

## VII

### RE-MARRIAGE

#### NEW RELATIONS

IN a second marriage publicity is the one thing most people seek to avoid, and though early in the century the objectionable methods of the Press for securing details of family life had by no means reached the proportions of the present day, I remember how annoyed Lord Barrington and I were at the small paragraphs constantly appearing in the Society papers, giving items of our social life, in many of which there was not a shadow of truth ! though some consolation was found in the recognition how hard up the editors must be for "copy" for their papers when even a middled-aged couple were the object of their attentions ! An article in the *Westminster Gazette*, speaking of "Mrs. Arden Birch's great wealth !" (a supposititious idea !) and of the "flat and uninteresting character of Beckett Park !", was the final straw, and we resolved to call on the editor, on our way to a city appointment, to express our indignation and to inquire from what source this data had been received. The editor, who gladly consented to give Lord Barrington an interview, fled when he saw a lady on the stairs, and it cannot be said that we obtained much information from the sub-editor sent as his representative. The poor man "hummed and hawed" and eventually explained that the papers were dependent



VISCOUNT BARRINGTON

*Compton Collier*

for their society news on usually reliable correspondents. The interview was short, and having flatly denied my claims to wealth and repudiated the statements of the uninteresting character of the Park, and also extracted an undertaking that no elaborate explanation should make for more publicity in the matter, we left with the feeling that we had done a satisfactory morning's work !

It has always interested me to note the different way in which men and women consider re-marriage ! While a bachelor of thirty-five or over takes a long time in making the matrimonial plunge and weighs the "pros and cons" with grave impartiality, he, as a widower, seems to settle down without hesitation to a second venture. This, however, may be taken as an appreciation of his happiness under the first regime, and is due also to his helplessness without a wife, more especially if there are children. A woman, on the contrary, marrying when young, has fewer misgivings, but in a second marriage makes the decision after much anxious reflection, in the fear that the happiness of the first marriage may not be repeated ; or, if the first venture has not been a success, that a repetition of earlier troubles may recur. Again, if she has a right feeling and common sense, and has escaped an infatuation for her boy's tutor or a young man ten years younger than herself, she will probably consider her children's interests equally with her own, and whether the aspirant for her hand will, as far as possible, replace the loss of their own father !

From my point of view that was a primary consideration, and time could not but prove what an excellent stepfather Lord Barrington made in the new rôle he then assumed. His very human outlook on life, his loving disposition, his great sympathy with young people, his simple faith and high-minded integrity, made him one of the pleasantest and best companions for my boys, and his devotion to

cricket and to Eton was another bond of union between them. Under these circumstances, it was all the more amusing, when, at our parties in Ennismore Gardens at that time, my elder son, the musician of the family and possessing a great sense of humour, would invariably choose as his favourite song, the clever words of the Unemployment ditty in *The Orchid*, and after the lines :

It ain't much enjoyment  
To ask for employment  
And only get work instead !

would proceed to recite with marked emphasis and reproachful glances at myself :

For two of my sisters  
Are passive resisters  
And Mother has married agine !

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In every new phase of life one is confronted with fresh duties and responsibilities, and in my case the adoption of a ready-made family, made, with my husband's seven and my five, the respectable number of twelve in all. My husband's children were already married or out in the world, and I remember the admiration I at once conceived for the good looks of sons and daughters alike, inherited from both father and mother, and in particular for the great beauty of the second daughter, Maud, who married the Hon. Eustace Fitzgerald, and whom I shall always consider one of the handsomest women I have ever met. Later on I could assure their father that his young people had the looks and my children the brains, a remark that required some consideration before deciding where the compliment ultimately rested ! The elder daughter married the late Mr. Hope-Brooke, a well-known gentleman farmer and a near relative

of the Rajah of Sarawak ; and the younger, the late Colonel Reginald Curtis, of the Royal Engineers.

It was delightful to realize as time passed on—what was perhaps unnoticed at the moment—how warmly I was welcomed by many members of the Barrington family, how kindly I was admitted to the intimacy of my husband's old and best friends, and how greatly they appealed to me and I, seemingly, to them.

The Barringtons appeared in some ways connected with every family you could mention. The aunts, Mrs. Sartoris, Lady Normanton, Lady Strathmore (her Royal Highness, the Duchess of York's great aunt), and Mrs. MacLagan, wife of the Archbishop of York ; and the uncles, Sir Eric, in the Foreign Office, who had married Sir Henry Graham's daughter, and Sir William, in the Diplomatic Service ; the Hardwickses, Haldons, Cravens, Normanbys and Ravensworths, constituted the innumerable first and second cousins with whom to make acquaintance, and when added to my own multitudinous relations of Roses, Wrottesleys, Hornbys and Stopfords, made a formidable number with whom to keep in touch.

The elder members of my new relations were especially congenial, in their old-world courtesy, their cultured minds and their perfect manners, reminding me of similar traits in my own people of the same generation. It has always seemed a marvel to me that in the lack of the many educational advantages we now possess, how many of that age acquired so thorough a mastery of foreign languages, the comprehensive grasp of general information and the famous aptitude for letter-writing of which we see so little now. We are apt to forget that these gifts were not peculiar to one age, but found favourable soil in the quieter home life, in the leisured hours, in the time then available for deep study, compared with the superficiality engendered by the

vast number of interests and distractions which call now for our attention.

Our earliest visit was paid to the MacLagans at Bishopthorpe—my first experience of life at an Archbishop's Palace. Our host, a remarkably able and saintly man, and a composer of many beautiful hymns, was adored by one and all. His wife, Augusta, however, my husband's aunt, was held in considerable awe by her nephews and nieces, while her commanding presence and her perfect acquaintance with the duties of her position gained for her the sobriquet of "Augusta, by the grace of God!" One indiscretion is nevertheless recorded of her when, on her sister's marriage to Lord Strathmore, she determined to solve the mystery of Glamis Castle and was found by her brother-in-law trying various devices to trace the haunted room, and was banished from the Castle from that date. The Barrington and Strathmore alliance was not a success and the wife died of a broken heart, it is said, at the early age of twenty-eight.

At Lady Normanton's house in Ennismore Gardens, but a few doors from our own, members of the family and some privileged friends and distinguished foreigners were constantly to be met, both she and Mrs. Sartoris giving the best of dinners, in their perfect acquaintance with the culinary art, which seemed to distinguish every member of the family. Eric and Bill Barrington—the two brothers—were nearly always present; Eric, then in a high position in the Foreign Office, gave equally choice dinners, sharing his sister's talents in this direction. The family trait was so well recognized that I remember it became the dictum of the Carlton Club that "What a Barrington did not know about cooking was not worth knowing!"

