

'JUST REMEMBERING'

by

MONA RYAN

Chapter One¹

This is the story of my mother - the story of Peg of the Gay Nineties². I remember how I loved to hear that oft-repeated story, bits and pieces here and there all through the years, told to me by, my mother, and by others who knew and loved her so well. That late Victorian era of the Gay Nineties will forever stand in my memory as the most romantic, thrilling and colourful period throughout the ages of time. Peg - christened Margaret Maria Magdalene - first opened her blue eyes to the light of a warm November day in Hobart, Tasmania, being at that time the youngest child in a family of four - Joseph, the eldest, about seven or eight years old, May two years younger, and Edward a small boy of two³. At the age of six months, Peg was brought to the mainland, where the family took up residence at Ballarat⁴. Her parentage was Irish - a mixed marriage - her mother alone following the teachings of the Catholic Faith. Her father, Edward Coleman⁵, was a stern North-countryman, and Peg soon had cause to fear his strict discipline - not, it is true, on her own behalf, but on that of her beloved brother, Joe, and the highly-strung May, who, unfortunately very frequently incurred his wrath. Peg herself was the acknowledged pet of the family, and indeed the nickname of 'Pet' clung to her for many years. Her sweet disposition and quiet manner endeared her to all the family even the stern father often relaxing in her presence. Her mother she adored with a great and tender love, doing all in her power to help with the baby sister and brother, Edith and Gilbert, as the years passed. Peg dearly loved all her family, as they her, but a shadow was soon to fall upon them when Joe, unable to stand any longer the many unjust punishments meted out to him by his father, ran away from home, eventually making his way to Queensland⁶. This almost broke his mother's heart – and incidentally, Peg's. Many times she told me about the night when standing before the fire at bed - time, her nightgown caught alight and she was severely burned. It was her dear brother Joe who nursed her in his strong young arms, and comforted her during her long convalescence. Nobody ever knew how greatly she missed him, and longed for his return.

¹ The footnotes have been added by Ray Ison where particular claims or interpretations are not supported by the research evidence or where some aspect of the narrative has triggered a question worthy of further research.

² Peg married in October 1890 and the late 1880s and early 1890s were a period of recession; perhaps what is actually being described are the 'gay 1880s' or perhaps their lives were not affected by the recession?

³ The records actually show that Peg was the third child – she was older than her brother Edward who was born in Ballarat in 1872. Interestingly there are no other mentions of her brother – Mona's Uncle Edward in this account.

⁴ If Peg was six months old, the family must have left Tasmania in about April 1870.

⁵ Peg's father was Daniel, not Edward, Coleman. He was probably protestant but he was not from the North – his family came from Co. Galway.

⁶ As a result of seeing this account I have been able to locate and obtain details about Joe from Queensland.

When the time came for Peg to go to school, another division in the family occurred. May had been sent to the Loreto Convent, Mary's Mount⁷, but when Peg's turn came her father insisted that she be sent to the Scotch College then a school for both boys and girls⁸. This was another heartbreak for Peg, who had a very inborn love of her mother's Catholic Faith, and whose earnest wish it had been to attend the Convent School and be with the nuns. She was denied all this. Often she told me of the day when May made her First Holy Communion - of how it rained and rained, and they had to take a cab to the Convent with, May trying to keep her white frock spotless and dry. How Peg longed to be one of the little First Communicants! She was instead debarred from instruction in the Catholic Faith, but, never would she miss Mass on Sunday, and, with her mother's help learned all she could about the religion she loved so dearly.

One terrible night the home in Ballarat caught fire, and was burned to the ground, the family barely escaping with their lives⁹. Everything they prized was lost in this disastrous fire, and for some time afterwards they made their home with Peg's maternal grandmother, Mrs. D'Arcy, who lived in Ballarat at that time.

During these early years; Peg developed a great talent for music, and played the piano exceedingly well. A teacher of the harp also offered to teach her that beautiful instrument, and she learned to play it well and love it dearly. Unfortunately, though, harps were very expensive, and it was yet another of Peg's disappointments that she was never to know the happiness of owning one of her own. Thus her talent in that direction had to lapse when circumstances permitted her no longer the use of her teacher's instrument.

It is strange to note here that May, who had so many opportunities at the Convent, became more and more dissatisfied with her life at home. She rebelled constantly against the restrictions placed upon her by the strictness of her father. She was nearing the age of sixteen when she met a young theatrical entrepreneur named Joseph Brown. She was infatuated, and, knowing well that her father would never give his consent, she ran away after her sixteenth birthday, and married Joseph Brown. This was a dreadful shock to her poor mother, and one from which she never fully recovered. At the early age of forty-two she fell ill of the dreaded cholera, and slipped away from her little family while the Church bells were ringing one sad Sunday evening¹⁰.

⁷ The Loreto sisters arrived in Ballarat, Australia in 1875; Mary Gonzaga Barry sailed to Australia on the 'Somersetshire' from Ireland to make the first Loreto foundation in Australia at Loreto, Mary's Mount, Sturt St., Ballarat. She left Ireland with only 9 companions, answering a call from the first Bishop of Ballarat, to provide education for the young ladies of the colony (see http://www.loreto.org.au/about/h_gonzaga_barry.html and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loreto_College,_Victoria)

⁸ Scotch College is actually in Melbourne, founded 1851; this was possibly Ballarat College, founded in 1864 by the Minister of St Andrew's Kirk, Rev William Henderson, in a brick building beside his church in Sturt Street.

⁹ It should be possible to find reports of this fire in the local press – knowing the date is the difficulty.

