The Amazing Marriage

By

JOSSLEYN HENNESSY

Family members mentioned are the following:

Father	Hugo Seilern	1840 - 1886	
Mother	Ida Zaluska	1841 - 1916	
Children	Ida (Idetchka) Seilern	1864 - 1944	married Philip Hennessy (1873-1954)
	Carlo Seilern	1866 - 1940	married Antoinette Woerishoffer (1875-1901)
	Jossleyn Hennessy	1902 - 1976	son of Ida (Seilern) & Philip Hennessy

Jossleyn Hennessy wrote two books -

"The Amazing Marriage" a biography of his parents Philip Hennessy and Ida Seilern
and
"Some Seilern Memoirs" in 1974

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About the Author

JOSSLEYN HENNESSY was educated at Charterhouse and New College, Oxford. He obtained an Honours degree in History, and a Diploma with Distinction in Economics.

On leaving Oxford, he was successively on the staffs of Lloyds Bank and the Chartered Institute of Secretaries in London, and the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris. He has been fluent in French from his earliest years.

Between 1931 and 1937 he was Reuters correspondent in Paris and then Chief Paris correspondent of the News Chronicle, covering innumerable economic and political conferences and crises. He travelled widely in Europe and reported the Spanish Civil War. His despatches annoyed the Franco regime so much that they posted his photograph on the frontier with a reward for his capture, but he cannot remember how much he was worth.

The President of the French Republic created him a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour with the citation "For the greatest services to the cause of Franco-British friendship".

In 1937 Viceroy Lord Linlithgow appointed him Director of Public Relations to the Government of India to reorganise its press and public relations department. In 1942 he was sent to Washington DC to inaugurate The Government of India's Information Services in the U.S.A and Canada.

In 1946, he returned to India as special correspondent of the Sunday Times to cover the last days of the British Raj. Always to the fore amidst the scenes of flames and violence, he was ambushed twice in Pathan tribal territory in the company of Jawarharlal Nehru.

Since his return to the U.K. in 1953 he has been a frequent contributor to Encounter, The Spectator, The Economist, The Listener, The Times, New Society, and many other publications.

He has participated in innumerable sound and television broadcasts in the U.K., the U.S.A., France and India.

This word document is typed from a copy of the original, given to Peter Seilern by Armyn Hennessy, Jossleyn Hennessy's younger son. Jossleyn was born in 1902 and died in 1976. He is buried in Dean, Edinburgh, Scotland, together with his wife Lora Frances Noel-Paton (1904-1975) and his son Flavian (1937- 1961).

I Introducing Philip and Ida

This is the story of my parents' marriage. My father, Philip Hennessy, loved my mother, born Ida * Seilern and Aspang (a Countess of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), good humouredly, nonchalantly. Throughout their lives, they exchanged a flow of letters – imaginatively, extravagantly, baroquely gallant on his part, affectionate on hers. They always had interesting things to talk about: their conversations were animated, punctuated by my father's bursts of hearty and infectious laughter at his own wit – which, for the most part, was kindly, though he had barbed shafts of reserve for moments when people or circumstances frayed his normal joie de vivre – and by my mother's silent laughter; she laughed with her eyes. Philip respected Ida and took care to insist to me that she was "a very great lady", by which he meant that she never once reproached him for his mistresses, for the bevies of women in adoring attendance upon him, for his financial fecklessness, for the loneliness of her life – a long struggle with the burdens that negligently he shifted onto her shoulders.

Philip was an extravert of a now extinct species – the Edwardian man of pleasure. He enjoyed vital, full bosomed, flamboyantly bedworthy women, of whom he tired easily and from whose clutches he then deftly or, if necessary, ruthlessly, disentangled himself. Ida was as handsome as she was distinguished, but she was eight years older than Philip, and she aged quickly. At a party she was interested and observant, rather than an active participant. She had studied music and was a gifted pianist. Philip's interest in music ran the gamut from Lottie Collins' Ta-ra-ra boomdiay through Marie Lloyds' I sits among the cabbages and leeks to Franz Lehar's classical Merry Widow. Ida's interests were intellectual: she had a real contribution which she made diffidently when talking intimately to two or three intelligent friends. Philip savoured Balzac's melodrama and Anatole France's irony, as did Ida, but he was only mildly interested in her views on education and psychology, based on wide reading, that Ida loved to discuss and clarify. Yet he listened with gravity, appreciative gestures and shrewdly inserted comments intended to show that he was following the argument. If pressed for his opinion, he would formulate one in line with Ida's reasoning or just sufficiently different to encourage her to elaborate one of her points. Thus Ida enjoyed her voyage round her mind and was delighted to find that Philip agreed, while Philip basked in his own mastery of the art of conversation and of spreading good humour.

To the friends of each – as to me for years – the marriage was incomprehensible. Why did Philip marry a woman so different from those whose beds he continued to patronise? Why did Ida tolerate the shocks, difficulties, and miseries of her marriage? Since pain is worse when repressed in aching silence, how came it that Ida was emotionally inarticulate?

Reflection and research have, I believe, enabled me to unravel some of the twisted links that bound them. If we are to understand them, we need to go back a little distance into the histories of the ancestry of each to see what heritage each brought to their marriage.

II The Heritage of the Aristocratic Zaluskis and Seilerns

My maternal grandmother, Ida Zaluska (1841 -1916) was born in Austrian Poland, the tenth child of Count Charles Zaluski (1794 – 1846) and his wife Amelie (1803 – 1858). Ida was a neurotic, who created the tragedies of her life. In illustration of her character, my mother quotes William McDougall: "The man of unformed character is not integrated; he is moved by the crude impulses of his native tendencies and by the motives that spring from his various sentiments, but there is no governing centre, no dominant power that can control them, set them in due subordination to one another, or resolve incipient conflicts between them". Ida Zaluska wrecked her marriage, laid the foundations of the tragedy of my mother's marriage, and of the life-long adolescence of her son's character, my uncle Carlo.

My mother attributed her mother's persecution mania and perpetual self-pity to Mina, the old retainer who for years was nurse maid to Amelie's succession of children. Fanny, the baby of the family, two years younger than Ida, was Mina's favourite. Fanny could do no wrong, Ida no right. Mina was forever scolding and punishing Ida.

Yet Ida could have had a wonderful life.

The break-up of the Austro-Hungarian empire into penny packets in 1918, and the national animosities bred of two World Wars, ended an era when aristocratic society was international. Amidst today's democratic nationalism, the kind of family to which I belong, with first cousins in the United States, France, Germany, Austria, and Poland, and family connections with Ireland, Holland, Italy, and various Austro-Hungarian successor states, is losing its links and its identity. To many people today, a Frenchman, a Pole, or an Austrian is a foreigner, a person whose attitudes and customs are strange, of ten faintly ridiculous, probably "wrong". In the educated cosmopolitan pre-1914 world, such an attitude would have been unnatural when one travelled around visiting cousins of different nationalities.

Ida Zaluska was born fortunate. She inherited a dowry of 50,000 gulden, say £50,000 in 1973 sterling. As a Zaluska she had the world of the nineteenth century cosmopolitan aristocracy at her feet. She was a pretty brunette. She had a natural elegance and taste in dress. Her gaiety and charm gave her great initial success in society everywhere. Young men crowded to dance with her. Mothers and fathers welcomed her for her beauty, her birth, and her dowry. But she rarely kept friends; sooner or later her sensitivity to fancied slights and imagined wrongs created a desert round her. "Poor little mother!", wrote her daughter, "happiness could have been hers, but the threads which she chose to weave her life's tapestry were rotten." She enveloped her husband, her daughter and her son in her neurotic self-pity.

In 1863, Ida Zaluska, aged twenty-two, married Count Hugo Seilern, aged twenty-three, a member of an Austrian family, which had made its contribution to public life in the Holy Roman Empire. The family owed its fortunes to Johann Friedrich Seilern

(1645-1715) who, by his abilities, rose from bourgeois origins to be the outstanding Imperial diplomat of his time and to be First Austrian Court Chancellor to the emperors Leopold I (1657 – 1705), Joseph I (1705-1711) and Charles VI (1711 – 1740). Charles VI, having no male heir, wished his daughter Maria Theresa to succeed him. To ensure this, Seilern drafted the famous Pragmatic Sanction, which remained the fundamental law of the Empire until its dissolution in 1918. He was "the architect of the Austrian monarchy".

My great-great-great grandfather, Christian August Seilern (1712 – 1801), was the Imperial a ambassador in London from 1763 to 1769. He aroused the ridicule and contempt of Horace Walpole, but his friendliness to Great Britain and his diplomatic talents were appreciated by a series of Secretaries of State. He was the friend and patron of Joseph Sonnenfels (1733 – 1817), the theorist of "enlightened despotism" and was an active participant in the reforms of the Emperor Joseph II.

Ida aged 3 years

Hugo Seilern's marriage to Ida Zaluska was a love match. Ida poisoned it. After two or three years of scenes and reproaches they lived apart, and Ida began a restless life wandering around Poland, Austria, Italy and France in a succession of impermanent flats, hotels, pensions and villas.

Hugo and Ida continued to meet at intervals. Their periodical re-unions would begin well but sooner or later Ida made scenes. "Poor father!" my mother wrote in retrospect, "he wanted to win his wife's love, share her life, live with his family … She could have had him at her feet. He had loved her passionately madly… I realized this when I grew older and saw him with Maman. Papa had a warm heart and great nobility of character. In a letter to my mother that I read, he expressed his love for her delicately, charmingly… Papa was an atheist and a Free Mason*, but he behaved more often like a Christian than Maman. She passed happiness by. One cannot help feeling sorry for her."

Ida, 9 months old 1864 or 1865

*Idetchka was mistaken. F ree Masons believe in a deity.

However many scenes Ida made, Hugo did not, according to my mother, answer back: he bore his cross in silence. When in 1879, Ida brought an action against him for a legal separation, the judge asked him what he had to reproach his wife.

Quietly, without bitterness, he said "Nothing". Over the years Idetchka* began gradually to see her father in a new light.

She wrote: "I found it difficult to understand what was going on. Too young at first, for years separated from my father, subject to the influence of Maman, whom I used to see suffering, I could not form a clear idea of him. The charm of my father's personality attracted me. I sensed the quality of the man, of his way of life, of his remarkable intelligence but, especially when I was a girl, I could not be my natural self with him after years of Maman's complaints, criticisms, and false insinuations had seared my mind. He had no religion, while I, convent-educated, was still full of piety. He was not intolerant or bigoted, but his atheism created a barrier between us. He conceded the support that faith gave to those that had it, but he denied the necessity of religion, and condemned the disdain of Christians towards those who had no faith."

Ida in 1880 or 1881

My mother began a school essay: "Life, alas, is a road strewn with briars and thorns." She was ten years old when she wrote this.

That her father gambled away his wife's comfortable dowry was, in the judgement that Idetchka formed when she reached maturity, a compensation for his unrequited need for affection and his lack of a home life. This may have been so, but his mother** must share some of the blame for his fecklessness. She did not give him his inheritance but made a modest allowance of 1,200 thalers a month, a substantial part

Ida aged 10 years in 1874 of which he passed on for the upkeep of his wife and children. When he ran up debts, his mother paid them, but their relationship was

*My mother was christened Ida after her mother. Her parents called her Idetchka, Polish for "little Ida."

**Antonie Seilern (1811 – 1877), née Baroness Krosigk Not easy – sometimes they were on good terms, at others he refused to write or speak to her. She kept him thus like a schoolboy until she died in 1877 when he was thirty seven. Only then did he become responsible for the management of his affairs. Hitherto he had lived for music. H e was a pupil of Liszt and a friend of Brahms, with whom he played four handed; he wrote a number of charming pieces for piano and orchestra, which enjoyed some public success. But, on coming into his own, he struck out into a series of business ventures – mostly backing new inventions, all of which were going to make his fortune. However, as Idetchka said on one occasion when she went to meet him: "Papa is arriving with the first million, adding later:

Ida aged 10 years in 1874

“He came – but without the million!” He earned a varying living until afflicted with cancer of the tongue. He suffered and when he could no longer speak, he played the piano to his wife and daughter. He died in poverty in Munich in 1886 when Idetchka was twenty-two.

The sight of her father sinking slowly, painfully and bravely, added to her tragic memories of him.

Idetchka recorded that for the rest of her life she suffered from a recurrent nightmare in which she faced her mother in agony, filled with a sense “of helplessness, bitterness, even resentment that a child feels towards its parents … I seek to resist my mother’s domination, her peremptory orders and arguments, full of evasions and excuses…” She concluded “but when I meditate on her character and her life, I am filled with indulgence and pity. My resentment fades.”

Idetchka could have found the joys of family life in Austria, where she had Seilern uncles, aunts and cousins innumerable in those days of large families. The Seilerns were well-disposed towards her, her brother, and her mother. They were comfortably off, influential and “knew everybody”. Idetchka did enjoy some happy times, going to balls and concerts with cousins. She continued her studies at the piano, which she had begun as soon as she could reach the keyboard. In Vienna, she did not work under the great Theodore Leschetizky (1830 – 1915), because he only took pupils when they had attained sufficient mastery to have professional ambitions (his pupils included Paderewski, Mark Hambourg, Moisiewitsch, Katherine Goodson, and many others) but he used Fraulein Melanie Wiendzkowska to prepare pupils for him, and Idetchka was among those whose talent Wiendzkowska regarded as worth cultivating. She learned Leschetizky’s technique based on a study of muscular movement and concentration of detail.

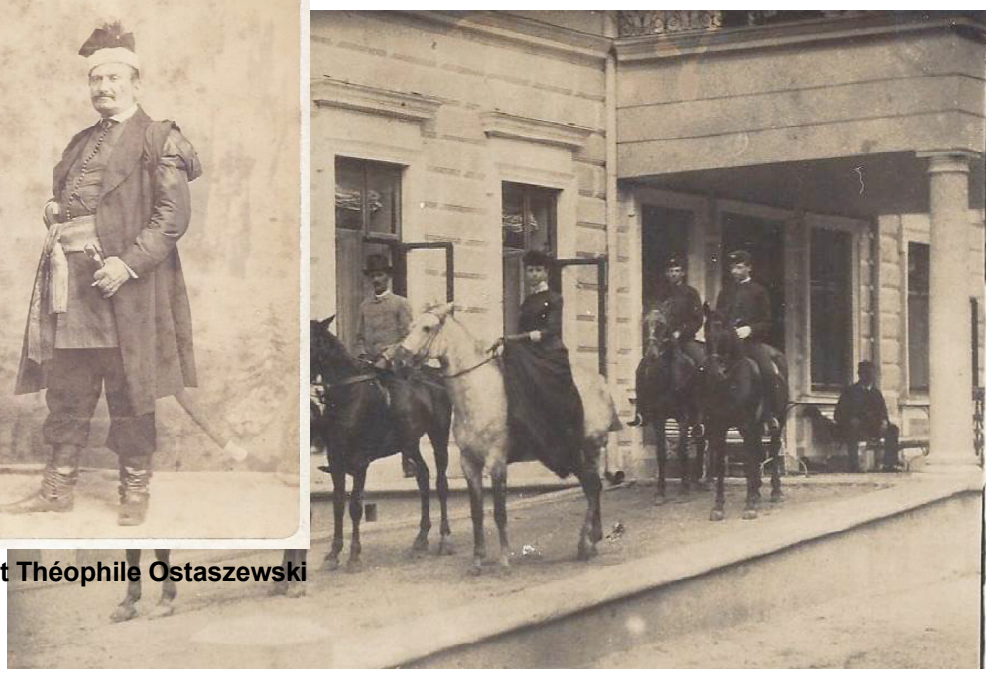
Hugo Seilern was his mother’s favourite son and she adored Idetchka because she was her only granddaughter: this was enough to ensure that her daughter-in-law should quarrel with her. All the mother-in-law’s efforts at conciliation were useless. Ida’s attitude made visits and invitations to parties eventually impossible.

Ida remained, however, on passably good terms with her Polish relations, so that her visits to Poland were the happiest days of Idetchka’s life.

III My Mother's Love Story

In the pensions in Italy and France Idetchka was hourly under her mother's eye, and mostly saw her mother's grown-up acquaintances. In this wandering existence, she had few opportunities to make lasting friends of her own age. But in Poland she entered a joyous world of uncles, aunts and, above all, cousins – boys and girls – of her own age, who lived in a scattering of manor houses mostly in Galicia, starting off with Uncle Michel Zaluski (1827 – 1893) and Aunt Helena (1833 – 1892) at Iwonicz. Her mother's presence and influence were diluted. Cheerfulness broke in. Youthful high spirits abounded. The cousins went riding – "How madly we galloped!" – they went swimming; they picnicked; they danced Polonaises, mazurkas, tarantellas. "Que nous étions folles*!" wrote my mother looking back fifty years later. Of the 438 pages of her autobiography, these are among the few that sparkle.

Count Théophile Ostaszewski



Emma Zaluska in front, Kazimierz Ostaszewski with Ida, Carlo Seilern and Josef Zaluski behind, mid 1880s

Ida's sister, Emma, had married Count Théophile Ostaszewski. Since they lived at Klimkoofka** manor farm, a few miles away, their sons Kazio and Stash*** were constantly in and out. Stash taught Idetchka to ride and somehow, as the troop of cousins cantered among the fields and the forests of the Carpathian foothills, Stash was always at Idetchka's side. "Our eyes said the words that we did not speak. A vague, undefined fear made us keep our secret, a treasure too precious to expose to unknown dangers and misfortunes."

*" What madcaps we were!"

** This is the phonetic English pronunciation of Klimkowka. The name means "kneeling cows" and commemorates a visit some centuries ago by the Holy Virgin when the manor's pious cows knelt before her.

*** Stash, to rhyme with ash, is the phonetic English pronunciation of t he Polish Stas

One day, while Kazio was playing the piano, Stash stood on one side, Idetchka on the other. Kazio sang “If I were a bird in the forest, Only for you would I sing. If I were the sun in the heavens, Only for you would I shine.” Stash joined in, his blue eyes fixed on Idetchka. “*Moment délicieux!”* wrote Idetchka. “Un des ces moment de bonheur dont le coeur et l’âme jouissent d’une paix profonde … . ***Un de ces moments où rien n’existe en dehors du sentiment qui possède tout nôtre être***. Goethe said ‘Glück ohne Ruh’, Liebe bist Du’ : ‘***Amour, tu es le bonheur dans repos’***. *‘C’est vrai,’* Idetchka commented, ‘***mais pas pour des heures comme celles-là. Elles sont rares. Bien des humains ne les ont jamais éprouvées, mais elles sont ineffaçables pour ceux qui les ont vécues.’****

Idetchka was then twenty-three, Stash twenty-five years old.

The three Ostaszewski brothers

* I quote this (and shall quote other passages) in French, because they thus retain the charm and an idiom of their own, but for the benefit of those who do not know French and who, like me, are exasperated to find chunks of an unknown language quoted at them, here is a translation : « A delicious moment! One of the moments of happiness when the heart and mind enjoy a deep peace … . One of those moments of happiness in which nothing exists save the feeling which enthrals our whole being. Goethe said “Love, thou art happiness without peace.” This is true, but not for moments like these. They are rare. Many people have never experienced them, but they are unforgettable for those who have lived them.”

On a day when Stash rode over to Iwonicz from Klimkowka, Ida Seilern was in bed with a sick headache. “Stash hope you’re better, “ Idetchka told her mother. “I feel too ill to see him,” Ida said. “Thank him and embrace him for me.” Idetchka returned to Stash. “Maman is too unwell to see you but sends you a kiss.”

His hands behind his back, Stash approached Idetchka. “ Well, her orders must be obeyed,” he said smiling.

"*Le regard de ses yeux bleus pénétra les miens de son rayon lumineux*,"* recalled my mother. 'Innocent of the facts of life, of love, I took Stash's kiss. My heart sang. Always after that we kissed when we met – our lips alone touching.'

Stash Ostaszeski as a young man in uniform

So the idyllic days passed, until the time came when Stash had to leave for a spell with the Lancer regiment in which he was a reserve officer. He drove over in a Bryczka to say good-bye. He stayed to supper and the merry group of cousins talked and danced until the moment came for Stash to leave. They saw him off on the verandah. He kissed the hands of his aunts and shook the hands of his cousins.

The drive at Iwonicz takes a U turn half circling the park. By cutting across the top of the U, Idetchka could hope to intercept Stash at the park gates.

* "The gaze of his blue eyes penetrated mine with their luminous gleam" sounds affected in English, which is why I have left it in the delicately poetic French.

"The park was bathed in the light of a wonderful full moon," Idetchka remembered. "I slipped out. I skimmed across the garden into the park. The last lap was up hill and I arrived breathless. Stash was already outside the gate, his back to me. I called his name with wh at breath I had left, but a lover's hearing is sensitive. Stash stopped the horses. He jumped out of the bryszka landing with his feet together. "Idetchka!" he cried. He ran to me. His hands behind his back, he gazed at me and smiled comme font les êtres simples, bons, droits. Joie ineffable. Un baiser, et le voilà parti!* I turned and sped back to the house.

two photos of Stash in uniform

Idetchka ran back to the manor house where she was met by her kind Aunt Helena, who said to her with a smile in her eyes: "Was the park looking lovely in the moonlight up at the top there?"

"Yes," murmered Idetchka, "Very lovely."

Idetchka resumed her wanderings with her mother. Two years later, in 1889, Ida Seilern was worried about her daughter's health and took her to Szczawnica, a little watering place in the Carpathian mountains. Since

Idetchka's health did not improve, Ida decided that she was pining for Stash and invited him over. He proposed and was accepted.

"Un bonheur infini possédait nos coeurs, pénétrait jusqu'au plus profond de nos âmes. Le ciel, les montagnes, les bois, les fleurs souhaitaient la bienvenue à nos fiançailles.'**

They left on a round of joyous visits to cousins.

It was too good to last.

Ida Seilern, having taken the initiative of bringing Stash and her daughter together, now veered to doubts. She laid down two conditions; they must not live at Klimkowka, Stash's property, because, she alleged, the manor was damp, the ceilings low and airless, and heaven knows what else. She countered Stash's promise to rebuild the manor with exasperation, insisting that she could not allow her daughter to live in a dark, damp house, and so on and so forth.

* "…as do simple, good honest beings. Joy ineffable. A kiss and he was gone!"

** "An infinite happiness filled our hearts, penetrated the deepest depths of our souls. The sky, the mountains, the woods, the flowers smiled on our betrothal."

"The autumn came," remembered Idetchka. "The leaves yellowed, took on shades of brown, copper, and the leaves of wine, beautiful with the beauty of melancholy. The fallen leaves had ended their mission on earth, leaving naked the trees which they had adorned. The cold winds quickened their fall, scattering them far. Thus, sometimes, is it with our hopes which life's chances scatter, revealing the naked reality – sharp, hard, inexorable.

Maman and I returned to Vienna. She indulged her moodiness. The triumphant happiness of the first weeks of my betrothal ebbed, and the disadvantages of the marriage loomed."

A last photo of Stash Ostaszewski

Idetchka's health continued to trouble her. The doctor said that she must not think of marriage for some time, that once that she had recovered she could only lead a "normal" life if surrounded with comfort and free from over-exertion – a poor lookout for a woman expected to share in running a manor farm. The doctor shook his head over the severity of the Polish winters.

What the doctor's diagnosis was we do not know, but the chances are that Idetchka was suffering from the lack of self-confidence, the fears, and the anxieties that her mother's moody domination, unpredictable as a weathervane, had instilled in her.

Other objections readily suggested themselves to Ida. Stash had had a patch on a lung. No matter that this had healed and that he had been passed for military service: "tuberculosis remains latent and can revive." Idetchka's lungs were supposed not to be too good either. Marriage between two T.B. subjects and first cousins at that! Impossible! What of the children? Ida used all her ingenuity to demolish her daughter's confidence. She succeeded. Together they returned to Iwonicz so that – refinement of torture – Idetchka could break off the engagement herself. If it had to be, could not Ida have written a letter?

Idetchka remembered:

"*L'heure atroce, funébre, sonna*".* We were sitting opposite each other across the dining room table. The sun streamed in through the windows… I don't know what I said to him. I don't know how I found the courage or the strength. I had to convince him that I was not the woman for him. I said that my inability to cope with the responsibilites of the wife of a small landowner would seriously handicap him; he would grow to resent this and I would reproach myself all the time… . Stash looked at me like a drowning man. He hardly spoke – all that he had to say was in his eyes, which have haunted me ever since. I felt his heart break with mine. To see him suffer, to be compelled to make him suffer in order to convince him of the need for a sacrifice – was torture…" And my mother ended with this cry from her heart: "I never saw him again. I have never ceased to love him!"

This was in 1889.

Stash told his mother that he would never marry before Idetchka married. So year after year Stash's mother wrote to Ida Seilern "Will Idetchka be getting married this year?" – a cheerful source of conversation between mother and daughter.

In January, 1900, eleven years after breaking off her engagement with Stash, Idetchka married Philip Hennessy. Three months later Stash married Anielka Sekowska.

IV The Story of the French Ambassador and the Safety Pin

We now approach an event which, at first glance, suggests that Noel Coward had bedroom farcically teamed up with Ibsen, breathing doom, in a play that would have strained my credulity had I not loved through its final acts and been myself a member of its cast. Philip de Wolf Mather Hennessy, aged twenty-six years and nine months, Edwardian man of pleasure, proposed to, and was accepted by, Ida Seilern*, who was eight years and two months older than he.

Against which of the two were the stars in their courses fighting?

Ida was a handsome woman, indeed to anyone with eyes to see, she was interesting and beautiful. Her slim figure and naturally waving blue-black hair would have rejoiced artists among couturières and coiffeuses. But Ida's clothes were too often cheap or behind the fashion. She did not despise pretty things. But as long as Carlo (nineteen months younger than she) was at home, her mother, defying her father's indignation, spent all money available on his education, clothes, and pocket money. By the time Carlo was out in the world, Ida, aged twenty-three, had become conditioned to make-do with cast-off clothes and to economise on herself in everything. On her periodical visits to Poland Ida was gay in the company of her happy-go-lucky country cousins, but the lonely years spent elsewhere, moving among the middle aged or elderly frequenters of pensions, in her mother's crushing company, had denied her opportunities to acquire the ease of manner, the cheerful, allusive give and take, and the quickness of reparte that spread among young people who made the rounds of the same houses, parties and pastimes. Ida read widely. She was interested in serious things. She was responsible.

Philip Hennessy was a phenomenon outside Ida's experience. He could have held his own among the characters of the Importance of Being Earnest. Indeed Philip's suave charm would have won over Lady Bracknell where Jack Worthing was getting nowhere until Wilde conveniently but unfairly provided him with the means to blackmail her. But in pensions Ida had met no Oscar Wilde characters. To her it was important to be earnest and in the first years of her marriage she strove to understand what, to her was the incomprehensible – Philip's frivolity and cynicism.

* From the date of her marriage, Idetchka, "little Ida", became Ida Hennessy. Hereafter "Ida Seilern" refers to her mother.

Philip kept a register of his conquests. In the twenty years between 1886 and 1906 he entered sixty-two ladies, fifty-four of whom have various symbols against them which, from my personal knowledge of several, I can see, were a method of scoring, say, on the analogy of cricket, the number of singles stolen, hits to the boundary and a not infrequent Six. The eight names without symbols I take to indicate maiden overs. In deference to the representations (which seem to me to flout both the criteria and obligations of historical scholarship and to be unduly emotional) of two or three of the

now aged grandchildren of the sixty-two ladies, I refrain from citing names, but they range from the more passionate upper reaches of the aristocracy to the down-to-earth jollity of the once famous Gaiety Theatre chorus.

On October 18, 1899, Philip turned up after his usual early morning ride in Rotton Row late for breakfast at the Grosvenor Gardens house of his friend, Count Carlo Seilern and Aspang (1866 – 1940) and his American millionaire's wife, Nettie. He found his host's sister, Ida, at the breakfast table. Whether Philip was his debonair self and strolling from silver covered dish to silver covered dish, fastidiously to help himself to his usual hearty post-ride meal, or whether he was, for once, pre-occupied, I do not know. But years later my mother told me that eventually he said:

"Will you come to Paris with me next week?"

To which she replied: "Well, I don't see how I can unless I marry you."

Ida would have said this with the shy sweet smile, simultaneously clasping her hands with a slight awkward movement of the body that was her way of seeking reassurance when something made her feel embarrassed.

"That is what I meant," Philip said from the other side of the table. He would have said this quietly, slowly, a barely perceptible pause between each word, with the studied gravity that was his way of emphasising that what he was saying was of particular interest – the nub of an anecdote or, as in this instance, of a proposal of marriage.

Ida, seized with emotion, could not speak. She smiled her answer. Philip gravely wiped his superbly curled moustache – to which in accordance with the custom of the dandies of those days he applied hot tongs when he rose in the morning and again when dressing for dinner – laid his napkin on the table, and walked round to Ida with the winning smile and diffidence (expressed physically in his gait) that had won many hearts. With reverence and gallantry, he kissed her hand, and then, chastely, her cheek. For nonchalance of feeling and perfection of manners, Philip's proposal was perhaps unique.

Ida had begun her thirty-sixth year. Perhaps she told herself that this was her last chance to escape from the endless vista that stretched ahead with her dominating, tearful, nagging mother. It would be marvellous to have a settled home of one's own. She was also a natural woman and she wanted children. She had had time to think these things over, because Philip's proposal had not come as a surprise. Philip and Carlo were friends. When Ida arrived to stay in Grosvenor Gardens, Philip was in and out of the house every day. Carlo and he rode in Hyde Park before breakfast. After forty-eight hours' acquaintance with Ida, Philip began to pay her marked attention, which (she emphasised in a letter to her mother) she had been careful not to encourage, because of the obvious difficulties. Doubtless it would have been natural if she had also been flattered by the unexpected attentions to a country cousin like herself – and of her

age – of a man so handsome, young, popular, and so accomplished in the social graces.

Of Philip it was true to say that, given the least chance, he was the life of any party.

Philip's stories were all about himself, frequently against himself, and conveyed with studied casualness his wide acquaintance with royalty, the titled, "the great and the good". Whereas too many people often give the impression that they are waiting to cap your anecdote, Philip was, as well as a fascinating raconteur, an enchanted listener: he laughed at all your jokes and subtly helped to underline your points. Philip was sensitive to the reactions to what he or anyone else present was saying, he steered away from the least hint of emerging unpleasantness between two people and steered his own talk, and that of those around him, into smooth topics, which he lifted from the banal by his sense of fun. I have never met anyone with his gift of sweeping everyone along with him in his total enjoyment of the passing hour of his own creation. Justin Huntley McCarthy endows a character in one of his now forgotten romances with the ability to improvise verses on the spot for any occasion. Philip could improvise fictitious but rollicking stories in which he figured in improbably ridiculous situations. Anything sufficed to fire his imagination. Nor were his stories single simple anecdotes; he was a master of what dramatists call "complication": the unforeseen twist of a story.

I remember once at a party, one of the guests was upset when he realised that he had a hole in an embarrassing part of his trousers. At once Philip intervened. "Why, that's nothing to worry about", he beamed. "A year ago, when I was at a levee at the Court of St. James, I stooped to pick up my handkerchief so abruptly that I burst both the back buttons of my court breeches. My braces flew to my neck. It was minutes before I was to be presented to His Majesty. How could I bow to him with one hand holding up my breeches? You know our respected George V as well as I do – of course you do – so, you know he's a stickler for etiquette and has no sense of humour. What to do? Roger Cambon, the French ambassador, was behind me.

"Excellency, have you a safety pin?" I enquired.

"Pardon?"

"*Une épingle de nourice'*, I repeated.
'I'm not sure, but I think not', he said.
I pointed to my breeches. Roger smiled his suble smile (son sourire fin).
'Ah! Mon cher!' he said. 'Vous voilà dans la pagaie, un beau pétrin*!'
'My eye fell on the row of orders pinned to his breast.'
'*Mais, Excellence, vous avez toute une collection d'épingles de nourice. Ayez la grace de m'en preter une*** - you can get the one at the end off easiest'

"And that was how my breeches came to be held up by the French Ambassador's Siamese Order of the White Elephant".

If you think that was the end of the story you did not know Philip. He went on to recount how despite a distracting scratching on the back, he enjoyed the levee, the number of old friends he met, and so on. He went home, unpinned his breeches, forgot about the Order until a Third Secretary at the French embassy rang to request its return. Philip searched everywhere – in vain. Could he have put it in his breeches pocket? Where were the breeches? Gone to his tailor to be mended! Tableau!

A hope seized him. He telephoned Sir William Tyrell's secretary and asked if he could have five minutes with the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office on an urgent matter that could destroy Curzon's last hope of securing the Anglo-French pact. When at 6.50 p.m. he explained his predicament to Tyrrell and urged him to cable the British ambassador at Bangkok to procure another Order and despatch it at once to London by special courier, "Willie looked at me over his thick glasses, with his head quizzically on one side – you know the way he does my father continued. "Philip!" he began – but this was too much for one of the listening company.

"Really, Philip", he said. "You don't expect us to believe that! Why all you had to do to get a duplicate Order was to – "

Most people would betray some annoyance at being interrupted in the middle of a successful story, and might be embarrassed by a threat to its credibility. Not so

* 'My dear fellow ! You are up a gum tree !'

** 'But, Excellency, you have a whole collection of safety pins. Be good enough, I beg you, to lend me one'.

Philip. Unruffled, he cut in before the interrupter could spoil his *dénouement*.

"Of course, my dear Bill, you have, with your usual astuteness, spotted my stupidity in failing to see the real solution…"

The few seconds pause which followed while Philip collected his imagination for an alternative "complication" served only to intensify the pleasurable suspense.

"Willie's nerve did not fail him. At once he grasped the fundamentals. He knew I was wrong. But, for someone, who had, on occasion, persuaded Curzon and Austen Chamberlain to change course, I was child's play."

“You were right to waste no time in coming to me,” he said – a note of concern in his gentle voice. “There’s not a moment to be lost. Unfortunately, I can’t put this up to the Foreign Secretary because he left this morning for Cannes to confer with Briand. I’ll have to take the responsibility on myself. I’ll phone Willy Clarkson this minute.”

“Willy Clarkson!” I was lost in admiration of Tyrrell’s resourcefulness. Of course! We could get a replica of the order from the theatrical costumier.”

There was a roar of laughter. Again, if you thought that Philip could extract no more from the story, you knew nothing of his ability to live in his fantasies.

Seizing the right moment when the laughter was abating but before the attention of the audience had wandered elsewhere – Philip never tried their patience by trying to revive dead embers – he resumed:

“Sometime later Roger Cambon invited me to dine at the embassy.

“Philip” he greeted me, “This is a Vin d’honneur for you. Vous le méritez!”

“Plait-il, Excellence?’ I asked. ‘Que diable ai-je donc fait ?’*

‘You’ve got me a promotion,’ said Roger. “The King of Siam honoured me with a White Elephant of the Second Class. Vous-êtes prestidigitateur de valeur.** You’ve secured me one of the First Class.”

All this looks long-winded and boring, because I cannot get onto paper Philip’s verve and bubbling spirits. He was no deadpan raconteur. He laughed at his own jokes till his tears ran, and such was the infection of his own enjoyment that no one could resist laughing with him.

* ‘This is an official reception for you, you deserve it !’
‘I beg you your pardon, Excellency, what on earth have I done?’
** “You are a first class conjuror!”

Note that the success of Philip’s story was based on two premises to which he attached importance: he sought (1) to amuse and (2) to smooth out a socially awkward moment. Amidst smiles the guest with the torn trousers borrowed without embarrassment a safety pin from his hostess and he remained ever after one of Philip’s devoted admirers.

V The Heritage of the Bourgeois Hennessys and Mathers

All his life Philip talked of his descent from the kings of Ireland. Well, I suppose that if one could go back far enough only a red-faced minority would have to find plausible reasons for not having royal blood in their veins. Be that as it may, I have only been able to trace Philip's ancestry back to my great-grandfather John (1802-1875), who was born in Knocktopher, Kilkenny, of a middle-class family of small landowners, professional men, dignitaries of the church, and the like.

John was active in all Irish national movements and was intimate with the leaders of the Old and Young Ireland Parties, so much so that after the abortive Young Ireland rising of 1848, he fled to the United States, taking with him his wife Catherine (née Laffin, another sound middle class family), his sons Michael (1833-1892) and William John (1839-1917). John was able to bring sufficient funds from Ireland to set up a wholesale provision business in New York and to buy a house at 9 Lispenard Street between Canal Street and Sixth Avenue, now a slum but then a fashionable quarter on the outskirts of the city. When I walked down the street in 1943, the original houses had been demolished, all except number 9, which, although dilapidated, stood out a two-storeyed building in contrast to the tall dreary warehouses all round. Its nineteenth century architecture was that of a well-to-do residence. The ground floor was a sleazy eating house. A brass plate bore the name of a Jewish tailor who occupied the two upper floors. Queer feelings of grand-filial pietas brought a lump to my throat as I climbed the stairs. I knocked. A voice said: "Come right in!"

I entered a large cutting room. Patterns, cloth and half-made suits were scattered on trestle tables. A small, bald-headed, middle-aged Jew, in waistcoat and shirt sleeves, a measuring tape round his neck, peered at me over his spectacles.

"This was once my grandfather's home," – I began.

"Why! Whaddya know!" he said enthusiastically. "Take a look around. The whole place is yours!"

In the grip of ancestor worship, I looked around – reverently. What had once been a spacious drawing room was now partitioned down the middle. A pleasant Victorian cornice disappeared under the partition into an adjoining room, but some decorative mouldings on the walls struck me as aggressively ornate. The tailor followed my glance.

"Your Grandpappy a bootlegger?" he enquired unexpectedly.

Startled, I said: "No. He lived here years before prohibition."

"Then I guess he didn't see them decorations," the tailor chuckled. "They were put up in the 1920s when this was a speak-easy… Moider – and all – was done here, he added proudly.

The tension of grandfilial pietas dissolved in laughter.

John Hennessy and his family became American citizens.

Michael was on the staff of the “New York Times” from its foundation in September, 1851, and rose to be its Commercial Editor. He died in July, 1892. His hobby was Irish Catholicism, genealogy and place names. His obituary said that on these subjects his library was the most complete in the United States. Michael is the only Hennessy of whom I have ever heard who had not only signed the pledge but was a temperance preacher. In his obsession for books, however, he was a characteristic Hennessy. Like me, he brought a new book home every day as often as not, and his house at 227 Baltic Street, Brooklyn was, as mine is, bursting with books. When books began to overflow into her drawing room, Michael’s wife, Joanna (née Spruhan) was exasperated. She threatened that if he came home with another book, she would throw it out of the window. “Very well, my dear,” said Michael mildly, “I will bring no more into the house.”

Nor did he. He made his bookseller do his purchases up in a parcel with fourteen feet of string attached, which, keeping an eye on the front windows, he lowered furtively into the basement area. He then pulled the front door bell in a special way as a signal to his (Irish compatriot) cook, who took the books in through the kitchen window. This story came to me from my aunt Norah*, who stayed with her uncle and aunt when she was seven years old. Uncle Michael took his niece out to see the town, inevitably brought some books, and had no option but to take her into his confidence when they got back. Norah never forgot the experience: she was thrilled, mystified, and loyal. She never gave him away.

Their memories of 1848 made John and his sons virulently anti-English. William John (known to everybody as “Will”) was, however, in two minds about the money that his father kept subscribing to Irish causes. “Patriotism is fine but its finer when it begins at home,” he once said to me. “Father had been well off but he left nothing when he died. Much good it did Ireland! But much more good it could have done me – and you! After all you and I are both deserving Irish causes.”

*Eleonor Hennessy, born 1884, married 1915 Paul Methuen (fourth Baron) died 1958.

Among the New York drawing rooms in which Will was guest was that of a middle-aged doctor named John Ward, whose wife, Charlotte, many years younger than her husband, was an acknowledged beauty. She parted her rich chestnut hair in the middle, drawing it closely to either side of her round face. She had an intelligent forehead above naturally pencilled eyebrows, eyes capable of a merry twinkle, a well-proportioned nose and a pleasant imperturbable mouth set in readily dimpling cheeks. Without being aggressive, her chin suggested the courage and determination that she was to show all her life.

Charlotte's father, William Mather of New England, had died in 1856. Two years later, when Charlotte was sixteen, her mother re-married. Charlotte detested her stepfather. She left home to become a schoolteacher. She qualified herself largely on the job. I possess the "crib" from which she taught Vergil to the top classes. Fifty years later she smiled a trifle grimly when she told me "I had my work cut out to keep one pace ahead of those tough farmers' sons. Many a time I sat up the night before. I was determined to hold the job down so as not to be compelled to go home to my stepfather."

How old was she when she got to New York? Gossip has it that she frequented a crowd of "advanced" free lovers and thinkers, but since this was an obvious reaction to a "bachelor" girl in those days, it may mean anything or nothing. She married Doctor John A. Ward, who was many years older than she. For love? Security? Position? Did her husband allow her to visit Will Hennessy's studio to have her portrait painted? Whatever the answers, the day came when Charlotte was with child and Doctor Ward denied that it was his. He divorced her. She married Will on June 19, 1870. The scandal in New York's Victorian society was such that Will decided to emigrate to England.

These discoveries reminded me that Grandma had told my wife that her first son had died while a baby. My wife said to my father's sister Moya, that she had not known that Grandma had had another son before Philip. "Nor had she," said Moya. "Grandma is 91 and wandering in her mind." Later my wife said to me: "I must say Grandma talked perfectly sensibly about her lost baby and not at all as if she were confused in mind."

So one thing leading to another, I tracked down, first, the Law Report of a case heard on February 20, 1868, before the New York Supreme Court, First District, between Charlotte Ward and Doctor J. A. Ward – not the divorce but a case in which the wife denies adultery and puts forward the plea, accepted by the Court, that pending the divorce case Doctor Ward should support his wife and also pay her lawyer's fee. So bitter was Ward against Charlotte that he preferred to go to prison rather than pay her alimony and he would have gone had his counsel not successfully pleaded a technical flaw in his sentence.

My grandparents were married at St. Patrick's Catholic church, New Haven, Connecticut, home town of Charlotte's mother and stepfather.

The marriage certificate is puzzling.

In the spaces allotted for the names and maiden names of the couple's parents is the entry: "Not stated." To have entered their names would, one would have thought, have been harmless. Was the omission intended to hinder the New England newspapers from publicising the wedding among the respectable Mather clan?

Despite the pre-divorce proceedings, the Clerk of the Court told me: " We have checked the records from 1784 through 1910. There is no record of divorce from Dr. John A Ward v. his wife. Bronx Country is part of the Supreme Court's First District. Please write to them." I did. Bronx replied that their records go back only to 1914 and

suggested I try Westchester County. I did. Westchester did not reply. So the question is: Was there or was there not a divorce?

If there was no divorce, Charlotte was committing bigamy. If there was a divorce, Charlotte could not have been married in a Catholic church without a religious annulment from Rome. To obtain that she would have to have been a Catholic. Did she seek religious instruction? Was she received into the Church? If she applied for an annulment (which is not automatic) was it granted? Some months before her death in 1940, Charlotte received instruction and was received into the Church (which gave her great comfort, because she felt that it would enable her to rejoin Will in the next world).

This makes it look as though she had not been received before. On the other hand, she was suffering from senile decay : had she forgotten the first ceremony? Was she received once or twice?

VI CIRCE Gate-crashes Ida's Honeymoon

We now return to Philip Hennessy 's proposal to Ida Seilern.

Since he regarded himself as an aristocrat, marriage with a countess, of ruling families in Austria and Poland, appealed to him as an “alliance”, proof of his own claim to aristocracy. Secondly, his sister, Moya , had married the Vicomte, Léon de Janzé, and this may have been an additional incitement to climb into the first league by marrying into the aristocracy himself.

Then, again, Philip may have thought that Ida was an heiress. Her brother lived in grandeur at 24 Grosvenor Gardens and rented country seats, like Frensham Place* for the summer. Ida did have an inheritance of her own -[1] the Villa Cornelia in Cimiez, Nice ~ and she had some capital (how much I do not know),but characteristic of what some would call her filial piety and others her capacity for self-inflicted suffering and the inadequacy of her defence mechanism, Ida allowed her mother to manage the property and to live off its income until she died in 1916. Nor, for reasons that will emerge, did she get anything out of the property thereafter. The constant financial uncertainties which wore Ida down throughout these years would have been relieved had she quietly insisted on her rights in the Villa Cornélia.

It is clear from her letters written in these weeks to her mother that Ida was as joyous and excited as any normal newly engaged girl expects to be and that, like so many others, she wondered at her good fortune as she made one happy discovery after another about her fiance's delightful character. For example, she tells her mother that Philip is at heart deeply sincere and not at all the cynical man of the world that he likes to pretend to be. Ida was living in a castle·-in-the air of her own building. Her stay in it did not survive her honeymoon.

The Hennessy family and Ida's brother, Carlo, were disturbed at the possibility of this marriage, because of the difference in ages and because while Ida's dowry was meagre, Philip had neither a penny nor a job and would continue penniless and jobless for as far ahead as the Hennessys and Carlo could see.

For some days the Hennessy-Seilern opposition created discords at Grosvenor Gardens, which made the sensitive Ida wilt: "I felt quite ill," she wrote.

[1] Moya Hennessy, born 1875, married 1897, Léon, Vicomte de Janzé, died 1940.

The one person who immediately approved of the marriage was Ida's unpredictable mother, who gave her blessing from the Villa Cornelia, where she was living. Did she feel that Philip ought to be seized as her thirty-five year old daughter's last chance? Had she come to regard her spinster daughter's company as a burden for the rest of her life? Did she want to be rid of the expense?

I do not know, but as one of my cousins once put it to me: "The trouble with our grandmother was that she was just a bloody fool." Gaps there are in this as an assessment but, as a definition, I am unable to better it.

While Carlo Seilern reveled in Philip's company all his life, neither then nor later had he any illusions about him as a husband for his sister. He wrote to his mother protesting that he could not understand how she could accept Philip as a son-in-law, a letter which doubtless clinched her. approval.

But what were Ida and Philip to live on? And where?

The answers may provoke., among the charitable or compassionate, amazement at Ida's, childlike attitudes, inexperience, and defencelessness, or, among no-nonsense, common-sense observers, exasperation. At Philips, fecklessness, and irresponsibility, or, among the psychiatrically. Minded, forebodings about the destinies that these two obviously disturbed personalities were ensuring for themselves.

As to income, Philip had been a special correspondent of the New York Herald in the Graeco-Turkish war of 1897 in which he was as successful in galloping about picturesquely, enjoying himself and being overtaken by the advancing Turks, causing diplomatic enquiries to be made about him, as he was in getting despatches published. The Herald had not kept him on after the war. He had then done desultory free-lance journalism and regarded himself as an author. True that he had as yet published nothing, but he told Ida that he was confident that success was round the corner. All his life he wrote himself novels and short stories. They were his form of psychedelism. Most authors seek freedom from distraction. Philip could write anywhere. For the eighteen years that he was a manager in the old Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank, in intervals between clients, passionate love scenes would stream from his pen in his complicated ornate, baroque, indeed ro0coco, handwriting. I have scores of them; the trouble is that few are finished. His talent was as a verbal entertainer. When he wrote, he produced what amounted to drafts with splendid possibilities, but he was verbose and ornate. He was full of ideas; too full because half, or even a quarter, way through a story, he would lose interest in it and launch out on another dazzling idea.

In the autumn of 1899, Philip assured himself - and Ida - that he was going to outdistance his favourite Balzac.

That, however, was in the future. What to do to bridge the interval between effort and triumph?

The sort of fairy godmother good luck that publishers' readers deplore in novels solved the problem. Nettie Seilern[2], Carlo's charming, generous, beautiful, wealthy, twenty-four-year-old American wife, offered Ida an allowance of £800 a year for life.

In 1900, £800 a year bought perhaps ten times what it could have bought in 1973 (and doubtless much more than that by the time these words are published). You could not cut a dash on £800 a year, but you could live comfortably in the country, with a cook, parlour, and house maid. You could have, as did my parents, a landau, a wagonette, a luggage cart, and three or four horses, one a hunter. The husband could afford to belong to a London club and the wife to entertain adequately. With fees at £30 a term, a son or two could be educated at a public school.