In the April of 1905 my daughter, Cicely, was married to Dick Stopford, and she accompanied her husband a

month later to Pretoria, where he had a billet in the Civil Service following an appointment on Lord Milner's staff. In the summer of the same year we rented the Brassey's house at Upper Slaughter, and here the younger Fitzgeralds and my children had a splendid time together. The three Fitzgeralds inherited the good looks of their parents, and Iris was considered as the greater beauty, though I recollect the artistic Duchess of Grafton of that day telling me at a later period that, in her opinion, Pamela, the younger sister, who afterwards died of the influenza epidemic of 1919, was one of the most attractive girls she had come across.

The acquaintance with my husband's delightful place in Berkshire, then let to Mr. Whitehead, was made through the kindness of Countess Hoyos, who ran the house in the declining years of her father's life, and, from the first moment of my introduction to Beckett, I shared in the great appreciation and affection my husband always evinced for the old family home. Mr. Whitehead, the great engineer and war material manufacturer, had leased the place for his lifetime from the eighth viscount, and his daughter, her husband and her large family were living with him there on the occasion of our visit. Mr. Whitehead was bedridden, but the young people had a cheerful house-party downstairs, with many leading Germans then residing in England as the Hoyos' guests; amongst them members of the Bismarck family, Countess Hoyos's daughter having married a son of the great German chancellor, while Count Blucher, our mutual friend, was another constant visitor.

Under the circumstances, I could not well explore the house, and lost myself over and over again in the Gallery, where the four corners of the building are at first sight entirely similar one to the other. We left much hoping

that when the place was once again ours, we might be able to live there—dreams which were realized, when in the following year Mr. Whitehead passed away and we were enabled to call the place our own again.

In January, 1906, I paid my last visit to South Africa, and with my daughter Dorothy, and my husband, sailed for Cape Town. I remember how the latter, never ill at sea, jarred terribly on my sea-sick sensations when he called at my cabin in the early hours, beaming with good health and good spirits, and telling of the marvellous joint of roast beef of which he had partaken at his breakfast that morning.

We went direct to the Boer capital on our arrival at the Cape and I was much struck with the many discomforts experienced in the Transvaal at that time, which must have been keenly felt by those who had lately enjoyed the more favourable conditions of home life in England. As for my husband, he expressed his entire disapproval of existing conditions, the bad food, tough meat and inferior cooking provided being the subject of his ire, both then and in later recollections of his South African tour! Owing to the kindness of Sir Richard Solomon we were able to rent "Towie," the Lawley's house at Johannesburg, during the absence of the owners in England, and here my daughter Cicely's first baby arrived in February of 1906. The situation was still generally unsettled in those parts; the amount of crime was even greater than during our previous visit; and the town itself and all the neighbourhood was scoured at night by mounted patrols; marauders not only attacking openly any house in which they hoped to find loot but never hesitating to shoot dead any householder who offered the slightest resistance! This had happened in a house opposite "Towie," just before we arrived there, and on appealing for protection to the Police Headquarters,



the Commandant insisted that a revolver, to be used in self-defence, must be kept by everyone staying in Johannesburg.

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We returned to England a month later, and during the following years time and energies were devoted to many and varied interests, amongst them Frank's Eton career and my elder son's experiences in connection with his Foreign Office examinations. Again, there were constant efforts behind the scenes to get my son-in-law transferred to London, and these were crowned with success, when Sir Richard Solomon kindly offered him a post in the High Commissioner's Office. Alterations to Beckett were other preoccupations, and, in our residence there later, acquaintance was made with most agreeable neighbours then living in the district. The debates in the House of Lords were a great attraction and occupied many hours of the day, and a considerable amount of time was taken up by visits to my husband's relations and to friends at the Hague—to the Landgraf of Hesse at Pankah—and to my son a little later, at his first diplomatic post at Vienna. Budapest, Oberammergau (where we were present at the Passion Play) were all taken *en route*, while winters were spent in Egypt and the south of France.

Underlying this multiplicity of interests and home and social duties, there was the growing recognition, as we lived more at Beckett, of the appalling monotony and stagnation of village existence, which resulted in the determination that, at any rate at Shrivenham, I would endeavour to show what could be done in various ways to promote the revival of rural social life.

## ETON

## MY HUSBAND'S RECOLLECTIONS AND MY SON'S SUCCESS

But to return to Eton, it was indeed a pleasure when my boy Frank's arrival there enabled us to renew the relations with the place which had been partially severed on my elder son's leaving school for Oxford University. Frank had a favourable introduction to his new surroundings, in the reflected light of his brother's reputation at Eton, in the promise of his own talents making for success, and in the favourable auspices of his stepfather's associations with, and intense love of, the school; again, in my husband's remarkable recollections of every incident connected with his own life there, his devotion to cricket, to cricketers past and present, and to Eton itself, where he had spent such happy years, and to the Playing Fields, where he figured in the "Eleven" in three successive years. Each of these places had, in his eyes, a fascination of its own, associated with the episodes of those early days, which lived so vividly in his memory. Every visit to Eton afforded opportunities for some fresh remembrance of the masters he had liked and disliked, the jokes practised on them and anecdotes of the hundred and one great friends of those schooldays.

This devotion to Eton was extended to the House in which he had been placed, his tutors, his house masters, his fag and his fag masters and each and all of his youthful companions. Nor is it surprising that the nine long years spent there at the most impressionable age should remain in memory as the happiest reminiscences of schooldays. So often were these incidents recited that they have remained clearly in my own recollections, while a few notes I persuaded my husband to make of his Eton career have been invaluable as *aides-mémoire*. Nor do I feel any

compunction in presenting these particulars, in the recognition of the real interest they will evoke in the few survivors of that far-distant time and of the amusement they will afford to Etonians past and present.

My husband tells of his arrival at Eton on the afternoon of June 6, 1857, as a very small boy at Mr. Hawtrey's House, which stands at the corner of Keats Lane on the Slough Road, "probably in tears," he relates, "after bidding adieu to my parents; and tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the Askelon, to my dear old nurse, from whom I was parted for the first time! I was then ushered into the presence of Mr. Hawtrey, a kindly, benevolent old gentleman, with wonderful blue eyes. 'Well, my boy,' was the inquiry, 'what do you know?' 'Please, sir, nothing!' was the reply! And at that early age, with little previous instruction, I felt no shame in the avowal! 'All right, my boy,' said the tutor, 'write your name in my book,' and having done this with some difficulty, no further questions were asked and I was promptly placed as lag of the school. A few days later the late Lord Langford, who has since remained my dear and intimate friend, arrived at Eton and, on his admission that he could not write, had to take my place as the lowest boy in the school. I remember my father, in those early days, taking me to a tailor in Regent Street—Simpson by name—then celebrated for 'down-the-road box coats,' to place the order they had probably never before executed for so young a boy! My father chose two suits, one a harmless grey, but the other an enormous check pattern in brown and black, which I must candidly own I never had the cheek to put on, or I should have been hooted all over the school yard!"

