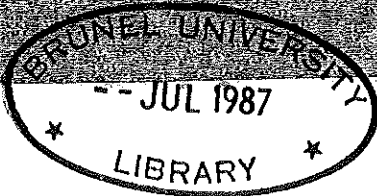


2-199



Elizabeth Dale

My Mother

I have no recollection of my Mother ever embracing me spontaneously or using any pet names in her talking to me yet I always felt that she loved me dearly and ~~yet~~ ^{but} in some way resented me. My early delinquency must have been a great worry to her more so because she was very young being only nineteen when I was born. She and my father were very much in love and I remember when I was but three or four walking with them after tea on a summer Sunday evening along Oak Hill Rd. They would always be a little ahead of me, arm-in-arm with their hands clasped, looking around from time to time to make sure that I was following. After a while, having become tired of looking at the evening sun through the leaves of the plane trees I would catch up with them and my father would carry me on his shoulder.

My Mother was the oldest girl
in a family of two boys and three
girls. ~~Her mother and these~~ had all
moved from Abbey St. Bermondsey
where my mother was born to the
very pleasant suburb of Tooting.

She would talk to me by the hour
it seemed telling me of her childhood
and schooldays which were spent in
a church school attached to S. James'
Bermondsey. When her own reminiscences
were exhausted she would recite to
me the poems learnt at school
"The Village Blacksmith" and "The Charge
of the ~~Light~~ Light Brigade".

In appearance, my mother was
of slim build with oval shaped face,
blue eyes and soft light brown hair.
Although always on a low wage my
father handed at all to mother each
week and she would give him enough
for a tin of Maccabines and a quarter of
a pound of buttered Brazil's which

He would bring home for her each week. She was always very neatly dressed and ~~she~~ ^{her} hair long and parted in the centre with a large "bun" at the back.

- ① By nature my mother was extremely shy and self-conscious, ~~but~~ nervous of any unfamiliar circumstance. On the occasion of the Silverton explosion when I must have been four years old Mother and I were alone in the upstairs flat, my father must have been in the Royal Flying Corps by now. Although the incident was on the other side of the Thames the noise was frightening as the windows and doors shook and cups rattled on their hooks on the dresser. Foot was blown all over the kitchen from the range and Mother who had been sitting by the fire doing her crochets work screamed at the bang and grabbing me ran from the house the crochets still in her hands. She was still screaming

hysterically when a man took hold of her and after shaking her to try to calm her took us back to my Grandma. After a cup of tea with my Auntie Aggie and Grandma Mother began to laugh as she pointed to her clothes which she still had with her, the cotton ~~of~~ disappearing under the door and up the street; the ball was still in her work-bag hanging on the fire guard at home!

~~For the last~~ Every night Mother would have me say my prayers before she put me to bed and when I was away from home I slept with her and every night she would kneel by the side of the bed in her calice nightdress and pray. To me these prayers seemed to go on for an awful long time and I would wonder what it was she could be saying to God, it didn't take me all that time to say "Gentle Jesus meek and mild
look upon a little child."

~~Testing~~ Pity my simplicity

Suffer me to come to thee.
followed by asking His blessing on
all my relations and friends.

After he was demobilised in 1918
my Father was employed on the buses ^{as a conductor} and
became friendly with his driver. Unfortunately
this man died suddenly and his widow
wanted to go back to residential domestic
work but was hampered by having a
little boy a year younger than me.
Mum and Dad decided to take Charlie
Hoods until his mother could make
permanent arrangements for him.

I don't remember quite how long he
stayed but the peace of our home was
shattered by Charlie for about two years.

Mother didn't like children very
much at all but particularly little boys.
It was her belief that parents protected
their children from harm by not
encouraging them to do anything for
themselves. Charlie had been brought

up in a completely different way and the first morning he was with us he wakened me early to say he was going to make 'Auntie and Uncle' a cup of tea! I made no attempt to stop him but just lay in bed wondering whatever they would say. For days my mother would speak of nothing else but Charlie, just six years old and bringing them tea in bed on Sunday morning!

Charlie was enrolled at Trederton Rd, School which was a little further from home than the one I attended. His first morning saw him in disgrace as it was a cold morning and when he arrived there the children were all standing around in the playground waiting for the teacher to open the door and ring the bell. It must have been very early and the staff not about for Charlie climbed in through a window and unbolted the door to let the children in from the cold.

I had never wanted a brother or sister but Charlie was a great champion for me when the children in the street called after me or pushed me about. My father bought him a pedal car and (as an index number painted PC 49 on the front. This was a reference to a character in a comic strip of the time. On one occasion when I had gone indoors crying because someone had hit me Charlie jumped into his little car and drove straight into ~~the~~ my group of tormentors scattering them and sending them home to their mothers.

Charlie had never been to Sunday school but Mother, determined to do her duty by this fatherless boy sent him off with me. I think it must have been the funniest thing that had ever happened to him. Charlie told the teacher that ~~for~~ making a model of the road to Jericho in a sand tray to illustrate the story of the good Samaritan was

daft and when she told him she
wouldn't have a card for attendance he
swore at her and was sent home.
After Sunday school he was waiting
outside for me quite unrepentant and
delighted that he had in his pocket the
penny which had been given to him for
the collection. He never went again.

All the time that Charlie was
with us there seemed to be a battle
going on with his parents or school-teachers.
I was not invited to birthday parties
because Charlie would have had to go as
well. I don't think I cared much for parties
was a bore anyway. Finally matters came to
a head when his teacher complained that
Charlie was "taking over" his class by
blowing a whistle, which my father had
given him, every time the other children
became noisy. Arrangements were made
with Charlie's mother and he left us to
go to a home where he
would be taught to be a sailor.

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By the end of 1919 mother was pregnant and Dad was working as a traveller for Rowntrees. Mum had always been very superstitious and there was a saying that if you were parted at the New Year you would be parted all the year. Dad was working in Sheffield and Mum decided that things being as they were she had better be with him for this New Year anyway. So on New Year's Eve, which was her birthday I was given a message to take to the Post Office and send a telegram to Dad. The text was naturally brief and merely said "arriving Sheffield" and the time, but mother didn't know there were two stations in Sheffield and we travelled up from Manglebone Station arriving in Sheffield at 11-0pm with no one to meet us. After waiting some little time we asked the way to the address of Dad's lodgings and started to walk. It was quite horrifying, we walked over a sort of viaduct and below there

was a late market or fair. I only know I thought it must be hell, it seemed to be a mass of glaring lights and people shouting. Dad caught up with us just as we turned into the road of his lodgings and without having time to eat or wash we were taken to a New Year party at a club. Hardly had we arrived when midnight sounded over the town, a very dark man came in with coal in his hand and chanted a few words then everyone joined hands and sang "Auld Lang Syne" but they were all unwilling to take my mother's or my name because we were fair. This worried Mum a lot she was sure it must be a bad omen but 1920 had begun and it was going to be much the same as any other year except that in the Spring Grandma came to stay to look after Dad and me whilst Mother was in the South London Hospital for Women at Balham.

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Grandma made great changes to
our little back garden. Where only
sunflowers and golden rod had grown
before, she dug borders and planted
pansies, stocks and forget-me-nots.

- It all looked very pretty when Mum came
home after three weeks although she was
only there for a few days when she
went to stay at Chipping Norton with
my father who was now working there
for Marconi. Nobody mentioned a baby at
which I was relieved and completely
unconscious but some weeks after she
finally came home Mother told me that
I had had a brother who had been born
- with a weak heart and died after three
days. She told me he was christened by
one of the nurses and named Denis.
I remember feeling sorry for him but I
was happy to still be the 'only one'.

In all of this I haven't mentioned
Mother at the Arsenal. She worked there for
the last two years of the war. I don't

know what she did at first, I went to live with Grandma and Nina a friend of my mother moved in with her. They both seemed to be on night work most of the time and Mother was soon made an Inspector wearing a black armband on her white overall. Mother's two younger sisters joined her at the Arsenal and would tell Grandma and me how Mum would keep up their spirits during the raids by singing "Who killed Cock Robin." Mother was fond of singing and would encourage me to sing in harmony with her but apart from parties at her parents home I had never heard her sing in front of other people and this anecdote of the Arsenal was puzzling to me. Apparently during a raid one of the 'shops' which were built on stilts over water, had been hit and the lights had all gone out in Mother's 'shop'. Amidst the confusion there came the sound of "Who killed Cock Robin" and someone said "There goes Rose, singing away"

Great Grandma Widdows

My first recollections of Great Grandma are of a tall broad-shouldered lady, always dressed in black. She was very handsome, with a fine clear skin, smooth and unlined although she must have been well over seventy.

To my mother and her sisters 'Gran' as they called her was an object of great love and ~~my~~ the event of the week in our home was Gran's visit every Tuesday. From her home in a very poor little house in Jamaica Rd, Brompton she would walk to see us. It must have been at least three miles and there was no direct bus route. About once a month she would go to Tooting to see my mother's family. Grandad was her youngest son. 'Gran' was stone-deaf and the journey usually had

some adventure or humorous incident for her to tell on her Tuesday visit. As is usual with deaf people Gran spoke very loudly and in common with most old women of that time her remarks were very direct and unvarnished. Much as I loved her Gran was often a source of great embarrassment to me as when visiting us during the summer she would sit at the kitchen table with my mother and give the next door neighbours the benefit of all the gossip which she had brought from Bermondsey. There was the horrifying story of an acquaintance who had been found lying ill in her riverside house with rats having gnawed at her. Then when I was nine years old mother was expecting another child, because of Gran's conversations with mother there was

no chance of my being ignorant of the fact but I was so ashamed to think that because of all the open windows ~~and~~ in every house the whole street must know of this dreadful thing that was about to happen. I definitely did not want a brother or sister at this time, the families I knew where there was more than one child seemed to spend most of their time quarrelling and I was very frightened by violence verbal or otherwise. "Little Grandma" who only lived around the corner was very fond of 'Gran' and would sometimes come to tea on Tuesday to have a "chin-wag". There was one visit she must have regretted, it was following her seventieth birthday in August 1919 the two old ladies met over tea and discussed the difficulty of living in the post-war years. Grandma had a very small income from some shares in the

South Metropolitan Gas Co. but was very disinclined to discuss this with Gran who pressed on with direct questions of all descriptions. Finally she asked Grandma in her loudest voice if she was getting the Old Age Pension. Poor Grandma had to shout back that she was not accepting 'charity' and she could manage. The agitation of this little conversation piece caused Grandma's hands to shake so much her tea-cup rattled in her saucer as she sipped her tea.

