Bertie. In the house she had two fine collies when I was young and she always had one or two of this kind about her, besides smaller pets, such as noisy little Italian Spitz. These dogs moved from residence to residence with her, sat about in her rooms, jumped onto her chair behind her back and were generally very disobedient, as were Aunt Beatrice's dogs and the dogs of the grandchildren. All the dogs were looked after by Grandmama's Scotch servants.

Grandmama used to enjoy visiting her animals on her morning drive in her pony carriage. In the last years, she was not able to walk without help, one leg being very weak and her sight beginning to fail her. She always breakfasted in Frogmore grounds at about 9.30. and, after a little turn in her pony carriage sat there writing till it was time to [p.194] go back for lunch. For her tea, she also came down to Frogmore and after more work, went for a drive when the air had grown cooler, until after eight. Of course, this only applies to summer.

She had been very fond of riding in her young days and the habit of riding about the grounds on a Scotch pony she kept up when Ella and I used to go to Balmoral as girls. Her old black pony "Jessie" I remember well. It was led by John Brown or his successor, Francis Clark.

MS62

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Louis got his summer leave in August and he, I and the children left Frogmore on the 15th went to Filey in Yorkshire for a month for some bracing air and sea bathing, returning to Frogmore on the 29th of September.

In October Henry and Irene spent a few days with us on their return from Balmoral. Later in the month I went with Louis for a few days to Paris, where we joined Ella and Serge at the Hotel Campbell in the Avenue Friedland and visited the Paris International Exhibition (1900)

That same month I was often at Cumberland Lodge as they were much worried about Christel, who was laid up [p.195] at Pretoria with typhoid. He died on the 29th and was buried there. He was a pleasant and very able person.

On the 1st of November we gave up Frogmore and moved to No. 4 Hans Crescent very near Harrods. That winter the children used to go for drill and gymnastics to McPherson's Institute in Sloane Street and the girls had lessons with Fraulein Lent, while Alice read English literature with my old governess Miss Jackson. Georgie we sent to Mr Moreton's school at Cliveden Place.

Alice was now prepared for her Confirmation by Pastor Frisius. He was a particularly nice man, and, before coming to London, had been Chaplain at the German Church in Paris for many years. He was the clergyman of the German Chapel Royal, which is now the Marlborough House Chapel. When George the First became King of England, he understood no English and the Anglican Service was performed by a Lutheran pastor in German for his benefit. These services continued till the end of Grandmama's reign and were attended by a German congregation. The English church service, well translated into German was used, but [p.196] Chorales were sung instead of hymns.

Grandmama seemed to be failing in health, but she still attended the usual service at the Mausoleum on December 14th at which we and most of the family were present.

The children's nurse, Hughes was ill and went away for treatment, Emma Bailey who, when I was a child, had been my nurserymaid and then had gone to the Erbachs first as nurse, afterwards as housekeeper, being in England at the time came to look after baby.

1901

On the 11th of January Aunt Louise informed us that Grandmama was not at all well and a couple of days afterwards, the Emperor William came over to see her. William had a real affection and respect for Grandmama and his visit this time was purely due to personal impulse.

MS62

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On the 22nd Louis and I were sent for to Osborne, where we arrived a quarter of an hour after Grandmama had died.

Lots of relations, among them many foreign Sovereigns came to the funeral, Louis, as personal A.D.C. walked besides the coffin in the procession through London and in Windsor.

[p.197] The only one of her children who was unable to attend was poor Aunt Vicky who was already a very sick woman. On her last visit to Grandmama in 1900, Aunt Vicky had spoken about her illness (cancer in the breast) to Grandmama, after having had the diagnosis privately confirmed by an English specialist. This knowledge, which Aunt Vicky had begged Grandmama to keep to herself, as well as her great anxiety over the Boer War and her grief at the loss of Christel whom she loved, and that of so many gallant soldiers she knew, preyed on Grandmama's mind and had helped to lower her vitality.

Grandmama's death was a great personal loss to me. On account of our having lost our mother when we were so young Grandmama had taken a special interest in her beloved daughter's children. Her affection for us was very warm and sincere and she proved it on every occasion. As the one of us, who was the most in England, I was the one who was in closest touch with her. After my marriage she became very fond of Louis and relied on his judgement, tact and discretion, so that she discussed not only many private, but also public matters with him - and she nominated him as one of the Executors of her will.

My understanding of Grandmama grew with the years. In childhood, I had known her as a middle aged woman, and as I was approaching middle age, she had become a very old lady.

[p.198] Both of us had developed different traits of character during those years. In my early youth, Grandmama was a very formidable person in my mind some one whom my mother regarded with respect and almost awe. She herself tho' very gracious to her grandchildren, expected perfect manners and immediate obedience from them and would look and speak severely to any offender. These are the years of Angeli's portrait, with its stern and rather forbidding expression of face. My mother's death broke through many of these outward barriers and the constant signs of affectionate pity and interest, gave to our intercourse a more natural ease.

If with the older grandchildren Grandmama had been somewhat strict, with the youngest who were, in age, a generation younger, she showed the proverbial grandmother's leniency, and to the Connaughts and to Aunt Beatrice's



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children she was the "Gan-gan" whom they could coax and wheedle. People picture Queen Victoria to themselves as completely "Victorian", but I do not know what Victorian means, when applied to a period extending over sixty years. Though in various details she adhered to the custom of her happy married life yet, gradually, many little rules had been relaxed and had been adapted to the times she was living in. This was specially noticeable in her treatment of her grandchildren.

In her dress she always kept to the old-fashioned style she was accustomed to. Her day dresses had wide sleeves, showing the finest lawn under-sleeves. There were pocket [p.199] slits in the ample skirts, the pockets themselves being in the under-skirt in which she kept the keys of dispatch boxes, attached to a chain and her spectacles. She had two writing tables, side by side, one for her public, the other for her private correspondence and when she had on a smarter dress, she would put on a little black silk apron; evidently, in her young days, ladies protected their light dresses from the chance of ink specking.

Once when Aunt Beatrice was a little girl of about four, Grandmama was writing with her apron on, and the child was playing about the room. Having nothing better to do, she managed to untie the apron strings and knot them to the back rail of the chair without her mother's noticing it. When the nurse had removed the child and the Queen wanted to get up from her table, she found herself so securely tied to her chair that she had to ring for the maid to release her.

Though it is well known from her portraits the Queen always wore some form of widow's cap, yet in the privacy of her own room she would sit without it, with only a little bow arrangement pinned on to the back of her hair, which it covered leaving the greater part of the head free.

In the grounds she wore a broad brimmed straw hat in summer.

She was extraordinarily neat and tidy in her toilette and used a faint perfume of orange blossom. She once gave me a [p.200] bottle of this scent, which was made at Grasse, but I have in vain after her death tried to get it there and elsewhere.

She never went out without a collection of capes of different thickness, and many a time have I helped her in the carriage to take a thinner one off and put a thicker one on and vice versa.

When she went abroad, she always took her own bed and bedding with

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her and her personal housemaid. For many years her head dresser was the faithful Coburger of the name of Dettweiler. Her successor, who had been the second dresser, was old Annie MacDonald, whose pronunciation of foreign names was hopeless; for example, the Queen in vain tried to teach her to say "schloss" instead of "Slosh." In the latter years of her life, the third dresser was my mother's last maid, Mary Adams, who had continued on with me, for the first years after my marriage. As she had not attained the pensionable years of service when the Queen died, Queen Alexandra took her over. With her, as with Grandmama, she had special charge of the wardrobe stores and the stock of gifts etc.

For breakfast and tea Grandmama used two special cups and would pour the tea from one into the other to cool it.

Having suffered very severely from gout between the age of 45 and 60 once in Balmoral she had gout in both hands - the doctors had forbidden her to take any wine and she only [p.201] drank whisky and water at her meals, the whisky, probably, was finished off by her servants and thence the legend has arisen of her drinking lots of alcohol. It is true that she was not particularly shocked at any of her Scottish servants taking a drop too much, but one must not forget that in her youth gentlemen, as well as servants were given to hard drinking. She was in the habit of visiting the people on her estates, more especially in Scotland. Sometimes when driving she would only stop at the door to inquire after the health of the families, sometimes she would go into the house and talk with the tenants. Life at Windsor was, of course more formal than at Osborne and Balmoral. Most evenings there were guests to dinner - ministers, Ambassadors, generals and their wives, various clergymen who had preached to her on Sunday and many more, I have met many distinguished people at her table. I remember an amusing episode when Mr and Mrs Gladstone had been invited to Windsor to dine and, as usual, spend the night there afterwards. Mrs Gladstone appeared for dinner wrapped up in a shawl, which was somewhat against etiquette. Grandmama who always suffered from the heat and kept her rooms very cold, never understood that people could feel chilly and generally made remarks when she saw signs of it. However nothing was said to Mrs Gladstone on this occasion. When we had risen from table and were leaving the room, one of the gentlemen noticed that [p.202] something was trailing at the back of Mrs Gladstone's dress. When he stooped to pick it up Mrs Gladstone exclaimed "Oh that is the bodice of my dress I could not find. My maid must have pinned it on there. That is why I have had to cover myself with the shawl." Her untidiness is well known. She was only amused at her maid's precautions when packing.

MS62

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It was at Windsor too that I made the acquaintance of Majors Chard and Broomhead, the heroes of the Defence of Rorke's Drift in the Zulu War, two modest little V.C's in knee breeches and tights. I was not present when Lord Kitchener dined there before going out to S Africa, but Ducky, Ernie's first wife, who was, told me that on the following morning Grandmama had remarked to her, that he had been most pleasant and kind in his conversation, though she had always heard that he disliked women and she had been a little alarmed at first, by his stern appearance.

The Queen was a very shy person all her life and her apparent stiffness on meeting people for the first time was due to embarrassment. I am sure that it was that great shyness that made her so averse to appear in public when she no longer had her husband to support her. It was not until the Duke of Albany was a grown man in her house, that she again had the support she needed. Another marked trait of [p.203] Grandmama's character, as one of her favourite ladies-in-waiting, the old dowager Marchioness of Ely, pointed out to me was "that the stupidest man's opinion carried more weight with the Queen than the cleverest woman's" - Like all Sovereigns I have met and who have been some time on the Throne, she could be autocratic in her behaviour, which her own children were made to feel, especially in small ways. If any were worried or distressed however her warm, mother feeling was always to the fore. Up to the day she took to her bed in her last illness, the first thing she did, after retiring to her own room in the evening, was to write up her diary for the past day. In the latter years, when her eyesight began to fail her, she took to dictating it to Aunt Beatrice or when she was not available, to me or Thora Holstein. Thora was much with her those last years and in many ways replaced Aunt Beatrice whose own young family occupied more of her time, and was always a welcome substitute Grandmama was very fond of her.

For quite half a dozen years before her death, Grandmama's sight began to trouble her. The nerves of the eye were affected and the various oculists she consulted agreed, that no operation could prevent a progress of the trouble. The thought one day she would go quite blind like her grandfather, George III oppressed her greatly. I remember when, for some reason she had to write some official letter to the [p.204] Emperor of Austria, she called me in to assist her in making a fair copy. She could not see where the words ended, after she had interrupted her writing to dip her pen. I had to put my finger on the last word written before she could continue.

She was very lame too, having at different times injured each leg by a fall. She relied more and more on her Indian servants neat-handed support, and latterly, could not walk from one room to another without their help. The first of these servants were appointed after her first Jubilee. The Duke of Connaught's

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command in India had roused her personal interest in the native element of that country, and the presence of the Christian Indian servant, Damouda, whom they had brought back with them may have fostered the idea to have Indian attendants herself. These were very carefully selected for her by advisers of the Viceroy. One of the first lot sent over happened to be a man of a better class than the ordinary servant, having been trained as a clerk. The Queen soon discovered that he was an educated person and should not be in so menial a position. She singled him out from the others. He was officially entitled her Munchi, gave her lessons in Hindustani and did small, unimportant clerical work for her, for which her maids were unsuitable. Of course the privileges she granted him, such as a house of his own in which to lodge his family, which he sent for, roused much jealousy. She would have liked to give him the position the German secretary formerly held, but this plan [p.205] for various reasons met with opposition and he never attained it. Wild rumours went about of the political influence he was thought to be gaining over her. This was disproved at her death, as King Edward himself has told me. The Munchi retired to India on a pension and played no further part.

Grandmama was always very proud of being a soldier's daughter and the interest she took in the Army was very sincere. In the Navy it was less pronounced, as the Admiralty had deeply offended her and hurt her feelings when it refused to give the Prince Consort an Honorary rank in the Service. I may say that it was not until Louis became her grandson by marriage and she heard so much more about Naval life and Naval doings, that her personal interest became keener. Neither her naval step-nephew, Prince Ernest Leiningen, nor her naval son, the Duke of Edinburgh had been able to do so.

Grandmama was essentially, what was called a womanly nature, and her likes and dislikes were influenced by personal contacts. This was the secret of Lord Beaconsfield's charm for her; he never overlooked the woman in the Sovereign. [p.206]

1900

In February we went with the children to lunch with Uncle Bertie and family at Windsor and we spent a couple of nights there. A number of relations were then dividing such jewellery of Grandmama's that she had not specially left to one or the other. Grandmama had left her family correspondence and diaries to be dealt with by Aunt Beatrice, who was busy sealing up letters and returning them to the brothers and sisters. As to her diaries, she was so averse to the family affairs of a Sovereign being made public to satisfy the curiosity of succeeding generations, that her first intention was to have them destroyed. It would have been a great misfortune and the fact being pointed out to her, Grandmama left them in her Will to Aunt Beatrice, who personally copied the manuscript and deleted all the passages that she knew Grandmama would not have wished to

**MS62**

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have been preserved. Aunt Beatrice burned the originals when copied. This work occupied her for thirty nine years.

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.207]

CHAPTER X

1901 First visit to King Edward at Windsor 207. Confirmation of Princess Alice 208. Last visit to Empress Frederick at Friedrichshof 210. "Bauerlein" Stormy voyage to Malta 211. Divorce of Grand Duke of Hesse 212. 1902 Spiro and his horses 213. Great storm 213. Picnic on Princess Alice's birthday 213. Admiral and Lady Fisher 214. Fancy dress ball during the carnival 214. Trip to Syracuse in the *Implacable* 215. The summer at the Heiligenberg 215. King Edward's illness and the postponement of the Coronation 216. Private engagement of Princess Alice 216. King Edward's Coronation 216. Autumn at Darmstadt 217. 1903 Visit to Kiel when Hemmelmark was being built 218. Prince Henry's steam propelled motor car 218. Winter in London at Cadogan Square 218. Prince George goes to Cheam 219. We buy our first motor car 220. Tragic death of Lady Strafford's daughter 221. Prince Dickie goes to his nurse's wedding 221. A case of arson at Sopwell 222. Princess Alice's wedding at Darmstadt 223. Stay at Wolfsgarten 225. Death of little Princess Elizabeth of Hesse 225.

1901 On January 1st Georgie starts school life going daily to Mr Morton's school in Cliveden Place. His studies were interrupted for a time owing to his being laid up with an attack of German Measles.

In March we sent the children down to West Bay near Bridport for some sea air. Nona's sister, Mrs Wickham had a little cottage there and had recommended the place. Louis was laid up during that time with gout.

George and May having left on their tour to Australia and Aunt Alix having gone with the girls to Denmark, Uncle Bertie was alone with the York children at Windsor and invited us with ours and Nona Kerr to visit him there at the end of March for a [p.208] couple of days, as we were about to go to Germany. It was a strange sort of visit, so different from old times. Uncle Bertie was very busy planning rearrangements of the rooms and we and the suite dined in the big dining room and afterwards played cards in the drawing room. He taught me to play bridge on that occasion.