¹⁰ Annie Coleman died on 13th MARCH 1887 - at the time of her death her children were Joseph 23, Ann (May) 19, Margaret 17, Edward 15, Edith 6 and Gilbert 3; May was married four years earlier on the 29th March 1883. If Peg went to live with May and Joseph after her mother's death she would have stayed with them for just under three years before her marriage.

I shall always remember with what sadness of heart I heard from my mother the story of that terrible night when the light went out in her little world. She who, of all earthly loves, loved her mother best was left at the tender age of fourteen - to face life without that dear mother's help and guidance. Her little heart was broken. I remember how she cried herself to sleep every night for twelve months afterwards, and my mind would go back through all those years to that lonely, bereft little girl, and my heart would ache for her because that same little girl was now my own precious mother, and I felt that the very worst thing that could happen to me in this world would be the loss of her.

The small sister and brother had to be taken care of, and Peg did her best to fill the dear mother's place in the home - but what is home without a mother? After some time had elapsed, Peg's father married a widow with a family of her own, and she took to her heart and mothered the two youngest children, bringing them up indeed as her own. Peg's married sister May, now living in Melbourne, offered her a home with her, so Peg left Ballarat for good, and came to live with May, her husband, and small son Loris in the City¹¹. Theirs was a strangely exciting life - spent mostly in hotels and boarding houses in Melbourne and Sydney, as Joseph Brown's business took him backwards and forwards from Capital city to Capital city.

Peg was still in mourning for her beloved mother when first she came to live in Melbourne, and it was a long time before she could take any interest in her surroundings. However, her music soon brought her before the notice of guests at the Hotel, and she was always in great demand, playing accompaniments etc. She also had the happy knack of being able to play any tune she once heard, and could remember the whole score of a Musical Comedy on returning from a performance. This greatly enhanced her popularity - it was the age of the Musical Evening!

Peg was living then at Henningham's Hotel - now the Occidental, on the corner of Exhibition and Collins Streets, and became very friendly with the Henningham girls, who were somewhere about her own age. One afterwards became Mrs Armytage, I believe, and another (Adelaide) whom I met many years later, married Edwin Lester, well-known character actor. It was good for Peg to have friends of her own age, and they managed to have quite a lot of fun together. Peg also took up painting, and so found plenty to occupy her spare time. There was her young nephew Loris, too, with whom she spent the greater part of the day, helping to amuse the lonely child in many ways. I never wearied of listening to the tale of those happy months spent at Henningham's. I loved to hear all about the many and varied types of people whom Peg met during that time, and of funny little incidents that happened - the night, for instance, when May, overcome by the conversation of an insufferable bore, made a grimace behind his back, only to discover to her horror that he was looking at her through a large mirror on the wall. I remember also about the coming of the English Test Cricketers to stay at Henningham's - how they begged Peg to barrack for them and wear their colours - pale blue, I think. One even went so far as to offer her a small gold bird brooch, with which to attach the colours, stating dramatically that he would trample it underfoot should she refuse - and all that in an age when young ladies dared not accept other than flowers or chocolates from a male! I cannot remember what Peg

¹¹ Loris Coleman Leopold Brown was born on the 1st April 1884, at Paddington, NSW; he died 26th January 1949, at Kensington. NSW)

did eventually on that occasion, but I do know that it all sounded extremely romantic to my childish ears.

The most romantic thing of all to my mind, however, in those far off days, was the way in which the girls prepared to go to a Ball. Preparations really commenced ages before, when shops were visited, and colours and materials carefully chosen for the ball dress. Then came the exciting though tedious, visits to the dress maker for the many fittings, until at last the box arrived home, and there, amid many folds of crisp white tissue paper lay the dress in all its glory. I remember Mother telling me of one superb one - pink and apple green striped satin, with angel sleeves of nun's veiling. I used to really see that dress in my mind's eye, and to picture my lovely young mother encased in its soft folds.

The great day of days would dawn at last. Hours before night-fall the preparations would commence. On the bed would be spread the dress, stockings, shoes, and all the things that were to go on underneath, while the happy miss luxuriated in a perfumed bath, her eyes sparkling with anticipation of the forthcoming night's festivities. Throughout all this happy speculating too ran a feeling of trepidation as to whether or not that little white programme, with its dangling coloured pencil, might be satisfactorily filled. Yes, those were the days of programme dances - and how romantic they were, too! One had the little programmes all around one's dressing table mirror for months afterwards - and woe betide the small brother or sister who dared take the pencils!

Now the bath is over and the time has come for the happy girl to attire herself in spotless array - the lacy camisole threaded with satin bebe ribbon, the filmy petticoat with its many rows of lace and insertion and satin rosettes, the fine openwork stockings and slippers of soft satin, the soles of which arc so velvety smooth when rubbed against one's cheek. Finally, over the carefully dressed hair, the ball dress itself a masterpiece of sartorial ingenuity. A moment of hectic suspense! Will the hooks and eyes at the tiny waist meet? Oh, they must! One has religiously starved oneself for at least a day! Ah! a happy sigh of relief when all is at last securely hooked, and one can breathe freely again - or can one? Well, maybe not quite freely.

Peg made a lovely picture as she stood before her mirror putting the finishing touches to her toilette. She was now in her fresh eighteenth year, with the fresh bloom of youth on her soft smooth cheeks¹². Her hair of golden brown was close cropped, clinging in short soft curls to her small head not unlike the curly cut of to-day. Her mirror pictured a generous mouth, rather sad, framing a perfect set of strong white teeth, a well shaped nose, and large and lovely eyes of deepest blue. Her neck and shoulders were satiny cream against the deeper toning of her gown, making altogether a most delightful study.