Splendid: Now, we can marry! It apparently occurred neither to Ida, nor to Philip to suggest that solicitors should perform their function, which is to make legal provision for unforeseen eventualities, e.g., what would Ida's position be if, having married on the verbal promise of £800 a year for life, Nettie later were to fall out with the Seilerns and to divorce Carlo - or to die? Nobody asked. Again, if £800 a year is fine to live on, it won't buy a house. Where do we live?

Ida answered that by pointing to her Villa Cornelia, in which both her mother and her uncle Charles Zaluski* lived for long spells throughout each year.[3]

Ida, who yearned for happy relationship with her mother, thought that the sight of her own happiness with Philip would at last melt her mother's heart towards her. As for Uncle Charles, was he not the kindest of men? He had given away most of his sizeable

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[2] Antoinette Woerishofer, born 1875, married Carlo 1898, died 1901.

[3] Her bachelor uncle, born in 1833, then retired after a long and distinguished career in the Austrian diplomatic service. Died 1919 at Iwoniez

fortune to sisters, nephews and nieces, and lived modestly on his pension. What Philip thought of the prospect of living with his mother and uncle-in-law is not recorded but he had his own techniques for avoiding unpleasantness.

Philip's contribution to the housing problem was to point out that hi sister Moya and her husband Léon de Janzé had, besides their town residence in Paris, the Château de Parfondeval, a beautiful estate in Normandy. Léon and Moya only visited its 2,000 acres of forest and arable land for the shooting season. For the rest of the year if Philip and Ida wanted a change from the Villa Cornélia, they could, Philip said, live at Parfondeval. So now that they, or rather Ida, had an income and a home, and that Philip could offer no income but someone else's home, no obstacles remained to the marriage, which was solemnised by the Bishop of Nice on February 10, 1900, in the old church at Cimiez which, Ida noted, without, however, attaching any symbolic importance to it, had a stuffed crocodile suspended from the ceiling [4].

Immediately after the return from their honeymoon at Cap Martin, Ida was years later to write in her autobiography:

Circe, a french woman, who played a certain role in your father's life, began to telegraph and write to him. He left her telegrams lying about the place and it is probable that the maid read them. In an exercise book containing his short stories., which he gave me to read, I found a letter from her saying 'But quit, then (laches donc), these two crazy women'. I said nothing, but he noticed a change in my manner and asked. I mentioned the letter. He seemed distressed, was very affectionate, and offered explanations which I found it difficult to know how to take –

The letters, a sheaf of which I have before me as I write, could have but one meaning: they reveal Circe to be one of the women who became obsessed with Philip, crazed with passion for him, oblivious of public opinion or consequences. As the French say crudely but clearly 'Elles avaient Philip dans la peau', the dictionary translation of which "They were infatuated with Philip" is pallid beside the literal "They had Philip in their skin."

Thus. In the earliest weeks of her marriage, Eder learned that she was but one in a procession. In her husband's life. Would it be any consolation? To her to discover. That she was prima inter pares or, more strictly, prima inter pares mutantes?

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4 I am told that this must have been a votive offering from someone who had escaped from a crocodile or who had an enemy who had not.

Philip was in the habit of giving his inamorata allusive names, like Roxane, Carmen, or Diane. Circe's real name was Lily. She was one of the. fiftyfour*. Study of her letters suggests that older than Philip, she was the mistress of a wealthy man, or a high class woman of easy virtues: she stays at the Savoy in London.: keeps a horse to ride in the In Paris bois ; spends holidays on the Riviera or in Egypt. Her handwriting is uneducated, her spelling unreliable. She is primitive in physical passion and in the spitefulness of her jealousy. She has a pretty line. In elementary sarcasm. She has not met the two Ida Seilerns, mother and daughter, but she apparently knows Carlo. And a number of Philips other friends. She simply, but simply, cannot understand how Philip can have left her for these two folles (crazies) - the thirty-five year old invalid. Aida. And her tearful mother. She received no reason why Philip should not drop everything and come at once whenever she feels like it, which is often. Regardless of appearances, she showers letters and wires on Philip to whom they must have meant something because, since Circe rarely dates a letter, he takes care to write on each of the dates on which he receives it and he keeps them all (as trophies?). Commas, semi colon's and many initial capitals flee before the intensity. Of sickest feelings. Here is a letter dated May 8, 1900, written (four months after Philip's marriage) in French, the style of which I try to convey.

My dear Philip,

I am absolutely angry at you if you loved me. You would easily find a way to come to me a few days alone. All you have to do is to say you've been commissioned by a newspaper to report on the Paris exhibition but you don't love me and some madame Sampson[5] or other detains you in Nice. The exhibition[6] Is magnificent and nearly over. The newspapers are idiotic.

I'm bored to death without you. If you don't come quickly, I will be unfaithful to you. So much the worse for you. I'm not such a fool. Darling, I love you. But really what a let-down. For that matter the Idas don't need to come they're too great molly-coddles the exhibition would be too tiring for them. I can just see each of them in a little baby's pushcart and you trotting behind like a well-trained poodle. We could have such fun now before it gets …….

[5] i.e., Delilah.

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too hot and too crowded well so much the worse for you I'll have fun alone with Maina*1 Good by noty*2 I don't love you at all Lily.

FOOTNOTE*: 1. A close friend or relation who knew all about Philip.

2. This is Circe's spelling in English for "Goodbye naughty".

END OF FOOTNOTE.

From the following it seems that Philip must have cancelled a rendez-vous:

Philip my dear Love your telegram has laid me out. is it possible no its not if you love me as I love you you would find a way these women have not the right to keep you prisoner like this. What will you do between these two women you kill your future what inspiration can you have in the middle of them do something, get your sister to help you; anyway come you belong to me I want you* think that I have counted the hours since we last met. I love you Philip

FOOTNOTE*: The French Je te veux carries physical overtones with it. END OF FOOTNOTE.

I've given you my heart and my life do with me what you will but be kind and don't make me suffer too much. I can't live without you any longer I need to have you next to me to feel your kisses.

Come my beloved I am waiting for you if you really love me it is impossible that you put up with this situation be a man and do at least for once what you want to Dear Dear I send you all my poor bruised heart in a long kiss of love Lily.

Such letters followed each other throughout the summer of 1900 that Philip and Ida spent at Parfondeval. Ida had begun to expect a child in May. She had a slight haemorrhage and was told to avoid emotions and all physical exertion. She used to drive to do the household shopping in Londinières, the village three miles away, in a bath chair drawn by a donkey, Philip walking by her side. One day he told her that he must go to Paris "on business". He was away for some time and did not write. Ida recorded: "Carlo knew why your

father was in Paris. It was all very complicated and I never knew exactly what, except that a woman was mixed up in it — was it Circe?" The chances are that it was, because Circe's letters continue throughout this summer and into the winter after Philip and Ida had rented Matlock Lodge at Crawley, Sussex, in order to be near Philip's parents.

Everyone inside the family, and friends outside, seem to have known about the "business" — save only Ida alone. Her mother came to Parfondeval and created a stink in the relations between Ida, Léon and Moya by complaining nastily about Philip. She did this without Ida's knowledge, but the Janzés assumed that their new sister-in-law had instigated these complaints. This was a terrible breech of Janzé etiquette. In their world, a wife was supposed to look after her husband herself, to hold him by her feminine attractions if she could, and to accept that he would have a mistress if she could not. But the conventions must be observed. There must be no scandal. The Hennessys — my grandparents and my aunts Moya and Norah — also came to accept this code and they regarded Ida with a mixture of exasperation and contempt for her inability to deal with Philip on equal terms. It is fair to add that they were at this particular moment outraged with Philip because they considered that he had himself offended against the proprieties by indulging in a love affair too early in his marriage, and the evidence also suggests that either Philip or Circe or both caused some kind of scandal.

Here are extracts from a letter that Carlo Seilern wrote Philip on August 20, 1900:

I have not the slightest intention of interfering in your affairs, my dear Philip... On the contrary, the less I know and hear of your private family affairs, the more I shall be pleased, because it will prove that everything

goes all right in your marriage, and that my sister is happy. But I will, and shall always, raise my voice in occurrences such as those in question, when your extraordinary want of tact and discretion might cause scandal and misfortune not only for you but for all of us... I am liberal and broadminded and of necessity indulgent, as I badly need indulgence myself, but I can say that, however I have sinned and failed, I have always been discreet, have observed the necessary decorum, and avoided everything which might cause sorrow to those near me.

I was already very much surprised by your proceedings in Paris which were extremely indelicate... Let me beseech you to be careful and not fail any more against the respect and sacred duties towards your wife and the self-respect and the pride which you owe yourself... Think of the future and of the enormous responsibility it will bring you*... For the present you seem not to

FOOTNOTE*: Presumably refers to the child Ida was expecting in January, 1901.

END OF FOOTNOTE.

be in the least aware of your duties and responsibilities as a married man... I should be only too happy if you make it possible for me to give you back all the friendship and brotherly love that I so warmly and sincerely entertained for you. Carlo. P.S. Tear this letter up at once after perusal.

But Philip never tore letters up. He collected them. Some he forgot between the pages of whatever book he happened to be reading. Others he mislaid

Simultaneously with this dressing down from Carlo, Philip received one from Circe:

Received Tuesday, August 21, 1900.

My dear Philip, You should not be so surprised at my silence. I had warned you that I don't want that the lovely things I have to tell you should come upon you after a night of orgy with Ida...

An increasing note of irritation characterises Circe's further letters:

I understand nothing in your long letter, first of all I've said nothing to anyone for the good reason that we have not seen the person in question before our departure for trouville. All this tittle-tattle is incomprehensible. Who is the victim? I don't no*! I would quite (sic)

FOOTNOTE*: Original thus in Circe's English. END OF FOOTNOTE.

like to see you you know I like frankness between friends. You've asked me to suspend judgment well I do I wait and I don't judge. Till when? kisses Circe.

Philip was a fine horseman. His feelings for horses were among his deepest and sincerest. Circe reacted thus to one of his letters:

Very happy I am dear friend to occupy so important a place among your beloved horses. It really is a pity that you have not had occasion to keep a stud farm in pedigree pigs because you than might perhaps have kept a corner for me among those noble animals which would have much flattered me. See you tomorrow my dear heart when I'll let my hair flow loose behind like a horse's mane. Circe.

Another (undated) letter, which finds Circe writing from Paris to Philip in Crawley, Sussex, contains a hint towards one's picture of her as another man's wife or mistress:

Why have you not replied to my telegram and letter are you quite angry with me and don't want that we should remain good friends! to see if so I'm going to ask you a little service to find me in London a ~~lday~~'s maid, who /lady/ speaks little or no French is about 30 years of age and though of good appearance <u>not pretty</u>...

But Philip's love affair with Circe was approaching a climax subtly contrived by both parties. The letters suggest that Philip, living with Ida at Matlock Lodge, Crawley, had not seen Circe for some time and that she had reacted to Philip's failing ardour by a corresponding coolness. Suddenly, however, Circe writes that she is going to Egypt for a long time and she urges Philip to move heaven, earth, and hell to join her in a farewell night of love. Ida recorded (some years later) that very early one November morning Philip announced that he was going out with hounds near Lewis. Late that afternoon she received a wire saying that he was spending the night with friends. In fact, he went to Paris as the following letter shows: Philip wrote it to Maina, intimate friend of Philip and Circe:

November 3, 1900

Matlock Lodge,
Crawley, Sussex.

My dear Maina, Just a line to thank you and to offer my excuses for not having thanked you sooner. In any other circumstances nothing would have stopped me from using the ticket for the concert you so kindly left for me. But I found myself so unnerved by what would in the eighteenth century have been called my 'fall from the favour of the Court' that I would have sat next to you in a gloom as profound as that of the Knight of the Rueful Countenance! When I learned that Lily (who was wiring only the previous night that she was waiting for me to say goodbye in Paris that night) had gone, you'll easily understand that I felt as though I'd been kicked in the stomach. My adventure doubtless has its comic side, but I had to recover from the first shock before I could savour the joke in its entirety. You can just see me standing there, can't you? Risen at 4 a.m., after a sleepless night, to jump into the boat train in London just as it moved off, alighting in hot haste in Paris to trick myself out in twenty minutes like a matinée idol, and presenting myself bathed, shaven, scented — and famished — before your unfortunate butler, who was quietly smoking the cigar of the evenings that mesdames are out to dinner! Your butler was tender hearted, he even found elevated language to express respectful sorrow appropriate to the height of my despair. He was inspired to term my mortification a 'disaster' in his purest Alsatian accent — and that several times. He pointed out, with great good sense and nice judgment, that if I had left a night earlier or if Matame had waited till the next morning, the outcome would have been totally different. He ended up by insisting that he must telephone Matame Maina to inform her of what had happened. To assuage my grief he credited you with a lively desire to console me, and I think that he even invited me to luncheon the next day. Do not scold him, because if he is a knave he is the Knave of Hearts*. And you must blame my British pride if all

FOOTNOTE*: The play on words is neater in the original French: Ne lui en fais pas un reproche, car si c'est un valet c'est celui de coeur! END OF FOOTNOTE.

his warm and lyrical words failed to soothe my despair. Ah! My dear, good, sweet Maina, I am stricken to the heart. I was suffering too much, and I still suffer too much, to enjoy the harmonies of a concert. Quite simply I returned to my hotel to pack in time to catch the next express for England. When I got home I took refuge in bed like an animal seeking refuge in its earth after suffering a gunshot. This morning I rose at midday and went to visit my poor horse, my unfortunate Dark 'Un, who is looking very poorly with his blisters on his shoulder and pastern. Together we exchanged our impressions of life and came to the conclusion that it was a sad joke in which one gets knocked about more often than one wins the Gold Cup.

It would give me much pleasure to hear from you as it is a long time since I had any news of you. How are the horses? And all the other inhabitants

of Paradise Lost? I send by the same post a letter to Lily, which it would be good of you to forward. Don't worry! I am not the kind of person who utters reproaches or poses as an interesting victim.

Until I see you again, I place a kiss on each of your hands.

Ever yours affectionately, Philip.

And here is the letter of the same date to Circe:

But why, Lily, why send me that wire: Paris tomorrow aurevoire* — Circe? What precipitated your departure?

Was it the joyous Alright that I wired back, or was it my letter, in which I told you how happy and delighted I was at the thought of seeing you once more?

When I arrived at number 188 at 8.15 on Friday evening, what did I find? Neither you, nor a word from you. Only a lackey taken by complete surprise, but sympathetic enough to explain 'Matame? Ah! What a disaster! Matame left zee morning for Roma'. I confess I felt the blow cruelly. Maina, to whom your man insisted on telephoning, was kind enough to invite me to meet her at a concert being given by your teacher of singing, but I was too crushed by this unexpected climax to my dash to Paris to pluck up the courage to brave the lights, meet people, and keep up a flow of small talk.

I bear you no ill-will, my darling. I feel neither resentment nor anger. I am so dumbfounded by behaviour that I so little expected in a woman like you, that I tell you that if you did it again tomorrow I would be taken by surprise a second time. After thinking it all over carefully, and suffering greatly, I believe that I have at last hit on the only circumstances in which you could perhaps be yourself and yet act thus. I must suppose that seeing my eagerness, and realising at last how much you were loved by me, you could not bring yourself to stay to tell me that you loved me no longer. You see how well I know you, and that it was therefore only in the goodness of your heart that I could hope to find an explanation of behaviour that seems spiteful and fickle. So you went away rather than give me my notice to quit, because you knew that it would fill me with despair. This is a refinement of kindness, which it has taken me some hours to appreciate! But in the end I have got the point.

My God, how happy I was Thursday night! Happiness kept me awake, my darling, and before 4 a.m. on Friday I was afoot, restless, agitated, apprehensive about all sorts of things, but all the same wildly happy at the thought that I was to see you once more in a few hours. It remains for me to thank you for a final day of happiness, because the conviction that I had after receiving your wire that you really did want to say aurevoir* before leaving

FOOTNOTE*: I.e., not adieu. END OF FOOTNOTE.

for Egypt brought back, I confess, a hope that I had scarcely dared to cherish for a long time. But if, indeed, you acted as you did from the motive that I attribute to you, it seems to me that you have forgotten and overlooked the friend in the dismissed lover, because truly, my dear darling, I love you enough to be able never again to speak to you of love — since it bores you — and if I am to believe that never again am I to have news of you, that each time that I think of you I am to be forbidden to tell you so, then I should be even unhappier than I am. Because you are everything to me — my best friend, my best comrade, as well as all the rest. How can I explain these things to you without seeming flowery? But you know me so well that you will easily understand, and you know all this better even than I. Anyway, on the off chance, I'll send you a letter tomorrow to the Savoy Hotel in Cairo. Have a good time, and when the sight of something beautiful moves you, or when some happiness delights you, spare me a moment's remembrance, because every day I shall be thinking of you and wishing you happiness.

Adieu, my treasure, adieu my dear darling, adieu Lilian, you have broken my heart. Philip.

What can be deduced from the letters quoted and from the sheaf of others with the same monotonous appeals and declarations from Circe?

The association had begun before Philip's marriage in January, 1900, but on the analogy of all his other associations, except two, it was relatively short lived. I doubt that it lasted longer than the eleven months covered by the letters. Circe's violent sexual witchery was balanced by jealousy and possessiveness, traits from which Philip, sooner rather than later, always recoiled. One of the two women who managed to retain their enduring but very different kinds of relationships with him was without these traits, the other kept them under strict control.

The trend of Circe's letters suggests that she was reconciling herself to losing Philip, but that she was determined to punish him. How to do this better than by jilting him? The letters imply that after a period of silence on the part of both, she wrote out of the blue, announcing that she was about to leave for Egypt, urging a rendezvous. I think that Philip jumped at this,

partly because physically she satisfied him to the brim, mostly because it was to be a farewell session; she would be away for a long time, and when she returne much could have changed.

I do not think that Philip's letter exaggerates his sense of shock. Love is so important a source of self-esteem that rejection is a terrible blow to the ego. Philip retired to his earth to lick his wounds, and I am sure that the impressions that he exchanged with Dark 'Un were as disenchanted as he says. But the difference between ultimate failure or success in art, science, business, or love, is resilience, the ability to "lose and start again at your beginnings".

The more that one reflects over Philip's letter, the more resilience one finds in it. His first aim would have been to rebuild his self-esteem. How better than by asserting that he was not the rejected but that Circe was fleeing from the power of his love? This would re-establish his moral domination over the situation and over her. His "generous" interpretation of her behaviour would testify to the superiority of his character and help to restore the good temper and equanimity which he aimed ~~(with unvarying success except for passing "bad quarters of an hour" such as this)~~ frequent to present to the world. The desire for future friendship that he professes to be able to substitute for a passionate relationship would further build up his sense of control over Circe, would also subtly flatter her, and could raise hopes (from which he would eventually gracefully disillusion her) that he might once again be at her beck and call if she wished.

Not least, the composition of such letters gave Philip an artist's satisfaction and release; for he did not dash them off; they were compositions, written and re-written. The letter to Circe that I have quoted is a transformation of the first draft, (which survives in my possession).

I repeat that I think that Philip's self-esteem was deeply bruised when he found that Circe had jilted him, but by the time that he had written to her and to Maina, he had, I believe, recovered his good tempered self-possession.

The character of the butler (also described as "lackey" and "valet") deftly hinted by "tender hearted", the mild witticism contrasting his "elevated language... appropriate to the height of my despair", his "respectful sorrow... great good sense and nice judgement," hinted also by the cigar of the mistresses's evening out that he is discovered smoking, and by his Alsatian accent, which I cannot render in English* is not a sketch drawn by a lover moving towards suicide

FOOTNOTE*: Matame? Matame est Barthie ce madin pour Rome. END OF FOOTNOTE.

but by an artist revelling in his craftsmanship. And that Philip had something of the artist's detachment in the use of his raw materials appears from his references to himself as the "Knight of the Rueful Countenance" and as a "matinée idol... bathed, shaven, scented — and famished... "

In the writing of love stories Philip was an amateur, of love letters a professional. I am sorry that Circe made him suffer, but I cannot help feeling that, on this occasion, he got professional satisfaction, not to say fun, out of his sufferings.

VII „I have neither mother, nor husband, nor child“ - IDA

Ida Marie Hennessy, (born Seilern) 1864 – 1944
sister of Carlo Seilern
married Philip Mather Hennessy

Ida's first son, Patrick, was born on January 24, 1901. It was a difficult birth.

Ida was a devoted mother. She began by nursing Patrick herself - by no means usual in those days - but her supply being inadequate, he had to have "formulae" which Ida. prepared herself. She also gave him his bath, another unusual point in an age of nannies.

As the months went by, Ida became worried about the baby. He did not seem well. Dr. Jukes re-assured her: it was the exceptionally hot summer, which did not suit many babies, he said, and he told Philip that she fussed too much.

One day when Patrick was asleep, Ida noticed that his eyes were fluttering up and down beneath the lids. She sent for the doctor, who would not commit himself. Patrick cried in a new and strange way. Ida wrote:

I racked my brain for a way to soothe him. He quietened when I played the piano softly to him. The next day Jukes said Patrick must be kept in a dark room, lit only by a shaded candle. Patrick cried more and more. The meningitis cry is peculiar and distressing. At one time my poor adored baby cried incessantly for 16 hours.

My anxiety gave way to terror. I felt like someone imprisoned in darkness, groping for a way out. I knew with everything in me that Patrick was not being given the right treatment. To have an intuition that this precious life, which seemed to be fleeing from me, could be saved, and that every hour, every minute, lessened the chances, was an ordeal.

I asked for a consultation with a specialist. Jukes had difficulty in tracking one down in London because it was August. At last Dr. Coutts came on the 26th... When the child was examined, I saw for the first time what the darkness had prevented me from seeing: Patrick's lips were blue... Coutts gave me no hope... The mustard bath prescribed - and that I gave Patrick myself - revived him for a moment. His eyes sought mine. What distress was in their look ! The inability to breathe tortured him and was torturing to watch. The Doctor therefore asked us to leave the nursery. He stayed there alone with the nurse. Towards midnight the soul of our child left its bruised body. Early the next day I went into the nursery. The big windows, flung wide open, let in the pure air and the sun. It was chilly.

I ran to the bed on which Baby lay in a white dress. His tiny hands and his forehead were cold - like marble. He no longer had need of warm clothing. He had need of nothing - except a grave. One does not always realise the full horror that the

ward "grave" carries with it. The horror of helplessness is worse than the horror that one feels in peering into an abyss, deep, unfathomable, silent, without light, without life, without hope... In a few weeks thirty-nine years will have fled since August 27, 1901, but one does not forget. The tears well when one recalls feelings that lie deep in one's heart.

When I saw the undertaker touch the tiny body on the bed, a strange sensation, something like indignation, seized me. But reason prevailed. I realised that it was his job to take the measurements for the coffin that would be from now on my child's (Patrick H.) cradle.

It is staggering to think that neither Philip nor the nurse thought of keeping Ida out of the way when the undertaker was due.

On August 28, 1901, Ida had been married eighteen months. How, in the light of her experiences. at Nice, at Parfondeval, and at Matlock Lodge, did she look upon her situation?

Following immediately on the entries in her (Ida Marie H.) autobiography quoted above, I find this:

On the morning of August 28, your father (Philip Mather H. ?), hollow-eyed, took the coffin away in the landau. Standing behind a curtain in the corner of a window, I watched them go, and I said aloud “I have neither mother, nor husband, nor child”.

VIII Uncle Carlo and the Great Blotting Paper Crisis of 1907

Some weeks before Patrick's death (Jossleyn's elder brother who died aged 7 months in 1901), Philip (Hennessy, Jossleyn's father) had looked at a neighbouring property for sale. lfield Park was a three storeyed country house with thirteen bedrooms; drawing room, dining room, library, theatre (with proscenium, footlights, dressing rooms and auditorium to seat thirty), servants hall, roof observation-balcony (commanding lovely views over several miles north east and west) garage, stables, coach-house (beneath quarters for the coachman's family), conservatory with vines and figs, greenhouses (with rank upon rank of flowers) in pots, huge, middling, and small; long, narrow tanks covered with water plants; pools glimmering with gold fish; the warm, humid air, laden with exotic aromas); croquet, tennis, and archery lawns; a glorious, full grown copper beach, a supported weeping willow, traditional monkey-puzzle tree, summer house star-shaped rose beds, herbaceous border, high-pink-walled kitchen garden, orchard with loose box, the privacy of the whole ensured by a circle of thickly growing rhododendron bushes, hazelnut alleys, and fir and pine trees, pierced at a single point by a quarter of a mile drive guarded by a lodge in which lived the farmer and his family who rented the home farm.

lfield Park entranced Philip. A late nineteenth century builder's speculation, architecturally the house was nondescriptly inoffensive, comfortable and spacious, and he rightly considered that, with its tree-encircled lawns and park lands, it was ideal for a country gentleman who wished to give leisurely Edwardian week-end parties in the summer, amateur theatricals in the winter, provide his guests with mounts for hunting or hacking, garage space for three or four cars, and for breakfast fresh eggs and milk from the farm. Always providing that one had the income to foot the bills, a point on which Ida was from the first apprehensive.

Ida had no idea of costs in England but she judged from the upkeep of her Villa Cornelia (whose garden was run on the metayer system (cultivation of land for a proprietor by one who receives a proportion of the produce) that lfield Park with acres of roof to maintain, lawns, gardens and orchards to tend, was altogether too lavish. She would have preferred a modest four or five-roomed house and more land than a meagre twenty-five acres to rent or farm. Philip ridiculed her fears. The rent from the farm, he said, would be ¬£100 a year; the farmer would supply labour to tend the gardens and orchards, the ample surplus produce from which could be sold in Crawley. Why, lfield would not only pay for itself, it would make money. It is possible that these dreams could have been made to come true if Philip had known anything of horticulture, estate management, and farming, and been prepared for the year in, year out, slog of a farmer's life. His plans for lfield were characteristic of the various glowing schemes, always on the verge of making a fortune, that he pursued until he joined Lloyds Bank in 1914. These ventures resembled his novels in that

they left behind a train of brilliant starts, each readily abandoned in favour of an even more dazzling idea.

Philip's ample income from writing was still, and was always to remain, in the future. Meanwhile Ida's allowance from her sister-in-law, Nettie (Seilern), was ¬£800 a year. Full of doubts, but yielding to Philip's judgement, Ida bought lfield for ¬£3'600 with a mortgage of ¬£2'000 on which the interest was ¬£120 a year. She bought a carriage-horse, a hunter, a brood mare, a landau, wagonette, dogcart, station wagon, furniture for the house and coachman's quarters; garden mowing machine and (what was to become to me) a fascinating water cart - a zinc barrel suspended from hinges on a creaking and boum-bouming push-carrier with two large flat-rimmed iron wheels.

On September 22, 1901 - twenty-five days after Patrick's death - as they were sitting down to breakfast, Philip asked Ida to get ready to catch the next train to Farnham, the station for Frensham Place, the country mansion that Carlo had rented for the summer. Nettie had died.

The loss of a loved and gracious sister-in-law ("the closest and dearest friend I ever had" Ida once told me), coming so soon after her own bereavement, was grievous. The loss of ¬£800 a year was, in Ida's eyes, ominous: she would willingly have got rid of lfield Park, in which they were not yet living as it was still in the hands of decorators, and furniture was being bought and delivered piecemeal; the mortgage was signed but they could sell the house and find a modest alternative.

To Philip, Ida's attitude was defeatist. She was, he said, invariably hypnotised by forebodings of calamity. Carlo, as heir to Nettie's fortune, would, "of course" assume Nettie's obligations to his sister, besides there would be the income from Philip's writing and from letting the farm. As usual, Ida's lack of self-confidence yielded to Philip's carefree optimism.

He was, of course, right about the farm: it was let, if not for ¬£100 a year at least for ¬£24, plus the obligation to mow the lawns and maintain the gardens. He was also, of course, right about Carlo, who promised an allowance, if not of ¬£800 at least of ¬£500. But the trouble with Carlo throughout his life was that although he was wealthy, he was never quite wealthy enough. He always mustered pocket money to rough it at the Ritz or, when engaged in one of his periodical economy drives, to id it at the Grosvenor Hotel in Victoria Station (which, he pointed out, was a terrific economy on taxis between station and hotel). But life was so expensive that he was compelled to engage in a series of enterprises intended not only to make his own fortune but his sister's too - for - and I write this sincerely, without

a trace of irony, in the light of my experience of Uncle Carlo over thirty years - he was unselfishness, generosity, and bonhomie personified. Bonhomie is here the right word; it is often used in English as synonymous for "hail-fellow-well-met", but its true meaning combines the notions of simple good-heartedness and good nature with guilessness.

In their infinite resource for unearthing stupidly neglected schemes for making money, Philip and Carlo were identical, except that Carlo was always worried by his lack of money, whereas Philip more often than not rode resiliently over his, scattering generous tips right and left. There was, however, in Philip, as I hope to show, more than the superficial flaneur. Even if lacking in depth, his superstructure was complex. On the other hand, Carlo was straightforward, uncomplicated, and loveable at first sight, although more enduring relations required stamina, because his affairs were usually in some muddle and therefore a trial, sore to himself, sorer to Ida and others who dad to deal with him.

When Carlo married Nettie, he found the sums settled upon her and the allowance made to him inadequate. He therefore cast around. He observed from the newspaper that people made fortunes on the London Stock Exchange. All you needed was

Some capital in hand,
Flair and
Inside information.

Carlo could always borrow (1), knew that he had plenty of (2) but he could only acquire (3) by becoming a member of the Stock Exchange and for this it was necessary to be a British subject. Carlo became naturalised (His male descendants remain British subjects to this day.)

He then proceeded to back the inside information so acquired until his mother-in-law (Anna Woerishoffer) said to him:

"I am rich but I'm not rich enough to bail you out every time you try to beat the market".

Mrs. Woerishoffer's anxiety for the future of her grandsons led her to tie her money up in a trust, which prevented Carlo from touching capital and gave him an income that would have been comfortable but for his discovery, half a century before Northcote Parkinson, that "expenditure rises to meet income." Carlo, hurt by Mrs. Woerishoffer's lack of confidence in his flair, and puzzled by her frivolous "je m'en foutism" (I don't care a damn) towards sound investment, decided to pay her out by giving up the Stock Exchange; if, in consequence, her grandsons starved she might see the point.

Carlo was as much a slave to efficiency as to economy. He kept his clocks a quarter of an hour fast so that everyone should be in time for the theatre or a train. Curtains, however, persisted in rising, and trains in departing, before the scheduled hour whenever he turned up. Philip maintained that this was because theatres and trains observed Greenwich Mean Time and not Carlo's Mean Time. After that, when Carlo announced the hour at which he wished something done, everyone would chorus "GMT or CMT?" Carlo would smile tolerantly and say "Well, just keep your eye on the clock." He suspected that his household loitered, safe in the belief that his clocks gave them fifteen minutes in hand, so now and again, he would surreptitiously put them back to the correct hour, which made everyone thirty minutes late for their dentists or their dinners. Carlo would ask innocently "Didn't you see the time?"

Philip, who was fond of his brother-in-law, used to say that Carlo was like a high-spirited terrier; he had the same wistfully intelligent expression; the illusion was complete if you went for a stroll with him. He never walked; he trotted with short, quick steps. He would dart from your side to look at a shopwindow. Before you could join him, he would be off to study a poster elsewhere. After motors came in, if you suddenly heard hoots and screaming brakes, you would see a bespattered Carlo beaming at the traffic from the edge of the opposite pavement, with a "What-fun-life-is" smile stretched from ear to ear. It was best to walk steadily on. Carlo always came back to the house.

Periodically after Nettie's death, Ida kept house for Carlo, his three small sons and their nurse, Julia. In 1907, she and Philip stayed with him for some time at 131, Harley Street, which he had rented.

On morning, as Carlo was rushing out of the house - he was always pressed for time - Ida called after him:

"Carlo, buy me some blotting paper, will you?"

Carlo put a harassed face round the door.

"What?" Quickly now, or I'll be late." "We're out of blotting paper,"

"Good God!" Blotting paper! Blotting paper!!"

Carlo shrugged expressive shoulders.

"As if I hadn't enough on my hands with all this-"

he waved round while my mother's eyes followed the circle in hopes of discovering what it was that he had on his hands - "without having blotting paper thrown in."

The next day, King, the butler, came in to my mother and said:

"Some blotting paper has arrived, madam."

"Oh? I thought Count Seilern might forget, so I bought a packet myself," Ida smiled. Never mind, a few extra sheets will be useful."

"There's a van outside. With a ton, madam," King said distinctly. "A ton?"

"Twenty hundredweight, madam."

"What does he want a ton for?" Ida asked, laughing in spite of herself. "Maybe his lordship is thinking of writing a letter, madam" King said, strictly in character.

"How many sheets are there in a ton? Ida wondered. "Several millions by the looks of it," King said gloomily.

"Say there's been a mistake and send it away," Ida had decided, when Carlo trotted happily in.

"I've saved you ¬£4 in housekeeping money, my dear Ida," he announced. "You have?" It was a sigh rather than a question.

"By taking a ton, I got a 20 per cent discount," Carlo said triumphantly. "I've already got a packet for a shilling."

"Yes, at the rate of ¬£20 per ton instead of ¬£16," Carlo scorned. "Where shall I store it, my lord?" Kind said.

"Store it?" Carlo put on his "For-heaven's-sake-must-I-do-everything-for-you" tone. "The house is big enough."

"We might squeeze a hundredweight into the wine cellar - King began.

Carlo bristled at him.

"I will not have the claret disturbed. What about" - he thought rapidly- "one of the maid's bedrooms?"

My mother and King, who were firm allies in the management of the household, exchanged glances.

"Where will the maid sleep?" Ida asked, mildly enough.

As my father used to say, my mother's reasonableness only encouraged her brother's aptitude for solving difficulties.

"Sleep?" Carlo snorted contemptuously. "On the blotting paper, of course."

Suddenly inspiration seized him and he began to pace round the room. "A new use for blotting paper!" he cried. "We can furnish room with it! Wallpaper, carpets, chairs, chests of drawers, tables, beds, pillows, sheets, blankets - all made of blotting paper of different colours! There's a fortune in it! And think of the convenience if you are an author. You can't mislay it! There it is, all round you. Are you writing on the mantelpiece?" (Carlo thought of all possibilities) "You don't need to move -you blot there. Do you write in bed? You use the sheets! And what a room for children! They could throw ink at the walls - wallow in it - and only have to blot themselves on the floor to be ready for a party! And no more sweeping or dusting! You simply tear off the top sheet." That's where you'd make the money-" Carlo said shrewdly - "on the re-fills. You'd have a monthly re¬¨blotting day. It's the idea of the century!

Philip entered. From the expressions with which everyone turned to him - Carlo rapt - King respectfully washing his hands of the whole thing - Ida signalling an S.O.S. - Philip saw that he was being called upon to play his recognised role as conciliation officer in awkward social situations.

"Carlo's got the idea of the century," Ida said.
"This century or the last?" Philip asked, deeply interested.

Carlo ran up excitedly and seemed about to leap all over him, but instead he began walking him rapidly up and down while he explained. When he finished, Philip said impressively:

"Carlo! If people would only listen to you -
'"'There!" Carlo rounded on the other two. You see! Philip understands at once."

" - They would be richer and happier," Philip continued, in the tones of a Victorian moralist. "But, alas! You are, as usual, a century before your time. Remember that the Inquisition imprisoned Galileo for fooling about with the sun-"

"But I'm not "fooling about" with blotting paper," Carlo interrupted with some heat.
"I'm only putting the stupid official viewpoint," Philip said. "Remember that it took half a century to persuade the War Office to adopt the breech-loading gun. People will make absurd objections. They'll say that a blotting paper room would absorb the damp in wet weather."
"But you could devise a non-absorbent blotting paper," Carlo cried.

"Of course, you could," my father agreed warmly. "Blotting paper which didn't blot! It would catch on like - he searched for a simile.
"Wild fire that didn't burn," Ida said.
"That suggests an advertising campaign, "Philip said. "you know the sort of thing: "Keep that escutcheon blotted! Or - "
"Mothers! It's baby's blotting time! "Carlo nodded enthusiastically. Ida rose.
"Whether it's GMT or GMT, it's certainly ML T" she said. "What's that?" Carlo said, suspiciously.
"My lunch time," Ida answered, moving towards the dining room.
Carlo looked at the clock, which said 1.35. He turned slightly away from Philip and stole a glance at his watch.
"It's all right, it's only " he began, checked himself, and finished carelessly:
"Twenty-five minutes to two."
"I'll just wash. Don't wait for me," Philip said waving Carlo and Ida to the dining room.

Quietly, he told King to put a hundredweight of blotting paper in the cellar and to send the rest back. Carlo's interest was always absorbed in the things and people in front of him. Philip judged that if the blotting paper were out of sight, he would forget it.

Carlo received the bill a few days later, and my mother feared that this would re-open the question of the maid's sleeping arrangements, but by that time Carlo was working on a plan for reducing his transport costs by keeping an elephant, so although he regretted the opportunity missed in blotting paper, he was only half-hearted about it.

Unfortunately, when he came to write the cheque, he unerringly spotted that since he had taken only one hundredweight, Frank Smythson had reduced the discount from 20 to 10 percent. Instantly blotting paper obliterated elephants from his mind.

"I'm not going to throw money away like this," he said angrily. But after a moment, a "big business" expression came over his face, and he retired to his study at a purposeful trot.

Later Carlo said:

"I've solved the storage problem. Frank Smythson agreed to take 15 hundredweight back."
"We've got one hundredweight here" Ida said. "What have you done with the remaining four?"
"I'll give you two guesses," Carlo said, dancing from one foot to the other in excitement.
"You've taken a suite at the Savoy for it?" Ida suggested. "Wrong!" Carlo replied seriously. "Give up?"
"You've deposited it for safe custody in the strong room at your bank," Philip said after careful thought.
"How did you guess?" Carlo was crestfallen.
"It's the one place where he could keep it for nothing," Philip explained to Ida, and he managed to inject such admiration into his voice that Carlo's spirits were restored and what was remembered in the family (until the Agadir crisis of 1911 blotted it out) as the Great Blotting Paper crisis of 1907 was over.

Note: Nothing, incidentally, came of Uncle Carlo's idea of keeping an elephant to economise on horses and station waggons to fetch the luggage of his weekend guests form the station to his house in the country, because (so he claimed) Philip persuaded Carlo that the economies that he would make on the horse transport would be outweighed by the fines that he would incur for frightening the trains with his elephant.

The aftermath was that the one thing with which, despite several financial crises, Ida was always bountifully supplied was the finest quality of Ford's pink blotting paper. I myself used the last sheets in 1928, some twenty-one years later, which suggests that Carlo had, in sheer size, brought off the biggest bargain of the century. I confess to have invented the price and discount that Smythsons' offered, the real figures of which have long been forgotten. It is, of course, possible that the story may have lost nothing in countless re-tellings, but its spirit is in keeping with the characters of the protagonists - and that in a way which emerges only after reflection.

In the first place, Carlo was the son of his parents' broken marriage and of his mother's self-pity: he retained an eleven-year old's enthusiasm for new experiences and a teenager's maturity of judgment. But, whatever his weaknesses, he was a sentient human being. Here, in illustration, are extracts from the letter that he wrote in French to his mother (Ida Seilern, born Zaluska) on September 22, 1901, a few hours after the death of his beautiful 26-year-old wife, Nettie, after three and a half years of marriage:

Darling Maman,
When you receive these lines you will already have learned of the terrible blow dealt me by the loss of my beloved Nettie, the staunchest, most loving of wives, the best of mothers. My family

happiness which, thanks to her unique qualities, was perfect, is shattered for ever. I am still completely unable to realise the extent, and the tragic consequences, of my misfortune: when I think of my three motherless darling children, I become crazed with grief.
I know that, despite the sad misunderstandings that came between you and her (see Note below) , you loved her sincerely and appreciated her exquisite qualities of heart. I know that my tears, which keep brimming over, will mingle with yours and that together in our grief we shall forget our differences in the past...

Towards the evening yesterday the poor child lost consciousness .... She died at four this morning without regaining it and probably without any idea that her end was near ...

I cannot write more today, dear Maman, because I am prostrate ....
Poor darling Ida and poor Philip, they also have had a terrible shock and are still overcome by their own sufferings ....
I kiss you hands and commend myself to your motherly compassion. Your unhappy Carlo.

Note: Ida Seilern, Carlo Seilern's mother (born Zaluska) apparently did not get along with Nettie. Chapter II (above) partly explains this state of affairs.

Nettie lies in the far corner of the cemetery at Farnham, Surrey, in a tomb which, beneath the arms in coloured relief of the Seilern and Aspang family, bears an epitaph taken from Archbishop Fenelon (1651-1715): "Gathered by the angels, her death was asleep and her soul knew not the agonies of its passing. While in our amidst she was a gentle zephyr, good, sweet, tender, affectionate - fleeting."

The epitaph is among that minority which is both beautiful and true. I wish I knew who took the time and pains to seek it out for Nettie. Since Francois de Salignac de la Mothe Fenelon was an aristocrat and a prince of the Church, a combination for which Philip had a special cult, and since he had a copy of Fenelon's Telemachus in his library at lfield, Philip may well have been responsible. It would have been characteristic of his urge to give pleasure to others which found expression in graceful flattery or, as in this possibility, a gracious need.

Ida and Philip scrambled through 1903 to 1906, partly by paying some lengthy visits to generous friends, such as Dr. Ludwig Mond, father of Robert and Alfred (Later the first Baron Melchett), or to Count Alexander Perpocher, and his wife, Rosette, daughter of Ida's aunt Fanny Zelenska (nee Zaluska). My parents and I, aged 3, spent Christmas of 1905 on the Perpocher estate at Neudorf Silesia (at that time part of Germany). Then uncle Carlo helped out by inviting Ida to keep house for him at 131, Harley Street, and again by renting lfield for a summer.

But Philip's dependence on his wife's allowance, and on prolonged visits, irked Carlo and he periodically lectured him on his responsibilities as a husband and a father and on the

need for any self-respecting man in his position to get himself a job and an income of his own. Now, an average man, and especially an average brother-in-law, clearly vulnerable, as Philip was, to such criticisms, might easily have responded by taking offence, quarrelling, or developing an attitude of hostility towards Carlo, perhaps refusing to meet him. Philip was neither an average man nor an average brother-in-law. He listened patiently, and refrained from exploiting opportunities for "What about you?" retorts. He invariably left Carlo in a pleasant glow at having accomplished his duty and grateful towards Philip for having made it so easy. But although above the average, Philip was no superman. His way of getting his own back was to tell amusing and somewhat patronising stories about "ce pauvre Carlo" - such as the Great Blotting Paper crisis, of which the basic fact comes from Ida but the colour and style of the story from Philip - which held Carlo up to ridicule, gentle and affectionate, so that no one could take offence, but which at the same time revealed Philip as the kindly, sophisticated man of the world, getting Carlo out of scrapes and smoothing everyone's path.

I can't help pointing out that Philip's technique not only assuaged his wounded vanity but that, in contrast with many, who do this by spreading venom and ill-will, Philip spread innocent laughter.

IX Ida’s exasperates her in-laws

In November, 1901, less than three months after the traumatic shock of Patrick's death, Ida was again pregnant. The doctor had warned her that she must not exert herself, but after Nettie's death she kept house for Carlo at Frensham Place for some weeks -- a big and tiresome responsibility with nine servants and many guests to look after; then there was the supervision of the redecorating and furnishing of Ifield Park while she and Philip stayed with various friends as guests, which meant the strain of being social, fitting in with the arrangements of others, and the inability to rest according to her own needs. If reasonable comfort was to be enjoyed in Ifield Park's large rooms (lit by fourteen oil lamps and heated by open log fires) four or five servants, which she could not afford, were needed. Ida took up a picnic residence at Ifield on December 6, a grey-black day of penetrating cold. The only fire hardly took the chill off the library, now inhabited for the first time, and Ida shivered throughout the day; the culmination was a miscarriage that night, which she survived alone and unaided.

She spent one week in bed and then, still feeling more than shaky, got up to resume her duties as mistress of house and as wife. They spent Christmas at Frensham Place where Ida took charge. Although she lacked self-confidence in dealing with Philip, because with him she felt out of her depth, she was resourceful and brave in matters which she understood. She saw that the servants, unsupervised since Nettie's death, were revelling in waste, extravagance, and pilfering. Quietly, pleasantly, firmly as was ever her way whatever the problem (providing that Philip or her in-laws were not involved when she became tongue-tied), Ida insisted on vetting the cook's book. She

records that Madam Parisot, the cordon bleu ne devait pas nous porter dans son coeur, King et moi.*

FOOTNOTE*: "The cook cannot have taken King and me to her heart." END OF FOOTNOTE.

By March, 1902, Ida was once more pregnant.

Doctor Ralph Vincent, senior physician of the Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, one of London's outstanding specialists at that time, took charge of Ida. Over the years there grew up between them a warm intellectual regard. From time to time they discussed diet and child psychology and, because he respected her intelligence, exchanging ideas and experiences with her on the footing of equality denied her by her in-laws, Vincent did must to boost Ida's morale when periodically her will to live wavered.

I emphasise this point for two reasons: (1) if Ralph Vincent has any descendants, I should like them to rejoice in the memory of a forebear who was great, wise, and kind; (2) Vincent's relation with Ida constituted an experience of which few can have any idea in this era of National Health Services when patients are apt to be so much impersonal doctor-fodder, treading on each other's heels as they are speeded in and out of group surgeries. This, I hasten to add, is the fault neither of doctors nor patients but of any nationalised system.

Vincent said that Ida had been negligently tended at the time of Patrick's birth. One of the muscles which supported the uterous had become like an over-stretched elastic, hence her continual pain and internal troubles, and the difficulty of a normal birth.

I was born at 7 p.m. on November 17, 1902. Immediately after, Ida had a haemorrhage, accompanied by rigor. She lay in bed trembling with cold, her teeth chattering. Vincent forbade her to put foot to ground for six weeks. At no time of her life had she been robust, but her miscarriages and her experiences (physical and emotional) before, during, and after the birth of her two children in her thirtyseventh and theirtyeighth years, had exhausted her physical strength and her nervous reserves. She tired easily, was prone to sick headaches and to any infectious disease around and, after Ifield's horses and carriages were sold, had no option but to take to a bath chair although only in her early forties.

Carlo had promised Ida £500 a year. This, in relation to mortgage interest of £120 and the upkeep of a place the size of Ifield Park, was a tight fit, but since Ida was a first rate housekeeper and spent nothing on herself, she might just have squeezed by if the allowance of £41-13-8 a month had been paid regularly. But to the psychological quicksands of Ida's life were now added a financial morass. While grocers', butchers', bakers', and later my school bills flowed steadily in, she could depend neither on the regularity, nor even on the amount, of the allowance. For example, in 1904, Carlo sent her:

£40	for	January and February
£80	"	March
£36	"	April
£35	"	May
£30	"	June
£30	"	July
£45	"	August
£12	"	November
£30	"	December
Total: £338		(instead of £500).

£338 less £120 for the mortgage left £218 to live on. Ida began gradually

to sell her jewelry, silver, and beautiful wedding presents, for which, since she was in no position to bargain, she naturally received low prices. One of the reproaches launched against Ida throughout her life by her mother-in-law, Charlotte Hennessy and her sister-in-law Norah — though not by Philip, who never once in my hearing referred to my mother in any but affectionate and respectful terms — was that Ida could be relied upon to sell anything of value. What else could she do?

Ifield, with an income adequate to cover repairs and maintenance, servants and transport, was a delight; Ifield without an income was the acme of inconvenience and a running financial sore. The great water tanks in the attic took a man two brow-sweating hours to fill every morning by cranking a hand pump (not with long slow swings but with short quick, hand-blistering jerks) that raised the water from the well in the park. The house was two miles across muddy fields, or three miles by road, from Crawley village*.