On the second of April we left for the Heiligenberg. Alice who had already been examined by Pastor Frisius, was re-examined by Pfarrer Matthes of Jugenheim and on the 9th of April she was confirmed in the village church. Henry, Irene and Ernie were present at the confirmation. On the 16th of April I went on a visit to poor Aunt Vicky, spending a week with her at Friedrichshof. She was suffering greatly from cancer of the breast and had to be taken about in a bath chair. Mossie, who was living at Frankfurt, had been going to Cronberg by

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rail every day. She had been ordered a rest by her doctor, as she was expecting and the doctor said that if she would not keep quiet for a few days her child (the second set of twins as it turned out) would be born in the train. I used to read aloud to Aunt Vicky and walk by her bath chair. She still took pleasure in showing me her improvements in the grounds and waited outside the castle of Cronberg which she had restored and which I went over at her request.

[p.209] Thora came to stay a while with me and on April 27th Leopold, Maurice and Ena, in charge of the tutor Mr Theobald and Miss May Smith, daughter of the Vicar of Whippingham, arrived from Cap Martin. Aunt Beatrice, accompanied by Bessie Bulteel, followed on the 10th of May. The tutor first and then all Aunt Beatrice's children went down with measles and the house soon became a regular hospital, for I and Louis followed, then Bessie Bulteel and last of all our own children. Four weeks later everybody had recovered and the visitors went back to England. Louis had left the Admiralty and had gone on half pay, and on the 6th of July we went to Illinskoje with the children and Nona. It was a lovely warm summer and we bathed and fished a great deal. There were the usual relays of visitors, amongst them Paul's children. On the 6th of August came the news of Aunt Vicky's death and on the 9th we left for Peterhof on a visit to Alix and Nicky. Ella and Serge had preceded us. From Peterhof we and the members of the Russian Family went by yacht to St Petersburg to attend the memorial service for Aunt Vicky. On the 18th of August Louis, I and Alice, accompanied by Nona, went with Nicky and Alix to see the Manoeuvres at Narva, living in the Imperial train with them for several days. On the 24th of that month we returned to the Heiligenberg.

[p.210] Early in September Louis went to Commission the *Implacable* at Plymouth preparatory to joining the Mediterranean Fleet. Fraulein Ottilie Bauer, "Bauerlein" as we all called her, paid me her usual autumn visit. She was quite an institution in the family. A Hessian by birth, and now permanently living at Darmstadt, she had, in the fifties and sixties been the German governess-teacher of my mother and her younger sisters. When Aunt Beatrice was grown up she was given the position of lectrice by Queen Victoria. This meant that she spent part of the year at her court, alternating with Aunt Beatrice's French governess, who had been given the same position. Bauerlein only retired from her post about the time of Liko's death. When at Darmstadt, she used to accompany us on our rides. Being very small and very light, she was rather a comic figure on a tall horse. In character she was straightforward and high-principled and though given to being somewhat fussy, not to say governessy, in small matters of manners and behaviour, yet she understood children and young girls very well. She greatly missed her life in England where she had gained a broader outlook, than life in Darmstadt afforded her, and she loved her visits to me to talk over old times.

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.211] At the end of October we left for Malta. Admiral (later lord) Fisher, the C.I.C. sent the *Surprise* to Genoa to take us to Malta. Off the coast of Sicily a violent thunder squall sprung up at night, I had hurriedly to leave the deck cabin, recently erected by the admiral, as there was imminent risk, should the deck awnings be carried away before they could be furled, of being swept out to sea like a hen in a coop. On arrival at Malta, we went straight to our newly purchased house, 52 Strada Mezzodi, next door to Admiralty House. Louis had had all the furniture we had bought for it put into place and had made the rooms very comfortable. We had also bought and sent out a buggy for the use of the girls and Nona.

The Governor, Sir Henry Grenfell and his niece Mrs St Aubyn, called on me soon after arrival as did also the Admiral second in command, Lord Charles Beresford, with his daughter Kathleen. Charles Beresford was an old acquaintance of ours as he was a friend of Uncle Bertie's. He had been in command of the small Cruiser *Condor* at the capture of Alexandria, at which Louis as a young lieutenant, was present in the *Inconstant*. He was a witty Irishman. One of the most popular of British naval officers, he was a good whip and horseman and drove a four-in-hand team in Malta.

So that the girls' lessons should not be interrupted we had engaged their London teacher Fraulein Grau to [p.212] to spend the winter in Malta to continue working with them. Though German, she had been many years a resident in England. She lived in lodgings in Valetta.

I had not been long in Malta, when I had a letter from Ernie, who had been spending a short time at Capri, saying that Ducky had informed him that she had decided to ask for a divorce. I was really, less surprised and startled by her decision than he. Tho' both had done their best to make a success of their marriage, it had been a failure. Their characters and temperaments were quite unsuited to each other and I had noticed how they were gradually drifting apart. As I had known Ducky well from a child, since the time that she lived with her parents at San Antonia, she had often spoken freely to me on the subject of her married life. She had confidence, that I hope was not misplaced, in my fairness of judgement, and in spite of my being devoted to my brother. I can only say that I thought then, and still think, that it was best for both that they should part from each other.

1902

According to our custom we started the New Year by a railway trip from Valetta to Citta Vecchia and finished up the day by going to a ball given by Charlie Beresford on board his flagship *Ramillies*. That winter we acquired a fine pair of big black carriage horses which our friend Mr. Rolfe the consul had



**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

purchased for us at [p.213] Naples. They were the pride of our little Maltese coachman's Spiro's heart, who tied an amulet on the neck of each. Spiro had a fat wife and numerous children who all lodged, Maltese fashion, in a large room opening on to the steep side street. It was in the basement of our house, next to the stables and the coachhouse. Our house being on a steep slope, these were beneath the ground floor.

Often have I watched from our balcony first Spiro, assisted by his wife and some of the children, shove the large sized carrozza we had had made for us, up to the corner of Strada Mezzodi, after which the horses, one led by Spiro and the other by a diminutive little son of his, were brought out and harnessed to the carriage.

January was very stormy and I was kept indoors by a touch of bronchitis. In February there was a particularly violent Easterly gale and I went with Nona and the three elder children to S. Elmo to see the great seas breaking. Even Alice and Nona had to be helped back to the shelter of the houses. We did a certain amount of entertaining, having our own house and gave dinner parties about once a week. As a birthday treat for Alice, we all and a certain number of midshipmen from the *Implacable* went to St. Paul's Bay for a picnic, some going in go-carts, others riding. Among the latter was Prince Wadijai of Siam, a very poor rider, who came a painful cropper on the hard highroad. [p.214] The other midshipmen explained this to me by saying, that Siamese had fat knees like women and could not stick to the saddle.

We saw a good deal of Admiral and Lady Fisher, our next door neighbours. Louis had a great respect for his brains and energy and Fisher used to send for Louis to consult him about his great scheme for founding Osborne College. Personally, I did not care very much for the admiral. He seemed to glory in his partiality for or against individuals and once said to me "I love hating". He was a passionate dancer and many a young wife or girl was snatched away from her midshipman partner because Fisher considered her a good dancer.

Lady Fisher I liked. She was one of those, fortunately, rare cases of people born without any ear for music. The loud performances of the bands at Admiralty House dinners and at balls were a sore trial to her. She told me that not only could she not distinguish one tune from another but could not even detect the rhythm in them.

At the great Carnival fancy dress ball at the Palace that winter Nona danced in a quadrille in a costume of King Charles II's time. Wadijai and a fellow midshipman went as the Siamese twins - Wadijai perfectly comfortable in

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his native dress and the English boy, to whom he had lent a complete outfit, very much the contrary, as all the [p.215] time he was afraid of his Sarong's coming undone.

In March, the *Implacable* went to Syracuse for a few days firing and torpedo practice and Louis took me, Alice and Nona with him. We slept on board and when the ship was out visited the town and neighbourhood. We made an expedition in the captain's launch up the Anapos River in company with the chaplain and one evening, Nona and Alice went after dinner in a boat with some of the officers to try and spear mullets by the light of flares. They had but a poor success.

That winter Colonel Hunter Blair's daughters, who were about the age of Alice and Louise became great friends of theirs and Georgie often played with General Lane's boy. As to Dickie, he was still too small to make friends with other children.

Towards the end of April, the Fleet left for its spring cruise and the admiral kindly lent us the *Surprise* to take me and the family to Genoa. On the way we stopped for twenty-four hours at Aranchi Bay in Sardinia, where our fleet was lying. We reached the Heiligenberg on the 29th of April. I saw a good deal of Ernie that summer, he spending some time at the Heiligenberg and we at Wolfsgarten. Franzjos and [p.216] Anna had invested in a bright red little motor car and would come puffing up the hill in it from the Emilsgarten where they were now established. On June the 22nd Alice, Nona and I left for England for Uncle Bertie's Coronation, joining up with Irene and Henry at Flushing. Alice and I were put up at Buckingham Palace. I was horrified to see how ill Uncle Bertie looked. Two days afterwards, on the 24th, he was operated on for appendicitis and the Coronation ceremonies had to be put off. Tino and Sophie of Greece, as well as Andrea, also lived at the Palace. It was then that Alice and Andrea became privately engaged, somewhat against my wish, as I considered them too young. On the 8th of July after having seen Uncle Bertie for a moment, we returned to the Heiligenberg where Louis was able to come for a three day's visit to discuss Alice's engagement. On the 7th of August Alice, Nona and I once more started for London leaving Louise Georgie and baby Dick with Franzjos and Anna at the Emilsgarten.

On the 9th of August Uncle Bertie and Aunt Alix's Coronation took place at the Abbey. It was a beautiful sight to which we drove in procession. Well do I remember all the discussions about the details of the ceremony in the preceding year. There was hardly a person living who remembered the details of Grandmama's coronation, and Aunt Augusta Strelitz, [p.217] who had been

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

present at it as a very young but observant girl, was often appealed to.

We once more had been lodged at Buckingham Palace and we got back to the Heiligenberg on the 13th of August.

In September we went with Ernie to Friedberg for the manoeuvres which lasted for several days and which Alice, Nona and I attended on horseback. Louise and Georgie drove out to see them with little Elisabeth, who was spending part of the summer with her father. We stayed part of the autumn at the Schloss, where Irene and Henry with their youngest boys joined us. Plans for going to Malta were given up, as Louis was appointed Director of Naval Intelligence at the Admiralty and would soon have to leave for England. At the end of October Ella and Serge also came to the Schloss and at the beginning of November Louis came to Darmstadt for a week on his way to London. On November 19th I moved into the rooms at the Alte Palais with the children and Nona. The weather in December was cold and I took the children several times skating on the Emilgarten pond. On the 10th of December Ernie started for India to be present at the Coronation Durbar and three days later Ella and Serge left for St Petersburg. On the 21st I went to Kiel with the children and Nona, where Louis joined us two days later. [p.218] He had to return to London on the last day of the year.

1903

We started the New Year, at Kiel, where we remained with Henry and Irene till the middle of January. They had begun building the new house at Hemmelmark and Henry one day took Irene and me over in his steam driven motor car. In these early days of cars there were a certain number of people, Henry among them, who believed in steam as a better propelling force than petrol. There were great drawbacks about Henry's motor car, however. First of all between Kiel and Hemmelmark, you had to replenish the boiler, stopping at some farmhouse on the way to get water in a bucket. Then, in accordance with the force of the draught created by the car, flames and steam would envelop the passengers in the back seat, and the temperature would become uncomfortably high. Coming back from Hemmelmark I was frozen up to the waist by the icy wind we faced, while the lower part of my body was being roasted like St Laurence on the gridiron!

Henry gave two big dinner parties and a ball to the nobility and the officials while we were with them.

We arrived in London on the 16th of January where Louis was waiting for us in the house we had taken for the winter, 70 Cadogan Square. He was suffering from a slight [p.219] attack of gout and that year he had them pretty

MS62

### MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

frequently. Though these attacks did not last more than a week, generally, they were very painful at the time. We spent a couple of days at Windsor where there was a family gathering for the anniversary of Grandmama's death on the 22nd of January. On the 24th, the Wales's fourth boy, John was christened, Louis being one of the godfathers.

From Windsor Louis took Georgie to the Preparatory School at Cheam, the headmaster being Mr. Talbot. The school in one of the oldest preparatory schools in England but the present school buildings only date from the XVIII century. There was no superfluous luxury at Cheam, such as running water in the dormitories and the little luxuries other schools had begun to introduce. There was however, a good covered swimming bath, which could be used all the year round. Georgie became quite attached to the school in which there were many sons of military and naval men, whose fathers and grandfathers had been there before them. We generally visited Georgie once a fortnight and were present at their Annual Sports and Winter Concert.

During our stay at Cadogan Square, Alice read English Literature once a week with kind Miss Jackson, my old [p.220] governess, while Louise went on with regular lessons with Fraulein Grau at home. Dick I used to take for walks and to see the birds and beasts at the Natural History Museum which he loved.

Uncle Bertie and Aunt Alix gave a dance for about 400 people on their wedding day, March 10, to which we took Alice. In April we left for Sopwell, near St. Albans, the dower house of the Verulams, which we had taken for three months. We had just bought our first motor car, made for us by the Wolsey works. The body was a four seated wagonette. There was a closed top for it which was put on in winter. It had a 12 H.P. engine and cost nearly £900. As far as I recollect its speed did not exceed 30 miles an hour! In these first years of motor cars, motorists were subject to many annoyances. Children continued to play on the roads when they saw the car coming while horses shied at the sight of the strange vehicle. The rubber tyres were too rounded and smooth, so that whenever it was wet the car skidded abominably and little boys and bicyclists would try and hang on behind.

Louis used to go to and fro to his work by car or rail as did the two girls, Alice taking French and Greek lessons. They would lunch at Grille's Family hotel in Sloane Street. We saw a good deal of the Straffords, Nona's elder sister and her girls at Wrotham. The third girl, who was about Alice's age was [p.221] remarkably pretty. Hers was to be a tragic fate. When she had been happily married for less than a year, she was walking through some thickets behind her husband who had his gun with him. The gun went off and killed her almost

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

instantaneously, the whole charge going into her face and head.

Whilst we were at Sopwell Hughes, the children's nurse was married to our former footman Valentin Schmidt. I took Baby with me to the wedding and he was allowed to bring his toy woolly lamb with him to keep him occupied. He behaved very well, except for a few loud remarks about his lamb, which I would not allow him to "baa". I remember that that summer he was much upset by falling, with fatal effect, on the nursery canary, which was flitting about the room. When he was told it would never get up again as it was dead, he cried bitterly. The miller presented Dick with a charming little kitten which we took to the Heiligenberg with us. The kitten, however much preferred Georgie to Dick and was devotedly attached to him, always knowing when Georgie was back for his holidays and immediately settling down in his room. Georgie like myself was always very fond of cats.

On the 9th of May Andrea of Greece arrived and his engagement to Alice was announced by Uncle Bertie at a family dinner given by George and May at Marlborough House as a sort of housewarming party, they having just establishing themselves there. [p.222]

1903

Andrea had been allowed to come over to England alone, without an A.D.C. and very shy he was on the day that he, Alice and I assisted at a Te Deum in honour of the engagement at the Greek Church, which was followed by a reception of the legation. Louis was unable to go with us owing to gout.

We spent a few days at Windsor and on our return to Sopwell were told, that the shed by the mill next door had been burned out - evidently a case of arson. A week later we were aroused by the burning of a hay rick on a meadow at the back of the mill. The County Commissioner said that many fires caused in summer time, were probably due to people of unbalanced mind, who seemed unable to resist the temptation to set things on fire.