Evidently satisfied with her reflection, Peg slowly drew on her long evening gloves of white kid, and wrapped the pale pink "fascinator" of finest Shetland wool about her head. Picking up her long hooded cloak she threw it over one arm, and taking the small beaded bag and ivory fan from her dressing table, proceeded to descend to the foyer, where her chaperone was already awaiting her. Outside they step into the

¹² This was about one year after her mother's death.

hansom cab drawn up to the kerb. Oh! the hansom cab of long ago! What a romantic vehicle was that! Three people could sit side by side in its luxurious interior. Rounded glass door's in front would be automatically operated by the driver from his precarious little seat up near the roof at the rear of the cab, forming a kind of apron of protection for the passengers, and the rubber tyres would roll smoothly along the road to the accompaniment of the gentle clip-clop of the horses' hoofs. Arrived at its destination, the doors would again open mysteriously to enable the occupants to alight. All very thrilling - and how very different from the rush and tear of the taxi of today.

One had to be early at the Ball in those days, so that one might have ample opportunity of filling one's programme before the first dance. (Nowadays I see my sons setting out for a Ball in the vicinity of ten o'clock or thereabouts. How hopeless would have been their position in those days! Chaperones and their charges lined the walls, the girls pretending an unawareness and aloofness they were indeed far from feeling looking anywhere but towards the groups of black clad, much mustached young males at the doorways. Then, with many a flutter of the fan (and incidentally of the heart), one became aware of' the approach of a prospective partner.

Peg had no trouble whatever in filling her programme. Being artistic to her fingertips, it is no cause for wonder that she was an excellent dancer, and did not lack partners. She loved dancing, and always enjoyed herself at the many' balls of the Melbourne season. In those days, apart from the theatre, there was very little evening entertainment other than dancing , and so one naturally studied it as a fine art, and did one's best to excel in all its points. Dancing, therefore, held a prominent place in Peg's life at this period, and it was during the dancing season of her nineteenth year that she had her photograph taken by one of Melbourne's leading photographers. Bead' blinds had just then become one of fashion's latest decrees, and it was looking through one of these that Peg's picture was taken. This was an experiment on the part of the; photographer. It was a great success, and is still the photo I love best of my mother. The expression on the sweet young face is particularly sad, portraying only too clearly the fact that Peg had known great sorrow during the course of her eighteen years of life. I believe that the photographer had this photograph displayed in his window for many months, and I particularly remember an incident in connection with it which happened many years later. My mother one night, while in the company of my two sisters and myself, met an old friend of those days, to whom she introduced us. Looking rather critically at us, he remarked that we would never be as good looking as our mother had been as a girl, and went on to tell mother how he had seen that same photograph in the window, and had gone in and purchased one for himself! I can still remember mother bridling with indignation at the "insult" to her precious girls, but we just loved it. There was no greater complement one could pay us than to say that we resembled that dear mother we loved so well.

While on the subject of photographs, it was while Peg was strolling along Collins St. one day that her eye was suddenly arrested by the portrait - displayed very prominently in the window of a photographer - of a very handsome young man. She told me often of how she then straight away fell in love with that pictured face, and decided there and then that that was the man she would like to marry.

Not long afterwards - they were living then in the New Treasury Hotel, Spring St., opposite the Treasury Gardens - Peg and her sister May were enjoying, in the privacy of their sitting room, some pork pies which they had been unable to resist buying that afternoon. Suddenly, much to their consternation, a knock came to the door and it opened to admit a Mr Belcher, whom they knew well and with him - of all people! - the man of the photograph! Peg, trying vainly to rid herself of the pork pie could scarcely believe her eyes. He was introduced to her as Edward Hyde McGuinness, of H.M. Customs, and her first reaction was one of disappointment because he was fair - not dark, as he appeared in the photograph!

Peg as may well be imagined, had no lack of suitors, and it was at about this time that she was attracted by a Mr D----, who was indeed vary assiduous in his attentions. However, her meeting with Edward McGuinness caused her to doubt very much her feeling towards Mr D----. She was indeed glad when the time came for the family to make one of its periodical visits to Sydney, as she felt that absence would enable her to study her own mind more fully. She had been seeing quite a lot of Edward since their meeting, and the oftener they met the more she felt herself drawn towards him. He was indeed as handsome as his photograph, possessing as he did almost perfect features, fine eyes and fair waving hair and mustache. He dressed faultlessly in the fashion of the day - morning coat, striped trousers, top hat, stick and gloves - and possessed a very great sense of humour, as evidenced by the twinkle in his eye. For all his dandified appearance, however, he was fond of all kinds of sport especially rowing, and could handle any horse, driving a buggy and pair or tandem with the best. I remember mother telling me of an incident in Elizabeth St one day. Edward (more familiarly called "Mac") was passing a lane where some horses attached to a large van were playing up considerably, with the driver trying vainly to bring them under control. Dropping his stick, Mac grabbed the horses heads, bringing them finally to a standstill, amid the cheers of the gaping crowd. Nevertheless Mac was a dandy of his day, and, together with his inseparable friends, Mr Belcher and Mr Priestly was often to be seen on the Block at the fashionable hour.

“The Block” was an exciting place in those days. One walked up and down, meeting or bowing to friends and acquaintances, and displaying one’s best finery, and it was all very thrilling. The face of the Block has changed a lot since those days. Even the Paris Cafe has gone. What a fashionable rendezvous it was! I can remember my Uncle Gilbert taking me to dine there when I was very small, and I can still see the bewildering array of implements arranged on either side of my plate, and feel again the awful apprehension as to what might happen if I should miss a course and lose count of the various knives, forks, etc. as I used them - working from the outside in¹³. As far as I can remember, nothing did happen, so I must have managed alright.

