

THE MEMOIRS

of

ALICE MAUD CHASE

Born 21st June, 1880

Died 5th April, 1968

(The story goes from 1777 to 1960 - from the reign of George III to that of Elizabeth II)

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CHAPTER 1

THE STORY OF THE MOODY FAMILY

The name of the family originally was not Moody, but Maude. It was changed to Moody by my grandfather early in the 19th century. To begin at the very beginning, there lived in Yorkshire in the year 1777 A.D. a gentleman of means, named William Maude, Esq., and his wife, whose name I do not know. He had an estate near the spot which is now largely occupied by Hull Dockyard and his income was near about £15,000 a year. In the year 1777, a son was Christened - William, like his father. Before the boy reached man's age, in fact he was quite a youngster, his parents died and he was left to the care and guardianship of two maiden aunts, both very strict and very religious in a rigid way.

In this dull and forbidding home he lived until he was seventeen years of age, always a secret rebel. Then in that year, 1794, he broke away from all ties and made his way to Portsmouth, hoping to find adventure, and to make a living for himself, away from the preaching and praying and chapel-going life he had lived for so long. I cannot say I blame him, for his life could not have been exactly a whirl of gaiety, and such dissipations as prayer-meetings and Bands of Hope soon pall on a young man.

Why he came to Portsmouth no one will ever know. Except that it was the chief Naval Port, it had no claim to fame or eminence. It was not a lucky choice for him at any rate, for he had scarcely time to admire the ships and the fine harbour, when he was seized by the Press Gang and taken on board ship and made a sailor by force. This was a common practice in those unenlightened days, and was really necessary to keep the Navy manned; for the life of a sailor was so hard, the pay so poor, the food and conditions so filthy, that very few men could be found to volunteer to serve in the Royal Navy. Only the very low, the starving and the desperate would willingly join the service.

Poor young William Maude soon had cause to regret the impulse that led him to run away from a good home with every comfort, to a life of cold, hunger, hardship, stripes and blows and rotten maggoty food - a very different life from the life of a naval rating to-day. Many poor boys lost their lives by falling from the rigging into the stormy sea, while aloft

furling or unfurling the sails. Many were knocked senseless by brutal Officers and fell down holds, and many died from scurvy, a dreadful disease brought on by eating nothing but dried and salted food for months on end and not having any fresh fruit or vegetables. In fact, more men and boys died from scurvy than ever were killed in battles at sea. However, our William escaped and put in his full service, which I believe was 21 years, and qualified for a Petty Officer's pension in his forties. Once, while his ship was in Belfast harbour, he slipped away and returned to Portsmouth on the Irish packet boat.

This boat used to call in at Portsmouth once a week, and I myself have seen it there when I was young and crossed the harbour to Portsmouth every day to my work in a Southsea shop. The boat does not call in there now and has not done so for some years.

William came back to Portsmouth and rejoined the Royal Navy under the name of Moody. I don't know why he did this. If he hated it so much that he risked being hanged for desertion in war time, why did he rejoin? Perhaps it was a very unhappy ship, or had a brutal captain, or he may have got drunk and missed it when it sailed. At any rate, he was not caught, and he re-enlisted under a new name. So William Maude became William Moody and in that name he got married and had nine children - five sons and four daughters. I will make a list of them at the end of this book.

Now as all this was happening 150 years ago and more, I can only tell you what my father told me and it may not all be correct in the details.

My grandfather (the William Moody mentioned above) married a woman whose Christian name was Hannah, but whose surname I do not know. While he sailed the Seven Seas and fought 'Boney' and the French Fleet, she, Hannah, kept a small shop in College Street, Portsea. It was a very small shop with a door cut across the middle, so that the top part could be opened and the bottom part shut, and she could lean on the lower half and look up and down the street. She sold groceries, tea by the ounce, sugar by the half or quarter pound, a large needle with a good long bit of thread already threaded for a farthing, dried salt cod, ship's biscuits, ship's cocoa, and all kinds of odds and ends; one sheet of notepaper and one envelope, and if asked to do so, would write the letter for anyone who could not do it for themselves. She sold pins, cottons, hooks and eyes, and lovely beef dripping which she bought from the big commercial hotels. We often had it for our tea as a change from butter, and loved it.

I was often in that shop visiting my father's sister, called Hannah after her mother. There was in the window a glass shelf with a row of glass jars on it, jars with lids. Only one contained sweets, black minty bullseyes with white lines. The other jars held reels of cotton, knobs of Reckitts Blue, little bundles of hair pins and such like uneatable things. I was not interested. But originally this was Grandmother Moody's shop and it might have been quite a thriving business in its day. There my father was born and grew up with his four brothers and four sisters and he the youngest of all.

Before I begin to talk about my father, I had better finish telling all I know about my grandfather. He duly retired from the Navy and took his pension. He lived on in College Street and grandmother looked after her shop, her husband and her nine children. Grandfather bought a wherry and plied for hire. He took passengers across from Portsmouth to Gosport and vice-versa and he also took the wives of sailormen out to Spit Head to visit their husbands when the Fleet came in and the men could not all get leave. After a time of being a wherryman, grandfather was made a Warden of Portchester Castle and had charge of the French prisoners of war who were confined there. Some of these prisoners were clever at carving and made and sold things to get a little pocket money. I have now a solitaire board and two stoppers for tobacco pipes, made for my grandfather by a French prisoner.

I really do not know which stage in his story came first - whether he was made a Warden before he became a wherryman, or vice-versa. I know the wherry had to wait until it was full enough to pay the oarsman for the long hard pull across the harbour. So the man would wait for passengers and keep shouting, "One more and over", to encourage customers to embark. Afterwards a floating bridge was installed at the narrowest part of the harbour, called "The Point". Also a regular service of steam ferryboats plied from both The Point and Portsea Hard. Now the floating bridge no longer floats, but has been hauled up on the beach for good and all after nearly a hundred years of good service. With the passing of the 'horse' and the coming of the petrol engine, it is both cheaper and quicker to go round the harbour than across it.

To sum up all I know of grandfather William Maude-Moody, he never returned to Yorkshire, never tried to contact his relatives if he had any, and never claimed his inheritance. So, for all we know, his estate and money were claimed by the State and were lost to his family for ever. None of it ever came our way. When he and his wife died, I do not know. The daughter Hannah, whose married name was Mrs. Lawrence, carried on the business until she died at the ripe old age of 92 and after that, her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Harry Lawrence, lived on in the old shop with her daughter, Eva. Finally, Mrs. H. Lawrence died, and Eva went away and got married, and I don't know whom she married or any more about her. The business, such as it was, had been in the same family about a hundred years. It fell into ruin and slumdom and was at last bombed flat by Hitler's bombs in 1941, and no great loss.

So endeth the Saga of College Street. Here beginneth the real story of my father, Reuben Moody, ninth and last child of the said William and his wife, Hannah. My father was born on October 4th, 1827; George IV was still on the throne, to be succeeded in 1830 by William IV, to be succeeded in 1837 by Victoria the Good and Great of Blessed Memory. So you will see that in 1837, father was ten years old. So we will call this the Second Chapter.

CHAPTER 2ENGLAND UNDER VICTORIA

Here are a few facts my father told me about himself as a small boy. He dearly loved his mother, who was terribly proud of him and petted him up a lot. He had lovely curly black hair, dark brown eyes, very expressive, and good regular features, so of course his mother was proud of him. He was still a good-looking man at ninety-three.

As a small boy, he was dressed in the style we now call 'Kate Greenaway' from the children's artist of that name. No doubt you have seen pictures of small boys wearing a tunic with a round collar, long trousers to the ankle, which came up and buttoned over the tunic just below the breast. With these a round tammy hat with a rounded peak in front and buckled shoes. Once, in a fit of pride, his mother bought him a high beaver hat shaped like a Welsh hat for him to wear on Sundays. He hated it and was very glad when some rough Portsea lads took exception to it and knocked it off his head and kicked it all along the Hard until it was in ruins. She never bought him another like it. He told me he once rode a hobby horse, which really was the forerunner of the bicycle. This was a wooden or metal framework supported on two wheels with a handle bar and a saddle, but with no pedals. You sat on the saddle with a foot each side, held onto the handle bar and propelled yourself along with your feet, left foot, right foot, sitting down to walk. I do not know if he owned it or just borrowed it from a friend. He did not say any more than "I used to ride a hobby horse" and then described it. He also told me that he went to school and his schoolmaster was a cruel brute, but he evidently was a good teacher, for my father could always tell me anything I wanted to know when I went to school myself, or he would tell me where to find it in one of the various books of reference that were everywhere about our house. Especially "Magnall's Questions". That book was a mine of information and I wish I had it now. My father left school at eleven years of age.

During my father's schooldays, there was a convict prison in Portsea on the junction of Queen Street and Edinburgh Road. The place is now inside the dockyard, taken in when the dockyard was enlarged. The prison has been gone for years. Near this was a river crossed by an iron bridge with round iron railings. At that time the marsh land at East Southsea was being reclaimed by convict labour and new roads laid out. Gangs of convicts would be marched out between 8 and 9 a.m. to do this work of reclamation and road making, just as my father and his friends were going to school. These boys would save bread and butter from their breakfasts and go along to the iron bridge where the convicts had to cross on their way to work. They would put two slices of bread and butter sandwich fashion and bend them over the round iron railing of the bridge and then watch to see the convicts break into a run to seize the prize as soon as it came in sight. How hungry they must have been, to race for a lump of bread and butter out of a schoolboy's pocket, and consider it a delicacy! Well, it showed the boys had tender hearts, to save some of their own very plain fare for poor felons.

It seems queer to think of a river in Edinburgh Road, but I know it is true, because farther along the same road was another bridge, a rustic one of wood, which crossed the road where now the railway line into the dockyard runs. There, my mother has told me, she and her two sisters roamed in the fields and picked poppies. But that was later. Practically all the parts of Southsea east of Palmerston Road were built on the land reclaimed from the sea by the convicts' labour during my father's and my own lifetime.

CHAPTER 3

THE ISLAND OF PORTSEA

The town of Portsmouth stands at the south western side of Portsea Island. There were several villages and districts on the island, but Portsmouth itself was a fortified town surrounded by ramparts and walls with several big stone gates which were closed at night. Outside the walls were : to the east, Southsea with Southsea Castle built by Henry VIII; to the north, Landport and Portsea. Landport was mainly residential and Portsea the centre for shopping. Beyond Portsea and Landport, dividing the town from the sea, lay the Dockyard, taking in all one side of Portsmouth Harbour. To the east and north of Southsea and the Castle, were a lot of small places divided by marsh and gorse land and small farms. There were various windmills - I can remember two at least - and the sea came in as far as the place now called the Strand. All the land beyond this point is reclaimed from the sea and is nowhere more than nine inches above sea level. So that at high tides and heavy rains, there is still a lot of flooding. There are two main London roads running from the sea on the south, but they both converge where the sea bounds the island on the north.

To get out of the town, everyone must pass over Portsea Bridge at Hillsea. From Hillsea on the north, going south to Southsea, you pass through or pass by the districts of: North End, Stamshaw, Copnor, Milton, Eastney, Mile End, Landport and Southsea. Also Fratton and Kingston. Most of these places in my father's day were just scattered villages, but now*it is so thickly populated that the houses back closely onto one another and house anything up to a quarter of a million people. The town has stretched out to include Leigh Park and Cosham (pronounced Cossam).

Quite a lot of what is now the town of Portsmouth was under water a hundred years ago. For instance, what is now the Officer's Recreation Ground was a large lake, and there was a mill dam close to the Portsmouth Grammar School. A river ran

*Written in 1960.

out to sea near the Clarence Pier and even now you can see traces of it when the weather is wet for any length of time. That part of Southsea Common is often submerged in winter. The Canoe Lake was all part of the sea and has only been separated from it by the building up of the Promenade. It was always called the Minny Pond in the old days and Fratton Road was called Lady Temple's Lane. I do not know why. Where the railway is now, was once a canal and you can still see traces of it near Milton Locks. In fact, the whole of Portsea Island was intersected with waterways. Now, although these have been filled in, reclaimed and built over, the town is as flat as a postage stamp and is frequently flooded in bad weather and at Spring Tides. Now the place is one big town, the streets are rapidly taking over the fields and the green belt, the walls are down, the gates removed, the moats filled in and on the slopes of Portsdown Hill, where sheep grazed when I was young, and where the cornfields were the first to ripen in all England, there are streets of houses, great factories, comprehensive schools and even a crematorium. So you see there is something to suit all tastes.

Those old stone gates of Portsmouth were not destroyed and they stand at the various entrances to the dockyard and to the Services' Recreation Grounds. There is still a Lion Gate, a Unicorn Gate and a Marlborough Gate and some I do not know. Also a small bit of the ramparts, called the "Hot Walls". Why "Hot" nobody knows.* There is also a small bit of the moat left. Of course, the Vandals on the City Council want to push the bit of rampart into the bit of moat, level it all off and build a big hotel on the spot, where it is said that Nelson embarked on his last voyage. The Lord forbid.

I think that is enough about the old town, so let us return to our muttons, as the French say. Goodness knows why.

CHAPTER 4

THE HISTORY OF REUBEN MOODY

We left my father a small boy going to school and helping to feed poor convicts with his own breakfast. When he was nearly ten years old, Queen Victoria came to the throne, on June 21st, 1837. During that summer she had to ride in state through London to open her first parliament. It happened in the school holiday and the Schoolmaster determined to go to see the young new Queen. She was only seventeen. He asked my father if he would like to go with him. Of course he would. What boy of ten would not? He got leave of his parents and money for his keep and they started off to walk the 67 miles

*It has been suggested by the author's daughter that they were called 'Haut' by the French prisoners who built them, simply because they were high, and the locals of those days thought 'haut' was 'hot'.

from Portsmouth to London. There was no railway and the stage coach fare was quite beyond the poor schoolmaster's pocket. So Shanks's pony it had to be, with some lifts in carriers' carts going their way, for which they paid a few coppers. They slept at country inns for a shilling each a night and ate their bread and cheese on the highway. So at last they reached the City of London and prepared to see all that could be seen for nothing. Years after, when my father was 92 years of age, I questioned him about his visit, but he could not remember anything about the journey or the things he saw, until I said to him, "Well, at any rate you saw Queen Victoria when she was very young. What was she like, Papa?" He sat quiet for a moment, looking very thoughtful. Then he said, "She was beautiful. She was the loveliest creature God ever made. Her cheeks were carmine, as if they had been painted, but ^{you} could see it was not paint; her neck and arms were white as the driven snow, her eyes as blue as a summer day, and her hair was parted in the middle and brushed until it shone like a gold satin cap; I shall never forget her." Well, that was my father's impression of Queen Victoria when he was ten and she was seventeen.

Well, he was the only member of our family who ever saw her, for she was practically a female hermit for the last forty years of her life.

Now there are very few things I can tell you about my father's life before my own memories begin, but he told me once that when he was a young man on holiday in London with a brother and a friend, he saw a man hanged. Public executions were still the common practice and his companions persuaded him to go against his will. Again I asked him what it was like, but he shook his head and turned his face away shuddering.

Then he had a good joke about a visit he and his companions paid to France. When they got there they had to go to a bank or exchange and change their English money into French francs. When they got to bed that night (they shared a room), one of the party kept up a fit of giggling and wouldn't let them sleep; so my father said to him, "Shut up giggling, you ass, what on earth are you laughing at?" Whereupon the fellow replied, "Well, wouldn't you laugh? That fool that changed our money gave me twenty-five bob for a quid." He wasn't aware that the franc was only worth 10d. He thought he had made a profit out of someone's ignorance. English people are like that. They never think a foreigner has any sense.

Now, what more do I know of my father's younger days? He told me he left school at eleven years of age. He felt he could learn more away from a cruel brute who caned the boys indiscriminately for his own satisfaction rather than for their own good. He went to work for a lath maker at first and later apprenticed himself to carpentry. I asked him once if he chose his trade because it was Our Lord's trade, and he said, "No, not exactly". He chose it because it was the king of all trades and no one could work at anything without the aid of a

carpenter to begin with. He said workers in iron or stone, from blacksmiths to stonemasons, engineers to sculptors, had to have their patterns worked out in wood first; so the wood-worker was the king-pin, the keystone and the queen bee in all industry.