Great Grandma loved visiting her children no matter how far away they lived. She would go, always alone to see her ^{granddaughter} ~~daughter~~ Connie in Carlisle, Vivienne in Cambridge which visit she would combine with her son Bill who kept the Bailey-mow at Histon and another grand-daughter whose name I forget who lived at Huddersfield.

Social life.

After the war my mother remained on close ~~terms~~ ^{friendly} terms with Nina, her Woolwich Arsenal colleague and as a result a friendship was formed between my father and mother and Nina and Albert, her husband who had been serving in Mesopotamia and Palestine. For the ~~remainder~~ ^{rest} of my childhood Saturday evenings remained constant in their manner. Fortnightly visits to each other's homes meant high tea followed by card playing until midnight. When my parents were host I was sent to bed at the usual time but on the return visit two weeks later I spent the whole of the evening reading steadily through a great number of books which Nina kept under her dresser.

These books had been acquired by Albert during his work as bar tender at the Royal Victoria Hotel Hastings. Practically how he came by such a number of books it

might have been tactless to enquire
but here was a feast for me not to
refuse. Amongst the authors were
Florence Barclay, Joseph and Silas Hocking,
Doyle Willard, Michael Arden, Ethel M. Dell
Mrs Henry Wood, Marie Corelli, Conan
Doyle and I think James Parkinson-Keyes.
Three books were there which seemed to
be standard in every household of that
time which boasted any books at all
and they were "A Basket of Flowers"
"The Lamplighter" and "The Wide Wide World."

Nana and Albert lived at Camberwell
and the walk home following a visit,
often after midnight, would be long
and in the winter made eerie with
the occasional yellow fog which often
engulfed London during November.

The Saturdays in between were
spent by my mother and father at the
New Cross Empire or ~~the~~ Lewisham Hippodrome.
Sometimes I was allowed to go with them
to see Harry Tate, Kate Carney or Little Tich.

but usually I would stay with Grandma and have a bed made up on her horse-hair sofa, ~~although~~ I would rather have shared her large feather bed but since returning to my mother after the end of the war there seemed to be some tacit agreement between them that I must no longer ~~stay~~ ^{sleep in} my grandma's cosy bed.

Again every evening ~~spent~~ in the old and loved surroundings was spent in reading but this time of a different kind. The books possessed by Grandma were relics of my grandfather and dealt mostly with the sea. Sailors of the period that my grandfather was in the Navy were great readers as the journeys when at sea in sailing ships were long and often tedious. His books included a very touching little story called "I'm going to sea in real earnest now!" It was about a cabin boy who seemed born for disaster and as I remember the title was his dying speech. Many tears I shed over

him and the little pupil in "Crofton Boys" who had his foot amputated and was so brave about it all but couldn't understand why the toes of his amputated foot were giving him such pain. A great puzzle to me was the title of another book belonging to Grandma, it was Isaac Walton's "Compleat Angler" and I was bothered over the seemingly incorrect spelling of the title on the cover. *

Every Tuesday evening there was "Band of Hope" in the church hall and I remember the promise I made then which the years have eroded. The boys and girls attending would all raise their right arms and recite or in the case of the little boys shout "I promise by God's help to abstain from all intoxicating drink as long as I remain a member of this Band of Hope!" Then we all sat down with a thump, many a folding chair was broken and the pieces of

wood surreptitiously concealed by the boys to be used as weapons against each other once outside the hall. As I remember these meetings were very dull and uninspiring with only the occasional magic lantern show and games which were always spoilt by the rough behaviour of the boys!

On Thursday evening was an event more to my liking, it was the Guild of S. Agnes and started ^{with} the recital of an office led by the deaconess Sister Edith in the church which was above the hall, then we would go down to the hall for games and working towards the Annual Sale of Work when the Guild would have a stall to decorate. Many a useless article was knitted, crocheted and stitched on those Thursday evenings.

* Other friends of my parents were Will and Bertha, fellow cycling enthusiasts of pre-marriage days. They had one son when I first remember them and they

lived at Brockley which at that time
was ^{considered} a very "posh" Will worked in the
office at the Surrey Commercial Docks
and seemed to be aware of the higher
social standing he had ^{on account of} ~~because~~ of this
which was strange because Albert was
in the Civil Service now as a clerk in
Inland Revenue and he had no such
illusions of himself. When I was seven
or eight Bertha had another baby
and ~~when~~ ^{the day} ~~the~~ ^{Alec} ~~child~~ was brought to
see us I was asked if I would
like to hold him. Too timid to say
I would not like, I took the child
and sat by the kitchen fire with
him. After a little while I became
engrossed in the conversation of the
adults and little Alec slipped off
my lap on to the steel fender.

Bed was the only place for me, unnatural
child that I was not to like babies!*

The Church Sale of Work was one
of two great events in the parish, the

other was the annual visit of the "Undergrads" from Corpus Christi College Cambridge. These dashing young men would come and put on an entertainment of some sort or organize a dance. I was always allowed to attend these functions from a very early age as Auntie Aggie, Auntie Jo and Cousin Elsie were "pillars of the church", my father's phrase, and they usually lay on the refreshments. So long as I stayed close by one or other of them I would be allowed to go the following year. The "Undergrads" were like beings from another world, their voices were different, even from the teachers at school, and I would stand by the refreshment table listening to them, hardly understanding a word of their strange accent. At the age of nine I was completely overcome when one of these young gods asked me to dance and taught me the "Vebeta!"

To return to the Sale of Work,

all the women of the parish would have been working for months making articles for sale. Here there would be woything, waddy toys, knitted and crocheted garments, hand sewn underwear, covers for milk jugs made of net and weighted with coloured beads. The men would make dolls houses and go-carts but their brawn was required more for putting up the stalls and generally decorating the hall. Someone of "importance" always came to open the sale and one year someone must have had friends at Court because

Princess Louise a sister to King George V came to perform the opening ceremony.

From the earliest age I was always encouraged to remember the birthdays of my Aunts, Uncles, Cousins and Grandparents. I was only expected to write a card except for Grandma and Mum and Dad when I would be taken out to buy a small coloured

stone brooch for Mum, a handkerchief for Dad, a tiny bottle of Eau-de-Cologne for Grandma. By the age of nine I was really ambitious and having mastered the art of crocheting chain and treble I made a mat for the table which stood in the window of the front room. Mother had an aspidistra standing in a large black art-pot with large pink roses painted on its side and I thought how pleased she would be with the mat which was in pink and pale green. She was and grateful too that the pot was heavy as it kept down the centre of the mat which stood up like a dunce's cap because I didn't know how to decrease properly and couldn't ask my mother who was the only other person I knew who could crochet.

Corpus Christi Players were a very flourishing drama group and every year they would put on a play. ~~Some~~ ^{Some} of the titles I remember were: - "Filly from Bloomsbury" and "The Passing of the Third

"Floor Back." The leading parts were always taken by the same people. My two cousins "Auntie" Jo and Elsie, the vicar, two sisters Phyllis and Doris, Bill Welch whose fiancée Gladys had died of consumption recently and was therefore an object of great sympathy and some scheming by the mothers of unmarried daughters in the neighbourhood. Eligible men were scarce now that the war to end all wars had taken its toll of European manhood.

A great deal of practice went into the preparation of a tableau which the Sunday School children were to present as part of a pageant to be held at Camberwell Palace. It represented a band of Angels dressed in white all standing at different levels around the throne of God. After attending most of the rehearsals I developed measles and was not able to continue but by the time of the great night I was well.

enough to be taken to the theatre and see the display. As 'Our' tableau was revealed a choir sang the hymn "around the throne of God a band" and the lighting was dimmed to a gentle shade of blue. It was very effective but I only remember the disappointment I felt at not being on the stage with the rest.

Christmas was a time of great joy. There were so many things going on, the church nativity play, a smaller one by the Sunday school children, Christmas party in the church hall with presents for all and then Christmas in the home. Mother would have made the pudding a couple of months earlier when I ~~would~~ helped her stone the raisins and give it a stir for luck. Then helping Dad make the paper chains; he bought packets of coloured strips of paper, paste was made from flour and water and ~~then~~ the job was ready. By the time Christmas Eve came the dresser would be piled

high with paper chains waiting for me to go to bed so that they could be hung from corner to corner across the ceiling and along the walls of the kitchen and front room. We only had a Christmas tree once but it made so much mess mother planted it in the back garden and we never had one again. Every year on Christmas Eve before I went to bed there would be a feeling of great expectation and I would be so excited because Father Christmas would knock at the door shortly and ask for me. I would ask him in, ~~and~~ he would have a mince pie and some cocoa, afterwards he would undo his sack and put a little pile of parcels on the table these would be presents from Auntie Aggie and my cousins and Grandma although she would be coming to dinner with us the next day. I don't think I ever told anyone that I knew it was Auntie Jo

dressed up in the Father Christmas costume from the church Property box. What courage she must have had walking down the street all dressed up! There must have been a Christmas when I was away from home because returning some days afterwards my father took me into the front room and showed me the mess Father Christmas had made. The brass fender and fire irons were across the room, soot was all in the fireplace and the toys he had brought me for Christmas were strewn everywhere.

The dinner on Christmas Day was always quiet, only Grandma, with Mum and Dad. I don't ever remember having turkey or chicken, the pudding and mince pies with custard seemed to be the most important part. After we had cleared away and washed up, Mum and Dad would change into their best clothes and I remember one year having a red corduroy velvet dress with lace collar and cuffs then we would all

four walk down to Auntie Aggie's for tea and a party afterwards.

The parties at Hornshay St. were very different from the ones at Tooting with Mother's people but equally enjoyable in a different way. There would only be lemonade to drink and every one sat around very quietly. Auntie Jo played the piano and accompanied her husband Carlton Frank who had quite a good tenor voice and sang songs like "I've just come up from Somerset" and "The Grand Old Duke of York" and "Trumpeter". Cousin Elsie was great at monologues going to ^{a lot of} great trouble to dress the part. I can still remember most of the words of the "Night Watchman" and one about the Hindu who died and went to Paradise and when he told the man on the gate that he had been married twice the punch line was "Begone, begone, we want no fools in Paradise." We had a lot to thank Brianby Williams for I am sure his monologues gave

great pleasure to many in those days. ~~7~~

Games, ~~and~~ Recreation and Pastimes.