In those days one "did" the Block regularly. It was a tradition and one of Melbourne’s famous institutions, like the Melbourne Cup. My two sisters when very small girls were found by my mother one day walking around and around a huge block of red gum, which they had somehow managed to drag from the wood-shed. When asked what on earth they were doing, they replied in all seriousness “We’re

¹³ Her Uncle, Gilbert Coleman – if Mona was four or five at this time it would have been around 1904-5.

doing the Block, Mummie". They had no idea of course what "doing the Block" meant, but they often heard the expression used by their elders.

How much quieter life must have been in those days! Just imagine only cabs, hansom, buggies and carriages parading up and down beautiful Collins St. instead of the noise and confusion of the traffic of to-day!

While in Sydney, Peg's feeling for Mr. D---- gradually faded, while that for Edward grew steadily stronger. On their return to Melbourne the family took up residence in Princess Terrace, off St Kilda Road, but it eventually came back to the City to board at "Daylesford House" (now "Cairo" I think), just below St Patrick's Cathedral. Whether through coincidence or not I cannot remember, but at this boarding house Mac also lived and the young couple met more frequently than before. Although seated at tables far apart in the huge dining room, Mac would do everything in his power to attract Peg's attention, tapping spoons and forks on the table, etc. until poor Peg would find great difficulty in restraining her laughter.

As the happy weeks went by, Mac and Peg discovered their mutual love and so, on one soft summer evening they plighted their troth. Peg was now just twenty - Mac her senior by twelve years - and they were married at St. Patrick's Cathedral in the Spring of that year¹⁴.

I always felt it to be a matter of regret that, my mother, who would have been such a beautiful bride, was married in her travelling dress of dove grey. However, be that as it may, she was a very happy little bride. They spent their honeymoon at Daly's Hotel, Healesville, afterwards coming to live in their lovely new eight-roomed villa in Canterbury.

Housekeeping was a new venture for Peg who had had no experience in that direction. Her first maid was an Irish girl of 28 (eight years older than Peg) who knew far more about everything than her young mistress. One day Peg could not find her Cashmere Bouquet soap, and on enquiring of Maggie if she had seen it was told that "Oh yes. Mum, I used it myself - and mind you, Mum, it isn't everyone I'd use soap after. However they managed to keep the peace, and got along very well all things considered.

Peg loved being mistress of her own home, and revelled in her importance. She also loved the social life about her, making many good friends amongst, her neighbours. Some of these friendships were to last throughout most of her life - particularly that of Mr. Anthony Loughnan and his sister. Their lovely home at "Pinemont", Ringwood, in later years affording our family many happy holidays. Sometimes she gave select little dinner parties for her own and her husband's friends, and altogether enjoyed life in her new surroundings.

Not many months after their marriage, Mac bought Peg a beautiful piano of her own, and this, of course, brought her endless joy, for while ever she could play she was

¹⁴ They were married on 29th October 1890 by Thomas Donaghy; Peg's brother-in-law, Joseph Brown (possibly the best man), married to her elder sister Annie May, and May Watson signed as witnesses at their wedding. I wonder if Peg's father and step-mother, Emily Coleman (nee Wigley) attended the wedding?

happy. Soon, however, she had other interests to fill her days, and just before Springtime came again her first baby was born - a lovely little girl whom she proudly named Dorothea Ilma. It seemed now that her cup of happiness was full and for Mac to the world was a rosy place. He thought the world of his wife and baby daughter. Ilma was a delightful child, with golden curls like her father's and her mother's deep blue eyes. She was meticulously tidy, treasuring her toys and guarding them from destruction. I remember mother telling me about the day she took Ilma into Craig's in Elizabeth St. to buy a toy for her birthday. Given the choice of anything in the Department Ilma chose a sixpenny wooden bucket with a hole in it! She would have nothing else.

When Ilma was two years old, my sister Verna was born. She had the same shade of lovely fair hair, although finer and straighter than Ilma's, and was rather a delicate baby. As time went on, however, she grew quite sturdy, although never quite as robust perhaps as Ilma. She soon made short shrift of Ilma's carefully hoarded toys as babies often will, but Ilma quite cheerfully and happily gave her everything.

Verna was about two or three years old when Papa was transferred to the position of Collector of Customs for Echuca. This, unfortunately, meant saying good-bye forever to the happy and beautiful home at Canterbury. They rented it for awhile, but had so much trouble with tenants that, eventually they were forced to sell. It was a heartbreak for Peg to part with her home, and, as it so happened, she was never again to know the happiness and security of owning her own home.

Life in Echuca on the Murray was very pleasant, and the little family happily settled in Hargreaves St., where I was eventually born. Mother was soon enveloped in the round of social gaiety, etc. connected with life in a country town in those days, her two greatest friends being Hannah Kelly (sister of my father's friend and our family physician, Dr. Kelly) and Fanny McGrain (afterwards mother's lifelong friend Mrs Meagher), holidaying from her home in Malmsbury with relatives at Echuca at the time. When I was born, mama asked Hannah Kelly to act as my Godmother at the Christening, but, as she happened to be away at the time, Fanny McGrain acted as proxy. Prior Murray, O.S.A., was at the time Parish Priest of Echuca, and a very dear friend of the family.