Of course, he was right. I should never have thought it out for myself. He taught me to think for myself and not keep on asking unnecessary questions. It is a very useful accomplishment to be able to reason things out for oneself and not to depend on other men's judgement all the time. Of course, children have to rely on their elders when they are very young, but the sooner young people learn to think for themselves, the stronger will their reasoning powers grow and so they become independent and reliable citizens. Some people are born unstable and weak-willed, but there is no need for them to remain so. The source of all wisdom is God, and in His Word it is written, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." (James I, 5). These are true words, as I have proved a thousand times.

I was born a naturally silly ass, but I did not stay that way, and I have always been guided away from pitfalls and temptations that lay in wait for the unwary. I had very little of what people call, for want of a better word, "common sense", but I learned very early in life to ask for God's help and guidance whenever I was in any doubt or perplexity and there is no question in my mind but that God did indeed guide me through dangers I never even knew about, brought up as I was in complete ignorance, never even being cursed with the bump of curiosity.

My father, in a quiet way, was deeply religious. He was a Baptist by persuasion, being baptised by immersion at Kent Street Baptist Church at the age of seventeen years, and once he very carefully explained to me the difference between his form of Baptism and that practised on infants in the Church of England. He read his Bible every day and never laid down to sleep at night, or left his room in the morning without kneeling beside his bed to pray. He never talked religion to us or to anyone, but would always answer any of our questions. I admired but did not love him.

At the age of 27, my father married a lady named Eleanor Bewsey. She was a brunette and I should say she was a very handsome woman. Black hair, black eyes, creamy skin. I believe they were very happy together, although they had many troubles. They were evidently rather slapdash and would rather play than work. They had thirteen children in fifteen years, but the first was stillborn and five of the others died in infancy. Then poor Eleanor died herself of an abscess in the lung. She was only 35 when she died and she left seven children, the eldest a girl of 14 and the youngest a boy of 3 months. Poor creatures.

My poor father just did not know how to cope, but he did his best for three and a half years before taking a second wife. His friends and relations hoped he would marry a capable woman in her thirties and some folks invited him to their houses to meet such good ladies, who would no doubt have been very willing to take him and his flock of children to their hearts. But that was not my father's way. Marriage without love was unthinkable and he waited until he fell in love before venturing again upon the stormy sea of matrimony.

Now in the year that he married Eleanor Bewsey, 1854,* there was born in Nelson Square, Landport, a baby girl to Francis and Anne Gamblin. She was as fair as the beautiful Eleanor was dark. Blue-eyed, golden-haired and a skin like a wild rose petal. All the while my father was being tossed about with the cares of fatherhood, and losing children and losing his wife, this fair creature was growing up to be a very lovely girl, and incidentally, having a jolly good time with boyfriends galore, who all wanted to marry her, but she would have none of them. Then, when she was nineteen and a half years old, these two met at a Christmas party and fell in love with a crash that could be heard from Lands End to John-o'-Groats. It was no ordinary love story. It was unique. They had neither eyes nor ears for anyone else from that time forward. They met at Christmas, were engaged on her twentieth birthday in June, and married on October 4th, which was my father's 47th birthday. Everyone thought he was an old fool, and that she would never be able to manage those seven stepchildren; even her own parents were afraid for her happiness and peace of mind, but she was determined to make a go of it and she did by the power of "love, which is stronger than death". (Song of Solomon 8, 6).

Before starting a new chapter on the life and times of my father and mother, here are a few hard facts about the life of those times.

People talk of the hungry forties and that describes them accurately. There was the Potato Famine, when hundreds of poor Irish people starved to death. Bread was dear and wages low. Labouring men worked long hours for ten shillings to fifteen shillings a week. Women toiled at wash tubs or in the fields and little children of five or six years of age worked in mines and factories to get food enough to keep body and soul together. My father could remember those years and would tell me of the potato famine which made things so much worse. You could not get a potato even in a good hotel. Chefs cut cabbage stumps and turnips into rounds and ovals to look like potatoes, to deceive customers. Of course, factory and mine owners amassed great fortunes and nobody thought any the worse of them. This is a black spot in English history and God raised up great reformers like Lord Shaftesbury and John Pounds to set the pendulum swinging the other way. Now the boot is on the other food and it is the working man who kicks the rest of the world about. The world will eventually right itself and get onto an

*Priscilla Gamblin was indeed born in 1854, but Reuben Moody's marriage to Eleanor Bewsey was in fact one year later, in 1855.

even keel again, but I shall not live to see it. I have seen much. I have heard my mother say when eating her Christmas dinner of roast fowl or turkey: "Oh, how I wish my poor mother had tasted a roast fowl, but she never did in all her life." She lived on bread and cheese and beer, or bread and soused sprats, and had a cup of tea with a farthing's worth of milk on Sunday. There was always roast pork too on Sunday, because pork was cheap. But soused sprats on a thick slice of bread was the usual midday meal. That is sprats cooked in a big crock with vinegar, salt and pepper. Sprats were so cheap they were sold by the gallon, not as now by the pound. They were about 6d a gallon, and two gallons would last a week for a family.

My grandmother Gamblin made her own bread twice a week. The sprats were brought into the fish market on a place near Portsmouth Point and hawked round the town on barrows. A large earthenware crock, such as people made bread in, or did washing in, was nearly filled with sprats. They were sprinkled with salt and pepper, a few bay leaves and a few spices added, and the crock stood on the hob of the kitchen fire. Oh, I nearly forgot the vinegar and a little water, of course. (All vinegar would have been too sour.) They were cooked slowly and then the crock removed and put down in a corner to cool and covered over with a lid or a towel. When cold, it made a solid jelly and could be dug out in lumps with a large wooden spoon. Each member of the family had two thick slices of bread given them, one of them acted as a plate, and had a spoonful of solid sprats in jelly dumped on it, and you ate one slice, picking small pinches of sprats off your plate, and then finally ate the plate. Sprats cooked like this are very delicious and also very rich in oils and vitamins. I have a small book on food values and calories and it tells me that a quarter of a pound of sprats is equal to 500 calories of heat. No wonder my mother was so healthy.

On Sundays the dinner was always the same. A large piece of pork, cooked over a parting dish, that is a dish divided across the middle, made of earthenware. One end of the dish contained potatoes, sage and onions, and the other end apple dumplings. One for each member of the family. As the family numbered seven, this was SOME dish! It was always taken to the Bakehouse in Russell Street. My mother never made apple sauce for us - she thought it unnatural - yet she thought apple dumplings quite the proper thing when she was a girl. We always had a plain baked suet pudding in our parting dish - no apples. However, we lived a little better than Grandmother Gamblin. We had tea with milk and sugar every day, not only on Sundays, and bread and butter - three slices each girl and four each for the boys. No cake or jam - only at Christmas. A half a pound of treacle (1d) sometimes for a change, or dripping from Aunt Hannah's shop or from the Sunday joint.

What a lot I have written about food! That was speaking about the Hungry Forties. Believe me, the Fifties, Sixties and Seventies were hungry too. I know.

CHAPTER 5

Now I must go back and take up my tale about my father and his life with his second wife, Priscilla Gamblin, my own mother. At twenty years of age, she took up the burden of a man nearly - no not quite - old enough to be her father*, his neglected and dirty home and his seven neglected and dirty children**. The older ones were resentful to begin with, but when they saw how she worked to bring order and cleanliness to an untidy and unruly existence, how she worked to make over a lot of her own nice clothes to clothe them, mended stockings, cleaned out cupboards, patched sheets, did long lines of washing, and every day got them hot and nourishing food - then gratitude and relief and a feeling of self-respect drove out all resentment and before long they all loved her as much, if not more, than their father. Of course, my mother very quickly started a family of her own - five little girls all in a row. I was the fifth little girl (born in 1880) and Ruby the fourth (born in 1879). She was 14 months older than I and we grew up together very happily. Unhappily for my poor young mother, her first three baby girls died as babies and nearly broke her heart. Also, three of her seven stepchildren died all within a few months. You see, they inherited their mother's lung disease, tuberculosis, called then consumption. It was a germ taken from those older children that killed my mother's healthy babies.

By the time Ruby and I were born, those affected (or should I say 'infected') had died (three of them), Eleanor had married, and only three of the original seven were left in the home.*** So we two small girls escaped our sisters' doom and grew up into rather lively children.

Now people tell me that no one could possibly remember being sixteen months old, but I do, and I know I do. When I was sixteen months old, diphtheria broke out in the family. The older children - the stepchildren - had it. Ruby was then 2½ years old and remembers better than I do. My mother, anxious that we two babies should not catch it, sent us with our older sister Lily to our grandmother's house in Nelson Square. Lily was then 15½ years old and she took us in an old single perambulator with thick wooden wheels; I on the seat with my little legs stuck straight out, Ruby sitting on the foot, and our bundle of clothes in between, and Lily pushing.

I can remember the journey, about 20 minutes' walk, the clothes I wore, a fawn cloth pelisse and bonnet of the same cloth, with a pleated frill of pale blue silk inside round my face. I can remember the noise that old wooden-wheeled

*He was 27 years older than her - so he was old enough to be her father!

**Eleanor (17), Amy (11), Lily (9), Harry Augustus (3), and three others who died soon after.

***i.e. Amy (now 17), Lily (now 15) and Harry Augustus (now 9).

contraption made, rattling over the rough stone pavement, like a porter's barrow in a railway station, enough to wake the seven sleepers. Also I remember my granny (Gamblin) taking me down the garden to a little rustic arbour with a wooden bench where she sat and held me on her lap. I can remember the white rose tree, the grape-vine, and going to bed with Lily on a mattress spread on the floor and waking up in the night and crying for my mother. I can remember being given a doll to comfort me and seeing a furry caterpillar from the garden on the doll's dress.

There my memories come to an end. I do not remember how long we were there, or going home, or any more about it. It was just the change, and being taken from my mother that made such a deep impression on my baby mind that I recall it all to this day. Especially do I remember that tortoiseshell caterpillar. It was years before I saw another - for we lived in a town - and I was a girl in my teens before I saw one and recognised it at once as the furry creature I had seen at grandma's, when I was a baby. The white rose tree too left a memory behind. You never see a real old-fashioned tree now, bearing sweet-scented white roses. They are all bushes, or standards, or ramblers, and very few of them scented.

I think here I should describe that old house where my mother and her two brothers and two sisters were born. (Francis, William, Ann and Thirza). It was an old house then and my mother was born in 1854, so that she would now - in 1960 - have been 106 years of age. She was the fourth in a family of five. The eldest son, Francis (born 1839), was a cripple with a diseased hip. He was never able to go out to work, but he learned shoemaking and mending and took in work at home. He died in his early twenties, when my mother was eight years of age. The second son, William, married twice. He had ten children, who all but one contracted consumption and died at about twenty-one. His was a very sad life. He had a trade, a coach-builder, but he could never keep a job and his two wives both had to work to keep him and all the children. They were all miserably poor and my mother was forever helping them with money she could ill afford. Ann, the eldest girl, married a farm worker from Southwick (pronounced Suthick). They had ten children (four boys, six girls) and that drunken brute never gave her a week's money in twenty-five years, and then she left him, and her four sons made a home for her. She worked at her sewing machine all those years and kept them, and in return they all stayed single and kept her.

Her daughters were not so generous. She had a happy nature, could always get some fun and enjoyment out of life and she was a fighter. She saw what she wanted and she went for it tooth and nail. She was not one of the "wise and prudent".

Then came Priscilla (my mother), and I have told you before what she attempted and accomplished when no more than a girl. She also had nine children and she also was a fighter, but she had both wisdom and prudence, and having put her hand to the plough she never looked back.

That was the family* - now for the house. Nelson Square was a narrow street off Park Road and if you stood on the south side of Portsmouth Guildhall with your back to the south entrance, you could look straight down the street and see the house on the left hand side. It had three floors and a basement, but nowhere was it more than two rooms deep. Arranged so : front basement kitchen, back basement kitchen; front room, back room; front bedroom, back bedroom; front garret, back garret. The front door was up three steps, a passage straight through to a back door, down three steps into a garden. On the right of the front door : front room door, next - stair to upper part, next - stair to basement, then back room door. Down the basement stairs into front kitchen, where everyone lived and moved and had their being. Left of the basement stair, back kitchen where the washing was done in an enormous stone sink and where the tap was. Three brick steps up into the garden, alongside of the three brick steps from the passage down into the garden.

The front room was sacred, the back room unused. The front bedroom was the parents' bedroom, and all the family slept in the two garrets - boys in one, girls in the other. I think the two unused rooms had once held lodgers. In fact, I know that at one time a certain elderly lady named Miss Clayton lived with my grandmother. She was the aunt of a Revd. Clayton, who was vicar of St. James's, Milton. (This was the Clayton family of Toc H fame.) The family of Clayton lived at Priory Park, Milton, and when the nephew, the Rev, wanted to get married, he did not like the idea of his bride having to look after his aged maiden aunt whose mind was failing, and he sought out my grandmother and asked her if she would receive her into her home and take care of her for as long as she lived. Grandma, who had been her personal maid, agreed to do this, and Miss Clayton came as a boarder to Nelson Square and brought with her the furniture of her room. She left the furniture to grandma. It was not much, nor of any value. I had her round table, but now it is in the possession of an old lady in the Thorngate Almshouses. I gave it to her as it cluttered up my house.

Then there was an old Mrs. Beames and all she left was a large Bible weighing about half a hundredweight and which has the nine books of the Apocrypha in between the Old and New Testaments. I have that too and have read some of the books, but find it difficult because of the long s's like f's. Also because the whole thing is so darned heavy.

Now you know all about my mother's family, as well as my father's, so I had better get on with the true story of an insignificant nobody. I take up my thread again somewhere between 1880 and 1885. During those years I can remember very little. My grandmother Gamblin and Aunt Thirza Gamblin died.

*There was one more - the youngest, Thirza. (Mentioned later on).

I forgot to mention Aunt Thirza. She was the youngest of the Gamblin family (born 1857) and got consumption through nursing poor Uncle Bill's dying children. Consumption was the scourge of the age, and two out of every ten people you met in the street had it and would soon die of it.

Of these early years I can remember there was a big yard to play in. A big timber stack, empty of timber, but with two swings hanging from the cross beams, one each for Ruby and me. There we would sit and swing for hours. There was a fowl house and chicken run, all along one wall, so we had eggs sometimes. There was an elderberry tree covered with lovely scented flowers in the spring. There were rows and rows of tall sunflowers as big over as dinner plates, and I used to pick out the ripe sunflower seeds and eat them with relish. Parrots' food. There was plenty of grass to tumble about on and a sawing horse with a long plank which made us a good see-saw. There was a tabby cat which followed us about, crying for some of our lunch, milk sop or a ha'penny bun each, when times were good. We used to give her plenty of bits. We were not greedy and we loved our puss.

It was not a bad life, taking it all round. One thing spoiled a lot of our fun was the fact that Ruby suffered from tuberculosis of the eyes, and when the winter set in, her poor eyes were often so inflamed that she could not see at all for months on end. She had to wear a green shade and to be led about by the hand. One Sunday evening when Papa was at Chapel, Mama told us the story of Jesus healing the blind man by putting mud on his eyes and then telling him to "go wash in the pool of Siloam" (St. John's Gospel, 9, 5-7). It was a wet night and our yard was a heap of mud and I stood on a chair and looked out and oh, how I wished I could go out and get some mud and put it on Ruby's eyes and make them well. But alas, I was in my nightie, bare-footed, could not reach the latch of the back door, and would not have been allowed out in that weather anyway, and so a grand opportunity was lost for ever. My longing was so great and my faith so strong and simple, that even now I feel I could have healed her of her partial blindness. As she grew up and got stronger, her eyes grew much better, but they have always been scarred by tubercular ulcers and her sight is not good. During the summer and in mild weather, she could run about and play as well as anyone. It was in cold east winds that they were so bad.

Now came the time when we were old enough to go to school and Mama took us to see some ladies who kept a little school in Castle Road near our house. I was five and Ruby six (1885), but she had not been able to go to school on account of her bad eyes. So we started school together, and lo, I was told off for being naughty on my very first morning. We were all sat around a deal table and given a slate to write on. Then we were all given a thick stick of slate pencil. Then we were all shown how to make pothooks, etc. and so forth. Then my troubles began. A fat-faced kid on my left, with a mop of

fuzzy black hair, held out her stick of pencil to me and said, "You couldn't break that." I took it from her and promptly showed her that I could. She burst into a howl to the teacher, "She broke my pencil. She broke my pencil." Teacher called me to her and asked, "Why did you do that?" and I replied, "Because she said I couldn't." The teacher's lips quivered and she said, "That was very naughty and you must not do it again." So I promised not to do it again and was let off after standing in the corner for five minutes. I didn't mind. I had that kid where I wanted her. Neither she nor anyone else tried to lead me into temptation after that.