A great deal of play and recreation time was spent in the streets as gardens were not much more than a back-yard. Most of the houses on the Sandford estate where I lived were bounded in the front by two horizontal railings about eight feet in length and four feet high. These were used by the boys and girls, who didn't mind shewing their bloomers, as climbing frames. Swings were made by throwing a skipping rope over the cross bar at the top of the lamp post and hanging on after a push from someone would send you swinging out and around.

Boys played with wooden whiptops, the top had a steel point and a cord was wound tightly up from the tip then released with a deft flick of the wrist; in the same way that the motor is started in a lawn mower the top would be sent spinning along the pavement and boys would compete to see who could keep his going longest by whipping it on the way.

I don't remember anybody in the neighbourhood having a bicycle except one or two men who used them to get to their work. Several boys had wooden scooters and some of the more affluent would career about on roller skates. Almost every family

where there were boys had a hand-made go-cart, just a wooden box with two old perambulator wheels and a wooden handle nailed on each side.

The pavements were covered with chalked areas marked out for hop-scotch. I was never able to play the game as I never succeeded in balancing on one leg long enough to advance from square to square.

During the summer groups of children would sit in the doorways playing fivestones.

I was not allowed to play in the street very often and with most of the children's games I never mastered the rules which seemed to be rigid and I was too timid to ask, so remained an onlooker often getting in the way of the noisy contestants and being told to ~~go~~ "gi ou ~~of~~ the wigh".

In the winter the main diversion for girls was skipping and this I could do but my Grandma made the fatal mistake of buying me a 'posh' skipping rope which had ball bearings in the handles thus making it easier to manipulate. I was not popular with my rope and it was eventually 'pinched' by a big girl in the next street. The other children had lengths of clothes line to use and many and varied were the rhymes they chanted as they executed the 'Bumps' either

individually or by two girls holding the rope between them and turning for several others to run into the rope and skip to the chant the word at the end of the line was accented and the rope then turned twice as fast but the skipper had to clear it in one jump. These were some of the rhymes

"One two three O'leary
My balls down the arey
Go and tell your sister Mary
On a Sunday morning."

"Jelly on the plate
Jelly on the plate
Wibble, wobble wibble wobble
Jelly on the plate."

and "Salt mustard vinegar pepper
Salt mustard vinegar pepper."
over and over.

Any blank wall would be used to throw a ball against and many intricate turns and twists would be executed between throwing the ball and catching its return. Some of the boys would draw cricket stumps on the wall but this game was not taught in the local elementary schools and the Oval was the nearest cricket ground so

I don't suppose there were many potential test players amongst the boys on the Sandford Estate.

Throughout all of my childhood hoops were a favourite plaything, wooden ones for the girls and iron ones for the boys, these latter being controlled by an iron hook on a stick but the wooden ones were bowled gently along with a wooden stick.

As now some little girls had their dolls' prams but they were usually made of wood and painted black.

Very special ones had shades which could be opened and shut with matching covers made of American cloth. I don't know what the equivalent material would be nowadays but this cloth was used for all manner of things which needed to be wiped clean it could be made into windows blinds or table and shelf covering. It was a fairly coarse fabric sealed on one side with a waterproof substance, I only ever saw it in dark green.

It wasn't usual for mothers to go out to work all day, school and office cleaning or 'charving' for the better class in New Cross or Lewisham would only keep women away from their own domestic duties for three or four hours. A lot of 'finishing' was done in the homes, ~~there~~^{there} was a shirt factory near home and at one time mum sewed on buttons to the garments which were brought

home and collected a few days later but mother wasn't very handy with her needle and would occasionally have piles of book-folding all over the kitchen table. This had been her trade when she was single several of her family had been "in the print." One of her sisters now in her late eighties still speaks with great pride of the Bibles she had helped to produce, the very thin paper with real gold leaf edging and the high quality binding. There were a great many women who "took in" washing and whose gardens had several lines of clothes and linen out every day. ~~There~~ ^{There} were no aids to this labour as now, water was heated in the copper and a bar of Sunlight soap was grated into the water, to remove the obstinate grime on collars and cuffs a wooden washing board was used to rub the garments on.

Most of the children hated Monday because it was traditionally washing day and mothers would be tired and irritable and if the weather was too wet to put the line up wet clothes would be flapping from lines made of string which would be tied across the ceiling or hung over the fire-guard and tea would be eaten in this steamy scorch-smelling atmosphere.

Recreation indoors depended a lot on the size and sex of the family. Where there were several boys a dart board was usually

found on the kitchen wall and the better off would have train sets not as nowadays with layouts all over the floor but large enough to take up most of the kitchen table, the leading engine would run by clockwork. The station and signal box was tin painted most realistically. Children's toys were then as now usually small replicas of the items in the home. Toy shops would have tin models of a kitchen range, baths and bowls, wooden tables and chairs, bedstead and kitchen dresser and of course there were dolls, wax dolls, china dolls, wooden dolls and rag dolls. I wasn't very keen on dolls but was rather proud of one that my father brought home for me. He had been to a sale of the contents of the Cecil Hotel and amongst the miscellaneous items were toys either provided for or left behind by the children of the well-to-do patrons. This sale must have taken place about 1920 the site on the Thames embankment later became one of the first multi-national concerns to be established in this country, Shell-Mex House. But back to the doll, I was proud of it as I said because she was very beautiful with real hair, dark brown and wavy, eyes that opened and closed ~~and~~ ^{with} long lashes. She was jointed and dressed in a green satin dress with hat to match, very fine underclothes which all unbuttoned and two cords hanging from her waist but concealed beneath her

dress; when pulled the doll would say "Mama" and "Papa". I never loved the doll enough to give her a name and only took her out of the cupboard to shew her off.

My only other doll was Sal Arch. she was made by grandma from a leg of a black woollen stocking stuffed with rags and ^{her} hair contrived with a piece of black astrakhan fur, the eyes were two pearl button and a wide mouth was embroidered on with scarlet wool. This doll I loved because I could take her to bed with me and if I rolled on her during the night she didn't stick in me.

Most women knitted or crocheted so that girls would be taught these crafts in the home. Another winter pastime in our home was rag rug-making. Mother would beg old coats and mens' suits from friends and neighbours then Dad, Mum and I would cut the garments up into strips about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide by $\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. Then an old sack would be obtained from the greengrocer and after Mother had thoroughly washed it this would be cut to the required size of a hearthrug or slip mat for the door and with a steel hook the strips of material would be drawn through the sacking and knotted in much the same way as ~~cut~~ cut-wool rugs are made to-day. These rag-mats were very drab looking as ^{there} ~~there~~ was not

the great range of dyes in colours such as we see today and in any case working peoples clothes were always dark so as not to shew the dirt, there were such places as dry cleaners but they were not common the only one I remember was "Pollars of Perth" dyers and cleaners. If my Mum wanted to clean anything she would wash it in paraffin; certainly it got the dirt out but the garment had to hang in the garden for days to get rid of the smell. Mum was also a great one for dyeing and each summer last year's dresses would be dyed and brought out as new. Casement curtains which were normally a neutral beige colour mum would dye starting with pastel shades the first year and progressing through mid blues and greens until they rotted away.

All of Mother's table-linen and pillow-slips were trimmed with exquisite crochet at which she was very good but macrame work was very fashionable and almost everything in the home was decorated with this in some way or another.

The mantelshelf over the fireplace in each room had a deeply fringed border, the curtains were all looped back with bands of macrame work and 'hair-tidys' lined with a scrap of pale blue or pink silk

hung from each side of the dressing-table mirror in Mother's bedroom.

There were two cinemas that I remember, the 'Tower' in Rye Lane Peckham and a small one just off the Old Kent Rd; whose name I never knew but the children who were allowed to go to the 'pictures' called it the "flea-pit." I did not go to the cinema until I was about thirteen and the film was called "Mother's Boy" starring Harold Lloyd. Later there was another cinema near the Marquis of Granby in New Cross Rd; this one was built on the site of the old New Cross Empire which was the home of Music Hall and Variety. Here Mum and Dad would spend an occasional Saturday evening, leaving me with my Grandma. All the variety artists of the time appeared at this music-hall Dan Leno, Little Titch, Hety King and later Sandy Powell, Gracie Fields etc. I saw the first show that Gracie played the leading role it was called "Mr Tower of London" and produced by her first husband Archie Pitt. At the Elephant and Castle was a theatre which regularly had the plays made famous by Tod Slaughter and his company. One of the greatest treats I can remember was being taken to see "Sweeney Todd the demon barber of Fleet St." Just to make it more horrific meat pies were sold to the audience! "East Lynne"

was Mum's favourite as the book by Mrs Henry Wood together with 'Ivanhoe' by Sir Walter Scott were the only two books in the home until books became the regular birthday and Christmas present for me

School, Day and Sunday.

Canterbury Rd; Elementary School was within ten minutes walk of the home of most of the pupils but it was divided down the middle by that peculiar brand of class distinction so noticeable the lower the social ladder one descends. On one side of Canterbury Rd; was the Sandford Estate and on the other the really mean little houses of Ormside and Tustin St; the children from the latter were very poor, many came without shoes and the health of these children was undermined by the diseases of poverty, rickets, ringworm and bronchitis. In some ways these children were envied by the young of the Sandford Estate because they were eligible for holidays with the "Children's Country Holiday Fund." These youngsters not only had the happiness of the holiday in the country but also the glory when they came back to school; the rest of us only had a holiday if our parents could afford to take us.

The school was very old even in 1917 when I was enrolled, there were four entrances "INFANTS" "JUNIOR MIXED" "GIRLS" "BOYS" As I remember two years were spent in the Infants and two or three in the Junior Mixed from then on it was Girls or Boys until fourteen years of age.

Inside the school was all brown and green paint with a blackboard and easel by the side of the teacher's desk in each classroom. Heating in winter consisted of a stove in the middle of the room but that was during the war, as I remember by the time I reached the big girls there were hot water pipes installed. The teaching profession was greatly admired by all the people I knew and looking back the dedication of these single women, all devoting their lives to the education and training of children other than their own. I remember with great affection the first headmistress Miss Schwann and later on Miss Agutter.

Each part of the school had its own small asphalt playground at the side of which was a row of green painted lavatories the walls of which were always covered with childish anatomical drawings and rude comments about other children.