"And this reminds me," the tale continues, "of the story of a Scotch boy coming to Mr. Ainger's House and arriving with three kilts and no trews, and my tutor's urgent request

that he would change from his national costume into the more ordinary and modest attire of an English schoolboy, and the frank avowal, when he heard the child had no other clothes, that he would not be responsible for the boy's life if he appeared at Eton in a kilt ! Bed, therefore, had to be his refuge until Tom Brown had made him a complete Eton suit ! I have nothing further," we read in these notes, "to relate of my career in Lower School. I was switched twice by dear old Billy Carter, then Lower Master, and in the year 1860, having passed into Upper School, I was transferred to Mr. Marriott's House, which afterwards became Mr. Mitchell's and next door to Mr. Vaughan's—then Miss Edgar's.

"An absurd thing happened almost the first night I was there ! Mr. Marriott's House being full up, two other small boys and myself were located in a large bedroom in the private part of the house. One night I was considerably annoyed by the appearance of a mouse behind the shut-up wooden bedstead then in vogue at Eton. Not being able to get at the mouse, the brilliant idea occurred to my fertile brain of drowning it ! No sooner thought of than acted upon !—and the entire contents of my water jug was emptied behind the bed—the mouse not caring a tuppenny cuss ! Next morning, on being called by Jones, the butler (commonly known as 'Bones' by the boys, on the *lucas non lucendo* principle, because he was rather well covered with flesh !), he inquired if any of the young gentlemen had accidentally upset some water the night before. 'Not much accident, Bones,' said I, 'I poured the whole of my water jug behind the bed to try and drown a mouse which was annoying me !' 'Well, sir, do you know what 'appened ? Your tutor 'ad got a dinner-party (the dining-room being exactly under our bedroom), and the water soaked through the floor and trickled into the soup tureen

just as 'e was 'elping the guests to soup !' I roared with laughter, but foresaw *pœnas*, flogging and even expulsion staring me in the face ! However, my tutor behaved nobly, as, after hearing my story, he burst out laughing and forgave me !

“ Mr. Mitchell, erstwhile master and renowned cricketer, was my fag master, my chief duty being to oil his bats, of which he possessed at least a dozen ! I remember that, when annoyed with me about some delinquency, he gave the order for a bun to be fetched from Layton's every day for a week, in a paper bag bearing the name of the confectioner from whom it was bought. This was a favourite punishment of the fag master, which involved a good half-hour's walk to Windsor Hill and back, whereas it did not take five minutes to go to 'Little Brown's,' the rival sock shop close at hand ! As I defy anyone to differentiate between the buns coming from the two shops, I hit on a happy expedient of securing six bags from Layton's and placing a bun purchased at Little Brown's in each of them to present from day to day to my fag master !

“ During my last year at Eton, Mr. Austen Leigh, better known as the 'Flea,' came there as a master ; at that time C. J. Thornton, a tremendous hitter and having considerable muscular power in his arms, was in the Eleven. 'Flea' was leaning over the rails of the Pavilion looking with much interest at a Cricket Match, and being in an ideal position for being attacked, up came Thornton and issued one of the most amazing and sounding spansks I have ever witnessed ! Austen Leigh turned round as though shot, and I never saw such a comical expression on two faces before ! The one almost crying with pain, the other horror-struck, as, though he possessed unlimited cheek, he had hardly sufficient assurance to make for a master in cold blood ! Thornton at once apologized, ' Oh, sir, I am so sorry ! I thought you

were "Moonie" Barrington!" (my nickname). "Never mind, Thornton," said the 'Flea', "it didn't hurt much!"

Correspondents in *The Times* of recent date discuss the reason of the prefix of "Bun" to the name of Thornton, and some controversy has arisen as to how the nickname was gained. My husband's version, however, never varied that the origin of the sobriquet of this redoubted cricketer can be traced to an occasion at Lord's when a great match was taking place, and Bun Thornton, while fielding for his side was also munching a large bun filled with jam and cream, when a warning cry was raised, and looking up he saw a ball coming in his direction, and in the twinkling of an eye had deposited the bun, jam, cream and all in his trousers' pocket, and proceeded to catch the ball!

My husband would tell my sons, in his inimitable way of recounting events of past history, of his days at Eton, and I remember one very popular story which commenced in the words: "When I was at Eton, two of my half-uncles were there—a very unfortunate occurrence for them, as being well-behaved they were penalized at times from bearing the same name as their mischievous nephew! On one occasion, the French master, the long-suffering butt of ill-disposed pupils, complained of my conduct to the tutor, and the order was given to 'stand down,' which meant a swishing, and was conveyed to Eric Barrington by mistake. Indignant at this, Eric sought an interview with the master, disclaiming the charge and saying there must be some misunderstanding! The tutor, irate at somebody having blundered, would not at first acknowledge there might be truth in the explanation given, and when Eric ended up by saying, 'You must mean my nephew, sir, who is a very naughty boy,' he replied angrily, 'Nephew, did you say? And what right have you to have a nephew?' The extreme sentence might have been carried out but for the

further remonstrance, ' But, sir, I do not learn French ! ' This at least could not be ignored, and with great difficulty the master was convinced ; while, oddly enough, a nice invitation to breakfast in high quarters, also intended for Eric Barrington, reached me that morning." Thus, the narrative continued, " I escaped the punishment, which nearly fell on my uncle, and I received the pleasant invitation intended for him ! " " So time went on and at the age of fifteen I developed into a medium-paced bowler, and eventually got into the School Eleven."

Yet still more popular with my boys was the tale of their stepfather's being taken to task in his division for having failed to prepare his work for the day, as showing the courage and independence of an Etonian when maintaining the prestige of the school. Springing to his feet the cricketer indignantly exclaimed : " Look here, sir, I am now at Eton to play cricket for the honour of the School and not to do any work which interferes with cricket practice—I cannot do both ! " Loud applause from the boys greeted this pronouncement, and we are told the master had nothing further to say, an ending to the episode, in which I, for one, cannot quite believe !

Another tale is of a boy we will call " Robinson," a remarkably bad compiler of verses—so bad indeed that he always got someone else to do them for him. On one occasion, failing to find a friend willing or with sufficient spare time to help him, he presented his own production with somewhat amazing results, for on showing them to his tutor, Mr. Cookson, the latter remarked, " Why, Robinson, you must have done these verses yourself ! " " Yes, sir," said Robinson, on which he received the unexpected reply, " Well, if you ever show up another copy of verses done by yourself, I shall have you very soundly flogged ! "

These few lines of Eton remembrances end with the

pathetic words, "Almost the saddest day of my life was the one on which I left the dear old School, having been there nine years and three months!" In after years, my husband's happiest times were spent with those who had been with him at Eton and not a soul he had known and liked there ever passed from his memory or affection. The love of cricket lasted throughout his life, and no big match was ever missed at Lord's! The Eton v. Harrow match was a sacred day, when no relatives and friends present could interfere with the long hours spent in the Pavilion. It was a sacrilege, too, to miss the 4th of June and all engagements must be subordinated to allow of the whole day being spent at Eton or Winchester for the annual cricket match between the two schools. Eton, cricket, and his old friends were the paramount interests of his life, and with these tastes and proclivities it gave him great pleasure to have a stepson just beginning his Eton career. While my husband, from his long connection with the school, was a great hero in the eyes of a young Etonian, on the other hand his warm sympathies with the experiences of a younger generation and his great appreciation of my son's success, naturally appealed to the boy and still more to his fond parent.