He Christened me Mona Kathleen and I believe the names were partly his own choice. He was afterwards consecrated Bishop of Cairns, and would always visit our home in Melbourne whenever he happened to be in that City. We all loved him dearly. His last visit to us, I remember, was on one unforgettable Sunday afternoon. We were preparing for the Annual Fancy Dress Ball of the Catholic Ladies' College, which was to take place on the following night. Mother, trying to fit out three small daughters in fancy dress for the occasion, found herself forced to put finishing touches to three frocks on Sunday. When the front doorbell rang, we all kept quiet in speechless horror, and, as mother did not wish to be caught sewing on Sunday, she decided she would not open the door. However, the bell rang and rang, and poor mother in desperation went to see who it was. Imagine her delight ... and dismay! when she found her visitor to be none other than our beloved Bishop Murray! Of course he had to be brought in and told about everything. That is my last recollection of, that very dear friend.

I'm afraid I have digressed, so must go back again to the days of my beginning in Echuca. Mama was still only in her twenties, and still fond of dancing and fun. She used to enjoy the country balls with their gay informal air, and the fact of knowing everybody there. She was also called upon to help out the local Musical Comedy Company in their production of "Trial by Jury" at one period, by teaching the six "bridesmaids" to dance the Gavotte. All went well at rehearsals but when the great night arrived the six girls, overcome with stage fright, absolutely refused to be on the stage without Mama, so she had to don a costume at the last minute and lead the ballet. Secretly I think she loved it. She was in everything, and enjoyed life in the country immensely.

Papa, at that time owned about six hundred acres of land at Flowerdale, and was anxious to go on the land altogether, but, Mama always felt she could not do this. I often wondered why, as she always fitted so well into country life, and seemed to like it so much. However, she must have liked the City more, as she could never bring herself to leave it for good. Papa afterwards sold his lovely place at Flowerdale for a mere song when prices were at their lowest. He used to go up sometimes just to ride around his property on one of the horses he loved so well. I do not know very much of my father's early background, except that he was born at Creswick, and lost his mother at an early age. He was deeply attached to his elder sister Mary (always Auntie Daly to us) who brought up the family after their mother's death. I can remember him telling of my pioneer Grandfather boiling his billy on the site where the Melbourne Post Office now stands. I thought that a marvellous feat. I remember my grandfather, too. He was a dear old man, but he died when I was very young.

While I was still a small baby, Papa was transferred to Geelong to take over the position of Collector of Customs there. The people of Echuca gave him a splendid send-off, and I still possess the yellowed cuttings from the Echuca paper, giving a full account of the proceedings. Both Papa and Mama were very sad at having to say good-bye to their many friends in Echuca.

At Geelong we lived in the big Customs House on the seafront. Mama with her usual capacity for making friends had no difficulty in forming many friendships in these new and wider surroundings. The Customs House has an attractive residence, and wherever Mama was very soon became "home" to our little family. We were fortunate, too, in securing the services of a splendid girl, Ethel, who became very attached to us all, and of whom we in turn were very fond. When Mama had sometimes to accompany Papa on business or social visits to Melbourne, she could always leave us safely in the capable hands of Ethel. About this time too, Mama's sister, Auntie Edith (ten years younger than Mama) came to live with us, and stayed until her marriage to James Cavanagh of Adelaide.

When I was eighteen months old, my sister Lorna was born – to stay with us for only four and a half months. She was a lovely healthy baby until a few days before she died, and Mama was prostrated with grief and shock at her loss. She turned to me – only a baby too! – for consolation in her great sorrow, and she told me in later years that I would not allow her out of my sight, but would watch her face closely and say "Don't cry, Mummie" should the slightest sign of a tear appear. It was not very long, however, before her sorrow turned to joy at the birth of her first son – after four daughters!

Those were happy days in Geelong, although I myself can remember very little about them. One memory is of a tiny figure in a frilly blue dress (myself) walking up the aisle in a crowded hall, and demanding to know the way up to the stage. This was, Mother has since told me, the Convent School Concert, in which my sisters were performing. Ilma made her debut as a pianist at that same concert at the age of eight, playing beautifully with all the time a hairpin firmly embedded in her head. Someone had "fixed" her curls at the last moment, digging the pin in hard, and the poor child had no time to protest before being ushered on to the stage.

One day, too, Mama took me to the home of a friend of hers, a Miss D. . . ., to afternoon tea. I could not have been more than two years old at the time; but already had developed, I'm afraid, a capacity for likes and dislikes. This day somebody whom I did not like happened to be also visiting the house, and to avoid her I hid in the bedroom across the passage. When afternoon tea was served, I opened the door a little, and said, much to poor Mama's dismay, "I'll have my afternoon tea in here please Miss D. . ." I really think it was a sort of fear rather than dislike that made me act so strangely at time.

I have one other memory of my life in Geelong. One day Papa took me with him to the barber's, and when he proceeded to cut his hair, I turned my face to the wall and cried bitterly. Nothing could pacify me. I thought the barber was cutting Papa's head off - it was really dreadful. The wall was red, I remember, and did not improve the colour of my face. The barber carried me out to see his garden and birds at the back of the shop, but all to no avail. I was too afraid to look at Papa to see if he was alright, but he managed somehow to get me home at last, and vowed he would not take me out again. I was a strange child in that way, and often my imagination would get the better of me. I could not bear to look at anybody who had had his or her teeth out, for instance, and would make any excuse to put as great a distance as possible between us.

From Geelong we came back to Melbourne where Papa again took up duties at the Head Office. We lived in various houses during the next few years - at Ascot Vale, South Yarra, Windsor (where I remember the maid's room was reached by a small stairway behind the kitchen mantelpiece!). This was just the most wonderful thing I had seen in any house - and what possibilities it opened up to my young mind) and Toorak.