I managed to survive the Infants without any serious illness but soon after going up into the Junior mixed I was in hospital and away from school for over three months. The class kept a scrap book and under the guidance of Miss Richards, the teacher, made it interesting and informative. This was sent to me in hospital but because of infection it had to be left behind.

The teachers and lessons were a great joy to me, I loved hearing about "Beowulf and Grendel", "The Knights of the Round Table" and "Aesops Fables". The latter always caused giggles amongst the class as my surname was "Sopp" and my initial "E". Because of this unfortunate name life at school tended to be miserable when mixing with the other children so I became quite solitary but my enjoyment came when the bell rang for us to assemble in lines and return to our classrooms. Here we sat in order of merit, top boy and girl front right facing the teacher thence up and down the rows until the bottom boy and girl who occupied the back left-hand desk. This system seems completely topsy-turvy, the slowest and probably those with hearing or visual problems were in the corner furthest from the windows blackboard and teacher.

Francis Shorter and I were almost permanent occupants of front-right, he was really 'top' as he was good at sums as well as everything else whereas I was good at most other things but hopeless at sums which I detested, never understood and wouldn't bother to learn. I think it was in 1920 that a society for Road Safety was formed, I can't remember what it was called but all schoolchildren were required to write an essay on road safety. Prizes and certificates

were awarded and Francis and I were both recipients and would have to go to Caxton Hall to receive them from Princess Mary (later the Princess Royal Countess of Harewood). As only one child from each school could go and it being the days of sex-discrimination but also male gallantry Francis stood down and I went to Caxton Hall!

My mother took me by tram to Westminster, it must have been November as it was cold, wet and dark. Mum had only the faintest idea of the location of Caxton Hall and much time was wasted wandering up and down Victoria St; with mum getting irritable and I miserable and tearful. Eventually a policeman directed us and we arrived just before Princess Mary came on to the platform. She was dressed in a black coat and skirt with the white collar of her blouse over the coat collar. I was told afterwards that she was in mourning for her youngest brother John who had recently died. This prince was not known to the public generally as he was handicapped in some way.

The following week at school I was required to write an essay of the occasion and this was read out to the assembled school. All of which resulted in approbation from my class teacher but did nothing to improve my standing with my classmates.

I would conerantly arrive home in tears having run the gauntlet from school of boys and girls calling after me with such names as "Soppy, by name, soppy by nature." "Four eyes!" "Rabbits' teeth!" and so on. Complaints to my mother received scant sympathy as she would tell me to "treat it with the contempt it so richly deserves!" which I thought was a wonderful phrase but how did you do it?

~~the playground~~ One of the things I did learn in the playground was class distinction. Canterbury Rd; was the dividing line between the reasonably neat little houses of Sandford Estate and the old, run down cottages of Ormside St; and Tustin St; even the names sounded ugly.

The children from this latter side came to school often barefoot, mostly grubby and obviously hungry. Their's were the names called out by the Nurse 'Nit' after she had examined our heads to take letters home to their mothers.

In class and at play these two factions rarely combined; the only child every one liked was Sambo! Always smiling, always helpful and as I recall always wearing a red woolly jersey, he was the only black child I saw for many years.

My overall recollection of life at school ~~was~~ is of a happy atmosphere fostered by kindly women with soft voices who seemed to have no difficulty in managing a class of

thirty odd boys and girls. From my earliest childhood I had enjoyed listening to the human voice whether to the poems recited to me by my mother "The village blacksmith" being her favourite or the first years at school listening to the 'big' girls at their singing lessons. A warm afternoon with the windows wide open would make the drab surroundings like heaven as I listened to "Where'er you walk" and "Kindenker". Of our own singing lessons I remember only one song, which I have never heard since and am pretty certain would not be tolerated in schools of the present as "Nannies" and "Nurseries" smack too much of a privileged class which oddly enough we never seemed to envy or want to emulate. Political awareness was to come much later.

Any way here is the lyric. ~~ff~~ sixty-odd years on.

The Night Nursery.

When nurse has tucked the bed-clothes in
And stumped across the floor,
She says that not a single soul
Can come in through the door
But only me and Mick the dog
Who sleeps along o'me
Knows why the skylight's open
And what we're going to see,
For when the world has gone to rest

The sun has gone to bed
Then someone comes to see us there
Who nurse says is dead
Dad used to call her "Darling Heart"
But Mother was her name
And Mick and me were very sad
Before our mother came.
She comes in through the window
'Cause the door is not allowed
Her eyes are bright as little stars
Her dress is like a cloud,
She holds me very close and tight
And talks about a Land
Where all the flowers are boys and girls
With Mother's close at hand
And when I want to go with her
She says 'twould never do
"Cause Daddy would be lonely son
Without a man like you!"

As schools in those days were really local
everyone went home to dinner at 12:00 clock
to return by 2:0pm. On the way home
I had to pass Bettel's the greengrocer who
also sold a few sweets and some strange
looking things, dark brown and shiny,
which we called locust beans; about the
size of a runner bean, they were very
sweet after you had bitten through the
hard exterior, the seeds in these dried

were like tiny hard stones which had to be spat out needless to say a game was made to see who could spit the furthest. I received pocket money once a week on Saturday, Grandma gave me sixpence and I had the same from Mum but some of this had to be put in my money box ready for Christmas and birthday presents and I also had to provide my own collection for Church and Sunday school I might sometimes getting an extra penny or two getting errands for my mother. At any rate I was always short of money during the week and it was the thought of locust beans that tempted me to steal from Francis Shorter! Francis was always in funds to the extent of a penny a day which he kept tied into the corner of his handkerchief and tucked on the ledge under our desk. On one particular day I loitered behind when it was playtime and took the penny from the handkerchief; on the way home to dinner I spent the penny in Bettels on locust beans. Nothing was ever said about the missing penny, Francis was very quiet and reserved so perhaps he didn't like to tell anyone. A penny was a lot of money then but perhaps life was easier for Francis, his father was a butcher in Canterbury Rd. Compared with the other schools in the neighbourhood my elementary school may

have been good or bad, as a child I couldn't judge but only know that as I remember the class was always well behaved apart from the odd misdemeanour like flicking inky pieces of blotting paper about the room and although we heard about the School Board man I never heard of anyone at whose home he had called because of truancy.

At that time and in that district of South East London it was recognised that education to a higher grade was essential if you were to get a good job and not finish up in Peek Freans Biscuit Factory or Rogers's Laundry. Everyone was aiming to have a regular job with a pension at the end of it and for this you needed to pass the Scholarship and go on to a Secondary or Grammar School. For the more practical minded there was a scholarship at thirteen or fourteen when it was possible to go to a Polytechnic to train as a Chef, Dress designer, Hairdresser etc.

Sunday School

Sunday School at Corpus Christi Church was a very flourishing affair. There were three grades, little children up to nine or ten, then catechism for those about to be confirmed which as the church was Anglo-Catholic children were encouraged to present themselves from ten years of age; finally the Bible Class

for those who were now communicants.

My Auntie Jo was the superintendent of the little ones' Sunday School with four or five teachers each sitting with a group of eight or ten children around them. For the prayers and collection we all sat in line and sang hymns from Ancient and Modern. When it was time for collection we all filed past the table at which Auntie Jo sat and dropped our money into a wooden box, we always sang the same jingle for this ceremony and it puzzles me still

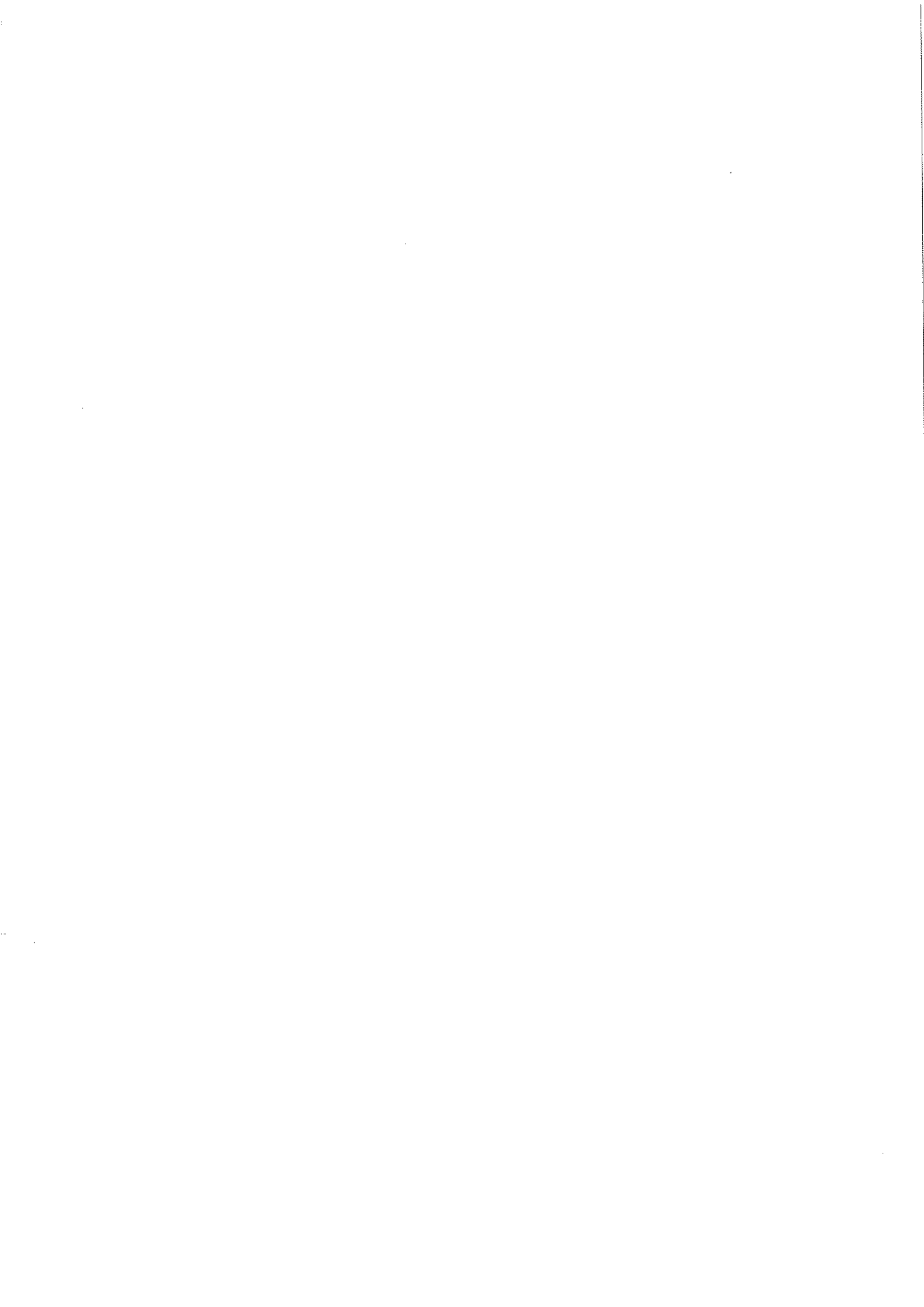
Hear the pennies dropping
Listen while they fall
They belong to Jesus
He shall have them all.