On my return from abroad in the previous year, I had found considerable difficulty in placing Frank in a preparatory school for the short time before he could enter Mr. Vaughan's House at Eton, the school masters choosing to consider that some delinquencies at home had caused his removal abroad. But Mr. Carter of Farnborough had no such misgivings, though he feared a lower place might be taken at Eton, in the loss of earlier teaching in Latin and Greek. Frank, however, passed into Upper Fourth and in six months had outdistanced, in both these dead languages, the boys who had been studying them for two years past, giving some justification for my contention that too much



concentration on these subjects at an early age is a waste of time, when they can be acquired with far more facility in the greater brain power of later years.

Successes in other ways attended the years my son spent at Eton. Distinctions and prizes were won in trials and examinations, and he was the only Etonian who had, up to that time, secured a language scholarship at the University. The advantages of his early acquisition of foreign languages were also seen when he won in competition with the whole school, King Edward's Prize for French in one year, and for German the next, in the latter case having to face a German boy as a formidable opponent. He had already shown histrionic and literary tastes in his editorship of the monthly illustrated magazine compiled by the family at home, and to which I and my husband contributed for the benefit of the daughter living in South Africa. These literary tastes found vent at the early age of twelve years in the stirring tale, "What an English shake of the hand will do," and which told of two great friends both deeply in love with the same lady. These two became mortal enemies in their jealousies of one another, and were only reconciled when meeting in a hospital at the Cape in the Boer War, and placed in adjoining beds they could not resist an English handshake, which seems to have removed earlier misunderstandings and strifes. The story was shown to me at this stage, when quite incomplete, and being naturally anxious to know of its finality, I inquired which man the lady eventually married! This question seemed for a moment to puzzle the author's powers of composition, for it was not a case of the one a hero, and the other a villain, but of two good enough sort of people. Reflecting for some minutes, he remarked thoughtfully, "She did not marry either of them, but they each visited her every other day!" After expressing my deep appreciation of the story, I strongly

advised tales of heroism and adventure, rather than of love !

A further incident in my son's Eton career is perhaps worthy to record. He was "up" to a master called "Stone," who asked the boys to construe some Greek and Latin sentences which spoke of a man being extremely drunk. The boy next to Frank answered promptly, "Drunk as a Lord, sir !" to which Mr. Stone replied, "Well, that is one way of looking at it, but I should like another definition. What do you say, Birch ?" Without any hesitation the boy looked full at the master and with an air of extreme innocence on his face, replied, "Stone drunk, sir !" Mr. Vaughan told me the story was repeated to him by Mr. Stone, who added, "He ought to have been kicked for it, but it was so clever, I could take no notice !"

How vividly I recall the long days spent at Eton, usually in glorious summer weather, the change from the fatigue and bustle of London life in the height of the season, the interest of watching the cricket in the society of my boy, while my husband must necessarily find out and make acquaintance with the Captain of the Eleven and with nearly all the cricketers on the ground, and secure an interview with Mat Wright, to make sure of seats for the coming matches. The cheery luncheons with many masters, the interesting guests met at the Provost's house, the afternoons, again looking on at the match and meeting a multitude of friends, the splendid teas provided by Mr. Edward Vaughan, when strawberries, unseen elsewhere, always figured on the host's hospitable board, the few precious moments we spent in the boy's bed-sitting-room before leaving, and the return home, after the very pleasantest of days.

Amongst many of the Eton masters with whom we were intimately acquainted, Mr. Luxmore, Mr. Rawlins and Mr.

Vaughan were our special friends, and the latter, as my husband's erstwhile fag, was very high in his affections, while his dare-devil love of adventure made him the admiration of observant and critical house boys. It was through riding a horse which no one else would mount that he met with the accident which made him lame in later years, and fortunately I was not aware at the time of the perils faced when he took Frank in a small boat, without a single sailor who knew the ropes, on the dangerous crossing to the Scilly Isles, arousing a strong protest from Mr. Smith Dorrien on the great peril of such excursions.

It is curious what small episodes of various phases in past life often survive in our memory while more important events are forgotten in the pressure of a busy existence. I remember how touched I was when on returning from South Africa, and not having time to send the small tip which generally provided our teas in my boy's rooms, I found he had stopped the daily tea order I gave him for ten days, previous to our visit, in order to entertain us in proper style, when we arrived! I remember also the gratification of hearing Mr. Vaughan, his House Master, remark at one of his famous teas on the 4th June, that "of all the clever boys he had had in his House, he considered Frank the cleverest!" As many other parents were present, I was justified in assuming this appreciation was made in good faith! A further recollection is of the dull November wintry evening, when Frank was practising the "Vale" he had to recite before leaving Eton, in his House Master's room, and unmistakably showed his intense boredom with the rehearsal, while Mr. Vaughan endeavoured to supplement his pupil's vocal powers by joining in the song himself, all the time shedding an untold amount of grease from a dripping candle, held in his hand to lighten the proceed-

ings, on boys and music alike. One of the Whittakers, then at Eton, was impressed to play the accompaniment, his shoulders shaking with laughter at the whole performance.

I suppose all recognize the position which Eton masters assume in the lives of their pupils as unique in its way. Loyalty to the tutors and the firm conviction of the superiority of their own houses, are outstanding features of an Etonian's creed. Yet this loyalty is by no means incompatible with many ingenious methods of pin-pricking annoyances and practical jokes. Naturally the French masters, who with few exceptions fail to understand the idiosyncrasies of English boys, are favourite victims. Any natural infirmity of the tutors also gave many a point of vantage to the pupils in the perpetration of practical jokes. I recall Mr. Broadbent's deafness as a case in one point. On one occasion, while in the classroom seated at his desk facing the young people, a young man with great ingenuity had placed the announcement on the reverse side of the desk, unnoticed by Broadbent but seen by all the boys: "There will be a Concert to-day." This proclamation was justified by a distinct humming directly the master began to speak, but which in his deafness he did not perceive. With even greater resourcefulness another notice was substituted for the first in the midst of the lesson and proclaimed that "Five minutes interval would be given for refreshments," whereupon every boy brought out from his pocket his favourite sweets which he could partake of without being detected by the tutor. Another way of getting a rise out of the House Master was for the young men to leave the cards of parents at his house in the pleasing certainty that on the following day he would with a considerable amount of self-satisfaction allude to the kindness of Lord Somebody in calling on him, adding how unfortunate it was that he

should have been out when the visit was paid. Yet in striking contrast to this mischievous spirit is the warm friendship, continued through life, of the old Etonians and their tutors of bygone days.