FOOTNOTE*: Since Ifield has been developed, the landscape has been transformed and these distances no longer pertain. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Without carriages and coachman the servants could not be taken in for their half day off and gave notice rather than live in isolation. Without carriages, the buying and delivery of provisions was a burden; one became dependent on the motor-rail from Ifield Halt and had to carry one's parcels from the Halt across the fields to the house. Without horses, it became virtually certain that any outbreak of fire would destroy the house before the brigade could arrive, for the horse-drawn Crawley fire brigade owned no horses but had to hire them from a livery stable some distance away. Neither we nor any neighbours for miles

around had a telephone. Ida told Higgs, the coachman, that in the event of a fire he was to mount one of our horses and lead two others in a cross-country dash to fetch the brigade. But after she had sold the horses?

The unpredictability of her allowance made Ida wish to sell Ifield. Philip laughed at her idea of asking £4,000 and advertised it at £8,000. Result: Not one enquiry.

Ida's health was fragile, largely because her morale had been continuously undermined by emotional difficulties.

First with her mother. What will strike the post-World War II generation is the number of letters exchanged between the two Idas. Throughou most of their lives they wrote to each other twice a week. To some extent this exemplifies the close pre-1914 ties between offspring and parent, were it not that these letters are morbid. The dowager Ida was touchy, always complaining that her birthday had been forgotten, something had been done behind her back ("No one ever tells me anything") or someone had been rude to her. Her daughter's replies are apologies, reassurances, protestations of love, which it must have been emotionally tiring to keep at a convincing level of sincerity week in, week out. When the dowager countess was not complaining from a distance, she swooped down to tell Ida in person "You're just like your father, you have a heart of stone," to which Ida, her eyes welling with tears would reply "But Maman darling, I adore you. All I want is to love and be loved".

Next Ida's in-laws. Will and Charlotte Hennessy lived between 1901 and 1908 in Turks Croft, a charming seventeenth century cottage opposite the gates of Ifield Park. Between Ida and her father-in-law there was affection.

Each appreciated the heart and intellect of the other. Ida admired Will's Barbizon-school pictures of misty moonlit forest glades, russet and blue in summer, frosted silver in winter. He was not a great artist but he endowed with sensitive poetic feeling the design and colour of the nature studies that gave him most pleasure. That he disapproved of Philip inclined him to sympathise with Ida.

But Charlotte, Philip, Moya and Norah had an in-group feeling dating from their earliest years.

Here are extracts from a letter from Philip, aged sixteen years, written from school to his mother, who had had an accident:

My dear little Maman,

What a ghastly accident... All your loyal supporters* are deeply upset and I don't doubt that you'll soon see cards of enquiry raining down on you from all your young admirers... I did not realise until now just how much I loved you, sweet Maman, and when I heard you were in pain, you can't imagine what a state it plunged me into. If you want me to come to see you or do anything, you have only to send word. If you're bored and want me to read to you I'm ready. Alas! I'm only an absolutely useless boy and for the first time in my life I sincerely regret I'm not your daughter, so that I could pamper and take care of you all the time ...

FOOTNOTE*: Philip's schoolfellows, whom his mother had often visited and taken out. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Dear Mamsy, I kiss your pretty white hands and wish you the best of good spirits... Your loving Son.

Here are extracts from a letter from Norah written from Germany, when she was not quite sixteen, to Philip eleven years her senior.

My Dearest Philip,

I've just received a letter from Mother enclosing your brilliant and

charming letter. Well, I certainly am enjoying my small self most completely and... I see no chance of developing into a misunderstood female, if such a thing is possible for a member of our illustrious house...

Norah then continues over eight newsy pages telling Philip about her German lessons, visits to the opera, and so on before concluding...

I have just been re-reading an old letter of yours. Really we are a brilliant family. I am sorry I have written such a silly non-Hennessy scrawl but I felt tired after my first Wagner opera. All the sparkle and wit has gone out of me... I am your very affectionate little Sister.

These two letters express what Charlotte, Philip, Moya, and Norah felt about each other thoughout their lives; the only difference is that they say outrightly with the naivety of sixteen year olds, what later on was understood between them. They were never bored with each other; they were always overflowing with things to say to each other, always lost in admiration of each other.

That Charlotte had queened it in the salons of New York in the 1860's (a city then small enough, yet sufficiently wealthy and influenced by Europe, for there to exist a genuine "Society," long since overwhelmed by the sheer numbers and size of a megapolis); that Parisian hostesses were anxious to secur for their parties Moya de Janzé, as one of the acknowledged beauties of the day that Norah, had she not had the bad luck to be known as the "lovely Moya's younger sister", would have been an Edvardian beauty in her own right; that Philip was handsome; and that all four were exceptionally endowed with the social graces, convinced them that they were the most distinguished and the most entertaining people they knew: their reunions were a joy to each other to an extent that I have observed only in one other family.*

FOOTNOTE*: That of the second Marquess of Linlithgow, Viceroy of India (1936-1943). He, his wife, sons and daughters struck me as a similarly self-

contained group, tolerant of outsiders, but happiest in the jollity of their family fun, games and inside-jokes. END OF FOOTNOTE.

In effect, they constituted a club. They were willing, indeed anxious, to elect other members, and a few were, but the qualifications were stringent: good looks, conscious courtliness of manners, including the desire to show a subtly flattering interest in others present, elegance of dress, ability to converse, i.e. not to lecture but to exchange. Wit was welcome, but could at a pinch be replaced by high spirits and eagerness to enjoy the wit of others.

What did they talk about? The day's headliness, drama, music, ballet, opera, parties, dances, dinners, the latest doings of themselves and their friends. Serious probing of a subject was skirted as a possible source of feeling, which it was their object to sense, and to head off, before it could provoke clashes. In other words, where most families treat each other casually and reserve efforts to please for their friends, Charlotte, Philip, Moya, and Norah trod perhaps even more delicately among their own feelings than they did among strangers. There are many worse philosophies,

But Ida disqualified herself from election from the start. First, although initially admissible on the score of good looks, time was not on her side. When the new sisters-in-law first met in 1900, Moya was a radiant, Lily-Langtry type of twentyfive, Norah a blossoming, Dana-Gibson girl of sixte(Ida already a frail thirtysix.

Next, Ida could not cope with conversation as defined by her in-laws. She approached life seriously. She had natural intellectual curiosity, which led her to read psychology, religion, and other topics on which she developed

views which, when eventually I came to examine them with all the indulgence of a twenty year old Oxford undergraduate, I found tenable and indeed, on occasion in her quiet tentative way, she decisively refuted my arguments. Her in-laws recoiled from any discussion that could end in a refutation. It was not that they did not recognise that life was full of problems, but that there was a time and a place for all things. Problems should be confined to universities company board meetings, family crises or other moments of stress; as topics of relaxed conversation ~~they~~ problems closed doors to high spirits and opened them to arguments that destroyed social enjoyment.

Next, Ida's in-laws had a wide acquaintance in London and Paris society in circles in which she had none. Much of their easy flow of news and quips about the current doings of people, referred to by their christian names, meant nothing to her. And if occasionally she asked who "Cameron" or "Weetman" were it made her feel a fool that it should have to be explained that they were pers whom "everyone" knew, such as General Sir Cameron Shute, sometime member of Parliament for Brighton, or Sir Weetman Pearson M.P. (the first Lord Cowdray from 1910).

Not least, Ida was conscious that her clothes — the most presentable of which Carlo had passed on to her from Nettie's wardrobe after his wife's death — were in humiliatingly inelegant contrast with the changing models worn by Moya and Norah.

She exasperated her in-laws. Their idolisation of Philip explains why: he could do no wrong. Unfortunately, as has to some extent already beer related, and as will later emerge further, he too frequently did what might

have upset them less if they had not put him on so high a pedestal. The salve was to blame Ida. If only she were elegant, mondaine and capable, like an Alfred de Musset heroine, of establishing her authority by a winsome cajolling charm, and if only by an imperious sexual prowess, she could keep Philip in order, he would settle down to writing, avoid getting into debt, and his encounters with other women would be discreet and minimal.

That Ida acquiesced, without any attempt to assert herself, in Philip's increasing absences and final departure, meant that she ceased to count with Charlotte, Moya and Norah, and became, in their eyes, an ineffectual incompetent to be left to her own devices.

X "My life is a preliminary rough sketch – Ida

Ida's autobiography is a narrative interrupted here and there with pauses for reflection, in which she seeks to extract a theory of life from her experience. Pieced together these scattered observations form a consistent whole which reflects a definite personality, whose outstanding trait is the pursuit of integrity and intellectual honesty: a constant effort to view the men and women around her, and the events that overtake her, steadily and as a whole, to keep an open mind, and ever to be on guard against allowing her judgement to be unduly influenced by pre-conceived ideas — partly inherited, partly of one's own formation — into which one seeks to fit new acquaintances and new facts, as one encounters them; in other words one's framework of reference constitutes one's bias. Few are those who, like Ida, are aware of the possibility of bias and seek, day by day, to extend or to modify their built-in mechanism of judgement. Whether or not Ida was familiar with Plato's theory of knowledge pictured in his image of mankind as prisoners in a cave, with their backs towards a fire, looking at the shadows thrown by it on the walls and mistaking the shadows for realities, I do not know, but she was certainly one of that minority who, Plato says, turn to the light to toil up the steep slope to the mouth of the cave, where they gradually train their eyes, bewildered in the sunlight, to distinguish the realities seen previously only in shadow.

One begins to appreciate how rare this effort towards reality is when one considers how the average person dreads to be left alone with his thoughts — consciously, or more probably unconsciously, he fears that he will be confronted by unanswerable questions or truths from which he shrinks. It is such fears that compel him to seek release by lulling his reason with drink, television,

radio "background music", or by living in a crowd.

The house at Ifield stands on rising ground above the level of the surrounding country and is to this day crowned by a roof balcony. Here Ida kept a deck chair on which in fine weather she would lie back to meditate, basking in a magnificent view north, east and west. For example:

August 27, 1909. The obligation that one imposes on oneself to seek the truth in all things — always — never to compromise with the truth, never to distort it, keeps the soul bathed in a life-giving atmosphere, which makes it stronger, more resistant — and fortifies the intelligence — because lack of straightforwardness harms both soul and intellect; the most ingenious scaffoldings of thought often collapse on those who have no cult for the truth; masses c intelligence can be wasted by those who fail to bring straightforwardness to ever contest. Character is worth more than cleverness alone.

August 28, 1909. The weather is beautiful. I climb up to the roof balcony. I love the hours I spend here. The scene is always the same, yet always new, as, in fact, with all beautiful things, one discovers each time some new detail to charm, some perfection which had escaped one — if only one knows how to look and to rejoice. Green predominates the scattered lights and shades. Neither the noises nor the agitations of the world below reach me. Here is restful calm, grateful serenity and a wide view: three things that I appreciate.

But the sword of Damocles was ever there and as she is about to leave the balcony to return to the world, Ida asks herself:

Is this perhaps the last time? I long to linger under this blue sky in this landscape — but the daily chores are waiting. Already an old woman*

FOOTNOTE*: The next day, August 29, was Ida's fortyfifth birthday. END OF FOOTNOTE.

I still have youth's desires without its illusions... Perhaps I still have illusions. Is this because my hopes, my aspirations, have been satisfied so meagrely? There is melancholy but no bitterness in my consciousness of the flight of time — of illusions. As the years pass, they take with them little by little one's faculties, whether they have blossomed or not, and fill me with regret for things I would like to keep, which, barely glimpsed or savoured, already are slipping from me — deep yearnings that circumstances have defeated — efforts sincere but sterile. My life — like so many others — is a preliminary rough sketch. It is neither vanity nor pride which make this regret throb within me. No, the feeling that I have is the same as that which

overcomes one at the sight of a being arrested in development by some obstacle or unfavourable environment: the sight of capabilities aborted, ossified; efforts anihilated by poverty, lack of a helping hand, or by ill will; the sight of all these things crumbling away, which will never again be and which will perhaps leave no memory other than that of desertion, distress, desolation.

September 5, 1909. What a good day! The weather was beautiful. I spent hours in the garden, looking up from my book — Ouida's Under Two Flags — to look around me, to drink in the peaceful picture of the gardens and the park, still so green and so fresh, to weed out the plantain which invades the lawns, or to watch Jossleyn frolicking. The sunset was one of the finest I have ever seen

This means that Ida took the trouble to leave the lawns which faced east and southeast, to walk round across the coach yard to the south, and on through the trees which surrounded the tennis court, past the hazelnut alley which formed the perimeter of the pleasure gardens, to reach the open fields to the west, whence she would have seen the sunset over a vista of farmer Jack Nash's cows, browsing in the foreground, down hill to the winding tree-lined brook which bounded the estate, the woods on the far side stretching away to the horizon.

XI The case of the green-eyed governess

Around May, 1907, Ida let Ifield Park. Will and Charlotte were away, probably staying with Moya in Parfondeval, so Ida rented their cottage, Turks Croft, opposite the gate to the Park.

There ensued an episode which Dr. Watson might have called The Case of the Green-eyed Governess.

At that time, Ida employed a French girl, Madeleine, as maid; Lucy was the cook; and the twenty year old Miss Turner was my governess.

Ida described Turner as "tall, extremely pretty, fresh complexioned. with a lovely figure. She moved with elegance. Her manner was reserved."

One day on returning in the luggage cart from Crawley, where you and Turner had been out shopping with me, I put all my parcels on the big table in the hall. Then we sat down to lunch. It was not until I sorted out my parcels afterwards that I realised that my purse, which contained £6, had disappeared. I mentioned this to Turner and the servants without result. I therefore pinned up a large note saying 'I don't want to know who took my purse but request whoever it was to put it on my desk'. Lucy, an excellent sort, whom I did not suspect, came to see me very upset. 'I suspect no one' I told her. 'The whole thing is extremely tiresome'. My purse did not turn up. While we were moving from Ifield to Turks Croft, a sapphire ring with two brilliants disappeared. I suspected Mrs. Higgs, the coachman's wife. I knew she wasn't honest, but thought she confined herself to pilfering food. She had three small children, with whom Jossleyn used to play in the garden. A good mother, she could not resist the temptation to add to their meals, a habit that began during Carlo's tenancy of Ifield. Higgs was an excellent coachman, patient and courageous. He never allowed a horse to anger him. We had a horse named Spice, a good looking cob, who obviously had painful associations with carriages; the mere sight of anything on four wheels filled him with terror, making him swerve abruptly, which was unnerving if you were not expecting it. Higgs was never put out. He used good-humouredly to regard Spice's antics as interesting challenges. I was therefore anxious to keep Higgs, all the more so now that your father was away in London.

I mentioned to Turner that one of my rings had disappeared. Calm, collected as usual, she told me how some friends of hers had called in a detective to recover some missing jewellry. Pretending to be a workman, he searched the house and found the jewels hidden under a plank in one of the maids' rooms.

The next day, after Jossleyn had gone out with his governess, Madeleine brought me my purse, empty, saying that she had seen it in a half-open drawer in Turner's room. 'That proves nothing', I told her. 'The thief could have put the purse there after emptying it'. When Turner returned, I told her what had happened. 'I hope you don't suspect me', she said. A few days earlier she had told me that she hadn't enough money to pay a tailor's bill. The receipted bill came shortly after in an unsealed envelope.

That night, after Jossleyn had gone to bed, I talked for a long time with Turner, seeking to pierce the mystery that I suspected. She told me she'd lost her mother when she was six years old. A housekeeper looked after her and ran the home, until her father sent her to school. She did not come home for the holidays but spent them at school with the headmistress. It was she who had given me references for Turner. Turner always spoke quietly, but one night, overcome by some emotion, she had said to me 'I have gone through a terrible experience and since then I am not myself'. She stopped, as if lost in her past. I would so like to have been able to win her confidence, to help her. I felt that some tragedy was at the back of the mystery of her personalit The look in her pretty green eyes was never serene. She was always on her guard. Her heart seemed bruised, disillusioned, frozen into apathy. Or was she simply bewildered?

Ida's tenancy of Turk's Croft ended. Carlo had invited her to stay at 131 Harley Street until it was time for Ida to leave for a rest-cure in Switzerland, prescribed by Dr. Vincent. Ida's lack of strength meant that she had to take someone with her to help her and to look after me. Since she coul not afford to take two servants Ida gave Turner her month's notice and decided to take Madeline, who was young, strong, cheerful, obliging, and since she had previously worked with a Paris couturière, was a good needlewoman.

My mother had left a pretty blouse behind at Ifield (wrote Ida). I planned to return it when she got back to Nice. I asked Madeleine to do this from Harley Street...

Para
When Ida returned from an outing, Madeleine told her that she could not find the blouse and that she and Fanny, the first house-maid, had seen Turner go out with a parcel.

I summoned the strange girl. 'You remember I asked you to pack some things in your trunk for me', I said. 'I have nothing besides the tea caddy', she replied. 'Please do search your trunk carefully', I said. Impassive, she

went back to her room. The thought that Turner might steal something belongin to Carlo worried me. I called in a plain clothes policeman, and explained the situation. 'If I search her trunk and find what you've lost' he said, 'I'll have to report it and she'll be arrested. If you search her trunk, you'll be free to decide what action you want to take'. I did not want to send the poor girl to prison, so I opened her trunk in her presence. There were several things of mine in it. Turner was unperturbed. After I had got over this painful and humiliating scene, I asked her if she had found another place. She said 'No'. I persuaded her to see a doctor at my expense, a specialist in mental disorders, whom I knew. 'Her health is excellent, but her state of mind is abnormal, and is beyond my competence,' this specialist said unhelpfully.

I wrote to the headmistress who had brought Turner up, told her that she was leaving me, that she had no money, and that it seemed unwise to leave alone in London a girl who was obviously unbalanced. I also wrote, without mentioning the theft, to the girl's father to tell him, that his daughter was leaving me. He replied in a well-turned out letter that his daughter absolutely refused to return home. Was that where the key to the mystery lay?

The Case of Green-eyed Governess is banal in itself, but it throws light on Ida's charity and humanity, her anxiety to understand and to sympathise with others, which were to lead her to study psychology to some purpose over the years. A post-Freudian psychiatrist would start his investigation into Turner's background from the clue that such cases of petty theft often mean that the patient is seeking to steal some of the parental affection of which she has been deprived. Turner had lost her mother when young, her father had not brought her up himself but sent her away to school, where she remained even in the holidays. All very obvious today, but in 1907 Ida's tentative groping towards such ideas were in advance of average educated thinking, even of thinking that could have been expected to be well-informed, as evidenced by the mental specialist who dismissed Turner's problem as "beyond his competence".

XII Interlude for happiness

It would be wrong to think that there were no periods of sunshine in Ida's life.

One began in November, 1907, when, on Dr. Vincent's advice, Ida left the damp and the mists of the Sussex winter, taking me and Madeleine, our French mai to the Swiss mountains. We did not return to England until the last week of May, 1908, when Ida was, through the actions of others, confronted with a disaster. In the meantime, unconscious of the future, she enjoyed some of the happiest months of her life, even though it got off to a shaky start.

Our destination was St. Moritz with stops en route including Bale (where I had on November 17 my fifth birthday) and Tiefenkasten. Here Ida was counting on a letter from Philip with money. No letter... Ida had not enough money to pay the hotel bill and fares and food for the rest of the journey for the three of us. She was only too familiar with such harassing situations. Although she never learned to enjoy them, she faced them with a courage, dignity, and tact that inspired confidence and, more often than not, won her a breathing space. Of this occasion Ida wrote:

I confided my embarrassment to the hotel proprietor, telling him that our rooms were already booked in St. Moritz.

'Don't worry' said the proprietor, 'here's the money for the tickets. Pay me back for the cash and the hotel bill when your cheque arrives.' And when we left, he presented me with a basket of beautiful apples.

Thus in ballast with fruit to counter the absence of cargo in my purse, and carrying away a happy impression of kindness, we caught the train.

In pursuit of the pennies which save pounds, Ida was indefatiguable and resourceful. On the morning after arrival in St. Moritz, she cast around to find cheaper accommodation, and we moved to two rooms at the Hotel la

Magna near the station. "Breakfast we took in the Magna, for luncheon we shopped around the town." Ida had brought with her a double-saucepan (bought in one of those 3d and 6d bazaars whose place was taken by Woolworth's after World War I), and with this she cooked our dinner over a travelling spirit stove "which", she proudly records, "had enabled me to save more than £5* by the time we got home".

FOOTNOTE*: Perhaps £50 in 1973 values. END OF FOOTNOTE.

In those days, hotel rooms with baths were unknown. One went along the corridor to the bathroom, the use of which was an extra. Ida wanted me to have a bath every day. She countered the expense by bringing with her a child's tub, which we used as a trunk when travelling. Such dodges not only saved money but gave her a glow of satisfaction. To Philip, Moya and Norah, however, they characterised Ida as an inhabitant of another world. Charlotte should, however, have sympathised with her daughter-in-law, for all her married life was a struggle to make do, and even Moya and Norah might have remembered that as children they, too, had had to scrape, make and mend.

For example, when Philip was twelve years old he was a boarder at the College de la Ste. Croix, at Pont l'Eveque in Calvados, a short train distance from Penne-de-pie Manor, near Honfleur, where Will and Charlotte made a home for their growing family between 1875 and 1886. If Philip accumulated enough good conduct marks, he could go home for a weekend once a month. I have a letter from Charlotte asking him to be sure to bring his dirty linen to be washed at home "as it saves 50 centimes".

Again on January 12, 1886, when Moya was four days short of her

eleventh birthday, she wrote from the Manor to Philip at school (I retain her style and spelling):

I am going to have a loterie and I write to know if you would be so kind as to take the one I send you, as you see on the ticket it is only 6 sous or 30 centimes. There are two French books and a lot of drawings, the first prise are the books the second the pictures and then I have a few little things in the whole I will get about twice as much as I have spent on the prises. Please do take a ticket it's only six sous but I will see what your thinck on the Matter the ticket I select you is the best I thinck but I don't know, write and tell me if you will take it. By the way Mamma thincks of having you over here to celebrate my birthday she says don't tell the Director yet she will write soon and tell you. I remain your forever loving sister Moya.

Para
Note how the Hennessys' courtesy to each other asserted itself early

Of our time at St. Moritz Ida wrote:

In our first few weeks the soft new fallen snow made walking difficult, but the frosts soon came to harden tracks and paths. The air is so dry at these heights that we have needed to dress scarcely more warmly than in an English winter. The really cold days are those without sun. Then the wind blows all the time and seems to say 'Winter is here! Muffle up!' Jossleyn used to walk behind me for shelter. But when skies are radiant, the sun carries the day against the clouds and debits the assets column of their sombre masses. For hours at a time out in the open, one can lose oneself — meditating, dreaming — in the majesty of these mountains, whose peaks, crowned with the whitest snow, stand out on the close-at-hand horizon with no haze to soften their savage outlines.

The lake used for skating was not near our hotel and I could not walk there as often as I would have liked. I watched Jossleyn's début on the ice. He mastered the technique of skating quickly enough, without lessons... Madeleine went with him when I could not. It amused her a lot to see this little man join up with a group of grown-up skaters with whom he had made friends... When Jossleyn and I went out together, he frequently greeted peopl unknown to me, whose acquaintance I made when I went to sit in the rink pavilio The lake, in a deserted rocky spot, lay like a mirror set there by some giant to reflect the sky.

I bought a toboggan which I steered with Jossleyn holding on behind me. For lunch, my preference was the Hotel Engadiner Kulm perched on the highest point of St. Moritz. Not only was the choice of dishes and the cooking excellent but the difference in the prices was well worth the climb. After lunch we sped down in our toboggan.

Do you remember the fête on the lake* which stretched at the feet of

FOOTNOTE*: The big lake — not the small, skating lake. END OF FOOTNOTE.

hills, puny beside their great solemn, majestic, white-clad sisters? This picturesque fête was set in a frame of dazzling light. The stunted larches, scattered here and there on the far side of the water, seemed forgotten survivors of another age — no tremor awoke their motionless branches. The atmosphere was limpid, absolutely still. The impression grew on one of a dream world, calm, serene, in which goodness, kindness, and the joy of being alive reigned.

The cheerful strains of the nearby orchestra seemed to fall on the ear from afar, as if they had traversed time as well as space in order to liven our fête.

Amateurs, professionals, champions contributed to a varied spectacle. Many countries competed. With what grace the skaters sped, waltzed, pirouetted, swept in wide curves, singly or in couples, achieving with ease feats in which artistry relieved mere geometric precision

We were not in the paying enclosure, but were perfectly able to enjoy the show, bourgeoisement,from the public benches on the hillside. It grew late. We could not wait to see the prizes distributed. The peaks of the mountains turn pink, slowly the shadows lengthen, yet the outlines linger — clear-cut.

In the cloudless sky, the moon floods the summits. Her beams pick out silver-blue streaks on the blankets of snow which cover the flanks of the unchanging, eternal giants. The profound stillness, deeper by night than by day, penetrates the encircling serenity.

Ida was planning a sleigh drive by moonlight with an English friend, mother of a small child, when an outbreak of scarlatina decided them to quit St. Moritz overnight.

We spent the nest five months peacefully, happily, in Zurich, Locarno and Lucerne.

XIII The misery of the incompetent barrister and the lying affidavit

Within minutes of Ida's arrival at Victoria station at the end of May, 1908, she was launched on an experience that left her shattered.

It is curious that although I was, as a child, always delighted to see my father, I cannot recall this reunion, which suggests either how unaware of what is happening, or incapable of grasping its significance, a child can be, or that he is so affected by what he sees or feels that he buries it for ever.

After Philip had embraced us and exchanged affectionate enquiries, he said casually: "You can't go to Ifield. Penfold has put a bailiff in. I've taken rooms for you in Hampstead".

John Penfold was the Crawley corn merchant. While Ida was abroad and Philip in London, Ifield was closed and letters were delivered to Charlotte at Turk's Croft opposite. After sending in a series of "Accounts rendered", Penfold posted a final demand. Instead of explaining that her daughter-in-law was abroad, Charlotte wrote haughtily and disdainfully to Penfold, who replied in effect "If that's the way you want it, that's the way you can have it". He got the High Court to send a bailiff along.

"For God's sake, why didn't you tell me anything?" Ida asked Philip in dismay.

"I didn't want you to be worried".

When some thirty years later Ida described this episode in her autobiography the memory was as searing as ever and she commented bitterly:

This was to make an elephant out of a flea. It is not situations that must be faced that worry me but those that arise needlessly because things have been botched through negligence or wrong attitudes about money problems.

One can usually avoid bothers, even a lawsuit, at the very last minute, if one takes enough trouble. For example, shortly after my return from Germany in 1906, I received a threat of proceedings on an old bill for things supplied to Higgs, the coachman. When Carlo rented Ifield he took Higgs over with it. Higgs had bought things on account while in Carlo's service, something that I never allowed my servants to do. As Higgs had not said that they were for Count Seilern they were charged to me. I went to the shop. As soon as the shopkeeper, who was serving someone, saw me his expression became hostile. When the customer left, I approached him with a smile and already his face relaxed a little. 'I'm sorry you've had to wait but I've been away for six months and Higgs was in my brother's service. I will pay you and let my brother know'. The shopkeeper became friendly and apologetic and said he hoped that I would not take my custom away because of this misunderstanding. Penfold, too, might have been coaxed.

We had to appear before the County Court in Horsham. What memories I have of those hours in that hall full of curious sightseers. Some were friends of Penfold and hostile to us — the hostility of those who have not what you have, the jealousy that well-dressed people — 'the likes of them' — often provoke.

John Penfold besides being a corn merchant was the village undertaker. His pale face and purple-puce cheeks were burnt on my brain from the moment when, with an indignation that I quickly controlled, I saw him, a total stranger, touch the dead body of my beautiful little Patrick*.

FOOTNOTE*: See page 51. END OF FOOTNOTE.

The court assembled. The judge, the prosecutor, barristers, take their places. Unknown feelings overwhelm me — astonishment, incomprehension. To have involved me in this lawsuit without a word of warning had, as a start, been outrageous. But then to go on to take me to Edwards, the solicitor, to make me sign an affidavit — a 'pure formality', they told me. My mother-in-law assured me that I didn't have to worry about anything or attend to anything — everything had been taken care of. She said that Norah knew Edwards well and that he had already kept them out of difficulties with creditors. 'The Hennessys have always had debts' Countess Reichenbach* told me. I came to

FOOTNOTE*: The Reichenbachs, *emigré* German liberals, neighbours and close friends of Ida and of the Hennessys, who lived at the Hollies in Crawley.

END OF FOOTNOTE.

realise this sad fact only too well — and more than once to my cost. It is true,

interjects Ida with the characteristic charity and steadiness of view which she was able to maintain even amidst circumstances so tragic to her —

that there are plenty of excuses for them. My poor, charming, and too naive father-in-law used to have his fees, pretty big on occasion, paid into his solicitor in London, a relation of his, who vanished one day to South Africa, where he died in misery. This was just before Norah's birth* — and my

FOOTNOTE: Norah was born in January, 1884. During the eleven years ending 1886 that Will and Charlotte lived in Penne-de-pie Manor, he sent his pictures to exhibitions in London, and elsewhere in the U.K., and it was doubtless convenient that his solicitor should look after both the business arrangements and collect the cheques. Will loved Normandy, where he did some of his best and most characteristic work, but so far from the centre of affairs it was difficult to cultivate and maintain the personal contacts important to a self-employed person. I suspect that the loss of his savings precipitated his decision to leave the country, and settle first at St. Germain-en-Laye near Paris (1886-1891) and thereafter in Brighton (1893-1901), then a small town where everybody who was anybody knew everyone else, and which at that time was an annexe to London society. Will and Charlotte entertained modestly but constantly and their guest lists read like overflows of the Court Circular. END OF FOOTNOTE.

father-in-law said nothing about it to his wife for some time. He had to start all over again: hard for a man in his fortysixth year. He was no good at business. He didn't know how to be smooth-tongued with those who could be useful to him. His too frank speech, especially when Ireland was mentioned, made enemies, so that he was never elected to the Royal Academy and never achieved the place that his great talent deserved. This is a long digression, but I write from memory and as things occur to me.

Too late — Alas! — I realised that straightforwardness, not to say honesty, was not among Edwards' attributes. A conscientious man would not hav made me sign an affidavit which he had faked, because in it I said that the furniture, paid for by me as well as the pictures given to me as presents by my

father-in-law all belonged to me except a few pieces which my brother had left behind.

Tippet, Penfold's barrister, was abominable as a good lawyer must be,

wrote Ida, again objectively fair towards her enemy, but adding with a mild touc

of sticking up for herself,

without, I should, however, have thought needing to be sarcastic. The malicious, contemptuous, biting tone of this ugly little man aroused emotions in me that I had never experienced. I had the sinking feeling that I was caught in a trap — with no one to help me. To suffer in silence Tippet's attacks and odious questions with the eyes of the whole court and the public galleries fixed on me — ! Among his unjust accusations was that the luggage cart bore the name and address 'Philip Hennessy, Ifield Park' in order to avoid a licence fee, whereas, he sneered, it belonged in fact to Count Seilern. My barrister was not up to Tippet. His defence lacked vigour and even conviction

The way in which Philip answered the court astounded me, because it was in contradiction with all the theories of good manners that he so rightly preaches. He called Penfold's letter 'impertinent'. This was neither tactful nor dignified. Needlessly to anger someone who, perfectly reasonbly, bears you ill-will is stupid. Asked why he did not answer Penfold's letters, Philip said 'I was travelling'. This was untrue, and anyway to travel or to amuse oneself when one has debts — pressing debts — is unedifying.

To this day I regret that I followed Edwards' advice 'Only answer questions. Don't volunteer anything.' I wanted to ask why Penfold did not write direct to me, since my signature had been on all the cheques that he had ever received.

I ought to have had the courage of my convictions.

We lost the case. I naturally had to pay the costs which, added to Penfold's bill, came to a large sum that I now forget.

I left the court sick in body and mind.

And then not a word, I don't say of excuse, but at least of regret or sympathy, from the family, and not a sign of life from them for a fortnight.

Your father relapses into silence when things go wrong with him, but at such a moment his silence, his apparent indifference, topped the load of distress that weighed me down.

I recovered my balance some days later, but the loneliness of my spirit grew. It was in you, Jossleyn, for you, and through you, that I recovered the courage and strength to go on... to grapple with difficulties that increased every day.

These proceedings were a traumatic dividing point in Ida's life. That her husband and her in-laws should have shown such indifference to her feelings of shock and public disgrace over the signature of a lying affidavit was inhuman. That her opponent should have been the undertaker who prepared the corpse of her firstborn for his coffin was a refinement of horror. Above all the case need never have happened if her mother-in-law and her husband had not behaved with what seemed to Ida an irresponsibility that was frivolous, unforgivable, inexplicable.

XIV The solution of the penfold mystery

My mother told me of the Penfold case when I was ten or eleven and her feelings of outrage, horror and shame have remained deep within me throughout my life

But when, in order to write this book, I studied her account of the case in her autobiography, I found it incomprehensible. Two puzzling facts emerged:

(1) That Philip and Ida owed Penfold the money was not in dispute. Her solicitor would therefore have presumably told her that there was nothing to defend. They must simply pay up. What, then, was the case at Horsham about?

(2) Ida says that she declared that the contents of Ifield Park belonged to her and that she had been misled into signing a false affidavit. This, in the context, seemed to make no sense and at first I thought that she had made a typing error and meant that Edwards had made her declare that the contents did not belong to her. Then I thought again: if they did not belong to her, to whom did they belong? She had contracted the mortgage. She had paid for everything inside the house and for the horses outside. Philip had paid for nothing.

There was mystery here.

I therefore tracked down a report of the case in the West Sussex Times of July 18, 1908.

I reproduce this in full because, if the reader is like me, a layman with no legal knowledge, I suspect that the report will leave him as much in

.he dark as I now realise that Ida had been.

A REMITTED INTERPLEADER

The next case was an interpleader remitted from the High Court. It arose out of an action by John Penfold and Sons, coal merchants, of High-street, Crawley, against Philip Hennessy, of Ifield Park, Crawley, and Ida Hennessy, wife of Philip Hennessy, known and described as Countess Ida Seilern, of Ifield Park, Crawley. The Countess was the claimant in respect of the furniture seized by the Sheriff of Sussex, who paid £140 into court.

Mr. Harold Simms, barrister-at-law (instructed by Messrs. J.J. Edwards and Co., 28, Sackville-street) appeared for the claimant; and Mr. Pitman, barrister-at-law (instructed by Messrs. Carleton Holmes, Son and Fell) for the execution creditors.

The Countess gave evidence to the effect that no part of the goods in question were her husband's property. Some were her's and some were her brother's. Evidence was also given by Mr. Hennessy; and husband and wife were cross-examined at some length.

There was a good deal of argument as to the claimant's original claim; and His Honour, Judge Scully, remarked that an interpleader was not to decide who was entitled to the goods, but whether the claimant was.

His Honour held that the claim was established as far as it related to the goods specified in the claimant's particulars of claim, but not so far as regarded the other goods which were in the house at the time of the seizure. The amount in respect of these was substantially larger than the sum paid into Court and the money must be paid to the execution creditor.

On the question of costs, His Honour said the claim had succeeded in part and failed in part, and he thought there should be no costs. — Thus the execution-creditors (Messrs. Penfold and Sons) get the judgment debt and costs; the balance goes towards the sheriff's costs; and any balance remaining due then is to be paid by the claimant (Countess Seilern).

For light in this legal darkness, I turned to my friend, Kenneth Thomas, some time Registrar of Westminster. He first explained that what must have happened when Penfold received my grandmother's disdainful letter was that he issued a Writ in the High Court in London to be served on Philip and Ida Hennessy, calling on them to pay the amount due at once. The Writ, having been ignored, judgment was entered in default of appearance and the High Court instructed the Sheriff of Sussex to send a bailiff to Ifield. This was the position when

.ilip met Ida at Victoria.

Next in a conference with J.J. Edwards, the solicitor, it must have emerged that the furniture belonged to Ida, who accordingly signed an affidavit to that effect.

Kenneth paused to set a match to the capacious pipe without which I have never seen him, whether in or out of doors, and with which, for all I know, he sleeps.

"But," I said, still puzzled, "surely it was irrelevant whether the furniture belonged to Ida or to Philip because the Writ was issued against both. Any items not belonging to Philip would have been just as seizeable if they belonged to Ida".

"My dear Watson," Kenneth said, blowing clouds to the ceiling, "You have with your usual acumen laid your finger on the key to the mystery. We must cast around for a trail that will lead us to it."

"What about Carlo?" I asked. "Any items belonging to him could not be seized for the Hennessys' debt, but why didn't he, rather than Ida, sign an affidavit on that point?"

Followed a long pause while we studied the summary. The words "husband and wife were cross examined at some length" caught our attention.

"I think I can see why my mother was so upset about her affidavit", I said "Pitman is trying to shake her on the ownership of various items claimed. He asks her innocently 'To whom does the luggage cart belong?' Ida says 'To my brother.' 'Then why,' he pounces viciously, 'is it inscribed with Philip Hennessy's name?' And Ida, upset by his venom, stands there looking confused. She is inhibited also by Edwards' warning not to volunteer anything."

"From your mother's autobiography, it's clear she thought she was being sued for debt in court," said Kenneth. "She says if she had had the courage of her convictions she'd 've asked why Penfold didn't write direct to her for a cheque. But that would've got her nowhere. It was water over the dam. Judgement for the debt had been given. It was not before the court. The judge was now being called upon to ascertain something else — whether the items listed in her affidavit did or did not belong to her."

"Yes," I said, "and Pitman is trying to make her feel that the declaration in it are probably wrong. He succeeds in persuading her that she was misled into signing it."

"True, my dear Watson, but why was she made to sign an affidavit at all?"

We read and re-read the summary again. "'There was a good deal of argument about the claimant's original claim', I quoted. "What does that mean?"

Kenneth considered. "I think it might be read together with the judge's finding that the claim was established as far as it related to the goods specified in the claimant's particulars of claim, but not as regards other goods in the house at the time of the seizure. Might it not be that after your mother had signed her claim, she was made to add a second, or perhaps a third, claim to the original? The judge held that the value of the goods not included in the original claim was more than the £140 paid into court and that the £140 must be paid to Penfold, who thus got his debt and his costs out of it — we don't know what this amount was, but it seems to have been less than £140 because the judge said that the balance should go to the Sherriff's costs, although he did add, perhaps as a precaution, that any further balance due should be paid by your mother."

All this was interesting but we seemed no nearer a solution of the mystery of the affidavit.

"Well," I said at last, "at least the whole episode was a warning to my mother not to take another six months' rest-cure out of the country."

"Eureka!" Kenneth cried. "Although the High Court's judgement and Writ was issued against both your parents, it was only served on Philip, not on Ida, because she could not be found. That, however, was good enough to secure payment of the debt and to distrain on the furniture belonging to Philip but not to Ida. Edwards saw a chance to limit the amount of furniture that could be sold. Hence Ida's interpleader claim — a suit between her and the Sheriff to decide which of the goods in Ifield could, if necessary, be sold to cover Penfold debt and costs. If judgement for the debt had been entered against Ida, as well as against Philip, there could have been no interpleader proceedings."

Reflection over Kenneth Thomas's elucidation of the Penfold case suggests two further important points:

(1) It looks as though after Ida's return to London, she and Philip saw no way of raising the sum needed to pay Penfold, and therefore expected the Sheriff to sell furniture as required. If so, this gives the interpleader proceedings a new significance. Edwards would have dreamt them up as a rescue operation to make sure that certain especially valuable items were saved from sale.

(2) Ida grieved that Philip offered her no word of sympathy, but he may have regarded — and quite rightly — the judgment in favour of Ida's claim as a triumph, to which, indeed, he probably thought that his own evidence had contributed. If so, the outcome was a matter for congratulation rather than sympathy.

As Ida said, when Philip was in difficulties or distress, he retired into

himself; if possible he retired literally to bed (as when Circe jilted him). He understood what the interpleader was about and he perhaps did not realise that Ida did not: if so, he could not guess how publicly disgraced she felt about the "lying" affidavit, which was, in fact, a true one.

Part of Ida's difficulties in the Case of the Incompetent Barrister arose because, although by 1908 she spoke adequate colloquial English, legal technicalities were beyond her, and she never understood what was at stake nor what had happened to her.

The irony of the proceedings that so tore at Ida's heart is that they were not, as she thought, a lawsuit against her, but the hearing of a claim on her behalf which she won. What struck her as the lack of vigour shown by Harold Simm, who appeared for her, was doubtless the calculated calm of one who feels that he has so good a case that he can afford to let the judge draw his own conclusions from the bullying tactics of his opponent who, sensing that things are going against him, is attempting to confuse and discredit the claimant.

XV Gathering storms

The rest of 1908 and the years up to 1914 cover a tragic chapter of Ida's autobiography. We should, however, bear in mind that we here see them through her eyes. We shall see later what they looked like to Philip.

Ida's autobiography reveals how, abandoned to struggle with mounting difficulties, terribly alone she felt — all the more so because Will and Charlotte lived opposite Ifield Park's gate and Norah, although she had started an interior decoration business in London, often spent weekends with her parents. Throughout 1908 and 1909 Ida's references to them are sparse and contain no hint of companionship. Will, who was always affectionate with her, besides being absorbed in work in his studio, now had enough troubles of his own which, especially as all his life he was in the heights of gaiety one day and in the depths of depression the next, would have inclined him to seek rather than to offe: sympathy; his earning power was waning; rheumatism was creeping up his fingers; he painted with increasing difficulty. Charlotte, though always pleasant, never managed to establish a warm personal relationship with her daughter-in-law. Norah concealed with difficulty the exasperation that what she regarded as Ida's incompetence provoked in her. Ida's feelings about Philip, and his towards her, will emerge in the pages ahead.

As a result of the Penfold case, other hitherto quiescent creditors deamanded immediate settlements, and for the next six years Ida kept them at bay by conciliatory visits and letters, paying a pound or two at a time, here and there, on account.

The farmer to whom Philip had entrusted the three fillies Dora, Peggy, and Daisy, for the winter sent in a bill for £70.

The fillies were now out at grass in the ten acre field. Ida used to bring them oats in a sieve. They greeted her with whinneys from afar and cantered to meet her. Once when someone left the gate open, they escaped into the park. Farmer Jack Nash and his boy began chasing and shouting after them. Attracted by hooves galloping wildly over lawns and flowerbeds, Ida fetched her sieve of oats, sent Nash away, and within ~~imutes~~ minutes had the fillies following her back into the field. "Alas! I could rarely afford to give them a treat of oats now. 'Times are hard,' I told them patting their necks." With autumn the grass became less nourishing. They were well-bred and promised to be jumpers, but Ida's experienced eye saw that they were beginning to suffer from inadequate fodder. She sold them — at a loss — for £50.

They came to fetch the fillies this morning. This forced sale revived unhappy thoughts and memories. I could not keep back my tears when I saw them go. Poor Peggy struggled desperately, like a hunted beast, lashing out, leaping sideways, jibbing, resisting the halter with her four feet planted on the ground. Once she fell on her back. Daisy watched, puzzled and disturbed to see her sister struggling with four unknown men. She saw me, cantered up, stood beside me turning her head anxiously from side to side as if in search of an explanation. Then she went back to Peggy in a well-collected trot and nuzzled her sister's nostrils with her's. It was pathetic. There was a last struggle before the gate. Once out on the road, Peggy seemed humbled and resigned. Daisy trotted by her side. This scene of violence made me very sad and gave me a headache for the rest of the day. The next day when I crossed the empty field, where the fillies used to keep me company along the path, I missed their warm breath on my cheeks and neck.

But most harrassing was the £2,000 mortgage on Ifield. The Longley family were entitled to foreclose on six months' notice. Hitherto they had seemed content with the interest. Now they gave notice of foreclosure.

Ida, accompanied by Philip, went to see them and, for once, she did the talking. "I told them that I did not have £2,000 or anything approaching it, but that I undertook to keep up the interest regularly. The Longleys were good

natured and kind. I breathed again. But their right to sell Ifield and all its contents to the value of £2,000 was a sword of Damocles."

Why did Ida not try to sell Ifield? She wanted to, but her first attempt in 1909 failed because Philip now insisted on asking £6,000 and at that price there was not one enquiry. In pre-1914 Sussex, £6,000 would have bought either a modern house with some hundreds of acres to compensate for lack of history, or a house with historical appeal to compensate for lack of acres. But Ifield, had only 25 acres and no history. It is likely that the £3,600 which Ida gave for it was the price as between a willing seller and a willing buyer. If Philip had thought of bargaining, they might well have been able to buy it for £3,000 or less. As the years passed, prospective buyers had to allow an increasing sum for repairs and redecoration.

I have been unable to ascertain the amount of Penfold's debt and costs but added to the £70 for the horses, and £120 for the Longleys, the total can have left Ida a bleak margin for living in 1908 out of Carlo's £41-13-4 a month (even if, exceptionally, he was up to date).

Where to turn? Philip who, as we shall see, had now migrated to London to try to make a living, hardly earned enough to pay for his lodging, board, and pocket money. Carlo had done more than his bit that year by contributing, over and above his allowance, to Ida's rest cure in Switzerland. There remained Carlo's millionaire mother-in-law, Mrs. Woerishoffer.

The extent to which Ida was made to suffer from the plain dam-silly behaviour of others is incalculable. My grandfather, Hugo Seilern, was the favourite son of his socially influential and financially well-off mother. So my grandmother, Ida Zaluska, quarrels with her, and cuts my mother and Carlo off

from her. Next Mrs. Woerishoffer. Her grandsons apart, Ida was the only Seilern of whom she spoke affectionately. So Ida's mother quarrels with her, and Philip angers her in a way that was uncharacteristic of him. Throughout his life Philip proclaimed Omar Khayyam's principle He who has a thousand friends has not a friend to spare, and he who has one enemy will meet him everywhere. I can testify that Philip deserved his reputation for saying nice things about people, not only to their faces — anyone can do that — but behind their backs — which is more difficult — and that I never heard him repeat gossip. If he discovered that I knew something discreditable, unkind, or merely ridiculous, about someone he impressed on me the importance of keeping it to myself. But the better the rule the more disastrous the exception. Philip had once made some remarks about Mrs Woerishoffer, which those present thought were so witty that Mrs. Woerishoffer ought to share the joke. She did, within the hour. Why on earth did Philip choose Mrs Woerishoffer of all people to break one of the few precepts of his life that he held sacred? It meant that she cut him out of her visiting list, which made it impossible for her and Ida to cultivate their liking for each other. Reluctantly Ida now wrote to Mrs Woerishoffer for a loan of £500, taking care to tell her that she had no idea when she would be able to repay it — she never was, in fact, able to do so — and saying that she would not have thrust herself on Mrs Woerishoffer were it not that she had a child for whom she had to provide. Ida felt the humiliation of writing a begging letter to Mrs Woerishoffer, but who else was there?

XVI The lady's maid: period study of a vanished species

Of January, 1909, Ida wrote: "Your father now had an office in London. Every now and again he came down to spend a few days with us... He is already thinking of your marriage." In describing the woman that he wished as a wife for me, I have a notion that Philip was offering Ida hints for her own use. "Above all Jossleyn must find her seductive, fascinating." Philip said that Léon de Janzé would not have been faithful to Moya if she had not been seductive, but, Ida comments sadly,

> All men are not necessarily attracted or charmed by the same traits, and circumstances can make a woman charming or not. Deprive a sparkling woman of the money needed for lovely dresses, for the pleasures and satisfactions which nourish her wit, liveliness, and gaiety, and she may cease to sparkle or attract. The psychological atmosphere may or may not be helpful; to be attractive a woman must move in a circle in which her type is appreciated...
>
> The fact is I was a short-sighted fool. I ought to have spent £80 a year on my clothes and another £50 to £70 on all the etceteras that make for gracious living. I ought to have had a lady's maid and not economised on myself. It would then have been possible for me to accept invitations and not let Philip always go out alone with Norah.

In 1909, Norah was twentyfive. In those days and, indeed, still in the 1920's when I began to go to parties and dances, no girl went unchaperoned*.

FOOTNOTE*: Since I left London to earn my living abroad in November, 1928, I do not know when this admirable custom faded out. I say "admirable" because I am confident that an opinion poll taken in those years among young people of both sexes would have resulted in an overwhelming majority in favour of chaperonage. I never heard criticism of the system in my youth, whereas I have heard its absence regretted by young people in the 1950s. I will try to explain why when, in a future volume, I reach that decade. END OF FOOTNOTE.