He informed Louis that our chauffeur was under strong suspicion, as he was the last person seen about. Though there was not enough evidence to arrest him, the Commissioner advised Louis to get rid of the man, which we did.

It had meanwhile been arranged, that Andrea was to be attached to the Rote Dragoner at Darmstadt and he left us to take up his service there on the 20th of June. We did a certain amount of trout fishing whilst at Sopwell in the little stream that ran past the property, the champion dry fly fisher of the county, a young auctioneer, Mr Scott, acting as our instructor in "the gentle art".

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

[p.223] We all spent a night at Marlborough House in July when George and May gave their first big ball and we also took Alice to the State Ball at Buckingham Palace. I went with the children, Georgie's holidays had just begun, to the Heiligenberg at the end of July. Andrea came out constantly from Darmstadt. In August Louis arrived with Nona, who had been spending a holiday at home. Georgie began to take riding lessons and I took Baby Dick out on the small pony "Rodrick" which also was driven in a pony cart. The village schoolmaster Herr Heid's son used to come and play with Georgie.

On the 17th of September Louis and Georgie returned to England for work and school and on the 24th I moved with Nona and the children to the Altes Palais to prepare for Alice's wedding.

There was a very large gathering for it. Ernie put up the whole Greek family at the Schloss, as well as Vera of Wuertenberg Aunt Olga's sister. Ella and Serge with Marie and Dimitry, Nicky, Alix and the children, Aunt Alix and Toria all lived with him at the New Palace. In the Alte Palais were Henry and Irene, Aunt Beatrice and Ena, Dolly Teck, Abby Holstein and Captain Mark Kerr - the latter was our personal guest. On the 1st of October Louis arrived from London and Georgie came over with Aunt Beatrice and Ena on the 4th. For the wedding he wore his Eton suit and had a top hat, by which [p.224] his cousins were half impressed, half amused. On the 6th Ernie gave a big dinner to all relations and their suites at the Schloss, followed by a reception and buffet we gave in the ballroom of the Alte Palais, at which two hundred and sixty people were present. Alice and Andrea were married on the following day, October 7th, first by Protestant rite in the Schlosskirche at 3 p.m. and then in the new Russian Chapel on the Mathildenhoehe. We used my parents-in-laws old state carriage for the bride. We gave a big family dinner and after it Alice and Andrea drove off to the Heiligenberg in the Wolsey motor which had been presented to Andrea by Nicky.

All the family saw them off as they left, and Nicky and Ernie, followed by excited policemen and Russian detectives in plain clothes, rushed out into the crowd to bombard them with the last handfuls of rice. On October 8th, Louis and Georgie had to leave again. To amuse his numerous guests, Ernie requisitioned two trams, which took a large family party through the town to tea at the Oberforsthaus. When the public in the streets identified the "August occupants", there was much bowing and waving of hands. Gradually the guests dispersed and the last festivities being a musical drive given by the "White Dragoons" and a big evening party at the Schloss, to which Alice and Andrea came. On the 13th I [p.225] moved with Louis and Dick to Wolfsgarten to join Ernie. The three sisters with families were there too. Nona was left at the Alte Palais to look after Sonia Orbeliani, Alix's lady-in-waiting. She was a charming, intelligent and

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

merry girl, most loyal and honest, whom we were all very fond of. For a couple of years she had showed symptoms of spinal trouble and on arrival at Darmstadt she suddenly almost lost the use of her legs. It was out of the question she should go to Wolfsgarten, so Alix took her in an ambulance to the Alte Palais which was now empty and quiet.

Our stay at Wolfsgarten was not very long as the weather was getting cold and on the 24th I returned with the children to the Alte Palais, Serge and Ella leaving at almost the same time. Early in November we joined Louis in London where we lived for the winter at 70 Cadogan Square. Alice and Andrea, meanwhile, took up their quarters in our rooms at the Alte Palais, as Andrea was doing duty with the "Red Dragoons". I had a bare fortnight in London when I got the sad news of poor little Elizabeth's death at Skierniewice, Nicky's shooting box in Poland on the 15th of November. Ernie had taken her with him when he went there with Nicky and Alix from Wolfsgarten. She had been ill a very short time. It was ambulatory typhoid a rare form of the malady which runs a very rapid course and early symptoms of which are not easily recognisable. Nicky [p.226] who telegraphed to me, asked me to go to Darmstadt to help to arrange for the funeral.

I left the next day, taking Bee Coburg with me as far as Cologne. I lodged at the New Palace. Alice and Andrea had met me at the station on my arrival. On the 19th in the afternoon, the poor child was laid to rest at the Rosenhoehe. Ducky had joined Ernie in the train at Frankfurt and I drove with her in the funeral procession, seeing her off with the other Coburgs at the station where they had some tea.

Both parents loved the little girl and were heartbroken at her loss. She used to stop with both alternately in the course of the year, but never spoke of her life with the one to the other. Her nurse, Wilson, told me the child was very unhappy at the separation of her parents, as she loved them both. Happy as she was with her mother, she always longed for Hesse which she considered her real home. I remained at Darmstadt till over Ernie's birthday, Ella and Serge staying a while longer with him. We all spent Christmas at Cumberland Lodge with Aunt Helena and family, General Grierson, who had been a friend of Christel's being the only other guest, Nona having gone to her own family.

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

[p.227]

## CHAPTER XI

1904                    Wedding of Princess Alice of Albany at Windsor 228. Funeral of Princess Henry's little son at Kiel 228. Prince and Princess Henry visit at Kendals 228. Prince Henry and Prince Maurice of Battenberg 228. Prince elected Elder Brother of Trinity House 229. Admiral Rojdestvensky's Fleet fires at the fishing fleet 229. Princess Alice falls ill with a kind of rheumatic fever 229. The Prince goes to Russia to represent the King at the christening of the Cesarewitch Alexei 230. Xmas at Osborne Cottage 230. 1905 Macpherson's gymnastic school 231. Wedding of the Grand Duke of Hesse 231. The Princesses of Solms 232. Germans of mixed blood 232. Murder of the Grand Duke Serge in February 233-4. Princess goes to Moscow, The Grand Duchess Elizabeth visits Kaliaev in prison 236. Funeral ceremonies 238. Old customs 238-9. In April Princess goes to Athens 239; present at the opening of the Archaeological Congress and at the performance of *Antigone* 240. Birth of Princess Margarita 241. Visits to excavations 241. Nightingales and cat concerts 241. Christening of Princess Margarita, confirmation of Princess Louise in June 241-2. Making gramophone records 242. First film made of Queen Victoria in 1896 243. Prince Dicky eagerness to see the circus 243, his disappointment at his niece's wails 244. Revolution in Russia in October 244. The Grand Duchess not interfered with in Moscow 244. Gibraltar in November 245. Visit to Granada 245, ball on the *Drake* 245. 1906 Return to the Heiligenberg in January 246. Herr Kofler digs up remains of the nunnery 246. Trip to Venice with the Grand Duke of Hesse and party 247. Birth of Princess Dolla 247. Visit to Moscow in July 247. Illynskoe 247; a taunt atmosphere 247. Peterhof 248. Visit to Paris and sight seeing of the places mentioned in Lenotre's books 249. Birth of Prince Don at Darmstadt 249. His godparents 249.

1904                    We spent the New Year at Cumberland Lodge and on our return to London Louis was laid up with a feverish cold, which culminated with an attack of hiccups which lasted for nine hours and left him very exhausted. At the end of the month Ernie came and spent over a fortnight with us. We visited every kind of picture gallery and museum together. On February [p.228] 10th I was present at the wedding of Alice Albany with Algy Teck at St. George's Windsor and on the last day of that month I went to Kiel for the funeral of Irene's little boy Henry. He had injured his head by a fall and whether from being a bleeder, or from having, as one professor declared, tuberculosis of the brain, he did not recover. He was a bright, merry fellow and his loss was a hard one for Irene and for her second boy Sigismund - "Bobby" - who had been devoted to his little brother.

I got back to London in the middle of March. Louis was busy during this time at the Admiralty, attending the meetings of the Defence Committee to which



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

he was acting as Naval Secretary. This year we took Kendals, a house between Elstree and St Albans for four months and were joined there in April by Henry and Irene with "Bobby". Henry had his motor car sent over from Bremen, as ours was hardly enough for the whole family. Maurice spent his Easter holidays there with Georgie and us. Henry, who was fond of boys, found various amusing jobs for them to do, but complained to me one day that Maurice was much less polite to him than Georgie, who never failed to call him "Uncle Harry" instead of Harry tout court, like Maurice, quite overlooking the fact that Maurice, who was hardly older than Georgie was his first cousin and not his nephew. After this I made Maurice call him "Cousin Henry". When there is a great [p.229] difference in age and of generations I had, following the example of my mother and her sisters made my children prefix "cousin" to the name of older relations who called the Duchess of Strelitz "Aunt Augusta", tho' the Duchess of Teck, nearer in age to them, was simply Mary.

During the summer Louis' gout continued to be troublesome and we took him out in a curious old bath chair, probably dating from the eighteenth century, that we found in the house. In May we spent a few days at Windsor and Louis was elected an Elder Brother of Trinity House. In June he accompanied Uncle Bertie in the *V&A* to Kiel, and on the first of July he was promoted Rear-Admiral. Alice and Andrea came to see us at Kendals. It was at this time that the incident with Admiral Rojdestvensky firing at our Fishing Fleet at the Doggerbank took place and, for a few days, there was intense excitement in the country. Louis attended many meetings of the Defence Committee and had to attend a Cabinet meeting too.

On the last day of July we gave up Kendals and I took the children, including Alice, Andrea and Georgie, whose holidays had begun, to stay with Ernie at Wolfsgarten. There Alice was laid up with a bad feverish attack and pains in her limbs. She had been drenched in a thunderstorm, when the [p.230] motor broke down between London and Kendals, shortly before we left. Dr Happel feared she was developing rheumatic fever, but as she was only in bed for three days, after which her temperature became normal, he concluded that there was no risk of this, so I, with the other children and Nona, left for the Heiligenberg on August 6th.

Later in the month Louis was sent to Peterhof to represent Uncle Bertie at the christening of Nicky and Alix' son and heir, Alexei, Henry Buller being attached to him. On his return Louis had a couple of weeks leave at the Heiligenberg with us.

In October we again went to Wolfsgarten and on the 3rd of November

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

we returned to London to 70 Cadogan Square. That winter Dickie came down regularly to lunch with us on Sundays and was put into shorts. We again attended the school concert at Cheam, at which Georgie played a duet on the piano with another boy. He was musical and sang in the school choir, but when he went to Osborne he gave up his music lessons, as they had to be taken in one's free time. Christmas we spent at Osborne cottage with Aunt Beatrice, the Connaughts spending it with Aunt Louise next door at Kent House.

I picked primroses in the Osborne grounds on the last day of that year.  
[p.231]

1905

On January 3rd we were back in London in Queen's Gate. At the back of our old house in Hans Crescent, in Sloane Street, was Macpherson's gymnastic school. Macpherson was an old retired non-commissioned officer in the Blues. His classes were excellently run and were divided into groups for older and younger children. As all the exercises were accompanied by piano, the children thoroughly enjoyed it. Louise and Georgie had attended those classes some years previously and we now thought we could enter Dickie for the drill class of the juniors. We took him there one day, but he was so overcome with shyness that nothing would induce him to leave our side. A few days later, however, he got braver and joined the others and thoroughly liked it at the end.

After a short visit to Windsor Louis and I left for Darmstadt on the 25th to be present at Ernie's wedding to Princess Eleonore of Solms-Hohensolms-Lich. There were the usual receptions and festivities, the wedding taking place on February 2nd. We had known the Lich family since our childhood, but the daughters only superficially, though Fuerst Hermann had been my father's friend from their student days onward. Onor I only had met once, I believe. She had lost both her parents fairly recently and had two brothers, Karl and Reinhardt and four sisters. The eldest Anni, was married to Count Lynar, then came Onor herself, as Eleonore was called [p.232] in the family, while younger than her were Countess, later Fuerstin Dohna Schlobitten, nicknamed Mietze, followed by Caroline called Putzi, who was married to Landgraf Chlodwig of Hesse Philippstal, which is a branch of the Hesse Cassel family. The youngest sister Dorothea, called Thea was unmarried and only a little older than Louise. (After a childless marriage to a Prince Stolberg she married in 1915 a Freiherr von Ledebur.) The outstanding figure in the family was their great aunt, the so called "Tante Marie" who lived up to the winter of 1836-7 and died well over ninety. This old lady was a Roman Catholic, her mother having been one of the Italo-Austrian Princess Collalto.

This reminds me of a conversation that occurred some years later when I

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

was lunching with Ernie at the New Palace. Wilhelmine von Grancy, later the Grande Maitresse; Georgina von Rotsmann, the faithful lady-in-waiting of Ducky, who had carried on her duties with Onor also; Herr von Massenbach, one of Ernie's A.D.C.s, were present. In the course of general conversation, I had made some rather stinging remarks about general German characteristics, and when we left the table I apologised for having perhaps spoken rather strongly, but did not think they could take it amiss, as most of those present were of mixed blood, like ourselves: Wilhelmine's father had been a Swiss, Georgina's mother was English and [p.233] Massenbach's mother was Dutch. "It is only you, Onor, to whom I owe apologies", I said, whereupon she replied "You need not worry, for my Collalto grandmother was really Italian". Ernie's second marriage was a great success. She understood him perfectly, thanks to her unselfish but very intelligent nature and they were deeply devoted to each other. There are few people whom I learned so to respect, love and admire, as my sister-in-law Onor.

In February Georgie came up to go before the Board of Selection for naval cadets and Louis was busy preparing to go to sea in the *Prince of Wales* and join the Mediterranean Fleet in her.

On February 17th I received the news from Ella that poor Serge had been killed by an anarchist's bomb while driving from the Kremlin to the Governor General's house. He had recently given up the General Governorship of Moscow. He had written to me at the time that he felt that as Nicky was preparing to introduce a more liberal government in Russia for which he thought that the people were not yet ripe, he, Serge, felt that the important post of Moscow should be filled by a man more in sympathy with the new trend and more convinced of its success.

Ella and Serge were living at the time in the Kremlin [p.234] in the Palais Nicolas, adjoining the Tchoudoff monastery, where Serge is buried. Every day he had been busy clearing out his private possessions from the General Governor's house and was going to do this on that day after lunch. The bomb, thrown at close quarters at the corner of the square just before the Spassky gates, tore him to pieces. The coachman's back was riddled with bits of bomb and stones, but the man had no mortal injuries and would have recovered had he not been in the habit of drinking too much. He died from shock a few days afterwards, and Ella visited him before he died. When the explosion occurred, Ella was preparing to leave the house to go and see Countess Mengden, their Hofmarschall's wife, who had just gone through a severe operation without anaesthetics, as her heart was not strong. She had begged Ella to sit beside her and hold her hand while the operation lasted. It had taken place about a week before and Serge's death was kept a secret from the Countess as long as possible so as not to upset her. On the

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

day after his assassination Ella went to pay her daily visit in her ordinary coloured clothes. It was very difficult for her to keep from showing any emotion and talk in a natural manner and she took refuge in reading a book aloud to the patient.

February was the period of daylight thaws and snow and [p.235] ice used to fall from the roofs like small avalanches. The noise of the exploding bomb sounded much like these falls of snow to most of the people in the Palais Nicolas. Ella, however, who knew that Serge was in great danger from anarchist plots ran downstairs when she heard the bang and went straight to her waiting carriage.