It is remarkable again how great is the influence of so-called Eton tone and traditions on the character of school life. The fetish of "good form," which, as a synonym for higher religious motives, shapes daily habits and practices. The respect for parents inculcated, with the elimination of any false sense of shame under embraces in public of an affectionate mother, the small sacrifices and generous spirit reflected in the episodes quoted above and the ever-growing development of "give and take," so marked a trait of English character, in which all public schools have an equal share.

Nor can we fail to recognize in this connection how materially the Eton masters have encouraged all that is to the good in these traditions, and, by the high standard of their own lives have given a splendid example to the boys in their houses and classrooms. Nor, again, can we fail to admire the patience and ingenuity exercised in extracting the best from the most unpromising of materials, the confidence and trust placed in their pupils which almost invariably evokes an encouraging response; and the self-control and forbearance shown in tackling the perversities and idiosyncrasies of boys who, though devoted to their tutors, lose no opportunity of trying to get a rise out of them, and of shirking any task uncongenial to their tastes. Again, how much latent talent and ability are fostered and developed in the personal interest shown in any exceptional gift, while invaluable to parents is the sympathetic advice given to the oft-times vague aspirations and ambitions for their young people, and the warm appreciation of home influence when exercised in the right direction.

VISITS TO COUNTRY HOUSES AND THE  
LANDGRAF OF HESSE

But I am anticipating events. Mr. Whitehead's passing away in 1906 placed Beckett in our hands again, and led to immediate plans for redecorating the place and for the structural work entailed in providing bathrooms, central heating and improvements to the electric-light installation. Having made a considerable expenditure on this undertaking, we let the place to the Lawson Johnsons for two years, and were all much amused by Lady Normanton's congratulations on having secured a tenant in that "nice Mrs. Bovril and her family !"

During these two years we spent the summer months of 1907 in Nairn, and the summer of 1908 in Northumberland. The Nairn visit was full of interest, my young people finding many others of their own age for games and picnics, and we all enjoyed the delightful excursions made in the neighbourhood. The Roses were the most friendly of cousins, the Cawdors also in residence, and the fascination of the Highland Meeting and games at Inverness made a pleasant conclusion to our stay in the North. My husband and I played a good deal of golf at Nairn, and it was here I nearly won a diamond necklace for a brilliant stroke in the game, for which, however, I could not claim the credit ! As usual when playing on the links, I had engaged a pro. to accompany me and by his tuition improve my style of play. At one of the tees we were faced with an immensely long drive, in the course of which a considerable expanse of water had to be covered. My husband, in the full certainty that I could never do the stroke, exclaimed, "If you carry this distance, I will give you a diamond necklace !" Knowing I could not do it by my own exertions, I was determined to secure such a valuable prize in some other way, and dis-

tracting his attention by showing him something in the distance, which would engross his powers of observation for a minute or two, I shoved my driver into the hands of the professional, saying : " Get it over as quickly as you can ! " When my husband turned to make his own stroke he saw the ball had carried the land and the water, though the club had returned to my hands, and he could only have found consolation in the recognition we both shared that his fortune would certainly not allow the purchase of the necklace !

The summer spent in the following year in a country house near Morpeth was equally enjoyable, and, in the near vicinity to Cragside, gave many opportunities of visiting the Armstrong cousins. Cragside has always appealed to me as one of the most attractive country houses with which I am acquainted. The back of the building nestles, as it were, into the crag from which it derives its name ; the front commands magnificent views of a vast expanse of moorland and heather in brilliant purple shades intersected by the larger and smaller lakes, so marked a feature of Northumberland scenery. The house, built on varying levels, is full of surprises, in the quaint shaped rooms, some large, some small, the unlooked-for passages and unsuspected steps ; the whole house, replete with every comfort and luxury which taste and money could provide, made an ideal setting for a happy home life, and, in the genial hospitality of the host and the charm and gaiety of the hostess, a most delightful resort for relations and friends. From Cragside we often paid visits of a few days to Bamborough, the fine old Northumbrian castle of great antiquity, which had been purchased by the first Lord Armstrong, and on which he had expended £12,000 yearly, in restoration work, in the later years of his life. The Castle and its surroundings made not only a show place but a delightful habitation in the

summer months, where we could enjoy to the full the unique charms of the Castle, the historic interests of the place, and the excellent golf there provided; yet it must be acknowledged that ghostly associations and gruesome stories of the past and the haunting vision of the seemingly bottomless well, the prominent feature of the entrance hall, occurred with strange persistence to a nervous visitor in the silent watches of the night. So popular is the Castle and the many attractions provided, that year after year the suites of rooms into which the place is now sub-divided are let to the same families in unfailing regularity.

Among other visits in England in those two years, Ravensworth Castle had a peculiar attraction in the great similarity of the high vaulted roof and general structure of the great hall to our own at Beckett—though Ravensworth can claim one great advantage in the well-planned and handsome staircases on either side of the farther end of the hall. Of Beckett it is always said that this indispensable way of reaching the upper floors quite escaped the attention of the architect when the new house was built 100 years ago, and had later to be placed in the too-contracted setting of a small vestibule opening from the large hall.

Many visits also were paid to Norton, the charming home in South Wales of Sir Paulett and Lady Milbank, who, as some of my husband's best friends, soon won a warm place in my affections, the home-like atmosphere of the place and the happy family life appealing greatly to those brought up in the same traditions and even reconciling me to what I considered the waste of one and a half hours spent each morning in feeding a large number of chickens, apparently known to my hostess by name, but of no earthly interest to me. The elder and younger daughters of the house, Mrs. Forester and Mrs. Henry—the latter then unmarried—were two of the most beautiful women, and the



younger was so fascinating and universally admired that I could quite understand the difficulties Lady Milbank experienced in keeping undesirable suitors at a respectful distance. I remember now the naïve way in which she would complain quite seriously to me that she really could not leave the room when one of these young men admirers of her daughter called, in the certainty that, if she did so, he would immediately take the opportunity of proposing to the object of his affections.

We went on from there to the house of a Mr. Seymour-Allen, the great admirer and would-be second husband of Lady Gort, whose writing was so illegible that she had to get her two sons to decipher the proposals she received regularly by post. The house-parties were not of great attraction, although much was made up for by the kind hospitality of our host. His leading ambition was to maintain, even in advancing years, the athletic form and upright bearing of earlier youth, and to this end a rope was fastened in the hall, by which he would haul himself up, when the guests had gone to bed, to his own room above!

Yet of greater interest was a visit to his Royal Highness, the Landgraf of Hesse at Pankah (near Hamburg) in 1907. This was one of his country places, where semi-royal state was maintained. Those invited to stay at the Palace were provided with charming suites of rooms and were not supposed to intrude on Royalty until the luncheon hour of one o'clock, so a quiet morning could be spent in exploring the neighbourhood or in reading or writing. Though the Landgraf was most kind and hospitable to his guests, a certain air of Court ceremony was maintained at Pankah, which was increased by the rather stiff dignity of Princess Margaret of Prussia—the Landgraf's sister-in-law, who was staying there at that time. Kind and affable in her intercourse with others, she never seemed to forget the etiquette

befitting her rank and, seated at the head of the table, she spoke very little and maintained a smiling but rigid demeanour. My husband's perfect aplomb and friendliness without presumption, however, seemed to improve the situation; beyond a due deference befitting the occasion, no sense of awe or inferiority complex entered his head.