That a chaperone was necessary for Norah was not in dispute, but if Ida had

insisted on her rights as a wife to Philip's time and company, and if he had therefore ceased to be available for Norah, I know enough about my grandmother's resourcefulness when parties for her young people were concerned to be certain that she would have organised matters so that Norah could have attended every party going, just as she did for me when I spent a vacation from Oxford with her If Grandma could get around enough to manage that in her eighties, still less would she have had any difficulty in 1909 when she was a lively sixtyseven.

To resume Ida's autobiography:

A maid, good looking dresses, and all the expensive etceteras, which I lacked, would have enabled me to avoid the fatigue that I experienced getting ready on my own for a ball — a fatigue which lessened my ability to enjoy the passing hour.

Any woman born after 1900 and who therefore began to go out after 1918 would find it difficult to understand why Ida found it fatiguing to dress without a maid.

A pre-World War I dress, especially for occasions such as Ascot by day or a dance by evening, was of an elaboration that went out between 1914 and 1918 It might have tucks or ruches, frills or quillings or ribbon; gauze, lace or braid; whalebones to shape it; and innumerable sequins, hooks, eyes, or button It would often end in a train, the underside of which would be sewn with braid both as a decoration and to protect the material from dirt and from tearing*.

FOOTNOTE*: A woman in a flounced dress with a train had no choice but to move with dignity. If something angered her, she might "flounce out" — words whic today no longer evoke the agitations of the flounces on a skirt. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Just as the upkeep of a house like Ifield Park implied servants, so did a dress of the period. Tucks, ruches, flounces, hooks, eyes and buttons, and the long gloves of coloured woollens or leathers worn by day and of white kid up to the elbows by night, required endless maintenance.

Beneath the dress came corsets reaching from bust to thighs which, if they were to achieve the silhouette in fashion, had to fit snugly, and therefore preferably were bespoke and not off the peg; they had to be done up tightly and therefore not be laced in front because that would have caused stays to cut painfully into the body; they had to be pulled tight from the back — by soneone else.

To remove stains called for a sponge, water, and patience. Dry cleaning had come into existence in the 1850s but its techniques remained primitive and before 1914 hems had to be undone by the yard, protective braid removed, and a woman had to have a wardrobe large enough to enable her to do without a dress during the three weeks that elapsed between handing it in at a branch of Pullars (or sending it by parcel post if there were none within carriage drive) and its return from Perth in Scotland where Pullars sent it for cleaning; after which it was prudent to air it until the smell of petrol had evaporated. Then came the re-sewing on of braid, buttons and the turning up of hems.

Women wore their hair at natural length and the bouffant effects were secured by long brushings over skillfully arranged and concealed pads, which would make the arms of a frail woman, like Ida, ache if she had to do it herself. Nowadays a woman has face creams, and can choose from lipsticks and powders in a score of shades; in Ida's day make-up was hardly used and the effects desired were achieved by applying different kinds of packs, hot and/or cold, or by soaking the face in milk — pleasant but lengthy processes — followed by

careful and discreet powdering. A woman would not put on her dress until she had done her face and her hair, which she would risk disarranging if she had to dress herself because many dresses went on over the head.

The servantless post-World War II woman, equipped with every labour-saving device, can, if pressed for time, bathe, do her face, tidy her hair, and slip on her zipped-up dress within minutes. But dressing for dinner before 1914 was a ritual, taking at least one hour, perhaps two, which women, who could afford the clothes and the maid, enjoyed. It gave to every party a sense of occasion.

Para.
Talking of a sense of occasion, my grandmother once told me of a friend of hers named Alice, who was going to a dance, had no maid, was alone in the house, and could not lace herself up from the back. She was having a small dinner party, which she had cooked herself. She had no alternative but to put the food in the oven to keep hot and to request the first guest to arrive to do her up. The front door bell rang. She opened it to find John and David in the porch. She explained her predicament and asked them to lace her up. "Thank heaven there are two of you, so while one laces the other can chaperone me," Alice chuckled. Having reached the bedroom she took off her dressing-gown and stood before them in her corsets and petticoat. John fumbled because he had never laced corsets before, until David said "Here, I see what to do. Let me lay into her," and putting his knee against Alice's behind, he tugged lace after lace tightly up while all three laughed their heads off. Downstairs the front door bell began to ring.

"John, let them in," Alice managed to gasp. John did so, discreetly explaining that he had been helping Alice over sizzling dishes in the kitchen and that they had only just heard the bell. Minutes passed. Still Alice did not appear.

"I'll go and see how she's getting on," said John. As he spoke, Alice entered, puce in the face and laughing. David did not come in with her but with cunning savoir faire slipped out of the front door, rang the bell and was ceremoniously admitted by John. They entered, two smiling conspirators.

"What is going on?" implored the guests.

Amidst gales of laughter, Alice explained, finally revealing that when she had been laced up, she found she could not breath, so David had to undo her and start again, his knee once more planted firmly against her behind. ("I feel black and blue all over!").

Once laced up, Alice slipped her dress over her head and, restricted by her corsets, could not do up the row of hooks and eyes extending from her neck to the bottom of her spine. The inexperienced David once more came to the rescue, fastening the hooks into the wrong eyes until her back looked like the indented spine of some prehistoric monster. Alice made the task more difficult because she was shaking with merriment, while David's laughter made his fingers all thumbs. But if the dinner was over-cooked, the gaiety was such that no one noticed it and the party arrived at the dance only an hour late.

XVII The dark maze of Ida's marriage

The constant contrast of my lack of elegance with the exquisiteness, down to the last detail, of Moya and Norah counted heavily against me. (Ida wrote Norah spent on scents and her table de toilette alone more than I did for my chea ready-made shoes and ready-made dresses, on which I spent perhaps £10 in the year. Norah's dry cleaning bill itself for the year averaged £40. The kind of economy which I should have avoided was to take a room in town for 4/- a night and eat at Lyons with your father, whereas when he went up to London with Norah they took rooms at 6/-, had breakfast sent up to their bedrooms, and never went near a Lyons except to pass it. Thus my image was associated in Philip's mind with shabbiness and skimping, his sister's with elegance and comfort... I also made the mistake of talking business, and of our difficulties, and what we ought to do to live within our means.

On re-reading this passage later, Ida characteristically felt that it was lacking in charity, so she added:

Some comments on what I have just written; perhaps it would have been better not to fair copy these pages. I had too much to do, too many worries of all kinds, and too few sources of renewal. I always had to draw on myself. Have I really succeeded in getting on to paper what went on in my spirit? Jealousy? No. I had none of the feelings that nourish jealousy — resentment, antagonism, hostility. I bore no grudge. I just regretted that I did not form part of the elegant and joyous group. That for lack of pretty dresses, accessories, and trinkets, expensive but indispensible, I was outside in the shadows — a nobody. But I must, in fairness, emphasise that you father always showed me high regard, time and again expressed his appreciation of things I had managed to accomplish, and gave me a free hand in all that concerned you.

I used up so much of my strength in seeking to slow down the headlong flight of pounds, shillings and pence, that when the time came to dress to go out, fatigue (a bad lady's maid) overcame me. The disappointments which sometimes clouded my horizon did not affect my serenity — or so little. I would have liked — then as always — to be among those who receive the advance and amiabilities — the small change of society — who laugh, talk of things gay, serious, or interesting, in the propitious atmosphere of a friendly select circle. Later in life I came to the conclusion that if a woman does not create a need in others to converse with her it is in herself that she must look for the cause and it is for her to remedy it, if possible, but how rarely is it possible! Above all practice is necessary; I lacked it; so is self-confidence which comes from being well-dressed and well understood*. Have I made myself dea clear

FOOTNOTE*: Ida expresses this neatly in French: Etre bien mise et comprise.

END OF FOOTNOTE.

If Ida had spent generously on herself, she would, of course, have run up unmanageably larger debts than she did, i.e., "unmanageably" to a woman of her character. It was amusing to read of Diskensian characters dodging and bilking creditors, but to lead that kind of life herself she dismissed as dishonest and lacking in dignity. It was enough of a blow to her self-respect to have to wheedle and cajole creditors as much as she did.

In another passage Ida wrote:

How I long for affection occasionally. There are within me depths of pent-up feelings. They need only caresses to overflow joyously, giving and sharing happiness. But my looking glass shows me wrinkled, hollow-cheeked, haggard. I am already an old woman. Yet inside me I feel young — at least in those moments when I do not long to be three feet below ground. It is, indeed, on the threshold of old age that a woman can say 'Abandon all hope'*

FOOTNOTE*: The streamlined matron of today may reflect that Ida wrote this at the age of fortyfive. END OF FOOTNOTE.

And the years of youth in which one can still hope to make lasting friendships speed by. Solitude awaits me when Jossleyn leaves home to make his career — the solitude of the heart and spirit...

February 3, 1909. I go to London. From the dentist I phone Philip at Old Bond Street*. He is out, will not be back till 2.30 p.m. I lunch at

FOOTNOTE*: When Philip migrated to London, he entered into partnership with a friend, Charles Eagle-Bott in running a luxury cigarette shop, Edouard Laurens, 7, Old Bond Street. Although as Chapter will reveal, he followed up innumerable other trails, Laurens was his operational base and mailing address. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Lyons. The orchestra plays a Waldteufel waltz which fills me with a mad longing to dance... I feel so young despite my wrinkles. The envelope is worn out, but I still have the heart and the yearnings of youth. It takes so little to make me vibrate. The instrument is there but the player's hand and heart are elsewhere.

I return to Old Bond Street. Philip is not there. I leave a note. I buy a little fire-engine, a book with pictures to cut out and paste together, a book of fairy tales, Robinson Crusoe and a football for Jossleyn. Then, hastily, two blouses.

How guilty Ida feels at having spent money on herself!

February 5, 1909... How lovely it would have been for Jossleyn — and how good for him — if my beautiful little Patrick had lived. I had always longed to have several children.

February 6, 1909. 'To understand all is to forgive all', said Victor Hugo, but my experience is that one must also forgive all when one understands nothing.

It is sometimes impossible to understand natures very different from one's own: the safest is, then, not to bear a grudge even if one would despise oneself had one been guilty of the behaviour which has made one suffer. Who can plumb the depths of another's heart and conscience? Several qualities are needed if one is to be conscientious: straightforwardness, delicacy of feeling, a sense of honour, even more than honesty; will power, much will power; courage. One cannot be conscientious without making sacrifices, sometimes great sacrifices. To be conscientious is to be 'collected'. An 'uncollected' horse wears itself out more quickly, without having worked as well, or as much, than one which is 'collected'; there are things which it can never accomplish, and accidents will befall it more easily.

During these months Ida mentions a number of day trips to London, ostensibly to see her dentist or take me to a doctor, but reading between the lines, one sees that she was also desperately hungry for Philip's companionship. As often as not when she called at Laurens at 7 Old Bond Street, he was out.

February 10, 1909. I go to London. Visit Bond Street first. Philip is not there. Time is precious. I cannot wait. I leave my dentist's address. I go to D.H. Evans where I buy a pretty cream-coloured scarf, two veils and a blouse. I do like to look nice, especially when I am with Philip. He attaches much more importance to appearances than he suspects. Elegance may not be his sole criterion but it is certainly three quarters of it. If he does not judge women solely by their clothes, the smart reap the benefit of any doubt. He also attaches too great an importance to the frequently artificial 'distinction' of the elegantly dressed. The elegance of fashion, manners, and language often goes with commoness of feeling, with a lack of heart which bolsters commoness.

Philip picks me up at the dentist. We lunch at the St. James's and spend a charming hour.

February 11. I awake with a heavy migraine*. Everything spins when I

FOOTNOTE*: Psychologists now say that migraine is the characteristic affliction of a woman who feels insufficiently supported by the man in her life. They explain that a migraine is a woman's protest against what she feels to be excessive burdens or responsibilities of one kind or another. END OF FOOTNOTE.

try to get up. I remain in bed. For hours, motionless and lonely, my thoughts keep reverting to the charming hour that I spent with Philip yesterday. To his unflappable sociability, his agreeableness, his cultivated mind, and the charm that he knows how to spread so well, why does he not add a sense of responsibility? How happy we could be if he had greater respect for life's essentials? The void, which weighs so heavily on my spirit, would cease to exist. I would have the support which a woman needs so much.

February 13. I feel better. How much time these migraines waste! I re-read Stendhal's Chartreuse de Parme. What freshness, what movement, what charming simplicity!

February 14. J. Edwards (her solicitor) claims the balance of £21 which I owe him. I send him £2. This Penfold business still bowls me over. The case itself was humiliating enough and put me through some of the worst moments of my life, but the insouciance, the frivolous carelessness, the lack of all sen of duty, the disregard for the harm done, the moral insensibility, the general attitude of caring less and less than a rap*, which caused the case and got me

FOOTNOTE*: Ida says the menfoutisme déteriorant. END OF FOOTNOTE.

before the court — that is what makes me suffer, that is what fills my heart with terror.

For that case to have come about there must have been a vast deal of the irresponsibilities I've just listed. It would have been so easy to stop it — even as late as May. How I have been punished for my stupid trust, for my ridiculous delicacy in refraining from questions which might hurt anyone's feelings...

Poor heart! How you torment yourself! Why relive these wrongs, these awful moments? Why? Because you would like to feel a heart beating next to yours, a heart which now seems always to be drawing further away from you! You would like to get at the truth, to understand, to make amends*, if you can. You

FOOTNOTE*: She to offer amends! That guilty feeling again. END OF FOOTNOTE.

W
ould like there to be between you and him the understanding that can exist betwee intellects!* You would like no barriers no misunderstandings to separate you from him, and that is why you think of what hurt you.

FOOTNOTE:* Significantly "between intellects." End of FT.

Let us not grudge the bravery of the soldier who, alongside his fellows, charges the enemy trenches. But the greater courage is that of the lone soul who, without support, rallies himself for the attack. Of such was Ida. Having written so far, she shrinks from ending on a note of reproach. Heroically, she seeks strength from within herself:

To grieve thus weakens, diminishes, atrophies the heart, closes the door to happiness. No! Hold your head high! Keep the door always open to feelings which build up strength and tenderness.

The further into this chapter that I write, the more conscious am I that it strikes one note "Woe is me! Woe is me!" It seems inadequate to say that these years were, in fact, the monotonously lowest ebb of Ida's life. I feel the need of some fresh insight to throw them into better perspective. Perhaps this is to be found in an episode which occurred on February 23, 1909:

I go to London... To Old Bond Street. No Philip. I see the letter lying there unopened in which I told him I was coming up today. I lunch at Lyons. Coming out, I suddenly find myself fact to face with Philip. He has been given tickets for the theatre by Norah and invites me to go with him. I am enchanted, I enjoy the theatre so much. Philip accompanies me while I do some shopping and go to the dentist, after which to the Kingsway Theatre where the Stage Society presents Right of the Soul by Giuseppe Giacosa* and The Bread of Others by Turgenev. The first play is very badly acted, the second admirably... We both enjoy the two plays. Philip's company, and this interesting matinée, give my morale a tremendous lift. I catch the 6 p.m. back to Ifield.

FOOTNOTE*: Better known as joint librettist of Puccini's Bohème. END OF FOOTNOT

When the occasion is seen against the background of their circumstances, is there not in this deadpan recital of the behaviour of this husband and wife a Chekhovian inconsequence and irrelevance, dragging from one an exasperated, nostalgic exclamation: "If only — !"

Consider, first, how after Ida has told Philip that she is coming to London and how after he has not only been out but left no word, outside a Chekhov play, one might expect a flicker of embarrassment of Philip at this unexpected meeting with his wife, some expression (just for the look of it) of regret that he has missed her so often.

But the moment that he catches sight of Ida, he throws wide his arms, exclaiming "But this is marvellous!" He embraces her enthusiastically. Without a second's pause he goes on "Norah has just given me two tickets for a matinee. Of course, you'll come. It needed only you to complete my joy!"*

FOOTNOTE*: Ida does not report these details, but I saw my father in action often enough on analogous occasions to visualise the scene. END OF FOOTNOTE.

How might a non-Chekhovian character have reacted to Philip's joyous welcome?

Sourly she might have said: "It's all very fine your suddenly inviting me to the theatre by chance like this, but where have you been all this time? You do have a wife and child in the country, you know. Of course you have to work in London, but how about the weekends with us? I am coping all alone with the management of Ifield, that white elephant you insisted on buying. I am harried by creditors, I live from hand to mouth. It may be that you can't help me with cash, but at any rate you might help to deal with these people and give me some moral support".

But Ida was in a seventh heaven at seeing her husband and at the prospec of a whole afternoon with him. "I was enchanted". True, but might she not als have made opportunities in the course of the afternoon to bring her husband up-tc

date over her difficulties without the least reproach, if for no other reason than that to discuss one's problems with a sympathetic listener, who loves one, lightens one's burdens? His problems in London, her's in the country, constituted a single situation which could, should, have been a partnership, a joint responsibility. But they both sheered away from the realities. Ida because she was too timid, too overjoyed to have Philip's company for once, too anxious to avoid anything which would spoil the exhilarating, intoxicating hour by hurting Philip's feelings. Philip, because it was axiomatic with him never to discuss any situation or problem to which, in his view, there was no solution. He shuddered away from anything that might confront him with responsibilities. He never argued. If you persisted, he said nothing, or changed the subject, or left the house and did not return until the lapse of the necessary number of hours, days, weeks, months, or years had solved the points at issue. I have already said that Philip more than once described Ida to me as "a very great lady", and that what he meant was that she had never made him any reproach or a scene — a display of character which won his lifelong gratitude and admiration.

After the enchanted hours with Philip at the theatre, Ida returned to Ifield feeling refreshed and, after a wonderful night's sleep, she rose late the next day.

But around eleven o'clock, the postman, in his pre-1914 oval cap and navy blue uniform with red piping, cycled up the drive, and the struggle to run single handed, unaided, an impossibly sized house, on an impossibly small income, and on impossibly large debts, plunged her once more into the depths. She received a letter from Warren, the builder, for the settlement of his long standing account, which maintained a steady upward creep.

All sorts of petty fusses and worries increased my malaise. By the end of the day I am lost in a cloud of black butterflies; a profound discouragement gives me a headache and makes my heart palpitate. When will the financial

horizon clear?... I see no end to my present poverty. At moments I can stand it no longer. O! The peace of the tomb... but also the dread of abandoning my poor darling child, who needs me so much. God grant me strength and courage.

There was no one in Ifield to whom she could turn for sympathy and encouragement. Among her friends in Crawley village were two or three of whom she was fond and who were close to her, but she was too proud, too loyal to Philip, ever to discuss her relations with him and her financial difficulties. In these she was a woman alone. But human beings are not equipped to live alone. The clan exists to support the family and the family to support its individual members: husband, wife, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins — the bigger and more closely in touch the family the less the tensions and anxieties of the individual. Admittedly Ida had a neurotic bias towards anxiety, worry, and discouragement, but the absence of anyone in whom she could confide, together with hours spent alone every day, drove her in on herself, gave her time to surrender to moods in which she struggled to find a way through the dark maze of the nine years of her marriage. How had she ever come to enter it? Whose fault was it? Her mother's? Philip's? Her's? Would she ever find a way out? Was that disloyalty? Self-pity vied with guilt and stern self-judgement, reproach of others with self-reproach. In the years up to 1914, Ida bashed this tread mill. Victim of others? Victim of herself?

On the second day after that wonderful afternoon in London with Philip, Ida wrote:

Has he ever loved me? Yes, I think, for a while, even though there were facts enough which could have made me doubt it. Has he ever really loved anyone? He admires his parents, above all his father and his sisters, Moya is his close friend. To love is to be capable of sacrifices, of forgetting oneself.

Over and over again, Ida refought the battles of her first weeks of marriage at the Villa Cornélia — that threesome with her husband, her mother and her uncle Charles Zaluski:

Our time there was disastrous. The atmosphere was heavy with wrong, narrow, archaic ideas on the respect and obedience due from the young (whether adult or not) to their elders and betters; to conform to their tastes, wishes, and viewpoint was natural and obligatory; to differ sent eyebrows up, incurred disapproval, expressed or silent, or provoked comments spilling over with unconscious egotism. Uncle Charles was our host*; he had given me away on my

FOOTNOTE*: Presumably he had rented Ida's villa so that his sister, niece, and her husband, were his guests. END OF FOOTNOTE.

wedding day. Unfortunately he acted as chorus to Maman, whom he loved and admired. Philip, accustomed to a wholly different atmosphere, the spoiled and admired darling of his family, popular in society, felt ill at ease, and did not always show himself in a good light. I found myself between the hammer and the anvil. One night Philip came in after we had finished dinner. I had him served and sat down with him. This angered Maman. Philip was not slow to react to all this. He absented himself more and more. He would sometimes get up at four or five a.m. to go for long walks. Often he visited a charming Countess Plater. Maman insinuated things which, she said, were more than mere suspicions. This made me indignant. I told her that I wished to know nothing. I was in a torment of mind and heart. For a long time I remained paralysed by the unexpectedness, the incomprehensibility of so many things that Philip said and did, and which made him, as it were, a stranger to me. The life that I had led, my inexperience of the masculine mind as well as of society, Philip's attitudes acted on me like a fire extinguisher, set up barriers, destroyed all my initiative, made me awkward, embarrassed, silent.

How different I would be if we could begin all over again! If I were ten years younger* I might have a chance but tired and old before my time —

FOOTNOTE*: At the time of writing she was fortyfive, and had been married nine years. END OF FOOTNOTE.

there's nothing to be done. The spark has gone out. I suffer because I feel so much younger than my mirror says. How often I feel the need of affection. My Polish cousins, the only men I've ever really known, were so different. If I had been gay, natural, full of high spirits, and myself with Philip as I had been with them, I might not perhaps have inspired him with the love that two of my cousins offered me, because he is so different, and since I am not his ideal

of a woman, I can never be really fascinating in his eyes — but I might perhaps have had a certain charm for him.

It was only years later that I understood that my mother's attitude towards Papa, all that she told me about him, the tears I saw her weep, which fell on my heart, had made me lose the confidence and sense of security that must be part of a woman's make-up if she is to have good relations with a man.

On March 3, 1909, Ida wrote;

But it was all my fault — a complex fault, made up of ignorance of life and men, of weakness, timidity, ingenuousness and lack of charm*. This is the

FOOTNOTE*: Ida writes grace in French. END OF FOOTNOTE.

quality I lack most, just as that which I lack the least is not to be at pains to do my best. But this absence of charm, was I born with it? Whence comes it? I sincerely believe that I was not entirely without it, but it had no chance. To hear Maman tell me 'You're like your father — you have no heart' — killed my spirit, my affections or, rather, prevented me from expressing my feelings, and I suffered, because I adored my mother. My apparent coldness contrasted with my brother's winning ways. The impressions that I got from struggling with the unknown after my marriage, the worries, the dark forebodings that I had about money — which came true only too quickly and proved far worse than ever I had feared — the almost constant fatigue, the day to day difficulties: all contributed to extinguish that essential, and often powerful, quality which sets life sparkling in sunshine: charm.

I never recaptured the gaiety — that sometimes madcap gaiety — of my visits to Poland, but when I became engaged to Philip, something of my old gaiety rose to the surface; it was no longer so youthful nor so lively, having led the life of a recluse with few days of sunshine... But it only asked to be allowed to come alive again.

Para
But after the honeymoon:

Too sensitive, it again retired to within itself, along with the rest of my spirit, disconcerted by comments and acts which revealed a wholly new and incomprehensible Philip. Then was born the terror of financial difficulties which his way of looking at a budget, of reckoning, spending, and then doing nothing, ceaselessly built up in me. My isolated position made me timid and awkward, perpetually afraid of stirring up the worries which charged the grey atmosphere of the Villa Cornélia.

On top of this was the feeling that Philip was unhappy — all combined to wilt my gaiety, stiff from lack of practice, but still alive! In other circumstances, given a little encouragement, it would certainly have blossomed.

March 21, 1909: To love and to make oneself loved — the whole of life should be there! To love is to allow one's heart to live in the life of another heart; it is to rejoice in thinking up ways to give joy; it is to sacrifice without reserve, without allowing a regret to measure the extent of the sacrifice To make oneself loved is sometimes difficult... When barriers, whether of the heart or the mind, prevent feelings from rising rapidly to the surface, it is an art to be acquired. It is bad to suffer in one's affections as a child, because even when it is great, a mother's love cannot repair the wrong done by mistaken interpretations of a child's motives or by a disposition to take offence where none is intended... A lack of stability in the character of an adult — parent or other — who looks after a child — all this makes a child retire into itself, counters its natural outward-givingness, extinguishes high spirits and induces instead lack of self-confidence. All this strikes — often irreparably — at the magic spell which enables one to make oneself loved, at the happines second only to that of loving. The sensitive naturally suffer more from this than the frigid.

Alone with her thoughts in the vastness of Ifield Park, with every peal of the front door bell more likely to announce a creditor than a friend, is it so extraordinary that the story of these years seems a monotonous cry of woe? The wonder is that Ida survived eventually to achieve more than average serenity and peace of mind.

From the tragic to the apparently ridiculous. Not to have mentioned that Ida kept hens would be like writing about Pallas Athene without mention of her owl or, if you prefer, like forgetting Charlie Chaplin's cane. Nothing aroused the amusement or provoked the scorn of her in-laws more than Ida's hens. Why?

Ida began keeping hens at Ifield for the sake of really fresh eggs for her child. Carlos sent her a dozen hens from Frensham Place, raised by her ally King, the butler. They gave few eggs and cost a lot in food. Anything to do with animals or birds interested Ida, so she bought books on poultry raising, took the hens in hand herself and began making her own observations.

I remember some of the differences between Ida's methods and those of farmer Nash, whose results on the home farm did not begin to compete. Whereas

twice a day Nash entered the hen-run to empty a bowl of corn perfunctorily within an area of a few yards, Ida spent twenty minutes or more making her hens run for the grains that she scattered widely ahead of them. They scratched and worked for their corn. In any flock there are two or three timid hens whom the others chase away. Ida always made sure that these got their share by diverting the attention of the majority while she threw corn separately to the timid. She strewed the floor of the henhouse with a thick layer of peat and, in winter, when the hens would not venture out if it were wet or if snow covered the grass, she buried the corn in the peat so that, again, they had to work for their food. Needless to say she also studied diet. She used to periodically move the wire netting round the hen-run so that the hens did not reduce the enclosure to bare mud in winter and dry dust in summer but had fresh grass year in year out. The result was that her hens, healthily exercised, glossily plumed and scarlet combed, began laying earlier, continued laying longer, laid bigger eggs and often outdistanced the champion layers of the time.

Ida was proud of her hens and ready to expatiate on her methods to any other hen keeper. What, it may be asked, was the harm in all this? Nothing, except that, on the one hand, the Hennessys did not regard keeping hens for eggs as such a socially graceful topic for the dinner table as, for example, keeping deer for stalking, and, on the other, what really made the Hennessy ribs ache was that Ida could distinguish individual characters among hens and called each of them to her by name. The idea of making pets of "wet hens" struck them as the end! And behind her back they built up a rollicking mythology of Ida and her hens in which, for example, she was credited with taking the sick ones to bed with her and her favourites to lay eggs in her lap.

In the tropical summer of 1911, I was due to go to Rose Hill School at

Banstead in Surrey. Ida decided that it would be more economical to live as a paying guest with her friends, Dr and Mrs Graham Pollard, in Egerton Crescent, London, rather than keep Ifield open for herself alone; further, she wished to add to her exchequer by letting the house. She took me with her to the Pollards in mid-April in order to buy my school outfit. A few days later I developed scarlet fever. Dr Pollard told Ida that we must leave at once. Meanwhile a sheet soaked in disinfectant was stretched over our bedroom door. Meals were left on a tray. To make or answer a phone call, Ida had to go down two floors. To make everything as difficult as possible for her it was Sunday. If I had to go to hospital, Ida wanted to go with me, but no hospital would allow this. Only one course was left: to return to the shuttered, empty, servantless Ifield. How to recruit servants? How to open up the house? How to travel down there with a scarlet fever patient? What, if she could not answer these questions, would Dr Pollard do? He was an amiable man but he felt that he could not visit his patients with scarlet fever in his own home, and Mrs Pollard, who was not so amiable, left Ida in no doubt that, by whatever means, she and I had to be out of the house in hours.

I was eight and a half at the time and unconscious of the urgency of my mother's plight, but I remember a moment when, alone with me in our bedroom, my mother, who had been sitting silent in a chair, clasping and unclasping her hands suddenly rose to her feet exclaiming in broken tones: Para "What shall I do? What can I do? My God! You alone can help me!" Para This made an impression on me which still revives the memories of sixtytwo years ago: first, a sinking feeling with a pain in my stomach, and then, an expression that crossed my mother's face that somehow conveys to me the hope that God has heard and is giving her the

determination to struggle on. In moments of crisis in my own life, the picture of my mother standing, oblivious of my presence, alone in the world save for God, has given me strength to pick up the pieces.

Almost at once a chink opened in the darkness. The Pollards' Nanny walking the children in Hyde Park chanced upon an Irish woman, who had been in Ida's service; an excellent cook, as long as she was handling her saucepans over Ifield's huge old fashioned coal-fired kitchen range — her soufflées would have won praise at the Ritz — she was deaf and unpredictable to the point of craziness, so that even the patient Ida had dismissed her as an impossible liability. As my aunt Norah commented with compressed lips "Nobody but Ida could have discovered such a woman!" At any rate the crazy Irish cook was a port in the storm and Mrs Pollard's Nanny kindly went to her lodgings and sent her with a letter of instructions to Ifield.

Ida stood for hours at the telephone in the hall — remember that this was a Sunday — tracking down a trained nurse to send to Ifield. Then how to get the house open, have bedrooms aired, linen found, beds made, coal ordered, and a charwoman engaged to lay and light fires. Ida wrote a detailed letter which Mrs Pollard took to Victoria station, entrusted to the guard of a train leaving for Crawley to be given to the station master with a request to deliver it to Ida's good friend, Helen King, who lived on the Brighton Road a few hundred yards from the station. Doubtless today Ida would have telephoned Mrs King, but in the days before telephones were widespread, odd tasks such as this added variety to the lives of station masters. On another occasion, for example, on arriving at Victoria, Ida found that she had not enough money left for her fare, so she went to the station master, who without hesitation obligingly issued her a ticket on

credit. Such things seemed natural in the pre-World War I England of gentlefolk, but there rises before me the picture of a derisive stationmaster at the Gare St Lazare in republican France faced with an English passenger who went to him in the same predicament (Que voulez-vous que ça me fasse!). The last difficulty that Ida had to overcome, and which nearly rendered all her previous activities useless, was to obtain an ambulance. "The answer to my phone call to the hospital did not", wrote Ida, "despite the shock it gave me, un-horse me." Ifield was 33½ miles from London. The hospital did not provide ambulances for distances beyond 30 miles. "You will not leave me stranded for an extra three and a half miles" she begged. "I'm sorry it's the hospital rule." "Oh come! Think again!" Ida insisted. "I have a seriously sick child." The hospital gave way.

This unforeseen episode shattered Ida's ever precarious finances. Instead of living economically as a paying guest with the Pollards, she had to reopen, staff and run Ifield, and pay ambulance, nurse and medical bills, which ate up the money that she had painfully laid aside for my school outfit and fees. The only recourse left was to pawn some of her wedding presents. Philip was entrusted with the negotiations with Attenborough and brought back £70. This was not enough. Ida had to cut trees down to sell for timber and to let Ifield to a couple with three children. The 1911 heat wave dried up Ifield's well. Ida visited Ifield to find the house occupied not by five inmates but by twelve: the tenant was taking in paying guests. Alfred, the handy boy, said that he spent hours pumping from the trickle at the bottom of the well. Ida pointed out that the water supply was ample for five, but not, especially in this weather, for the unexpected number of twelve. Nevertheless she instructed Warren, the builder, to deepen the well — more expense! Still the heat persisted and

water lacked. Ida had rented a small house in Crawley and one day as she was lunching, a motor stopped at the gate, footsteps crunched on the gravel and a key was hurled through the window. The tenants of Ifield had bilked Ida had to start legal proceedings for the recovery of six months' rent. Whether she was successful or not, she does not record but legal costs would, in any case, have made a hole in the sum receivable. Thus were Ida's plans to economise and to make a little money again frustrated. Incidentally, it throws light on the pre-1914 scale of prices to recall that Ifield with fourteen bedrooms, three living-rooms, servants' hall and rooms for four servants, garage, coachhouse, stables, and five acres of gardens and tennis court, let for between three and five guineas a week.

Within a few days of the departure of the bilkers, Ida was stricken with a painful and feverish nephritis. Dr Wood said she must have a nurse. She proved to be Bessie, a good looking girl of about 25 with honey-coloured hair, an excellent nurse and a convinced socialist. Ida was simply delighted. She had a companion with whom she could exchange ideas.

Bessie told Ida that her cook, a girl of 17, was not only a hopeless cook but kept the kitchen dirty, took time off without permission and returned at any hour of the night. This was no news to Ida, but she had kept the girl because she was supporting a poverty-stricken family. In the end, Ida followed Bessie's advice and dismissed the girl. Bessie herself took over the cooking about which she knew nothing beyond that you boiled eggs with water and made tea with tea leaves. She was, however, intelligent and full of good will and under Ida's tuition learned as she went along. In between times, Ida relished a series of splendid intellectual field days discussing socialism with her nurse. "Equal pay

for all" was one of Bessie's axioms. "And yet," said Ida happily, propped up on her pillows, "you've made me dismiss the cook because she was incompetent. According to your theories, incompetence should not prevent an individual from earning as good wages as a good worker able to produce above average work. It must therefore have been," Ida continued with gentle irony, "the tiresomeness of being badly served by an untidy, unpunctual person, which led you to get rid of her. As to pay, it seems to me that you deserve more than an ignorant and careless worker".

Until my grandfather died in 1917 my grandparents lived at their last home, Hencocks, Rudgwick, Sussex, where they assembled the family every year for wonderful Christmas parties.

In 1911, there were gathered my grandmother's sister, Aunt Mary Mather, who had lived with Will and Sharly since their marriage, as governess to the children and general aid, Norah Hennessy as yet unmarried, Philip, Ida, myself, Moya de Janzé with her twelve year old Fred and ten year old Henri, and an intimate friend of the family Charles Mendl*. Three or four of these guests

FOOTNOTE*: Later Sir Charles Mendl, Press Attaché of the British Embassy in Paris throughout the inter-war years. END OF FOOTNOTE.

slept in Hencocks, others in Norah's Lavender Cottage next door, my mother and I a couple of cottages further along with Mr and Mrs Marden, agreeable villagers.

Ida was generous in her appreciation of her in-laws:

Hencocks is as pretty and charming as ever. My mother-in-law works miracles and how admirably the house is kept*. Excellent taste, perfect order

FOOTNOTE*: Hencocks was originally two artisan's cottages. I am not sure if it was my grandmother who knocked them into one, but at any rate she was able to buy

the place for a song because it was in the last stages of dilapidation. Today, privately owned, it should be one of the minor show places of Sussex. END OF FOOTNOTE.

and remarkable savoir faire is everywhere in evidence. This model ensemble is the product of my mother-in-law ~~collaboration~~ as business woman and green-fingered gardener, of my father in law, with his artist's sensitive aesthetic sense, of Norah's expertise in furnishing — thanks to her decorating business, Tamworth Hindley, she secured household requirements at wholesale prices — and of Aunt Mary Mather, cordon bleu, and expert needlewoman, who made bedspreads and fitted chaircovers.

The oak beamed, two storeyed seventeenth century cottage, plentifully decorated with holly, with its big fireplace from whose inglenooks one could toast one's toes while far above one's head one caught glimpses of the stars, made a jolly Dickensian Christmas setting.

"We were", Ida recorded, "eleven gathered round a beautiful Christmas tree twinkling with candles, flashing coloured glass balls and tinsel. Happiness shone on all faces."

Around the tree were stacked scores of Christmas presents wrapped in coloured paper. For three days the Hennessys ate, drank and were gay, played blind man's buff, acted charades and told ghost stories — a united family — all discords buried.

After Christmas, Ida took me to Bournemouth where she had engaged rooms for the rest of my school holidays. Below us was a couple named MacIntyre with two children. Within days the MacIntyre boy went down with measles. What to do? Ida had a relapse from her nephritis and could not face going through all the hoops of reopening Ifield Park again. Fate took the decision out of her hands. She and I developed measles ourselves. I had it lightly and although confined to the bedroom, which I shared with my mother, managed to amuse myself

(as I still do today) with books, pencil and paper. Ida was gravely ill, requiring a day and night nurse. Her temperature persisted between 102 and 105 for a week. To measles were added the complications of pneumonia which made her cough day and night, agonising her ribs and keeping her awake, and her eyes and ears were also affected. The doctor fearing a mastoid, decided to operate under gas. Ida wrote:

Fortunately, I noticed that something had gone wrong in the gas apparatus and that I was suffocating. I warned the doctor. I heard whispering. The apparatus was adjusted and I lost consciousness. Woolen bandages made my head burn. Nobody had thought of this. I asked for cotton bandages which relieved me greatly. They gave me injections so frequently that I became numb with cold, my teeth chattering, shudders seizing my body, my limbs trembling...

I realised how seriously ill I was. I had to find someone to take care of Jossleyn if I died. Everything conspired against me. Philip had influenza in Paris; his eyes were affected, he had to be kept in darkness. Moya was in bed following an operation on her foot. Norah lay ill with gastritis in London. My mother-in-law had her hands full looking after her husband*. In despair I

FOOTNOTE*: This picture of a universally plague-stricken Hennessy family strikes me as too appropriately timed to be credible. END OF FOOTNOTE.

wrote to Helen King... she promised to come. My relief was short lived, because her son, fearing the contagion for her, begged her not to go. There was nothing left to me but resignation.

For several days I was completely deaf, then I began to catch a word here and there. Jossleyn put his little nose in my ear when they wanted to tell me something. I was so weak I could not even turn round in my bed. The doctor came twice a day and sometimes a third time in the night. When I was on the road to convalescence, he admitted that at one moment he did not think I would survive: 'It is your composure and fortitude that pulled you through.'

What the precise psychological significance of the following extract from Ida's autobiography is I am not sufficiently expert to diagnose, but I quote it as nice, succinct, critical demolition work:

On the wall in front of me hung a truly ugly picture, devoid of all art. The subject haunted me for long... As soon as I opened my eyes a disagreeable, even distressing, feeling seized me. I saw, in this cheap exhalation the absolute lack of the aesthetic sense (a) of the artist's work ascribable to no

category and (b) of the person who had bought it, impelled by the factitious need for decoration at all costs, begotten by a misunderstanding of civilisation.

At first sight it struck me as a pity that Ida did not describe the artist's subject, drawing and colour scheme, but on second thoughts, I feel that as herself an authoress of no mean literary skill, she realised that it was technically more forceful and intriguing to allow the reader to conjure up his own horror image.

All too soon the doctor said that I was able to return to school but Ida recorded:

> Seven weeks elapsed before I was allowed to leave my bed. The nurses having gone, they found an honest woman whose body took more space in this world than her intelligence; but she had a fund of good will on which she drew with an eagerness cramped by her slow witted corpulence.

The Easter school holidays came and went, spent pleasantly at Bournemouth, at the end of which Ida received a letter from Norah saying that £300 was needed at once to get Philip out of "a fine mess" and that bailiffs were once again in possession of Ifield Park. Norah offered to put up £180 if Ida could find £120 within ten days. "It was not," wrote Ida, "the first time that I was called upon to man the breach without having sufficient amunition in the bank". Ida wrote to her mother who, herself rarely in surplus, scraped the barrel, and a further sale of furniture at Ifield was avoided.

But this fortunate outcome coincided with a disagreeable one, which Ida described as "a new brick on my head." Philip had kept Attenborough's receipt for Ida's silver*. Ida did not know where he was so she wrote to him care of

FOOTNOTE*: See page 117. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Laurens in Old Bond Street to remind him that Attenborough's repayment date was due shortly; there was still time either to pay up or to renew. She received

no reply. "I neither complained nor made reproaches," wrote Ida. "What is the use when one cannot undo what has been done?" Ida's graciousness was admitted, for she added "The Hennessys were very grateful to me and showed their gratitude." By deeds, or by words alone? Ida has left no record.

When troubles assailed Ida they came not single spies. The Longleys chose the moment in July when Ida was stricken with quinsy to demand full repaymer of the Ifield mortgage or a substantial sum on account. In the midst of all this came my summer holiday during which Ida wanted above all to be free from this background of worry and anxiety. Once more she tried to sell Ifield, which found no buyer at any price that would repay the Longleys. How Ida managed to passify them for the time being, she did not record.

We now skip two years of varied ups and downs, significant enough to Ida, but which would be monotonous to the reader doubtless already surfeited with the difficulties that pursued her. In February, 1914, however, the skies lightened.

Ida received word that her mother's brother, the retired Austrian diplomat Charles Zaluski, offered to pass on to his sister the £2,000 of Austrian railway bonds that she would inherit from on his death. Ida Seilern gratefully accepted the offer and, since we have had to note what a trial she usually was to her daughter, it is pleasant to record that she now generously sent this £2,000 to her daughter, thus enabling Ida to pay off the Longleys and relieving her income of the burden of £120 a year in interest. Charles Zaluski's generosity was providential, because it not only removed the Ifield Sword of Damocles but forestalled the results of World War I at the end of which the Austrian railway bonds were worth nothing.

Meanwhile we have lost sight of Philip. What throughout the years in which we have been concentrating on Ida's struggles had he been doing?

XVIII Philip – the country gentry gentleman

Ifield was Philip's home from 1901 to 1907, towards the end of which he moved to London to try to earn a living [FOOTNOTE (See page 144).] For Philip, the years 1901-1907 were a golden half decade in which he realised the dream of his life, never again to be attained: he lived as an Edvardian country gentleman; he had a gracious house, lawns, gardens, exotic onservatories, a farm; he was a welcome guest in the homes of the nobility and gentry within carriage and short-train radius; he had three or four throughbreds which he rode for several hours almost every day; he lunged and taught dressage to his own horses and to those of neighbours anxious to take advantage of the expertise which he delighted to proffer; it was one of the highest lights of his life when in 1908 one of his horses, a roan gelding named Ramazon, won the British Dressage Championship at Olympia*. Philip never lacked a mount, because with his reputation as a horsema

FOOTNOTE*: Ridden by Mrs Macbride, who had bought it from Ida (for, of course, the horses like everything else at Ifield belonged to her.) END OF FOOTNOTE.

neighbours were always willing to let him exercise their horses or keen to have his advice.

Philip lunched, dined out and was the life of many house parties; his "Thank-you" letters, brimming with euphuistic flatteries, were the delight of Sussex hostesses far and wide. In the winter, he rode to hounds twice or thrice a month. He reached his bed at dawn after hunt balls. Here are two extracts from his diary:

Four a.m. January 2, 1907. I am just home from the Horsham hunt ball, which was very brilliant. There was even a pretty woman present, Mrs Melville, to whom Mrs Fred Godman (the incarnation of amiability) presented me and with wh I swept round the ballroom in three waltzes. Mrs Godman, resplendant in diamon

gave me an altogether exceptional welcome. I was able to present Cameron Shute*

FOOTNOTE*: See page 74. END OF FOOTNOTE.

to her and thanks to her I had an interesting evening. My sister Norah*, who was with the Montgomeries of Ifield Hall, was too Montgomerised to be able to profit by

FOOTNOTE*: Who was to have her twentythird birthday a fortnight after this hunt ball. END OF FOOTNOTE.

high society's excellent dispositions towards me.

January 6, 1907. The Lewes hunt ball was truly brilliant, infinitely more elegant than Horsham. Many lovely women and well turned out men.

I danced with Lady Duke, Lady Shifner, Mrs Lindsay Smith, Mrs Hugh Lang and her débutante daughter, Miss Edith Gowers, Miss Postlethwaite, Miss Nicholson and I had a long talk with Mrs Walter Ingram and Mrs Wood of Staplefield. Norah to whom I introduced many people, was the belle of the ball. I was the guest of Mr and Mrs Dawson at Lewes Castle Lodge for this ball.

Philip's diary shows that Ida accompanied him to luncheons and dinners within day-return radius, but that she rarely joined him in house parties and never at balls. This was largely because throughout 1900-1903 and well into 1904 she was either having miscarriages or was too preoccupied with her ill-fated first baby, and then with me, to allow herself to be away overnight. Philip was an affectionate husband. In between his rides and visits, he lunched or dined with Ida at home, read to her and had long exchanges with her on subjects such as Balzac's novels or the education of children. But Ida's reluctance to stay away overnight and her recurrent fragility gradually accustomed them both to the idea that Philip should go out and return as he pleased and, of course, whereas prior to Nettie Seilern's death in September, 1901, her dependable allowance enabled Ida and Philip to maintain a comfortable standard of living — to pay and receive visits, to keep horses and carriages — after her death money troub

began to pile up, making Ida ever more anxious to draw in their horns, while the carefree Philip maintained his customary relaxed definition of "necessary" expenditure. That he found it possible to live without a job after Nettie's death until the end of 1907 was because, first, the travelling, cigarettes, hairdressers and tips of the social round were so extraordinarily cheap — on January 10, 1901, Philip paid nine shillings and sixpence for newspapers, cigarettes and a return Crawley-London Pullman car fare and five shillings for a stall at the Empire — secondly Philip, who was always superbly turned out, ran up mountainous bills at his tailors and shirt-makers; thirdly, the cost of food, wages, rates and taxes were Ida's responsibility; and fourthly the local corn merchant, blacksmith*, builder and other tradesmen were, in those spacious days,

FOOTNOTE*: How well I remember that mighty man standing over his glowing forge sparks flying under the bellows worked by his little boy, the double clink-clank of his hammer, his soothing "Whoa lad!" to the horse, and the all-pervading aroma of singed hooves. Alas! On a recent tour of what remains of Ifield village, I could not even identify his house. Does anyone remember his name or where his forge stood? END OF FOOTNOTE.

ready to grant long term credit, although, of course, ultimately their bills rose to crisis proportions; writs and bailiffs loomed on Ida at Ifield, while in London Philip dodged them by overnight flittings.

XIX Roxane – the enchanteress

Of the several women whom Philip found ready to console him for the state of Ida's health, I pick out a Frenchwoman to whom between January 2 and December 23 1907, Philip wrote once a day to bid her good-morning, and often a second time to say goodnight (a letter which caught the first post at Ifield was delivered in London by the afternoon's second post!); of these, one hundred which he fair-copied into a leatherbound, quarto-sized notebook, plus a handful of originals, survive, totalling fifty thousand words, enough to fill one hundred and twenty five pages of the book in your hand.

Philip went up to London once, sometimes twice, a week to take her to a theatre and supper, to talk to her for hours, often but not necessarily — for that depended on her mood — spending the whole or part of the night with her. Added together, the hours that he spent in her company and in drafting, redraftin, and fair copying letters to Roxane suggest that throughout his waking hours in 1907 he must have been living in a dream world with her. His letters repay stud because to some extent they inkle the depths of his complex character. He addressed her variously as Manon, Carmen and Circé, but chiefly as Roxane.

Whatever one may feel about Philip's letters to Roxane, we shall, I think, find that they are remarkable for originality, imagination, tenderness, an delicate marivaudage — letters of a kind and of a rarity that surely many women would treasure, and indeed, although she did not deign to reply to them, Roxane kept them all her life. We have no letters from her commenting on Philip's pursuit, which might have given us a glimpse of herself as she saw herself or of Philip as she saw him. We have only the mysterious Roxane, the enigma in Philip's mind, that he created out of his own daydreams and unfulfilled wishes.

Twentyone years later, in 1928, I met Roxane and began an acquaintance that, over the years, deepened into friendship, but although the frankness with which she ~~had~~ discussed Philip with me has helped me towards some better understanding of him, it has done little to answer the questions that these letters raise: the lonely, sightless old lady of 1973, who lives alone with her unseen bric-à-brac, portraits and china, with her memories, in a remote French village, with whose rustic inhabitants she has nothing in common, has, in my mind, no connection with the Roxane of 1907, who remains as elusive as when I first encountered her in the pages of Philip's leatherbound note book.