The governess of Marie Pavlovna, Mlle Djoukowsky, hurriedly threw a coat over Ella and wanted to go with her, but Ella would not have it, as she said that if anything had happened, the poor children must have somebody with them (Marie and her brother Dimitry were living with Serge and Ella since their father's marriage to Mme Pistohlkors, later created Countess Hohenfelsen, and then Princess Paley.) When Ella in a minute reached the spot where the murder had taken place, a crowd had already gathered and kind people wanted to prevent her going near saying, that a dreadful thing had happened to the Grand Duke. They were gathering up his remains and she told me, that her one feeling at the gruesome sight was only "hurry, hurry, Serge hates blood and mess".

I left on the evening of the day I had received the news accompanied by my maid Adele and Ernie sent Riedesel to join me at Berlin. Irene and Henry were unable to go to Moscow, but travelled for couple of hours with me in [p.236] Germany. William met me at the Berlin station and gave me supper. He was very kind and thoughtful and much worried about Ella, for whom since his student days he had felt a strong devotion.

I found Ella very brave and collected, trying to distract her mind by looking after everybody and everything in the house. The shock had, however, been a very great one to her nervous system and she could not sleep neither could she touch a morsel of food. She had her bed moved into Marie's room. Contrary to the general belief she and Serge had led a happy married life, tho' it was he who was completely the head and master of the house. Ella was very willing that he should be it and he was full of affectionate attentions to her. As to bringing up Paul's children, she left it entirely to him, who was a devoted uncle to them. Both Ella and Serge were very fond of children and it was sad that they never had had any of their own.

Ella told me in confidence - she hoped it would not be spread about - that

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

she had visited Kaliaev, the young assassin: in prison. She knew that Serge had a great feeling of distress for people dying unconfessed and unshriven and felt herself, that if she could awaken a feeling of repentance [p.237] in him for the murder that he had committed, she would be helping his soul. When she entered Kaliaev's cell he said "Who are you?" She answered "I am the wife of the man whom you have killed." He seemed moved by her visit, but considered that he had only acted up to his convictions. She did not remain with him long nor discuss opinions with him. He did not resent her promise that she would pray for him. He had shown a certain regard for her before, as he had refrained from throwing a bomb at Serge a few days before when Ella was driving with him.

Ella was much distressed when the news of her visit leaked out. Tales were spread later, that she even went so far as to beg for Kaliaev's life to be spared. That is not true. She said to me herself "I have nothing to do with earthly justice. It was his soul and not his body I was thinking of." We never spoke to each other of that visit again.

I arrived on the 20th of February. Costia (Constantinovitch) Serge's cousin, who was his contemporary and great friend was already in the house, and on that night Aunt Marie Coburg - Edinburgh, Serge's sister and her daughter Bee arrived. On the following day Paul came from Paris terribly upset, for he and Serge had grown up together and Serge had been to him the adored and guiding elder brother. He threw himself on [p.238] Ella's shoulder, weeping bitterly, and had to be comforted by her. No other member of the Imperial family came to the funeral, Alix and Nicky, who wanted to come were prevented, as it was considered too risky for the Sovereign's safety, and the others did not wish to run any personal risks. The last to arrive were Ernie and Onor who had only been married for a fortnight, they now met his former mother-in-law for the first time since his divorce. It might have been an awkward situation, but Onor with her great tact and Aunt Marie with her broad-mindedness got on very well together and the sight of poor Ella so unselfishly bearing her sorrow was a great help.

The old funeral customs were carried out to the full in Moscow. The ante-Chamber was hung with black with darkened windows and artificial light till the funeral was over. Ella's closed carriage was all nailed over with black cloth.

In accordance with an ancient Moscow custom, Ella had free meals served on the day of the funeral to all the poor people. These meals were served at the Communal Food centres called "The People's Palace", of which there were three, I believe. The body lay in state before the funeral. The public filed past the open coffin and, in accordance with a centuries old tradition among the simple

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

people many coppers were dropped into it, the idea being, that when a "True [p.239] believer" had been murdered the whole Orthodox people should contribute to pay for masses for his soul. Isa's friend Mr Herbert Peirce was in Leningrad in the nineteen thirties and went to view the church built over the spot where the Emperor Alexander II was murdered in 1881. Tho' the actual piece of pavement, left untouched on Imperial times, had been boarded over, he still saw people throwing coppers on the spot.

On March 14th I left Ella to go to see Nicky and Alix at Tsarskoje Selo, Ernie and Onor having preceded me there. I spent four days at Tsarskoje, the first time I had ever lived with them there and then returned to England, Irene travelling two hours with me in Germany to hear my news. I found all the family well and Edda Erbach stopping in our house on a visit. The day after my return Georgie came up for his cadet examination which he passed satisfactorily. We went for the last time to Cheam and assisted at the sports there, Georgie now leaving the school. On the 31st of March we all went to Darmstadt, where the children were to remain at the New Palace whilst I would be in Greece and their father in London. On April 3rd I left with Nona for Athens in charge of an Airdale bitch for Andrea. On the 5th we embarked at Brindisi on an Austrian Lloyd steamer, which was [p.240] terribly crowded with people going to the Archaeological Congress in Athens. Luckily the captain ceded his cabin to us, as many people were herded to-gether in the saloon and I had not been able to order a cabin in time. The steamer stopped for a few hours at Corfu, the first time I saw that Island. At Patras, which we reached on the 7th Andrea and his friend A.D.C. Captain Metaxa met us, and went on with us to Athens, where we arrived in the afternoon. Alice was looking very well and I was quartered next to her. Nona had been bad with influenza part of the journey especially at Brindisi, but was none the worse for travelling, though she had to keep the house for a few days. I had a mild attack of it on reaching Athens and a troublesome cough. There were various fetes in honour of the Archaeological Congress and I was present at the opening of the English Archaeological school and attended some lectures. An interesting one was given by Professor Doerpfeldt. I also went with the Queen to a performance in Greek of *Antigone* in the stadium. My eyes were much affected by the strong Southern sun, chiefly owing to influenza and though I held a parasol over my head, my eyes streamed so badly that I had to keep mopping them with my handkerchief. I was told that many of the audience were deeply impressed by seeing how greatly I was moved by the tragedy and how well I must under- [p.241] stand Greek.

On the 18th of April Margarita was born at 12.a.m. Both Alice and the baby were remarkably well. Kind Olga the queen was with Alice all the time the labour lasted and obliged Andrea to be present from time to time. "It is only

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

right that men should see all the suffering they cause their wives and which they completely escape" she said to me. While Alice was laid up, the King took me for some motor drives and showed me Eleusis and Andrea also drove me to Pikermi amongst other places, which interested me as the site of some geological fossils that had been found there and that Professor Lepsius had told me about. Pikermi lies in a charming wooded valley, musical with the song of many nightingales at that time of the year. It was curious to observe, how full of them the public garden near the palace was, whilst on the ground below heaps of Athenian cats sang their own songs. The cats were an awful pest, as they came into the palace through open doors and promenaded all night through the corridors, leaving an appalling stench behind them.

I did a lot of sightseeing with Nona. On the 2nd of May Aunt Alix, Victoria, Maud and Charles with their little son Olaf, as well as Minnie, Andrea's sister arrived in the *V and A*. The whole party went to Tatoi for lunch on one of the days.

[p.242] On May 7th Louis arrived in his flagship, the *Drake* accompanied by the *Berwick* in which Drino was serving as a midshipman. On the 11th the baby was christened, the King and I being the acting godparents. Louis left again on the 15th and on the following day, Alice being now up and about in normal fashion again, my visit to her came to an end and I returned to Darmstadt, moving on to the Heiligenberg a few days later.

All of us including Dickie were busy tidying up the children's garden. On June 13th Louise was confirmed in the village church by Dekan Matthes, like Alice had been.

It was a very hot summer with frequent thunderstorms. We acquired a new gramophone with waxed cylinders on which a needle automatically recorded impressions, and we amused ourselves in making our own records. The recording by disks was not yet in use even for professional recording. Looking back to telephone development, it was a much more rapid one than the gramophone. In my father's time we already had a telephone to Frankfurt and he had a telephone connection with the Darmstadt theatre by means of which one could hear the opera through earphones. As these were rather heavy and clumsy we presented him with a sort of grandfather chair with clips at the level of the ears, on which the receivers rested.

[p.243] The beginnings of the cinema I have also witnessed. The terrible drawback of the films during the first years, was the incessant flickering, which tired the eyes exceedingly. The first private family film I remember was done

MS62

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

when Nicky and Alix visited our Grandmother, Queen Victoria, at Balmoral in 1896. The party was collected in front of the entrance of the castle and told to walk about whilst the Queen in her pony carriage formed the centre. I saw the film when Nicky's Court photographer showed it, later, at Darmstadt. Dickie was passionately fond of films and in his holidays I have gone with him to many a one, but the cinema has not had great attraction for me, though he has never ceased his efforts to make me more "film-minded."

That summer of 1905 a strolling circus gave a performance in the stableyard at the Heiligenberg, which poor Dickie could only witness from his bedroom window, as he was laid up with stomach trouble. On the evening before, after I had warned him that he might possibly not be well enough to leave the house the next day to see the circus, he was dreadfully disappointed and said to 'his Sophie' - "Bete Du recht stark damit ich Morgen wohl sein werde." [Pray that I may be well tomorrow.]

In August Alice arrived on a visit with Andrea and little [p.244] Margarita. (They returned to Greece on the 16th of September). They had had a long hot journey and the little one was very fretful. Dickie was much upset by this and after having assisted at her bathing, sadly said "This house was much pleasanter before a crying baby came to it!"

Georgie spent his cadet leave at home with us, continuing to take German lessons with the Jugenheim schoolmaster, Herr Heid, and finding the schoolmaster's son a pleasant companion, Loui Holstein spent part of the summer with us and we had other short visits from various relations.

In October a revolution broke out in Russia, especially in Moscow, but Ella was not interfered with. She was able to telegraph to Ernie on the 28th "that she was well, though blockaded in the Kremlin and that the town was without water or light". Though nobody was supposed to leave the Kremlin precincts she still used to slip out every day and go and visit her wounded in the hospitals in the town. In November the big strikes were over, and she was able to go with Paul's children to Tsarskoe Selo to join the Emperor. When the troubles began her entourage was desperately eager to persuade her to go at once. She declined leaving her hospital work, but bought two big motor cars to take Dimitry and Marie away immediately, if things got worse.

At the Heiligenberg cold weather set in fairly early [p.245] that year. There was a snow squall in October and more snow in November.

Louis had been with his squadron on an official visit to the U.S.A. from



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

where he went to Gibraltar in November. I went there with Louise, Dickie and Nona at the end of that month, travelling by sea via Marseille. We reached Gibraltar on the 27th, lodging in the Grand Hotel in the town. We spent some weeks there, Georgie joining us for his Christmas holidays. During our stay Nona hunted with the Caple hounds and we made various short expeditions. The Governor at that time was Sir George White.

Immediately after Christmas Louis took us in the *Drake* to Malaga, where we left Dickie and 'his' Sophie on Board and ourselves went by rail to Granada for a couple of days where we visited the Alhambra. Unfortunately, stormy and wet, during this trip. Louis gave a big ball on board the *Drake* making use of the parquet floor which could be laid down on the upper deck and which had been specially made for the official ball he gave on board at New York. This was the last time the floor was used on board a ship, part of it being sent to Malta to cover the stone floor of Admiralty House. I cannot remember where the other half was employed. [p.246]

1906

Georgie rang in the New Year on the *Drake* striking sixteen bells - eight for the Old, eight for the New.

We left Gibraltar on January 14th, Louis having already left with his Second Cruiser Squadron. Before departing, I dined at the Convent, where I met Sir Arthur Nicholson who had come for the opening of the Algeciras Conference. We sailed to Genoa in a North German Lloyd, the ship's doctor, being a son of the renowned oculist Weber of Darmstadt who attended to Ernie's eye when he was a boy and had had patients from all over the world. We went straight to the Heiligenberg where we established ourselves in the South and West side of the house, where it was very warm and sunny. Louis joined us there on short leave. We had a good deal of snow that winter and tobogganed down the steep footpath to the village and down some of the grass slopes. During one of the runs Nona upset and hurt her back.

In March our friend the Archaeologist, Herr Kofler, dug up the few remains of the nunnery in the Kreuzgarten. We still found some ornamental stove tiles of the XVI century. In April we moved into the Alte Palais in Darmstadt where Irene, Henry and Bobbie stayed a week with us and Georgie came for his Easter leave, after which we returned to the Heiligenberg. At the end of that month, all of us, besides [p.247] Ernie and Onor, Marie Gustaf and Edda Erbach, went to Venice to see Louis on board his flagship the *Drake*. We had a good time there and did a lot of sight-seeing, lodging at the Hotel d'Europe. By the 9th of May [we] were back at the Heiligenberg where we spent the summer with occasional visits to Wolfsgarten. On the 31st of April we had the news of Alice's

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

second girl, Dolla, being born. Andrea was attending Ena and Alfonso's wedding at Madrid at the time. Louis joined us in July and Franzjos and Anna, who were settled at the Emilgarten, often came to see us. On the 20th of July I left with Nona for Moscow and the children went to live with Ernie. There was much unrest in the country and the Governor General Scalon who received me at the station at Warsaw, did so to the risk of his life. We went straight to Illynskow where we found Olga of Greece and her son Christo established, also fat Masha Wassiltchikoff, Marie and Dimitry continued to live with Ella after Serge's death. Ella had a number of incurable invalids of the Russo-Japanese war living in one of the houses in the park and the care of them was the only occupation that distracted her thoughts after the terrible time she had gone through. The young people were very critical at the way she "spoiled" the patients, sending them out for trips in the carriages, the numbers of which were greatly reduced. Ella was not at all well that summer. [p.248] The shock of Serge's death had started an internal trouble which afterwards turned out to be a non-malignant growth. Even at Illynskoe precautions were taken against incendiary attacks by revolutionaries and we had electric lights burning all night around the house. When I left for Peterhof on the evening of the 19th of August we saw houses on fire not far from the station at Odinzovo and we were escorted to the station by a mounted guard. At Peterhof I was lodged in Nicky and Alix's house, Alexandria, in what was, formerly Orchie's room over the nurseries. Part of the Duma had left for Finland in defiance of the decree of dissolution - and resumed their sittings there. Assassinations of unpopular high officials and officers were frequent. During my stay General Min was shot dead on the platform of the Peterhof station, as he was sitting on a bench between his wife and his mother. I paid all my duty calls to the various members of the family living in the neighbourhood, Alix seizing the occasion to go and see them too. - I went to Cronstadt with her and Nicky when he inspected the *Cesarewitch*, *Slawa* and *Bogatyr* returned from the Far East and still bearing battle scars.

I was back at Wolfsgarten on the 4th of September, picked up the children and went back to the Heiligenberg, Georgie had again joined us for his summer leave. In [p.249] September I went with Louise, Georgie and Nona to Paris to see Louis, who had been sent there on naval business. Georgie had to return to his college on the same day. As usual, we lived at the Hotel Liverpool and did a lot of sight-seeing, including Versailles and Saint Germain. We also visited places that interested me owing to my having read Lenotre's books on the French Revolution.

Louis returned with us to the Heiligenberg on the last day of September. Dickie had been alone at Wolfsgarten during our absence. On the 13th of October Louis left for Gibraltar via Marseilles. On the 8th of November Ernie's

**MS62**

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

son Don was born.