On the first evening the Princess had refused to allow him, not being a German, to kiss her hand, but later on this rule was relaxed and we were the only guests favoured when we left, with an invitation to stay at her house at Carlsruhe. So well did the acquaintance ripen that when my husband inquired of the Princess why she so seldom came to England, and she gave the reply: "It costs too much, Lord Barrington!" I heard to my consternation the further proposition: "But why not come over with the Kaiser, ma'am, and get him to pay expenses?" and the answer given (instead of the snub I expected): "A good idea—I think I will act upon it?"

Every afternoon visits and excursions were made in the neighbourhood, and state and dignity, combined with rustic observance, were carried out. Carriages, each drawn by four of the Landgraf's splendid grey horses, drove up to the door and guests, strictly according to precedence, took their places in the barouches and were driven for miles in the surrounding country, ending with tea in the woods, a favourite pastime shared by German Royalty and their subjects alike. At dinner some of the Landgraf's neighbours were generally present, and early hours to bed were welcomed when conversation was exhausted, no games patronized, and so much state ceremony seemed to pall. It was an amusing experience and one cannot sufficiently appreciate the hospitality provided, but I am not sure I should care to pay visits to Royalty too often, unless born in Royal circles or closely connected with the Court.

After this visit to Pankah, my husband returned to England and I went to Nuremburg where I spent much time studying the glorious work of ages in the museums of this interesting place. I then journeyed to Munich, where my son was staying, and, during my few days there, we were present at the performance of the Passion Play at Oberammergau. Much as I had heard of these presentations, the accounts fell far short of one's real experiences. The impressive dignity of the performers, their marvellous adaptation to the various parts assigned them, especially Anton Lang, who personated Christ, were hardly to be looked for in members of a village community and must be attributed to the underlying traditions of many years, to the deep religious feelings of the actors and to the appreciation of the great privilege of being permitted to present these holy mysteries. Each representation of the Passion Play was preceded by the participation of one and all of the actors in the Holy Communion in the early morning hours. I think perhaps the most moving part of the whole performance was the glimpse given of the agony of the Virgin Mary, watching in the distance her son on his way to Calvary, with the Cross being carried at his side.

But other events of a more domestic character were occupying our attention in 1907 and 1908, when my elder son was competing in the Foreign Office examination for admittance to the Diplomatic Service under somewhat disconcerting circumstances, and, in view of our determination that all should be subordinated to giving him every chance of success, our home life was considerably affected for the time. Everyone knows that the varying standard of knowledge and attainments of the candidates in one year and another, increases the difficulty of gauging possible success in a competitive exam. Unfortunately,

in 1907 two First-Class Honours men had entered the lists and passed First and Second, and the Third scored a few more marks than my son, thus leaving him the Fourth place. It seemed certain that his admission was secure, for as a rule, though only two successful competitors were taken yearly for the Foreign Office, four to six were received annually in the Diplomatic Branch of the Service, and in fact a call on the Authorities in Downing Street confirmed this belief. But alas! a short time later we learnt that their views on the candidate who had passed just above my son, blocked the way to appointments below the two First-Class Oxford men. This information was confirmed by both Conyngham Greene and Eric Barrington who called at the Foreign Office to see what could be done and heard the same tale; while one or two competitors who were "in the know" crossed over to the Foreign Office side, where no block would be found, recrossing to the Diplomatic Service a little later, with the result that, with fewer marks than my son who passed the following year, they gained a year's seniority.

Another examination on the same lines twelve months later would not have been a serious matter, although, of course, the expenses of tutor and cramming were very great, but in this case, a new examination, based on the stipulated subjects in a three-years' course at the University, was to come into force, and, as my son had only been able to spare eighteen months for residence at Oxford, his acquaintance with the new special subjects was much limited. This meant seclusion in some place just outside London, where no interruption to work need occur, where foreign tutors would be accommodated and town was easily accessible should coaching be required.

I well remember the German professor arriving week after week at the Oxshott house we had taken for the

time, with his tiny little handbag and my son showing him each time the bathroom, of which he as regularly failed to take advantage ! I also remember my visits to the study at ten o'clock at night, and finding preparations for another two hours' work, a wet cloth round the student's forehead ! So determined was he to pass, and so difficult was it to take up these subjects in so short a time that, even if he spent an hour in visits to friends, notebooks had to be closely studied both on the outgoing and return journey.

When the time arrived for the next examination, great precautions were taken to avoid the possible mishaps which might occur when coming to town from a considerable distance, for the Foreign Office circular clearly stated that no excuse would be admitted should the candidates fail to appear on the specified day ! So the one car conveying the competitor from Oxshott had to be followed by another car, in case the first broke down. I shall never forget that time and the evening post-mortems on the questions dealt with in the day, the possible correct solutions given or the mistakes which would lose so many marks. Then there were the further considerations of nourishing food and of procuring rest at nights, and whether aspirin, though affording sleep, might not affect the brain power needed the following day !

Again, another untoward incident occurred, for having let our town house while staying in the country, and using my mother's when we came up for a night, the news of success was seriously delayed in reaching us, causing great anxiety as to possible failure. I remember the strain of tedious waiting, until the determination was made by son and parent alike to accept cheerfully the inevitable, whatever it might be. A visit to town on the morrow elicited no fresh news, until after my son had

departed for a pleasant distraction in the form of a visit to the dentist, a wire arrived, which of course I opened and found to be from a friend at the Foreign Office saying: "Congratulate you on your well-merited and brilliant success!" It was in the dentist's chair that the young man had the first intimation of the good news and on coming to the telephone received the confirmation of his hopes. Even then, after so much anxiety there was difficulty in believing the information was correct, until further inquiries at the Foreign Office gained official confirmation. It was indeed a great performance to have passed second, under such disabling conditions, and there was a humorous side to the situation, in the disappearance from that time of the somewhat strained relations of the past year with friends at the Foreign Office, one of whom, a leading official, acknowledged he could now meet us without fear!

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin, and it is in the knowledge that hundreds of young men are going through the examination ordeal each year and that they, therefore, may be interested in the somewhat exceptional incidents of these experiences that I claim justification for recording them at length. I cannot but wonder if the anxieties connected with the young men's "last chance" are impressed as indelibly on other parents' memories as they are on mine! Perhaps the Foreign Office learnt something from the events of this year's exam., for from that time a Board of Selection was appointed and before this august body all candidates for the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service had to appear. Lord Eustace Percy, who was interviewed on another occasion, told my son, by way of illustrating the exhaustive process of the ordeal, that "he went in a man, but came out a sausage!"