Sometime Papa would come home from the office with tickets for a theatre that evening. This was a wonderful thrill for my sisters and myself, and we would don our best white muslins and blue sashes, and I would wear my new ankle-strap shoes of shiny patent leather lined with white kid. How I loved new shoes! I would take them to bed with me until the newness had worn off, and I can still smell the lovely patent-leathery odour of them as I cuddled them close under the blankets. Getting back to the theatre, we would sit in the front row of the Dress Circle, dangling our programmes over the velvet-padded edge, and look down at the tops of the heads of the people in the stalls. Then the hush as the lights went out and the orchestra started up - the thrill as the curtain slowly rose. Those were happy, happy days. I remember "Peter Pan" and "Pinafore" - and all the wonderful Pantomimes with their gorgeous transformation scenes.

I have very vivid recollections of the day my mother and father went to the Melbourne Cup. Maybe they had been many times, but this day in particular stands out in my memory. If I close my eyes I can see Mama now. She wore a dress of heavy white silk, with row upon row of tiny frills edged with fine val. lace. The skirt, I remember, flared out to form a train, which she carried caught up in her right hand as she walked. Her hat was of red silk, accordion pleated across the crown in a kind of diamond pattern, and in her left hand she carried a red silk parasol. I felt terribly proud of her, and wanted to go too. I always felt awfully miserable when left behind. I suppose I was a "holy terror" really - a sort of odd man out in the family, being in the exact middle, with two sisters older and two brothers younger. That was why Mama often took me with her - to save trouble at Home, I'm afraid. I was always glad to go anyway, what ever the reason.

We lived in a house in Toorak at about that time, and had a ballroom. We were all too young, unfortunately, to make any good use of it then, but oh! how often I wished in later years that we still had it: All I can remember doing in it was racing up and down with my sisters and my father's sister, Aunty Daly, from Shepparton, singing "Lady Low, Tippity Toe, turn the wheel and away we go"! Strange, isn't it? how a little rhyme like that will stay in one's mind throughout the years, when other and far more important things are forever lost to one's memory with the passing of time.

My brother Kingston was born in this house in Toorak, and when we left it, while he was still a tiny baby, it was to take up residence in Landsdowne Street, East Melbourne. This house was next door to the Greek Church, which, by the way, always greatly intrigued us, although we were never inside its doors. We did not like this two-story house, with its rather dark interior. It had, however, a quaint little sort of two-way gate on the verandah, I remember, and the two front rooms were joined together by large folding doors, and could be made into one big room at a moment's notice. The Catholic Ladies College was just around the corner, so, at the age of five years, I was permitted to go to school there with my two sisters until, when I was six, Papa returned to the Echuca Office once more, ostensibly for nine months. I was thus enabled to find out something about the town in which I was born.

I can only remember a little about the train trip up to Echuca, but have a vague recollection of seeing Bendigo, with its electric trams, at night on our way. We stayed at the home of Dr. and Mrs Kelly on our arrival in Echuca. Dr: Kelly was Papa's best friend there, and we stayed for a fortnight while waiting for the house Papa had rented to be ready for us. The Kellys were a wonderful family. Mrs. Kelly was a serene and lovely person, and I shall never forget her kindness to us, all. Poor Mama must have had rather a worrying time for that fortnight, as the trunk containing most of our clothes was mislaid somehow on the railways, and did not arrive for ever so long after us.

When at last we were settled in our new home, we were again very fortunate in obtaining the services of a very nice girl, Fanny - of whom we all soon became very fond. She used to take us for lovely walks, I remember, sometime's out to the Plains, where wild flowers grew along the railway line. She always looked very trim and neat in her black dress with white cap and apron, and on Mama's "At Home" days on the First Tuesday of every month, Fanny would bring us into the drawing room on our

return from the Convent, to be kissed by the "afternoon tea" ladies, before running out to play.

Those "At Home" days always fascinated me. Some times Mama would take me with her on a return visit to somebody else's "At Home". I can remember so well the silver tray on the hallstand, with the visiting card of each lady, and the small "At Home - First Tuesday (or whatever it might be) in the corner. I believe you first had to call and leave your card and also one of your husband's, and then pay your first formal visit on the "At Home" day. "Till the end of her life, we always called Mother's best friends her "afternoon tea ladies". Alas! there is now only one of them left!

Our home in Echuca faced the beautiful Murray River, and its verandah was covered with Cloth of Gold roses. In the summer evenings the big river boats would take crowds of pleasure seekers on their lovely moonlight picnics up the river. I used to stand at our front gate and watch the boats with their laughing singing cargo, with their myriad lights shining upon the dark waters, as they slowly moved off from the wharf. I longed to make one of those excursions up the river, but this I never managed to do, the excuse always being that I was too young, and must wait until I grew older.

My brother Kempple had lovely golden curls, of which Mama was immensely proud. She was very reluctant to have them cut off, although Kemp must have been about three years old at this time. When at last the day came for his first visit to the barber, and the curls dropped to the floor, I remember Mama crying when she discovered that his hair was reddish under the gold!

I remember Papa's Office at the end of our street, and the lovely big tree that grew alongside. At a certain time of the year it would shed white petals over the pavement beneath. I have never discovered its name.

Sometimes Mama would pick a basket of the lovely roses that grew in profusion around our house, and send some of us to deliver them at the home of a friend. I always thought it a lovely gesture; Mama packed them so artistically. She was able to take up the chords or her social life in Echuca again to some extent, too. She looked lovely when dressed for a ball.