To translate these letters has been a problem. Presumably the translator's first duty is to seek his author's meaning, but while it is true that Philip means a good deal of what he says, one should not look for complete consistency of feeling or clarity of ideas in these letters, partly because many are a form of prose-poetry, partly because certain words — such as "heart", "soul", "charm" — intoxicate Philip and he prolongs many a sentence merely to work in perfumed variations on them, and partly because he is periodically overtaken by a schizophrenic fear that he may reveal too much of himself, so he puts up a barrage of words, similes and metaphors to hide his real self from the world My translations do not satisfy me. A near-literal rendition of the complication of Philip's baroque syntax, with the meandering flourishes of its maze of dependent clauses would be unreadable. The ideal would, of course, be an English equivalent of Philip's densely woven style, but I do not naturally expres myself in complex algebraic brackets written "in fantastic vein with a delirium of ornamen My mind strives to achieve a smooth, euphonious style, which, next to Philip's is anaemic, pedestrian.

Roxane appears to have lived in lodgings in Leinster Square, Bayswater, London. She rose between ten and eleven thirty of a morning. We do not know how she employed the day but at night she was invited out frequently to the subscription balls at Covent Garden. She was oppressed by some sorrow which she refused to divulge to Philip, indeed one gathers that while she listened to his gallantries, she herself spoke little. He was forbidden to telephone or to call without previous notice and her evenings were normally "prohibited hours" for Philip. Although he revelled in the favours that from time to time she granted him, he writes as if she did so like a hostess offering a glass of wine to a gues In this he seems to have been right, because in 1969 Roxane said to me "Il ne m'a jamais possedée. I never belonged to him."

What were Roxane's means of support? We do not know. What brought her to London from France? Philip met Roxane in the house of one of England's leading industrialists, much in the public eye, with whom Philip and Ida were intimate for many years. There is a reference to this man in one letter but nothing to reveal what role, if any, Roxane played in his life. I suspect, without having any evidence, that it was this industrialist who established Roxane with a maid in rooms in Bayswater. Had she been a mere prostitute she would have had no hesitation in making a fool of her protector and taking Philip as her amant de coeur. But she came of respectable petit bourgeois stock, which makes me suspect that her emotional reserve towards Philip, her unhappiness which she would not explain, and her occasional uncontrolable floods of tears, arose from shame at her relationship with the industrialist and guilt that she was betraying him with Philip. Her mother hated her because she was her father's favourite. To escape her mother, she entered into a marriage which proved

unhappy. Whether in 1906 she was divorced or had merely deserted her husband to be rescued by the industrialist, I do not know. But if my surmises approach the truth, her situation as a woman of twentyseven, was tragic, her life lonely, her future unpredictable. In these circumstances one guesses that the attentions of such an extraordinary lover as Philip were fascinating, bewildering, tempting.

The scores of picture postcards that I have of Roxane in ultra-fashionable pre-World War I dresses suggests that she may have modéled for the quaintly archaic forerunners of today's pin-up girls. The Roxane of 1907 does not strike me as a beauty, but she is a definite personality — chic, handsome, intelligent, good natured. To Philip, however, she was clearly a femme fatale. When he wrote these letters he was thirtythree years of age. He wrote from Ifield, from Carlo Seilern's house at 131 Harley Street and other places where work or pleasure took him.

January 6, 1907. I wonder what Cyrano would have said to Roxane if he h discovered that she neglected her health and took pleasure in the idea of an earl death. One is perplexed when one feels incapable of inventing anything to cheer the secret soul of a woman who is bored. Cyrano's Roxane was more communicative than mine. She did not tell all her secrets but she allowed enough to be divined, whereas it is the end of the world when I am permitted scarcely to touch a corner of the veil which my Roxane draws over herself so gracefully and so mysteriously. Very young and ingenious souls are sometimes so sensitive that they shrink even from sympathy lavished upon them by those who love them. They do not dare to reveal their adolescent emotions — for the deepest emotions always have their roots in our heart's youth — to frivolous and coarse man. They concentrate on satiating their immense need to experience all the tortures of one of those great griefs which poets and musicians alone know how to heal by the magic of their harmonies.

Alas! Little Roxane — little of stature, so great in spirit — why have you so much feeling? How cruelly one is punished for having too keen sensibilities! For the sort of men whom you meet are turned out by the dozen and understand nothing, while poets are rare. I, who am your friend, understand these things, but I cannot lay my hand on anyone to penetrate the dark brambled thickets in which — Sleeping Beauty — you await the awakening kiss of a Prince Charming.

January 12, 1907. Good morning Mademoiselle! Have you slept well? I hope your dreams have not been too dramatic, that you have not again stumbled upon me in the stalls of the Empire, clad for shooting with a gun in my hand

ready to annihilate you in a murderous and passionate rage! What an appalling nightmare! And yet I feel deeply flattered! The idea that I can have appeared, victorious and destructive, in someone's dreams gives me the illusion of success. This is certainly the first time that a woman has trembled at my approach. My shadow is more powerful than my real self. I have always wondered why Peter Pan was so worried to have lost his shadow. Now you have made me realise that a shadow is a force, which steals from us in search of adventure while we sleep, and whose amazing imaginings seize the attention of those who are not giving us a thought. I should, however, have preferred that my shadow, having had the good taste to seize Roxane, should have imitated Cyrano rather than parody the grossnesses of a drunken cowboy.

January 20, 1907. At bottom, dear Manon, I'm pretty astonished to find myself back here at Ifield. I only believe it because I see it. It is true tha I was not very anxious to leave you and if I had not kept a cab with my bag in it outside your front door as a hostage to fortune, I don't know if I would have had enough will power to rid you of my presence. I might, of course, tell you that I left for fear of boring you, but that would be poor acknowledgement of the graciousness of your welcome. As a matter of fact you have, dear Manon, the rare privilege of being able to make ordinary mortals like me forget that we are not of the race of Gods. A few kings and really charming women possess this magnificent gift. In their company we experience a simultaneously proud and modest gladdening of the heart. In contact with them, we lose for a few moments the eternal consciousness of our tiresome selves. We become intoxicated with our fleeting elevation into a sphere which is not ours. We are a little proud, very dazzled and altogether touched. Nobody emerging from an audience with a king, who is worthy of kingship, comes away with the humiliating thought that he is a bore. And I assure you that the feeblest cavalier who emerges from paying his respects to Roxane goes on his way spruced up, like a much acclaimed juvenile lead. In such circumstances we are too delighted ~~to have been welcomed~~ to have been welcomed to think of the impression that we may have made. No, a sovereign power has, for an instant, banished all memory of that sad "me" of whom we are not always proud, and we are full of joy because the sweetness of an enchantment envelops and penetrates to the very heart of us.

Now you are laughing! You find my comparison laboured, weak. Your delicate spirit regrets even the semblance of a compliment... Well, I can't help it — I write the things I think as I think them — just like that. If I had to turn my tongue over in my cheek seven times before speaking, I should never dare to say a thing. It is enough to hesitate only a second to see looming up the Himalayan difficulties that beset the expression of any feeling. Merely to think of it dries up my zest. And yet I would have liked, and I hoped to prove to you, dear Manon, that I am not insensitive to the infinite lights and shades with which you know so well how to embellish our marvellous friendship. No, Manon, I do not exaggerate! Neither you nor I have ever known anything even distantly resembling it. Therefore is it marvellous, unique and — very sweet.

January 21, 1907. What are you thinking about, dear Manon? I know that you never answer this question except by your subtlest smile. But it is th keenness of my desire to watch you parrying this foolish question with the

delicate ripple of your dimples that incites me put it so often. Poor dear soul, believe me, I do not wish to open Pandora's box. On the contrary, I admire the elegant perfection of a living enigma. When you say nothing, when you turn your lovely eyes away to question sombre destiny — then I hug you closer to my heart in order that you shall not be alone in your flight into the past or the future.

And truly I accompany you sometimes in the dark places of your silence as if I were blindfold, which gives me the entirely new sensation of playing a disturbing, but infinitely tender, blindman's buff with you.

Someone who read these lines without knowing you would imagine that they were written by a fool to a deaf mute, wouldn't they? Yet how many things, how many touching, and even sometimes tragic, things you have in fact told me. I do not forget them — Oh no, dear Manon — only it seems to me that some confidence should be like the treasures that one buries before the approach of an enemy. If in a careless moment one reveals the hiding place, even to a tried friend, one generally regrets it, because he usually cannot refrain from telling someone else about it in strict confidence. Your soul is shy, dear Manon, and I sense that you do not like to see the reflection of your treasures flash through words of mine. Do not worry, it is understood that I know nothing of what you have told me. I forget where the crown jewels lie hidden.

Do you know what I mean by this hyperbole? I hardly dare tell you — but I am thinking of that flood of precious tears, of those heartrending sobs, which follow your long silences.

Whence come these tears? From your heart, doubtless from your poor dear heart, whose beats, wild or gentle, regular or capricious, I have so often felt - in vain.

What is the profound bitterness or the implacable chimera which can so trouble your regal serenity? Truly are you like no one else. And if all the time I put you questions to which you never reply, it is because only thus can I share in mysteries which, without knowing what they are, I cherish. However I often see a mystical ebb in the touching charm of a mischievous dimple or a fleeting glance. And when I hear you laugh gaily, happily — as alone you know how to laugh — respect doubles my friendship for you.

Great heavens! It is three o'clock in the morning. Quick! An envelope! I must fling myself into bed. Goodnight! Aurevoir! My fondest love!

January 23, 1907... God! How happy I am at the thought of taking you to this ball! In general, I am never bored and it is rare that I prefer one person's company to another's. But something like a sweet obsession enters into my friendship with you. I think of you astonishingly often and I am constantly saving things up to tell you, but as soon as I see you I completely forget them. When with you I live every moment in the present, the pleasure of being with you drives away for the moment the consciousness of all not directly connected with you. Friendship with you, dear Manon, is indeed a happy exchange. From it I extract a joy which sweetens the saddest moments that may come after..

January 18, 1907. (Written after listening to Chopin). Good music cheers because it is usually serious and saddening. As one listens to this translation of our emotions into harmonies, we feel an unease — perhaps a little artificial — but which none the less, while it lasts, inflicts on us a very pleasant sensation of spiritual desolation. We are enchanted to have so heavy a heart, weighing us down so wonderfully, which makes those around us seem frivolous lacking in our splendid capacity to feel, understand and suffer. We look upon their passing light-weight pleasure with disdain, and each suave and perfidious note that the artist pours into our hungry ears increases our startling likeness t the frog in the fable, who tried to blow himself up to the size of a bull by his own lung power.

In other words, dear Manon, I am telling you two things: my spirits seem a little low tonight, yet, at the same time, when I remember your friendly banter I cheer up. One would have to be Cyrano to dare not to laugh at this spontaneous movement of one's heart which launches one into a passionate search for another's soul. Even Cyrano himself had the courage for this only once. And for that unique occasion he awaited the darkness of night and masked himself in the personality of another.

Yet, believe me, dear Manon, I am far from taking seriously the gravity o my case. I make every effort, crowned from time to time with a fleeting success to appreciate its comic charm. I even laugh sometimes. I know well how much one should beware of the unconscious witchery of one's own words, for often, when driven by a vain desire to please, when we try to gather a few posies to encircle an adorable head, I have noticed that we thus — without realising it — forge ourselves solid links which chain us down in our devotion.

It is curious that, having a nature perhaps as shy as yours, Manon, and an instinctive aloofness of spirit towards all that does not coincide with my secret desires, I should nevertheless voluntarily take on the thorny test of a friendship like ours...

February 2, 1907. The hands of the clock march towards 11 a.m. Therefore with a light expert hand, with pretty gestures — idle yet precise — Mademoiselle Manon dresses: the pink, the straw, the blue, the lace, the velvet? Occasionally she pauses to study herself in the mirror with that profound seriousness which always reminds me that a lady's toilette is a sacred rite. Or else she teases her maid Myvonne, who is ready to play the part of a comedy soubrette but hates being called Mouse! How beautifully Mademoiselle Manon's hair waves, how shining and glossy her black bandeaux! She is fresh as a rose, Her youth perfumes the whole room. See! She stands erect on her golden heels, delicately slender, taller than real life in her unconscious sense of her own gracefulness and power. She smooths her dress and preens herself in her finery proud as a Spaniard, sweet as a young queen.

Always independent and free, she deigns, however, from time to time to temper what her proud gaze has of contempt and indifference for people and things by the simple transposition of a single dimple. Then the flash of her white teeth lights up her face and you think you discern the distant twinkle of a star in the dark night of her eyes.

Now, by her attitude, her gestures, by the whole poise of her personality, she spreads a truly regal graciousness, and one divines that treasures lie concealed in her.

Why, yes, treasures, of which she is the ever incorruptible guardian, although she allows glimpses to those who are bold or mad enough to dare to lean over the edge of her young soul. Note that the more one persists in leaning over, the less is one able to recover one's balance. Perhaps that should be a warning of the vertigo which will seize anyone who dares to plumb the abyss?

But although I am quite prepared to allude to these palpitating suppositions in even more picturesque terms — at rock bottom I no longer believe in them. Faith had disappeared long before the Condordat was signed. We all think we can play with the primitive forces of our being without the risk of awakening passion and the pain that goes with it. In this — you see well enough, dear Manon — I am no exception, since not only do I dare to look at you often and long but, even more, I afterwards reflect on what I have seen. Is this not — as the great Solomon said (and he knew how to extricate himself from a mess!) — Is this not to take a flaming coal in one's hand, believing that it will not burn? But who ever acted on Solomon's wisdom? Certainly a cavalier as feeble as your humble servant would be out of his depth if he tried to drape himself in such biblical ermine. Perhaps his very weakness will protect him, for the puny shrub which we call a reed bends without breaking before storms which uproot a neighbouring oak — which seems to lay its foundations in the earth as does an ancient dynasty in the soul of a people. And if one day I have to face a tragic ending to my story, I will be grateful to you, dear Manon, for having inspired me with the strength necessary to survive misfortunes reserved for great powers.

How delicious it is to trifle in honour of your dimples, Mad^E moiselle! Thus time flies fast and lightly! Already a quarter to one in the morning! You have just done as Caesar: you have gone out, you have been seen, you have conquered. Now, dreaming of different world, a little wearily you strip Mademoiselle Manon of her finery. For since you are like no one, you are always alone, dear Manon — very alone. If I could now slip next to you, I should not know any better than anyone else how to disperse your sadness or to charm away your ennui. But I have gazed at you so much, thought of you so often, that perhaps you may find in my attentive eyes the reflection, pale and charming, of your all-beautiful image. Good night and good morning!

It was understood that although Philip could speak and write gallantly to Roxane he was to be only her friend; he was not to seek to be her amant de coeur. Occasionally, however, Philip allowed himself the luxury of writing her what he called a love letter, excusing the liberty by pretending that it was not from him but from an unknown admirer. Here is an example:

February 4, 1907: The Declaration

Mademoiselle, you have not wished to tell me whether you are Spanish or French. You prefer to remain in this half-shadow of mystery which fits in so wel with the trouble which you stir in my mind.

Since the time when I used my bench at school to dream of that liberty from which I have, as it turns out, little benefited, I have never yielded to the desire which has overpowered me tonight to write to an unknown. In doing so now I have an almost painful feeling of human weakness. There creeps into it, however, something like hunger for the forbidden fruit and I seem to breathe the perfume of a Paradise lost which I have regained.

You are intelligent and therefore even if you laugh at me you will nevertheless understand me. But, believe me, Mademoiselle, I make myself no illusions; I even share your opinion of me and bow in advance to the judgement without appeal that your good sense will pronounce. Certainly, a man would have to have a trivial enough nature to promenade thus of a night in search of a passing woman to speak to her of love, nor will I do so. First, because it would profane the ideal image of love which each of us carries in his heart. Secondly, because it would be false. No, Mademoiselle, I do not love you. I have not even felt the traditional thunderclap of love at first sight, as, in simple homage to your charms, I ought to have done.

Out of folly, or for lack of anything better to do, I went sauntering along a street where I risked what M. Prudhomme* used to call a dangerous liaison.

FOOTNOTE*: The creation of the French nineteenth century caricaturist H. Monnier. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Well, I consider that a man should visit a haunt of pleasure for the pleasure to be found in it, should go to a church to pray, to the City for business, a nightclub for a woman. If a man decides to visit as a mere spectator any one of these places — all equally precious and necessary to suffering humanity — he steals a place that should be reserved for true believers and risks being jostled in body and mind. I know all that, and yet, in my loneliness of spirit, women are such powerful magnets that I find myself seeking them out for the pleasure alone of breathing their perfumes, admiring their dresses, gathering their smiles. And because I am shy, sentimental and a fool, I cannot crudely accompany back to her lodging any woman I pick out as desirable.

No, to make me get a move on, as you say in your expressive language, I need the fabled enchantment of an adventure, of a drama, of love! If I address you this evening, it is because I divined from your first glance that you would not deign to let me accompany you to your room — a beautiful certainty which made you irresistible to me. And, to crown all, your dry refusal fell on my heart like an unbearably heavy blow from which I am still reeling.

No, I do not love you, Mademoiselle. Yet you have made me suffer, and one day you may perhaps make me suffer even more.

Wrapped in your sables, you look charming. Are you really as enticing as you seemed to me this evening? Are you always as fierce, as hard? Do you thus repel every homage offered you?

If so, you are the beauty that my heart awaits.

Yes, I, too, am proud and sometimes fierce, or so it is said. I do not love you, but your refusal proves that you are difficult, exigent, capricious. You are therefore capable of inspiring, and even sharing, the anguish of a great love. I am your man. Despite yourself you will be my mistress one day, mademoiselle. And each of us will hurt the other...

Do not worry, I shall not write you again for a long time... But even though you do not see me, you will come to feel that I haunt your existence; that I am the jealous spy of the least of your comings and goings — a shadow hidden in your shadow and, in your turn, you will for the first time feel troubled disturbed. You will understand the hidden significance of this letter, which you will then perhaps re-read and blot with tears. And when, in the end, I come to you, I shall fetter you as, by a single look, you have fettered me... Oh! No! Mademoiselle! I do not love you. Sans adieu!

March 23, 1907: Good morning Mademoiselle Manon! ...

After all I was wrong to say that you never reply to my letters, because this gorgeous sun which has shone on me for the past twelve days must have come from Barcelona*. It cannot belong to this country of fogs and I am ungrateful

FOOTNOTE*: This must have been a private joke, because Roxane is a Frenchwoman.

END OF FOOTNOTE.

not to have recognised sooner that this sunshine is a delicate attention which can only come from you. Yes, I gaze into this blue sky, I breathe this pure air, drinking in an atmosphere which is a trifle chilly but gentle, and in it I recapture Manon's caresses. And I was grumbling at you! What black ingratitude! Anyone could write a thousand letters but who, save you, dear idol could reply by a ray of sunshine?

Truly these beams that you send me from the sky, dear Manon, are as dazzling as your glances. And I would be absolutely happy if I could think that you were sharing their blessed warmth with me. But I greatly fear that in this, as in all else, you give more than you receive, for I am regretfully sure that I do not infiltrate your dreams with the charm with which you flood mine.

How is it that, while you spread happiness, no one knows how to set your sombre gaze afire with joyous lightening?

Sometimes — too rarely — I amuse you a little and you laugh gaily, but I have never seen you laugh with the overflowing rapture which, while it lasts, rids the heart of its daily burden...

The following letter hints at the crumbling of Philip's dream of a country gentleman's life at Ifield. Carlo's allowance to Ida was reduced and unreliable. Debts were piling up. Hitherto obsequious creditors were becoming obnoxious. His efforts to interest financiers in sure-fire money-spinning projects kept on hanging fire. Philip's life was entering a new phase, rising from the hectic to the frantic.

April 4, 1907... I am a little tired and absolutely furious. At the bottom of my heart I have curious feelings of apprehension, anxiety and dread. In vain, I try to reassure myself that the situation is not as serious as it looks... I feel as if a plank may give way beneath me at any moment. I feel like plunging in to drown myself in the waters rushing below. This agony infuses a secret bitterness into the most comforting dreams... I am so discouraged, I no longer have the heart for anything.

Forgive me, dear Manon, if for the moment I abuse your friendship by thus chanting on the Way of the Heart* litanies of lassitude instead of singing madrigals. But in the end, I am, like you, alone in the world. I have no one to whom I can talk of anything save the cheerful side of life; and at this moment the memory of the serene hours that we have spent together contrasts unbearably with the painful tinsel of the situation here, so that I feel keenly the need to unburden my heart on your affection in which, quite naively, I believe, although I know the wish is too good to be true. It is curious that with you, dear Manon, I cannot, as with everyone else, pretend to be gay when I am depressed.

FOOTNOTE*: Roxane moved from Leinster Square to a street with a church at one end of it, which Philip called the Way of the Heart. The map of Bayswater reveals that there still exists a St. Philip's Place complete with church at one end. Was this Philip's Way of the Heart? END OF FOOTNOTE.

Here is an extract from a letter written to Philip three years previously

Dear heart, Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the lovely things you say to me with so much charm. Thank you.

Yes, you will find strength because you love. You will succeed, and if

you wish it I will help you with everything I have and with my whole heart.

This was written to Philip by his wife. Why, amidst the threatening tide of 1907, did he not turn to Ida, who was so ready to stand by him, and who, surely, should have been his natural stand-by? Why did he find more comfort in Roxane?

The answer seems to be twofold.

First, full of love and good will as Ida was, her ideas of how to cope with the situation — by economy, by not running up tailor's bills, by not keeping hunters, by going to the upper circle rather than the stalls — would have sent bleak draughts whistling down the corridors of Philip's world of fantasy. Ida held up a level of action to which he could not, would not, aspire

Secondly, during the days of his courtship and in the first year or so of his marriage, Ida doubtless had had her place in his dream world, but, as time passed, it was not that familiarity bred contempt — Philip never felt contempt for Ida — it was that in the evolving kaleidoscope of Philip's dreams of women she had become a fulfilled wish — while as a mother she was of the presen as a desirable woman she was of the past. Philip's pet names for the women in his life repay study. That for Ida was "Tanagra", borrowed from the delicately draped female statuettes in terracotta, too fragile for anything save to be admired in a glass case.

Here are some Obiter dicta from letters to Roxane:

When my heart's desire eludes me, I am happiest alone on horseback. Nothing can then spoil the poignancy of my mood. The cantering of the horse beats a soothing rhythm which prevents the every day world from invading my dream.

With the muscled strength of a horse beneath him, who wants wings?

I enjoy your moments of serenity so much. Your splendid indifference is a stronghold as much for your faithful servant as for you, Manon.

You were telling me this evening that I am the happier of us two. You may be right. Although certain things inflict secret anxieties, the acuteness of which each time surprises and demolishes my professed philosophy, I yet have the consolation of a freedom and an isolation like those of a Carthusian nun*.

FOOTNOTE*: Note: not a Carthusian monk! END OF FOOTNOTE.

But in his heart of hearts a man laughs at all hierarchies, all barriers. When he suffers he becomes a "tiny-wee" (as my old nurse used to say) and then, in whatever circumstances he finds himself, he reduces everything to its primitive value: he only knows how to lament with the obstinacy and the egoism of childhood.

When my last moment comes, destiny will doubtless acknowledge my instinctive discretion by granting me a cold solitary bed, where I shall be able to fade away without anyone to witness the grimace that the prospect of quitting this world — which I shall have had so many reasons to love too much — will force from me.

You perhaps know that nothing is more precious than uncertainty, for when one is worried by a known anxiety then all one's hours are so fully employed that one has no leisure left to feel bored and to find life empty.

Iphigenia sacrificed herself to save her father and his people. Even fo so respectable a cause I confess I have no great taste for immolations. Honour and thanks rose to heaven with the sacrificial victim, but I think that if Agamemnon had fought stoutly for his daughter's life, he and his people would have been better off. No, I don't like sacrifices.

I skip many scented, honeyed pages to a letter of October 1, 1907, which suggests that Philip and Roxane are about to enter a new phase.

Roxane has at last written him a letter!

In the last paragraph of his reply he assumes that the reserve that she has hitherto maintained — her "defensive armour" — is to be dropped, and I read the final sentence as a proposal, not, indeed, of marriage, but of one of those "dangerous liaisons" about which Philip had ambivalent feelings — now driven by his inner urge to press forward to indulge his vanity in a triumphant assault on the final defences — now restrained by the knowledge that once victory is secure, the true knight errant (in Philip's definition) soon becomes

bored and quits — inflicting suffering and being made to suffer — in search of fresh adventures.

October 8, 1907. Do you ask me what I have been doing in the past week?

But I have been alone, all alone, Manon. Alone after having spent a whol year in your society.

Intervals of hours, days, sometimes even weeks, have interrupted our encounter. However, the Royal Mail, always friendly to lovers, granted me the illusion of a perpetual tête à tête.

Every morning one of my letters awoke you, Manon, and often a second bade you Good evening! Letters have been the food of my love.

In the secret garden of my cult for you a strange and rare feeling has grown.

By sheer force of expression our intimacy has attained full bloom. It has taken a form all its own, seizing caresses, joys and sadnesses, which have become so much a part of it that neither of us would ever devote it to another. Thus were we separated for a month or for twentyfour hours, we found ourselves again, we understood each other, we possessed each other with the intimacy of a honeymoon couple. Under the protection of my letters we have lived heart to heart, hand in hand, haven't we, Manon?

Those who pretend they can love each other without constantly telling their love, those who would persuade themselves that they are always thinking of each other without ever meeting or writing, know nothing of the depths, of the mystical union of a cult like ours. When they meet again, they will find only faded flowers and the ashes of past rites on their altars. They will have nothing to say to each other and they will have to search their hearts to forgive each other the hours of forgetfulness; they will have to build a new love on the ruins of the old which they left to perish from neglect.

Have you guessed, felt, understood these things, Manon?

I like to think so. I persuade myself when I re-read your letter, when I look into your eyes, that the sweet friend behind her defensive armour does no wish to prolong a test of which she has at last guaged the bitter depths, even though she has not plumbed them herself. No, you will not any longer, will you dear Manon, use so deadly a weapon. Thank you.

But Roxane knew her man. She kept the flag glying over the citadel.

After describing a day with a friend in the country, Philip says:

October 14, 1907. Well, that's what happened as it would have appeared in the eyes of anyone who found himself called upon to testify in the witness box.

In fact, however, I hardly paid attention to anything.

I was absorbed in prolonging our recent re-union; I am still under its spell, still sleepy from a night so short and so good, still pursuing the dream begun ~~gebun~~ in it. External things remain distant as if on the horizon; but the memory of your caresses regained stays in my hair, my eyes, my hands — everywhere — I breathe them in once more. They persist even now, Manon darling, and in a few minutes after I bid you this goodnight, I will return to close my eyes in an infinitely sweet sleep, for I feel that happy fatigue — so pleasant, so all-enveloping — which follows one's heart's delight.

Alas! Manon, I am perhaps wrong to confess my happiness to you. You will grudge me for having too much good luck! You will forget that I have suffe for a fortnight. You will think up some charming but diabolical plot to make me see a thousand stars instead of the one most beautiful of all — the lover's star.

Oh! I know, Manon, when I am gay your armour becomes impenetrable. I have often noticed that if I seem happy you get up from the sofa to take a chair by yourself. Yes, your instinct disaproves of this joie de vivre born anew in me when I am with you. Little Manon, it must really be that you yourself are sad, very sad, since you can only admit suffering humanity into your sanctuary. If I were ruined and ill you would probably offer me all your heart's hospitality permanently. I toss that off as a joke, but it's true isn't it? That is why I now ask you to grant me a little truce, to allow me to get my breat and for at least a few days, to hope, because, for the moment, I am only convalescent, a little tipsy from the fresh air of my first outing.

The very next day, October 15, we have a letter which implies that Philip has already called on Roxane but that she did not grant him a truce.

It is true, Manon, as I told you yesterday, I am not cured yet. So I found the test of a little while ago a bit stiff.

Did you not array yourself in all your finery to ensure the perfection of my defeat? Which, I confess, was complete. And although I'm all shaken, I nevertheless, as a connoisseur, cannot help saluting such a pretty piece of sword play.

I admire above all the devilish genius that you possess in the supreme degree of dismissing me in the nicest way by the manner in which you invite me t stay. So that when you gently thrust me out, I almost come to believe that it is I who am committing the unpardonable offence of deserting you — a refinemen which is not the least of your fascinations. Even when I am its victim I savour your wit.

No, these are not reproaches rigged out as compliments — quite the contrary! Only I have not yet quite recovered from my long exile, and everythi you do or say worse confounds the confusion of my spirits...

Good night, my Roxane, perhaps a little too coquettish but certainly not spiteful. I raise my glass to you!

It is part of the fascinating enigma of these letters that they contain many allusions to happenings which Philip and Roxane shared but at which we, who were not present in the appartment on the Way of the Heart, can only guess, can only put two and two and a half together in hopes of making four, but it seems to me that, from about the date of the foregoing letter the emotional pace quickens. I seem to detect beneath Philip's bouquets a rising note of protest.

After reviewing the entire library of Philip's love letters, I believe that no woman had ever held him at such emotional arms-length for so long as Roxane, but a letter dated twenty months later — August 23, 1909 — rings the curtain up on what seems to be the wrong play. The juvenile lead is indeed stil called Philip but, bewilderingly, he talks more like Thackeray's domesticated Captain Dobbin than Molière's satanic Don Juan.

Culverlands, Mortimer. S.O., Berks. August 23, 1909.

Dear Heart, I cannot, alas, get home today... my host has invited an important man for me to meet at dinner... and despite my profound boredom at being far from our nest I try to console myself that this dinner will lead to results that will consolidate the basis of our happiness.

You are so brave, dear heart, that I owe it to you to be as brave as you and I must do all I can to deserve your sincere and touching confidence in me. That is why I am so anxious to neglect no opportunity to improve the material side of our life...

Au revoir, my treasure, believe me this separation makes me feel keenly how each moment of our precious youth ought to be spent in the constant communion of our two beings. And when I am no longer with you, when I cannot get back to the nest, I feel an unbearable anguish and anxiety about all that concerns you. Dear Will-o-the-Wisp, you are keeping your toes and shoulders warm, aren't you, and you're taking taxis when you have to venture in dangerous streets. I hug you to my heart with infinite tenderness.

This glimpse of Philip in slippered domesticity reveals an unexpected facet in his character, which I should have liked to have studied. Where did

Roxane fit into Philip's hectic life to be described in the next chapter? Did they continue to frequent Covent Garden balls? What did Roxane say when Philip went out to dinners, dances and social occasions without her?

Unfortunately, now that they are living together, the torrent of Philip's letters to Roxane dries up overnight. I am left guessing.

I guess that Roxane found means to end her relationship with the wealthy industrialist, if, indeed, he was her protector. I guess that she did so for contradictory reasons. First, it would have eased the tensions in her life by diminishing her strong feelings of guilt. Secondly, because I have described Philip as Don Juan it does not follow that he created that impression on Roxane. Had he not, for eighteen months or more, shown himself persistently attentive, gay, tender, sympathetic, imaginative, loving, passionate — strong magnets to a lonely girl. He did not propose marriage, but did a liaison with him not offer some security to a girl in her precarious situation? Security? Philip had no regular income. No, but he was full of optimistic schemes, which always seemed to him just within final grasp.

These are surmises so, letting Roxane hover as a shadowy question mark somewhere in the background, I revert to other letters and journals, which show Philip, hitherto seen as insouciant and carefree, struggling seriously to earn a living.

XX Philip – the cosmopolitan financier

Some time around late 1907 or early 1908, as creditors became less and less willing to pay the costs of running Ifield, Philip decided that he must go to London to earn something, somehow.

How? His education and outlook equipped him for no salaried profession. On the other hand, his wide circle of acquaintances, many influential, some wealthy, indicated the role of what would today be called a "contact man". That was why Philip became interested in one invention or project after another that needed finance to get off the ground but which, despite his utmost efforts, not or ever did. He also went into partnership with a friend, Charles Eagle-Bott, to run a luxury tobacconist shop, Edouard Laurens at 7 Old Bond Street, which had a concession for Egyptian cigarettes. To stock a shop requires working capital and while Ida put £50 into the business, Philip had none (though he may have induced Carlo to put something up), so the capital must have come from the Eagle-Botts, and from hearsay about them I guess that it was borrowed. Philip's role was to persuade hotels, restaurants, and clubs to stock, and rich men to buy, bulk supplies of Laurens cigarettes. Despite Laurens' splendid location and despite Philip's sales efforts, which were by no means altogether in vain, the shop never fulfilled its proprietors' high hopes, because while Charles and Philip were experienced men-about-town, what they did not know about business was well worth knowing. They lived from week to week helping themselves to cigarettes from the counter and to cash from the till as required. Fortunately the cost of living in pre-World War I London helped out rich and poor alike; one could rent a room with a valet in lodgings in Half Moon Street for a pound a week and get a cooked breakfast for a shilling a day. Handsom cabs were

sixpence a mile, buses and trains a penny a mile, Players' Weights cigarettes five for a penny, Laurens' gold tipped luxury Egyptians six shillings a hundred, a bottle of vintage claret three or four shillings, a bespoke suit six guineas and one off the peg twentyfive or thirty shillings, so if the till produced five or six pounds net a week, Charles and Philip were in clover.

The trouble was that the till had also to pay rent, rates, light a girl secretary-assistant's wage, and keep stocks replenished. To cover these items and pocket-money, the gross takings had to achieve a minimum of £45 a week. I can find no record that they ever did. Consequently, since neither Charles nor Philip had any reserves, both the business, and they individually, ran up increasing debts.

To the year 1908 belongs Philip's connection with the Cosmopolitan Financier, a weekly review basically concerned with the stock exchange and investment, but which also offered political comment, dramatic criticism, and eventually seemed ready to publish contributions on any subject that would fill space.

To this, Philip contributed A Phantom Conquest, a serialisation of his adventures as New York Herald correspondent in the Graeco-Turkish war of 1897, occasional short stories, and a column of comment on current affairs, written in the high comedy tone of Noel Coward, although Philip did not invent his characters but took them from Scott's Ivanhoe: Front de Boeuf, uncle Cedric the Saxon, Wamba the jester, Gurth the Swineherd, himself as the Disinherited Knight, etc., who, when combined with his wit, gave his column sophistication and an unusual literary note. Since his topical jokes are now incomprehensible, and since nothing is more tedious than a joke explained I quote only one in illustration of Philip's high spirited fun.

First, the background: In July, 1908, the big scandal, which filled columns in every newspaper, was the arrest on Sandown race course of Robert Sievier, fortyeight year old editor and proprietor of the tabloid Winning Post, on a criminal charge of attempting to blackmail Jack Barnato Joel, fortysix year old South African diamond tycoon and race-horse owner. In a column claiming to expose frauds, Sievier had intermittently attacked Joel for years, describing him as a buyer of stolen diamonds and a thief. Asked in court why he had not issued a writ for libel, Joel pleaded a youthful indiscretion, and pointed out that the allegations were confined to the Winning Post, a scurrilous weekly not read in good society, whereas if he had sued, Sievier's allegations would be publicised in every daily.

The prosecution alleged that Sievier had demanded £5,000 to cease his attacks, and that a Mr. C.A. Mills, a commission agent, had been the intermediary between Sievier and Joel. It was not disputed that Sievier was heavily in debt; in his defence he countered that it had been Joel who had employed Mills as a stool-pigeon to try to entice him, Sievier, into demanding money under threat of blackmail in the presence of a concealed detective, and so enable criminal proceedings to be launched, which would not only end the Winning Post's attacks but give Joel his revenge by getting Sievier sent to prison. Ultimately the jury accepted Sievier's account and acquitted him, but this point had not been reached when Philip wrote:-

> People are saying that Mr. Sievier and Mr. Joel are exactly alike*1. Uncle Cedric the Saxon goes one better in suggesting that they are one and the same man leading a double life. As a matter of fact neither exists. They are fictitious characters, invented by a Mr. Mills*2, who sought to increase the circulation of the Winning Post by publishing a series of spicy articles, followed by actions at law*3. These characters are being impersonated in the court by two handsome young men, whose charm of manner, open and honest faces*4 have surprised the jury. There is no truth in some absurdly romantic tales circulated concerning them*5.

We are not at liberty to give their real names, but we can assure our readers that neither are princes of the blood royal*6, they are merely gentlemen — liberally educated*6 gentelmen who, failing in other walks of life, have consented to act their part in this Comédie de Société for an honest consideration We may add — as it is now an open secret — that the Winning Post is the latest of a leading journal's clever and fresh departures in the publishing line*7. The Winning Post is more profitable than the Encyclopaedia Britannica and contains fresh matter that was not included in the Supplement*8.

FOOTNOTES*: (1) The exchanges between Joel and Sievier and between their witnesses had evoked widespread comment in private that there was little to choose between them. To have said so while the case was on would have risked contempt of court. Philip, however, cheekily makes the point (present in every one of his reader's minds) by first suggesting that they are "exactly alike", adding immediately that they "are one and the same man leading a double life" — a quip so obviously farcical that counsel would have had difficulty in persuading any jury to take it seriously.

2. The public prosecutor used Mills' evidence to characterise Sievier as a blackmailer; the defence used it to characterise Joel as an imposter laying a trap for Sievier. Obviously, says Philip, two characters so contradictory could not exist outside fiction.

3. Exactly what was happening.

4. Since Joel and Sievier were both paunchy bons viveurs in their late forties, with five o'clock shadows and thinning, grizzling hair, who sneered the dirtiest insinuations against each other, Philip's readers would have been tickled by his deadpan description of them as "two handsome young men."

5. An Oscar Wild crack against two men whose (a) tastes were notoriously heterosexual and (b) hatred of each other was such as to attract a comment from the judge.

6. See 4 above.

7. From 1906, Moberley Bell had been striving to overcome the financial difficulties of the Times by seeking outside sources of revenue, e.g. the Times Atlas, and participation in a new edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. To link the respectable Times with the tabloid Winning Post was gorgeous effrontery, incomprehensible in these permissive days when to link the Times with, say, Private Eye, might raise smiles among the more than middle aged but would evoke stony-faced comments of "Well, what of it?" from those younger.

8. See 5 above. The nearest comparison — probably out of date by the time that this is in print — might be to say that Miss Christine Keeler's memoirs contain "fresh matter" not included in Her Majesty's latest Court Circular. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Philip's stories and comments contributed to the Cosmopolitan Financier are among the very few items that he ever wrote for a definite market, subject to the discipline of an editor's instructions and blue pencil. They start, develop, end; they reveal his observation, imagination and verve. If he had continued to contribute thus under editorial discipline for some years he could have become a successful and not unimportant author. His stories combine something of Balzac's lurid larger-than-life romantic realism, Anthony Hope's wit and subtlety, and Michael Arlen's interest in Mayfair and sex (although Arlen wrote, in fact, about Café Society rather than about the now vanished grea houses of Park Lane and Curzon Street, of which he conveys none of the first hand acquaintance which Philip had.)

But it was not to be. Perusal of the issues of the Cosmopolitan

Financier dated April to August, 1908, suggests a mounting fever similar to that which was rising in the Edouard Laurens shop at 7 Old Bond Street. Week by week the editor offers more and more free benefits to any who will take out an annual subscription: free insertions in the Small Ads, coupons to collect for free theatre tickets (dress circle only: no expensive stalls for this thrifty editor), a coupon entitling readers to investment and legal advice free (This coupon marked Valid for One Week Only is undated, which puts it on a par with the business efficiency with which 7 Old Bond Street was conducted): an offer of a fixed salary of £100 a year plus commission to any subscriber (You had to subscribe first) joining the staff of canvassers for subscriptions (Philip himself could have flourished and taken an inamorata nightly to supper at the Savoy if he could have counted on such a regular income in 1908); diamonds(!) on credit(! – for the asking; and an invitation to women to apply for jobs from directors down to clerks in the FIRST LADIES BANK (run by women for women)*;

FOOTNOTE*: When I first heard of the First Ladies Bank I started out on its track in the joyous anticipation that I had uncovered a hitherto unknown after-dinner racontage of Philip's. But it originated in a contribution to the Cosmopolitan Financier by a now forgotten woman novelist, John Strange Winter (author of Bootles Baby) who wrote: "... Think of the comfort of being able to go into a bank (which, to begin with, would not be furnished in the prison style) there to pay in or take out your money as pleasantly and as unfussily as you go into a milliner's shop to buy a new hat... " The editor of the Cosmopolitan Financier, D.J. de Lyann of 19 Ilchester Mansions, Kensington, saw in this the possibility of another "free special" and under the heading IMPORTANT NOTICE he announced:

Since Mrs. John Strange Winter wrote this article, several ladies, privately consulted, have enthusiastically come forward to found a Ladies Bank. We have consulted financial friends in the City and they intend to start The First Ladies Bank immediately. If any of our readers care to assist in this attractive financial development, we shall be glad if they will fill up the form below, and mention the amount they are prepared to invest in the Company and so secure all the benefits which accrue to a Founder... Ladies only will be engaged as Directors, Managers, and Clerks, and applicants are requested to fill up the coupon stating in which capacity they desire to act...

If only one could find the records which show how many enthusiastic women filled in coupons and what the proportion of those who saw themselves starting as Directors was to those who applied to be mere Managers or Clerks, if only one had limitless time for research, what recondite footnotes one might turn in! Finally, it seems ironic that the promoter of feminist banking signed her novels John, rather than Jean, Strange Winter. END OF FOOTNOTE.

culminating in AN AMAZING OFFER of 100,000 Six Percent Preference Shares of 5/- each at par and 1,200,000 Nine percent Ordinary shares (What is a 9 percent Ordinary share?) at 1/- each in anticipation of 100,000 new subscribers yielding a "certain net profit of £66,018" (Note the artistic verisimilitude of the carefully calculated odd £18). That the prospectus stresses prominently that no part of the issue was to be underwritten testifies to the confidence that the Directors had in the persuasiveness of their £100 a year subscription canvassers but one wonders how many of the 1,300,000 shares were sold. How many readers had confidence in the Cosmopolitan Financier, whose every other page offered glittering prizes for nothing? However many subscribers there were, cash became so short at the Cosmopolitan Financier that Philip found himself being paid in share certificates! He had, incidentally, a seat on the Board of (four) Directors, which carried with it status in the present and fees in the future. Philip was putting in long hours a week on his serial, his short

stories, and his column of Cosmopolitan comments, and there came a day when he was compelled to assess the value of the inflow of share certificates against the outflow of cash in meals, cab fares, and laundry bills. He resigned from the Cosmopolitan Board and papered his walls with no more C.F. share certificates after August 22, 1908.

Before taking leave of the Cosmopolitan Financier, let me quote from the Woman's Fashion Editress discussing bathing costumes: "Many people prefer a rather close, soft, silky alpaca which, in navy or black especially, certainly looks very smart and does not cling ..." (My italics). What would the editor of today's Investor's Chronicle and Stock Exchange Gazette do if he woke up to find that (a) he had a Woman's Fashion Editress, (b) she was discussing bathing costumes in the column next to building societies, and (c) was recommending as a bull point the non-clingingness of a material for a bikini?

Throughout 1908-1911 Philip struggled to raise money to finance a variety of projects. What is impressive is the genuine strenuousness of his efforts, his (almost) indefatiguable optimism and determination in the face of one setback after another to projects in all of which the success that he saw in sight always remained just one week ahead until each in turn collapsed, its place at once taken by another even more promising.

His ventures included attempts to persuade Sir John Elliman to buy the Daily Express. He tried to launch a patent electric advertising sign. In March, 1908, Henry Bey, son of Ismael Pasha, gave him the concession for the tramways in Constantinople to sell. Constantinople got its tramways, but Philip was not the man who put the deal through. In 1909, he was an intermediar between the Canadian Pacific Railway and an oil company! For months he chased after funds for the Stringer Company. We get glimpses of big deals from his

letters to Ida, in which sums of many thousands are mentioned and sometimes actually handled, but no worthwile commission ever seems to reach Philip's pocket. Here are two characteristic letters to Ida:

... I live amidst nameless terrors. Hardy has a petition out to bankrupt me if £72 are not paid within ten days. Onethousand twohundred and fifty pounds for Stringer remain unfindable. Really I don't know where to lay my head, especially as I have only sixpence in hand and no cigarettes'. It is raining cats and dogs and I am waiting in hopes of seeing a man on business. I say "in hopes" because in such weather most people put off till tomorrow their appointments of today.

I've just come from Edwards*, who is trying to adjourn the bankruptcy

FOOTNOTE*: Solicitor, see p. 84. END OF FOOTNOT.

petition from one week to a fortnight ahead. Please forgive this letter and also my silences — which often gloss over similar situations — for there are moments when one's mind is too obsessed for marivaudage.

From this one sees that Philip's image of himself as serene, self-possessed and suave in all circumstances was not literally accurate. He would have been inhuman had it been so, but to do him justice his serenity-level was above average. Sunshine burst through the next letter, written a little later:

My dear heart, I have at last found most of the money that the Stringer Company needs. After anguishing delays, a credit of £5,000 was opened for me this morning and I signed one cheque for £1,250 for the Stringer parent Company and one of £3,750 for the Manufacturing Company, which takes a huge load off my mind. I don't think I've ever told you the incredible risks I've run of losing my big interest in the sale of the U.S. patents if I failed to pay over this £5,000. I must say the Manufacturing Company has treated me with a generosity and a patience which our private creditors rarely show. For the first time in two whole years I seem now to feel firm ground beneath my scurrying feet. I no longer need stagger in the boglands of the almost impossible. I owe my success to the help you gave me in the course of your Woerishoffer intermezzo and also to the Mamma Countess whose little cheque for £23 came in time to rescue me from legal proceedings by my bank and set me free to devote all my time to chasing the big affair instead of scouring the streets for this small overdraft. Being no longer hag-ridden by worries, I have recovered my self-assurance, that sort of worldly serenity, which is one of my aces. That is how in a very short time I have become on very intimate terms with Mathey, who is one of the most magnificer old English gentlemen of our time, president of the Royal Society and a Director

of the Bank of England. Not only has he been a powerful aid in the present but his advice and interest have absolutely... (Letter ~~is~~ incomplete).

Inevitably many letters contain allusions to matters unknown to me, as e.g. the Woerishoffer intermezzo. Where I do not explain an allusion, it is because I cannot.

It is pleasant to read that the Mamma Countess — Philip's mother-in-law Ida Seilern — sent him twentythree valuable pounds, because she was far from affluent and her relations with her daughter and son-in-law were governed by her unpredictable temperament. This episode supports Ida's repeated assertion that fundamentally her mother had a good heart.

To quote further from the many letters describing Philip's desperate efforts to push one venture after another would be monotonous. Suffice it that they were constant and strike one as genuine, although I sometimes suspect that, in view of the responsible business leaders with whom he was often associated, some successes must have been achieved directing commissions into Philip's pocket and that they went towards the upkeep of his love-nest with Roxane. I imagine that Philip justified this by telling himself that Ida was looked after by Carlo's allowance and that when he made the big coup of his dreams, he would send Ida a substantial cheque.

Roxane and Ida? While Philip was writing lyrical love letters to Roxane, he was often by the same post writing affectionate, charming and cheering letters to Ida. Para Which of the two was he betraying? Para In allowing a man four wives at a time, Islam is more realistic than Christianity. My guess is that an average four-wifed Islamic household is more stable than the average single-wifed affair. In allowing husbands and wives to take lovers, providing that they observe the proprieties and good manners, the French are more realistic than

most Western nations. In general, one doubts that divorce solves many problems. If a man or a woman are incapable of the effort necessary to get along with each other, the chances are that they will be as unlikely to be able to get along with anyone else; possibly less likely, because once an individual discovers that divorce is neither so insuperable nor so painful an obstacle as was to be feared, a second (or even a third) divorce becomes that much easier: think of Hollywood! It is the children who suffer from the bitternesses and recriminations of broken marriages of which Islamic and French practice diminish the risks. I suffered from a variety of psychological disturbances as a child, but not from the emotion upheaval and lifelong aftermath of a broken marriage. It is true that my parents' marriage was not ideal and that as I gradually became aware of their relationship, my feelings were enlisted now on my mother's side, now on my father but then I doubt that — except among couples with the souls of cabbages — an ideal marriage has ever existed; the average child grows up emotionally zig-zagging between mother and father.