During that long stay we often saw Peggy Kerr, Nona's niece, who was at Darmstadt at Fraulein Textor's school learning German. - Winter set in early, and our car slipped badly on the hill road which the village boys had polished by tobogganning down it. Once it ran into the gate post at the bottom and was a good deal damaged. On the 4th of December Ernie's boy was christened at the New Palace. The chief godparents were the representatives of the other branches of Hesse; Fischy for Hesse Cassel, and Onor's brother-in-law Chlodwig, for Hesse Barchfeldt.

The boy was called Georg Donatus, the latter name in a sense of gratitude for the long wished for heir being given [p.250] them.

Louis and Georgie spent Christmas with us, it was the first time any members of the family had lived at the Heiligenberg during the winter.

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

[p.251]

## CHAPTER XII

Return to England in January after the Prince's attack of Influenza 251. Visit to Windsor 251-2. Prince Georgie's confirmation in March 252. Visit to Kiel in May and to Moscow at the end of the month 253. Engagement of the Grand Duchess Marie to Prince William of Sweden 253. Stay at Peterhof while Grand Duchess Anastasia had diphtheria 253. Founding a Club House for the youths of Jugenheim 254. Visits to Wolfsgarten 255. The Maharadja of Bikaneer stays with the Grand Duke 255. To Malta in November via Naples and Syracuse 256. The New House at Strada Mezzodi 256. General Grant and the Duke of Connaught 256. Improvements at Malta 258. 1908 Operation on the Grand Duchess Serge 260. Prince Dickie sickens with typhoid 261. "Happy Families" success 261-2. Death of Prince Erbach 262. Colonel Thompson arrives at Malta in his yacht - ex tramp steamer 263. Colonel Thompson 264. Princess Alice and her children come for a visit 264. Visit to Moscow in May 265. Laying of the foundation stone of the "Obitel" of Martha and Mary 266. Sightseeing in Moscow 266. Death of Francesco Zannotti 266. Stay at Hapsal with Grand Duchess Serge 266. Count and Countess Olssoufieff [Olsoufieff] 267. Prince Dickie's friend Mr. Jelsky 267. Reception given to the Princesses by the nobility of Esthonia at Reval 268. Prince Georgie has accident to his finger 268. Visit to Paris in August 269. Autumn at Wolfsgarten 269. Birth of Prince Lu 269. Christmas at the Heiligenberg 269. Visit to Prince Valdemar at Strassburg 269.

1907

Early in the next year Louis was laid up for a few days with a severe attack of influenza. On January 14th I accompanied Louis and Georgie back to England where Aunt Louise put us up at Kensington Palace. A couple of days later I went with Louis to Weymouth, where he joined the *Drake* in which Drino was also serving.

The weather turned bitterly cold, with frost and snow and the rooms at the hotel facing the sea could not be properly warmed. We paid a short visit to Windsor. The [p.252] Wales and their children were there, as well as Karl Hohenzollern, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Morley, Mr Haldane, the Bishop of Ripon and Mme Waddington. On the 28th of January I was back at Weymouth. Early in February Louis and I went across to the Isle of Wight for a few days, lodging at the Gloucester Hotel and visited Georgie at the college. On the 5th I was back at the Heiligenberg and brought back a little dog for Dickie, - "Scamp" - a present from Aunt Louise. We frequently went into Darmstadt for plays and concerts, and Louise was now sufficiently grown up to go to small parties. On the 9th of March, leaving Dickie at the New Palace, I arrived with Louise and Nona in London. We went straight on to Kent House, Isle of Wight where Aunt Louise

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

and Uncle Lorne put us up and were present at Georgie's Confirmation together with thirteen other cadets on the 10th of March. After that Louise and I went to Marlborough House on a visit to George and May and on the 18th of March we went to Cumberland Lodge for a week, after which we returned to Germany.

The artist Laszlo was then painting the portraits of Ernie and Onor and he also did a very good head of Louise in a big hat.

During April Irene and her boy Bobby came to stop with us and on the 23rd Louis came for a fortnight's leave from [p.253] Genoa. On the first of May Georgie joined the college at Dartmouth and on the 8th the rest of us went to Kiel. During our stay there was a service in the little chapel in which Henry and Irene's little boy's tomb was, and in which Henry himself now lies buried. I left the children with Irene and went with Nona to Russia to visit Ella, arriving at Moscow on May 23rd. We found William of Sweden in Moscow, who soon after became engaged to Marie. On the 1st of June I went to Peterhof, lodging with Nona at the "Ferme", Ella, Marie and Dimitry too. A few days afterwards, Anastasia developed diphtheria and had to be isolated. Nicky and the children went to the "Ferme", Alix remaining with Anastasia and we moved into the "Freilinsky Dom" near the Big Palace. William of Sweden came to Peterhof on the 15th of June and his engagement to Marie was officially announced. A couple of days afterwards, Anastasia having quite recovered, our party, including the fiances, went to Illynskoe. Ella was completing her plans for the foundation of her Nursing Order and I went with her to see the houses in Moscow which were bought for the "Martha and Mary Obitel".

On the 3rd of July I was back at the Heiligenberg, where I found Alice, Andrea and their children already established. [p.254] We went to lunch with Marie and Gustaf Erbach at Koenig in the Odenwaldt. Gustaf was looking shockingly ill. A week before they thought he was dying, but he rallied wonderfully. He was suffering from severe arterio-sclerosis, which even affected his brain. Lazlo [Laszlo] came to us to paint Alice, a half length portrait, in a white dress. For the knees Louise had to sit when Alice left.

On the 6th of August Louis joined us. He had again been troubled with gout, this time in both feet. That summer I was busy converting a barn at the entrance gates of the Heiligenberg into a sort of Club-House for the youths of Jugenheim. These boys were at a loose end in the years between leaving school and entering the army and Dekan Matthes pointed out the need of some place where they could spend the evening, play games and read books. It was an innovation in German village life, but, on the whole, quite successful. I had to fight the Dekan and the schoolmaster, who had an idea the youths should be

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

under their disciplined control, with no chance of managing anything themselves. Of course, I had to agree to the Kirchengesangverein making use of this little hall for church practice once a week. These Vereine in Germany were no regular Church choir, but on high days and [p.255] festivals they sang more ambitious pieces of Church music. In the German Protestant churches, the schoolchildren lead the communal singing and Chorales, generally under the organist's supervision.

Of course, during all the years I was at the head of the Alicefrauenverein and hospital, when in Germany, I would attend all their Committee Meetings and, occasionally, those of all their branches in the country. This year too I represented the Verein at a big two-days meeting of the Red Cross at Wiesbaden.

In August Irene came through Frankfurt with her boys on their way to St Moritz and she took Louise with her for a bracing change of air. In September, Thora Holstein and Miss Loch came on a visit to me. Georgie, who was with us, as usual, for his holidays, had learned to drive our motor, and drove me, Dickie and Miss Loch at the end of September to Friedberg, where we attended the manoeuvres. Georgie rode and Dickie drove. Georgie and I made an expedition to Marburg, where we visited the church with the tomb of St Elisabeth and the castle.

The Maharadja of Bikaneer, his little daughter and son and Indian suite twice visited Ernie at Wolfsgarten that summer, for a few days. He had been taking the waters at [p.256] Nauheim. We went over there to see them. At the beginning of October, Dickie and I spent a few days with Franzjos and Anna at the Emilgarten, just before Louise returned from St. Moritz. We lent our rooms in the Alte Palais for the winter to the Erbachs, and on the 4th of November our party left for Malta. We embarked at Genoa on board the *Hussar* which had taken the place of the old *Surprise*. Her first lieutenant was the present Lord Strabolgi. Though a socialist, he treated our maids and servants with a haughtiness they had never met with before.

We stopped for a few days at Naples from where we visited Pompei. The weather being somewhat stormy, this break in the journey was very welcome. Louis was now a Rear-Admiral, his flagship being the *Prince of Wales*. He came to Syracuse in the *Lancaster* to pick us up as the swell in the Malta Channel was very heavy. He took us up to our new house we had bought the previous year in Strada Mezzodi next to Admiralty House, which he had done up charmingly.

The Naval C.I.C. was now Admiral Sir Charles Drury and the governor General Grant. The Governor of Malta, a fortress, had always been a military

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

man in command of the garrison, having the civilian administration under him as well. For the first time the military position of the [p.257] Governor was shorn of much of his importance. The British Government had decided to abolish the post of head of the Army, which the Duke of Cambridge had held up to his recent death. The Duke of Connaught, who would otherwise, have been his successor, had to be given a special and honourable appointment so as to mark that the change was not due to any incapacity on his part. He was already a Full General and the special post of Inspector General of the Forces in the Mediterranean was created for him. Malta was to be his headquarters. He was to reside at the Palace and San Antonia was to be his country seat in the same manner as it had been the Duke of Edinburgh's, Verdala being left for the use of the Governor. He, naturally, took precedence over the Governor, as his superior in military rank and position.

General Grant would never have become Governor of Malta but for this division of authority, and it was explained to him that the day the Duke Connaught arrived he was to quit the Palace which he had occupied on arrival and live in the house which formerly had been used by the general second-in-command to the Governor. The whole arrangement was, undoubtedly very awkward for him, but in my opinion Grant was a man of very ordinary capacities, struggled to keep as much of the glory and pomp of the former governors as he [p.258] could and but for the patience and tact of the Duke of Connaught there would have been continual friction. The Civil Administration being left in the hands of the Governor, he was always trying to lay stress on his governmental position. The general's house he lived in was renamed "Government" House and when the Duke of Connaught was away on inspection, Grant had a good time. Nevertheless, the Maltese considered a Royal Prince a much more imposing personage, than an ordinary general, even though a governor, and much more so in the time of the Duke of Connaught, who resided in the Palace. Uncle Arthur and his wife were very popular with the Maltese. Every suggestion of theirs for improvements in the Palace, even when the expense had to be voted by the Maltese Chamber were willingly accepted. The great Reception-Ballroom and the drawing rooms, badly needed being done up again. This was undertaken by the Connaughts as well as some necessary improvements at San Antonio, and everything was done in good taste, and, often, at their own private expense. Many years afterwards, when some of the furniture which they had renewed was worn out, the then governor found that the Maltese objected to any change from what the Duke had introduced, only agreeing to a few necessary repairs. Previously, before the Connaughts came to Malta, [p.259] the governors and their wives had decided on necessary alterations, often with a great lack of taste. Luckily, Aunt Luischen had much knowledge and interest in old furniture and managed to collect a lot of good pieces at the usual sales which

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

took place in Malta at the death of members of impoverished families. They also persuaded the Malta Council to send the fine old tapestries, which adorned the Council Chamber, to Paris to be repaired - a somewhat expensive item. They also did much for the garden at San Antonia, which Lord Glenfell had begun to improve. The Connaughts, also, were the first to introduce motor cars to Malta, their cars having the right to drive down Strada Reale while the few others which then began to appear could only be used outside Valetta. The improvements of the Marsa had only just begun. The farm that filled the centre of the racecourse having been taken over and abolished and a golf course laid out along one side of the racing track, where Patsy Connaught and some of the suite used to play very often. The great military road circling round the North Western side of the island was also in the making when the Connaughts were there.

That winter, Louise being quite grown up, took part in [p.260] all parties and amusements going on. Captain Savory was now Louis' Flag Captain, and Archie, who is only a month older than Dickie made a nice companion for him. Mark Kerr was in command of one of the battleships in the Fleet and he and his wife had stopping with them for part of the time a very pretty girl, the daughter of the actor, Cyril Maude, whom Georgie greatly admired when he came during his Christmas leave to us. Louis gave a dance on board the *Prince of Wales* at which Georgie assisted, having assiduously practiced dancing under the tuition of Mrs. D'Eath, the wife of the commander of the *Prince of Wales*. He went to several balls with us.

1908

On the 4th of January, Uncle Arthur accompanied by Aunt Luischen, Patsy and suite arrived. We joined Mrs Grant, Lady Drury etc., at the Palace to be present at their reception. There was a march past of seven thousand soldiers and bluejackets. Louis was in attendance on Admiral Drury.

On the 21st of January, I received a telegram from Ella saying that she had been satisfactorily operated on for a non-malignant internal growth at Moscow. Further satisfactory telegrams came from Mengden and Dr Botkin. She had not warned us beforehand that it was going to be a biggish [p.261] operation so as not to alarm us, and had written out the telegram before the operation as she thought it would be more reassuring for us to have one from herself. When she was convalescent Irene went to keep her company. On the last day of the month Dickie, who had not been feeling very well for some days, developed a high temperature and Dr Moon, Louis' trusted naval doctor put him to bed. It proved to be an attack of typhoid. Luckily it was not a very severe case, but it kept him in bed till the 20th of February. He suffered from delirious nightmares which worried him terribly and in the daytime would often say: "I don't want to go to sleep to-night, as I shall have those horrid dreams." How he caught the infection



**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

was not discovered, but to this day he believes it must have been from licking some railings he was hanging over, on the road overlooking Sliem harbour. He was a good patient and, as soon as he was a little better, liked being entertained by dictating the adventures of two police dolls which he owned, being inspired by his beloved golliwog books, which I illustrated for him. Also with the help of his father I designed a pack of "Happy Families" for him, the families being representative naval and military ones, [p.262] from Governor and naval C.I.C. down to an ordinary seaman and Maltese gunner's family. They proved a great source of amusement to our who wished to have copies and who, quite wrongly, tried to find likenesses to people in Malta in them, which I had carefully tried to avoid. Encouraged by the popularity of the cards, we later on, had them reproduced in colour and sold at Malta for the benefit of the Soldiers and Sailors Families Association. The edition was rapidly bought up.

Louis had to dash off to Germany to assist at the funeral of our brother-in-law Gustaf Erbach, who died whilst Dickie was ill. Dickie recovered well and normally from his illness but poor Louis had a bad attack of gout on his return from the funeral owing to the sudden change of climate and the fatiguing journey. He had only been absent from Malta for five days.

A very nice American cousin of Mrs Savory's, Julia Patterson, spent some time with her and Louise and they saw a good deal of each other. An Austrian Toscana Archduke, a learned man, turned up for a few nights in his yacht and Louis' friend, Colonel Thompson, who had been attached to him during the cruiser squadron's visit to the States, arrived [p.263] on board a large tramp steamer he had hired and fitted out with cabins etc., as more comfortable and seaworthy than an ordinary yacht. The cabins were all in a superstructure on the upper deck and very large. As ballast he was taking out a battery of quick firing guns to the Philippines "to oblige" President Theodore Roosevelt. He had a small party of guests travelling with him, some of them going only as far as Alexandria, where others replaced them. Colonel Thompson had begun life in the American Navy, quitting it when he inherited some property he had to look after. He was the most loyal of friends and no trouble was too great if he could be of use to them. He acted like a second father to Charlie Beresford's daughter, gave Louis invaluable advice about investing his money, taking all initial risks upon himself and after Louis' death continued to look after my American investments. When, many years afterwards, Georgie had invested in a private business undertaking which was not a success and which Dickie took over from him without being able to set it on its legs again, I remember Colonel Thompson saying "The Navy is the very worst preparation a man can have for business. The whole outlook of a naval officer being so different." To explain this, he told me, that when in his youth [p.264] he had gone into business after leaving the Navy,

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

he had had an interview with a very able man with whom he had dealings. The man listened silently to Thompson's explanation of the situation and, at the end he said; "Young man, you will get on all right, as you know when it is advisable to tell the truth." Poor Thompson had never thought of doing anything else! He was very rich at one time, having been nicknamed "The Copper King."

On the 12th of March Alice and her two little girls arrived on a visit accompanied by her lady-in-waiting, Melle Lueders.