And in moralizing on men, matters and exams, do not these experiences further emphasize the regular course and sequence of events which we note in the lives of those considered well-regulated families, where even new and unsuspected circumstances seem to proceed on normal and placid lines, while in the case of others not only the daily tenor of existence is associated with untoward interruptions, but new developments present aggravated difficulties and acute problems almost impossible to solve? In the same way that some are, through their lives, looking for and "taking-in" the help, support and sympathy which other less fortunate mortals are always giving out, without, apparently, any adequate return.

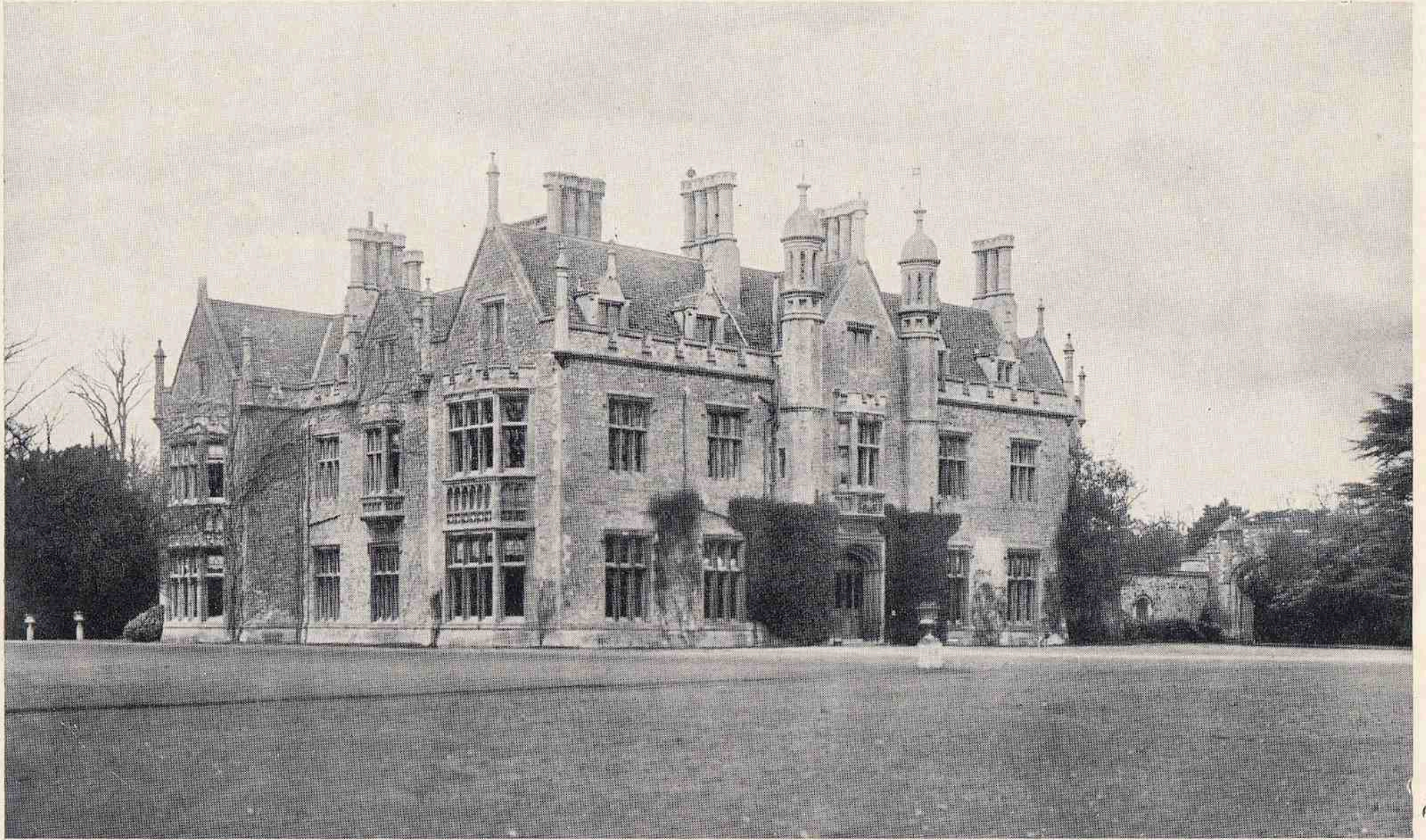
From the time of our return to Beckett, when the Lawson Johnson tenancy expired, we commenced the open house hospitality with which the place was for so long associated. The original mansion had been pulled down in the early years of the twentieth century, and a new one built on a site close at hand by Bishop Barrington (the last of the Bishops Palatine) for his brother, the sixth Viscount Barrington. In this work he was assisted by a friend, Tom Price and his cousin, one of the Liddells of the day, both showing considerable ability in design and construction. It was fortunate in the terrible architectural vogue of those days that the Bishop and his advisers produced a handsome pile of buildings in the Elizabethan style though somewhat marred by the Gothic touches so dear, no doubt, to the Bishop's tastes.

The house was admirably adapted to entertaining, in the somewhat foreign arrangement of the rooms on the ground floor—the library, saloon, yellow drawing-room (only used at that time on Sundays or on State occasions), the enormous dining-room, all opening the one into the other. Bridge in the library, theatricals in the large hall,

dancing and games in the saloon and sitting-out-room supplied by the yellow drawing-room ; while the billiard- and smoking-rooms afforded excellent cloak-rooms, and all made an ideal house for every kind of festivity.

We had only been in residence a few weeks when the manœuvres of that year, with Headquarters at Faringdon, brought great excitement and life into the neighbourhood. Many friends we had not seen for ages figured in the Regiments taking part in the Red and Blue armies, amongst whom were the two Fortescues, one in the 17th Lancers and one in the 60th ; while Colonel Du Cane, one of our oldest friends, stayed at Beckett, and invited many of his brother officers, including a very charming Count Gleichen (afterwards Lord Edward Gleichen), to come and dine with us. Day after day we drove in the neighbourhood, following the manœuvres, though understanding little, I fear, of the general plan of campaign. For it has always seemed to me, as a civilian, the greatest puzzle how the Umpires could clearly understand where failure or success was achieved. The climax was reached when the clump of trees on high ground at Faringdon, which had seen many battles in Parliamentary times, was attacked and taken by one of the contesting forces, and I remember the keen interest and excitement of the members of a London choir we had asked down for their summer outing, when they found themselves surrounded by troops who were then turning their attention to the capture of Beckett itself. We were only too glad to entertain at dinner at Beckett those who had partaken in the strenuous work of the two armies in the preceding day, and the evenings were enlivened by jazz dances and representations of leading artists of the time, given by Colonel Barrington-Foote, Colonel Du Cane and others, which the older members of the party seemed to enjoy quite as much as the younger folk present.