Now that we are little
Pennies are our store
But when we grow bigger
He will give us more

Dropping dropping dropping dropping
Hear the pennies fall
Everyone for Jesus
He shall have them all.

I do hope my memory has played me false and these were not really the words, but they are as I remember.

We were given picture cards each Sunday to certify our attendance and this qualified for the outing to Epsom or Riddlesdown which were right in the country then and entailed a train journey from New Cross Gate station although my very earliest outing was in a horse drawn brake to Epsom. There was as well a Christmas Party for regular attenders but I have no clear recollection of these probably because I disliked noisy gatherings.



SNAP
ELIZABETH
DALE

SNAP

a poem by

ELIZABETH DALE



*John Foreman
Broadsheet King
at the Catnap Press*

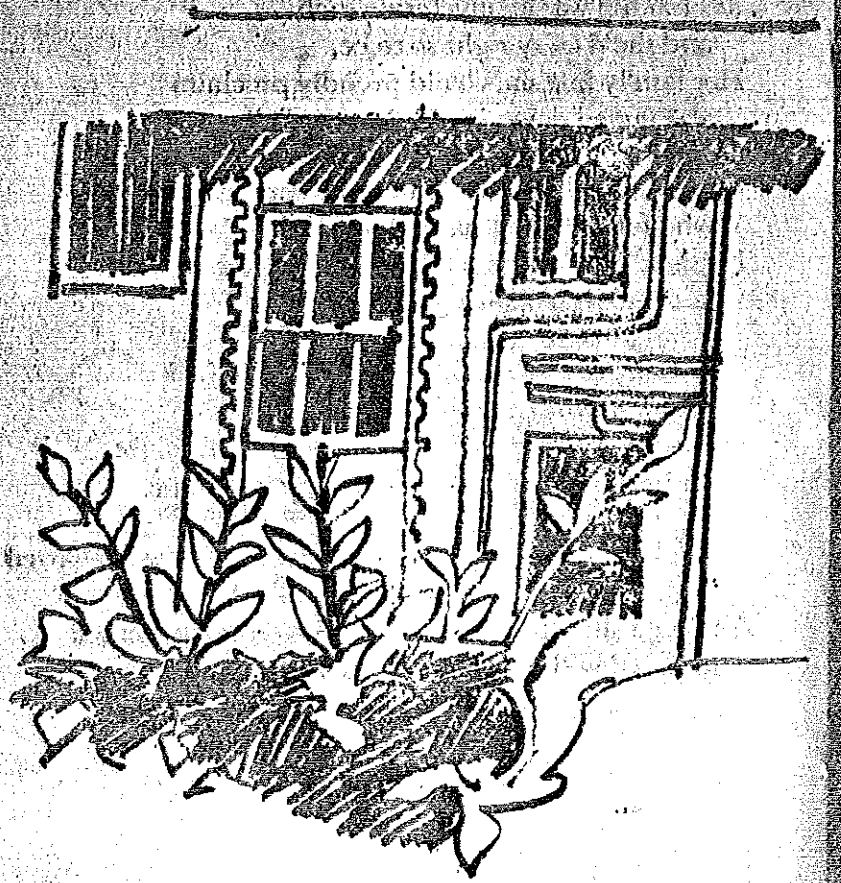


My mother was an inveterate snob
and she'd ev'ry right so to be,
Her fam'ly line she would proudly proclaim
was farned down in old Bermondsey.

Great uncle Fred was lighterman sure
who fell between barges one night,
He sank like a stone but his mem'ry lives on
to the elderly aunt's great delight.

The 'Grapes' was presided o'er by uncle Jack
whose wit and aplomb were well known,
He needed no help when he chucked out at night,
for he must have weighed near twenty stone.

Now of course great aunt Grace was a name we debarred
from polite talk unless fun was poked,
Although she was clever and in Government worked
she lived with a woman - and smoked.



But my mother's mum had a weakness for gin,
and often would place a small bet
So reg'lar as clockwork on Monday a.m.
round to 'Uncle's' she'd go fine or wet.

My mum's Sunday clothes would all then go in pawn
to give Gran the much needed 'gelt',
To buy her oblivion or chance of win?
that was never the card Fortune dealt.

My mother's dad was a docker tho' once
he had a skilled trade to his hand
Working leather or some such, I'm still not quite sure
but he joined the hard riverside band.

Because at the turn of the second decade
when men returned bitter and weary,
They found that the 'Land Fit For Heroes' a dream
and reality 'No Work' made life dreary.



I started to tell of my mother's weak spot,
how she 'name dropped' and followed the 'Royals'
And prayed for her children to all make their mark,
or at least to have some of the spoils.

It thus came to pass that the youngest of three
was to marry and mum must be meeting
The formidable opposite whose main delight
was to out-snob as soon as a greeting.

At tea-time the talk turned to homes old and stately
and ma-by-law gracious and lacy:
Said 'Are you acquainted with Sheridan's plays
which were written at old Polesdon Lacey?'

Then quick as a flash out came Mum's cockney wit:
'No, but I'm proud now to state
I'm on visiting terms and frequently meet
the Charles Lambs of Old Norton Folgate.'



First heard at the
Hastings Poetry Festival 1979
organised by the indefatigable
Josephine Austin.

Blocks from sketches by
Chris Morgan



MY FATHER

I remember him walking into that upstairs flat and looking deflated and the words 'C.3' being tossed about. It must have been at the outbreak of the Great War and he had volunteered for service only to be rejected on health grounds.

At that time he was working as a traveller for Monk & Glass, makers of custard powder although he had so many friends and relations 'in the print' that I think this was his original occupation after leaving school at 14. He met my Mother at sixteen and following a long courtship when from their reminiscences they seemed to spend most of their time off cycling into the Kentish countryside and visiting an Aunt of my Mother who lived on Bluebell Hill Chatham. They married when he was twenty-one.

My father was the type of man who is always described as the 'life and soul of the party'. Although he came from a poor home, his mother seems to have tried to maintain a certain gentility so he must have enjoyed the contrast with my Mother's home, when although her father was very strict the parties on every conceivable occasion were gargantuan. Here were all the opportunities for my father to play the fool with his contemporaries, tease the elderly and spoil all the children within reach.

These parties always seemed to centre around the piano, an upright with fretwork front over green silk complete with two hinged candlesticks. Dad was always the self appointed M.C. at these festivities and would soon have family and friends doing their piece. My Mother had a pleasant contralto voice and would sing 'A Little Grey Home in the West' with much feeling! Louie, a friend who lived nearby could play the piano by ear and would vamp out an accompaniment for all and also give a solo performance for good measure.

The most exciting part of the evening came when the men, having consumed most of the beer brought in from 'Jack Martin's' earlier in the day began to organise the games. It was no use putting me to bed as the noise downstairs would have kept me awake so I was allowed to stay in the corner and enjoy the fun. The games were usual for the time and started off with the noisy ones like 'Postman's Knock' and games where the girls had to go out into the dark passage from where excited screams indicated the fate that had befallen them. One game I was allowed

to join in was called 'Aeroplane'. The girls went outside the door and were called in one at a time after being blindfolded. They were then led a few paces and told to step up high as they were going to be lifted to the ceiling. At these times the rooms were very lofty and after getting the feet firmly onto a piece of board the girls were lifted about six inches from the floor but I can vouch that it felt more like six feet.

As the evening became late, some of the men would go to the kitchen and sit around a large table to play cards or 'Housy-housy'. Those who were left would sit around the fire and continue to play quieter games although one of those had an unexpected result. For this all the remaining men went into the passage and were admitted one by one after the girls had made preparation by one of them removing her stocking and carefully stuffing it to look like a leg, the shoe would be put onto this and she sat on her bare leg. As each man came in he was taken to the row of girls sitting with their feet demurely together and told that it was a room in France where it was the custom to greet ladies by shaking their leg instead of their hand. This evoked screams of laughter as each man came to the 'leg' which came away in his hand until a young fellow who must have come with a friend for I didn't know him suddenly reached the false leg and as it came away in his hand fell back in a dead faint. Feathers were burned under his nose and I so terrified at the sight had to be taken screaming up to bed.

There was never a time when he was too busy or tired to play with or talk to me and I have memories of being given a 'flying angel' on his shoulders to bed every night.

Early in 1916 he presented himself again to the recruiting office and this time he was a private in the Royal Flying Corps what he did I didn't know except that 'Officer's batman' were words I heard. After a little while he came home one leave with one stripe which apparently made him a lance-corporal but the next time home the stripe had gone.

During this time he was stationed at Wendover and at first my Mother went to stay at Aston Clinton to be near him but not for long, lonely country life and my Mother did not agree and she returned to work at the Woolwich Arsenal. Not a week went by but I didn't have a card from him carefully written in large capitals for my ease. I had learned to read before I was five and what was on those postcards was half the

incentive. One card came with the name and address looking quite normal but just before the message he had written 'Hold this up to the looking glass'. This intrigued me and I spent hours trying to do 'mirror writing'.

When my father came home on leave he would let me unwind the puttees which clad his legs to the knees. I soon learnt a lot of Army slang and songs from him. At that time the R.F.C. was part of the Army and wore khaki. After I had been in Hospital I went with my Mother to Wendover to stay near my father, and was taken to see the airfield, another airman took me into the basket of a balloon which was tethered to the ground. Now I feel that this must have been highly irregular!

Towards the end of 1918 my father came home on leave and we went with my Mother to have tea with Grandma. Living as she did in the first floor front room of my Auntie's house there wasn't much room for entertaining so we all had tea downstairs with Auntie Aggie and then nine of us piled into my Grandma's room. What with a wash-hand stand just inside the door, a double bed along the same wall, a large chest of drawers between the two windows, a horsehair sofa on the opposite wall and a large wooden plain deal table, in the middle of the room, chairs had to be brought up from Auntie Aggie's.