We went to the yearly Carnival Bal, at the Palace, as customary. I lent Nona a Russian costume, which Ella had given me and which I had worn before at Malta, and Louise a XV century costume. Louis again appeared in his Russian XVIII century Faulconer's dress. There is still a group in existence of them all. The Savory's Lieutenants Drummond and Wells and Julia Patterson are in the group, as well as Dickie and Archie Savory. Dickie in Cossack uniform and Archie in Chinese dress.

Once more Louis was laid up with gout. The Connaughts returned from their tour of inspection in Egypt, Cyprus etc., [p.265] and Louis gave a big dinner on board the *Prince of Wales* for them, which was followed by a dance. As Louis was so constantly having small attacks of gout, Admiral Drury agreed that he should go home with us and have treatment for it. On the 29th of March Alice and her children left in the *Hussar* for Patras and had a very stormy passage. On my birthday we embarked in the *Hussar* Louis being wheeled in a bath chair to the Baracca and taken down to the harbour in the lift from there. We disembarked at Genoa three days later, and to give Louis a rest spent the night at Basle on our way to the Heiligenberg. On Easter Day, the 19th of April, snow fell overnight.

Professor Fleiner from Heidelberg came to prescribe a treatment for Louis. It consisted in a series of soda baths dieting etc.,

We gave Dickie a lamb that year, which became a great pet. Dickie began to have German lessons with Herr Heid. Georgie had been over for his Easter Holidays and early in May returned to College. On May 27th, after a last consultation with Fleiner at the Benshaeim railway station, Louis returned to Malta. Poor Franzjos had an internal haemorrhage caused by a broken ulcer, and was at death's door. On the last day of May, Louise, Dickie, Nona and I left for Moscow, [p.266] where we found Alice, Andrea and the children established at the Nicolas Palace, where Ella also lodged us. On the 4th of June, Russian Ascension Day, we were present at the laying of the foundation stone of the Church of St. Mary and Martha at the "Obitel". All the most important ikons of

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

the city churches were brought for the procession on that occasion. During our stay in Moscow we heard the wonderful choir of the Synod. It gave a beautiful concert in the drawing room. We visited various museums and art schools and were shown his fine collection of antiques by Mr Stchoukin, who afterwards presented them to the State.

Our faithful Francesco, who had been moved to the Alice Hospital shortly before we left the Heiligenberg, died there in June. It was specially sad, as he had such a dislike of hospitals and a horror of dying in one, tho' he was beautifully looked after.

On the 16th of June our whole party went to St Petersburg. Alice and Andrea left for Stockholm and Copenhagen, while their little girls were established at the Winter Palace. We lived with Ella in Serge's Palace, opposite the Anitchkoff. I, with Louise Dickie and Nona, accompanied Ella to Hapsal, where she was to take a course of mud baths to recover after her severe operation of the winter. She had taken the Villa [p.267] Brevern, a big wooden house, which lay in grounds of it's own and her Grande Maitresse, Countess Olsoufieff with her little old husband, had taken a doll's house nearby. We used to hear the Count practising on his flute, and he would come every morning to fetch his wife, who lived in Ella's house, and to read the gospel for the day, which he did in a stentorian voice - rather disturbing to Ella, whose room was next to theirs. Ella's secretary, Monsieur Jolsky was also at Hapsal to attend to all the accounts and payments of the large household. Dickie and he struck up a very comical friendship, for neither of them could speak the language of the other and they had to content themselves with looking at picture books with dumb show explanations.

Louise and Nona can refresh Dickie's memories about Hapsal, so I will not enter into details of the place and of our doings there. Three of the local nobility were very specially hospitable and useful to us. They were Baron Taube, Meydell and Count Ungern Sternberg. The latter had a place on the island of Dahgo, which he visited. Dimitry spent some time at Hapsal with us and Alice with Mlle Lueders spent a few days on her way to rejoin Andrea at St Petersburg on their return journey to Greece. Baron Taube organised a tea party at Neuenhof near Hapsal, to which thirty of the [p.268] nobility had been invited. The owner had lent the place for this purpose. Not being nobles, they were not supposed to be included in the party but Ella insisted on making their acquaintance and they were asked to join us.

On the second of August we left Hapsal for Reval, where we lunched and dined at Catherinental with the Governor, Korostovetz. We visited the sights of

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

the town and were given tea at the Ritterschaftshaus by about forty eight members of the nobility.

We spent a week at Peterhof and then returned to the Heiligenberg where Georgie joined us for the summer holidays. Mrs Savory with her children, Doris and Archie, paid us a three week's visit and Assen, Louis' nephew, the son of Sandro and Countess Hartenau, who was stopping at Schoenberg came over for a few nights - a nice youth, but hampered in his movements by a paralysis of his right arm and leg, which he had from birth. I only met him again years afterwards when he was a grey haired man, and had come to London with an Austrian mission, having been employed in the Financial Department of the recently defunct Austrian state. That summer Georgie had a nasty accident. Trying to mend something in a toy cart of Dickie's he got a finger of his left hand caught in the gear and the nail was completely torn out by the root [p.269] and never grew again. Before the termination of his holidays he went with me to Paris to meet Louis and we spent three days with him there, during a colossal heat wave. We spent the whole of September and half of October at Wolfsgarten where everybody was very busy working for a big bazaar, which Onor was starting to collect funds for the tuberculous poor. The bazaar, which took place in November in the Schloss was a great success and was repeated annually.

On the 29th of November, Ernie's second son, so-called "Lu" was born. We spent that winter at the Heiligenberg. We did not go to Malta as Louis' Mediterranean Command came to an end and he joined us for a week early in January 1909 before going to England. As usual, Georgie's Christmas holidays were spent at home and with him I went to visit Valdemar, who was a student at the Strassburg University.

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

[p.270]

## CHAPTER XIII

1909 Silver Wedding Day 271. Explosion on an emigrant's ship off Dover 271. Prince Georgie cruises in the Baltic and sees relations 272. Visit to Moscow, the first since the Grand Duchess lived in the "Obitel" 273. In July stay at Peterhof during the king and queen of Denmark's visit 275. Visit to the Olssoufieffs [Olsoufieffs] 275. The Grand Duchess visits to student's home for consumptives 275. August at Hemmelmark 275. First Exhibition of airships at Frankfurt 277. Princess Louise goes to the out-patients department at St George's Hospital to have treatment 278. 1910 "Little Pednor" 279. Death of King Edward VII. 280 Confirmation of the Prince of Wales 280. Princess Alice and her children come to Germaines 280. Stay at Friedburg during the Empress' cure at Nauheim 281. Princess Louise busy with "Happy Evenings" 282. Prince Dickie has inflammation of the lungs 283. The Friends of the Poor 283. At Sheerness during the Prince's command 284. 1912 The Prince First Sea Lord 286. Receptions at the Mall House Mme Novikoff and Lord Camperdown 286-7. Mr Churchill's library 287. Eclipse of the sun we watch in Kensington Gardens 287. In July again trip to Moscow 288. Visit to the monastery of New Jerusalem 288. Peterhof 288. 1913 Balls in London given at the New Ritz 289. Prince Dickie enters Osborne as cadet 290. Operation for appendicitis 290. Ruth Draper's first performance at the Glasgow's 290. The Grand Duke and whole party fly in the first Zeppelin 291. The Duke's surprise at being a great-great uncle 292.

1909

At the beginning of March I went with my maid Adele to Dover for three weeks to be with Louis, now in command of the *Prince of Wales*. During my absence the children and Nona lived at the Neue Palais. In April I left the Heiligenberg and took them all with me on another visit to Dover, from where we went on to Cumberland Lodge where Georgie went through a sharp attack of tonsillitis. After that we [p.271] went on visits to Aunt Louise and Aunt Beatrice at Kensington Palace. On the 26th of April, Georgie passed out fourth out of Dartmouth. I spent our silver wedding day, the 30th [April], with Louis at Margate, in a very empty hotel. The weather was horrible and on the next day Louis returned with me to London.

May found us once more at Dover, as usual at the Burlington Hotel.

Whilst we were there an emigrant's ship, taking a lot of [?]Slavs to America, had an explosion in her engine room or in her coal bunkers when passing Dover. A few people on board were killed and others severely scalded. It was several hours before ships came to her rescue and brought the passengers to Dover. On arrival they were all packed into a train drawn up on the pier, just alongside of which Louis' Flagship was lying, on board of which we were

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

spending the evening. The wretched emigrants had had no food since midday. We and the whole of the ship's company worked hard supplying them with such refreshments as could be got hold of in a hurry. The wounded and injured were taken to the town hospital. I visited them the next day. Amongst them was a poor woman whose back had been broken and she would not speak a word of English. She was supposed to be a Russian [p.272] but when she addressed me as "Panina", I realized that she must be a Pole; Countess Benckendorf, the Russian ambassador's wife managed to send down a Polish priest from London, who was able to tell the woman that her family about who she was terribly worried, were safe and would be able to continue the journey in a few days time. The wretched people on arrival in London had promptly been put on another ship.

Returning from Dover to Aunt Beatrice's Dickie developed chicken pox and had to be isolated in one wing of the house.

In June Georgie started in the cadet training ship, the *Cornwall* for a tour in the Baltic. He found relations in each of the countries that line it, and after asking permission to visit his cousin Queen Maud of Norway and his cousin Daisy at Stockholm, the commander grew somewhat suspicious when he wished to visit an aunt in Moscow, and another in St Petersburg, and was not convinced of the genuineness of these Russian relations until he showed a telegram from Ella inviting him to visit her. On account of some cases of cholera at St Petersburg, he was to go straight to Moscow, but owing to a mistake of the interpreter's he was sent via St Petersburg, where he had to [p.273] spend the night at an hotel. Ella was much distressed at the risks he had run, travelling alone and sent one of her gentlemen to escort him on to Alix at Peterhof, after he had spent a few happy days with her. Every one of our relations had been very kind and hospitable to him.

On the 10th June Nona, myself and the children returned to the Heiligenberg, as Louis was going to be at sea for some time. That summer it was 25 years since Ernie had joined the 1st Hessian (115) Infantry regiment and we assisted at the Review he held on the Exercierplatz.

Poor Herr Heid, the schoolmaster, died after a long illness and we were present at the service for him. At the end of the month, I sent Louise and Dickie to Hemmelmark and went with Nona to Moscow, where we lodged at the Palais Nicolas. Ella had already gone to live at her Martha and Mary Home "Obitel", since February. We were present at the christening of the Olssoufieff's [Olsoufieff's] grandchild, their son's third daughter, Ella being the godmother. The "Obitel" consisted of a group of buildings, one of which was the hospital. Then there were the buildings which contained the Dispensary and the rooms in

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

which lighter cases were treated. In [p.274] another small building near the entrance gates, Ella lived, as did Mme Gordeef a friend, who had entered the sisterhood at the same time as Ella and superintended the domestic affairs of the foundation. Mme Gordeef's Russian title was "Kaznatchela" (treasurer). The gardens of the different buildings, which had been private houses before were all thrown to-gether, so that the "Obitel" had very nice grounds. A little removed from the main group of buildings stood one which now houses the orphan girls, that were under the care of the chaplain, who had before been military chaplain to one of Ella's regiments and who had moved with his family and the little girls into the "Obitel" chaplain's house. At the end of the grounds, was a little house where a few incurable invalides from the Great War, whom Ella had always looked after, were lodged.

Ella's sisterhood of Martha and Mary was still then in its earliest stages, and contained only a nucleus of sisters who were undergoing their first training in nursing, part of which they received at the University Hospital.

In July, we went with Ella to Peterhof, where, as in the previous year, we lived in the Grand Duke Vladimir's former house. It was during this visit that I met Ducky, now the wife of Kiril Vladimirovitch, whom I had not seen [p.275] for five years. Ella could not stay long, but I remained on during the official visit of the King and Queen of Denmark and their daughters. There were various festivities in their honour. There was a family dinner of thirty seven persons at the Big Palace and also a State Dinner. A big review was held at the camp of Krassnoje Selo [Krasnoye Selo], where we lived for a couple of nights and where a play and a ballet was performed at the theatre. On the 24th I went back to Moscow. From there we paid a short visit to the Olssoufieffs [Olsoufieffs] at their country place near Zwenigorod [Zvenigorod]. We visited various charitable institutions with Ella, especially those with which she had a personal connection, such as Mr. Meck's Boarding School for messenger boys, recruited from the poorest of the inhabitants of Moscow. Also a home for dying consumptive women which no hospitals would take in and which had been started by some students by voluntary contributions. The Home for Consumptives was badly lodged in an old peasant's house and Ella was very glad when the town took the institution over.

These cases were, of course, very sad ones, and Ella was often asked for by the patients to be with them at their last hours. In one case the husband, who was very devoted to his wife, was a communist, and he and Ella each held the hand of the dying woman. The husband afterwards said to one [p.276] of the nurses "that if all the members of the Imperial Family were like this one, the first one he had ever met, his opinion of them would be different."

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

I also visited a couple of Abbesses of nunneries with Ella and made some expeditions with her and her Sisters. Ella was on a very friendly footing with some of the abbesses of the big nunneries, who gave her helpful advice in the management of her novices.

On the 7th of August, Nona and I left for Kiel, accompanied till Warsaw by M de Westmann, one of the court chamberlains, who latterly had regularly been attached to me when I paid visits to Russia. We spent a couple of hours at Warsaw, where old Mr. Weniawsky met us, and took us for a drive in landau. On the 9th of August we reached Kiel where Henry met us and motored us to Hemmelmark. Besides my children, Ernie's two little boys were stopping with Irene and family, also Herr von Wiedebach, a fellow student of Valdemar's. We all spent many afternoons on the beach, where we bathed and had tea, the weather being very warm. Ten days later we returned to the Heiligenberg, travelling back in Ernie's saloon with his two little boys.

Towards the end of the month Louis joined us. He paid a short visit to Vienna to meet Countess Hartenau on [p.277] business. Edda Erbach became engaged to Fritz Wilhelm Stolberg.

The excitement of that summer was the flight of the Zeppelin, which flew over us on its way to Frankfurt where we saw it afterwards. The first exhibition of airships and aeroplanes was held at Frankfurt. A similar one had been shown in France shortly before it. Aunt Helena and Lady Northcote visited us and with them we went to the show at Frankfurt, and saw Latham and Euler fly, though I put in my diary "not very well". On our second visit there, no flying was possible, as the weather was too wet. On the following day we saw Bleriot and de Caters fly, this time very successfully. All the flying machines had much trouble in leaving the ground and did not fly very far nor high, but they were very manageable and dived under ropes stretched between high poles. Dickie accompanied us during one of the days and was thrilled.

In October Nicky passed through Hesse on his way to and from a state visit to Italy and we travelled with him for a couple of hours each time. After a month's stay, Aunt Helena left us. On the 4th of November self and family left for England where Nona, who had been on her usual summer holiday, [p.278] joined us at our new house, 35 Ennismore Gardens. That winter Dickie went regularly to Mr. Gladstone's day school for small boys at 35 Cliveden Place.

Louis had short leave in November and with him we went to the first Olympia Motor-Show and for a couple of nights to Windsor, during the visit of King Manoel [Manuel] of Portugal. Louise got a fishbone stuck in her throat and



MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

we went to St. George's Hospital, thinking it could be quietly pulled out in the out-patients department. Unfortunately, when they heard our names, we were taken round to the big hospital and were ushered into a special room where the "extraction" took place. By ill luck a reporter was in the hospital, inquiring after some accident case, and so the story of Louise's treatment was in the papers next day, causing a lot of unnecessary inquiries.

Georgie passed for midshipman, being fourth in his term in order of merit, first in science and German, and therefore got a first. Louis frequently was able to come up for a couple of nights from Dover and alarmed us all one morning [when] he was suffering from a chill and bad cough, by having a sort of collapse after breakfast.