We started school in September, 1885, and spent a very happy six or seven weeks. Then most unfortunately we both contracted whooping cough, and did we have it badly! Oh boy, I'll say we did. Ruby was not as ill as I was. She never had to keep to her bed, but was kept in one room for about a month. I, on the other hand, got bronchitis, congestion of the lungs, congestion of the brain, and lay in a semi-conscious state for nearly three months. Bleeding from the nose and throat every time I had a spasm, quite unable to keep down any kind of food, it is a wonder I ever came out of that dreadful illness. However, by the mercy of God and in answer to my mother's prayers, I survived and was carried downstairs for half an hour on Christmas Day and carried back to bed exhausted at the end of the half hour. The occasion was a great treat. Our brother Harry, then 14 years of age, had bought, or had given him, a magic lantern. It was only a tiny affair, lighted up by a candle inside, and the pictures shown on a sheet pinned to the wall. I can't remember what the pictures were, but they made pictures on the wall about as big as dinner plates. I lay in my mother's arms and watched the pictures and then someone dropped some heavy article on the floor and made me jump, and a spasm of coughing resulted and I was carried back to bed choking and gasping for breath. I can remember it clearly.

After Christmas I began to recover a little, but it was March before I left that room again. During that time I really learned to appreciate my father. He would come home from work and come straight up to me as soon as he had had his tea and keep me amused until I was tired enough to sleep for the night. Of course, Ruby was with me all day and kept me happy, reading to me from a Nursery Rhyme book. Yes, we could both read at five and a half and six years and eight months. It didn't take us long to master that art. Papa taught me to play draughts, and various card games: Old Maid, and Beggar my Neighbour, and Speculation - a complicated game for a five-year-old. Also I had the solitaire board and spent hours trying to work out how to get all the marbles out and leave one in the middle. I never did, neither did I ever see my father accomplish that feat.

Then he would draw pictures on my slate and make up stories and songs about them. He would take off his gold Albert and wind it round my wrist for a bracelet and put his signet ring on my thumb. I loved to be dressed up this way and I loved our games of cards. Of course, Ruby joined in all this and

when we were on our own, we would play endless games of Beggar my Neighbour. We called it 'Beat Jack out of door' and I have played it with Rosemary and Robin many a time.* That winter seemed endless to me lying in my mother's room with a fire day and night, but it would have been far worse without Ruby. We never quarrelled all that time. I was too weak and ill and she was very kind and patient for a six-year-old.

One day early in March, 1886, we had recovered from our long illness, but had not yet been out. I saw my mother looking at us and at the clock and suddenly she made up her mind and went into action. She dressed us both in our warm reefer jackets, our sailor tammies and thick white woollen scarves. Took off her big white apron and put on her bonnet and mantle. Then she went to the cupboard, like old Mother Hubbard, and brought from thence a little flask containing about a tablespoonful of brown liquid. Then she put some milk into a pipkin and warmed it with a teaspoonful of brown sugar and put about half of this mysterious brown liquid into the milk and gave us each an eggcupful to drink. It was delicious. Then taking a hand of each, she hurried us along Castle Road to Southsea Common, to the middle of Gordon Road which runs through the middle of the Common. There we stood with a thin line of sightseers, mostly women, as it was a weekday. Then she told us that Queen Victoria's oldest daughter, the Empress Frederick of Germany, was coming along in a carriage to open a house in old Portsmouth called the "Soldiers' Institute" and we were to look at the one on the far side of the carriage, as she would be our Queen's daughter. The carriage came slowly by and the two elderly ladies in it, one in grey and one in black. We looked at them dutifully and were not impressed. Neither of them was half as good-looking as our mother. There was a feeble cheer and a few handkerchiefs waved. Then they were gone and we turned for home. We could not get there quick enough. We knew that the little bottle, the pipkin and the two egg cups were still standing on the kitchen table and we should be given another taste of Heaven. Sure enough, we were. The warm milk, the brown sugar and the lovely brown medicine was repeated, the mixture as before. Then Mama said, "That was rum." I have never tasted it since. Never even seen it since, only in shop windows - but when we meet, Ruby and I, we often speak of it.

We quickly forgot the Empress Frederick, but we never forgot the rum. It kept us from catching a cold, for it was a bitter day.

Before I leave this part of my story, I must make a reference to the General Election that took place that winter of '85/'86. It was not possible to hold an election on one day only, because of the vote, which some people had in various parts of the country. Instead of "one man, one vote", as it is now, there were quite a lot of rich men who had a vote for

*Her two eldest grandchildren.

every house they owned. Wherever a rich merchant had a factory, or a gentleman a country house, there they could have a vote. Some men had half a dozen. Of course, it was very unfair, but no one seemed to care about the unfairness of anything.

These multiple voters had to travel from town to town recording their votes and so the election took a long time and sometimes it was weeks before the final result was known. Each day's results and the state of the parties were published in the papers. Some days one party was leading and some days another. Our 14-year-old brother was deeply interested in the election and every day after school, he would rush home and upstairs to our sick room and tell us how the parties stood. He would shout, "Tories in to-day!" or "Liberals!", as the case might be. Our brother's name was Harry, not Henry and Harry for short; but "Harry Augustus", and we were very fond of him and he was very kind to us. He never teased us or hurt us, and we liked him to comb our hair, because he had gentle hands and did not pull, as I am afraid our sister Lily did. All this by the way. The election, when the final state of the Poll was declared, went our way. We were Liberals and we were all very glad when Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister.

What he said in 1886, I have never been able to find out, but perhaps Mummy* might tell you what President Lincoln said in 1863.

For more than a year we had no serious illness and life went on in an easy way. Our father had given up trying to be a builder, as he had no capital, and accepted an offer from his rich brother, Henry, to come and take charge of his timber yard in place of brother John who wished to retire. Papa accepted the offer and my mother found herself much better off with a certain income from Jobbing. She still kept up her tailoring and steadily put her earnings in the Post Office Savings Bank for a rainy day. It came.

On my sixth birthday I remember my Grandpa Gamblin came to dinner and had a very happy day with us. He did not play with us or pet us, but he always gave us a ha'penny each. He sat by the fire; it was June 21st, but we always had a fire all the summer, as it was our only way of cooking. We had a boiled hock of bacon, cabbage and potatoes and a roly-poly pudding all boiled together in a big fish-kettle, the pudding in its cloth and the vegetables in nets. Afterwards there was a gooseberry pie, because it was my birthday.

We went to bed early and my mother took her father home. It was his last time out. He had very bad asthma and eight months later he died. He was a very good, wise man. He was also a very big man - six foot two inches in his socks and seventeen stone in weight.

*These memoirs were written for one of her grand-daughters. 'Mummy' refers to Alice's youngest daughter, Chrissie, who is the mother of this particular grand-daughter.

Ruby at this time had gone back to school and was getting on fine and was a wise and prudent girl. Her eyes too were very much improved and only gave her trouble in the winter. She always had to wear protective goggles.

CHAPTER 6

QUEEN VICTORIA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

Now 1887 was a very important year. Our Queen celebrated her 50th anniversary and nobody talked of anything else but the Jubilee. It fell upon my seventh birthday and I remember all about it.

Of course, I had to start off with another serious illness. This time it was measles with bronchitis and congestion of the brain. The mixture as before. I don't remember anything about it, being unconscious for most of the time. I was up again and about in time to go and see the decorations for this wonderful time. I could not walk far, but was able to see some of it. So many things happened that summer that I shall have to make a long chapter of it. Before the Great Day arrived, my father had made up his mind to make use of his large timber yard to build a pair of shops. He had saved a little money, and my very very thrifty and industrious mother likewise had saved money from her tailoring work, and between them they amassed over £200, and by raising a mortgage on the house we lived in, they raised another £200.

They went to Winchester and arranged everything with a firm of solicitors and Papa began to build on what had been our playground for so long. I don't remember when the houses were finished, but I think it was in the spring of 1888.

But back to Jubilee Year. The comic song of the day was one with a chorus which ran, "My wife she's gone mad about the Jubilee. Oh the Jubilee, Oh the Jubilee!" The boys roared it in the streets, and Ruby and I roared with the best and enjoyed ourselves hugely. On the day - June 21st - I was seven and my mother gave me a Bible. My very own. It had gilt edges, morocco covers and a reference. Mama made me find the chapter in Leviticus (Leviticus 25, 10) where it is written: "and the fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee". My father showed me how to use the marginal reference, and everything was done to give me a taste and a love for the Holy Word of God, the Christian's guide from this world to the next. The best of all Books.

Now the importance of the Jubilee Year had tempted my father's brother, the one next above him in age, to come to England to see the fun. He and his wife had emigrated to Canada some years before and raised a family. They lived in Toronto and I believe helped to build the city. They did not stay with us, but took a lodging in Landport. They were

Uncle Isaac and Aunt Jane to us, and a more unhappy, ill-matched, bad-tempered, and thoroughly unlikeable pair, I never saw nor wish to see. She was a whining, fault-finding, discontented old hag, with a voice like a sick cat, also a thorough-going liar, whose word could never be trusted at any time. He was a blustering, boasting, insolent, foul-mouthed bully, whose only pleasure was to call her foul names and shout her down on every possible occasion.

They would come to our nice quiet home, sit all the afternoon in the easiest chairs, and expect my overworked mother to cook meals for them and wait on them, while they quarrelled and abused one another. This admirable couple stayed in England about six months and then departed for Toronto, taking their undoubted talents and doubtful patronage to the Western World; and we breathed again and offered up our most humble and hearty thanks for this deliverance. No one was pleased to see them come and no one wept to see them go. What an existence.

A much more welcome visitor was our cousin, Lily Daniels, my Aunt Annie's eldest daughter. She was twelve, to Ruby's eight and my seven, and a fine jolly girl, pretty to look at, and full of life and spirits. She spent the whole school holiday with us - six weeks - and taught us so much mischief, it is a wonder we did not all get ourselves hung. In between the bouts of mischief, she taught us quite a number of hymns and texts, because she was at heart a very religious girl. We were very fond of her and I still am so, as she is still living in Southsea, aged eighty-five. Her cheeks are as pink, her bright blue eyes as full of fun and she is as attractive as ever. She married a naval man and had two daughters. The daughters each married and had one son, and now the two grandsons are married and each have a son. They are all a loving and united family and have never been in any way disloyal or unfaithful. The fun and frolic we three girls had in that Jubilee Year remains in my memory like a bright spot of sunshine.

It was a glorious summer. Queen Victoria always had glorious weather for all her important events. It passed into popular expression. Everyone called fine weather "Queen's weather".

Well, to complete the picture of that unforgettable day, June 21st, 1887, and its doings. Aunt Jane and Uncle Ike came to our house early and Papa took us girls and we went out to see the decorations. I can just remember a lot of flagstuffs with long lines of flags large and small, and a lot of flowers and streamers all along the roads. We walked a long way and I got very tired. At last we got home and had our dinner, and Mama made me lie on the front room sofa to rest. Then, soon after 3 p.m., we went to the end of our road, where was the main gate to Southsea Common.

The arrangement for the Sunday School children was for them all to assemble at Stamshaw Recreation Ground and march with banners and bands to Southsea Common, where they would be

given tea, have sports and games, and receive medals as souvenirs of the occasion. Now those two points are about three miles apart and that was quite a good walk, even for those who lived near the first place, the assembly point. Those who lived furthest away had to get there first, before the march started, and so did most of that journey twice. We went out to see them go by and presently we heard the band in the distance and in a minute that host of children came in sight. Five or six thousand of them. Oh, what a pitiful sight. It was a broiling day and those poor kids were smothered in dust, drenched in sweat and tears, hardly able to put one foot before the other. Brave big brothers and sisters carried little ones. Every teacher carried one or helped two or three. One brave man had a child on each arm and another on his back. Indignant mothers rushed into the lines and dragged their crying children out and took them home. Such a fiasco was never seen before. If the parents had known who was responsible for the arrangements, I believe they would have lynched him.

We watched them go by and then went home to tea, sick at heart and sorry. After another rest on the sofa, we were taken to see the fireworks. It was so close to our home, we had only about three hundred yards to walk to the Common. Then home to bed.

So ended the great and glorious Jubilee of Queen Victoria. My last thought was, "The Jubilee is over, but I have still got my Bible" - and that reminds me of one Christmas night, when we were small and were put to bed. We hated to go to bed on Christmas night, to know it was over, and we had to wait a whole year to the next one. I said dolefully to Ruby, "Oh dear, Christmas is gone", and she said cheerfully, "Yes, but the puddings aren't!" She loved Christmas pudding more than anything in the world, and while there was one left in the pantry, life was still worth living for her.

Well, the happy summer of 1887 passed and Lily Daniels went back to her home in Waterlooville. The building of the two shops on what was our playground, and my father's timber yard, proceeded apace. Ruby went back to school and I stayed at home and ran errands and helped my sister Lily do odd jobs about the house. I filled coal buckets and collected wood and shavings for the fire and read all I could lay my hands on. My brother Harry took in the "Bonny Boys of Britain". I read those, also "The Family Herald", "Reynold's" newspapers, and even "The Review of Reviews" - surely the driest of all dry reading. Anything and everything that came my way, especially murder trials. The trial of Florence Maybrick and of Mrs. Percy I followed with deepest interest. If my mother had only known what I had read, marked, learned and inwardly digested, there might have been another murder in the papers.

Of course, I read and revelled in fairy tales, especially "Alice in Wonderland". I read and enjoy that now. It is a classic. Of course, Ruby had school textbooks which she brought home, and I learned all those by heart, so that, except

for arithmetic and writing, I was as advanced in general knowledge as she was. I had "The Child's Guide to Knowledge", "Bible and Gospel History", "Line upon Line" (1st and 2nd volumes), "Magnall's Questions" and "British Manufactures" and "Little Arthur's History of England". All good solid facts, and I had them all off by heart and could have taken an oral examination with ease, but I could not have written it down.

Of course, it was not always summer, and for our entertainment and amusement in winter we had a dolls' house. It was a simple affair, made of an oblong box divided across the middle into two rooms and set up on end. The hinged lid had four windows - real glass, with lace curtains and a false door painted on it. Oh, that little dolls' house! - how we loved it. It had a small suite of four chairs and a sofa, covered in chintz with a pattern of small pink rosebuds. A little fireplace with red tinsel in the grate to look like fire, and a wool rug in front of the fire, a round marble-topped table in the middle of the room, and a clock in one corner. The clock was of bright shiny tin, ornamented with flowers and on the top a bird. You could wind it up and it went like a policeman's rattle for about three minutes and every time the large hand reached the '12', the bird on top flapped its wings and gave a sound like 'chuck'. It was a peach of a clock and we were very proud of it and wound it up once each time we played with the house.

The upper room held a chest of drawers, a dressing table, a chair and the BED. The bed was a masterpiece of ingenuity. Mama made it out of a fig box. She nailed the two pieces of wood, which had formed the lid of the box, onto the box to form the head and foot. The box was padded and covered with white calico, the head and foot disguised with frills of chintz; a half of a round collar box covered in chintz with curtains hanging on each side was fastened to the bed-head to make a hood and the counterpane of chintz had a strip of white sewn across the top to look like a top sheet turned back. A pillow, of course, with lace ends right across the bed. We each had five small dolls - none of them more than three inches long. In fact, four of them were pudding dolls, like you put into the Christmas pud, and cost a farthing each.

Then we had little Flo, a doll with china head, arms and legs, and sawdust body, and the biggest were two all-china dolls, with real curly wigs. The last two were not real dolls, but were small china ornaments, Benny and Bertha. Benny was a sailor-boy meant to squat on a mantelpiece, but instead he squatted on a dolls' house chair. Bertha was an invalid lying on a green couch. She couldn't fall off because she was glued on, leaning on one elbow and surveying the world. The couch had a hole just below the head with a thimble in it and the whole thing was a "present from somewhere". The couch was too good to be wasted and made a nice piece of furniture. Benny was too small for a mantelpiece and just fitted on a dolls' chair, so he and Bertha sat side by side and kept each other company, while the rest of the dolls were all crammed head to foot in the marvellous four-poster.