Philip must have been conscious of the contrast between Ida and Roxane as partners in adversity. On the one hand, there was the aging, economical Ida, always short of money, weighed down by ill-health, a lonely, indifferently dresse figure that embarassingly smote one's heart. The most that she could offer was intellectual companionship and a shy, unsure charm. Against her, stood the youthful, radiant Roxane, with a bursting wardrobe. She offered no intellectual companionship; for her not Balzac, but La Vie Parisienne: her spelling was phonetic; but she proved a practical housewife, unobtrusively economical, a good cook, a clever seamstress. Her chores done, she hung up her apron, slipped on a negligée, chattered cheerful trivialities, lapsed into enticing silences. Conscious of her power over Philip, her charm was self-assured — successfully

calculated — she was vital, lusty.

What I am trying to say was pithily summed up by Ingrid, the cook, in the film version of Clare Booth's play The Women: "The first person to think up a good excuse how a man can be in love with two women at the same time is going to win that prize they're always handing out in Sweden." Note that Ingrid does not dispute that a man can be in love with more than one woman at a time but sighs only for peaceful co-existence.

Philip wrote Ida many affectionate, encouraging and tender letters which should be weighed in the balance when the picture that Ida paints of herself in her autobiography is recalled. From Ida one gets the impression that Philip was unaware of, or at least entirely indifferent to, the difficulties that she was facing alone at Ifield.

Philip wrote the following in the summer of 1908 at the time when Ida was sadly selling the fillies, Dora, Peggy and Daisy.*

FOOTNOTE*: See page 95. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Your last letter is delicious and true as is all, dear heart, that emanat from your spirit. Providing that you do not abuse it, your strength will grow. For at every stage in our life, I experience the sweet and touching surprise of watching a forward movement in you — a progression of the soul, intelligence an heart! This forward movement, which does not come in bursts like fireworks or in fits and starts, but which ceaselessly continues and spreads, is the undeniabl revelation of your grace and your youth. The slightly slow blossoming of your earliest youth will thus have built up a reserve for the sufferings, joys and responsibilities to come. I hope you realise that when I reiterate this idea to you so often it is with no intention of diminishing nor of dismissing lightly the gallantry with which you face suffering and responsibilities. But it does seem to me that the day that you realise — as I have only properly realised in the last few months — that your strength is above that of other women, you will achieve a sense of well-being. When therefore you feel overcome and weighed dow with weariness, you are like the swimmer who has swum the Channel, someone strong enough to have made, and to feel, a Herculean effort.

I don't know if I myself am as strong as you. I doubt it. I am more flexible and my spirit preserves itself from the worst crises by the gaiety of its reactions.

I interrupt Philip here first to suggest that Ida would have thought that this gaiety was a tendency to a certain lack of appreciation of the true seriousness of a situation or the repercussions of an act amounting possibly to irresponsibility, and secondly to recall that Philip could emerge from his moments of despair more resiliently than many people, though, here again, Ida might have felt this to be an unwarrantable indifference to the facts. There are possible interpretations here that the reader will shade in according to his feeling for either character in the drama. In what follows Philip recognises that he has compensations amids his difficulties, while Ida's life was more laden with chores:

> And then some of my work is amusing. I laugh aloud from time to time as I write my Cosmopolitan Comments and I have the satisfaction of the pride of craftsmanship in polishing my Phantom Conquest. In addition, because I have been alone all my life, and because I have hardly ever interested anyone, I have had long practice in a certain inner stoicism, which absolutely stops me from cursing Providence at moments when nobody wants to help or to understand me. I have had many charming acquaintances — but in the ultimate analysis — except for you, Nora, and my mother — I have not had a single friend. Not one who is ready to do for me even one of those favours, one of those little efforts that I have so often done for others, even in the idlest periods of my life. This is natural enough and I appreciate the reasons too well to pity myself. An instinc of my superiority — perhaps wholly illusory — has led me indulgently to treat others as children and never to reveal myself as, for example, I reveal myself to you at this moment. Then again, I don't know how to tell my misfortunes, sufferings and worries, to others. This is doubtless why in order to succeed I must rely on myself alone to forge each link in the chain of my fortune. Dear heart, delicious heart, brave heart, I hug you to mine, which is wholly yours.

The striking contrast between the letters that Philip was simultaneously writing to Roxane and to Ida is brought out in the following dated March 24, 190

> Thank you, my dear heart, for your two letters which both arrived by this morning's post.
>
> I hasten to confess my delight at your subtle and penetrating critique of Jude the Obscure and of Maupassant. It is rare indeed to see so cultivated a taste expressed with such vigorous and constructive (his) ratiocination. The conclusions that you draw about the "sovereign people" are splendidly sound. Alas! No one knows this sovereign people — except a few rare country squires, clergymen, doctors, novelists and schoolmasters! The sovereign people has this in common

with the Jewish people — it is vain, greedy and childish. Both are impressed with their own superiority, while unable to refrain from despising themselves individually, persecuting themselves individually, and doing all whenever possibl to conceal their primitive origin. A man of the people, like a Jew, although he prides himself on being of the people, or of the Chosen People, can hardly bear anyone to address him as one.

Philip then goes on to discuss the first instalment of his serial A Phantom Conquest, Some Episodes of the Greco-Turkish war, which had appeared fort eight hours before in the Cosmopolitan Financier of March 21, 1909. The better to appreciate his observations, I quote its opening paragraphs.

"Zeto-o-Polemos! Zeto-o-Polemos!" roared the crowd, as the recruits went marching through Athens to embark at Peireus. A wild and handsome race of men, those sun-burnt volunteers from ~~[illegible]~~ the country. Mere boys, but sinewy and tall, proud of their new Gras rifles and heavy cartridge belts.

Drums were beating, and everywhere bands played variations on the nationa anthem. Old women in dark dresses, and pretty girls in vivid pink, white, blue, or yellow, clustered like flowers at the balconies. Below, the pavements were lined chiefly by citizens, but even there were more old women in black, shadowing brilliantly dressed girls... All were crying for war, clapping their hands, waving handkerchiefs, bouquets and fans, deliriously joyaunt!

Red-faced and fair-haired travellers from the West stood in tweeds on hotel door-steps puffing cigars in quizzical, yet immovable wonder. True, one Frenchman laughed because the recruits without uniforms reminded him of About's brigand's*! At which his own and several other persons' hats were knocked off

FOOTNOTE*: Edmond About (1828-1885) French novelist. END OF FOOTNOTE.

as the recruits stamped by, pointing their rifles heavenwards, and fired for joy.

It had some of the elements of an Offenbach opera, and was not unsuggestive of our own Mafeking day! But then I remembered the frontier, the vast Turkish hordes, and, as the cry for war waxed louder, there came from the tramping of feet and smell of gunpowder, sensations of danger ahead. Gradually the shouts and hurrahs melted in the distance. The sun went down; the crowds dispersed, the balconies were deserted. But still there was a spirit of unrest, and as a gust of wind blew black clouds across the starlit heaven, the angel of death seemed to rise from the dust and flap his great wings over Athens that night.

Philip could never have commented on this to Roxane as he did to Ida:

Enclosed is my piece on Greece. I hope it will find favour in your eyes despite the high quality literary nourishment which is your daily fare! You cannot imagine how difficult it is to write smoothly, simply, concisely. These two pages which seem easily tossed off trifles are the quintessence of forty hours work! And see how poor the result! Because you will not find in it anything striking or really interesting. When, as I do, one aims to write soberly, and with propriety, one loses all sorts of effects which seem happy and pleasant although completely false; one fails to interest the average reader, who has about the same mentality as that which inspires all the lucubrations emanating from an undisciplined intelligence. People take you for intelligent if you think and express yourself like everyone else — then you become a popular author. I would like to be popular and wish I had the knack. But, alas, I simply cannot write like that. I know perfectly well when a silliness escapes from my pen; I feel at once the irresistible physical and moral need to cross it out...

Philip largely achieved his aims in his contributions to the Cosmopolitan Financier. He wrote more simply in English than in French because in the Cosmopolitan Financier he had the advantage of writing under an experience editor, who never hesitated to sub out the superfluous and to simplify the complex.

Here is another letter which Philip would not have written to Roxane:

... What a tragedy is the death of poor Count André Potocki, such a splendid man, father of a family, millionaire, patriotic, charitable, in the flower of his fortysix years, killed by a fanatical student, himself a patriot, perhaps sublime of soul — encouraged to the murder by his own mother! My God When will poor humanity learn how to live? When will it learn the necessary differences between religion, principles and vested interests? No individual in the same family is identical, nor is he absolutely able to understand his brothers and sisters; a fortiori religious sects and political parties should abandon all ideas of converting, either by force or even by persuasion; they should resign themselves to living each according to its hereditary and predestined idiosyncracies. The longer I live, the more complete is my conviction of the incompatibility of men to live together except by making every kind of mutual concession which, when it comes down to brass tacks, each finds dumbfounding and painful. Man is a madly personal animal, who loves himself to the extent that he has enough temperament or vitality to maintain his instinct of self-preservation. Those who understand others too well are artists whose neurasthenia has taken on a paradoxical form. And, without the compliments on their personal superiority that they address more or less disguisedly to each other, they would commit suicide or cut the throat of their neighbour tomorrow.

Poor little human heart so full of pride and so banal, so empty of grandeur, so full of meannesses, always suffering and starving. It was by a confused but true instinct that man discovered the fallen angel, original sin, and elaborated the touching and accepted fable of Paradise Lost. Nobody

confesses to the suppurating wound that he hides under his shirt of Nessus; each makes a proud grimace and persecutes his neighbour, because he feels as ill and as weak as he.

Good heavens! what a harangue from that peaceful bourgeois, the cigarette merchant, who lays all his greetings and his affection at the feet of the ravishing Tanagra of his dreams!

XXII Ida: "Dear heart! Sweet heart! Great heart!"

Alas, my dear heart (Philip wrote in the summer of 1908 after the Penfold case but before mid-August), your letters, which I have dug out from beneath a heap of papers, have caused me such pain as you must yourself have so often experienced, for it is searing when too grievous an impression overcomes one's being. I have just lived through the most frightful fortnight of my life in negotiations as tough as they were humiliating... How despite all these talks - time wasted in vain waitings in childish discussions — I've been able to write my Cosmopolitan is a secret whose solution is probably unearthed in the fact that I was breast-fed.

But, my poor dear heart, none of this can offer you any consolation nor bring you reinforcements of the courage which your magnanimous and lonely soul needs. The image of my Ida desparing and crying in the void of a great house with neither curtains nor carpets* is something terrifying and tragic, which

FOOTNOTE*: Seized by the bailiffs? END OF FOOTNOTE.

makes me despair of life itself and curse fate. Dear heart, Sweet heart, Great heart! Alas, what ironic and perverse fate led you into a family, which has all God's gifts, except that of being able to earn the money needed for happy homes. In reading your letters, which seem to be written in the very blood of your wounded heart, I was reminded of the prophetic instinct, which urged me to beg you to refrain from so dangerous* a marriage.

FOOTNOTE*: I surmise that during the weeks in which Grandma Hennessy and Carlo Seilern were opposing the marriage — an opposition which made Ida feel quite ill — Philip offered to call the engagement off. My guess is that he instinctively knew that Ida would reject the offer. END OF FOOTNOTE.

I understand now those who sacrifice their personal integrity to get bread for their families. All these misalliances, which always seemed so baneful to the soul of our caste*, are to be explained and pardoned by the cruel

FOOTNOTE*: I.e. those aristocrats who marry, outside their ranks for money. END OF FOOTNOTE.

necessity of the struggle for life. And those who, like me, persist, despite all, in the instinctive and ingenuous cult of their ancestry have to pay dearly for this splendid and fabulous assertion of their lineage. And I find the

scientific explanation of our unrest in the eternal resistance that we offer to the march, dissolution and transformation of things. All I think, write and feel, is opposed to divine human folly — that great devourer of any individual who asserts his individuality. This is why I greatly fear that I shall never succeed in assuring my life on a solid basis. I work ceaselessly, but I fulfill no vast general human needs.

One hopes that the second paragraph of this letter reinforced Ida's courage and gave her some comfort, but what could she have made of the rest — a discursive essay on aristocratic misalliance and a somewhat defeatist assertion of the ideals of caste? Had she by then already come to recognise that when Philip had no solution to offer he either did not write (hence his reference to unearthing Ida's letters from beneath a pile of papers) or he retreated into grandiloquent vagueness, which translates badly into English, but which produces a certain effect in French?

August 22, 1908... On Saturday Carlo fell upon me with torrential intentions, which I read all the more easily because his expression bore a supernatural resemblance to that of our dear Mamma Countess.

But he, all the same, is by nature calmer, and happily, in a friendly and conciliatory atmosphere, he does not, as she does, smash all the crockery. Naturally it was you, dear treasure, who was the object of his brotherly solicitude and my heart spoke so sincerely for you that I entirely approved Carlo's anxieties and remonstrances. I therefore let him talk, I even helped him out, because I intimidate him a little. Once he had spilled out the overflow of his agitated soul, I explained quietly things as they are. I told him the story of my debts, my payments, and of my present work and enterprises. To all this Carlo — unlike our dear Mamma Countess — was good enough to listen, and we parted without having exchanged a sharp word.

Alas! Poor abandoned soul of Ifield, believe me, nobody more than I suffers from your worries, your solitude and the bitterness of your horizon spattered with creditors.

But I struggle as well as I can, clinging desperately to the walls of the well in which I am sunk. Each time I manage to climb (at the cost of efforts that are sometimes like my life's blood) to the lip of the well a writ plunges me back into the depths. Last week it was a matter of £30, this week of £11-17-6 for Edouard and Butler (shirtmakers)! They've not yet issued a writ but doubtless will shortly because this demand comes to me from the West End Tradesmen's Association (debt collectors).

All these things nail me down with implacable claws inflicting endless work and comings and goings.

If I were to raise a loan it would immediately be recorded in Lloyd's Trade Journal and then all the world's creditors would descend on us like harpies.

You see therefore that I'm not exactly amusing myself and that it would be rather nice to cross the Channel to put the sea between me and London... Have you still no offer to rent Ifield? That would give you the rest you so badly need.

A thousand caresses to the Madonna and child.

How consoling Ida found this ingenuously revealing letter one cannot tell, but surely the postscript was a blow:

P.S. According to what Charles Eagle-Bott says it seems that I have not explained to you that £50 of the £140 that I paid Penfold were an indirect repayment by Eagle-Bott of the £50 which Laurens owed you.

In other words, Ida's investment in Laurens had gone down the drain to pay for debts that she had not incurred.

October 14, 1908. My dear treasure, thank you for your good letter, so expressive of the soul of my rare and charming Tanagra.

It is true that one finds strength and courage only in the heart — that genial and tireless craftsman of sadness and joy. All that you say lights up, like one of your smiles, the dark pit out of which I seem to be climbing, slowly enough, to the sky's pure air. Agitation follows agitation, the hours flow like water through my fingers. However even in fatigue or fever I have the underlying sensation of poetry, whose murmur I hear always even when I'm not listening.

All these struggles have something lyrical and inspired about them and very often I retire within myself, like the peasants in Millet's Angelus to hear the distant and very sweet call that comes to me from you, even when you think of me without writing. I see you bent over Jossleyn's cradle like a madonna, pensive in her life-giving love. And then the fever in the air around me calms and the future — always a handsome child — appears full of promise, and suddenly the rushing, the uproar, the smoke and the crowds of this convulsed city weave a spell — a magnificent and powerful invitation to the energy which I feel welling up in me. Then motor buses and undergrounds cease to be repulsive and become the wings of inspiration. Not only do I run happily to business affairs but pages of new romances constellate in my mind. I hear them sing like sirens: Stop you pseudo-man-of-business! Tell, write what you have seen, what you see, what you guess, what you suffer, what you hope...

Many will envy Philip his resilience. The low tides of my life have ebbed through despair and the return of the rising tide has come from exhaustion

rather than from such self-generated resilience as his. The trouble during these years was that from his sufferings Philip never drew any moral which could have wrenched him out of the vicious circle of manic-depressive joie de vivre and gloom, old debts shuffled off to make way for new credits optimisitically tapped in the certainty of bringing off the current big coup next week.

Undated... Thank you, dear treasure, for your letter, so good, so long, so charming. I can see Miss Evans from here and our Jossleyn standing near your chair, snorting like a horse with his tail in the air. Your talent for letter-writing really is superior to anyone I know. As you write not only complicated ideas take flight in clear language, but also scenes and the play of characters spring up alive from each stroke of your pen...

I would like to send you The Memoirs of Two Young Couples — the only Balzac which you have not read recently, in which there are whole pages on the education of children and the role of the mother. To read it would give you a great feeling of satisfaction. Not only would you find in it the justification of your system of education but even more you'd find a subtle analysis of the mother ungrateful role in the household. In reading these pages, which I know so well, you would say to yourself "Since Philip has read this he must at least have a pal idea of my difficulties, fatigues and worries, and he must understand that a mother like me undertakes far more heavy and heroic tasks than Prime Ministers and novelists!"

When I reflect on your role, as I often do, believe me I see your work in all its richness, strength and beauty.

The only thing I'd like to prove to you is that it is not your strength which is weak but your burdens which are excessive. I know of no woman who would be capable of the sustained devotion, the constant care, physical and psychological, that, without respite, you have throughout so many years lavished on our Jossleyn. If you could really grasp this truth you would feel in moments of fatigue the strength of your character instead of allowing yourself sometimes to be overcome by discouraging thoughts of your weakness. I know myself that when after having done good work I feel very tired — even though I have no less of a headache or taut nerves — repose comes more quickly than if I think I have done a poor job. Well, your work, which is built of your being and your blood, is always good, dear adored one that you are. And of us two, the more capable, the richer, the more generous is you.

December 10, 1908... Yet again I have survived torments, which the situation at Ifield has only aggravated. Without a sou — literally, because I did not even have a penny, I had to do all my errands on foot to every part of London and to continue negotiations, of which some are already on the solicitor's desk for signatures. To speed matters up I've had to sacrifice considerable commissions, but within five or six days at the latest I should hav

a few pounds! I have seen curious things, but above all have felt the bitterness of lack of money, of loneliness, and of helplessness against material forces, and drunk the cup of the elixir of the struggle for life to the dregs... I've had no reply yet from Léon (de Janzé) about the railway economisers*... My long walks,

FOOTNOTE*: What could they have been? END OF FOOTNOTE.

which have worn out one of my stoutest pairs of shoes and shredded my feet, have completely cured my cold, and I'm as hard as steel except for the soles of my feet which are like two sponges. I no longer dare count on anything in this life of deceptions, but I think we shall have a little money at the end of next week...

June 30, 1909... Why are you so pale? Alas! I am only too well aware that for too long your life has been a martyrdom made up of one stupid worry after another. I alone perhaps can understand the cruel trial of this series of pinpricks to your delicate thoroughbred nerves. Dear beloved soul, forgive me if I don't succeed in setting up for you the nest of quilted down that the perfect white dove of my dreams deserves!

The Stringer affair continues promising but as soon as one difficulty, is overcome, another looms up. It is like the great stone of Tantalus, especially when one thirsts as I do after the immediate achievement of a deal which is modest enough from the financial viewpoint.

We are so rich in everything, except money, that it would require only a modest shade of success to re-establish my Ida in the circumstances necessary for her health and her immortal soul.

By a slip of the pen, which changed the French des into tes, Philip had seemed to be criticising Ida. She wrote back saying that she presumed he meant des. Philip replied:

August 7, 1909... Of course it was des and not tes and if I had not such an understanding wife as you my racing pen would have wounded you when all it sought was to express the deep love of my heart for you.

We must bury anything which could have even the appearance of a misunderstanding in our past, in which, indeed, we have been more affectionately united than most human beings. If ever you have hurt me — and I don't remember that you have — I ought to weigh it in the balance against the innumerable sufferings that I have caused you because I have a psyche that escapes understanding. Under a thick skin I am sensitive and a persistent dreamer of castles in Spain. And this secret urge towards impossible happiness sometimes makes me careless of current material problems, and cruel to those whose commonsense makes me half see the precipices that I am skirting.

As I reflect over my past... I realise that I remained too long with my parents after I was nineteen, that I ought to have done then what I am now doing rather late, i.e. plunge myself into London in the very heart of realities, often tragic, yet beautiful and strong when faced with courage and hard work. If I had done this at nineteen... you would have had a husband in comfortable circumstances and have had from the beginning the strong husbandly support that you have lacked in your role of mother and wife... Living in a circle of the very rich, in constant intimacy with serious people, but who too often were millionaires, I have learned extensively and in detail only what is useful for the very rich to know... I have learned how to administer an established fortune from having constantly studied its economic whys and wherefores. Only as I have not had an income of between £1,000 and £10,000 my studies have been purely academic — for what's the use of knowing how to administer with elegance if one does not know how to earn the fortune to be administered?

What I've been doing for the past two years is doubtless water off a duck's back for those accustomed to business, but for me life's biggest difficulty is to earn money. I have succeeded, and I will succeed again, but I'm far from doing it with the clear sightedness, skill and the whole bag of tricks that a man deploys when he does what he has long been accustomed to do. I do business in the way that the average man rides a horse, i.e., chance plays too great a part in the result, I do not spot all the little implications which I should grasp as the affair goes along — but I'm getting better...

Here are Ida and Philip in literary discussion:

Isn't Renan's Life of Jesus a masterpiece? I was sure you would appreciate it and I was even promising myself the treat of reading it with you. You will doubtless be astonished to learn that it is the favourite book of the worst atheists and anti-religious people. It seems that the truth needs to be filtered and streamlined before it becomes palatable or sound to the majority, who have the knack of poisoning themselves with it. And Ibsen, if you remember in The Enemy of Society, offers a paradox as profound as it is true when he says that truth ceases to be the truth as soon as it is recognised and digested by the majority*.

FOOTNOTE*: Ibsen's character, Doctor Stockmann says: "... Truths are by no means as long-lived as Methuselah — as some folk imagine. A normally constituted truth lives, seventeen, eighteen, or at most twenty years; seldom longer. But truths as old as that are always worn frightfully thin, yet it is only then that the majority recognises them and commends them to the community as wholesome moral nourishment..." END OF FOOTNOTE.

What makes life so difficult is that, honest men, when they are enlightened, are compelled to lead a double life: that of the real truth, which is the salvation of their souls and the incentive of their lives, and yet at the same time, they must live the life of the average man which is moulded by the

truths admitted by the majority...

December 31, 1909... Just a word, my dear heart, to tell you that I'm still running after the £100 and am close on their heels. I hope to have them from one minute to another. Meanwhile I live like a sportsman, sometimes hiding in a butt, sometimes out in full cry...

My dear, patient and valiant heart, I hug you to me, wishing you a thousand fewer trials in 1910 than in 1909, a year which has been so woeful! We cannot fail at long last to exhaust this series of misfortunes...

January 17, 1910... All that you say about the necessity of a home as much for Jossleyn's sake as for ours, and as much for our sake as for his, is the perfect synthesis of all that has been throbbing in my veins for the past two years. And if sometimes I allow myself to hope, it is because I hope to see my efforts crowned by the pretty big sum, and yet modest withal, which we need to ensure Jossleyn's education. Believe me, whether I earn £1,000 or £5,000 I shan't risk a penny in another business venture. We'll buy an annuity...

As I read Philip's letters I feel gratitude and affection towards him for all the encouragement that he strove to give Ida. If there was a gulf between his promises and his performance, between his good feelings and his will to action at least he had instincts of kindness and tenderness and he appreciated Ida's rare and delicate qualities.

Here is an extract from one of the few of Ida's letters to survive from this period:

January 28, 1910. Ifield. Darling, a sick headache, not too awful, kept me in bed yesterday. Today it has gone but I feel tired and will probably spend tomorrow in my room, which is so pleasant and sun-flooded when there is any...

Balzac's Wild Ass's Skin, is a marvellous work of deep insight and wonderfully elevated feeling. His knowledge of the human heart and the laws of nature has never produced a work of greater truth. Each of us has his wild ass's skin, but even when we appreciate our weaknesses, too often we are their slaves and it is often impossible for poor human nature to rid itself of its shackles and faults which heredity, education, our environment, health and other secondary causes impose, and against which we struggle too often with little success. But that should not discourage us because many a battle which seems lost has been won in the last minute...

This letter was written on pink notepaper. Philip replied:

January 29, 1910. Thank you dear heart, for your pink letter, a veritable masterpiece of grace, intelligence and truth... I regret having torn up at least twenty as interesting. How many different things you evoke in a few rapid and clear-cut phrases...

As you so justly say each of us carries his own wild ass's skin, and generally it is the impatience of the moment, our desire for the better, which consumes us. But neither must one forget that it is this same fever of desire which raises mankind towards progress. In the Happiness Stakes there are victor as well as vanquished. And those who, like you and me, my dear treasure, have passed through fire will, even if they do not wholly succeed, have at least lived and their souls are of a steel superior to those who vegetate. All humanity unconsciously experiences a very subtle satisfaction at contact with an ideal lived, even if unattained.

Alas! Dear heart, your dear Tanagra body is often bedridden but your spirit seems always to have stronger and stronger wings and to overflow with youthfulness — ardent, sincere and creative — which I encounter in no other person.

The next letter suggests that my grandmother, Ida Seilern, had given concrete evidence of what my mother always maintained, namely, that — despite the complaining, wounding letters that she was given to scattering — far and wide, with or without the least provocation — fundamentally she had a heart of gold: she had just sent her daughter a substantial cheque in response to an S.O.S. from Ida either to rescue Philip in the nick of time from bailiffs at Ifield, or from bankruptcy proceedings, or to save one of his great money-making schemes from going down the drain. She must have accompanied this by some withering comments on Philip's character and financial irresponsibility. If it is unkind to suggest that Philip was capable of absorbing with a good grace any amount of such punishment if it were accompanied by a big enough cheque, I add that I think that the following letter contains sufficient elements of the truth about the Mamma Countess and about Philip to contribute to the lights and shades of two complex characters.

February 19, 1910... I realise how full of inexactitudes, misunderstandings and prejudices the letter of the poor Mamma Countess is if one takes it

literally, and also how many of Mamma's sublime efforts are unnecessary, costly and burdensome sacrifices.

But with human beings as true and sincere as our dear Mamma, I am sure you will take into account her good intentions and her efforts, however misdirected, and also the results.

The poor woman has just seen all her plans crumble. She certainly lets out cries of despair but at least she has the heroism to sacrifice her dearest schemes — which, all awry as they were, were nonetheless the result of her convictions. She sacrifices her unfortunate schemes to the needs of the moment. That is rare and great.

Her errors are doubtless regrettable, but at least you have, dear heart, the immense satisfaction of showing me a mother who, as far as her somewhat confused understanding of material things allows, acts nobly. All the more so in that with a single cheque she destroys the hope that she has cherished since your marriage of bequeathing something to your child, our child.

Not only is this cheque much more useful to us now than it would be later, but also our mother's sacrifice is from the aesthetic viewpoint a moral heirloom, more precious to Jossleyn than some hundreds of pounds...

It is true that our mother is giving me something very precious. I am not sure how to put it, but this live contact with so rare a soul does me all kinds of good. It makes me recognise yet again, with a sense of personal exaltation, that you come of a very fine stock; you are not an accident in some average family but the rare and precious fruit of a long and patiently built up culture, which you carry in your blood, your intelligence and your heart — all the finest gifts for our son... I am happy to be your husband and I really feel a legitimate pride in being the son-in-law of this noble mamma...

Do not, my darling, let your great heart be too upset by this letter. See your mother as she is, a poor little woman battered by life's storms, and tell yourself with legitimate pride that she never betrays her origins, that despite poverty, wounded vanity, humiliated pride, she seeks only to do good...

May 11, 1910... I hope to be able to tell you tomorrow or the next day when I shall have the £500.

Alas! how right you are about human beings. Nobody is quite what he seems to be or what he thinks he is. For example, I imagine that it would take my breath away if I heard myself described by my neighbours and that they would be seized with apoplexy if I described Philip as I understand him... All I can do is to try to put myself in the place of others and to be charitable in interpreting their behaviour. By doing that, I often end by finding them sublime, because the human soul has a foundation of grandeur and devotion... It is this... which is the truth about each individual. Therein lies the cause of most misunderstandings between well brought up people, because each of us feels injured when people fail to recognise our fundamental goodness of heart. I share this weakness myself because I always feel bitterly resentful of those who refuse to recognise the real me.

I've thrown myself into my work as balm for my wounds and, like a child, I long to make a fortune to prove to everyone that they are wrong to treat me without respect. This is indeed puerile and yet it is true of almost every human heart when stripped bare. For this reason I have become very lonely becaus I feel my present position too keenly to mix with people who remind me of it.

I can understand that you would be glad to quit Ifield, even though you are as much loved and respected there as I am little, because in the eyes of "stout common sense," which is perhaps always right, you are my victim.

On the other hand, if I succeed... people will see qualities in me which I have not, and will assume that you exercise a degree of influence over me that I would be happy that people should believe, although I can assure you that it is the penetrating sweetness of your loyal and young devotion which has supported, and still supports, me during these terrible but beautiful years. I hug you to my heart, my dear treasure.

Letter undated: I feel in my bones that our luck has turned. Do not cry, my treasure, do not cry. Look at the new horizon which brings with it all the things which you, more than anyone else, need.

May 23, 1910... I can't tell you what a profound emotion your dear lett creates in me.

Really our Ida is indeed the woman whom I had inkled rather than guessed. And each day her unique soul emerges and defines itself by elegantly unfurling its strength... You have been at pains to understand your husband a little — a miracle without prededence between people who love each other, for every day I note with a strange delight that you know what I need most...

I do not perhaps find as often as you the right words to soothe and support your heart as your letters and actions support and soothe mine. This is because of a certain lack of simplicity in me, which is not so much in my character but results from a crowd of complicated circumstances in which lack of money and anxiety about the future loom large... and the constant difficulties of business deprive me of the quiet moments necessary to find words for what I feel most profoundly...

February 9... Dear darling ... Your letters are my sunshine, my help, my aid and my support...

In the course of 1910, Ida was seeking to let Ifield unfurnished or to sell it, and to set herself up in some unpretentious house with a negligible rent Eventually she took 21 Vicarage Road, Eastbourne, and sent me as a day-boy to St. Anthony's school nearby. She feared that Philip would resent her wish to quit Ifield, but on June 7, 1910, he wrote:

... No, my heart, you must not regret Ifield. It eats both of us up... When we buy another house, as I hope we will within a few months, we shall have all the experience that we have bought so expensively to use in our new home... which will be small but to which we shall add slowly according to our needs...

As soon as our guests cross the threshold they will breathe the perfume of your personality... We will enjoy ourselves like children, satisfying our tastes and needs instead of giving face-lifts to ugly Ifield in efforts to make her look like a great lady.

Carlo Seilern, even though he enjoyed a substantial tax-free allowance fr his late wife's trust, was usually as deep as Philip in money-making projects, which remained permanently within sight of yielding vast profits. They both lived in the demi-monde of big business. For some years Carlo had a secretary, whom I will call Ralph Barnes, who, if I had not met him myself, I would, from Philip's description, given below, have believed to have been a character out of Balzac.

February 11, 1911. I've just lived through far above averagely moving days — having on my back not only my own affairs (which have taken on a decidedly favourable turn) but also the nameless miseries, sordid, tragic, of our poor Barnes.

This unhappy fellow is now treading his Way of the Cross in penance for his past — fantastic and gay — gilded with cheques good and bad. Hunted, penniless, he has not a friend, not a relation, he is shunned by everyone — even his mother.

Yet even though all his belongings are in pawn to hotels strewn across the map of Europe and though he has left only the suit that he wears, he enters the room young, close-shaven, spick and span, without a rumple or a stain, his hands manicured, his shoes shining. He presents an elegant, smiling, joyous face to the world. He exudes a debonair exhilaration.

But one must hear him recite his Odyssey which is the apogee of vague, unconscious swindling, fitted with an alarm system which signals catastrophes inevitable. Naturally I can receive him neither at my home nor at my club, but from time to time when he asks me for the loan of £5, I give him five shillings, which is what I am about to do.

He should have arrived at five thirty... I will wait until six and if he is not here by then it will mean that a hand has been laid on his shoulder, or that a sovereign has found its way to his pocket.

I listen to his stories with the feeling that harsh truths lie buried in them; he is the apotheosis of vanity without self-respect, yet with it all a good chap, inoffensive and gentle, of pure morals, with great qualities of sociability, but no shadow of masculinity. (Asexual)

Elsewhere Philip mentions that Barnes played Chopin like a dream, in fact his was the music to which Philip referred in his letter to Roxane on page 133.

Without suggesting that Philip ever took part in a swindle, however vague or unconscious, that could have led to a hand being laid on his shoulder, he was able to depict Ralph Barnes so realistically, and even to have a sneaking admiration for him, because Barnes was a man in the same predicament as himself. The difference was that Barnes was many degrees lower down the financial and social scale, far less successful (if that were possible!), far less ambitious than Philip.

April 11, 1911. 52 A Conduit Street, London W. ... My God! What an accumulation of misfortunes, anxieties and trials.

I don't think I've slept more than four hours in the twenty four during the past ten days... I'm moving heaven and earth without being able to get hold of the minimum £50 that you need. I continue to have good hopes of the oil affair: my French colleagues write that they already have two-thirds of the £800,000...

Never write to me to this address because I don't want anyone in Crawley to know it, so that tiresome creditors can't stumble across it... I've had an awful job to pay the rent here and as this office is essential if our hopes are to be realised, I've been unable to send you any money. I've suffered much from the haunting thought of the terrible desolation that must reign at Ifield...

Dear, brave and good heart, I clasp you in my arms, which crave you so.

There is now a gap in the letters until May 24, 1912, which finds Philip writing from Paris. All his spectacular schemes, all his painful scurryings among inventors, patent lawyers, and financiers had died away without yielding more than a few pounds here and there, while creditors swarmed. He fled — just in time — to France, where he arrived perfectly attired, debonair, optimistic, penniless — just like Ralph Barnes!

Here ends a cycle in the story of the Amazing Marriage.

XXIII Pandora's box

After twelve years of married life, Ida had gradually come to some sort of terms with herself, with Philip and marriage. She was finding her way through experiences that were strange, extraordinary, sometimes incomprehensible, towards building up — brick by brick — that inner serenity, which ultimately she so largely achieved. I believe that Philip's letters must have given considerable support to her morale.

But if they did, why is it that these years contain some of the most tragic entries* in Ida's autobiography, culminating in her cry "Has he ever loved

FOOTNOTE*: See Chapters ~~9, 10, 12.~~ IX, X, XII, XVII ~~pp—.~~ END OF FOOTNOTE.

me?" Her bitterness seems difficult to reconcile with Philip's heart-warming letters. I think that one explanation is that she wrote her autobiography over thirty years later, and that when she looked back over the terrible years 1900 to 1912, Philip's kind letters were overshadowed by the traumatic discovery that she made in October, 1912, which brought the precarious fabric of her marriage crashing about her head. She had to pick up the pieces, to begin all over again.

On quitting England, Philip left a trunk behind, into which one day Ida looked to see if it contained anything that she ought to forward to Paris. She found it crammed with manuscripts of novels, short stories, and letters*

FOOTNOTE*: Most of which survive in my possession. END OF FOOTNOTE.

accumulated over the years as far back as Philip's schooldays. She came across the exchanges between Philip and Lily (See page 39) the letters to Roxane, and a notebook, since lost, in which Philip composed dialogues between himself and his alter ego, whom he calls the Prince and depicts as a Satanic Don Juan, from whom even he professes to turn away with a shudder.

Ida now discovered that at no period of their marriage had Philip ever been faithful to her, that again and again he plied his pen, still wet with the tenderest concern for her, to bewitch Roxane with his passion. From the very love-nest that he shared with Roxane, how could Philip write so fondly of making a new home for her?

And Circé! That scornful reference to her mother and herself "But quit, then, those two crazy women!" And the disgusting "I don't want that the lovely things that I have to tell you should come upon you after a night of orgy with Ida." Again and again Ida saw that Philip had lied to her, as when he had told her that he had gone to Lewes on the day that he had dashed across the Channel to find that Lily had skipped to Cairo, leaving him her empty bed.

Among Lily's letters Ida found one, written a couple of months after she had been in Cairo, saying that she was in desperate straits and begging him to wire her one thousand francs. Philip had no money of his own but at this date Ida's £800 a year from Nettie were still intact, so it was Ida's money that Philip sent to support Lily. I doubt that Ida's understanding of Philip's character enabled her to perceive from his final letter to Lily (See page 46) that her appeal to him in her distress would have presented itself as a triumph to Philip: she had jilted him, but he had the last word: Ida's £80 enabled him to forgive and to forget Lily.

That a man could be "in love" with more than one woman at the same time was beyond her imagination. Divorce? To her, the idea was as morally sullying and as socially degrading as — what? No-one who has not known the pre-World War I era can supply the missing word, because "frank" newspaper reports and four letter worded plays, acted with frontal nudity, have transformed todays climate of feeling and opinion, as acid turns litmus from blue to red.

It would, I assume, be wrong to think that "good society" — if there be such a group today — has no sexual standards, but whatever they are, they would have been as bewildering to Ida as her's would be unsympathetic today. Here is a small concrete example: In 1919, Ida's brother Carlo went for a motor drive with a friend G- - - - and his mistress, Mrs D- - - . Their route took them past Ida's home. They decided to call on her, but first, Carlo, leaving G - - - and Mrs D - - - in the car, went in to Ida to make sure that she would not mind receiving a kept-woman. Ida, the most generous of souls, said "But, of course!" A pleasant tea party followed, but when the visitors took their leave, Mrs D- - - stayed behind a moment and, with tears in her eyes, thanked Ida for receiving her.

Reading Philip's dialogues Ida saw that the Prince was Mr Hyde, who enabl Philip, as Dr Jekyll, to indulge the evil in his personality. Although she knew that people too often yield to their impulses, it dismayed her that any one should wish deliberately to indulge his evil side.

Philip's notebook of dialogues with his Prince, has, alas, been lost. "Alas" because they were extraordinary pieces of self-analysis. The impression made on me when I read them in my late 'teens remains after sixty years: the nearest that I can get to it is to ask what you might feel if you came across the manuscript of Jekyll and Hyde among your father's papers and read it as autobiography.

One Prince dialogue has survived in the Roxane notebook. It is significant that we do not meet the Prince there until April 13, 1907, i.e., until Philip had known Roxane seven months, written her some two hundred letters, evidently felt that a crisis was imminent and that it was time to take stock of his relationship with Roxane. The analysis in this dialogue shows a degree of

intellectual honesty, the more remarkable for Philip's normal self-complacency. As an appreciation of his relations, present and future, with Roxane his own summing up is far superior to anything that I could devise:

For months I had lost sight of him. Seized by a passion of which I could not in all conscience but disapprove, I did not seek him out; indeed, I avoided him. By chance, I found myself next to him one night at the theatre. He looked extremely well, but seemed thin and a little rumpled despite his fresh colour and the silhouette of an outfit as perfectly valeted as it was elegantly tailored.

I had the feeling that I was witnessing the Indian summer of his care-free youth rather than a new stage in an evolution towards a healthy maturity. It struck me that in continuing to fulfil his role of juvenile lead he was cheapening himself. He put me forcibly in mind of a man who obstinately persists in staying to the bitter end of every ball. I sensed an indefinable something of the contrived and the artificial in his high spirits and charm of manner. Not to dare to leave a party is to admit that one fears to be left out of the next party. I would have preferred him less dashing, less sprightly, more sedate. I thought that the grand seigneur sacrificed himself for the pleasure of remaining the dashing cavalier. I should have preferred him to risk the dangers of a great passion, even the grossness of a debauch, rather than keep up this appearance of elegant escapade. "If youth knew, if age could": he seemed to be trying to recapture all the follies of youth that he might enjoy them in the light of his experience as a finished man of the world. There was guile in his enticement, method in his charm.

"Prince," I said, "even Apollo's lyre had only seven strings. You are exhausting yourself.

"How so?"

"Because you aspire to all the triumphs and all the delights of the days of your pride. It is not humanly possible to act this part forever."

"What part?"

"The eternal lover".

"I am only her* friend".

FOOTNOTE*: Refers to Roxane. END OF FOOTNOTE.

"A friend who burns himself up every day to improvise a new variation on a single theme. A friend who explores her heart as if he believed himself always called upon to awaken the Sleeping Beauty but who would be extremely sorry

if he did awaken her, unless he could be certain that he would not see in her first glance that she claimed him as the Prince Charming of her dreams. On awakening her, you have of course, entered the citadel often enough, but, at the same time, you are determined to send her back to sleep once more in order to keep her for ever dreaming of marvellous new awakenings.

"You are intelligent, Prince, you lack neither imagination nor poetry nor astuteness, but Shakespeare himself could only create one Romeo, whereas you aspi to create a new Prince Charming cap à pie twice a week. That's impossible. That's not love, it is marivaudage. You can amuse her thus, but you can never touch her heart.

"To amuse without touching her heart is precisely my aim," said the Prince.

"You know that is not true".

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because I can see that you think you have to do with a sweet simple young girl. You seek to go on dazzling and fascinating her, because what you conceive to be your easy conquest does not satisfy you. Your vanity needs the homage of a steady advance towards complete triumph, skilfully manoeuvred. But, look out, because she already takes for granted these tours de force of yours that strain your powers to the limit. You have already set up a rival — yourself — whom you will never surpass and will rarely equal. If it were not for your frequent absences, she would already know each trick in your bag."

The Prince's look darkened. He meditated. Then:

"Perhaps you are right. Not one of us sees himself as he is, not one of us understands the effect he produces on others.

"However, you, too, are mistaken, because at rock bottom I am not out merely to dazzle or to seduce. I love love for its own sake, as I love horses.

"Love of love is an almost impersonal obsession with me. It gives the needed exercise and occupation to the vital forces of my being. Love is an exhaltation, an inner intoxication, a sacrifice cruel and sweet, an anguish and a joy, a fruitful and sacred plough, which many have stirred but which none have shared.

"By the throb of the poignant emotion that women arouse in me I express in all possible ways an act of involuntary and deadly thanksgiving. I thank them and strive by the only means I possess to ensure for them, as it were, the reflection of that divine happiness with which they flood my being.

"All women, my dear fellow, are ravaged by an incurable anxiety, a terror without a name, as if they had approached too close to the flame of the infinite and had been eternally singed. They take to love as some men take to the bottle

or to gambling to escape and to forget the memory of a cruel sickness. They need the enchantments and the diversions of every kind of mystic act in which they themselves — applauded and appreciated — play a leading part. They need the mirror of another personality, another heart, in which they see themselves beautiful, statuesque, serene. These poor distracted beings — who so easily burst into delicious chatter because they need the reassurance of your attention — want to see themselves in the mirror of your soul, unmoved, mysterious, wordless as an ancient idol. No woman has ever loved me, my dear fellow. They have loved love's portrait — a godd likeness, but softened, idealised...''

None too flattering a protrait of Philip? Perhaps not, but the outline is from his pen and the colours from his palette.

Imagination balks when one tries to guess what Ida's feelings can have been after reading these letters and diaries. She had to live alone with her thoughts, for she had as yet no friends in Eastbourne where she had only just arrived. It is difficult for an inhabitant of the permissive 1970's to recapture the feelings of a woman of the 1910s, educated in a convent, who had led a sheltered life, meeting only people of good manners, who gave her no glimpse of the lies and deceptions of husbands and wives engaged in easy-going adulteries, or of the forbidden pleasures and humiliations of kept women. Her ideas of husbands, lovers and mistresses came from reading books like Anatole France's Le Lys Rouge; her notions of the twilight world on the outskirts of society from Balzac's Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes; books which must have struck her like H.G. Well's descriptions of the inhabitants of another planet — fascinating to read about but impinging on no reality that she knew.

One senses Ida's nausea as she peered into the depths of what can only have seemed to her Philip's honeyed hypocrisy, studied lies, monstrous betrayals, all the worse for being so often decked out in language whose poetry now hung from it in tatters.

She must have shrunk from the image of Philip as a vulgar womaniser, an acolyte of Faust's Mephistopheles, who cannot have had a spark of feeling for her

Para.

But then, why, why, why had he married her? Slowly Ida thought her way through this ~~jungle~~ reeking bog. For some days she rasped the bottom of her feelings. But then her intelligence, her charity and her generosity re-asserted themselves. She reached the conclusion that Philip must have loved her a little at the beginning, but that she had failed him, that she was not capable of living up to his scale; throughout his marriage he must have been, must still be, a very unhappy man. Ida wrote all this in a long sorrowful letter to Philip, which does not survive, but we can reconstruct her Gethsemane from her autobiography and from the implications of Philip's reply:

Paris, November 1, 1912. Dear heart, it is the box of Pandora that you have let loose on yourself and the mischiefs of all the world have gripped in their claws the most tender, the ~~most~~ sweetest, the noblest of hearts.

No, no, my good, good treasure, no, you must not take these pages literally. There is both truth and romance in them. They serve two purposes: (1) to pour out a complex being, who has never opened himself to anyone, neither to a sister nor a mother, and (2) at the same time they outline the idea for a romance of a personality conceived as the embodiment of the supreme ironist. That is to say that in writing I almost always had in my mind's eye a type who had something of me, but who was simultaneously a super-me of evil, of irony — a modern Mephistopheles.

I explain this to try to get these diaries into perspective, so that you do not picture your Philip as so unhappy and so wicked.

In some things I resemble your mother. When I am hurt or exasperated, I am seized by a mad inexplicable fury, but instead of writing to all my relations, instead of confiding in a friend, I put my angry, feverish ideas on paper until I have rid myself of them just like your mother, and I am astonished if anyone could believe that I ever had had such thoughts.

I have, it is true, had a difficult life, but much less difficult than yours, because I understand things better than you.

I have for you a respect, a cult and an affection which, without question, is the deepest love that any man has ever had for a woman in whose company life presented difficulties for various reasons which neither you nor I could control. Absent or present, it is you who have played the biggest role in my life. Those very pages that you have read prove my obsession for you. You will search in vain among them for any other obsession as persistant.

Where I went wrong was to have believed that you loved me — an error that came naturally to a man who had always been loved. Your manner towards me was incomprehensible to the last degree as long as I thought you loved me.

I believe, indeed, that you, too, thought you loved me at the time of our marriage. But you were as mistaken as I, and you found yourself launched on life's stormy seas not only without experience — which doesn't matter much — but without having in your heart the sacred fire which, in a being as superior as you, would have made of you a <u>wife</u> equal to the <u>mother</u> that you have been for two children.

I held it against you in the beginning that you lacked a sense without which no human being has any importance in my eyes. "If that's the way she loves — !" I said to myself, and naturally I considered it rather arid.

But in the thoughtful care that you bought to motherhood, I recognised the riches which had been kept from me, quite simply because I had not known how to inspire them. That ruffled me sometimes. But since Jossleyn's birth — even four or five months earlier — I understood that my poor darling child had never loved me, but that she had the greatest, the most eager, the deepest heart that it has been given me to sound. Then truly I tried to make you love me. And even if I did not quite succeed in gilding your dreams with an indefinable something crazily beautiful, springing from the dizziest heights of happiness, I nevertheless entered deeper into your soul than anyone else — further even than Jossleyn — because you felt the sincerity and the strength of my cult for you. In your citadel, impregnable to all others, you received me as I deserved to be received, because of the pains, the infinite patience, and the <u>love</u> with which I persisted in cherishing you, in seeking to understand you.

You speak to me of Lily. My poor heart, did I ever hesitate between you and Lily? Never. When there was a question of a choice, I opted without hesitation for the woman whom I knew to be already the mother of our adorable Patrick. On the one hand, lay the pleasures of Sybaris, on the other was a life in which I moved uneasily.

Did I feel the call of duty? No, you know well enough that duty for its own sake makes no appeal to me. If I opted for you — sometimes with rage in my heart — it was because you were the strongest lodestar for me.

Sometimes in my unhappiness it seemed to me that you had cast an evil spell overme, and all your qualities, your virtues, the extraordinary glitter of your rich character, reminded me of the vices and passions by which Marigny's Spanish mistress stole him from his wife. As I re-read this book I told myself that I had fallen for your virtues almost as Marigny fell to evil passions.