Grandma had a favourite chair by the fire it was made rather like a deck chair but with carpet instead of canvas and the seat was held rigid with a cross piece of wood. As it was Dad's leave Grandma gave him the seat of honour by the fire. Wedged round the table were my Mother, Auntie Aggie, her husband Frank called Bruno by all, her eldest daughter Rose called Jo, I don't know why, her son Frank known as Sloper by my father, I think there was a character in a book or paper called Ally Sloper. Then came Elsie, her youngest girl only seven years older than I was. Finally Farlow Frank Rose's husband his name was reversed to save confusion with Frank or Sloper.

My father wanted Elsie and I to sing but we were both unwilling so he took us one on each knee and told Elsie to sing 'Its a long way to Tipperary' and for me to sing 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' both together. This we did and in the middle of it all what with my father keeping time with his knees and us two children jumping up and down the chair collapsed and we all three landed on the floor. Grandma's chair was broken beyond repair.

4

When the excitement and the scoldings had subsided I suddenly announced to the assembled company 'Daddy isn't on leave, he's not going back any more!' Everyone including my father was astonished. For a long time I lived on the importance of being a child who was 'fey'. Of course my father had been keeping it a secret to tell my Mother later that evening but he had to admit in front of them all that he was home for good.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

Some of my earliest memories were hearing my elders talking about bereaved families or families where someone was kept in a sunny room with the windows wide open because they had consumption. I learned very early that you could always tell a consumptive by the two bright spots of colour in their cheeks and their irritable tempers. Next door to us a widow lived in the upstairs flat with her son coughing his life away in his bed by the open window. Six doors away was the local Guide captain who would go through the macabre performance of taking the salute propped up on her pillows with Guide hat on as her company paraded outside the window! At the end of Hornshay Street where my Grandma lived was the one who fascinated me most. She was a beautiful young woman who was constantly wheeled about by her Mother or fiance. Gladys lay in this long spinal carriage made of wicker, her dark hair dressed in two long plaits lying over the blanket which covered her and I had evidence of her irritability as she snapped at me one day to stop staring at her!

Amongst the school children there was always someone who was in the Fever hospital and the teacher would give us reports on their progress.

Not quite an illness but something which must have caused the children concerned great distress was the question of nits and lice in their heads. A school nurse visited usually once a term and after her attendance there would be letters for some to take home to their Mothers and a visit to the Cleansing station for others. This last must have been quite horrifying for the children's heads were shaved and little girls would wear muslin mob-caps in class.

A stay in hospital definitely increased your status amongst the other children and as the grey ambulance with M.A.B. which I think meant Medical Asylums Board, called at a door children would appear as if called by the Pied Piper to line the route from doorway to ambulance paying their homage to the patient. It was the thought of this 'lap of honour' which excited me when I lay in an upstairs room waiting for the grey van to take me to the Fever hospital. My arrival there subdued me quite a lot as anything unknown held such terrors for me. I was wheeled into the outer hall where it was very dark and nurses hurried about with a swish of their long starched skirts. One of these stopped by the stretcher

and asked my name, I was so nervous I had to repeat it three times before she could understand the jumble of words which spilled out. When finally the name had been entered into a book and onto a chart the nurse suddenly called 'PORTER' I was terrified at the sharpness of her voice and could only apply one meaning to the word 'Porter' INTOXICATING DRINK! I lay there quietly vowing that no drop should pass my lips when they brought that which Grandma had warned me against and was I not a member of the 'Y' branch of the Women's Temperance Association! No I would die first of scarlet fever like Florrie whose picture was always on Grandma's mantelshelf and whose grave I had seen in Nunhead cemetery. After all it would be very nice to be with Gentle Jesus and those other children from all nations whose picture was in Sunday School. My thoughts about the 'Home for little children above the bright blue sky' were brought to a sudden halt by my being lifted from the stretcher and placed on a long trolley which was quickly wheeled into a long ward full of children all lying quietly in their beds as the wintry afternoon sun spun aureoles around their heads.

This was the beginning of six exciting weeks, pain there was when the scarlet fever turned to rheumatic fever, fear there was when an air-raid over S.E. London brought the nurses in to sit on the childrens' beds. I suppose most of all was the wonderful feeling of importance when Mr. Denham the Clergyman from Corpus Christi came to see me in the middle of the night and told me that if I was good I might soon go to see Gentle Jesus and he left me a picture of 'The Flight into Egypt'. This the nurse pinned over my bed which I thought was rather silly as I couldn't move enough to see it. At least I had the glorious feeling of authority as when I became somewhat better I was able to tell the older children who crowded round my bed the story behind the picture which I knew from my Sunday School.

Finally there was that wonderful Spring day when I was wheeled into the grounds and heard the ribald singing of the other children as they changed to an Army tune:

We want to go home
 We want to go home
 We don't want to have any medicine no more
 We don't want no nurses or sisters no more

I lay there thinking that perhaps Dad would be home again or I might go with Mum to Wendover where he was stationed and see the aeroplanes and balloons he had told me about. Whatever the outcome it was so lovely now to lie under the big tree and watch the shadows of the leaves making patterns on the blanket that I was utterly content.

'RELIGION, THE OPIATE OF THE POOR'.

Most of the children in the neighbourhood attended Sunday School either at Corpus Christi the local C. of E. despite its name, or to All Saints Church in New Cross Road. A few went to the Salvation Army and were called 'Sunbeams'.

As my Auntie Jo was superintendent of the Sunday School, I was the captive offering every Sunday morning to 'Eucharist'; the Anglo-Catholic movement was quite strong in the area, and again at 3.0 clock in the afternoon where we heard Bible stories and made models of Nazareth of the 'Road to Jericho' in sand trays. As I loved with my Grandma during the last two years of the war it was considered only a balanced religious education if I went with her to her Wesleyan Chapel for the evening service. This I liked because of the rousing Moody & Sankey hymns. 'Throw out the life-line, someone is sinking today', 'Count your blessings, see what God has done', 'What a friend we have in Jesus', And so on, that dingy, dark hall, with wooden forms, crowded to the door and offering vicarious comfort to people whose clothing was always black because you didn't know when it would be needed for a funeral and also it didn't show the dirt, whose children ran around barefoot. Some of whom, if they were lucky would be taken for a week to the country by a charitable organisation called 'The Country Holiday Fund.'

Before my father went into the Royal Flying Corps he and my Mother would attend 'Evensong' at Corpus. Here I disgraced myself by falling through the back of an open pew during the sermon and having to be carried screaming outside. After the war my father never went into a church again except for family christenings, marriages and funerals.

The intensive religious training I was getting made a deep impression on me and I loved every minute of hearing the Gospel stories. Each year was marked off by the Church's calendar and I vividly remember one Easter-tide when a thick London pea-souper rolled over at about midday on Good Friday. I startled my Mother by telling her that this was 'the darkness which encompassed the earth' and it would last until 3.0 pm. Whether it did or not I don't remember, I went to church to join Auntie Jo for the last hour of the three hour service, just to be on the safe side!

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Some of my earliest memories were hearing my elders talking about bereaved families or families where someone was kept in a sunny room with the windows wide open because they had consumption. I learned very early that you could always tell a consumptive by the two bright spots of colour in their cheeks and their irritable tempers. Next door to us a widow lived in the upstairs flat with her son coughing his life away in his bed by the open window. Six doors away was the local Guide captain who would go through the macabre performance of taking the salute ^{as she lay} propped up on her pillows with Guide hat on as her company paraded outside the window! At the end of Hornshay Street where my Grandma lived was the one who fascinated me most. She was a beautiful young woman who was constantly wheeled about by her Mother or fiance. Gladys lay in this long spinal carriage made of wicker, her dark hair dressed in two long plaits lying over the blanket which covered her and I had evidence of her irritability as she snapped at me one day to stop staring at her!

Amongst the school children there was always someone who was in the Fever hospital and the teacher would give us reports on their progress.

Not quite an illness but something which must have caused the children concerned great distress was the question of nits and lice in their heads. A school nurse visited usually once a term and after her attendance there would be letters for some to take home to their Mothers and a visit to the Cleansing station for others. This last must have been quite horrifying for the childrens' heads were shaved and little girls would wear muslim mob-caps in class.

My stay in hospital definitely increased your status amongst the other children and as the grey ambulance with M.A.P. which I think meant Medical Asylums Board, called at a door children would appear as if called by the Pied Piper to line the route from doorway to ambulance paying their homage to the patient. It was the thought of this 'lap of honour' which excited me when I lay in an upstairs room waiting for the grey van to take me to the Fever hospital. My arrival there subdued me quite a lot as anything unknown held such terrors for me. I was wheeled into the outer hall where it was very dark and nurses hurried about with a swish of their long starched skirts. One of these stopped by the stretcher

and asked my name, I was so nervous I had to repeat it three times before she could understand the jumble of words which spilled out. When finally the name had been entered into a book and onto a chart the nurse suddenly called 'PORTER' I was terrified at the sharpness of her voice and could only apply one meaning to the word 'Porter' INTOXICATING DRINK! I lay there quietly vowing that no drop should pass my lips when they brought^{me} that which Grandma had warned me against and was I not a member of the 'Y' branch of the Women's Temperance Association! No I would die first of scarlet fever like Florrie whose picture was always on Grandma's mantelshelf and whose grave I had seen in Nunhead cemetery. After all it would be very nice to be with Gentle Jesus and those other children from all nations whose picture was in Sunday School. My thoughts about the 'Home for little children above the bright blue sky' were brought to a sudden halt by my being lifted from the stretcher and placed on a ~~long~~ trolley which was quickly wheeled into a long ward full of children all lying quietly in their beds as the wintry afternoon sun spun aureoles around their heads.

This was the beginning of six exciting weeks, pain there was when the scarlet fever turned to rheumatic fever, fear there was when an air-raid over S.E. London brought the nurses in to sit on the childrens' beds. I suppose most of all was the wonderful feeling of importance when Mr. Denham the Clergyman from Corpus Christi came to see me in the middle of the night and told me that if I was good I might soon go to see Gentle Jesus and he left me a picture of 'The Flight into Egypt'. This the nurse pinned over my bed which I thought was rather silly as I couldn't move enough to see it. At least I had the glorious feeling of authority as when I became somewhat better I was able to tell the older children who crowded round my bed the story behind the picture which I knew from my Sunday School.