Every night we did this and covered Benny and Bertha up with bits of silk to keep them warm. Of course, there was no staircase and our family had to make their way to bed by walking up the side of the house. They did this with considerable agility when you remember that only two - the little Flo's - could move their legs; the rest were rigid.

How we loved that little house and lived in it in a way. We spring-cleaned it and the dolls, when it got dirty. Washed the little china faces and arms and put them all in new clothes. And thereby hangs a tale.

We both had work-boxes and could sew. One evening, being very anxious to get all the family sewn up for the winter, we were hurrying to get done before our bed time. I said to Ruby, "Make haste - don't put such small stitches in - anything is good enough for dolls." Papa was sitting by reading his paper. He lowered it and said to me, "What did I hear you say?" I replied sheepishly, "Anything is good enough for dolls." He said, "Only the very best you can do is good enough for anything. Anything worth doing at all is worth doing well. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'. You will find that in the Bible." (It is Ecclesiastes 9,10.) I felt very guilty and looked it. Ruby said nothing, but looked very smug. Here endeth the lesson. 'In quires and places, etc.'

I may say of that dolls' house that we never asked anyone to share it with us. It was ours. We played all sorts of games - whip top, marbles, hoops and swings, shuttle-cock, tip-cat, tag, skipping rope, and higher and higher, with all the other children round about and enjoyed ourselves hugely, but indoors we two kept our dolls' house private. We never quarrelled while we played with it, but made up all kinds of stories about it and forgot the world outside.

Now I must hurry over the next two years and only give the chief events in each.

In 1888, the two houses next door were finished and occupied. The one close to ours was taken by a dairy man from Dulwich. Dulwich was a country village at that time. Now it is a part of Greater London with huge stores, wide streets and a constant stream of traffic. Lorries, buses and cars by the thousand. These people had had a dairy farm and a family of three girls and one boy. The boy died and the father was so grief-stricken that he took to drink, neglected his business and went bankrupt. Then his wife and her relations rallied round and got him over the worst of his troubles and persuaded him to sign the pledge and turn over a new leaf. They were all in the dairy business and they came to Southsea, saw our new shops to let in a busy main thoroughfare and came to see my father and mother.

They both took to my parents and my parents took to them. They confided to them all their circumstances and begged to be allowed to take the house and shop almost without references or down payments, and Papa said yes, he'd risk it. So we lost our garden and gained in return good neighbours and two nice, kind, well-behaved girl-friends, who never quarrelled or used rough words and never got into mischief. The people's name was Dumbrill, the girls were Florrie and Louie - about mine and Ruby's ages. We kept friends with them for about twelve years and then we moved away from the town.

That Mr. John Dumbrill was so prosperous that in a year or two he had built up a connection, taken a partner, had two or three men working for him, and in less than ten years, had acquired the Southsea Dairy Company and the Bedhampton Dairy Company, and made one big firm of it, with shops all over South Hants. He put his daughters into businesses and bought them houses in the country and died a rich and well-respected man. My parents were not often wrong in their estimates.

In this same year, 1888, my stepsister Lily got engaged to a very good young man named Robert Clark. He was a printer and worked for the firm of Stride in Southsea. Early in January, 1889, they were married. On a Sunday morning, just after 9 a.m. Bob Clark could not afford to lose a day's pay to get married, so it had to be on a Sunday. At the Bible-Christian-Methodist Church in Brougham Road. Ruby and I went to the wedding and Amy was bridesmaid. Amy was older than Lily. Lily was twenty-two at the time and Amy was twenty-five. I was eight and a half and Ruby nine years and eight months. After the wedding, we went to our own Sunday School - Elm Grove Baptist - and then home to our Sunday dinner of roast stuffed veal and bacon.

Bob Clark's old widowed mother came for the day and had the time of her life. She was poor and old and took in washing for a living. It was a rare treat for her to sit by someone else's fire and eat a dinner someone else had cooked. She said she felt like a queen.

It is a merciful Providence that we cannot see into the future. Happiness is so short-lived.

I must mention here our Sunday School. After the fiasco of the Jubilee procession, my mother decided that we must join a Sunday School, so we joined Elm Grove Baptist, which was only five minutes' walk from our home, and there we spent twelve happy and contented years in an atmosphere of love, peace and joy. With teachers of good education and children like ourselves. Well-behaved without being smug, and lively without being unruly. Lovely, lovely Elm Grove Sunday School. Every hour I spent in its walls was a foretaste of Heaven for me.

CHAPTER 71889

Now we have reached a new chapter of my life. Lily married in January, and we two girls were left with our mother. Ruby at school, Harry and Amy at work all day, and Papa at work on and off. He spent a lot of time lying on a bed-chair. He had a slight accident and played up on it, as all men do.

One Sunday afternoon in May, we arrived home from Sunday School to find our mother in bed with a new baby, a boy, after five girls and nearly nine years. Amy met us and told us in a hushed voice and we were allowed to go upstairs and see it. I should have said HIM. Also to see Mama, who looked very pleased with herself. He was duly named Reuben John, but has never been called anything but Jack all his life. We were very happy to have a baby brother and spent a few quiet weeks, from May 19th to June 28th, when Ruby and I went down with scarlet fever. We were very ill indeed and I can only remember the latter part, the isolation in one room and our convalescence.

As usual, I spent the first two weeks in a coma from brain congestion. Amy had to stay away from her work, tailoring, but Papa and Harry still went to theirs because it was outdoor work. We recovered by the first week in August and came downstairs and into circulation again.

Jack had grown so much, we did not know him. That month our Rich Uncle Harry died, leaving a fortune of a hundred thousand pounds. He left such a complicated and contradictory Will, with so many codicils, that the relatives quarrelled violently over it, and the whole lot went into Chancery and no one got a penny. The case lasted for forty years and the money went to the lawyers. For this fiasco, we have our beautiful Ince Isaac to thank. He came over with Aunt Jane from Toronto and they planted themselves on our poor Lil and Bob Clark. They stayed long enough to row with the lawyers, set the whole family by the ears, and browbeat them into putting the case in Chancery. Then he, himself, sold out his claims to the lawyers for a lump sum and went back to Toronto for good. England was a lot quieter when he was gone. They never came back.

Lil and Bob never forgave him for going off with Bob's umbrella. That was the last straw that broke the camel's back. To my father's credit, he kept right out of all the strife. He never went to one of their prize fights, gave no opinions or advice nor put his name to any paper or agreement. They managed it without him.

One more event in 1889 was the birth in October of a son to Robert and Lily Clark. He is still living and I am very fond of him. Morris Clark. That Christmas was one of the happiest I have ever known. It fell on a Sunday. Lil and Bob and baby were invited for the day. Ruby and I went to Sunday School in the morning and then we walked as far as Lil's home to meet them and bring them back with us. It was a fine bright, frosty day. No wind, no clouds, a sparkling day, and

we enjoyed that walk so much - at least I did. Lil and Bob were so happy, the two babies, Jack and Morrie, were so sweet, Mama was so proud and fond of us all, Papa so good-tempered and jolly, the dinner so good - a pair of fowls and a cushion of bacon. Everything was perfect. After dinner we sat by the fire and rested and let the parents rest, and after tea we clustered round the piano and sang hymns and carols until bed-time and Lil and Bob went home.

CHAPTER 8

1889-92

During this time, our cousin Lily Daniels came back to live with us and help our mother with the work. She was now much quieter, but still a very lively girl.

In June of 1890, our mother had twin boys. Jack was only thirteen months old and we girls had our hands full with a baby each to tend and carry about. My baby was called Francis Victor and he only lived eleven weeks. Ruby's was called William Douglas and he is alive to-day and is seventy at the time of writing.

Lily stayed with us for about two years and then went into good service with some ladies called Hayes. As soon as Ruby was nearing her fourteenth birthday, she left school and took on the job of home help. She was about thirteen and eight months.

I had re-started school at eleven and was doing well. I was very happy at school and did not want to leave. That very winter of 1891-92 there was a terrible epidemic of influenza and my father got it and had to lay up for a fortnight. One day when we were sitting at dinner, the newspaper boys came out shouting "News! - Special Edition! Death of the Duke of Clarence!" My mother turned pale and said, "Run out and get me a paper, Alice" and I ran quickly out into the street and got a special news-sheet with a deep black border all round. There it was in cold print. "Death of the Duke of Clarence, Heir Presumptive to the throne." My mother was deeply shocked; the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, who had only recently been engaged to Princess May of Teck, was dead of the 'flu and of pneumonia. Poor young man, poor Princess May, poor mother. It was a blow to the nation, as well as to his sorrowing relations.

CHAPTER 91892-94

In 1892 my sister, Amy, married a man named George Johnson. He was not a nice man and none of us liked him, but Amy was brave and good and hard-working and she had five children by him. The youngest one, a boy called Walter, died in his first year, but the other four - two sons and two daughters - grew up so good they were more than a recompense to her for an ignorant, uncouth and selfish husband. In this year also, Harry got engaged to a nice girl called Agnes Leagrove. Amy was married on Good Friday at St. James's Church, Milton.

Lil and Bob Clark and their two babies, Harry, Aggie and I all walked to the Church to see the wedding. Papa, Amy and Ruby had a coach. Ruby was bridesmaid. It was a very quiet wedding; only one other present: a Mr. George Wilkinson, a tailor who kept mother supplied with work when she needed money. We did not like Amy getting married and going out of the home. Although I have said little about her, she was the brightest star in our young lives. The kindest, the jolliest and funniest. She always bought us little Christmas presents and took us to see her friends. Her friends sent us Christmas cards and Valentines and slipped a ha'penny into our hands if they met us in the street.

Amy was as full of saucy tricks as a waggon-load of monkeys, but none of them was spiteful or injurious. They were only funny, and done on the spur of the moment, and made everyone laugh.

Marriage to an uncouth ignoramus sobered her down a lot, but she never lost her sense of humour and she kept her optimism to the end of her life. She died at the age of eighty-six. Her 'blithe spirit' is with me still.

Now a few words about those '80's and '90's. They saw the coming of the bicycle. First the penny-farthing, and then the 'two ha'pennies' as I heard it once described. One of Harry's friends had a penny-farthing and he sometimes let Harry ride it. But the poor chap never had one of his own; in fact, he never had anything of his own in all his life, except a wife and two children.

The first bicycles had solid tyres and were aptly called 'bone-shakers'. Pneumatic tyres came into fashion about 1896 and were enormous - almost as big as a car tyre - an Austin 7 anyhow. They soon settled down to moderate proportions and at about this time, ladies began to ride as well as men. The song "Daisy Bell" was first popular in 1892. It is still popular now.

Cars came in about 1896, but very few and far between.

1893 was a very busy, but for us a very sad year. Mama was about to have her ninth and last child, Amy was getting ready for her first and Lily for her third. Lil already had Morrie, three years and a few months, and Lily getting on for two, and now a third in the offing and she was far from well.

In public life things were moving fast. The Royal Family had got over their grief and Princess May was now engaged to the younger brother of her late fiancé, Prince George, Duke of York. They were married that summer.

Then our first family baby arrived and Amy had a son in March and called him George after his father. Mama had a baby boy in June on the 22nd of the month (Francis Reuben), one day after my 13th birthday. As she lay in bed on that hot June afternoon, the newsboys again came running by with their shouts of "Special Edition! The 'Victoria' sunk in the Mediterranean! 400 lives lost!" What a blow that was for Portsmouth, for she was a Portsmouth-manned ship. So many young widows and orphans, and so many desolate old mothers in the town. It was a great tragedy and cast a gloom over the town that was preparing to celebrate the Royal Wedding.

To crown our private grief that year, immediately after the Royal Wedding, when our own baby was but eighteen days old, our sister Lily Clark gave birth to a stillborn baby and died herself in less than twenty-four hours. Our grief was unspeakable. Bob Clark was like a mad man, my mother's moans and wails nearly broke our hearts and life seemed to stand still suddenly. Ruby and I had no time to grieve. We had two little brothers to look after (Jack aged 4 and Billy aged 3). Mama went back to bed with her new baby (Frank) and the old woman who had nursed her for the confinement came back for another week to take charge of us all. Poor Bob shut up his own house and took his broken heart and his two orphaned babies to his old mother's house. She was just as cut up as we were. She loved our Lil more than her own daughter, because Lil was always so good to her.

Well, time passed away, and our grief was softened and finally died away, as grief always does.

Now we had experienced some changes from 1889 to 1893. Nothing happened about our Uncle's money and his estate had to be realised, so the first one to get the sack when the yard was closed was my father, of course. So, at sixty-four or sixty-five years of age, he had to look around for a living. He came to Gosport and looked around for a place to start a business and found a timber yard with an office and a cottage which was also my uncle's property. He got permission to rent it from the Trustees and with his own and my mother's savings, he was able to stock it with timber, lime, cement, etc. and start again in business. He did well and made light of the journey from Southsea to Gosport every day. We were better off than we had ever been.

My father had his business which kept us in comfort, but not in luxury, and there was the rent from the two houses to help us. At one time I did see my father look in despair at my mother and say, "I am finished, I must throw my hand in", and she burst into tears. It was a few days before Christmas and I think I was about twelve, or eleven and a half rather. What happened was that in order to help stock the yard, he had raised a mortgage of a hundred pounds on the house we occupied. This was suddenly called in on account of the death of the other party to the mortgage, and had to be paid on quarter day (December 25th, 1891). Now my father had not got a hundred pence in ready money. Now you will see how "bread cast on the waters will return after many days". (Ecclesiastes, 11, 1.)

The people who were so down and out three or four years previously and had thrown themselves on Papa's mercy to give them a fresh start, dear Mr. Dumbrell, handed over a cheque for a hundred pounds without question and didn't even ask for a receipt. He got one, of course, but he would have trusted Papa with all he had. That Christmas we dined on beef and had no presents, only a penny each to spend. But that story is just by the way.

Now I will tell you about something I learned while still at school. One of my school-fellows was a girl named Evelyn Organ. She lived with her Aunt and Uncle at a Public House in Castle Road, called "The Barley Mow". I used to call in for her sometimes and was most interested in a picture painted on the ceiling of the public bar. It was painted in a large round ring, all around the central gas light. It depicted a regular good old riot. There were men and women, brandishing sticks and pokers. Costers with barrows throwing carrots and potatoes, boys throwing stones, women in mob caps and aprons, carrying babies, shaking their fists and yelling. There were bricks and bottles whizzing through the air, men with cudgels and brooms, but nowhere a knife or gun or any lethal weapon. Round the edge of this intriguing piece of artistry there was painted in bold lettering: "The Battle of Southsea".

Now I was quite well acquainted with English history, but had never heard or read of a 'battle of Southsea'. So one day at tea-time, I asked my father, "Papa, was there ever a battle of Southsea?" Then he told me the story.

When the Clarence Pier was built and a concert hall, dance floor and bandstand included, it soon became very popular among visitors and the leisured people of Southsea. Then the Pier Company built the Esplanade Hotel about a hundred feet away, and some bright genius had the idea to erect a fence to enclose the space between the two and shut off part of Southsea beach to make a private bathing beach for the hotel patrons. Now this particular bit of beach was the only place where men and boys were allowed to bathe freely and in the nude. Only then between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. So it was a regular thing for hordes of poor working men and boys large and small, to hurry

down to the 'Hot Walls' as it was called, strip off on the shingle and plunge in and have a glorious time for an hour or so in the hot weather. If they lost this privilege, it meant that they would have to hire a machine or join a swimming club and buy a bathing dress, all beyond the means of so many poor people. Well, the fence was erected and the free bathers arrived one evening to find their way barred by a wooden fence. Of course, they pulled it down and had their free dip and went home. The next evening, the news had spread and hundreds of free bathers arrived; they found the fence had been re-erected. They pulled it down and smashed it up and bathed. The third night the whole town turned out to see the fun. There were several very respectable men, tradesmen from all over the town. They were led by a Mr. Barney Miller, an undertaker, a Mr. Masterman, a greengrocer, and my father was there, but as he said, "I did not fight; I only went to support the people's rights."

At any rate, the Pier Company had got a strong force of Police, and of course all their own workmen, and a battle royal ensued. The Mayor was forced to call out the Military from the nearby barracks and the Riot Act was read and the crowds went home. But the free bathing place was saved and the fence was never re-erected, and boys can still bathe in the RUDE.

CHAPTER 10

1894.