BECKETT

Nor was it only during the manœuvres that these festive times were enjoyed by the young people. Year after year at Christmas and also in the summer, the house was crammed with many visitors. Amongst our more frequent guests were the Milbanks, the Gorts, the Ravensworths, Lady d'Arcy de Knayth, Miss Anson (niece of the charming Lady Blandford of that day) and her brother ; Miss Philips, the two fascinating Miss Surtees, who came with their cousin, Lady Gort ; Mr. Wingfield of Barrington Park ; my eldest stepson and the Stopford family, and many young married people contributing to the charm of the entertainments. A quiet house dinner-party took place on the first day of the guests' arrival, and was followed on the next few evenings by a dance, a dressing-up night, theatricals, charades and other forms of amusement, and I remember the letters from one visitor after another, saying how much one and all had appreciated the week spent with us and their intense enjoyment of every minute of the day.

Undoubtedly the charming grounds surrounding the house added to the fascinations of the place. While by no means competing with the beautiful flower gardens of our neighbours, Beckett, it may be claimed, has more than counterbalancing advantages in the wide expanse of lawns, in the lake of one mile in length, in the marvellous trees, of which the beeches are unique in their way, and in the seven miles of paths designed with much ingenuity, leading through copse and woodland, and shaded by overhanging trees, along the water-walk and other parts of the grounds, affording as much exercise as could be desired, without once leaving the enclosures of the grounds. One is naturally prejudiced in describing the home of so many happy years, but it has remained for all visitors to appreciate especially these advantages connected with Beckett House.

In a book published on ten of the *Gardens and Grounds of England*, Beckett is mentioned as one of those of supreme attraction.

The Inigo Jones Tea House, originally the home of valuable Ming china long since broken or destroyed, stands in its architectural attraction above the lake close to the Cradle Bridge, and a landmark of exceptional beauty in the surrounding grounds. It was from this point of vantage, before the public road was diverted to a greater distance from the house, that the ladies of the party would watch the coaches passing below them on their way to Town.

The lake was, of course, an added attraction for the young people, and the water not being deep, there seemed to be no danger in immersion. An outrigger left by my son, George, was a great snare to boys, tempting them to feats on the water, which invariably ended in disaster, my nephew experiencing three upsets into the lake on the first afternoon he arrived, until his aquatic exercises were abruptly terminated by his mother's stern decree that she would not have more suits sacrificed in this way. Canon Hill, our dear old Vicar of Shrivenham for over forty years, had also some unpleasant acquaintance with our lake in attempting to negotiate the narrow Cradle Bridge on his bicycle; he fell into the water, and in view of the entanglement of the machine and the profusion of weeds was fortunate in escaping some dangerous results.

Beckett again was an ideal home for young children; the long nursery passage in a wing of the house, with large day and night nurseries, pantry, etc., opening out on either side, provided healthy surroundings and ample space for recreation and exercise on rainy days, while no noises or disturbances could reach visitors in other parts of the house. Nor did illness fortunately interfere with



THE INIGO JONES TEA HOUSE AT BECKETT

more cheerful scenes below, for as time progressed and the Stopford family increased from year to year, Fate seemed to decree that most of their childish ailments should take place at Beckett. Chicken-pox, measles and whooping-cough followed one another in rapid succession, but as I when a child had contracted measles staying with a friend of my mother's and my own children had taken advantage of visits to their grandmother, and aunt, Mrs. Morton Philips, to get through these infantile disorders, I felt I had no grounds of complaint. For these slight contretemps there was more than compensation in the pleasure and happiness of the large party of children and grandchildren in our midst. The older generation of Barringtons also paid us many visits in their touching devotion to their old house and happiness in recalling the many incidents of their youth, and were deeply gratified when we placed Beckett at their disposal for two months, and they and the two brothers, Sir Eric and Sir William, could feel once more they were in possession of the place.

Shrivenham and its environs afforded also in those days not only the hunting society of which I was somewhat in awe, but provided neighbours such as Lady Wantage of Lockinge, Sir William Anson of Pusey, Lord Banbury, Lord Faringdon, all greatly interested in politics and literature, and who had made their mark in the world. Sir William Throckmorton, with his charming sisters, kept open house at Buckland; other neighbours were Sir Cyril and Lady Butler, the Butlers of Carswell, the Eystons, Mrs. Wroughton and later, on the death of Sir William Throckmorton, the Knight of Kerry and Lady FitzGerald—all formed a delightful society. I always consider how fortunate we were, when returning to the family place, to find such a charming entourage.

Nor were the farmers and tenants forgotten in these

days at Beckett. Theatricals in the hall once a year, followed by supper in the billiard room, were much appreciated, while the summer garden-parties to which one and all were invited, were another way of getting into touch with every inhabitant of the place. Our tenants on our Beckett, Shrivenham and Longcott farms were friends of many years' standing, a succession of Wilsons, Millards, Hedges and Lawrences, allied to each other by inter-marriage, having lived on the property for many years. Mr. James Wilson of Bishopstone, though not one of our tenants, had sons on Shrivenham farms, and was known throughout England for his proficiency in sheep farming. Mr. Frank Wilson and Mrs. Hawkings, the wife of the tenant of the Home Farm, were both invalids for several years and greatly enjoyed drives in our landau to the shops beyond their walking powers though acknowledging a certain shamefacedness in driving in state to make their purchases in their landlord's equipage. Mrs. Hawkings in particular became one of my greatest friends regardless of social distinctions. Her brave acceptance of a bed-ridden life later led to a weekly visit to her house, and to a warm appreciation of her saintly character, her keen sense of humour, and her wonderful patience when set aside in the prime of life from the active work and household duties in which she so delighted. I have still the little books she sent me, the warmest recollection of her deep devotion, and I always feel she will be one of the first to welcome me in the Great Hereafter.

A little later hospitality was extended to the railwaymen from the G.W.R. at Swindon. Two or three hundred men, with their wives and children, arrived early in the afternoon and arranged for the last train to be stopped at Shrivenham to take them home at 10 p.m. One could but be struck by the powers of organization of these

working men. Arriving punctually at about two o'clock, they met at different parts of the grounds and then marched *en masse* to the front of the house, where we received them. The elder men superintended the games, kept the records of the marks gained in the competitions, and managed the races after tea for the young people, and so careful were they to see everything tidied up before they left that no one would have known the following morning that a fête of this description had taken place! It was a strenuous day. Games of every sort were provided, extra punts hired for the boys to use on the water, races planned in the evening, for which prizes were given, and a cold supper supplied before the men left. We were on duty the whole afternoon, forgetting fatigue in the happiness of our guests, and learning to know many individually. After a short interval for dinner we came out to see the men before they departed. I remember one day, soon after the railway strike, which had greatly disgusted most of the G.W.R. men and gained them no good in the end, my husband made a short speech in return for their vote of thanks, and concluded by saying: "My good men, if there is another strike, don't you come out!" Laughter and cheers greeted this injunction, the men knowing full well they could not but follow the dictates of their Trade Union!