How we loved the Convent at Echuca! And the nuns themselves above all! It was there that I first commenced my elocution lessons in earnest, and recited at the big concert at the end of the year. Ilma also performed at this concert, doing a little skirt dance, and playing the piano. She was a very talented little dancer having been taught by one of Melbourne's leading dancing teachers, Mrs Green. Verna, too, was in a part-song, and I remember how thrilled Mama was when the Bishop complimented her on her "clever family".

Often the nuns would keep me for a night, and I loved the thrill of saying prayers with the boarders, and sleeping in the dormitory. It was great fun - and of course I new that Mama was only over the road. We lived quite close to the Convent.

I remember once we had a big grasshopper plague, and coming home from the Convent we would all take hands and run together through the dense wall of hoppers. It would have to be seen to be believed.

Sometimes after school, Mama would be waiting outside the Convent gates in a buggy, and we would hop up and be driven to the tennis courts in the beautiful park for afternoon tea. This was a wonderful treat, and one we dearly loved. The tennis courts had climbing red roses around the wire enclosure, and I thought them very beautiful. There were crabs, too, in a small pond in the park, and bluebells and other wild flowers growing on the banks of the Murray, which flowed right through. It was a lovely park and we never tired of visiting its beauties. It was very close to the Convent, and sometimes during the lunch hour the gardener would give us bunches of flowers to take back to the nuns. It was always such a good excuse, too, if you were late back.

I remember the Catholic Church in Echuca. Way up behind the altar was pictured a large eye - the Eye of God. Papa gave me at this time the tiniest little prayer book I have ever seen - only about one and half inches square! I thought it a most wonderful little book, and was very proud of it,. It was the envy, too, of all my small friends.

Sometimes on a fine evening in summer some friends would come and take us for a drive over the Bridge into Moama, and we would be terribly thrilled to know we were then in New South Wales.

Often we would be invited to a Children's birthday party, and that of course was most exciting. We would dress up in our best party frocks with their blue satin sashes, and set off with glee in our hearts, and gifts tightly clutched in our hands. At the party there would be wonderful games and competitions, including "Hunt the Slipper", and we would all have a marvellous time until somebody from home came to call for us.

At about this time, Mama gave a grand birthday party for Ilma. All day long she and Fanny were baking all kinds of delicious fare - the cream puffs particularly making my mouth water. However, Fanny told me I mustn't touch them until the party was well under way, when I might then be permitted to help myself to one. Imagine my dismay, when I eventually managed to get anywhere near that dish and found it empty. That was an incident I never forgot.

Long before the original nine months of Papa's appointment were up, he was recalled to the Head Office in Melbourne, but we stayed on in Echuca until the close of the school year, while also waiting for Papa to find a suitable house in Melbourne. He used to visit us whenever possible for week-ends, and would write lovely little letters to each of us in turn, some of which I still have. He wrote a neat and beautiful hand, and all his books and papers were perfect in their even tidiness. Then, as now, evidently houses were rather difficult to obtain, and it was some time before Papa was able to secure a small one in Simpson St. East Melbourne. While we were still away from him in Echuca, he sent Kemp a most wonderful toy train, with a long trail of tip-trucks all hooked together. This toy brought endless joy to the two small boys and to me also.

When the time came to leave Echuca, we were all very sad. It had been a very happy nine months, and we were very loath to leave our many friends and associations there.

Our maid, Fanny, returned with us to Melbourne, where she soon afterwards made a wealthy ... although, unfortunately, not altogether happy marriage. She is now a widow, and the owner of a large station property in New South Wales. We have kept in touch with her, more or less, through the years, and have always thought of her with great fondness.

The only house available on our return to Melbourne was too small for the family and a maid, so, as soon as possible, Papa secured one a little larger only two doors away. The chief attraction about this house for me was an intriguing little service window between the kitchen and dining-room, through which the meals were passed. Ilma, Verna and I went back to the Catholic Ladies' College for awhile, until Papa decided that he would like to send us to Vaucluse Convent in Richmond. This was the school I loved best of all, and where I stayed happily until my school days were over.

I shall never forget my first day at Vaucluse. I was then in the Second Class, and was placed in charge of Stella Power (afterwards to become "the Little Melba") in the lovely Junior Study, with its perfect statue of the Infant Jesus. Stella was very good to me, and "mothered" me, while her sister Ergoule took charge of Verna upstairs in the Intermediate Study. Papa had contemplated sending me as a boarder to Vaucluse in the beginning, and I was half inclined to go, being fascinated by the large Doll's House which the Junior Boarders had to play with. However, I could not bear the thought of leaving Mama, so the idea was abandoned.

I was very often in disgrace at Vaucluse for laughing. Try as I would, I simply could not stop when anything really tickled my fancy. The girls all knew this and would quietly do something to make me laugh as I stood up to read, making it impossible for me to continue. I was a good reader, too, and really loved to read aloud. How merciless girls can be! However, my schooldays at Vaucluse were extremely happy - amongst the happiest of my life! I dearly loved the nuns - especially Mother Aloyssius. She was, I thought, absolute perfection, and the year I spent in her class was like Heaven to me. I loved, too, my parts in all the lovely plays we had for Prize Day and other special occasions. Oh! the thrill of Prize Day! The whole school had to be dressed in white frocks and pale blue cloaks, and we marched in slow procession up to our places on the Gallery behind the large stage, with its beautiful blue plush curtains. The Convent Orchestra was always of the best, consisting of four Grand Pianos, Organ, two harps, Cellos, Bass Violins, Violins and Viola, and the Concert would commence with an Overture by them. We had some very talented musicians at Vaucluse at that time, many of whom have since made a name for themselves in the Musical World.