This was to be my last year at school and I had to make the most of it. Nothing of any importance happened to us or to the nation. Oh yes, one thing to the Royal Family. Prince George and Princess May (now to be called the Duke and Duchess of York) had a baby son. He became later Prince of Wales, and later still, the Duke of Windsor after his abdication. This is all in the history books.

Ruby and I were growing up into two very nice-looking girls although we did not realise it ourselves. We both had an abundance of nut-brown hair. I could sit on mine and Ruby's was nearly as long. Also our eyes exactly matched our hair and I had cheeks the colour of a ripe cherry. Ruby was more pink and all over alike, but mine was in my cheeks. We had no opinion of ourselves or of each other, as Ruby admired blondes and I admired brunettes, and longed for flashing black eyes and hair like a 'raven's wing'. We were also constantly reminded that 'handsome is as handsome does' and our only mirror was cracked right down the middle and covered all over with damp blotches. To add to this, we were nearly always clad in navy blue serge on top and grew navy flannel and brass buttons underneath. Square-toed, laced-up boots and thick black-ribbed stockings. Not a style to enhance the charms of even the sweetest of nut-brown maids!

However, we had a few nice clothes and when our brother Harry married his Aggie in the Spring of 1895, we were both bridesmaids. We were dressed all in blue - blue corduroy dresses, blue moire sashes, blue velvet hats, blue hair ribbons, black stockings and court shoes, and white gloves. Our mother washed and brushed our lovely hair till it shone like silk and it hung down our backs in deep waves. I did feel a little bit proud that day. As for Mama, she nearly burst with pride as we walked side by side up the church. That was a very happy day for us and we were made a fuss of and admired more than we had ever been.

CHAPTER 11

OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL

Now I have reached the age of fourteen and a half. I have left school, but have not yet started work. I mean paid work. I worked alright, but I never got paid for my labour. Ruby always had pocket money from a little girl - a penny a week to start and now, at the time I speak of, she had arrived at ninepence a week by threepenny increments. I went away and cried when Ruby got her last threepenny rise, because I worked quite as hard and got nothing, and I thought if Mama had threepence to spare, she might have given it to me. But she never gave me any money at any time, and nearly ran my feet off doing errands. I also chopped wood, filled coal scuttles, sifted ashes, did all the dusting, cleaned knives and windows and the boys' shoes, darned stockings and washed hankies. It was a hard life and I always had to be ready to go anywhere and get anything. This meant I had to wash and change or go out in my old clothes and rough untidy hair. I was most unhappy for about fifteen months.

But oh, I was so happy on Sunday. All the preparation for cooking was done overnight, so that we only had to wash up the breakfast things and make our own beds and we could dress properly and go to Sunday School. At twelve years of age, we went straight into Chapel from the Sunday School and did not get home until it was time to get the dinner laid. Then we washed up dinner things and went to Sunday School again. Then home to tea and mind the three boys and let our parents go to Chapel.

It sounds a dull kind of weekend, but to us it was a taste of Heaven. Our teachers were Angels in our eyes. The Pastor was a kind, smiling man named John Williams and we all loved him. I had many friends and I loved them and I think they loved me. We had special Children's Days when the Church was decorated with flowers and we all wore our best clothes and sang special hymns learned for the occasion.

The year of Harry's marriage we had our blue bridesmaids' outfits to wear on our Anniversary Sunday, and did we swank! I'll say we did, a bit. That summer everyone wore blue. The popular song of the day was "Two Little Girls in Blue" and we led the fashion by being the first two sisters to go out in our blue, dressed exactly alike. It made us very happy to lead the fashion instead of following it. Even neighbouring shopkeepers told me in the week how very nice we both looked on Sunday. Undoubtedly that was our year (1895).

One of the high spots of our life was our Sunday School Outing. We assembled at the school with our packet of sandwiches and a clean hanky at 9 a.m. Four hundred or more excited kids, twelve or fourteen horse brakes drew up and we all filed into the seats and the small children were packed into horse buses and then with a blast on a long post-horn, we were off along the road, right up Commercial Road and sometimes through the market. Cheering and singing and waving to everyone we passed, and they waved back. Never was there such a happy crowd. The children to-day don't know what real joy is like.

To-day they are too tired to walk to school, but are taken in the school bus or have a bicycle to ride there and home again. We had to walk everywhere, and a ride in the country was a heavenly treat.

We would arrive at a farm at about twelve noon and be assembled in a big barn. There we were given instructions as to what we might do and what we might not do. Then we sat on benches or sacks and ate our lunch and went off in groups exploring the country. We picked wild flowers, found all kinds of things to see and do and roamed about fields and woods until a loud gong summoned us back to the barn for tea. Then after tea there were sports and games, cricket, skipping-rope, swings, a sweet stall, races, or we could go off on our own again until 7 p.m. Then assembled again and a hymn and three cheers for the teachers who had prepared it all. Then roll call and back to the brakes and so home to Elm Grove again, tired but, oh, so happy. 9.30 p.m. saw us all home.

It was a day plucked out of Heaven; and if Heaven is like that, then I don't mind how soon I go there. I cannot remember any mischief or bad behaviour on the part of any boy or girl. No noise, no rudeness and no destructiveness on any one of our annual outings. We could enjoy ourselves without annoying others. The farmer let us into his fields and the country children and workers stood about and waved us off and said, "Goodbye - come again next year!" and there was no dirty mess of litter to clear up when we had gone.

Times have changed without a doubt and not for the better, despite the Welfare State.

CHAPTER 12

Now in my sixteenth year, but before my sixteenth birthday, I was apprenticed to dressmaking. I had to get to work at 8.30 a.m., work until one o'clock, and then had an hour for dinner. Work from two o'clock till five and then half an hour for tea, work from 5.30 till 8 p.m., and then went home very tired and low-spirited. On Wednesdays we were let off at 4 p.m. instead of 8 p.m. If you work it out, you will see we worked $57\frac{1}{2}$ hours a week, not counting the going and coming. A pretty good week, for which I received the princely sum of one shilling a week. I served two years for that money. Then two years as improver at three and sixpence, then a year at five shillings, then the next three years I had a shilling a year rise, so that for eight years' solid slogging I reached the dizzy heights of eight shillings a week.

Many things happened during those years, but to girls like myself who were shut up in one room from 8.30 a.m. to 8 p.m., the world was just one long dreary round of tacking, stitching, pressing, oversewing, boning and trimming, over and over again, being bullied and harried and insulted by overbearing and ill-tempered taskmistresses, that we all grew pale, round-shouldered, dull-eyed and depressed. I wonder sometimes how I stood eight years of it. Of course, I met some nice girls and some very nasty ones. We had our fun at times and very many jokes. We discussed religion and politics and books and pictures - not films, they were not invented yet - I mean art. We talked of our homes and our parents and our churches and our boyfriends, those who had them. No matter how miserable I was in the week, I was always happy on Sunday. I often think of a poem by George Herbert, called "Sunday" :

The Sundays of man's life
Threaded together on time's string
Make bracelets to adorn the wife*
Of the Eternal Glorious King.
On Sundays Heaven's Gate stands ope',
Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope.

*Revelations 21, 9.

That is how my Sundays look to me as I look back over my rather dreary life. Like pure pearls in a necklace of common glass beads, one pearl in every seven.

When I had been working for three years and was approaching my nineteenth year, first the South African War broke out and the whole country broke out in a rash of patriotism and sang all kinds of jingoistic songs about the streets. It made a change and a bit of excitement. It also caused a lot of bitterness, because not everyone thought it was justified.

At this time my father had notice to quit his timber-yard, which he had been occupying for the last ten years. The land was sold for building, so at the age of seventy-two, poor old Papa had to look around for new premises. By the mercy of God,

a house with a yard and two large stores, an office and a cottage, came onto the market in the very nick of time. It meant buying the place outright and my parents decided that it would be worthwhile to sell our property in Southsea and buy the property in Gosport and move over there to live. This was done, Mr. Dumbrill buying our house and his own and the one next to it. With the money he received from the sale of the Southsea houses, my father was able to buy the house and cottage, stores and timber stacks and pay off all mortgages, stock up his yard and start life again, free. It seems a strange thing to start a new lease of life at seventy-two, but then my father was a remarkable man.

I had almost forgotten to mention the great event of 1897. That was the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The Golden Jubilee faded into insignificance in the face of this greater event. We learned a special new hymn for our Sunday School Anniversary and sang it with gusto. Perhaps you would like to have the words -

Oh, Thou whose love more precious is
Than gold or gem,
When songs sincere we sing to Thee
Thou hearest them.
Our fathers' strength and refuge, Thou
Hast ever been.
Oh, hear their children's prayer to-day -
God Bless our Queen.

For three score years Thy favour, Lord,
Her reign hath blessed.
When gladness filled her heart and when
'Twas sore distressed.
To guide her morning and her noon
Thy hand was seen,
And now her eventide has come -
God Bless our Queen.

Now hear us for our country, Lord,
The land we love,
That we may value truth and right
All else above.
Our secret life be purged from sin,
Our hands be clean,
So shalt Thou bless our Fatherland,
And bless our Queen.

I think they are lovely words and I have remembered them for sixty-three years. It was lovely weather. Sunday was our special Anniversary Sunday and in the week the great day was celebrated. This time there was no fiasco of a procession. There were processions, but each Sunday School was given a particular spot in the nearest Recreation Ground, and ours was the Canoe Lake Grounds. It was a pretty sight. Each school marched by the nearest route to their own place. Every child carried a flag; all were dressed in bright summer clothes. It was a glorious day. Queen's weather. All those gatherings of children in their own place and all grouped round the Canoe Lake looked like fairyland.

We had games and sports and scrumptious tea and the Mayor and Mayoress came round in a carriage and listened to us as we sang "God Save the Queen" and "God Bless the Prince of Wales" to the music of the Salvation Army band. Then we all lined up and marched out of the ground and were given our "Souvenir" - a blue and white beaker. Then home for a wash and ld. in the slot and back onto the Common for the firework display. There we met all the gang, boys and girls, and had a lovely time giggling at one another. By ten o'clock the fun was over and so to bed. A day to remember for a lifetime. Queen Victoria lived another three years after that eventful day and the story of that time must wait a bit.

CHAPTER 13

1898

I finished my apprenticeship and got a new job where I had got me a boyfriend, secretly; I was not allowed to have one openly. He was six years my senior and I first started going out with him soon after the lovely Diamond Jubilee, in August 1897. In that same month, our cousin Lily Daniels married her love. A nice naval man named Samuel Monck. They had been in love from fourteen years of age to twenty-two years and now were married and very happy. We all went to the wedding at St. Jude's Church, Southsea, and had a lovely time.

My boyfriend was very kind and understanding. He treated me like a dearly loved little sister and I don't think that the idea of marriage entered into either of our minds. He met me away from my home, mostly in the Public Library, took me for walks, bought me chocolates and kissed me goodnight. It was a very pleasant friendship and lasted two years and in all that time he kept our conversation clean and wholesome, never said a rude or disconcerting word, never made advances of any sort except that goodnight kiss. I liked him very much; he was great fun, and kindness itself, but I was never in love with him. He filled a gap in my life, made by the early courtship between Ruby and Dave. They started courting at seventeen, both one age, and I was left without a companion. It was very convenient for us both. We started out together and came home together, and no one knew we parted in between and each went our own way. I had one lonely year, sixteen to seventeen of my age, but I was so busy and so tired that I was glad sometimes to be alone and mooch about on my own.

1899

During this year, the preparations for our move to Gosport were completed. Papa moved his timber-yard from the old place belonging to the Moody Estate, into the new place called Parry Villa, 4 Forton Road. It was only a few yards from the first house and yard, which was now sold. We moved over to Gosport on June 22nd, one day after my nineteenth birthday. I had formally said goodbye to my boyfriend as I could see the difficulty of meeting and walking out together when we lived so

far apart. All my spare time would be spent getting home from work. You see, I worked until 8 p.m. and had to be indoors by 9 p.m. and I had an hour's walk, or perhaps not a full hour, but quite three-quarters of an hour. We parted the best of friends, and no hearts broken, and no hard feelings. He soon married and although I missed his friendship, I worked too hard and too long to feel anything but a longing for home and bed.

The year sped by and the South African War still languished on, and patriotism flagged, and jingo songs ceased to excite us, and the old Queen fell ill. She was now eighty and had seen many joys and sorrows and no doubt was glad to be drawing to her long rest. We people never took her illness seriously. She had been ill before and had got better. No one under seventy remembered a time when there had been no Queen Victoria.

It was a cold miserable night in January, 1901, the turn of the century. We girls in the workroom had had our tea at 5 o'clock and in the next hour we all took turns to slip away for a few minutes to wash our hands and look in the glass to tidy our hair ready for the walk home. It was between 6 and 7 o'clock and I went out into the lobby for the same purpose. Immediately above our room (the coat room) was the skirt room and on the stairs between the two stood a girl from the skirt room, listening. She was a dark, heavy-looking girl, with cow-like brown eyes and slow speech. She looked at me, came down the last step and took me by the wrist. Then she opened the outer door and said, "Listen." I listened and I heard the town hall clock boom, one. At once St. Jude's Church clock followed suit and boomed, one. Then all the churches far and near were tolling. She whispered, "The Queen's dead", and I felt my heart sink. She went back upstairs and I went back into the workroom and walked up to our forewoman and said, "Miss Elsy, all the bells are tolling - the Queen must be dead." She looked startled and then turned to us all and said, "If this is true, I am afraid it means working overtime; so come prepared to stay until 9.30 to-morrow." Then of course the news spread. The other rooms had heard the bells and all the Heads got together chattering.

Well, to continue and to put it briefly. We worked a 12-hour day for three solid weeks. For these extra hours we received 2/6 a week extra - 7/6 in all. What I did with this vast sum I really can't remember, but most of the girls who lived alone and kept themselves in one room no doubt put it down as S.P.C. Those letters really stand for "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel", but in this case it means, "Spent, probably, grub", and you could get quite a bit of grub for 7/6. When the mourning clothes were all made and we slackened off for a bit, we had a day off.

Of course, while the three weeks' preparation for the funeral was on, Crowned Heads from all over the world were arriving to follow the Great Queen to the grave. There were four Emperors from Europe. Our own King was Emperor of India,

then the Czar or Emperor of Russia, the German Emperor, and Franz Josef, Emperor of Austria. The Kings of Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and Grand Dukes innumerable and Presidents galore. There were Indian Princes in gorgeous uniforms; in fact, all were in gorgeous uniforms. There were no Black Suits. Kings carried the coffin and Kings bore the pall. They marched in solemn procession from Osborne House on the Isle of Wight where she died, to the private pier at Cowes, where the body was embarked on her own little private yacht, the "Alberta", then all those Kings, Princes, Grand Dukes, Serene Highnesses, Royal Highnesses and Foreign Notabilities embarked on the Royal Yacht, "Victoria and Albert". This was a big yacht, almost a liner, but Queen Victoria disliked it and she never went on it. She loved the little "Alberta" and always used it, and it brought her over the Solent to Portsmouth Harbour and I saw it.

We had leave to go out onto the beach to see the yachts come in and we all went to the "Hot Walls" where so many years before, the people had fought for their bathing rights; and there we saw Our Queen pass by. It was Queen's weather. At this spot the harbour mouth is at its narrowest point and so the ships are as close inshore as they can get. Every inch of Southsea beach and Haslar Wall, and Portsmouth Point and Portsea Hard, was packed tight with people, all silent, nearly all in black, no running children or barking dogs broke that uncanny silence. It was January, but the sun shone clear and pale in a clear and pale sky. The sea was as still as a sea of glass and not a breath of wind stirred. The little Yacht came in, escorted by destroyers, and followed by the big Royal Yacht, like a great swan. There on the deck we saw a raised bier, massed about by great mounds of white flowers and above it the tiny coffin, draped with flags and a pile of wreaths on the top. We held our breath and strained our eyes, and watched it out of sight and then the silent watching crowds turned their faces homewards, looking as if they were still in a dream. No one spoke.

The next day was our day off and it poured with rain as if the sky would fall. Of the funeral procession in London or Windsor, or the final interment at Frogmore, we knew little, as there were no such things as films, and newspaper photographs were very inferior. Now, while that procession was going slowly along the route from Osborne to Cowes, the whole length of road was lined with troops leaning on their "arms reversed" and among the troops was a Company of the 3rd Hants Volunteers, and in that Company was a young corporal named James Chase. I did not know him and he did not know me. We were not to meet for another nine months, but we did meet eventually, as I shall shortly tell you. It is enough. Queen Victoria, after a reign of sixty-three years, is dead, and Edward her son reigned in her stead.