Finally there was that wonderful Spring day when I was wheeled into the grounds and heard the ribald singing of the other children as they ~~changed~~ to an Army tune:

chanted

We want to go home
 We want to go home
 We don't want to have any medicine no more
 We don't want no nurses or sisters no more

I lay there thinking that perhaps Dad would be home again or I might go with Mum to Wendover where he was stationed and see the aeroplanes and balloons he had told me about. Whatever the outcome it was so lovely now to lie under the big tree and watch the shadows of the leaves making patterns on the blanket that I was utterly content.

EARLY MEMORIES

One of my earliest memories is of being lifted up from the pavement outside Corpus Christi Church to wave to the children who were going on a Sunday School outing to Riddlesdown. They were all seated on a wagonette, the seats facing outwards and horse drawn. This must have been in 1915 and although I went to Sunday School my Grandma with whom I lived thought me too young to go on such a long journey.

Just as the horses were about to move off my Auntie 'Jo' who was the superintendent of the Sunday School reached down and taking me from my Grandma's arms called out that she would look after me and settled me on a seat beside her. Of the journey I remember nothing but do recall the disgust I felt when on arrival I was treated to a glass of milk instead of sweets which the other children were buying for themselves in the little dairy cum general store. I had always hated milk.

The whole exercise must have been a strain on my Auntie Jo's patience as she would have had to keep waiting for me as I couldn't have joined in the play of the other children in case I was knocked over, my legs still being very weak from the mild attack of I.P. I had suffered two years previously. Because of this slight disability I always wore high black buttoned up boots summer and winter and continued to until I was eight or nine.

The journey home I do not remember so suppose I slept, only that Grandma was waiting for me when the wagonette arrived back at Corpus Christi.

Shortly after this Auntie Jo who had no children thought she would have me to stay for a week-end in her flat which was beside the tram depot in New Cross Road. 'How oft the plans of mice and men' after tea and a wash I was taken to a large bedroom and suddenly I realised that Grandma wasn't there. Even the bar of chocolate under the pillow couldn't placate me and after much fruitless persuasion I had to be carried all the way back to Grandma screaming that 'I was my Grandma's Belgy girl'. She heard me long before we turned into Hornshay Street.

The reference to a 'Belgy girl' was brought about by the sympathy everyone felt for 'poor little Belgium' which had been overrun by the Germans early in the war and a number of refugees from that country were settled in East London.

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PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER

My father came from a family which had they all lived would have been large even by the late 19th century standards. My Grandmother was the only child of a fairly well-off couple who owned a laundry in Camberwell. From her reminiscences her childhood was sheltered and comfortable. She was educated at home by a governess who taught her needlework and deportment. I would listen, fascinated to her accounts of her lessons when to improve her posture she would stand with her arms over the arms of a back-board which would hold her shoulders back while she recited poems and passages from the Bible. The back-board seemed to be a wooden T shaped frame.

At nineteen she ran away with a good-looking sailor and after marrying him never saw her parents again although she lived within walking distance of her childhood home.

My Grandfather rose to become a Captain in the Royal Navy but over the years because of excessive drinking he was reduced to Petty Officer and finally died in the Seemans' Hospits at Greenwich with delirium tremens.

During their marriage my Grandparents were not together for very long periods because of the call of the Navy but my Grandmother bore fourteen children of whom only four survived beyond the age of twelve and most died in early infancy.

My Grandmother would take me to Nunhead cemetery and point out the various little graves although some seemed not to have a separate plot but to have been buried with a complete stranger. It must have been an arrangement for the very poor who were unable to afford the burial costs.

By the end of the 19th century my Grandmother had reached the bottom of the road from her early days. She would entertain me by the hour telling me harrowing stories of babies who died of fever, smallpox, fits, and one who seemed to be her favourite a golden-haired girl whose picture was always on the mantel-shelf. She was wearing a stiff-brimmed sailor hat and dark dress with a sailor collar. Florrie died at the age of twelve from scarlet fever.

PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER

By far the most important influence in my childhood was this Grandma. My father being the last child of her large family and her only surviving son he was naturally the focal point of her love until my arrival when she saw it as her bounden duty to take on the task of rearing her son's child. Although my Mother resented this there were occasions when she was grateful for Grandma's helping hand.

In 1916 Mother decided to answer the call to work on munitions and Grandma was then in loco-parentis to me until the end of the war. It was decided that I should live with Grandma although she had only one room, because Mother had met Nina at the Arsenal who was looking for a place to live having left her employment at the Royal Victoria Hotel Hastings to go on 'war work'. So Nina moved in with my Mother.

Most of my clothes were made by Grandma on her old Singer treadle-sewing machine. The material for garments worn next to the skin was flannelette, then a liberty-bodice which was like a corset of soft material; this would have been bought. A pair of drawers made of white calico and fastened with a button or drawstring at the waist and decorated with gathered lace at the knees constituted the nether garments. Stockings were black worsted, sometimes hand knitted and kept taut by elastic garters. During the winter a flannelette petticoat was worn under the embroidered calico one which was left on after May was out and clouts could be cast. Winter frocks were made of serge or gaberdine for everyday wear and velvet or merino which was a fine woollen material for Sunday best. As a protection for all clothing a pinafore was worn and on this article of clothing Grandma would let her imagination have rein. It was usually made of white lawn or fine calico for school. The three inch epaulettes would be decorated with a lace frill or ribbon insertion. These garments were starched quite stiffly and the frills and gathers goffered. This last was done with goffering irons which resembled hair waving tongs. Every day before going out to school a clean handkerchief would be fastened to the yoke of the pinafore with a tiny gold-coloured safety-pin. Knee-high black buttoned boots were my purgatory. As my legs were weak they were worn summer and winter and every morning there was the agony of the steel

2 3

button-hook pinching my flesh. Summer dresses were always made of various coloured prints or gingham checks. Winter coats came from Grandma's machine made of blanket cloth or corduroy with knitted scarves for extra warmth and in the summer a lighter coat was made from drill. The one item of clothing which gave Grandma most pleasure to make and me least pleasure to wear was the best summer dress. Made of tussore silk or shantung the material was ideal for smocking or silk embroidery, it also washed very well and lasted it seemed for ever. It always came in the same buff colour and I was sallow skinned and child though I was I knew that this best dress did nothing for me.

According to all friends and relations Grandma 'spoil me'. Whether it was spoiling or not it was she who taught me to read before I went to school and who gave me a love of words. She would play games with the sounds of words and their meanings so that long before I knew the meaning of the word onomatopoeia I was aware of its significance. Grandma would read to me by the hour not only children's stories but pieces from 'Sunday Companion' which I am sure meant nothing to me but I enjoyed listening to the words. She would teach me simple poems and by the time I was seven and could read quite fluently it was my delight to learn by heart some of the hymns in her Moody and Sankey hymn book.

Grandma must have been sixty four years old when I first remember her. She was small of stature and always dressed very neatly. The clothes she would have made herself except for her best coat and skirt which would have come from 'Holdrons' or 'Jones & Higgins' in Rye Lane Peckham. Alexandra, the Queen Mother was my Grandma's ideal in all matters of dress and it would require a whole afternoon at a special bonnet shop in Rye Lane first of all to buy the toque shape made of fine black straw then to choose the ribbon which tied under the chin. Should it be black satin or moire silk? Then finally the spray of artificial flowers which pinned across the front of the bonnet. Before venturing out in the new bonnet a veil was drawn tightly over the face and tied in a bunch at the back, again there was always the question should it be the fine plain net or the one with small black dots. My Grandma's nose was aquiline and the tightly drawn veil would make the bridge of her nose gleam white from underneath.

The necessity to walk practically everywhere was made into a virtue by Grandma for acting on the advice of the hospital doctor who had said that my legs would regain their strength with exercise, she would take me by tram to Woolwich from where we would walk to Bostall Woods where I first saw bluebells and primroses growing. Another excursion would be by tram to Greenwich to walk along the river-front then up to Greenwich Park and the Royal Observatory or on to Blackheath. Once she took me to the Maritime Museum where we were shown relics of Nelson and a very beautiful painted ceiling which impressed me greatly. Another treat was to go again by tram to Eltham then walk on to Avery Hill to visit Captain North's Winter Gardens, this was a very small version of Kew Gardens with tropical houses and exotic plants. Although a Londoner Grandma had a great love of the country and to us both it was all there at Chislehurst. In her stylish bonnet and long skirt, always carrying a rolled umbrella to steady her as she scoffed at the idea of a walking stick we must have presented a curious picture, a pale child, obviously frail, being encouraged to climb a tree with cries of 'Go on fairy-girl, put your foot there, now pull, I'll catch you if you slip'! As we walked or sat on a bank to rest she would point out the dainty moss or upturn a stone with the ferrule of her umbrella to show me the life underneath.

Religion had always played a great part in Grandma's life and although baptized and brought up in the Church of England she became a Wesleyan when she married, because as she explained to me it was best that husband and wife should row in the same boat. My Grandfather's drunkenness caused her to become a total abstainer and she belonged to the British Women's Temperance Association. She would take me to her Wednesday afternoon meetings which were held in a church hall in Meeting House Lane Peckham. Here at the age of four I was enrolled in the 'Y' branch and solemnly wore the White Ribboners' badge. The meetings began with the singing of the Temperance Hymn which went to the tune of 'Old Black Joe' and was about twining the White Ribbon of Temperance and Peace around the world. This was followed by a talk on the evils of drink given by a guest speaker then the meeting was given over to the members who would display their talent at singing, reciting or declaiming monologues by Bransby Williams whose is the only name I can remember although there must have been others. Once I was specially dressed in a white dress with a wide blue sash and my hair which was naturally 'straight as a yard of pump water' to quote my Mother's description, was

curled overnight into long ringlets ready for me to be lifted on to the platform to sing a song or it may have been a hymn as it referred to the Gospel story of the storm on the sea of Gallilee. Of this I remember the tune and the first verse which set the scene:

'A little ship was on the sea
It was a pretty sight,
It sailed along so merrily
And all was calm and bright'

The war was a great trial for Grandma; there was an anti-aircraft gun on Millwall football ground and after the air-raids started Grandma's nerves were literally shot to pieces. The air-raid warning was given by the firing of maroons and once I was taken from my bed to go to the local school for shelter in the cellars. This was too much for Grandma who would rather we both died in our bed with quiet dignity than amongst a group of people who sat around singing bawdy parodies of war songs and screamed hysterically at every bang.