Christmas we spent at Cumberland Lodge, where General Grierson was again one of the guests. There was a dance [p.279] for servants, a cinema and a conjuror's performance for them.

1910

My little pocket diaries from 1910 till end of the Great War have either been lost or mysteriously mislaid. I have searched for them fruitlessly. Nona has lent me hers, but they are even more sketchy than mine were and only, of course, refer to events that related to herself. My account of the next four years will, therefore be much more summarized. I intend to finish these recollections with the outbreak of the Great War, as I find it unnecessarily depressing to go through the experiences of that time during the second Great War. Anyhow, my children were sufficiently grown up by then to have recollections of their own to take the place of mine.

In April Louise, Nona and I went for a night to Dover to be present at a big ball given by Louis and the officers of the Atlantic Fleet at the Town Hall.

This year we thought it might be advantageous to buy a little house of our own in the country not too far from London, as the renting of temporary houses was so expensive. We saw a very nice little place, called Little Pednor in Buckinghamshire, which we actually bought. It was only a small farmhouse with adjuncts, very prettily situated, but when it came to the details of building what was necessary, [p.280] the cost proved too high for our finances and we had to give up the plan and soon afterwards sold the property without loss. In some curious way the editors of *Debrett* got hold of the name of the place as belonging to us, and for several years afterwards "Little Pednor" was given as Louise's [Louis'] address.

Meanwhile we rented for the summer a comfortable old fashioned house

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

with pleasure grounds, called Germaines (near Chesham, Bucks) where Alice and Andrea with their two little girls came to stay with us. Aunt Alix had been stopping in Greece and had arranged to bring them over, when the news came that Uncle Bertie was ill and they set off in a great hurry. Only a few days after their arrival Uncle Bertie died, on May the 9th. His loss cast a sad gloom over all those who had known and loved him. Louis, personally felt it very much, for ever since he had been a cadet in the *Ariadne* in 1869, Uncle Bertie had been the kindest of friends to him. Once more Louis, as the personal A.D.C. of the Sovereign had to accompany the funeral procession on foot all through London, whilst we others went to the actual funeral at Windsor.

We again went to Windsor towards the end of June for David (Prince of Wales') confirmation. We drove there in our car, i.e. myself, Alice, Louise, Nona and Andrea, the women in the deepest mourning, with mourning bonnets and veils, [p.281] and Andrea, in evening clothes, with his Grand Cross Ribbon. He remarked "The Public, seeing us in the car, must think that this must be a party of widows, accompanied by a conjuror".

Margarita and Dolla had reached the age of being the most amusing little girls and Dolla was full of quaint ideas such as that she had seen fairies flitting about in the grounds. She used to have the funniest fits of absent-mindedness too, for which she was much derided by her very sprightly sister.

In the summer we all went at first to the Heiligenberg, where both boys joined us, and then moved on to Friedberg, where there was a large family gathering, as Nicky and Alix and all their children lived there with Ernie, during a cure that Alix took at Nauheim. Alix was not able to do much and spent the afternoon sitting quietly in the grounds, where I, generally kept her company. The rest of the family, augmented at one time by Irene and Henry and later by Ella, and a large party of Russian and Hessian suites, all of whom also lodged at the castle of Friedburg, made many expeditions in the neighbourhood. Many cousins and neighbours used to come and lunch, Georgie and I made a little expedition by ourselves to visit Marburg, and especially the church, where one can still see the much despoiled shrine which once contained the remains of our ancestress St Elisabeth (of Hungary) as well as many monuments of early Landgraves of Hesse.

[p.282] That summer diabolio was the great game and was much indulged in by everybody.

Louis had a bit of leave and spent part of it at Wiesbaden, going through a treatment for his eyes by the renowned oculist, Count Wieser. The oculist he had

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

consulted before thought that gout had affected them, but, luckily, his sight was only temporarily interfered with, by overwork, and the treatment put him all right.

When Alix' cure was finished, all of us, including Irene and Ella moved to Wolfsgarten for a while, and it was not until October that we returned to London.

1911 We began 1911 again at 87 Queen's Gate. During the winter, Louise and Nona were busy with their so-called "Happy Evenings". These had been arranged by Lady [?]Dallas and took place at Bermondsey, where the small boys were occupied and entertained at games by voluntary workers. They were very popular with the children and it seemed a pity when the Council did not see their way to lending the school any more. Nona and Louise were also much interested in a young cockney couple with two or three small children called Hisscock. The poor man could find no work and they and the family had been recommended to them by the Friends of the Poor. They were emigrated to Newfoundland where the husband found steady [p.283] employment and in spite of a very trying climate Mrs Hisscock successfully brought up a numerous family. The connection between her, Nona and us, only came to an end with her death a few years ago.

My own connection with the Friends of the Poor dates from its foundation under cousin Marie Louise's presidency. The society had a most excellent secretary, Miss Collins, who, this year 1942, celebrated her 90th birthday and still goes to the office whenever her health permits it.

Roller skating had once more become very fashionable. Louise, Nona, Georgie and Peggy Kerr, Nona's niece and Louise's friend (now Mrs Heywood) were very assiduous at it and even persuaded me to try it. I had done some real skating in former years, but that is so different, that after numerous tumbles, I gave it up.

Louis and I very nearly bought a very nice old Georgian farmhouse called Great Hundridge near Chesham, very prettily situated too, but, unfortunately, we would have been obliged to build on and alter a great deal of it, which our finances would not permit.

In February of that year Dickie fell seriously ill at Locker's Park with inflammation of the lungs. Luckily a good constitution and good nursing pulled him through.

[p.284] In March Louis took over the command of The Nore and in May

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

we moved to the C.I.C.'s house at Sheerness, going down there by barge from London. Admiral Beamish was the Flag Lieutenant and Admiral Phillpotts was on his staff. The surroundings of Sheerness are not beautiful and the immediate vicinity of some gunnery defences obliged us to keep our windows open even in the winter, whenever there was gun practice. Not far off lies Queensborough which had a glue factory, the smell of which was most repulsive, when the wind came from that direction. Louis was away at sea a great deal, but not for long periods. The delightful old-world dockyard looked very much as it must have done when Sheerness was an important harbour. It was the first place where I had to play the part of a C.I.C.'s wife and we gave a series of dinners and even a garden party. King George V Coronation took place on June 22nd, for which Aunt Louise put us up at Kensington Palace, and Beamish was attached to me as equerry for the occasion. Together with Aunt Louise and Uncle Lorne we witnessed the Naval Review on Louis's Flagship, the *Africa*, where we were put up for the night. Georgie was serving in the little cruiser *Blanche* which lay almost at the end of the line. This was a terribly [p.285] dry summer. The stiff clay ground all round Sheerness was full of large cracks and the farmers had the greatest difficulty finding water for their cattle. We indulged in a good deal of bathing on the beach off Admiralty House. Admiral Drury was then C.I.C. at Chatham and we visited the Drury's from time to time, besides making some expeditions and calling on neighbours.

In July Irene and Bobby came to us at Sheerness and Dickie spent his holidays there.

Not far from Eastchurch in our Isle of Sheppy, was the Naval Sea-Plane Station. The planes were built by a Mr. Short, a pioneer in that work. Poor man, he was terrible to look at, as he suffered from a rare and fatal complaint, the enlargement of the bones of the skull, so that his head looked like a carnival mask.

That summer we had our first experience in earoplane [aeroplane] flying. The planes were not made to carry passengers and for our short flight - for Louis would not allow me to be taken on a long one - we perched securely attached, on a little stool holding on to the flyers back. Commander Sampson took me, and Lieutenant Longmore, now the Air Marshall, took Louise and Nona.

[p.286] After a short autumn visit to Ernie, we came back to Sheerness, in October, where Louise and Nona used to go out with the Beadles, run by one of the Naval Officers. I had a good deal to do as president of the Friendly Union of Sailor's wives in the district. We gave the wives a big tea in summer and one in winter. First-aid Lectures were started which Louise and Nona attended.

MS62

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Before the end of the year Louis was transferred to the Admiralty and we left Sheerness returning to Queen's Gate.

In December Louise, Nona and I paid a three days visit to Lady Naylor Leyland at her son's place, Nantcloyed [Nantclwyd] in Wales. I first met her before her marriage at Homburg?. Kind friends, such as Lady Leicester, had arranged with Lady Naylor Leyland, as I found out afterwards, to have some suitable young men to meet Louise. But this plan had no success. Christmas, I believe, we spent at Cumberland Lodge.

1912

This was our last winter at Queen's Gate, as we moved from there to the Mall House, when Louis became First Sea Lord. At Queen's Gate we attended a certain number of dinners and dances for Louise, as we continued to do in 1913. Two rather quaint dinner hosts I remember, one was old Mme Novikoff, the erstwhile friend of Mr. Gladstone, [p.287] in a palpable large black wig and smothered in paste jewellery, and the other, Lord Camperdown, who had interesting mementoes of his celebrated ancestor. His sister, Lady Abercrombie kept house for him. She had once been lady-in-waiting to my grandmother. This very precise and prosaic lady had a rare gift for painting in water colours and made some remarkable copies of Gainsboroughs and other portraits in life size. We also dined with Winston Churchill and his pretty wife at their little house in Eccleston Square, where I was struck by his ingenious arrangement for lodging his large number of books. On deep shelves the books stood in two lines, the rear-most sufficiently raised for one to be able to read their titles over the backs of the front row.

Easter we spent at Frogmore, where Aunt Helena was living at the time.

In April there was an eclipse of the sun, very marked, as it was a fine cloudless day. Dickie and I betook ourselves to Kensington Gardens to watch it. They were full of people watching through bits of smoked glass, as we did. The faint shadows, cast by the leaves of the trees on the grass were all half-moon shaped during the eclipse climax.

[p.288] In May Louis and I spent a few days in Paris. In July I took the children to Hemmelmark and went with Nona to Moscow. We were not lodged in the Palais Nicolas, but Ella had arranged for a few rooms for us in a little house she had bought at the bottom of the garden of the "Obitel". There our stay lasted one night only, as the house proved to be infested by bugs! We moved into Ella's house, I living in her room, and she sleeping in her study. Her reception room was furnished with basket-ware furniture, neatly covered with chintz, but emitting many squeaks as we moved. There we took our meals and visitors were

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

received, mostly old friends and abbesses from other convents. In spite of taking Russian lessons, both in London and with Mme [?]Gordeef, my powers of conversation were extremely limited, and as a number of the abbesses could only speak Russian, I was at a complete loss when Ella left the room. It was a very hot summer and we only made one long expedition, visiting the New Jerusalem Monastery at Rostof [Rostov], where we lodged in the Abbot's guest rooms. The church of the Monastery is a complete replica of the plan of the Holy Sepulchre Church in Jerusalem, but painted inside in the style of the Empress Anne's time (first half of the XVIII century).

After a week early in August, spent with Alix and Nicky [p.289] at Peterhof, I went to Hemmelmark to pick up the children before returning to London. The Greco-Turkish war broke out in October and in November I sent out Nona to Greece to join Alice. She had charge of two Red Cross nurses one of which was a Miss [?]Bose.

Nona remained with Alice, who was very busy looking after the wounded, till after the war. She lived with her in various places in Epirus and assisted with Alice, at the entry of the Greek Troops into Janina when that city was captured.

1913

The New Year found us still at the Mall House, where we continued our social duties, taking Louise to a number of balls. The fashion had come up for people who had no private houses or too small ones for entertaining on a large scale, to hire the ball-room and adjoining rooms in the basement of the Ritz Hotel, which had recently been opened. Each hostess had the rooms decorated at her own expense, but otherwise there was great similarity between all the balls. Supper was regularly served upstairs in the big dining room of the Ritz and the menu of it was regularly the same, being provided by the hotel.

[p.290] This year Dickie entered Osborne as a cadet. In June I was operated on in my rooms for appendicitis, having had a sharper attack of pain than usual in my inside. The operation did not cure me of the pain, which years afterwards proved to be caused by a diseased gall-bladder which was removed, after the war, at Portsmouth in a nursing home where I was taken from Georgie's house.

Kind Ella came all the way from Moscow to visit me, wearing her "Martha and Mary" dress and remained nearly three weeks. That season I remember taking tea with our American friends the Glasgows, who had got up a little after-noon party to make a talented young American girl, called Ruth Draper known as a society entertainer. Since then she has become universally celebrated for her impersonations. I found her very charming and quite without

MS62

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pose. The entertainment she gave afterwards was most original, but her time in London was nearly up and, I think, she only gave one other before leaving.

In July we went for a few weeks to Kent House, chiefly to see Dickie who was laid up in a military quarantine, I believe with scarlet fever.

When Dickie had recovered we went to Wolfgarten, where Alice and family joined the party. During our stay there, [p.291] Ernie and all of us were taken for an afternoon tour in the first Zeppelin, flying over Frankfurt, along the Taunus over Mayence, Worms and back. This great dirigeable balloon was so carefully balanced, that on landing the weight of each passenger had to be compensated, before the passenger could get off. To make these proceedings a little quicker for us a number of the sightseeing crowd were invited to take our places in the anchored airship and I saw an enthusiastic Hausfrau plump herself down in the chair I had just vacated and hurriedly scribble on an illustrated post card of the Zeppelin which lay on the table beside her. We had also previously made a trip in a dirigeable which at that time seemed to have a promising future before it. It was called a Parzival and its propellers of limp material were kept rigid when in flight by a centrifugal force. Here too, the question of the weight of its passengers had to be accurately ascertained and great was Dickie's joy when at the last moment he was lifted up by his collar and put into the airship, he having sadly resigned himself only to remain an onlooker of our flight.

September saw us back in the Mall House, where Irene paid us a short visit and Alice and her two little girls [p.292] came to stop with us for a month in October. It was during that visit that when Uncle Arthur came to see me, I presented him to my grand-daughters as their "Great Great Uncle". Whereupon Uncle Arthur, in a horrified voice exclaimed "My dear, you are making an ancestor of me"! He lived to be the godfather of Cecile's boy - his great great great nephew! whilst the same ancestral relationship was borne by Aunt Louise, when she became the Godmother of Dolla's little girl and by Aunt Beatrice who is godmother to Margarita's daughter. A rare occurrence in any family.

## MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven

[p.293]

## CHAPTER XIV

Schemes for apartment houses for poor ladies 293. Prince takes a pessimistic view of the position in Europe 294. "Snooky" Motor tour to Oxford and Marlborough 295. Death and funeral of the Duke of Argyle 296. Journey to Corfu and birth of Princess Sophie 297. Murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo 297. Journey to Moscow and down the Volga with the Grand Duchess Elizabeth 298. Visits to different places on the Kama and in the Urals 299-303. Telegram of the Empress urging return as Russia was mobilising 304. Princess Louise falls ill with a septic throat 304-5. Arrival at the Winter Palace in St Petersburg 305. Journey back to England via Finland, Sweden and Norway 306-8.

1914

In January we gave a ball at the Mall House, which went off very successfully, Nona was full of plans for securing a number of flats to lodge poor ladies, which idea Miss Collin warmly welcomed. I did my best to help her, for I too, had realized that it was extremely difficult for a daily governess, for example to find a room in a workman's flat. Everything was being done to assist the working man and his family, but the agents for the flats as well as their tenants looked askance on intellectual workers, no matter how badly off they were, and especially so on solitary women. The outbreak of the Great War put an end to all our plans, tho' I must say that other people, such as Mrs Edwardes, Sylvia Cleichen's mother, carried out the same sort of schemes. She started a residential club for typists etc., and Miss St John Brodrick founded a residential club for poor ladies, both of which met [p.294] a great want.