1900-1

These years in my life were very dull years. I had been forced by circumstances to give up my interests in Chapel and Sunday School. I just could not keep it up and still go on walking miles to work, working long hours on sandwich food, and walking miles home at night in all weathers. I had to rest on Sundays. So I made friends with a girl next door; she was thirty-one to my nineteen. I liked her very much and she liked me. We spent our Bank Holidays going for water trips to the Isle of Wight and to Southampton and Bournemouth, etc. We never went anywhere by train and of course buses except the local horse-bus were unheard of. There was an electric tram over to Horndean, north of Portsdown Hill, and sometimes we took a 1d ticket over there, went for a country walk, had tea in a cottage and came back home and went to bed. Not very exciting, and very tiring.

First we had to walk down to the ferry. Cross over to Portsmouth, 1d. tram to the Portsmouth Town Hall, change to a tram for Cosham (Cossam) 4d, get on the green line tram for Horndean, 1d. Go for a walk in the Holt. Back to the tram stop, tea in a cottage 6d., and so home. It was just a ride and a change of scene. We never quarrelled or disagreed in any way. We talked when we felt like it and when we did not were silent. We never talked sex or boyfriends. We discussed books chiefly, then religion - church versus chapel, never politics because I was Liberal and she was Tory. We kept friends and we remained friends until her death at the age of sixty-eight. I am glad to say she made a happy marriage at the age of forty-six and was quietly and deeply happy for those twenty-two years. Her husband adored her and his grief at her death was pitiful to see. Yet she was an exceedingly plain woman, not gifted or clever, but always sympathetic, kind and true. She had a child-like mind and would ask my advice often in her difficulties. She said she had never met any one like me who knew so much about so many things, and could argue without quarrelling, and remain firm friends at the end. We were both of us discontented with our lot. She had a drunken father and four drunken brothers, a good mother, and a bitter-tongued and ill-tempered sister. She was housekeeper and cook to all this lot, and once we both got so fed up that we went down to the Public Library and searched the daily paper to see if we could find a situation where we could be together - she as cook, and I as kitchen or housemaid. We did not find one.

CHAPTER 14

The year 1901 dragged on its weary way and I was twenty-one and my father gave me half a crown. Ruby complained that he never gave her 2/6 last year when she was twenty-one; so he said, "You never asked". I had asked. That was unanswerable, but he gave her one for last year and that was that.

Three months after my twenty-first birthday, on a Sunday evening after church, my friend and I (by the way, her name was Eliza) were walking down town by the Thorngate Hall and she saw her brother Walter coming along with two men friends. She said, "Oh, here comes Wally - I must speak to him - Ma wants to see him." So we stopped and he came up to see what his sister had to say, and the other two men lingered a few feet away while she delivered her message. Then suddenly Wally said, "Here, meet my friends, Mr. Chase and Mr. Cantle," and I found myself shaking hands with a nice warm dry hand and looking into a pair of kind brown eyes, and the spark was lit between us that has never gone out in nearly sixty years. I never saw the other young man again; he mooched off, but the kind brown eyes and the warm dry hand lined up beside me and walked close to me for the rest of that evening and has kept close to me ever since. It was a good evening's work for my friend Eliza; for she had marked him down for me, and me for him, and had been waiting for this chance meeting for a long time and now she had achieved it.

As soon as she saw that we were both seriously interested in each other, she quietly dropped out of my life and took up the burden of loneliness again. She never had another girl-friend to go about with; she stuck to her religion, her church and her drunken, ungrateful old father, until a man who had loved her for years took her out of her lonely state and made a happy wife of her until her death.

Her mother died early on in our friendship and her sister married. Her brothers were already married, so when her father remarried, she was free, and then the patient lover came forward and her long loneliness was over. Years after, when we were both wives, she told me how she had worked and prayed for a change to bring me and my husband together, because she knew in her heart that we were right for each other. I don't know. Some things "which are hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes". (Matthew 11, 25). She certainly was a child-like and trusting soul.

We courted for three years and nine months and were very happy enjoying simple pleasures. Country walks, boat trips, sitting on the beach at Stokes Bay. Rides over to Horndean, and always work all day, and meet for a few hours after work. We got engaged at our second Christmas when I was twenty-two and a half (1902). Ruby got married to David Hucker when I was twenty-four and she was twenty-five (1904). I was bridesmaid. One year later, when I was twenty-five, on the 29th of July, 1905, we were married at St. John's Forton, and that was that.

Now I must condense my narrative a bit, if I am to get my memories into these few remaining pages. When Jim and I had been courting for nine months, the Coronation of King Edward VII was drawing near. It was fixed for June 22nd, 1902, eighteen months after Queen Victoria's death. The King wanted to have a Summer Coronation to suit the crowds who would be standing in the streets all day to see the Procession. All was prepared and the City of London full of foreigners, Royal, Noble and Gentle, and lo, the King fell ill. He fought like a Trojan to

keep about, but his agony at last got him down and, instead of a Coronation, he had to have an operation for acute appendicitis, the first of its kind in England. Everything came to a standstill. Lots of the foreign visitors went back home and the gay decorations flapped dismally in the streets. We had a day off from work and went round the fleet in a pleasure steamer. I was not interested in the fleet, but I liked the boat trip. The following Saturday was the Naval Review, with fireworks and illuminations of the Fleet at night. Tens of thousands, or rather hundreds of thousands, crowded the beaches and shores from Portsmouth to Southampton and all the Isle of Wight.

Families came with rugs prepared to stay all night if the crowds were too great for them to get away. Suppers were spread out on the shingle and all was going as merry as a marriage bell, when without warning, the 'father and mother' of all the thunderstorms that ever were, broke upon us. We were all there - me, Jim, his aunt and sister, his other aunt, uncle and twin boys of fourteen. We had our sandwiches and cakes and bottles of pop, all ready to begin. We rushed for the shelter of Gill Kicker Fort and crouched against the wall, while a wall of water fell on us from the sky. We were all soaked to our undervests. We got home somehow, having waded through six or seven inches of water in some places.

When I got indoors, I went straight upto the bathroom, stood in the bath and dropped my saturated garments into the bath to drain off. The dye from my lovely red dress had gone right through to my body. It was a terrible storm. The seashore and the roads leading to it next morning resembled the roads outside Samaria when the Assyrian Army took fright in the night and fled from God's anger. (Kings II, 7, 6-15). There were prams and bicycles lying about deserted. I saw one mother lift her baby out of a flooded pram, tip the pram up on end to empty it, and struggle along the packed road holding the baby in one arm and trying to push the pram with the other. Poor Edward VII; he didn't have any luck and neither did we.

The Coronation eventually took place in August. It was a quiet affair because the foreign visitors could not come again and be entertained and the Abbey was filled with our own Royal, Noble and Gentle folk. There was no review and no more holidays for us. I was not very well in myself about that time. I had a grumbling appendix, but no one took any notice of me, as I was not Royal. It meant that I had to live on a very restricted diet, as so many things made me ill. I got right down to bread, butter and tea, and got thinner and thinner. By strict dieting I was able to go to work and live normally. Our life was a very quiet one. We both worked hard, met for a walk in the evenings, and went out for the day on Bank Holidays.

As I did in my childhood, I just lived for Sundays. I went to Chapel and he went to Church, and after Church we went for a walk. Rain and cold made no difference to us. As long as we could walk along arm in arm, sometimes talking and sometimes silent, we were happy. We had our spots of fun, of

course, and like the Walrus and the Carpenter, "we talked of many things". So passed our courtship.

CHAPTER 15

In the year 1904, my sister Ruby and her faithful Dave made up their minds to get married. They were both twenty-five, Dave in December 1903 and Ruby in April 1904, and had been courting for eight years, from the age of seventeen. The wedding was fixed for July 16th and in April that year, I was sacked from my work by a vicious forewoman who hated my innards. It was a busy time and she would not have done it if she had not been told by a mischief-making fellow-worker that I was going to leave of my own accord in June. You see, it was arranged that just before the wedding, I should come come and take Ruby's place in the home and help in the preparations for the wedding. I had talked of this and longed for the day when I might give in my notice. However, the tale-bearer warned the forewoman and she forestalled me by giving me notice. However, I rather deflated her ego when she said suddenly, "I want you to take a week's notice, Miss Moody", by answering, "I'll do that with pleasure, Miss G." She looked a bit surprised at my quick retort. She didn't know her Alice.

It meant that I was home three months with no money, but I was free and I stitched all Ruby's sheets, pillow-cases and table-cloths on the machine in that time, besides setting her free to go shopping. The wedding day was fine and warm. Ruby looked very excited and pretty. She wore a cream dress, wreath and veil and carried a shower bouquet. I and the other bridesmaid, Dave's sister, wore biscuit-coloured sprigged muslin dresses, picture hats with green (pale) satin ribbon falling over our hair at the back, and belts of the same ribbon, and carried bouquets of red and white geraniums. It was a pretty wedding. They went on a cycling tour of the West Country. North Devon mainly. Then Ruby went back to Portsmouth to live.

1905

Now I am coming near to the end of my narrative - not very interesting, I am afraid. This year was to be an important one for me. My wedding year. I wanted it to be the same weekend as Ruby had the year before, but no such luck. I had to let my Lord choose His date and He chose a fortnight later in the month, July 29th. That meant that strawberries, which had formed a great part of Ruby's wedding breakfast, were out. They do not last so long. So I had to be content with tinned fruit. It also meant (for him) that August Bank Holiday came in his fortnight's leave, and as dockyard men were paid for that day, he would lose only eleven days' pay, instead of twelve. A weighty consideration.

Ruby's had been a Chapel wedding, like my sister Lily's, but mine was Church, like Amy's. It was at St. John's, Forton, and was quite pretty. I had two bridesmaids: the bridegroom's sister was one and my niece, Ethel Stewart, the other. They wore biscuit-coloured dresses and hats and carried red and white geraniums as before. I was in cream with a veil. We went to North Devon for two weeks, stopping first at Salisbury, then on to Exeter, then on to Barnstaple. Doing day trips to places of interest. We visited Bemerton, Templecombe, Exeter, Barnstaple, Lynton, Lynmouth, Bideford, Clovelly and Ilfracombe. Also we had a day at Stonehenge on the way. We saw quite a lot and enjoyed it all very much. Came home on the Friday week, went shopping for food, and settled down to domesticity at the weekend.

At the end of a year we had a baby girl, May. When she was one year and nine months, we had a baby boy, Jim, or Jamie. When he was fifteen months, and May three years and five days, we had another baby girl. I believe you know her slightly...* We called her Christine - her father's choice - and Margaret, my choice. She can tell you a lot more about herself and her childhood than I can. So ask her. "She is of age, she shall speak for herself." (John, 9, 21-23.)

Now after that, it was work and babies and never a breathing space until my baby Christine was five years old. I had no fun and no excitement, but don't think the rest of the world was dull.

There was a great upheaval in English politics during those years. People were sick of poverty, sick of working until they were seventy or eighty years of age, only to die in the workhouse and be buried in a pauper's grave by the parish at the end. A certain Mr. David Lloyd George arose in Parliament and brought in a Bill to give all old people over seventy the huge sum of five shillings a week pension.

A certain gentleman who was leader of the House of Lords, and whose annual income was fifty thousand pounds a year (really £50,000 a year) said in the Lords that it would undermine the independence of the British people, and sap the life of the nation and they would throw out the Bill and "damn the consequences."

So the country went to the polls and put in the Liberals with such an overwhelming majority that King Edward himself warned the "Lords" that the will of the people must prevail or the House of Lords would find themselves abolished. Once the Liberal Party were firmly established with a majority greater than the whole of the Tory Party, they went to work and passed the Old Age Pensions Bill, the National Insurance Act, the Parliament Act, the Children's Act; in fact, all the Acts of the present Welfare State were begun in 1906 by the Great Liberal Government. All the nation enjoys to-day was won for them by the Liberals, and the present Labour Party had no hand or part in it and the working man owes them nothing. Always remember that; for the Labour Party or any Socialist Party builds nothing, it only pulls down.

*Christine is the mother of Cynthia,
the grand-daughter for whom this is written.

I managed to go to one or two meetings. I went to Portsmouth to hear Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and found him very dull, but the meeting was lively. Then the Suffragettes started on a campaign of "Votes for Women" and that went on for years. They smashed windows, set fire to pillar boxes full of letters, destroyed paintings and carvings in churches and art galleries; in fact, they were a perfect nuisance all round and only consented to stop their agitation when war was imminent.

In the midst of all this political maelstrom, King Edward kept up a very lively court and London was a very gay place during the season. Mourning was over, and the order of the day was "Eat, drink and be merry." After forty years of being ruled by a dreary and austere widow, England became a very happy place indeed. Fashions were bright and pretty and lots of beautiful Debutantes were presented. Then, suddenly, in 1910, when the fun was at its height and the Great Parliament Bill was about to be passed and receive the Royal Signature, like a clap of thunder the King fell ill, and before the people had realised that he was really ill, he had died of heart failure and bronchitis. He had been King only just ten years and he really had endeared himself to his people.

You always love people who make you happy, and Edward VII made people happy by setting an example of gaiety, and getting about and doing all the things that people like to do. I know I felt stunned by the blow. We were awed by Queen Victoria's death, but very few people had any love for her. King Edward's death left us feeling that we had lost a beloved and jolly old Dad. I know I felt orphaned. He lay in State for a week or more, a thing unheard of before, and long queues of people filed round his coffin in an unbroken line for days. It was said that before he died, he sent for his son, the Duke of York, and warned him to see the Parliament Act was passed, or it would mean a revolution. And I believe it would have.

The fact remains that the House of Lords, after a lot of grumbling, and twice rejecting the Bill, passed it at the third reading and it became law. It did as much for English liberty as "Magna Carta" did in 1215, but I cannot enlarge on it here. (See later).

George V and Queen Mary were duly crowned a year later and the whole day and all the plans for treats and all the decorations and preparations were kyboshed by torrential rain. I stayed indoors with my three small children and watched the rain pouring down and James W. Chase went to St. John's School and helped to serve teas and organise games for the children and hand out souvenir beakers. It was a great disappointment.

Before I embark on the story of the Great War and its consequences, I must just put in a few words about myself. You know I had been brought up in the Baptist belief and my husband was Church of England. He was a practising member and a communicant, while I had not taken the decisive step of joining my church by adult baptism. My father had done so, but not my mother, and she rather discouraged us from doing what she had never done herself; and I felt the need of making a definite stand. So, as soon as I was married, I made arrangements to be baptised and confirmed in the Church of England. I did not waste any time, but was baptised on November 29th and confirmed on December 4th, 1905, before my first married Christmas. I was baptised at St. John's, Forton, by Canon Stephenson, who had married us in July, and confirmed at St. Mark's of North End, Portsmouth, by the Bishop of Southampton, Dr. MacArthur. I took my first Communion the next Sunday and have been a practising member of the Church of England for fifty-five years and not regretted it.

All my three children were baptised by the same man as I myself, but after the third child was about three months old, he left Forton to become the vicar of Droxford, and St. John's, Forton, got a ritualistic parson called Christopher Carey and went very 'high'. So the Chases and many more people who refused to follow the crowd, left St. John's and went to St. Mary's and St. Faith's, Alverstoke. At St. Faith's we were made very welcome and very happy. There I joined the "Mothers' Union" in 1911, and I hope to live to see my Golden Jubilee in the Mothers' Union on October 6th, 1961. October 6th is St. Faith's Day.

CHAPTER 16

August, 1914.

This is a memorable date. In this year, my third and last child came of school age and I should have had a little leisure and a little more money. But it was not to be. On August 4th, the Great War broke out and father was called up for the Army. For two and a half months, the 6th Hants were kept in training on Salisbury Plain and then after a brief weekend's leave, they sailed for India on October 9th, and the bottom fell out of my world. Although it is 46 years ago, I can still feel the blank misery of saying Goodbye and the heartache at seeing his empty place at the table, and in the armchair, and the bed.

Time rubbed off the sharp edges of the parting and we all tried to make the best of things, and I thanked God I had three jolly little kids to cheer me with their games and songs and stories of school. May learned to play the piano and gave me

a lot of pleasure. Of course, I had my troubles with food shortages and no rationing for the first three years. I had to stand and fight almost for every ounce of meat, butter, bacon, sugar and potatoes. Very often we were reduced to dry bread and onion sandwiches for our supper. It was better in 1917-18 when rationing started and everyone got a little of everything. At last it was over and our beloved men came home, but not all. Uncle Percy Chase was killed in 1916, with many more good men and true. His wife, Auntie Mabel, survived him for forty-three years, and died in 1959 at the age of seventy-nine.