I found myself seized by the infernal oddities of a nature that was cold, cruelly, agonisingly indifferent to the span of my soul, my ideas, my feelings, impervious to the poetry with which I wanted to, and could have, enchanted your soul.

The woman who was betrayed was not you. It was that poor Lily who, to be fair, deserved a better fate than to have met me at all and especially at the moment when I was desperately engaged in the conquest of an unconquerable Ida, in the pursuit of whom my whole being was all set to such an extent that even now I still seem to shudder at the thought of the abysses into which I fell each time that, broken by my vain efforts, I stumbled.

But that was where I was mistaken: all those soaring flights, all those noble ideas after which I strove in my pursuit of my indomitable, invincible Ida, were not in vain. Little by little new muscles developed in me and another and much better Philip was born. And I sincerely believe that if Ida remained invincible, at least her spirit truly caught something from a pursuit that was so ingenuous, so fresh, so pure.

So I am sure that you do not doubt that you have been for me the most loved, the most cherished of all women.

Not only have you felt the impression of my spirit almost as much as you have stamped yours on mine but, even more, you know that I understand you and that I cherish you as no other woman has ever been understood and cherished.

If we had had a little money and fewer accidents to your health after my return from Italy* — your life — our life would not only have been beautiful

FOOTNOTE*: About June 1906. This was probably a little before Philip met Roxane. END OF FOOTNOTE.

but very happy. But neither with money nor with your health did we have any luck.

Each of us suffered in our pride — not in our vanity but in our pride — and yet if you had not opened the box of Pandora you would never have doubted the beauty of what happened to us — even from the very beginning. You must not doubt it now, my heart, because I am your creation as much as Jossleyn is — a creation of which you are not for the moment proud, but, despite everything, neither mean nor ugly things are happening inside me. I am challenging destiny in order to live in the beauty of a struggle which is vital to a man if he is not to forfeit his place in the world.

I'll write again tomorrow. I'm up to my neck in business and very tired. I found your letter on getting back today. I write at once so that you may read my heart as you already know how to read it, for otherwise you would not have written me your trusting and sad letter. You write thus because your sure instinct convinces you that I am yours. Before you burn these pages, wait till I write again.

Ever yours tenderly, Philip.

In his next letter, Philip refers to the events of the first weeks of their married life when he and Ida lived together unhappily under the jaundiced eyes of her mother and her uncle Charles. He is defending himself against some accusation, perhaps made by his new in-laws, certainly not by Ida:

... I did not indulge in deceit at the Villa Cornelia; I used self-control. I know of no circumstances in which one can do without self-control. On the other hand, one must not allow self-control to become a hair-shirt like monastic discipline. It is essential if one's feelings are not to torment one to exhaustion, to give them an outlet. Most people comfort themselves by confiding in another, by recriminations, or by day-dreaming. Confidences are dangerous and disloyal. Recriminations are dangerous. Day-dreams, since they cost no effort, can slide into an indulgence of the ego almost as pernicious as the abuse of opium or wine. Because one cannot control one's day-dreams one easily imagines them to be closer to the truth and nobler than they are. Whereas if one writes down for one's own edification one's own devils, it compels one to make a definite effort of work — which is always healthy — and then when one reads them stone cold one is struck by one's injustice, one's prejudice, and — don't lets burke the word — one's vulgarity. If you re-read these pages of truth and (don't forget) of romance, you will understand my argument, because I remember to have been shocked so often by my own injustice, by finding myself in a nasty attitude in all that business, not because I was frequenting Lily but because I had been hard, unjust, unkind to you — and inwardly vulgar, which in my eyes is the abomination of desolation, because to allow oneself to be inwardly vulgar is an affront to that image of oneself in the sight of God which one should always be seeking to perfect.

You cannot say — no, you cannot say that your life has been a failure.

On the contrary, if you examine your fondest hopes you will see how successful you have been. From the beginning, motherhood has been your aim, vocation and cult. And you have marched without faltering towards the completion of a master work. You have neglected nothing, neither science nor your husband's skill in horsemanship. And to all that you have added the admirable instinct of a passionate interest — an instinct which almost seems a prophet's gift, but which is, in fact, only the keenest unfailing observation — a super-human vigilance.

Certainly you have not had all the pleasures of life. On the contrary, you have fallen in with what people call a bad husband. But this bad husband has helped you much in your motherhood, not only in backing you up from time to time but also in pruning certain educational prejudices which were, indeed, waiting to be pruned. All the good husbands are not psychologists, and many men of good morals (in the generally acepted sense) understand nothing about wives and children. What's more, these good husbands must lack something, because all women, even the most virtuous, don't appreciate them much as friends and complain greatly of them as husbands! But we're getting away from our discussion to indulge in a passing smile!

I come back to your greatest error — your fixed idea, which has always been your fixed idea long before you opened Pandora's box — that you find it impossible to cast the rays of your sunshine over your husband's life.

But I know no man who has always been subject to his wife's influence more than I. "Subject to" is not even the term, because I surrender to your influence with a blind confidence, which is the greatest source of strength to me. If others were to overhear our long talks together or read our letters, they would recognise the truth of what I'm saying.

Ifield is in my heart — not just that more or less ordinary house surrounded by a park... What I mean by Ifield are our first three years there spend in absolute community of ideas and occupations. Those three years were for me a period of healthy fertilisation... I became a man at Ifield... I tasted life there at its sweetest. The imprint of those days is too beautiful ever to be effaced. And I know that whereever we shall be together once more within four walls of our own, lined with those dear pictures with which you embellish Vicarage Drive — and with the splendid Jossleyn — I shall find again my heart's Ifield — yours and mine — our Ifield, which no-one knows because we built it with our dreams, our hopes, the sweetness of our talks, the fullness of your confidence and the strength of my cult for you.

Thank you for having understood how important I feel it to be that you and Jossleyn should live among our beautiful pictures*, in which part of the soul

FOOTNOTE*: Before leaving for India in 1937, I had all these pictures cleaned and crated for storage in London. In 1941, all were destroyed by enemy bombs. My father's spirit will be consoled to know that I cherish them in my memory. Alas! my children can never enjoy the inspiration of their beauty. END OF FOOTNOTE.

of his Hennessy ancestry affirms itself — this ancestry which you also understand and love as much as any one who bears our old forgotten name, without glory but splendid from generation to generation throughout so many centuries in the distinctive elegance of our family tradition.

From these letters Philip's basic desire to comfort Ida emerges clearly and to his credit.

I should, however, have thought that Ida would have been hurt to be told that she had never loved him and that she lacked something without which no

human being had any importance in his eyes. I guess that she had no idea what he meant and I adjourn the explanation that occurs to me.

Somehow Ida picked up the pieces after this traumatic event. She made a home for her son. A more devoted or well-intentioned mother never existed. She studied education, health and psychology. Her first principle was to encourage her son to develop self-relaince and initiative. She only said "No" if a project would harm him or others. When he was ~~twelve~~ thirteen, his parrot broke its beak and she allowed him to take it from Godalming to a vet in London, where, the bird having been treated, he chose himself a lunch at the Trocadero, did not forget to tip the waiter, and went to ~~three~~ two cinemas in succession before catching the last train home in good order. At the age of sixteen he organised a concert in the Town Hall in aid of Polish refugees, engaging as his stars Carrie Herwin, a leading contralto of the day, to sing Mon Coeur S'ouvre à ta Voix, Nellie Davieson, a Pierrot troupe comedienne, to make the audience laugh, and Edward Rendel, the accomplished Charterhouse music master, to play the accompaniments. The printing and distribution of posters, advertising, sale of advance bookings, payment of entertainment tax, the auditing of the accounts, and other problems of organisation were tackled and solved.

But Ida's reading was far from limited to education and child psychology. She read the Times Literary Supplement and bought or borrowed an extraordinary number and wide spectrum of novels, plays, literary criticism, history, politics, religion, popular biology as expounded by Julian Huxley, philosophy as analysed by C.E.M. Joad, and even (on my recommendation) the economist Edwin Cannan's 'Wealth'.

XIV Philip acquires a permanent job and an official mistress

The four years of World War I passed smoothly for Ida and triumphantly for Philip.

The outbreak found Carlo Seilern in Switzerland. Although a naturalised British subject he had not lost his Austrian citizenship, so that at the age of fortyeight he was mobilised as an officer in the Reserve. Communications with him were cut and Ida lost her allowance. In this crisis, the long-suffering but generous Mrs Woerishoffer came to the rescue and, for the first time since Nettie's death, Ida received her allowance monthly on the dot.

In August, 1914, when Philip was fortyone, his luck at long-last changed. Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank was losing to the army a stream of its younger staff members. It sought substitutes; they had to be British, above military age, know French, have references and an aptitude for joint stock banking routine.

Philip's social network included Evelyn Toulmin, the bank's General Manager. To him Philip presented himself as a candidate. I cannot help wondering what Toulmin made of him. The normal bank manager, neatly dressed in a suit off the peg, was a respectable, vaguely anonymous, anodyne type, who would have approached the General Manager certainly without fear but also certainly not as an equal. He bore no resemblance to the man whom Toulmin interviewed.

Philip moved with an air of authority — he was apt to address commissionaires, porters, cabmen and others as "Sonny" — a friendly approach which would arouse the profane indignation of post-war World II egalitarians. When the occasion needed it, his glance pierced you like a gimlet; you felt that he read your secrets, yet his kindly expression simultaneously assured you

that he understood all, forgave all, and would never give you away. His cloth were the impeccable products of Scholte of Savile Row, tailor to Edward VII; h satin-lined bowler hat was made by James Lock, his tautly furled silk umbrella by Brigg, both of St. James's Street. He would have sat facing Toulmin with perfect but consciously not over-done self-assurance. Toulmin would have questioned Philip concerning his experience and this would have enabled Philip casually to mention a number of business leaders, ambassadors and others with whom he profess to be on first name terms, and often was. Toulmin would have outlined the routine of a probationer. Philip had the subtle flattery of the attentive listener, absorbing every word that Toulmin uttered, putting in the occasional constructively supporting question intended to make Toulmin feel that he was grasping his least point. When Toulmin appeared about to end the interview, Philip would with easy naturalness have prolonged it to turn it into a social occasion for a minute or two's gossip about mutual acquaintances, to mention that he had recently been out with the Comte de Vallon's hunt with one, appreciated the vintage wines of another, ending up with an amusing anecdote of a recent dinner at the British Embassy. A man of Toulmin's experience would have seen that Philip did not underestimate his talents, but he doubtless felt that, provided Philip learnt the routine, his outsize personality could be an asset to the bank. He engaged him on a salary of Frs. 12,600 (£525) a year, which seems minuscule but which was a living wage at the then halcyon price level and well above the normal starting figure for a raw recruit.

Philip deserves full credit for his career in the bank. As he left Toulmin's office, he must have been walking on air. Gone were his nervously exhausting, precarious, humiliating salad days, shot with creditors and scarred

with writs. His starting pay must have seemed princely to Philip in 1914; above all it was certain, and he could look forward to a respected position with a steadily rising pensionable salary — always providing that he could learn the routine. I am in a special position to take my hat off to him, because on leaving Oxford in 1921, I joined Lloyds Bank and resigned two unhappy years later, defeated. I lacked the guts to make good in the meticulous work of a joint stock bank. But Philip, with modest realism, told Ida that he thought that it would take him eighteen months to two years to learn banking methods and theory, and he put his aquiline nose to the grindstone, to such effect that within six years he was a deputy manager in Paris and was assigned to manage the branch opened at the Hotel Meurice for the Peace Conference, where he revelled in the acquaintance of such figures as Clémenceau and Arthur Balfour, won an intimate dining-out friendship with William Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister, was appalled by President Wilson's ignorance and despised Lloyd George's demagogy.

Philip could expect spells of one to two years as manager of branches in Bayonne, Nice, Biarritz, Cannes, Le Havre or Zurich, before attaining Paris. He might take a room in a hotel and eat all his meals out, but this would be more expensive and less comfortable than if he rented a modest three roomed, furnished flat. For this he needed furniture and bric à brac. He was in luck. Moya had a surplus of good looking furniture and of Will Hennessy's pictures stored in her château, which she gave Philip, while his mother and Nora sent items from England. His silver was handsome and when eventually I visited his flat, I was puzzled to see that his dishes and salvers bore Ida's monogram. Philip kindly presented me with this silver as a wedding present. When Ida saw it she smiled ruefully and mysteriously, finally admitting diffidently that this was the silver

that she had pawned to save Philip from bankruptcy, and that when it was due to be redeemed, it appeared that there was no money available, which explained why our silver throughout my years at home was cheap aluminium.

Next Philip needed a maid to cook and to clean and someone who could not only supervise the maid but do the marketing with a flair for good food, who would act as hostess for the select parties that he envisaged. As Philip's hostess, she would have to be good looking, socially presentable, well dressed, and know how to receive with charm, for Philip would have suffered agonies from daily contact with a woman who lacked any one of these essentials. We can see that she would have to be a very special person because — I do not know how Philip put this to himself, but I can only blurt it out in terms which would have made him shudder: she would also have to be at once bedworthy and broadminded, that is to say he would expect her not to make a scene if he spent a night out, and to regard it as normal that he should have a queue of beauties telephoning him at all hours.

I suspect that he did not outline the problem thus crudely to himself, but approached it from another angle, i.e., he must find a beauty whom it would be delightful to pursue with his chivalresque manners and dazzling letters, and just as he had with Roxane, get it into writing that one day she would be his mistress and that she and he would then suffer greatly*, whereafter she would

FOOTNOTE*: See page 136. END OF FOOTNOTE.

gradually be conditioned to living within the aura of his company princess to his "Prince" — which would leave him with time off to prolong the cycle of love-in-pursuit, of love-triumphant, of love-in-the-descendant, of love-in-ashes, and so

back to the beginning.

I would have thought the problem ~~well-nigh~~ insoluble. Surely no mistress endowed with the required graces would stand for such cavalier treatment. But, where women were concerned, Philip accomplished the difficult within hours, the impossible ~~not long after.~~ the next day.

The reader who will now be good enough to glance back at Philip's letters to Roxane on pages 134 ff and to his dialogue about her with the Prince on page 174 will see that Philip's specification for a resident mistress amounts to a close description of Roxane. I do not know whether Philip and Roxane remained together after he crossed to France in 1912 or whether they parted, and, if so, when they met again. What I can say is that when in 1928 I arrived in Paris, Philip, with a diffidence and slight embarassment which I had never before seen in him and which shocked me as much as what he said, explained that he had a maîtresse attitrée, implying that if I wished to go on seeing him I must accept her existence. She proved to be the lady whom I will continue to call Roxane.

By that time their relationship had lost the gloss that it once had had. They lived together as do many disillusioned married couples, who stay together because it is convenient to both. Roxane gave Philip what he wanted, a good looking, presentable, superior, housekeeper-companion, who supervised recherché luncheons, ran the household smoothly and nursed him if he were ill. She may well have echoed Ida's cry "Has he ever loved me?" Any love that she ever had for him was dead, although she was woman enough to feel affronted if he introduced one of his lights of love into their apartment.

Why did Roxane stand all this? One must remember her background. Her father was a small-town petit bourgeois. She had no money. She was unhappy at home. She had to earn her living. Gossip had it that she had been a dress-

maker's assistant and a cashier in a café — ill-paid, monotonous jobs, requiring her to live an obscure bed-sitter life. Whereas much as she had to swallow from Philip, she lived comfortably in a beautifully furnished flat, with enough money to dress attractively; she consorted with a variety of interesting people, far above her social status, whom she would otherwise never even glimpse. And when I say that love between them was dead, I mean just that. I do not mean that they had no regard for each other. Providing that she made him no reproach for his recreations, Philip was a good-tempered companion. Roxane was equable, self-contained and intelligent. At the luncheon parties that I attended at Philip's flat there was always at least one raging beauty. The wide range of the bank's clients in all walks of society, which included many British visitors and other nationalities, who flowed through Paris, provided Philip with a unique source of supply. He collected dressmakers from Paris haute couture, their models, actresses, film stars, wives of business leaders, ambassadors and dukes. All found something irresistible in Philip and were delighted to be invited to his luncheons, Roxane's dishes were beyond criticism, Philip's wines of the best vintages (then available at prices which seem inconceivably cheap to-day), the company always interesting and amused by Philip's recondite flattery, or rippling with laughter at his anecdotes of which he was usually the hero, often presented in some farcical situation as in the story of his burst braces at the St. James's Palace levee that I have already recounted. Roxane enjoyed these gay parties as much as anybody.

As long as Philip's attentions in her presence to a woman were marivaudage Roxane was tolerant, but if she thought that the other woman was laying his flattering unction too thickly on her soul, she would exclaim with devasting irony

Taratata! Of which the English translation, hoity-toity, gives but a faint echo. The amused scorn in her eyes and voice knocked the wind out of Philip's billowing sails. He relapsed into a momentary silence, which conveyed indulgence towards an uncalled for social solecism. Nevertheless it was a knockout and Roxane was the only woman whom I ever met who could stand up to Philip and, to use one of his favourite metaphors, make him see stars in place of love's single star*.

FOOTNOTE*: L'étoile du berger: Venus, the star in the East. END OF FOOTNOTE

Just as Philip's relations with Ida were unique in their amazing marriage, so were his relations with Roxane in their amazing ménage. To ask if they were happy is a profitless question. As long as Philip worked full time at the bank Ida and Roxane had, in their wholly different ways, many compansations. Difficulties raised their heads once more when Philip was prematurely retired from the bank in 1931.

XXV How to be happy though married

After peering into the depths of Philip's marriage-long perfidy with Lily, Roxane and bedloads of others, and the many revelations of his irresponsibility and frivolity, one could imagine that even if a wife dismissed the idea of divorce, she would not deign to pick up the pieces of her marriage but would re-organise her affairs to suit her own interests, to lead a self-contained life on terms of polite reserve towards Philip. The box of Pandora, one might assume, was a watershed. Obviously the waters could not run back upwards to re-form a single stream but must for ever flow downwards on opposite sides. But in this amazing marriage the waters did run back upwards to re-form one stream. Anyone who, knowing nothing of their first twelve years, read the letters that passed between Ida and Philip between 1914 and 1919 would get the impression of an exceptionally united couple, discussing, with mutual affection and understanding, in regular weekly exchanges on family affairs that were unfolding themselves with even tenor*

FOOTNOTE*: Unfortunately as few of Ida's letters survive, one has to divine her views from Philip's reflections. END OF FOOTNOTE.

In September, 1914, Ida rents a house in Godalming and tells Philip that she has set aside a room for him. "Haha!" replies Philip, "how lovely to think that, despite all, there is for me — a bird of passage — a room ready at home!"

October, 1914, finds them happily recalling the date of his proposal. "Of course, I remember with nostalgia that lovely autumn day," writes Philip.

Bayonne, January 30, 1915. My dearest heart, a thousand thanks for your long and good letter, so interesting, so crammed with perceptive thought. As I read your letter, which is straight out of your rare and sweet personality, I re-live the joys of our long, happy talks, interrupted only by our separations, but which we resume each time we meet again, as if there has been no interval in the

continuous flow of our ideas and feelings. And, in fact, nothing does interrupt it, because each of us continues to widen our interests as we go along with life.

That is why, when we see each other again, there is no need to waste time in "Do you remembers?" in order to recapture our points of contact. Some meeting between old friends put me in mind of a visit to a cemetary: instead of resuming the thread of previous talks, they rack their brains to recall the past, they empty the coffin of ideas and feelings buried so long ago that they are compelled to consult the inscriptions on the tombstones to bring back to daylight the corpses of topics long stripped to the bone.

It is, believe me, rare and very sweet to find ourselves again as you and I do. Even those who live side by side do not escape the progressive break-up of sympathy which is the common lot of those who lack the inner resources to evolve and to renew themselves... I bless the fate which for us has reserved so rare a privilege, whose delightful stimulus I always experience whether talking to you or reading your letters...

In April, 1915, Philip attends the Easter week services at Bayonne Cathedral, finds the sermon preached for the religious "retreat" of "an impressive beauty in which I steeped myself in the profound atavism of our Christian and Catholic souls. These rites, exhortations and meditations are inspiring and consolidate all that is best and most fruitful in us, although most of us refuse to take advantage of their latent force."

Essays on human nature flow from Philip's pen and are eagerly read and commented upon by Ida.

Biarritz, June 1, 1915. My dear heart, it is distressing to witness man's eternal self-torment.

Pascal said 'The ego is hateful,' but is it so in fact? Is it not rather the life-force which is crudely asserting itself among those who have not the inner resources to express themselves in noble ways? Living in constant contact with strangers in one new place after another, as I have for so many years past, and mingling in every social strata, I am continuously struck by the unhappiness which afflicts the majority, because the majority is simple-minded and, although verbose, inarticulate.

Human unhappiness is neither the poverty, nor the sadness, nor the despair, which follow in the wake of the sorrows of love, however great. It is crueller and more piercing than any despair that follows the catastrophes of life It is a cancer in the very centre of the human life-force. It is the awful feeling of one's own helplessness that tortures, humiliates and makes ordinary men wicked they know not why; they are unhappy because they have accomplished

so little that was beautiful or useful. Fallen angels, they lay the blame on an ironical destiny, which jeeringly tells them that they might have found redemption. For man redemption is, never doubt it, work. For women redemption — more difficult because subtler — is charity, spiritual rather than material.

I am so penetrated by the truth of this that I rarely feel indignation stirring within me, even secretly, against my fellow-men. On the least personal contact with them, I sense the pain of the red hot iron that is searing their very souls. And, since once they have passed the age of reason (21 years), nothing can cure them, I try to speak soothing words to soften or disguise for a few moments, the atrociousness of their lot, for these moments — however rare — are a respite in which they taste the sweetness of a peace of mind as rare as the drop of holy water that some saint lets fall from his fingertip into hell.

Whatever one may think of Philip's views, whatever light they throw on his character, ~~the~~ his many letters such as these must have been fun to receive and stimulating to further enjoyable discussions.

Here is a letter to gladden the heart of any wife:

Le Havre. March 21, 1916. My dear heart, rain falls over the town and perhaps a little on my heart, for, on some sad grey days, vague and oppressive feelings overcome one.

What are you up to in your demesne?

Your hens, your young fellow, and your reading fill much of your time, but even so you find time to reflect and to dream.

If you are in a moment of dreams, I would love to have one of your sweet smiles, and I would like you to feel that, from afar, across the fogs of the Channel and despite the submarines, my own dreams turn irresistibly to mingle with yours. I would like you to feel that I am beside you and that I think, and above all dream, with you in a castle which, although not in Spain, is enchanting and feëry.

Ivory Tanagra, I embrace you.

Here is a letter which implies that despite all that she had experienced in her marriage, Ida was still blaming herself for what she believed to be her deficiencies as a wife. Replying on March 30, 1916, from Le Havre, Philip strives to comfort her:

... The ray of sunshine which your letter brought flooded me with an infinitely sweet, strange and rare sense of well-being.

No, you must not think that you have not known how to give happiness.

On the contrary, it is you alone who, with your two hands, has laid the true foundations of the characteristics of your husband and your son.

Sincerity, providing that it does not mask an insolent egoism, is after all the richest human grace. And your modest but strong sincerity, which sometimes causes you to suffer, is Paradise Lost for the common run of men. That is why Jossleyn and I lean on you: he from instinct, I from an innate, hereditary and consciously cultivated inclination.

I do not know if I understand you. As you yourself say, it is almost impossible for one humanbeing to understand another, but of one thing I am at least sure: No-one else the wide world over inspires me with such confidence, nor has such overflowing, spontaneous and happy generosity as you. Not only do I write to you impulsively, straight from the heart, but I realise that in some sort I examine all my actions from your point of view — an irrefutable touchstone to distinguish good from bad. It follows that I am, as it were, in constant communion with you.

I live with you.

You are my companion, my friend, my secret confident, a marvellous being who has perceptibly ennobled my thoughts and my actions.

It is quite possible that I don't really understand you, but I believe that you understand me — by instinct as much as by reason. You sense that, despite the circumstances of the moment, there exists perpetually in me a great ferment of feelings and ideas which emanate from you, that I am in some sort the expression, the fruition of some of your highest meditations.

And then, dear treasure, even if none of this existed, even if I had remained merely preoccupied with exterior elegancies, I would always have sought you out and wanted you to myself because no-one has a more beautiful, finer and happier personality than you. These three elements of strength persist in you despite the worst blows of destiny. They express themselves in your gaze, the carriage of your head, your smile and the beauty of your Tanagra-moulded body.

Believe me, dear heart, if I am destiny's spoilt child, it is because my life has drawn support from the profound spiritual goodness of your tender and brave heart. And if sometimes I have abused it a little, it is because it is difficult not to make prodigal use of so much wealth! Rare and marvellous child, I embrace you as I love the whole of you.

Nice, June 11, 1917. Dear heart, just when your good letter arrived I was, without knowing why, a little sad and absolutely lonely, as if a cold hand had passed over my soul.

Your interesting letter, so full of perhaps too indulgently nice things about me, so overflowing with affection, has given me the delicious feeling that I am resting on your heart, looking into your lovely eyes and finding the affection that each of us needs so badly.

I am neither as young nor as handsome as your portrait makes me out to be, but, as I was perhaps like it once, it is nice for me that you should thus recall to the memory of those whom I love, and who are good enough to love me, the image of a Philip who, in sometimes bizarre ways, had at least a certain sincerity — the ineffaceable imprint of the family which God gave him and of the wife whom he was clever enough to give himself.

Even separated by great distances, we write to each other more often and with more elegance than most couples, whose intimacy, or I should rather say whose promiscuity, exhausts itself in the naggings in which wounded prides try to justif themselves without ever understanding that justice itself is an empty formula of democracy. They do not understand that a husband and wife should love and admire one another and each grant the other the benefit of unjustifiable favours if they are to attain the high perfection of which humanity is capable, providing that one shows a little confidence in it...

One is tempted to ask whether these letters are extracted from a book entitled How To Be Happy Though Married.

XXVI Carlo squares the circle and makes legal history

With the end of the war Ida's respite from her financial slavery ended. Mrs Woerishoffer, who had generously paid Carlo's allowance to Ida during the war, now gave him an interim allowance of Swiss francs 5,000 a month, out of which she expected him to meet all his obligations until he had found a way, if he could, to recover his wartime sequestrated American funds. One result was to restore unpredictability to Ida's income, because Carlo found it impossible to live on this allowance.

However, in 1921, Ida had a stroke of good fortune; she sold Ifield Park for £2,500. Had she invested this capital conservatively it could have brought her an acceptable income of £125 a year, which would have at least given her a stable basis. But what did she do with it?

She gave £100 to her eighteen and a half year old son, who had never before had more than £5 in his pocket. This he went up to London to spend on two good bespoke suits, a dinner jacket, an evening tail coat, shirts and ties totalling some £50, which was a sensible investment, and partly in entertaining his friends to the carefully dished and wined luncheons which Philip's example had taught him to regard as normal. Hardly had Ida given this £100 away when she received a letter from Norah asking to be paid the £180 that she had put up for Philip in 1912*, and another from Philip saying that it would help him in the

FOOTNOTE*: See page 122. END OF FOOTNOTE.

bank if she entrusted her capital to his care. By return of post she sent Norah £180 and Philip £2,000.

Did she then spend nothing on herself?

I told her that she should buy a good tailor-made coat and skirt, that classical outfit for so many occasions. But neither she nor I knew anything about ladies' tailors. So, having heard that Redferns were top of the dressing making league, I took her there. Now, Redferns did not make classic cut coats and skirts expected to last many years. They catered for a clientèle which could afford to follow annual changes of fashion. They designed specialty clothes which dated quickly. What was more, their designers were old-fashioned and looked back to the Edvardian era. Consequently Redferns provided Ida with a bizarre navy blue, black-braided serge combination, whose coat reached to below her knees, which she wore for the next ten years, happily unaware that with each passing year she looked ever more quaintly like a survival of a pre-World War I fashion plate.

Ida had taken a house in Godalming to enable her to send me to Charterhouse as a day-boy (which cost £10 per term). I was due to go up to New College, Oxford, in September, 1921. Ida forseeing that my life as what was then known as "a young man about town" would be centred on London, and wishing to make a home for me there, surrounded by the family furniture and pictures, decided to buy the long lease of 68 Boundary Road, St. John's Wood, for £900, which sum she requested Philip to return to her out of her Ifield capital. As the days sped by and she heard nothing from Paris, she wrote again and began to worry. At the eleventh hour, when she was at her wits' end and on the brink of losing her deposit, she received Philip's cheque. Of the balance of £1,400 in his possession, she never saw a penny. Mrs Woerishoffer, having ceased to pay Carlo's allowance in January,1922, Ida scraped along for the next fourteen months, by letting rooms at 68 Boundary Road and by pawning jewellery.

What did Philip do with the money from Ifield Park? His salary in 1921 was £850 a year, sufficient to live in comfort but not to cut a dash. Philip now began to entertain more freely, but he did not blue the whole of Ida's capital. First, he paid out £1,400 at the rate of £85 per term to keep me at Oxford for four years. For this I have never ceased to be grateful to him, because Oxford gave me insights into the meaning of systematic thought and of intellectual honesty, and provided lifelong aspirations and loyalties. Secondly, Philip set about extricating Carlo from one of those abracadabrant predicaments ~~which was~~ tailormade for one of Philip's rollicking after-dinner fantasies.

In 1921, Carlo was threatened with drowning in a rising sea of debts while all the time he was, mixed metaphorically, sitting on a goldmine. All that he had to do was to persuade the Home Office Naturalisations Department that it wa perfectly feasible for a man of Carlo's gifts to fight in an enemy army throughout four years of war without for one moment faltering in his allegiance to the British crown. That done, his American funds, accumulating handsomely the while, would shower upon him like rupees from a pagoda tree. I remember the late Sir Francis Smith, senior partner of Messrs Lee and Pemberton, solicitors to Mrs Woerishoffer, telling me at the time that if Carlo won such an appeal it would be the first case known to history — legal, scientific, political or economic,— in which the appellant had squared the circle. But whatever unimaginative Soames Forsytes like Francis Smith thought, this was one of those ventures in which Philip saw the gleam of gold in the crock at the rainbow's end. He found solicitors to brief King's Counsel to argue the case — the costs of which absorbed the balance of Ida's Ifield capital and of a second windfall which came her — and Philip's — way.

The case came up before a judge in the Law Courts in the Strand. The cr

went something like this:

Counsel for the Crown: "You fought in the Austrian army on the Italian front?"

Carlo: "Well, you see — "

Counsel: "Yes or no — Did you fight on the Italian front?

Carlo (reluctantly): "Yes."

Counsel: "Not content with mere routine, you fought with such distinction that you won the great golden medal for valour?"

Carlo (gathering himself for a long explanation): "Well, you see — "

Counsel: "Yes or no. Were you awarded the highest Austrian distinction for valour?"

Carlo: "But — "

Counsel: "Yes or no?"

Carlo, puce with repressed emotion, shrugging shoulders of mountainous frustration: "Yes".

Counsel to Carlo with exquisite courtesy: "Thank you very much." To the judge quietly and pregnantly; "That, your honour, is the Crown's case."

It was now the turn of Carlo's counsel to put him through a number of hoops — which he did so unimpressively that an increasing smugness appeared in the expression of counsel for the Crown.

At last Carlo's counsel came to the Austrian campaign in Italy.

Counsel: "There are three classes of the Imperial golden medal for valour. Which were you awarded?"

Carlo (proudly): "The first class."

Whereupon counsel for the Crown beamed at Carlo's counsel, who continued apparently unaware of the satisfaction that he was giving his opponent: "Tell his honour precisely for what you were awarded the golden medal of the first

class."

Carlo, showing signs of acute embarassment and confusion, murmured something inaudible.

The judge: "I did not catch that."

Counsel for the Crown and for Carlo simultaneously; "Louder please!"

Carlo raising his voice to bare audibility: "For playing Vingt-et-un."

There followed a few moments of total silence.

Counsel for the Crown: "Really your honour, I protest — "

Carlo's counsel: "One moment, my learned friend — " To Carlo: "Why were you awarded a medal for playing Vingt-et-un?"

Carlo (apologetically): "Well, you see, I was playing it in the face of the enemy."

At this point unrestrained laughter broke out not only in the public gallery but amongst the court officials.

The judge (with the remotest hint of a smile in his voice): "Unless the witness is allowed to tell his story without interruptions, I shall have the court cleared." To Carlo: "Proceed."

Carlo: "The front had been stabilised for some time. There seemed nothing to do, so a friend of mine and I descended into a deep dug-out to play Vingt-et-un. He is a great gambler," Carlo explained ingenuously.

"And you are too?" asked Counsel.

"When I play, I play seriously," Carlo conceded. "Anyway my friend and I were so concentrated on our game, and the dug-out was so deep and the schnapps so — I mean," Carlo interrupted himself hastily, "We did not notice that the battle had resumed above ground. Our sergeant major looked in and said 'We are isolated, sir. The enemy has pushed back the platoons on either side of us. What are your orders?" '

"If we're isolated, we can't retreat" I said, dealing a fresh hand. 'Carry on sergeant major.' "

Counsel: "You went on playing?"

Carlo, shrugging: "There was nothing else to do."

Counsel: "For how long?"

Carlo, re-shrugging: "I can't say. It may have been hours or days befo the sergeant major returned to report that the enemy had been driven back on our right and left and that the general was inspecting the position in person. 'Very good sergeant major,' I said. 'Show the general everything he wants to see." '

Counsel: "And you went on with your game?"

Naturally!" said Carlo. "I was at that point in my system when I was losing heavily. It would have been simple bankruptcy to stop then. Eventually however, we heard the sergeant major say 'This way, sir, they are down here... ' We jumped to our feet. We saluted. The General seemed deeply moved. When at last he could speak, he said: 'By holding on to this key position, you have saved the front, and while the storm raged above and all round you, you continued to play cards with the utmost gallantry. I am proud to decorate you on the field of battle." '

By this time the court, the police and the public gallery were frankly holding their sides and the judge made no attempt to repress their merriment. He sat concealing his lips with his hand, a slight quiver in his shoulders.

When at length Carlo's counsel could again make himself heard he turned to the judge and said:

"You will have observed, your honour, that Count Seilern was too busy playing cards to fire a single shot at His Majesty's allies. That is my case."

That, at least, was the report of Carlo's case that Philip gave ~~to~~ at 2 a

number of delighted dinner parties. I myself attended the court. I do not remember what was said but I have a clear recollection that Counsel for the Crown put a series of extremely awkward questions to Carlo and that he replied with such transparent honesty, not to say ingenuousness, that the judge obviously took him to his heart. Be that as it may, he restored Carlo's British nationality.

"He must have been crazy" Sir Francis Smith said to me in disgust.

"Who?" I asked. "Carlo or the judge?"

"Both," Sir Francis said.

According to Ida's autobiography Carlo recovered £60,000 from the U.S.A. He repaid Philip generously for his expenses, time and trouble. Ida urged him to set £10,000 aside in a trust giving her the income for life and the capital thereafter to go to Manny, Carlo's son by his second marriage. But Carlo pooh-poohed this timid proposal. He was deep in schemes for making all our fortunes, one essential preliminary of which was to spend his newly acquired £60,000 as soon as possible.

XXVII Ida meets her husband's mistress

For a while Ida received her allowance from Carlo, but then it petered out and instead of £41-13-4 from Carlo per month she received an allowance from Philip which was ta first, as far as I can make out, £30 a month, though later it dwindled to a chancey £15.

At this period, in the mid-1920s, Philip was keeping open house in his apartment at 21 rue de Lisbonne in the fashionable eighth quartier of Paris a splendid horse ta Mrs. Hensman's' stables off the Bois de Boulogne, where he rode every morning before breakfast, and a racehorse at Maison Lafitte. I never heard that this horse won a race, but it paid its way by enabling Philip to give excellent tax-free, expense-account luncheons. His salary was now £850 a year. Where, then, did he find £360 for Ida and £250 for me at Oxford? Partly from het gift that Carlo gave him after winning his case; partly because in the course of 1927, Ida sold her villa at Nice. Under French law the sale required the authorization of her husband. Philip readily gave this and the proceeds, £1,600 were transferred to his account in Paris.

Ida, who was in Paris to see about this sale, won for the first time learned of Roxane's [7]existence.

What can her feelings have been on discovering that Philip kept an extremely good-looking mistress, who at the age of forty-six was in the plenitude of her charms?

Ida in her autobiography writes quietly:

Lunch in the beautiful Rue de Lisbonne flat with its pictures and portraits and objets d'art. A peculkiar, strange experience. Roxanne said to me simply that if I wished it, she would leave Philip. "Not at all, "I said "I could run the flat neither as well nor as economically as you". As always when in doubt, I suspended judgement on Roxanne 's personality. She had the manners and of a woman. Of the world, seemed very intelligent and capable. One must take people and situations as they are when one is in no position to change them or to do better.

These few words - remarkable for their revelation of the candidness of Ida's steady gaze on the world and of the grandeur of her spirit - were the only comment that she ever made on her husband's mistress.

Elsewhere referring to her mother's accusations of infidelity by her father, Ida wrote "when a wife lives apart from her husband, she must close her eyes, be reasonable, indulgent." But even the greatest philosophers have feelings, and I cannot but believe that the discovery that, during these many yeas in which he had so often professed to be looking forward to making a home for Ida, Philip was in slippered ease

[7] Roxane was Philip's fancy name for her. Ida did not identify her with the Roxane of the letters. She knew her by her real name, for which I have suppressed.

in an attractive home with his lares et penates. presided over by a handsome woman, was another dagger in her heart, another blow to her pride as a wife and to her self-respect as a woman, and I cannot understand how Philip, who boasted his sensitive understanding of feminine psychology, failed to realise this. If, as we saw, Carlo felt it necessary to obtain Ida's permission to introduce a friend's mistress to her, à fortiori should her husband not have recoiled from introducing his mistress to his wife? What was Roxane's social position? While Philip invited male friends, divorced women and the haute demi-monde to his flat, he entertained guests from the beau monde at his club without Roxane. Philip's sister Moya, and his Janzé in-laws were pleasant to Roxane; they received her alone to an intimate family meal from time to time, but they never invited her to their social occasions. Roxane was sensitive to this distinction and her heart warmed to Ida because she felt that Ida treated her - at once and without giving the matter a thought - as an equal. "Ah! Votre mère!" Roxane once said to me "Voilà une vraie grande dame – une autre paire de manches - quite a different cup of tea from those others."

When between 1932 and 1937 Ida lived in Paris, either with me or in a flat of her own, Philip invited her to luncheon from time to time at his flat, and in their exchanges of letters, Roxane sent affectionate greetings to Ida and Ida to Roxane. Evidently - on the conscious level at least - Ida became reconciled to being in some sort, an accessory to a ménage à trois.

I can guess. Philips attitude. He would have sat between them with the set of satisfaction of a man clever enough to have ridden 2 very different classic winners in an international dressage competition. Self-consciousness was not part of his make-up[8].

Ida was, of course, never intimate with Roxane because they had on interests in common. Ida had inexhaustible inner resources, Roxane had none.

After Philip's death in 1954, Roxane, aged seventy-four, and almost penniless, became humiliatingly dependent on a nephew who grudgingly gave her a roof over her head in a remote French village. In 1973, she was still alive and almost blind. Whatever her sins may have been, surely she had expiated them living alone, unable to read or write, suffering from increasing disabilities, with nothing to do but mul over the past and listen to the radio from daybreak to midnight. The highlights of her life were an annual visit of a fortnight from a kindly niece; from me letters and packets of Earl Grey's mixture, her favourite tea, and an occasional visit. She wrote no autobiography, but had she attempted one, she would have been incapable of such a typical entry as this in Ida's autobiography; written in the recollection of her late seventies, of a journey from Folkestone to Ostend in 1930:

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[8] *: Roxane once told me that she and Philip went for a weekend to a château, where they were given separate bedrooms. Unpacking her suitcase after tea, she found Philip's slippers in it. She took them to his bedroom, opened the door to see Philip spreadeagled (tiré à quatre épingles) above their hostess on the bed. She flung the slippers with a crash on the oak floor and left. At dinner Philip was at his wittiest - a contrast to their hostess who paid tribute to Roxane with a blush that spread from her forehead to her bosom.

I embarked on a magnificent June day. To glide on a blue sea, scintillating with white ripples, under a pure azure sky soothes the spirit: thoughts - more dreams than realities - float up from the unconscious, skimming lightly over charming souvenirs. I smile at the sky. I smile at the sea. I smile at myself. Wreathing white masses, fleecy, diaphanous, drift towards the ship, little by little draping us in a giant veil. We now steam at a snail's pace, cut off from the world. The ship's siren - raucous cry of a monster in distress – spreads discords across the vibrating waves. Suddenly a sombre mass breaks through the mists, misses us by feet: another ship.! We approach Ostend and it is with a certain regret that I see the end of my journey across the North Sea. The mists, too, lift regretfully, and, by the time that we disembarked, have vanished.

Or again, as Ida describes the cliffs of Folkestone:

How pretty the picture before my eyes! I am sheltered in the zigzag walk from the wind. Before me is the sea. Around me is budding greenery, of a freshness that it will later lose, tracing a thousand graceful outlines in the most varied, delicately tinted, colours. I drink in this beauty, this exquisite all-present charm, which, transfigured by thought cover, softens what there is of hardness in one's soul, and envelops one in a serenity receptive of impressions and ideas.

And this aphorism[9]:

The important thing is never to break a rule of good taste. Good taste in ethics is altruism.

Ida wanted to invest the proceeds of the sale of her Nice villa in a London house which would have provided her with one flat to live in and another to let for income. Philip backed the scheme wholeheartedly in several enthusiastic letters, but a series of unforeseen obstacles prevented him from sending the money (always promised for "next week") to London. Despite these tiresomenesses eh and Ida continued their affectionate letters, of which I need quote on further examples because those already cited may be re-read as typical of the exchanges that they maintained until death parted them.

There are many happy entries in Ida's autobiography during the years following World War I, which I am sorely tempted to cite in order to lighten the sombre picture that I feel I have painted, but such references as, for example,

to her happiness when she treated herself to a lovely new evening dress on the wonderful occasion of the Oxford University Dramatic Society's Commemoration Bal which she attended in June 1925, as the guest of honour in the party given by

the ball manager, namely her son, belong to another book (which I hope to write) rather than to this one which is concerned with her relations with her husband.

[9] Ida does not attribute this to anyone, so I assume that it is her own.

XXVIII Poland again: Ida's shining delight

After I had secured a job in Paris in November, 1928, Ida no longer felt it necessary to maintain a home in London and she spent the next three years in one of the truly happiest periods of her life - a pilgrimage to the scenes of her youth in Austria and Poland renewing contact with a score of cousins whom she had not seen for upwards of forty years.

All her life Ida remembered in a golden haze the parties, cross-country gallops, jingling winter sleigh rides, the balls with their polonaises and mazurkas and the camaraderie of her teenage cousins. "Que nous étions folles!"

When people meet after a long interval, they size each other up, to some extent in the light of their experience and reason, but the greater part of their impression reaches them through the antennae of their feelings which light up encouraging signals or cautionary warnings. What were the Zaluskis, Ostaszewskis, Kwileckis, Tyskiewiczes and other cousins expecting to find in Ida? They were educated gentlefolk, but as landowners in comparatively reduced circumstances, dotted about the Galician countryside, under an unfriendly socialist government, they led somewhat isolated provincial lives. Now here was cousin Ida, who had spent her life between those fabulous capitals, London and Paris, who was married to a distinguished banker, and whose son was a graduate of the prestigious university of Oxford. It would have been natural if they had anticipated with some feelings of trepidation, mingled with defensive aggressiveness, a stately, sophisticated great lady stepping with polite condescension from the frame of a full-length Gainsborough.

Whom did they meet? Ida did indeed carry herself with unconscious distinction, but within seconds, the cousins' antennae were flashing that here was a personality, who stepped down from the frame with outstretched arms, spiritually as well as physically, absolutely without guile, without pretensions, seeking to love and to be loved.

Ida had last seen them in the springtime of life, when cheeks were rosy, hopes high, and each tomorrow a joyous adventure. She came back to them in the autumn when half the leaves had fallen and those which remained were sere and futureless. The kindly uncles and aunts were dead: the troupes of joyous teenagers were now, like Ida, in their late sixties. They had survived hard times,

for the Germans and Russians had fought all over their lands1, destroying houses, property and livestock, leaving most of them in reduced circumstances. But by the very excitement of her expectations, the candour of her happiness in being once more at home, Ida rekindled something of their youth.

"Let's have a dance tonight," Ida said with a shy smile and sparkling eyes.

“But, good heavens, we haven’t danced for years! And nobody does mazurkas now! The young only know how to foxtrot! They’ll laugh their heads off at us. Are you crazy?”

“Yes,” smiled Ida. “Let’s all be crazy again!”

So carpets were rolled back and the cousins took their turn at the piano – for all could play: though when it was Ida’s turn, she took off her rings, they gathered round to listen, because she, via Wiendzkowska, was a pupil-once-removed of Leschetizky (1830-1915). The thunders of Liszt’s fireworks were beyond Ida but she bewitched her cousins through every nuance of Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata and Chopin’s Raindrop Prelude2.

And so Ida went from one manor house to another, her shining delight to be among her own people awakening answering joy in their hearts. This is not sentimental imagination on my part, for I myself saw how faces lit up when she entered a room, with what verve and grace she and the sixty-eight year old Kazio stiff-jointedly danced an exhibition mazurka amidst thunderous applause.

Ida lived through some poignant moments when she visited Anielka, widow of Stash Ostaszewski. It is pleasant to record that Anielka, who knew that Ida had been the love of her husband’s life, welcomed her to Klimkowka. “Stash often used to talk about you,” she said with a friendly smile, pointing to two portraits that hung in the drawing room, one of Ida and one of Stash.

Ida regretfully noted that the peasants no longer wore their picturesque brightly coloured costumes while at work in the fields: they now wore drab nondescript “western” clothes.

On the other hand, the cousins observed the old Polish custom whereby the hostess stood at the head of the table after dinner and the household and guests filed past to kiss her hand in thanks.

Ida spent her sixty-fifth birthday on August 29, 1929, at Kwilcz near Posen, the Palladian house belonging to Count Dosh Kwilecki, and his wife Zosia, daughter of Ida’s first cousin Josef Zaluski. “They made this a real festival day for me,” she wrote. She entered the dining room to find her chair covered with flowers in accordance with the Polish custom and a whole table laden with parcels. The grown ups and the children kissed her hand in turn and wished her happy returns. “It all made an unforgettable day that is among my most precious memories.”

Ida had cousins enough in Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland to be able to go on a more or less continuous round of visits during 1929 and 1931 without outstaying her welcome anywhere. She was among contemporaries, who loved her and whom she loved, and as “Aunt Ida” she won the affections of the younger generations. These were

idyllic years. Was that, therefore, why an inscrutable Providence decided to cut them short and to restore the sword of Damocles to its place above Ida's head?

XXIX Philip loses his job

In mid-1931, Philip was compulsorily and prematurely retired from the Bank. His pay of £850 a year – an acceptable sum in those days – slid to £250.

The wonder is that this catastrophe did not overtake him sooner.

Between 1928 and 1931, I had from time-to-time occasion to visit Philippa in his office at the Lloyds and national provincial foreign bank at 43, Boulevard de Capucines. At one end of the building on the first floor was a lounge for the use of clients. Off this were the offices of the managers. You wrote your name on the slip which a commissionaire took in to the manager of your choice. There was sitting space, if memory serves, for perhaps a dozen clients period the first time I went up there I was intrigued to find half the seats occupied by some of the most gorgeous women I have ever seen period collectively they provided the lounge with the meaning of rumours of a Lucette don't have a perfumery period they are each other with the frosty appraising stairs of rival actresses waiting outside a casting directors office. A few remaining cheers occupied by dim men and women who obviously had no connection with the beauty squad. If I had encountered any one of these ladies in the bank lounge I should not have given her a thought, but to find half a dozen such exotics together aroused my curiosity. However, I wrote my name on the slip and handed it to the commissionaire.

"For Monsieur Hennessy » he said." I am afraid you will have to wait quite a while."

It was 10:15 am "How long" I asked.