The feeling of increasing political tension was very disquieting to us, especially as Louis took a rather pessimistic view of the situation in Europe. Louise and Nona attended nursing lectures and took first aid exams. I also was occupied with a scheme for making use of the Friendly Union of Sailor's wives in case of an outbreak of war. The members were to be a link of information for the wives of sailor's killed or wounded. For this, an office in each of the great ports was to be found. We applied to the mayor of Chatham for permission to use rooms in the Town Hall in the eventuality of war, but his reply was "That being in principle opposed to war, he could not sanction that request".

In February we went for a couple of days to Cowes, living on board the Admiralty Yacht *Enchantress*, the First Sea Lord, as Louis was then, getting permission to lodge us on board. In March Louise accompanied Ernie and family to North Italy for five weeks, where he had taken a villa on Lake Garda. About that time, Georgie returned from a tour in H.M.S. *New Zealand* in which he was serving, during which she had visited the Cape, Australia and all the coasts of



MS62

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New Zealand to show the ship to the Colony, which had paid for it. The return journey was made via Vancouver and all round the Americas [p.295] rounding Cape Horn. In Vancouver poor Georgie caught a terrible infection in his gums, which did his teeth a lot of harm.

He brought back with him a little mongrel ship's kitten, picked up at Honolulu, called "Snooky." She lived in his cabin and was bathed once a week. Georgie gave her to me and I continued the system of bathing with great success, tho' she did not neglect to lick and clean herself in the usual manner. Snooky was devoted to me personally, and I had her nearly the whole of the war. Her back had been injured by a fall on board, so she did not live to a great age.

I remember that year going to dine with Louis' former lieutenant in the *Cambrian* now Admiral Hood and Lady Hood at East Sheen where the dining room furniture had been taken over by the great Admiral Lord Hood when he had defeated the French, from the Comte de Grasse. "Bertie" Hood was a delightful man and we felt the tragic loss of him in the Battle of Jutland very much, Louis especially, who had a very high opinion of his character and gifts.

About Easter time Louis took Georgie, Dickie, Nona and me for a little tour by car visiting Oxford and Marlborough in the course of it. That spring Dickie had his tonsils out. [p.296] One of his friends at that time was a youth called Cotton who has a most inventive mind which he applied with success during the war.

In May I hurriedly went to Kent House, where Aunt Louise and Uncle Lorne were living. He had fallen ill with inflammation of the lungs and soon after I arrived, he died. I accompanied Aunt Louise when the body was removed from Cowes to London. The funeral procession in Cowes was rather quaint. His body was placed on a gun carriage and was escorted by the troops of the Isle of Wight regiment. Neil Campbell (now the Duke), followed on foot as chief mourner, in a yachting suit, not having had time to have mourning clothes sent him, but he had brought with him the Sword of State Uncle Lorne had carried at the Coronation, which Neil bore solemnly in its rich scabbard, held aloft in his two hands. Aunt Louise, I and Lady Frances Balfour drove behind in a marvellous old carriage which Aunt Louise had inherited from Grandmama and which was called "The bathing carriage," as it used to take the family down to Osborne Bay to bathe. (There was a floating swimming bath with cabins to dress in, anchored off the shore when Grandmama was in residence).

Soon after Uncle Lorne's funeral, unlucky Dickie had whooping cough at the Mall House and bronchitis on top of it, [p.297] the latter brought on by me,

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having left him lying in a draught in my anxiety to give him some fresh air. In May we sent him for a change of air to the cottage, Nona's sister, Mrs Whickham had kindly lent us for the purpose at West Bay, near Bridport. Mr. Long, a former master of his, kept him company there. I had not been long home when, towards the end of May, I had to start for Corfu, where Alice was expecting a baby. The birth was somewhat delayed, tho' the child, Tiny, was a fine and healthy one. I got back on the 12th of July for the annual meeting of the Friendly Union of Sailor's wives, and four days afterwards, Louise, Nona and I went to Moscow and immediately after our arrival, started on an interesting trip with Ella.

We were not able to carry out all our programme, for the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo started a crisis which soon after brought on the World War.

In 1913 the tricentenary of the reign of the Romanoff dynasty had been celebrated in Russia and Nicky and Alix visited the home towns of the family, Jaroslaw and Kostroma on the Volga. One of the river inspector's ships had been fitted out as a yacht for them. It had not been returned to its usual service and Nicky had suggested it might be used by us for our trip. Our party included besides Ella and [p.298] ourselves, Mme [?]Gordeef, Ella's chamberlain [?]ready [?]P. Kornilof and our maids and the necessary servants. We embarked at Nijni Novgorod (now called Gorky) and after visiting that town, then in its somnolent period before the great Autumn fair, we steamed down the Volga to Kazan. We spent a couple of days there, Ella attending church services and we doing sight seeing and all lunching at the Governor's house in the Kremlin. All the old fortified centres of Russian cities went by that name. It was interesting to see the Tartar population still in their distinctive Oriental clothes. There seemed to be a lot of eye disease amongst them, for there were many blind or half-blind people walking about. The weather was very hot and the dust from the low lying and dried up Volga shore was very trying. Ella's original plan had been to go right down to Samara (now Kuibishef) where we hoped Louis might join us when he took his summer leave, bringing Dickie with him. From Kazan we steamed up the Kama, which falls into the Volga a little lower than that town and went as far as Perm. The immense breadth of the Volga was most imposing, but the shores were not very picturesque and, owing to the great width of the river, often far off, while the banks of the Kama offered much variety. There were little towns with their churches showing among the woods and meadows topping the banks.

[p.299] We landed at various spots, where Ella had to visit convents, while Kornilof took us for walks. At one place, I remember a large wood of lime trees in full bloom and the scent was delicious. The population of the villages all turned out in their best clothes to receive Ella. There we saw a man of the

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[?]Teheremies tribe, strikingly different looking from the Russians.

We often ate small starlet, freshly caught, which I consider much better than the great fat starlet people make such fuss about. The ship, tho' not luxuriously, was very comfortably furnished and a good big bathroom had been built in it. There were more than enough cabins in it for everybody. Our river voyage ended at Perm where Ella and we separated, she going to visit various convents, one of which was at Alapaievsk, the place in which she was interned in the schoolhouse during the revolution and from where she was taken out to be murdered.

Meanwhile Louise, Nona and I escorted by Kornilof, made a tour in the Urals by special train. One of the first places we visited was the town of Kishtym, where no member of the Imperial Family had been since the visit of Alexander I. Tho' not the rose, I was near enough to it, being the Empress' sister and we were officially received there during two or [p.300] three days. At all the other places we stopped we were very hospitably welcomed too, both officially and privately and were presented with gifts and souvenirs. At Kishtyn [Kishtym] there was an exhibition of Home Industries on and we were given complete peasant costumes, such as were worn in the province. There too we visited an interesting cave on the banks of the small river, which had only been discovered a year or two before. The weather being exceedingly hot and the cave being very cold, elaborate preparations were made for us to put on thick stockings, overcoats and wraps in a tent specially erected for this. We were not allowed to stay very long in the cave for fear of our getting inflammation of the lungs from the extreme and sudden change of temperature. We had to crawl through the entrance, sheepskins having been laid down on the ground in the passage on the rocky soil. The limestone ridge was not high, nor was the cave very deep, faint daylight penetrating into it, yet the temperature was permanently below freezing point. In one corner there was a great mass of smooth ice of a lovely blue colour and the roof of the cave was incrustated with large and perfect ice-crystals of fascinating shape, for the air was absolutely still. They were so brittle, that our walking about would cause them to fall down. When we left the cave, we felt exactly [p.301] as if we were entering an oven. The official opulent banquet that evening was a very trying performance!

From Kishtym the train took us into the Ural Mountains, where we visited various mines, iron mines and different mining centres. We saw Platinum, dredgings, for platinum like diamonds is only found in alluvial deposits. It was strange to come upon a large river dredge in the middle of a wood, which by gradually scooping the soil, was turning the valley into a lake.

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At [blank] which was the centre of the Russo-Asiatic Mining Company, an English concern, we lived in the big old palace of the Meller Zakomelsky. It was flanked by two towers, one of which had played its part in the rising of the Pretender Pougatchef, in the Empress Catherine's time. He had stayed in it.

The town, where all the miners lived had been well laid out, with a good school, public playing centres and nice workmen's houses.

Here as in another iron mining centre, we were presented with cast iron copies of statuary, very popular in the country, figures of Cossacks, troikas, etc. Also a lifesize bust of Uncle Nicky, which I intended to take over and give to some school. At most of the places we were presented with [p.302] bread and salt on handsome dishes and with many other gifts, such as XVII century "Kokoshniks" and brocaded skirts, given by some "Old Believers". They were all embarked upon the yacht at Perm and they remained in Russia. We went into no underground iron mines, but saw the great State mine at Blagodot, really, a mountain of iron, which is gradually being removed, all the work being above ground. In the time of the Empress Anne, when the exploitation began, a small chapel had been built on the summit of the hill. As the surrounding ground was removed, the chapel was left standing on a base of rock and when we saw it, one had to go up many steps to reach it. At this place we were given lunch by the mining officials and in front of our seats the table was adorned with pine apple plants, grown in pots, with a small ripe pine apple on each. These plants belonged to the wives of the officials who had lent them for the occasion and we were asked to eat the fruit. The furthest point in the Urals we were taken to was a little beyond the sign post on the old road, one arm of which was marked Europe and the other Asia. The scenery of the Urals reminds one of Scotland. There are no great mountain peaks and the hills are often covered to their summits with firs, while rivers and lakes can be seen in the valleys.

[p.303] The biggest town we visited was Ekaterinburg. We stopped there twice on our trip, living in the train. I did not think the town attractive and there the population did not seem particularly pleased at the official visit. I noticed it, especially, at an evening entertainment of fireworks, where the crowd was quite unenthusiastic. We were shown many things at Ekaterinburg and in the neighbourhood; Home Arts Exhibition, an Art School, the Imperial Factory where the marbles and precious stones were cut, samples of which were given to us. We saw great iron rolling works of the Slokazov and [?]Sessert Company, some gold mines in the neighbourhood and attended a sort of afternoon party on the banks of a lake, to which we drove through woods and forests and which is not far from the spot, where the remains of the destroyed bodies of Nicky Alix and their children were found.

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The Ipatiev house at Ekaterinburg where Nicky, my sister and family were interned, lies on a big square and I have several times driven past it and remember it was pointed out to me as belonging to a rich merchant.

The old Poklewsky couple, owners of much land and mines in the surrounding country, gave us a big dinner in their town house, and their son very kindly acted as our cicerone in the town. This son is the Poklewsky who married Zola [p.304] Stoeckl and it was nearly twenty years later that I met him again in London.

Meanwhile the political outlook was so threatening, that any hopes of Louis' being able to join us on this holiday had to be given up, and Alix warned Ella we had better return to Petersburg as soon as possible as war might break out any day. We therefore went straight back to Perm, where we rejoined Ella and had to wait for twenty four hours for the yacht to return, as it had gone down the river, towards Kazan with much of our clothes and belongings on board.

While waiting for the yacht's return, we lived in our special railway carriage drawn up opposite the Imperial waiting rooms at the Perm station. Louise had a very dull day in these rooms, as she had got an inflamed ankle and could hardly hobble about. Ella took Nona and me in the governor's carriage for a drive in the town and we bought some Siberian semi-precious stones. Our journey from Perm to St Petersburg was a slow one, as mobilisation was in full swing and our train had several times to be shunted off the line to make way for the troop trains to pass. War between Russia and Germany was declared while we were under way. A number of our party, including Louise, our ladies' maids and our servant, Valentin Schmidt, had been infected by a very [p.305] severe form of tonsillitis prevalent at Ekaterinburg. One after the other developed it on the journey. The symptoms were accompanied by high fever and pain. At two of the bigger towns we passed, doctors, who had been telegraphically summoned met us, at the station and visited the patients. We reached St Petersburg on the evening of August 4th, just on the day that England had also declared war. Sir George Buchanan and Isa Buxhoeveden, one of Alix's ladies-in-waiting received us at the station and the latter took us to the Winter Palace where she had rooms hurriedly prepared for us, as the Palace was in disuse in the summer. We felt we could not put up at Peterhof as Alix had intended, the patients having to be kept in bed and there was a risk of spreading the infection. Alix, with the two eldest girls came to see Ella and me on the following forenoon and I spent the next day with her and her family at Peterhof. Meanwhile there was no time for the usual treatment of tonsillitis, we having to leave for England as soon as possible, so the throat specialist made use of caustic and after three days we were able to start off again. Valentin Schmidt, as a German subject, we left behind very ill in bed still

MS62

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

and Alix managed to send him back to Germany later. She came again to St Petersburg [p.306] to see us before we left and, with loving forethought, equipped us with thick coats and other serviceable clothing for the sea journey; we only having the lightest of summer clothing with us, also giving us smaller and lighter travelling trunks.

We had to provide ourselves with a largish sum of money in golden sovereigns, which was rendered possible through special Imperial permission. I believe it was £200 which we divided up, each one of the party having a share of the money in a small bag worn round our waists under our dresses. We left St Petersburg on the afternoon of August 7th. I little dreamt that it was the last time I should ever see my sisters again. We were escorted on the journey home by Mr. Wilton who belonged to the British Embassy. His brother was the Newspaper correspondent who was present at the investigation of the Ekaterinburg murders by the Russian Authorities and who wrote an account of it.

We were taken by special train to the Russian Frontier at Torneo [Tornio] at the head of the Gulf of Bothnia. Lying at a wayside station, I caught sight of another saloon carriage on the line opposite to us in which I recognized Aunt Minnie, her daughter Olga and party sitting at tea. We dashed across [p.307] to speak to her and get the latest news. Aunt Minnie had come from England and Olga from France and they had been sent out through Berlin and Sweden and were now nearing home.

There is no communication by rail between the Russian frontier and Haparanda, only a high wooden bridge connecting the Russian frontier station and the Swedish town. We walked across to Haparanda and there, with infinite difficulty succeeded in getting a cart to take our luggage to the train and in obtaining a cab for ourselves. Now we should be needing our English money, so I suggested to Nona, she should take some of the sovereigns out of her little bag. For this purpose she tried to hide herself between the cabs and carts. When we got to the station, Mr Wilton found out, that the very long train which we were supposed to take, was transporting the whole of the Austrian Embassy from St Petersburg including the wives and families of its staff and consulates, most seats were already taken though the saloon carriage, which had brought Aunt Minnie from Stockholm would be attached, empty, to the train.

Wilton suggested we should be more comfortable if we got permission to travel in it. After some demur the station master agreed to this, but charged us £75 for the use of the carriage - the full fare for the number of seats in it, plus [p.308] extras - This was reduced to the ordinary individual fares at Stockholm. We spent twelve hours with Gustaf and Daisy at Drottningholm and also visited

**MS62**

**MB21 Recollections of Victoria Mountbatten, Marchioness of Milford Haven**

Charles (Haakon) and Maud at their small summer place on our way through Norway. We boarded the last steamer leaving Bergen. They had managed to secure cabins for us from Oslo. The ship was crowded with the last tourists and anglers coming from distant parts of Norway and people slept on the floor of the dining saloon. We crossed the North Sea going as high up as Petershead and coasting down from there to Newcastle. We had good weather and an undisturbed voyage, but we found all the warm clothes Alix had provided us with most useful in the fresh sea air. We arrived in London on the 17th of August, ten days after we left St Petersburg. We found Louis absorbed in his work which went on at night as well as by day. As to Dickie, whose leave from college had begun several days before, he had been quite solitary at the Mall House till we arrived and tried to find occupation in the care of some white mice he had bought for that purpose.