I remember the solemn day of the Armistice signing, when crowds of people went down to the Town Hall steps to hear peace proclaimed by the Mayor. I did not go down. I felt too sick at heart at all the unnecessary waste of life and happiness. After we had had our tea, I took my children down to St. John's Church to a Thanksgiving Service. The smell of incense made us all feel sick and we were glad to get home.

Father had got his first leave and was on his way home when the Armistice was signed. He came by sea to Italy and overland from Italy across Europe and arrived home on November 18th, having been away from us all for four years and four months. It was a joyful reunion, but a painful time for poor Auntie Mabel. That was a happy Christmas, and the year following was a happy time. We had lovely picnics on Stokes Bay and the weather was grand. There were rejoicings and Peace Parties and fetes. The face of Europe was entirely changed. The emperors of Germany, Austria and Russia were dead or exiled. Spain and Portugal had got rid of their kings and were republics. Norway, Sweden and Denmark, Holland and Belgium still retained their monarchies and the British Empire was still intact. All the Balkan States were in a state of turmoil. There were wars and sieges and sackings of cities right throughout the Middle East. The slaughter and pillage went on in the Holy Land for years and has not really stopped yet.

That wicked monster Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany took the lid off Hell in 1914 and no one has been able since to put the lid back on again. Life before 1914 seems to me, looking back, so uncomplicated. In that year which was called Peace Year, father and I took a week's holiday and went to London. We had neither of us been to London for more than one day, years before. It was not a good time to go, because the whole place was shabby from neglect; half the animals in the Zoo were dead and had not been replaced; we did not know our way about and wasted a lot of time finding it. We managed to visit the Tower of London, the Zoo, Hampton Court, the British Museum and the Kensington Museum, and Madame Tussaud's Waxworks, and do three theatres.

The high spot of these dissipations was "Chu-Chin-Chow", featuring Oscar Asche and Lily Brayton at His Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket. It was a wow and I am glad to have seen it in its prime. It ran for four years, a record for that time,

though I believe it has been broken since. We went to Westminster Abbey on the Sunday afternoon and heard Cosmo Gordon Lang preach. He was at that time Archbishop of York and afterwards was Archbishop of Canterbury for many years. In the morning of that Sunday, we went to the Church of the Foundling Hospital and after service went into the refectory of the Home and saw the children's dinners all laid out ready for them on dark oak tables, many years old. This is in Great Coram Street and is immortalised by Charles Dickens in "Little Dorrit" and another story - I forget the name. I even remember the ingredients of that very suitable meal. Every plate had two substantial slices of cold roast beef, a quarter of a good cos lettuce, beautifully washed and crisp, and two slices of bread. All down the centre of the table were jugs of water and drinking mugs, salt, pepper and mustard. On a long table across the end of the room was the second course. Large tin dishes of cold bread pudding full of currants, etc. cut into squares about four inches across, enough to fill the belly of any hearty kid and all looked appetising.

In "Little Dorrit", there is a little servant girl living with a very kind and generous family who treat her with the utmost consideration. She was from the Foundling Hospital and never knew her origin. Because she was found in Coram Street near the hospital, she was called "Coram" for her surname, and christened "Harriet". This was shortened to Tatty and lengthened by her jolly old master to "Tattycoram", which stuck to her all her life. Read it.

We were only allowed to walk round one dining room and did not see any of the inmates, only in the gallery of the church, because of an outbreak of measles. And that reminds me of a great epidemic. In the winter of 1917 and '18, the whole world was ravaged by the Spanish Influenza. It raged from the Arctic Circle to Patagonia, all round the globe and back again. In the Great War of 1914-1918, six million men were killed. In the 'flu epidemic of 1917-1918, twelve million people died. All the schools, picture-houses, etc. were closed, and the public were advised to walk rather than go in trams. In one afternoon, there were seventeen funerals in Ann's Hill Cemetary, a few yards from my home. The bell never stopped tolling. It was a dreary time and I lost some friends. I and my children went out round the beach every day for fresh air and we managed to keep well.

After Father came home, as I said, we contrived to be happy and I had a little more money to spend than I had ever had, so I had the three children taught to play the piano. May had begun at nine years of age - no ten, and now I had a teacher call every Friday evening, and give all three a half-hour each.

CHAPTER 17

In the second year after the War, Father had a chance to go to Malta, so we all went. We only had ten days' notice and it was a terrible scramble getting what we wanted packed, and what we didn't want, given away or burnt. I had to say goodbye to my old, old father, now nearly ninety-three, and both knew it was for ever. I held him and kissed him and reminded him that we should meet one day before God's throne and be for ever with the Lord. He wept.

We went off early one morning, July 10th, 1920, to Southampton Docks, where we boarded our ship, the "Meteor". She was really a converted yacht and was once the property of the German Emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm II, now deposed and living in exile in Holland.

By the way, this wicked Wilhelm was the son of the Empress Frederick, the lady whom I saw drive along Southsea Common when I was a small girl of five and a half and Ruby six and a half, and we had that glorious taste of rum and milk. She was Queen Victoria's firstborn and he (Wilhelm) was her firstborn, and thought he ought to be King of England.

We loved that yacht and enjoyed nine lovely days of glorious weather, going to Malta. We saw the spouting of whales in the Atlantic and flying fish in the Mediterranean and were very sorry to get off the ship when we reached our destination. We were out there two years and if I had been well in health, we should have had a lovely time, but I was very ill and we all had to come home before our three years were up. It was a pleasant interlude, but not long enough.

We came back to England in 1922 and for about five years I had a wretched time, from one hospital to another, always in pain, poor May trying to do my job besides looking after me. Very little money and no fun at all. Then father bought a little car and took me out at weekends and I began to mend. I recovered and finally my family all got married and left me. Now Pa and I are eighty years of age and we still have each other and there is light at eventide.

Of the second Great War I will not say much. Father had been working in the yard and in the Army for forty-six years and we both were looking forward to his retirement and for freedom to come and go and take a holiday just when we pleased. However, it was not to be. He had to stay in harness another six years before we finally settled down to enjoy our pensions at our leisure. We were both very tired; too old to dance, an exercise we were both very fond of, no petrol to go out picnicking, the house neglected and wanting painting inside and out. It was a grim prospect for everyone besides ourselves. We worked and got the house cleaned up and took one or two belated holidays, but without youth and strength, you cannot do much. So our sixties and our seventies have passed and we are now well and truly launched in our eighties.

We have enjoyed having our grandchildren and now we are very glad to welcome our great-grandchildren when we see them, which is not often.

Now I am trying to set my house in order "before I go hence and am no more seen". (Burial Service. Psalm 39, v.13).

CHAPTER 18

This little account of a dull life of an insignificant person will perhaps keep my memory green, for as long as there is one person interested enough to read it.

One thing I would emphasise and impress upon the young people of the present - in all my eighty years, I have never been bored. I have always found something interesting to see, to hear, to say and to do. My mind is always occupied and I can still look forward to whatever the future has in store. Boredom comes from within a person and is a sign of a listless and unenterprising mind. I was not bored when I was the sole occupant of a hospital ward for a whole week, and I would not be bored on a desert island. There is always something to do, something to find out and learn about. I know enough poetry and Scripture to recite to myself for a twelvemonth and enough songs and hymns to sing for a twelvemonth. I have to sit still a lot now, because I have not the strength to keep on doing things; but there is quite a lot of pleasure to be got by sitting still and just remembering.

I have done things, taught in Sunday School, run a girls' Bible Class, sung to the sick and mentally sick in hospitals, worked for the Moral Welfare, which looks after the unmarried mother and her child, and cared for an orphaned niece. Written letters to a Mothers' Union Branch for thirty years in Jamaica, and they have written to me. Father and I have never neglected our worship in Church and that is the real secret of never being bored. No one can feel useless and unwanted while they realise that this world and its people are not all, "that our citizenship is in Heaven" and the things that really matter are not good jobs, good money, good times, good clothes, good food and plenty of fun and pleasure - these are alright in their way if you can have them without doing any one else down. "But covet earnestly the best gifts." (1 Corinthians, Ch. 12, last verse.)

Good thoughts, good words, good deeds, good prayers, good books, good friends, regular worship and Bible reading; there is no need to make a parade of it. This is the first time I have ever mentioned it and it will be the last. The real thing is that while I cannot do much now, while I could do things, I did them.

So my mind is stored with happy memories and I can look back with pleasure (not pride) and look forward with hope. The way ahead is not dark, but filled with light for me. Here endeth the sermon.

CHAPTER 19

There are a few things I have not mentioned in this book :-

Few people know that the Railway came first to Gosport, before Portsmouth had a branch. Portsmouth people who wanted to travel by train, or who wanted to see the wonderful new invention, had to cross the Harbour in a wherry to Gosport Station to see it.

Also, I forgot to say that seventy years ago, Ruby and I were taken to our Uncle Henry's timber yard, where a stage with seats had been set up on the timber stack and all the family and friends were invited to go and see the Prince and Princess of Wales drive by to open the new Portsmouth Town Hall. Ten years later they became King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. Well, I saw the Town Hall in its "first glory". I have been to tuppenny concerts on Saturday nights when I was a girl. I have heard the "Messiah" sung there on many Good Fridays. I have been to bazaars and shows there, and once your own mother* sang there in the Big Hall in a Music Festival, and she and Auntie May sang the duet from the same stage in the Big Hall. Ask her about it. She sang "Margaret at the Spinning Wheel" (Schubert) and they sang the duet "See How the Morning Smiles". I was there, of course. And oh, the lovely chrysanthemum shows they used to have!

I stood out in Linden Grove** and saw the light in the sky of a hundred fires the night it was burnt down. Now it has been rebuilt and I have been there and heard the "Messiah" sung again after twenty years and enjoyed every minute of it. There is no doubt about it : I have lived.

When I was a child I have seen in the spring a crowd of Corporation workers arrive on Southsea Common with big long scythes to cut the grass. They worked right over the common, swathe by swathe. I saw an urchin who would run in the way of the men, carried home on a man's shoulder in a fainting condition with a badly cut leg. He had asked for it.

I saw a mad dog race along Castle Road, caught and killed on a door step of the house opposite my home, and my mother's terrified face as she rushed out to our gate and caught me up in her arms.

I can remember an old man called William Burroughs, but always known as "Nosy Burroughs" because of his large sniffer; he wore a large leather contraption, across one shoulder and under the opposite arm like an officer's sash, with an inscription on it : "William Burroughs, the Portsmouth Poet, Patronised by Royalty", and a crown. This was because he wrote a piece about the celebrated elephant who was sold by the London Zoo to the American showman, Barnum. He sent a copy to Queen Victoria and she accepted it and wrote a letter of thanks. I know only one verse :

*her daughter, Christine. (Auntie May being her other daughter.)
 **Linden Grove, Gosport, was where Alice and Jim Chase lived.

Jumbo said to Alice 'I love you'
 Alice said to Jumbo, 'I don't believe you do'
 'If you really loved me, as you say you do,
 'You wouldn't go to America and leave me in
 the Zoo'.

Alice was his mate, of course. This wonderful work of art was accepted by the Queen. She must have been bats, or perhaps her secretary just sent the letter off without her knowledge. Anyway, Nosy was very proud of his effort and used to sing it in pubs and pass round the hat. He used to sell nuts from a basket on his arm, and boys used to creep up behind him and dive their hands into his basket and steal the nuts; so he had a wire cage made to fit over the basket with a hole at the top to put his hand through, like a lobster pot. I have seen him heaps of times. He was a celebrity.

I lived in a street of small shops and a very lively, noisy place it was. There were four men who got drunk regularly every Saturday night. They got drunk most nights, but only comfortably so. On Saturdays they really let themselves go. One, a harmless kind of ass, used to reel along the pavement roaring r-r-r-rats every step of the way, until his quiet wife and two nice quiet daughters smuggled him indoors and up to bed before he woke the whole street. He kept a secondhand furniture shop. Number Two was a pork butcher and and he got drunk and beat up his wife because she drank more than he did. Number Three was a jolly old chap who kept a secondhand clothes shop and he got drunk and challenged everyone in the street to come out and fight him, and nobody would because they liked him. The last one, Number Four, kept a mews and he just got drunk because he found it easier to be carried home than to walk. He never quarrelled or fought, or beat his wife, or swore. He just got helplessly drunk.

All these men were good businessmen and all day they worked hard, kept their homes in comfort and their children loved them. I knew them all to speak to and was not at all afraid of them. They drank for pleasure and it was their only pleasure. There was literally nothing else to do. No football, no cycling, no buses, no dart clubs, just a game of shove ha'penny at times. No whist drives, no dances, no cinemas, only two theatres in a town the size of Portsmouth. The pubs were the only place of entertainment and the beer was strong.

There was a dreadful lack of any effort to keep these people happy and occupied. They worked until 8 or 9 p.m. and then drank solidly until 11 p.m. There were many other things lacking that the working classes now enjoy. No unemployment pay, no old age pension, no widow's pension, no children's allowance, no sick benefit, no free medicine or doctors; nothing but continuous hard work, or no work, hunger, sickness and death to look forward to, and people who talk of the 'good old times' should have lived in them and learned better.

Hordes of bare-footed children swarmed outside the dockyard gates begging for the scraps of food the dockies might have left over from their dinners. Tiny boys and girls of 5, crying because the bigger ones pushed them out of the way and snatched the food from their hands. This was a daily spectacle even after Grandpa and I were married and he always kept a sandwich or two from his packed lunch to give to some poor tiny one.

The 1914-18 War put a stop to all that. It meant work and bread for all, widows and orphans were cared for and National Insurance and the DOLE came into being. I am glad the world is so much better off, but I am sorry that people have such short memories. No one seems particularly grateful.

Things I have done.

Well, for one thing, I have made a patchwork quilt, with 2,109 one-inch squares in it. All by hand, padding and lining and all.

Then I have climbed mountains : Helvellyn (3,118 feet) three times; Old Man of Conistone (once); Langdale Pikes (three times); Plynlimmon (once); Cader Idris (once); and Snowdon (twice), but I don't count it as a climb, as we used the mountain railway. Once we went by car over the Vyrnwy Pass. There is no road, no path, only rugged mountainsides with sheer drops on either side. The signboard said "Dangerous - but not impassable". So we started over and had to go on to the bitter end, as it was impossible to turn back. We got over in one piece, but like the three wise men, "we returned another way". (Matthew, 2, 12.)

In a more domesticated and peaceful capacity, I have written, produced, made the dresses and scenery for six pantomimes. That was when I was a Sunday School teacher. May did all the music and playing, but I wrote all the words and taught the kids, and wrote the lyrics. They were : "Cinderella" (twice), "Dick Whittington" (twice), "Babes in the Wood" and "The Sleeping Beauty". Also, when I was a teacher in the Congregational Sunday School during the war, I wrote and produced two "Services of Song" for their Anniversary Sunday. One was "The Light of the World" and one was "The Good Shepherd". They were very successful and the special preacher asked me to repeat it at the Evening Service, which I did.

Now that's enough about me; so now for the people I have seen and heard in the flesh and not over the radio.

Great Preachers.

Campbell-Morgan, the great Congregational missionary; Gipsy Smith, Methodist; F.C. Spurr, Baptist; Archbishops Cosmo Gordon Lang and William Temple; and Bishop Taylor Smith, Bishop of the Mediterranean, the greatest preacher of all.

My father went to London to hear Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who built the City Tabernacle which held 3,000 people and filled it twice every Sunday for many years. He also founded an orphanage for the sons of poor ministers of religion. My mother also heard Catherine, the wife of William Booth, who founded the Salvation Army, in the old Bluebell Theatre, Old Portsmouth. I was there at the time; my mother took me in her arms, but as I was only six months old, I have no recollection of the words of that wonderful woman. I only know of one thing she is reputed to have said. When she first found after her marriage that she was starting a family, she made a vow to God, "I will not have a Godless child", and she did not. All that family followed their parents' lead in the Salvation Army and their Lord's footsteps, in that they "went about doing good and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom" (Acts 10, 38). So much for Catherine's vow.