The incident which affected me most during air-raids was the occasion when a German zeppelin was brought down. I suppose it must have been the one at Billericay in Essex although it all seemed to be happening over the football ground. People rushed into the street dancing and cheering and Auntie Aggie called up to Grandma to bring me down to see the spectacle. We went and stood looking up into the sky at the tiny black pieces of something falling from the giant airship which was ablaze from end to end. Grandma took up a position in front of the gate and shouted at the top of her voice which she very seldom raised; 'Stop it, be quiet, there are some Mothers' sons up there, think of them!' This silenced them for a while but gradually the cheering broke out again though not quite so confidently.

Grandma's home was an upstairs front room in Auntie Aggie's terraced house in Hornshay Street. The house was next but one to Kahn's the baker. This unfortunate man had his windows broken and was forced to close for a while at the beginning of the war all because of his German name but when he reopened this had been changed to Cane. Auntie Aggie was Grandma's eldest daughter and the only other surviving child, the two women were constantly bickering and Grandma who usually seemed to win a battle of words, would stand on her landing singing

'Count your many blessings' to no-one in particular but as a sign of her victory. Most of the trouble seemed to arise from the fact that Auntie Aggie was a member of Corpus Christi Church which was 'High' and this conflicted with Grandma's Wesleyism.

Hornshay Street was short and differed from the surrounding streets in that each house had a tiny front garden with iron railings and a gate. A lilac or laburnum would grow in most of these gardens and this gave the little street a very peaceful air. During the winter this peace would be shattered every Saturday afternoon when Millwall was playing at home. Crowds would stream down from Old Kent Road station where the trams and buses would have disgorged the opposing team supporters and once inside the ground the occasional roar would go up from the 'Den' as goals were scored..

From behind her lace curtains Grandma would sit and watch the small world go by, enlivening many an afternoon for me by describing it all as I sat at the table playing with plasticine or painting. Her commentary would run like this: 'There goes Mrs. Gould with her eldest girl Dorothy, the one who won the scholarship last year and now goes to S. Olaves Grammar School. You will do that when you are bigger! 'The rain is heavier now, it is dancing in the road like prancing horses'. 'Poor Mrs. Perry has just gone by with Gladys. My, she must be getting cold and wet lying in that spinal carriage. They say it is galloping consumption, poor girl, but she must go out in the air. Sad that she won't see twenty-one: that Bill Welch who is courting her must be very devoted always pushing her out'. 'There goes that fornicating hypocrite Mrs. Quaife, she might well wear that bright green coat and let everyone know she is an Irish Catholic'. To my Grandma 'Catholics' or Papists were anathema and as for the epithet 'fornicating hypocrite' it rolled off the tongue and I longed for the time when I would find someone it fitted. Luckily, because the meaning was obscure to me, I never did.

Early in 1918 I was taken ill with scarlet fever and admitted to the South Eastern Fever Hospital. Grandma was distracted, probably remembering her daughter Florrie whom I resembled and who had died of the fever at the age of twelve. The nurses at the hospital must have become tired of her daily calls at the gate where she would leave a book or drawing paper and pencils and once a large tin of acid drops

which ^{was} ~~were~~ kept in a cupboard in the ward and shared with the other children.

When the armistice came I was back at school and at 11-0 clock on the eleventh of November 1918 we were all dismissed. Mothers were already gathered at the gates, Grandma amongst them and the children were all taken off to celebrate. We walked up to Old Kent Road and then to New Cross Gate, here Grandma seemed unsure of what she was doing or which way to go. Finally we turned towards New Cross Gate Station. There were people walking, everywhere they were walking, talking, calling out to each other and waving the flags of the allied nations. Grandma stopped at a little shop opposite 'Aske's Haberdashers' Girls' School' to buy me a tiny Union Jack and thereafter I was constantly adjured to 'Wave your flag fairy girl'. That or her little 'Belgy girl' were her pet names for me. As we passed the school the walls were topped with schoolgirls waving their hockey sticks. Just as we reached the 'Marquis of Granby' where the road divided we met Mother and Nina walking home from the Arsenal, evidently everyone had just stopped work when eleven 0 clock came.

My first thought about the ending of the war was that I would be going home to Mum and after the period of love and care with my Grandma where every wish seemed to be granted before it was articulated, I was apprehensive. Of course, I knew that my Mother loved me and that my father whom I adored would be there, it seemed to my childish, selfish mind that they would be wrapped up in each other and I felt insecure and unsure of the future.

Food.

I do not know whether the type of food we ate in our home was ~~£~~ usual in the rest of the neighbourhood as I do not remember the children ever talking about food and as there were no school meals the subject never arose.

The weekly menu for my family brought us the same dishes with monotonous regularity. Mum was not a good cook except for her sponge sandwich which again we had every Sunday as surely as night followed day.

For breakfast each morning my father would have a streaky rasher with fried egg; Mum and I had bread and Maypole margarine with Robertson's Golden Shred marmalade. On Sunday I would have the crispy rind from Dad's bacon and a piece of fried bread. There were no such things as breakfast cereals and Mum couldn't make porridge it always came out grey and lumpy.

Sunday dinner was always a roast of beef, lamb or pork but the latter only when there was an 'R' in the month.

The joint would have been bought late on Saturday evening as it would be cheaper the butchers not wanting to

keep the meat over the week-end. Roast potatoes and vegetables in season completed the first, except of course Mum's batter pudding with beef. This last was the only part of Sunday dinner I enjoyed after it had been drenched in gravy!

The 'afters' was usually stewed rhubarb, gooseberries or plums with thin custard in the summer and stewed prunes or dried apricots in the winter. I hated rhubarb and prunes but Dad liked them so we had them.

At tea-time the man would have been round with his wheelbarrow calling out "Shrimps, winkles and watercresses."

Mum would make a watercress sandwich for me and then she and Dad would get down to the serious business of dealing with their winkles using a pin to disgorge the 'innards'. Winter Sundays brought the 'muffin-man'; he carried his muffins and crumpets on a board balanced on his head and covered with a green cloth. He rang a large hand-bell to announce his presence.

For supper on Sunday Mum and Dad would have a meat sandwich after I had gone to bed.

Monday dinner was cold-meat and bubble and squeak which was the

vegetables left over from Sunday
Tuesday the remainder of the joint was minced
up for shepherd's pie
Wednesday was steak and kidney pie or pudding
I always hoped it would be pudding because
Mum's pastry was like cardboard on top and
'gooey' underneath but a pudding she
could make and having tied the top of the
basin with a piece of white cloth it could
simmer for hours and only improve whereas
the same could not happen with pastry.
If we did not have pudding on Wednesday
then on Thursday there would be bacon
and onion pudding or baked rabbit. I don't
know why the rabbits always had to be
'Ostend' whether they were better or cheaper
than any other.
Friday the meal had to be quick and easy
so that Mum could go 'down the Blue'
in the afternoon. The quickest meal was
sausage and mash and this I enjoyed.
The 'Blue' was the nearest market place and
was so named because there was a public
house called the 'Blue Anchor'. The stalls
were all set up in Southwark Park Rd;
Saturday dinner I always enjoyed, liver and
bacon with mashed potatoes and very dark
greens. Dad would sometimes have a
kipper or bloaters for his tea but there
were some Saturdays which were really

special. Mum and I would go to a shop in the Old Kent Rd; to buy fish and chips or having taken a basin with us get some saveloys or faggots and pease pudding for supper. I was always allowed to stay up one hour later on Saturday, my usual bed-time was seven o'clock.

During the '14-'18 war of course food was scarce and expensive, Grandma with whom I lived at this time would buy an egg for my tea sometimes but never one for herself as they cost sixpence each so it was a treat which I didn't appreciate as she would only lightly boil the egg otherwise it would be indigestible so I had fingers of bread dipped into the yolk whilst Grandma ate the white. I don't remember ever having "cow's milk" in my tea except in some other people's houses. We always had tinned milk called 'Goat brand' it was condensed and very sweet.

The milk was delivered in the streets by a man pushing a large hand-barrow with a large milk-churn on it from which he dispensed the required amount into the women's jugs, they would be waiting at their doors having heard the wailing call of "Meeilko". The barrow was hung about with metal measures - a gill, half-pint, pint, etc. Later on a horse drawn cart came which could carry more milk. We only had fresh

milk on Sunday when Mother would need it for her sponge and the custard.

A fishmonger came round every week with all his wet fish displayed on his hand-barrow but there was a fish shop in the Old Kent Rd; Sometimes a special barrow came into our street the man would be calling "Alive alive Ooh and slithering over the trays and into buckets of water hanging on the sides were the 'Eels' I was so thankful that neither Mum or Dad liked these creatures

Fish was very cheap at this time fresh herrings and bloaters a penny each and fried fish and chips a really cheap meal at "fourpenny piece of skate and two pennorth" and that was the top end you could get cod or rock salmon for twopence or threepence.

The Sandford Estate.

In the years before the first World War and public housing schemes, homes for the working class in London were built by urban landowner or large companies. Some were in the form of large blocks of flats as in the case of Guinness Trust Buildings others were small estates of five or six hundred houses.

The Sandford Estate was situated between the Grand Surrey Canal and Old Kent Rd; bound on two other sides ^{by} Canterbury Rd; and woodyards the Millwall football ground was also entered by gates in the south east corner of the estate. Houses were built in six streets arranged grid fashion in this area. ~~Each~~ ^{Every} house consisted of ground and first floor, each floor being identical comprising front room, bedroom, kitchen and scullery; one outside w.c.

Most of these houses were occupied by two families the one living on the ground floor being the tenant and having the extra luxury of a copper being built in to the corner of the scullery, the responsibility of the rent from the "people upstairs" was also theirs. Rent was collected by the agents for the Sandford estates and even now, the name of Mr Statesbury the rent collector sounds ominous. The first rent I remember being quoted was when I was seven or eight and we had the

upstair flat of 56 Upcor St; the tenant was a Mr Precious who with his wife and two children Marie and Freddie occupied the ground floor. The rent for our rooms ^{was} ten shillings a week, all decoration necessary was carried out by the estates agents.

On this relatively small estate there were three grocers shops, one greengrocer, one baker one newspaper/sweet shop, one barber and one public house 'The Sandford Arms'. Life was very quiet and self-contained, street play was safe for the children as delivery vans were hand or horse-drawn the fastest person being the telegraph boy on his bicycle. Even until I left the area in 1930 hardly anyone owned a car though some had rich relations who visited in style.