The commissionaire ran his eye over the six beauties. "Between an hour and an hour and a quarter, I should judge," he said.

Then I understood. They had all come to see Philip.

I never visited Philip without finding a beauty squad on duty. These visitors infuriated Philip's colleagues who were jealous of his success with women, jealous of the type of woman with whom he was successful, and contemptuous of him as a ladies man. They complained to the general manager that these women by taking up Phillips time added to the burden of the day – his colleagues – had to carry. The general manager, a Methodical man, informed himself of the identities of Philips visitors. He found that they all had accounts in the bank and that several, such as Madam X the racehorse owner, Madam Y the couturier, and Madam Z, the sister and active partner of one of the best-known restaurants in Paris, kept valuable accounts. That he decided to say nothing to Philip further exasperated his colleagues with the result that they waited and watched in hopes of catching him out in some error of judgement or banking misdemeanour. And in the end they did. I do not know what his offence was. Clearly it was not a legal crime for, if it had been, the bank would not have allowed him

his pension and would as a matter of routine have launched a persecution as a warning to other potential weak brethren.

In 1931, £250 a year in Paris was not penury, but you had to live carefully of course, Philip could expect to stay with Moya in the country for fairly long spells and perhaps with one or two other friends and relatives, but realistically he sold his horse, gave up his flat in the hoodle is born and moved to a cheaper one. He seized his luncheon parties and dismissed them made. So economical was he that he even did his own marketing, which must have been a blow to Roxanne 's pride as a housewife. He settled down to live as do the poor, which was greatly to his credit, seeing that he was giving up all that made his life worth living to him dash fast women, beautiful horses, expensive dinners and fine wines. Doubtless A trifle of ida's capital remained, or when i married in London in October 1932, he surprised me by coming over, staying at the St. James's Club and giving me a handsome check of £50.

FOOTNOTE*: It should be remembered that I did not know what Philips salary or his pension worm until I began my research for this book. At the time, I assumed that his generosity in sending me to Oxford, mounting me to ride in the Bois de Boulogne and with the Comte de Vallon's staghounds, came out of his salary. I did not realise that it must in substantial part have come from Ida's funds that had found their way into his safekeeping. End of footnote

Ida was in Poland in April 1931, when in the course of a letter to her I mentioned Philip's retirement. I did not know that she did not know. She was full of sympathy for poor Philip. Then it occurred to her to ask her bank for a statement of account. This revealed that Philip's economies had included cancellation of his standing order to credit her with £15 a month. Since his pension was £20-17-6, this was inevitable, but what at the time I found it hard to forgive was that he just ceased to pay it without warning Ida, and lapsed into one of those impenetrable silences which he maintained when he had awkward situations to explain or saw no solution to a problem.

Luckily Ida always lived with a month of her allowance in hand. In addition, she had sold 68 Boundary Road for £900 which (without my asking), she had at once paid over to me. I invested the money and had the dividends paid into an account in my name on which I authorised her to sign. I cashed no check on this account as long as she lived. Dividends amounted to some £50 a year and had accumulated to about £100 in June, 1931, because Ida regarded them as a reserve fund. I was unable to help Ida because I was living in a bed-sitter, earning £300 a year as a sub editor in Reuters. What to do?

Mrs Woerishoffer had just died. Carlo (Ida's brother) was having a hard time keeping his expenses up to his income. There remained his three sons, Ida's nephews, Chappie, Oswald and Anton, who were comfortably endowed with worldly possessions, which was why they were often a prey to begging letters. There was no reason why they should take on an obligation incurred by their father. However, they maintained a list of charities to which they jointly contributed and on which they generously put Ida

down for £300 a year; this together with her income from my dividends was sufficient for her simple needs. She spent the bare minimum on clothes. She ate plainly. She read widely in books borrowed from the public library. She subscribed to the Times and the Listener and maintained an ample supply of paper and ribbons for her typewriter. The kindness of her three nephews, who were all fond of her and made pilgrimages to see her from time to time, gave her financial security for the remaining fourteen years of her life. After her death, I was touched to discover that, bit by bit, she had subscribed £52 in saving certificates in the names of her three grandchildren.

XXX Philip fools the Gestapo

The Nazi blitz in 1941 overtook Philip in Paris. France fell. Philip was nervous that as a British subject, the Germans would send him to a concentration camp. But whatever Philip lacked it was not resource. He went to his friend, Count Gerald O'Kelly, the Irish ambassador, to request an Irish passport.

"But you've got a passport, Philip. What nationality is it?" Gerald asked.
"British"
"Well, that's not Insuperable" said Gerald
"Where were you born?
"In London"
"How many years have you lived in Ireland?
"I have never been there" said Philip.

There was a silence. At last, Philip said: "Nothing prevents me from applying for Irish citizenship and nothing prevents you, my dear Gerald, from issuing me with an official receipt for my application.

Nothing, Gerald agreed heartily.

And so it was that when the Gestapo came around to inquire into Phillip's affairs, he welcomed them with the usual disarming courtesy - or perhaps in this instance it should be called blarney - and got through six years of war by gravely producing a receipt for an application for Irish citizenship - as he told me with all his old sparkle when I saw him again in postwar Paris.

Footnote. Count Gerald Kelly. 1890 – 1968. He was in Paris from 1929 to 1948. Thereafter Chargé d'Affaires in Lisbon until his death.

XXXI Ida in Lonely Old Age

The departure in 1937 of my wife, myself, and Ida's first grandchild (note – Flavian) from Paris for India was a grievous blow to Ida.

Where was she to settle down now?

By chance my mother-in-law, Madge Noel-Paton, was also at a loose end and she and Ida decided to share Kelsall Lodge, a house at Taunton near Madge's unmarried daughter Peggie. That the two old mothers-in-law should live together seemed touchingly appropriate. It occurred neither to her family nor to me to wonder how two women, who hardly knew each other, whose backgrounds and interests were worlds apart, would get on cooped up in a remote country house.

Madge's days were too long. She had few inner resources. She tuned in to all the B.B.C. news bulletins and often listened for hours. Years before she had fallen over a cliff. Her family attributed to this serious head injury her vagueness, loquacity, and unpredictable temper.

Ida's days were too short. She was fully occupied in translating from Polish and German into French my large collection of Zaluski and Seilern family documents, in writing her autobiography, in replenishing her intellectual armoury by reading on psychology, education, history and current affairs, and in sitting in her room or in the garden meditating.

In the first weeks of their lives together, Madge, lonely and in search of company, would burst in on Ida for a good gossip at any hour. She failed to see any significance in the books, papers and open typewriter surrounding Ida, who, for her part, was too defenseless to rebuff Madge. But when eventually it penetrated Madge's consciousness that Ida was uninterested in her soliloquies on the day's news, and was anxious to be left alone, she was hurt. That she took this out on Ida in a variety of petty persecutions, even to the extent one day of locking Ida in her room, where she might have stayed for heaven knows how long had Peggie not chanced to visit the couple that day, was attributed, and doubtless was due, to the damage to her psyche caused by her fall over the cliff.

I do not know which was the unhappier - Madge seething with resentment at what seemed to her Ida's hostility, or Ida, turning the other cheek, indulging when her abnormal self-control wore out, in reasonable explanations. Poor Madge - is there anything more exasperating than sweet reasonableness and Christian forbearance'? Poor Ida - is there anything more trying for a highbrow than day in day out to be cornered by an explosive lowbrow who chatters incessantly and doesn't listen to the answers.

In 1943, Ida became bedridden with a painful cancer. She had not seen me for six years and, feeling her end to be near, asked me to visit her in Washington D.C. and

the story of how, despite the difficulties of war-time transport, I managed to get to see her for a week belongs to another book.

I found Ida in a nursing home in Exeter. Many a mother and son might have exhausted their topics of conversation in the course of two two-hour visits a day, but although she was suffering, mentally she was as alive as ever and we had lively discussions in the course of which her critical faculties kept me continuously and pleasantly alert.

My last half hour with her was agonizing. Space was limited in Ida's nursing home bedroom and her one wish was to get back to her books and typewriter. But the burden of looking after a patient who needed night and day attention was too great for Kelsall Lodge and I had to try to explain to my mother that she could never return to her home. The task was all the more difficult in that there was a third person present who seemed unable to grasp that this was a moment when mother and son might wish to be alone together.

After I had stumbled through my explanations and Ida understood what lay ahead for her, we were silent for a while; she, because she was adjusting to the new situation; I, because I could not trust myself to speak. I do not remember how we said goodbye. I never saw her again.

XXXII Philip's Irish wake

I was in Morayshire in Scotland and had just posted a letter to my father when, on March 24, 1954, I learnt that he had died on the 22nd. I flew to Paris where Roxane welcomed me at 7.30 a.m. on the 26th.

I entered the room in which my father's body lay under a sheet. I do not remember what my feelings on the flight to Paris had been, but when I stood before the bed, I was unprepared for the confused emotions that surged over me. I felt reverence in the presence of death. I felt that although an outside observer might think that Philip had all his life had just what he valued most — the successful pursuit of women, many wonderful runs in the hunting field, much laughter over anecdotes of his own exploits, good food and fine wines eaten and drunk in fashionable company — despite all this I felt that he had been an unhappy man and that the picture that he presented in his journals of his alter ego, the Prince, from whose Satanic personality he turned with a shudder, was in some ways the true Philip, whom the good Philip abhorred, but before whose spell he felt helpless.

These ideas passed through my mind not as rational thoughts but as a series of kaleidoscopic pictures which filled me with grief for my father.

I found myself on my knees in prayer.

Whatever Philip's infidelities to Roxane — and she knew that they had been countless — in the presence of death she remembered only that he had loved her and that she had loved him. Her tears began to flow. I took her in my arms. Between compulsive sobs, she told me how on the evening of March 21, Philip — who fancied himself on the ballroom floor — had taken a couple of dance steps, holding an imaginary partner in his arms, as he exclaimed "I feel twenty years younger." (He

was, in fact, eighty one years of age). Later Roxane heard him cry out. She found him, bathed in perspiration, rolling on the floor groaning "It hurts all over". She managed to drag him to bed, where after some time he quietened. At last he said: "I feel wonderful. I'm going to have a wonderful sleep — " and in this wonderful sleep he died.

My last letter to Philip arrived a few hours after his death. It was read out to the family, to whom apparently it gave great pleasure because they all thanked me for it as though I had written it to them!

Philip was to be buried in the Janzé family vault in St. Pierre des Jonquières, the little church near the Janzé Château de Parfondeval in Normandy — an eighty mile drive from Paris. At 8.15 a.m. I ~~got~~ climbed in next to the driver of the hearse. Every time that the vehicle went over a pothole, I winced, picturing my father's inert body jolting in the coffin.

It was for me a nostalgic journey to Parfondeval. I had many memories of that road. I remembered when ~~Fred~~ my cousin, Fred de Janzé, drove my father up to Paris in his racing Bugatti driving as only Fred could drive. Moya and I watched them disappear in a cloud of dust. We followed in the family Renault. When we reached Paris, Moya was visibly relieved to see Fred and her brother, ~~and~~ Sto asked how the journey had been. "A bit draughty at times," Philip said indicating the whistling of the wind past his head, "but," he added nonchalantly, "neither Fred nor I intend to die anywhere except in our beds."

Philip had been born and bred a Catholic. When I knew him he had never been devout. He did not go to church to pray but to enjoy himself. He revelled in the incense, the gorgeous vestments, the magic of church ritual. Nobody denies that there are higher ways of approaching religion. Nobody wishes to stop anyone capable

of these higher reaches from attaining them, but if a man is not capable of the highest, is he to be prohibited from the aesthetic, emotional or other approaches?

Philip respected the priesthood and he cultivated the company of the princes of the church as much as he cultivated the company of the secular aristocracy. He smiled at people who said that the priest came between the faithful and God. "Does the Alpine guide get in the way of the climber and the peak?" he asked. "Of course, you may become so good at climbing that you don't need a guide. If so, you are in a decimal minority. Most ~~men~~ Christians, like most mountaineers, need guides."

At a later date, Roxane told me with amusement that, as old age crept up on him, Philip became pious. "Oh! Là là!" she exclaimed, with the special scorn that she reserved for Philip's peccadilloes. "Have you only just remembered all your sins? One rosary a day won't keep you from hell-fire. If you were on your knees all day you'd hardly catch up with yourself!" And she gave her cutting taratata laugh. I said nothing, because I saw no point in reproaching Roxane for something that was past recall, but it was the only time in my life that I was angry with her.

After the funeral we drove back to Parfondeval, which, as lovely as its name, now belongs to Nolwen, daughter of my first cousin the late Fred de Janzé.

It was a grey occasion to re-visit a place in which I had spent so many sunlit hours. Every thicket of the coverts, every room in the Château brought back memories — of going out to shoot my first rabbit, when I narrowly missed Arthur the gamekeeper who said phlegmatically: "You should never swing your gun through a right angle, Monsieur Jossleyn," of smoking my first cigar in the linen room and Lockina, Auntie Moya's maid, laughing "What will her ladyship say when she lays her head on a pillow slip smelling of Havana instead of lavender?" — of a score of other

occasions, all happy save only one: once when alone with my mother she said aloud to herself "Why do these Janzés not accept me, their own sister-in-law? I should so like to be one of the joyous band."

Straight from the funeral, we sat down, some fourteen people, at luncheon: my various cousins, the padré and others, whom I forget — but it was a full table and we were elbow to elbow.

Everyone, even Roxane, was laughing, chatting and enjoying an excellent meal. I had never in the then fiftyone years of my life attended a funeral repast and I was unprepared for the behaviour of the mourners, which struck me as like all that I had read about Irish wakes: it might have been a wedding breakfast. The swift flight from the north of Scotland, the sight of my father's body, the memory of Roxane crying in my arms, the jolting hearse-ride to the church, the solemn requiem mass, the village padré's address simple and touching, the glimpse of the coffin deep below ground in the vault — all this had shaken me and I was feeling queasy rather than conversational. The food stuck in my throat. The thought shot unbidden through my head "I am the only person who regrets him, the only one who loved him." When I remembered all that my father had meant to me and to my mother, I smiled ruefully at the thought. However, I survived the meal somehow, reflecting that could Philip have been present he would have deprecated gloom and encouraged laughter by a rollicking account of all that had gone wrong the last time that he had been buried, of the difficulty that he had had in convincing Saint Peter that his guardian angel ("Well meaning, but an awful old silly, you know") had brought him to the wrong place and that Lucifer was putting in a stiff diplomatic protest over the delayed arrival of the most important catch that he had made for centuries.

After luncheon I drove back three hours to Paris in the jolting hearse, not a cheering type of conveyance. My father left £37, just enough to pay for exactly

one half of his funeral costs, but at any rate these included my return journey of one hundred and sixty miles by motor-hearse — the most expensive and least enjoyable round trip I have ever taken.

XXXIII Philip as a husband

When I consider all the tender, loving letters that Philip wrote to Ida, only a few of which have I quoted (See especially page 152 ff), the image that rises in my mind's eye is that of Harold Wilson in the years of his first premiership.

Two men less alike, or who would have had a greater contempt for each other, than Philip and Wilson could not be found. Yet they have one trait in common. Throughout 1962-1970, Wilson faced each crisis courageously with a speech — packed with splendid phrases, striking ideas and scornful demolition of critics. Having spoken, Wilson retired to his office to get on with the daily round. He thought that his speech had solved the crisis. Philip, too, faced each crisis courageously by writing a letter — packed with encouragement and sympathy. Having written it he put his pen down with the relief of a man who has solved a problem that would have defeated those lesser mortals who lacked his social gifts and his insights into "poor human nature."

What effect on Ida did Philip's letters have? She yearned for companionship*, she regretted that she lacked elegant clothes, pathetically she bought hersel

FOOTNOTE*: See pp. 98, 99, 103 ff. END OF FOOTNOTE.

a "pretty cream-coloured scarf, two veils and a blouse," and wrote "I do like to look nice, especially when I am with Philip.*"

FOOTNOTE*: See page 105. END OF FOOTNOTE.

But if she could not get daily companionship from his letters, surely they made clear his sincerity in wishing to give her support and fresh courage?

It is from these years that Ida's cry from the heart dates — "Has he ever

loved me?", although it should be remembered that her autobiography was written thirty years later and so represents her feelings in sad hindsight rather than of th moment. Her bitterness is difficult to reconcile with Philip's affectionate letter unless one assumes that they offered her, at the time, no support at all and that she discounted them as mere verbiage. Perhaps the truth is that Philip's letters cheered her along at the time but as the months and years slipped by while he remained abroad, her attitude must gradually have altered. She came to realise that he would never make a home for her, that his material aid, like Carlo's, was unpredictable and that each crisis would evoke new passages of purple prose. It says something for both of them that Ida was able to adjust to this and to make something of her own life, and that Philip never lost his urge to write to her affectionate letters, for, after all, many a man could have come to regard Ida as (from his special outlook on women) just a boring dead load and have ceased all relations with her. Not so, Ida and Philip: they exchanged letters regularly and their rare meetings were joyous and bracing reunions.

Therefore, providing that my comparison between Philip's and Harold Wilson's method of coping with crises is allowed to shade the picture, I place Philip's affectionate letters to his credit.

What did Philip think of himself as a husband?

Turn, first, to the Pandora box letters (See page 178 ff.)

I do not know what their impact on Ida was, but they put me in mind of an embarrassed man in the dock, accused on deadly circumstantial evidence, of betraying his trust. His defence was to assert that he had for Ida "a respect, a cult and an affection", which he calls "the deepest love that any man has ever had for a woman in whose company life presented difficulties for various reasons which neither you nor I could control." Surely the words that I have italicised cause a sentence

which starts off with the promise of splendid love to end with a graceless plop. Philip's ~~love~~ "deepest love" seems curiously based, for he goes on to say that as long as he thought that Ida loved him, he found her behaviour incomprehensible, because she lacked "a sense without which no human being has any importance in my eyes. 'If that's the way she loves me — !'... naturally I considered it somewhat arid... I take it that Philip was accusing Ida of sexual frigidity. But this term, now common coin, was unknown even in the psychology books of 1912 and Ida cannot have had any idea of what he was referring to. If Philip was comparing Ida to women like Lily, in whose lives sex is, for as long as they are capable of it — in her eightieth year Ninon de Lenclos is said to have exhausted her lovers — the dominant pre-occupation, he was right. Remember that Ida was of a generation which first learned what sex was on their wedding night. When I look through photograph albums of the Victorian era, it seems to me that many women look resigned and listless and I suspect that they negatively adjusted to, rather than positively delighted in, what they regarded as their "marital duties." From my knowledge of her character, I would not say that Ida was frigid. On the contrary, ~~she~~ Ida had a warm, outgiving personality, and if a husband had initiated her lovingly and gently, she would have enjoyed sex as a normal element in marriage. On the other hand, it would be reasonable to suppose that her resentments against Philip's personality and his actions, which baffled her, led her unconsciously to shy away from the ultimate intimacies with him. Her constant ill-health, which would have made sex a cruel, even dangerous, infliction was, I think, largely a defence mechanism against Philip.

Philip's references to Lily are prevarications, sophistries or irrelevant.

The woman who was betrayed was not you. It was that poor Lily who, to be fair, deserved a better fate than to have met me at all, especially at the moment when I was desperately engaged in the conquest of an unconquerable Ida, in pursuit

of whom my whole being was all set to such an extent that even now I shudder at the thought of the abysses into which I fell each time that, broken by my vain efforts, I stumbled.

The short comment on which is: "Words, words, words." Philip had made his choice. He was already married to Ida. If he was so "all set" in her pursuit, all that he had to do was to send a telegram to Lily: "Thanks for everything. Adieu." Instead, his affair with Lily lasted some eleven months, culminating in his abortive dash from Ida's side to Paris.

I imagine that a jury of women, and indeed of men, would, on the strength of these Pandora letters, find Philip guilty of blaming his infidelities on his wife's shortcomings. But that would be because no ordinary jury ever lived in the same world, upheld the same code or had the same definition of "love" as Philip. It may help to some understanding of Philip if we consider these letters alongside an entry in his diary recording a talk that he had in Berne on June 26, 1919 with ~~an~~ a well-known Englishwoman married to a German of high rank.

"O! The infinite sadness of things!" Mary von X. said to me through her tears this evening. "I am English. I detest the Germans. I will recover my health and my serenity as soon as I set foot on the quay at Folkestone and hear the first porter say 'Luggage, Mum?'.

"But Hans makes my mother an allowance of £2,000 a year, of £500 to my aunt and £700 to my brother. How can I divorce him? He will need me to return to England after peace has been signed: he loves one thing only — hunting. He has supported all my family. How can I protest because he has a mistress? I have lived my life and given the blood of my veins to these Germans.

"I long, however, not to be happy — there is no happiness here on earth - but at least to have the friendship of a sympathetic heart. And since woman must suffer from man, I long to live with a man who will at least say nasty things to me in the language of my own people.

"You don't know what all this means. You are a real gentleman, the chevalier without fear and without reproach, the friend of women and the pride of your family...

"What? You also have deceived your wife, you say? What does that matter? I'll bet that has not made her bitter; I'll bet she is proud of your success with other women.

"No, don't interrupt me! I've known you for years and I know all about your romances.

"Of course your wife has grounds for complaint, but she is not unhappy, because she knows that you are worth the cost of any sorrows — sorrows which have been noble and touching. She has not wept for a lost ideal but for a happiness that was doubtless too short — exactly what I have never known.

"I shudder to think that Hans is the father of my children. I regret that they are his and I hope they don't resemble him, whereas, never doubt it, your wife looks for your well-loved features, your ways, your bearing in her son, because it makes her happy to think that she has brought another like you into the world.

"I exaggerate? Good Heavens, women who have suffered as I have know things as they are, and although I've never met the Countess Ida, I know, I sense that she adores you.

"You say you don't deserve this any more than Hans. But my dear friend, love does not depend on merit or legal justice. Love can only flourish in certain fertile and delicate flower beds in which love's roots can fine their nourishment. What nourishment? Alas! How do you think I can explain things which have never fallen to my lot, whose joys I have never tasted. Only you know them all.

"Talking to you every woman feels consoled to think that a man like you exists I know you won't think I'm propositioning you. You must feel that I'm opening my heart to ease a pain that you are far too busy with your own romances to be able to console, but at least let me rest for a moment in the shelter of your ever-ready and good kindness and I won't be so mean as to hide from you that this brief moment is delightful. You see I'm beginning to cry. I can't cry in front of enemies or those who don't care a rap about me. I sense your friendship; we are of the same blood, from the same background and have the same outlook on life. Good night! I feel I'm going to have a long and pleasant sleep.

The interest of this entry in Philip's diary is its authenticity in recording not (not believe) what Mary von X said to him but what he would have liked to hear her say to him. The one fact that she told him, namely that her husband's infidelities made her marriage unhappy, opened vistas to Philip's imagination. Here was an opportunity to find reasons why his own wife would not merely not mind, but would actually take pride in, and rejoice, over his infidelities.

XXXIV Philip's unconscious: a case study

What is astonishing is, first, the extent to which Philip himself realised that he was constantly adding to the involuted baroque fabric behind which he hid his true self from what he saw as a hostile world and, secondly, his powere of self-analysis in which, from time to time, he reveals much of what he sought to hide He does not let drop, he parades, the clues needed for a case study of him.

The following extracts from two letters are characteristic of themes that Philip repeated throughout his life when writing to "good women", usually older than himself, whom he rejected, as opposed to accessible women, who might be of any age, whose favours he enjoyed.

This dates from his twentyfirst year:

I am not a good man... I have always been lazy, vain, self-indulgent... s I am not an ideal in any way worthy of your love... You are so superior, I so inferior. You are an ideal, I but puerile in my madness and badness... I try to correct my faults but there is a certain frivolity in my character which makes me forgive myself as easily as I do others, so that I live from day to day, playing at life like a child.

Philip can, he goes on, rid himself of any unhappiness by writing it out in a story.

Isn't such frivolity despicable? Can you imagine a man baser than one who is never downcast for more than an hour? Who can forget anything sacred by writing or reading a book, or dancing a waltz or smoking a cigarette? All my good intentions drift away in smoke, drown themselves in champagne or in words... My frivolity always dances like a cork on the waves...

I love you. I love you, but, alas, only in thoughts, words, intentions... The years roll on and I have not given my life that unity and strength on which a man should rest who wishes to carry a woman in his arms safe through life.

In a letter written in 1892, when he was a world-weary stripling of nineteen, Philip says:

I find myself very alone in the world, but with my increasing indifference towards my fellow men and my heart freezing up, I experience the satisfaction, the egoistic pride of Satan alone against God and men. Yes, I find a bitter pleasure in scorning everybody, in trampling on all, making sport of all. In this world of

heedless buffoonery I don an arcane mask of gaiety behind which I conceal myself...

You idealise me, dear friend. How could I ever stay on the peaks to which you have raised me...

Here is Philip Hennessy as he is: he certainly has talent, which, if cultivated, could perhaps ape genius. But indolent as he is, he risks becoming a total failure. His amiability is, of course, not only egoism but egoism with no bounds to it. It is difficult to decide whether he really has a heart, because he is one of those unconscious actors, who work themselves up to portray the most contrary characters — today nobler than nature, tomorrow basest of the base... He pleases everybody because all men are fools whom you take in by laughing with one, weeping with another, dancing with a third, smoking a cigar with a fourth and talking politics with the elderly. These are the sympathies between one egoist and another. The man who took the trouble to analyse me would see at once the chink in my armour: the banality of my character... Great characters have a steel framework... I have nothing but the courtesan's ready compliance. That is the difference between me and my father. He imposes his opinions on others. I have nothing but scorn for my own opinions. My father is loved, because he is noble. I please because I know how to flatter.

The sentences that I have italiscised provide the first key to Philip's unconscious. Like all boys, Philip naturally admired, and sought to model himself on, his father, whom he worshipped from afar as a man of the highest attainments and nobility of character. Like all normal boys, Philip aimed to be one day as great and wonderful as his father. But Will Hennessy steadily distorted Philip's personality by rejecting him, treating his ideas and actions with ridicule and contempt, convincing Philip that he must for ever be amongst the lowest forms of life*.

FOOTNOTE*: Cf. the letter on page 71 in which Philip, aged sixteen, regrets that he is "only an absolutely useless boy." END OF FOOTNOTE.

How does a boy react to such treatment? Every character is a bundle of reflexes conditioned by its environment, with the vital exception that the individua can, by processes that at present escape analysis, choose what he wants to put in his bundle of reflexes. This is the unknown X, the element of free will. Amongst

the innumerable choices open to Philip we may cite two crude opposites as examples: he might have rejected his father's judgment and have chosen to become a member of a religious order in order to devote his life to self-imposed rigours to demonstrate that his father was wrong and that he was capable of the highest good; or he might have accepted his father's judgement and have chosen to obliterate his intolerable image of himself by becoming a dipsomaniac.

Philip's choice produced a Jekyll and Prince-Hyde. He largely accepted his father's judgement that he was amongst the lowest form of life but he sought compensation by imagining himself the descendant of aristocrats, and he looked down from topless towers of indulgence on "poor suffering humanity" in contrast to his own god-like understanding and compassion, far above all such petty jealousies, vanities and self-inflicted heartaches.

But a boy has two parents. What of Philip's mother? Every infant boy passes through an Oedipus complex stage in which he unconsciously wants to kill his father and marry his mother. Given harmonious relations between the parents, and between them and the boy, this stage merges into normal heterosexual life. But Philip's relations with his parents were not in balance. His mother defended and comforted him against his father. From his mother he received all the warmth and approval that his father withheld from him, so that Philip never wholly grew out of his Oedipus complex, part of which manifested itself in his desire to marry a woman older than himself, who would behave towards him more as a mother than as a wife. It is characteristic of an Oedipus subject that once having married his "mother" he unconsciously shrinks in horror from "incest" and turns, as Philip did to mistresses for sexual enjoyment. Philip married a woman eight years older than himself, who within some years looked almost old enough to be his mother. He

could not manage a stable sexual relationship with his wife-mother — "the unconquerable Ida" — who, as he himself said, did not love him in the way which a wife should love a man, who lacked the "sacred fire which would have made of her a wife equal to the mother*". From the first Philip unconsciously recoiled from

FOOTNOTE*: See Pandora letter, page 179. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Ida's arms into those of one Lily after another.

As a grown man he sought the company of women rather than of men, because his mother's attitude had taught him how to win the approval and admiration of women. Since all Will's children were scared of him, they naturally banded together in support of each other, and that Philip was the only boy among girls reinforced his consciousness of women. Moya and Norah* took their cue from their mother and

FOOTNOTE*: His eldest sister, Kathleen, died when she was nineteen. Evidence from letters suggests that she took the same attitude as her sisters. END OF FOOTNOTE.

adored their brother as the embodiment of all the graces.

But mingled with Philip's love of women was the fear of being betrayed by them. After he had won his way to a woman's bed, sooner or later he withdrew because he did not dare to trust himself to any one woman. There is evidence that his fear of betrayal arose from his seduction at a very early age by a maid servant. The authority for this is Philip's mother who, in telling my wife the fact, offered it as an explanation of Philip's adult sexual life. Charlotte discovered what was going on between Philip and the maid. She dismissed the girl. Knowing Charlotte's character and reactions and how she could fly off the handle — having on one unforgettable occasion been the object of her anger — I think it

certain that she gave Philip a wrathful dressing down. Yet her attitude in telling the story to my wife implied that she thought Philip more sinned against than sinning and, here again, basing myself on her attitude to me after she had expended her anger, I think it probable that she left Philip with the impression that she thought it more the girl's fault than his. In short, Philip's first experience of sex taught him that (1) the act was as shameful as it was wonderful, (2) it was the woman's fault that his own beloved mother was angry with him, and not least (3) had he restrained himself and ceased, instead of persisting in, these forbidden delights, he would have avoided discovery and disaster. The moral to Philip's unconscious was: once you have won a woman, do not linger with her.

The average man judges others as he judges himself. Now, we have seen from Philip's self-analysis (See especially pp. 105 and ~~229~~ 230) that he despised himself. It follows that he had difficulty in loving others. He never found a woman to whom he could surrender in mutual trust. In what seems to me a perceptive piece of self-analysis, Philip says in his dialogue with his alter ego, the Prince-Hyde that would be sorry if he awoke the Sleeping Beauty (page 176) to find that she claimed him as the Prince Charming of her dreams, that the Prince was determined ro "send her back to sleep in order to keep her for ever dreaming of marvellous new awakenings." Philip warns the Prince that Roxane had reached the point of taking for granted the Prince's tours de force in gallantry; to which the Prince replies that he was not out merely to dazzle or to seduce but that he worshipped an almost impersonal obsession: love for its own sake. Here, I think, Philip reached a rock bottom truth about himself, because thereafter he makes the Prince take refuge in an involved counter-attack on women. I refer to the passage (pages 176-177) beginning "By the throb of the poignant emotion that women arouse in me" down to

"No woman has ever loved me... They have loved love's portrait..." This passage makes better sense if it is read not as much as a description of ~~Mother~~ women but of himself. He took to love as some men take to the bottle or to gambling to escape the memory of a cruel sickness — his "incest" with his mother. He needed the enchantments and diversions of every kind of mystic act, in which he himself played a leading part, to the applause and appreciation denied him by his male father but accorded him by his female mother and sisters. He, conscious of his moral ugliness, needed the mirror of another personality in which to see himself beautiful. He had never loved any woman. He had loved love's portrait.

I do not see that the foregoing is so much an indictment of Philip as a description of his disturbed psychological inheritance in which, I repeat, there exists the element of choice and free will. In his defence, it can be said that in his self-analyses (Cf. p. ~~225~~ 230) he over-dramatises his choice of Satan. Had he really chosen evil without qualification, he might have embraced a career of crime and ended in prison or on the gallows. Instead, handicapped by his psychological load and the indulgence of his mother, who kept him in pocket money until his marriage, he plunged in 1907, at the late age of thirtyfour, into the struggle to earn a living. He did not become flotsam and jetsam on life's flood but eventually got himself into Lloyds Bank, where he did good work for eighteen years; from the viewpoint of an economist, he made his contribution to society and justified his existence. In his retirement, it was a success for a man of his pleasure-loving and luxurious tastes that he made no debts and lived within his small pension. He was, in his own way, faithful to two women — Ida, his mother, and Roxane, his mistress, — whom to the best of his psychological ability he he supported and loved. Which brings me to my next point: it takes two to make

a marriage or a ménage. It is true that Philip made both Ida and Roxane suffer, but they, too, made their choices: Ida took him for husband and, despite all, never left him; Roxane took him for lover and, despite all, never left him.

I have ~~her~~ said all that I know about Roxane's background (See pages 129/130, 188) and cannot add to it.

There remains Ida.

XXXV Ida's unconscious: a case study

Ida's childhood experience with her parents presents both a curious similarity and contrast with that of Philip. Whereas he, a boy, had an affectionate mother and was rejected by his father, she, a girl, had an affectionate father and was rejected by her mother.

Throughout her life Ida Seilern accused her daughter by word of mouth and in letters past counting, of having no heart, i.e. of failing to love her mother; this was probably an unconscious jealous resentment of her daughter's affection for her father. The result (as we saw*) was that Ida suffered a recurrent

FOOTNOTE*: See page 7 ~~and particularly page~~ . END OF FOOTNOTE.

nightmare in which she faced her mother in agony, filled with a sense "of helplessness, bitterness, even resentment... I seek to resist my mother's domination, her peremptory orders and arguments, full of evasions and excuses... But when I meditate on her character and her life, I am filled with indulgence and pity. My resentment fades."

This passage suggests that out of the innumerable possible choices of reaction to her mother's persecution Ida chose so deep a resentment, that made her feel so guilty, that she hid it behind a facade of kindness, charity and forgiveness and reasonableness, which was a form of propitiation. The extract quoted above is typical of Ida's many references in her autobiography to her mother in that it begins with a criticism and ends with a charitable apology for her mother.

Ida's attitude towards her father was conditioned by her mother's constant criticisms of his behaviour (See page 5ff) ~~particularly pages 5/6~~. In addition one of Ida's earliest recollections was an occasion when her father behaved unwisely. Her mother sent her to him to be punished for some offence. Hugo

beat his daughter and then, stricken with remorse, caressed her. So that Ida's unconscious associated her father with suffering and love — the masochist's reaction.

For most of her girlhood, Ida was baffled by the contradictions between (a) her mother's complaints against her father and (b) what she saw of her father's appeasing attitude towards her mother and affection towards her and her brother. The first unconscious conclusion that she reached was that men are baffling, incomprehensible. The second, which came as she began better to understand the relations between her parents, was one of deep guilt towards her father for having allowed herself to think so badly of him since her earliest childhood. It followed that she unconsciously sought to marry her father in order that she might expiate her guilt for having in her formative years rejected him in favour of her mother.

To attribute Ida's marriage to this unconscious motive is not in contradiction with the speculations offered on page 18. Those would have been the reasons that Ida could have given herself on the conscious level; but merely to state them — to escape from her mother, to have children, etc., — implies the strength of the unconscious motive that I have suggested, because she could have given herself those reasons for marrying at any time during the eleven long years that had elapsed since she broke off her engagement with Stash, whereas she waited until she had a man with the characteristics that her unconscious sought. As for her rejection of Stash, while readily admitting the influence on the conscious level of her mother's nagging, it seems probable that fundamentally her unconscious also rejected him; had she really wished to marry him, she would have made a stand and rebelled against her mother, just as when Philip came along she rebelled successfully against the strong opposition of her brother and of the Hennessys.

Characteristic of Ida's psychology was her reaction to Bizet's Carmen. Whenever I played a Carmen record, she said with a degree of indignation that showed how deeply the subject touched her feelings about men, women and love: "No woman has the right to treat a man as Carmen treated José, provoking him, scorning him, and then deserting him. José was right to kill her. She deserved the punishment!"

Note, first, that both Ida and Philip respond to the rejection of one parent by choosing to cope with other potential rejecters (i.e. people who make themselves unpleasant in life) by appeasing them. Ida by kindness and turning the other cheek, Philip by flattery. Note, secondly, that there is nothing intrinsically wrong in kindness or in flattery, which become weaknesses only if used to exaggeration as a substantial part of a defence mechanism to the exclusion of firmness. Ida's kindness in surrendering all her capital to Philip was propitiation to the point of self-inflicted suffering. Philip's flattering letters were propitiation to the point of self-indulgence; he substituted words for action.

Reading between the lines of Ida'a autobiography, one senses that despite her conscious efforts to be fair to her mother, she unconsciously over-colours the picture in favour of her father. She does not bring out the significance of certain facts which emerge from the mass of Hugo's letters to his wife and daughter namely, that Hugo was brought up to no profession but was supported by his mother (See page 6), that he was financially feckless, that he kept his wife's dowry and gambled it away, that he never made a home for his family, that from the age of thirtyseven when his mother died, he embarked on a serious struggle to earn his living by seeking to raise finance for one invention after another each

more full of promise of a fortune than the last (see page 7). He died at the age of fortysix without having made his fortune or provided a home for his wife and children.

The resemblances between Hugo Seilern and Philip Hennessy as husbands are so striking that one is led to conclude that just as Philip unconsciously sought his mother in Ida, so Ida sought her father in Philip in whom she found a charmer, who treated her masochistically, whose point of view and attitudes towards life simultaneously baffled her and made her feel guilty of lack of sympathy and understanding (Cf. pp, 5, 111, 112), who spent her dowry, who never made a home for her, and who at a crisis in his life struggled seriously to earn money by launching a series of golden projects which always failed. The only divergence between Hugo and Philip is that Hugo died before he found a job suited to his capabilities, whereas Philip succeeded in ~~doing so.~~ finding one.

If Hugo Seilern and his wife could not live together neither could they live apart. The volume of letters that Hugo wrote his Ida rivals the volume that Philip wrote his. Both couples visited each other and enjoyed each other's company at intervals. The divergence here is that the pleasure of Hugo's visits to his Ida were apt to be cut short by her moods, whereas the joyousness of Philip's visits to his Ida ended smoothly when unconsciously they had each had enough of the other and wished to return to their own lives. The proof of this seems to be that when in 1914 Philip at last acquired a settled income, which together with Ida's allowance, would have added up to a more than comfortable total, he could have realised the dream that he had so often described to Ida: that they should set up in a sensibly sized house together with all the family furniture and pictures around them. But that by then was water over the dam. The truth was that neithe

then wanted a home together. The fleeting first years of their marriage when they had lived as man and wife and enjoyed Balzac and Anatole France were twelve very long years ago. They had learned to live apart and like it. Ida was now fifty years of age. For his part, Philip had every wish to continue to entertain the profoundest respect for her and to worship her on the highest pedestal -- from afar -- but her presence would have been awkwardly in the way of his leisure-time pursuits. In addition to such conscious reasoning, the psychological case history of each leads to the same conclusion that each unconsciously preferred to enjoy the other in letters and occasional reunions.

XXXVI "We let happiness go by" -- Ida

After Ida's death I came across the following headed "Page found among the manuscripts of a friend deceased":

Escorted by light clouds, which reflect its last rays, the sun has just disappeared. Shadows slowly creep over the landscape, climbing up the trees topped with crests of trembling golden leaves.

I am alone in my room. Familiar objects fade gradually into the darknes My thoughts float aimlessly, skimming memories, faces, carrying me back over the years...

Noiselessly the door opens. My father appears, dressed in black, his figure slightly bent, his smile sad and sweet. He stops, looks at me uncertainl — a question in his eyes. I fling myself into his arms. I hug him with all my heart.

"At last you come! Have you felt what I feel? I have called you ~~so~~ Ac often, wanting with all I have to tell you what I never told you when we were together. Why did I not? The misinterpretations of your feelings disconcerted me, shut me up. The idea that you had made Maman unhappy troubled me. Your atheism shocked my religious convictions: youth is so easily uncompromising.

FOOTNOTE*: As a Free Mason Hugo was deist, not an atheist. END OF FOOTNOTE.

Life has taught me that prejudices or convictions, even if antagonistic, should not be allowed to seal the heart, to dismiss pity.

"I did, however, notice that Maman sometimes was unjust to you, misjudgi your motives. She listened only to her resentment when she was upset or angry. She should have listened to her heart, for she had a good heart.

"How I remember and admire the dignified silence with which you received the hard humiliating things she said to you in front of me, the significance of which I did not always grasp. I was so naive then...

"With what dauntless courage you faced the agonies of your last illness!

"I was unhappy because I was ill at ease, not simple and natural with yo because I failed in affection and sympathy towards you, because I was not gay an cheerful with you, especially when you were ill.

"Saddled with morbid emotions, completely without bearings, the wings of my initiative clipped, I had lost the ability clearly to distinguish the true from the false. I could not find the way to your heart.

"Father, we let happiness go by, all three of us."

My father's figure straightens itself. His clothes are no longer black. His face is radiant.

I am alone. The silence of the night enfolds me. Outside the stars twinkle.

Sad, but relieved of the burdens which weighed on me, I think of the miseries and sufferings, which human beings create out of nothing with so much waste of energy and precious faculties, with a persistence that weeps aloud at being compelled to perpetuate vile and cruel actions. Poor humans, who chase mirages, who sacrifice happiness to chimeras, to shabby sentiments.

On the back of the foregoing Ida had written: "If this is ever published I do not want it known that it was to me that this vision appeared". She did not want it attributed to her, because she did not wish to seem to be casting reproaches on her mother, and because, unconsciously, she was revealing the secret of her relationship with two men — her father and her husband — who evoked in her the same emotions.

Philip, in his heart of hearts, as we have repeatedly seen, unconsciously approached Ida, "the good woman", whom he respected, "with a question in his eyes". Ida longed to fling herself in his arms to show how she loved him, yet she could not, because "I failed in sympathy and affection towards you... because saddled with morbid emotions, completely without bearings, the wings of my initiative clipped, I had lost the ability clearly to distinguish true from false. I could not find the way to your heart."

Contrary to Ida's wishes I have disclosed that she wrote this vision, because it provides a perfect epitaph for her father, her mother, her husband and herself, which may evoke compassion for four people who "let happiness go by."

Appendix

THE STORY OF A NEW IDEA

The Story of A New Idea was published in French in both Calme et Santé (Paris) in March, 1935, and in the Abinger Chronicle in 1940.

I append it here as characteristic of Ida's limpid thought and style of writing.

Ida's New Idea is identifiable with her own simplicity and fortitude in the face of difficulties and with her own loving kind conviction that Goodness and Truth will prevail, providing that the hostile and stupid are treated with forebearance — a touching faith which, it is conceivable, may prevail under circumstances that do occasionally occur in history.

Born in a calm and withdrawn atmosphere, she grows up surrounded by friends and pleasant companions, until, strong and beautiful, she wishes to fulfill her mission in the world.

She starts out trembling but confident, full of enthusiasm.

At first a little fearful, she soon goes forward bravely towards those who seem made to understand her.

From the first, the coldness of the looks cast upon her, make her shiver. She advances nevertheless, certain of success, conscious only of the purity of her intentions.

She bruises herself against ill-will, irony, red tape and prejudices.

Stupid sarcasm, hatred and envy let loose their poisoned arrows.

All these influences, sometimes singly, sometimes jointly, insult her, throw stones — even mud.

Pale, she nevertheless retains her calm in the face of mockery and invective.

Looking around, her eyes opened wide by surprise and suffering, she seeks support, an encouraging word, and moves to a quarter whence neither stones nor threats assail her — to find that egotistical indifference and coldness do not even trouble to answer her but continue on their way with a shrug.

She beats a slow retreat, bearing herself proudly despite her grievous wounds.

She withdraws. The hostile and stupid crowd, disdainful and cruel, continue to scoff, to treat her as a stranger, as crazy, as an enemy.

Love and sympathy, her birthright, she has encountered the ill-will of brute beasts.

She did not fear stony paths but the crowd stoned her.

She dreamt of conquests but had to flee before vituperation.

The few whom she won over are ridiculed, despised.

Slowly she climbs back to the refuge which saw her birth and seeks the safety of her mother's arms.

"Why, mother, have they done this to me? Why do they want to kill me?

"Child, do not despair," replies Thought. "You will understand later. Poor humanity, if they are selfish, jealous, cruel, it is because they have suffered at the age when they should have encountered only love, joy and serenity. If their intelligence is closed to truth, to ideas, to new conceptions, it is because in childhood they were prisoners, bowed down by excessive burdens which prevented them from taking flight, which presented Knowledge to them not as a friend but as a tyrant. But what you have done has not been lost: Goodness and Truth sow seeds which will germinate.

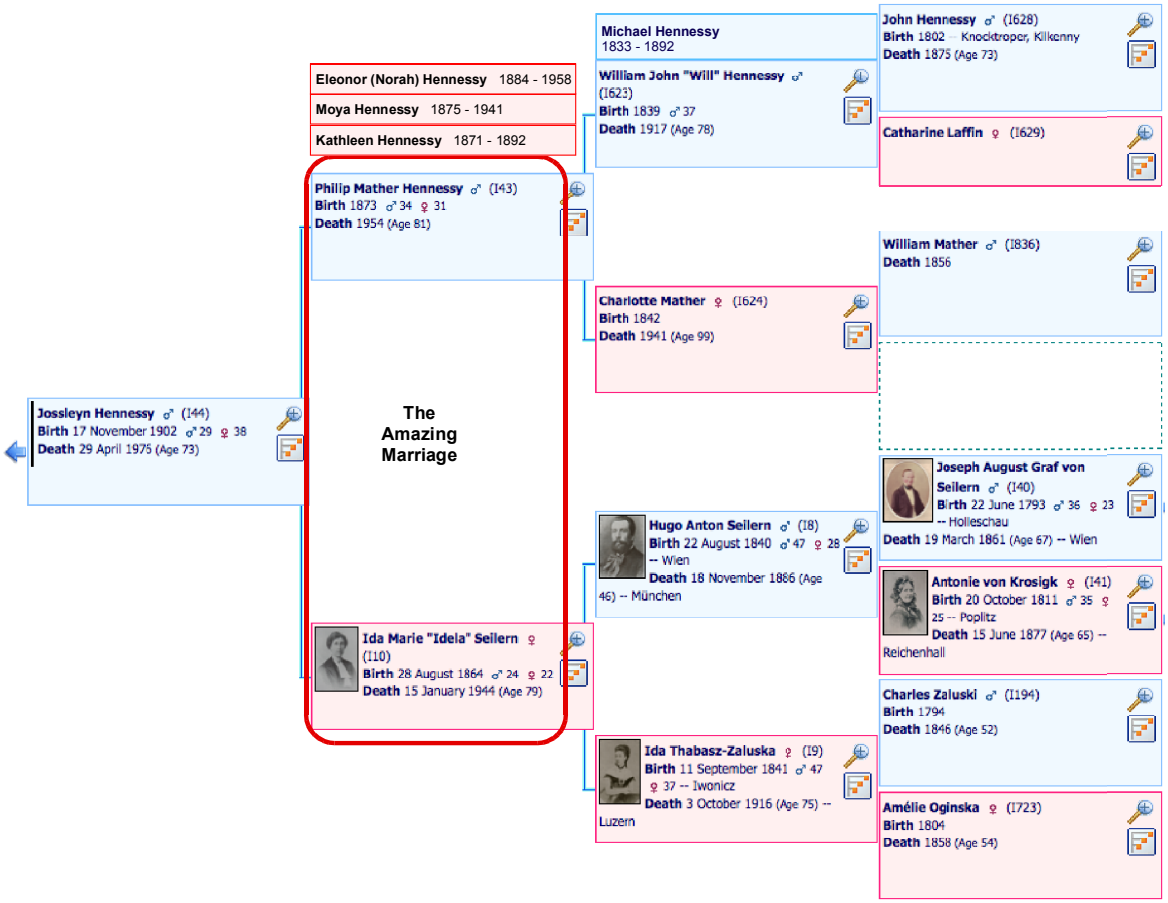
"Forget, forgive the disdain, the insults! Let bitterness find no place in your soul.

"Rest so that you may be strong when the hour strikes for you to resume your work. It will come. You will be acclaimed, crowned with flowers. Sleep! I will watch over you."

Thus spake Thought to her daughter Truth.

Family Tree

Pedigree Tree:
Jossleyn Hennessy



Hugo Anton Seilern 1840 - 1886

Hennessy – Seilern Tree