Now let me come down to more secular experiences. I heard Dame Nellie Melba sing in Portsmouth Town Hall, and Dame Clara Butt on the Clarence Pier. In the Concert Hall, of course, I have not seen very many great actors or actresses. Marie Tempest and Martin Harvey at the King's Theatre, and I believe I once saw Seymour Hicks. Henry Ainly and Sir Henry Lytton and Oscar Asche at Her Majesty's, London, and Owen Nares once at the Kings'. We were not great theatre-goers. It was such a nuisance to get from Portsmouth to Gosport late at night. There were two things I tried to do and failed dismally. One was to ride a bicycle and one was to learn to swim. I just could not get the hang of either, so to save myself and other people trouble, I gave it up as a bad job.

It is a queer thing that people who have agile minds generally have stiff and awkward bodies to house them. I was never any good at team games. I could not skip - only backwards. I could toss a ball, but I'll be darned if I could catch it. I had to learn to hit a shuttlecock by standing facing into a corner. I could trundle a hoop, spin a top, jump high in 'higher and higher', but I was always last in a race. I seemed to be alright on my own, but in a game with teams or partners, I was always more of a liability than an asset. Ruby was good at everything. Papa bought her a skipping rope with turned wooden handles that cost every bit of 4½d. because she skipped a hundred without breaking down with a piece of Mama's old clothes line. If I could skip six without falling over the rope, I thought I was an athlete and rushed indoors to tell someone. I have never graduated beyond the bit of old clothes line.

Once more I must refer back (to page 25), where I spoke of standing round the piano singing carols and hymns. How came we, who were so poor, to have a piano? Well, I spoke earlier of my grandfather Gamblin of Nelson Square. He died in February, 1887, when Ruby was going on to be eight in the April. He had always been very anxious about her on account of her bad eyes. Perhaps he thought she might go permanently blind one day. At any rate, he left my mother his £30 insurance money

with the solemn injunction to spend it on something for "that child". By the time my mother got that £30, Ruby was going to school and doing well and her eyes were much better. She was crazy on music and talked all the time of Nelly German and Annie Mighell (pronounced 'Mile'), who were learning to play the piano. Mama said to her, "Would you like a piano?" Can a duck swim? Of course she would! So the £30 went down on a 36-guinea piano and the remainder was paid off in a year. That piano was in our house in Jubilee Year 1887, because I know our beautiful Uncle Ike, of profane memory, came to see us as soon as he arrived in England from Toronto, and he sat down at the piano and played from memory "The Fairyland Waltz", and did it very well too. Now I wonder how, when and where he learned to do that?

Ruby started lessons at once and because she had learned early to be independent of her eyes and to look with her hands, she very rarely used the written music. She learned the music with her hands and memorised everything. She didn't buy many pieces, but when she heard a schoolfriend playing a piece that she liked, she would borrow it for a few days and learn it by heart, and hand, and return it. We always had little cheap songbooks and, of course, Sankey's Hymns and Books of Carols, and my happiest hours were spent standing by the piano and lifting up my voice in song. I could not or I would not learn to play the piano. St. Cecilia never smiled upon my Natal Day. Ruby put me so much in the shade, I did not dare to venture. But I could sing. I could always sing. Even my father acknowledged that fact. Sometimes he took one of us to chapel with him and once I heard my mother ask him, "Which one will you take this morning?" and he answered, "I'll take the little one - I like to hear her sing." My mother never left me in any doubt of her opinion of my voice. As sure as fate, if I was having a good time singing my favourite hymn or song, she would shout out to me to "shut up that screeching". Outside the home I had quite a few fans and have sung to the sick and dying and to the feeble-minded.

Once in hospital I sang a little girl to sleep who was desperately ill with pneumonia. She asked me to sing "There's a Friend for Little Children", and I did so two or three times over softly and still more softly until the Matron came and said to me, "It's alright now, Mrs. Chase, she has dropped off." Next day the Matron told me that I had undoubtedly saved her life. If she had not had that timely sleep, she would have died before morning. So God used my voice and blessed it on that occasion.

I sometimes wonder why my mother was so proud of Ruby's playing and yet so despised my singing. It gave me an inferiority complex that it took me years to conquer. She liked other people's singing, some of which was very far from good. It doesn't matter now. I remembered my one neglected gift when I had children of my own. Each one had music

got lessons and singing lessons and some pleasure out of them. Jamie was a choir boy and a good one. May profited most from the piano lessons and is very much in demand as an accompanist. Both girls were in the Girls' Friendly Society choirs and sang in festivals. Only Robin and Gillian have no gift that way.

I tried also to form in them a taste for literature and read aloud to them some of Dickens' books. Also a lot of Longfellow's poetry: "The Song of Hiawatha", "The Golden Legend", the "Spanish Student" and "The Courtship of Miles Standish", and Tales of a Wayside Inn". I don't suppose Mummy remembers a word of them, but she listened and enjoyed them at the time. What does she read now, I wonder? What do you three read?

Now I wonder if you are at all interested in the Great Parliament Act of 1906? I can give you the skeleton of the things it did for the common man. First, it gave one man one vote, and did away with the multiple vote mentioned earlier. Then it made it compulsory for all elections to be held on one day, so even if a man tried to vote in two places, he could not be in two places at once. Also it meant that men made up their minds beforehand and were not led by press reports to cast their vote for the winning side. Then it curbed the power of the House of Lords. Before the passing of the Act, the House of Lords had power to throw out any Bill passed by the Lower House of which it did not approve. Even after the Commons had passed the Bill three times, the Lords could still kill it dead; and after the third time, it was dead, and could not be brought up again until it had been altered and amended to please their Lordships. So no Liberal measure could become the law until the country had a change of Government decided by a General Election; and Governments could stay in power for seven years. All this was changed by the Parliament Act. In addition to the One Man One Vote, and One Day Election clauses, the life of a parliament was cut by two years to five year terms. Another clause was that any Bill passed in the Commons twice could become law and receive the King's signature without the consent of the Lords.

How did it get past the Lords when the Act was still in the Bill stage and the Lords had sworn it should never pass? The then Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, approached King Edward VII, a wise and liberal-minded man, and asked him to create enough new peers to sit in the House of Lords and outnumber the die-hard Tories and get the Bill passed into law. The King consented to do this and warned the Lords of the danger their House was in unless they saw reason and passed the Bill. This they did, after a lot of hot-air-talk about treason, and so the Great Parliament Act was passed and duly received the King's signature, but not King Edward's. He died before he could sign it, but he warned his son before he passed away that the will of the people must prevail or even the throne itself might be in danger.

Of that great Liberal Government and all the good it did there is no room to tell. Old age pensions, National Insurance, Unemployment Pay, Labour Exchanges, free milk for the children of the poor. The Children's Charter, a Bill promoted by the M.P. for Portsmouth, Sir Thomas Bramsden, which forbade young children entering or being taken into pubs and given drink, and many other safeguards of the young.

Bramsden had been the Portsmouth Coroner for many years and he knew how many helpless babies were done to death each year by drunken mothers, falling on them, dropping them from drunken arms onto the pavement, laying on them in bed in drunken sleep; and all attributed to accidental death. There was no proof of anything else. Now I have said enough to prove to you that loud-mouthed Socialists are only building their flimsy reputations on the solid, good foundations laid down by good Liberals - Herbert Asquith, David Lloyd George and Winston Churchill.

The first Great War 1914-18 threw the whole world into the melting-pot and so many things happened to change whole countries and their governments that things that had looked impossible to achieve in 1914 became accepted facts in 1920. Women came into their own. They had worked so hard during the war years, driving trams, buses and lorries, stepping into men's jobs as the men were called up for the services, and what is more, doing them far better than men and in less time, that the Suffragette Movement took on a new look. They had no need to burn houses, smash windows and march to the House of Commons from that time on. All the arguments about "Women's Inferiority" collapsed before the great fact that "anything you can do, we can do better". So first came "enfranchisement". Women got their vote. Then by degrees other privileges followed.

Women were admitted to the Universities, they became doctors, lawyers, ministers of religion and members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers. The only profession they have not entered as yet is the Church of England. I expect that will come in time and, when it does, there will be a great revival of Christianity.

The terrible upsurge of crimes of violence and the chronic dishonesty of the young people of our time is due, in my opinion, to the decay of the Sunday School and the neglect of the "Ten Commandments". Nowadays, children do not hear their parents and teachers saying to them week by week, "Thou shalt not steal", "Thou shalt not kill". Instead of these injunctions, they are told, "Honesty is the best policy." That means nothing to the average greedy scrounger who is crafty enough to keep himself on the right side of the law so as to keep out of prison. And instead of Our Lord's command to "do unto others as you would like them to do to you", there is a general tendency to "do or you will be done".

This is all wrong, but how can any one teach their children the things they never learned themselves, and the young parents of to-day are fearfully ignorant of the "Moral Law". This is the result of three generations of secular teaching only, in our schools, and the decay of Sunday worship. Yet, I am sure that deep down in the hearts of the ordinary people, there is a longing for and a hidden love for the God of our fathers and the Faith of our fathers, and it will be reborn and flourish anew when the right moment arrives, as nineteen centuries ago, "in the fulness of time, Christ came into the world to save sinners". May it come soon.

CHAPTER 20

This must be my summing-up chapter. I have not mentioned the death of King George VI, or the abdication of Edward VIII, who finished up as "third mate of an American Drifter called 'Wallis Simpson'", nor the life and death of our late beloved King George VI, nor the reign of Elizabeth II and her marriage to Philip, or the birth of her three children. All these events, with the death of Queen Mary and the marriage of Princess Margaret, are of recent times and within your own memory, so I need not remind you of any of them.

The world to-day is in a state of chaos, with wars and rumours of wars, and no one knows what will be the final outcome. I do not like to look too far ahead for the sake of my grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They will grow up in a different world from the world of my childhood. A better world as far as this world is concerned, I know. More money, more food, more clothes, more fun, more amusement, more leisure, more holidays, more and better houses, more time and work savers and homes and fires and beds for everyone. That is all right, and as it should be. No one wants to see hunger and poverty reigning in a world of plenty. But the dark side of the picture is always there as well as the light.

We see all about us evidences of more crime, more violence, more gambling, more wasteful smoking, more vice, more thriftlessness, more selfishness, more swearing and loose talking, more Godlessness, and an air of "Damn you, Jack, I'm all right" about the young people of to-day, that is a perpetual source of grief to the older generation, who were brought up to "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes, last chapter, last 2 vv.)

Now I do implore you who will read this record of eighty years of one woman's life - if you have a Bible, read it daily and form your lives on its teachings. If you have not got one, buy yourself a good one and make a study of it. You will find it the very cream of all literature. A person who

has not read the Bible is not educated. He or she is not even half educated. It deals faithfully and drastically with the most important side of life, which is not merely of this world and temporal, but the side which is spiritual and eternal, the very breath of God Who made us all. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth". Remember also the Saviour of the World Who bought you at such a price, not with silver or gold, but with His own most precious blood, that you might be His witnesses and ambassadors to all men. Remember also the Holy One Who is ever present with you and giveth wisdom and understanding to all who ask and never lets any one down.

Now the circle of the old family is breaking up and this very week my sister, Ruby, has lost her husband, Dave. I have mentioned Ruby so often that you must be tired of her name, but she is my last link with my childhood, as I am hers, and we two are closer to each other than we are to our younger brothers. They came late. I cannot go to her, as I am too old to travel, and she is even older, but we can write and no doubt we will write often, until the next link is broken. I shall miss our happy days at the caravan, now Ruby has no one to bring her.

Well, I must write FINE and do it with regret. I have known love and joy, poverty and pain, hope and fear, and now I can say with the Psalmist: "I have been young and now am old; and yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." (Psalm 37, 25).

F I N E

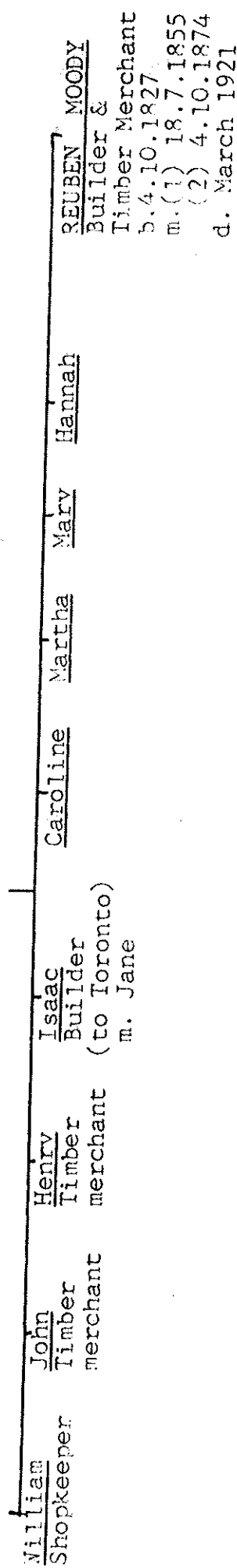
Written by Alice Maud Chase
(nee Moody)
for my grandchildren.

January 20th, 1961.

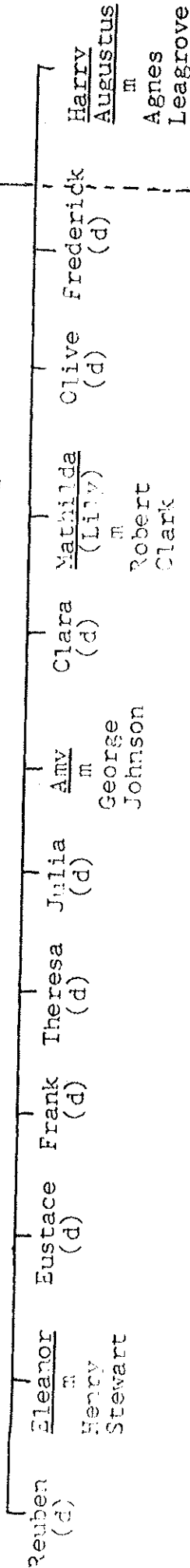
MAUDE / MOODY FAMILY TREE

William NAUDE, d. 1780 approx. in Hull

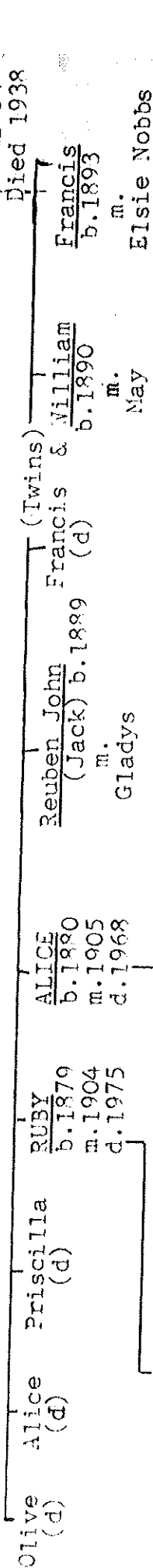
William NAUDE - later changed to MOODY
b. 1777 (Date of death unknown)
m. Hannah



Children of Reuben's 1st marriage to Eleanor Bewsey, born 1836, died 1871.

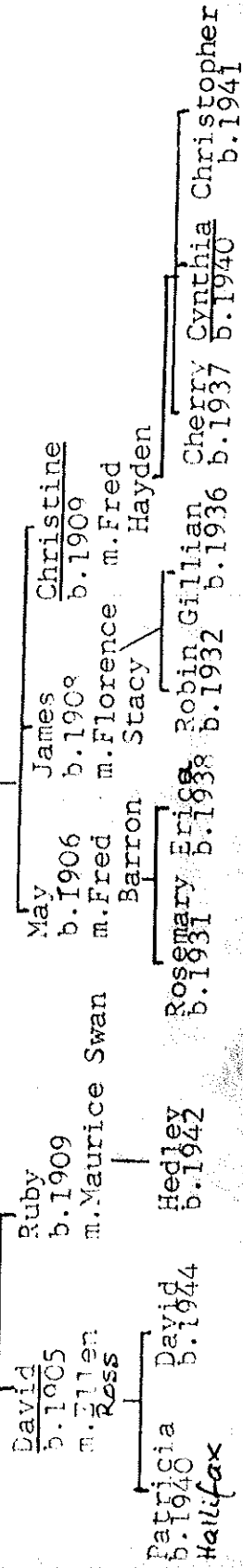


Children of Reuben's 2nd marriage to Priscilla GAMBLIN, daughter of Francis & Ann Gamblin. Born 1854, Died 1938



Alice m. James Chase

Ruby m. David Hucker



Hallifax