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My Uncle Joseph Brown had died, and my Aunty May now presented us with a new Uncle - H. Noel Kentish, Manager of the Colonial Bank on the corner of Smith & Johnston Sts., Collingwood¹⁵.

¹⁵ Joseph Brown did not die at this time – he and his wife, May (nee Coleman) were divorced. Clearly this was a subject that could not be spoken about openly.

We always looked forward to the frequent visits of Aunty May and Uncle Noel to our home in East Melbourne, and it was exciting opening the parcels they brought, as they never came empty handed. We often visited them at the Bank, too, and sometimes, after much persuasion, Uncle Noel would take us into his Office, and recite "The Three Blue Pigeons". He would have to don his overcoat, with the collar turned right up, a cap pulled well down over his eyes, and the gaslight would be turned down to a mere flicker, making a weird and peculiar noise. Then he would stand in the dim light, and tell us all about the three blue pigeons. I have really never found out exactly what happened to those blue pigeons; but I do remember how the atmosphere thrilled me.

Uncle Noel's mother and sister also lived in East Melbourne. They used to board at one of the large boarding-houses. We loved old Mrs. Kentish. She had boxes of lovely beads and old-fashioned things that children loved to see and play with, and sometimes she would make us gifts of beautiful long strings of beads that she had bought at Colombo and other places during her travels abroad. Often she would have Musical Evenings, to which we were invited. Uncle Noel was a great lover of Mama's playing and would keep her at the piano, requesting her to play this and that, for hours. Although himself a non-Catholic, he loved to hear my sisters and myself sing a lovely setting of "O Salutaris" which Mama had taught us, and would never fail to ask us to sing it at these evenings at his mother's or at the Bank¹⁶. The tears come to my eyes as I remember the three of us standing about my mother at the piano, while her dear hands stroked the ivory keys.

My mother's hands were very lovely - I shall always remember them. Throughout the years she managed to keep them white and soft with the aid of a piece of lemon ever on the kitchen sink. They never seemed more at home than when gliding over the creamy keys of our well-used piano. It was a Leitner (Berlin) - and was one of two only, I believe, which were ever brought to Australia. How we loved to hear Mama play! We would sit for hours on a long summer evening, sometimes in the dusk, just listening to her waltzes, songs from Gilbert & Sullivan and other operas and operettas of long ago. I remember, too, that Mama had a song for everything. Always some phrase, or perhaps a word even, would immediately strike a musical chord in her versatile mind, and she would burst forth into song.

She had so many stories to tell - about Operas, Musical Comedy and Drama -and so we grew up with quite a host of knowledge about things other children often do not learn until later in life - or perhaps never. The Opera "Maritana" (written in Tasmania, I believe) was a great favorite of Mama's. She used to play and sing its many songs and arias to us over and over again, until I felt I knew them off by heart. Included, too, in her repertoire were many of our own lovely hymns, with the "O Salutaris" Uncle Noel loved so much. We could all sing in tune and Mama had taught us to sing from infancy, so great was her love of music. She herself never wearied of playing, and it breaks my heart to remember now those last years of her life lived in a flat, where she was almost afraid to open the piano in case "people" might be disturbed. I can never hear a Strauss Waltz or "Love's Old Sweet Song" without my

¹⁶ Despite her early education at Loreto Convent school, May was probably also a Protestant, as she was married and buried in Protestant ceremonies.

thoughts at once returning to that dear one I loved so well in life, and whom I shall never cease to love and miss all the days left to me.

Those dear hands kept their beauty all through that last long illness, and when at last they lay folded peacefully across the tired heart stilled forever, we, her children, gazed in wonder through the blinding tears at their loveliness.

My Aunt May was the most vivid and colourful personality I think I have ever known. She had a lovely smile, showing a perfect set of pearly teeth, and her sparkling eyes were full of humour. We loved, and yet stood in awe of her, because you really never knew just when you had her. Her smile could change to wrath awfully quickly, and oh! how she could make you squirm! We often used to walk over to the Bank to see her, and were always welcome. She had a lovely white cockatoo who called her "mother" and intrigued us greatly, and a rosella parrot. She loved these birds dearly, and would carry on a conversation with them as if they really understood. We were rather scared of Cocky, and did not care to approach him too closely as he stood upon his perch. He had a very knowing look indeed, and would wink his eye at you with his head on one side and his comb up, saying "Scratch Cocky ... Kiss Cocky".

Aunt May had a magnificent silver Epergne, which always stood in the centre of the table at mealtimes, and one day I, trying to be helpful in clearing the table, carefully lifted this great thing to remove the cloth, setting it gently on the floor. Just then Aunt May came in, and I felt the world falling about my ears as her wrath descended upon me. Words came tumbling all over me, enveloping me in abject misery, and I remember quietly slipping out the front door and speeding home to the comfort and consolation of Mama's arms as fast as my legs would take me.

One could always depend on Mama's sympathy. Never in all my life have I known anyone so sympathetic as she. This great sympathy was not experienced by her own family alone, but by all and sundry who sought it. She had a simply endless flow of it, and we always knew where to go when things went wrong. She did not spoil us, and was just and kind, but she had later on to be both father and mother to her children, ably filling the double role. She and her sister, Aunt May, were as different from each other as the proverbial chalk and cheese, and yet, much love existed between them, as is often the way with opposites.

Aunt May used to entertain quite a lot at the Bank, and we were often called on to assist in this respect. Mr John Wren banked with Uncle¹⁷, and also Mr MacRobertson

¹⁷ WREN, JOHN (1871-1953), entrepreneur, was born on 3 April 1871 at Collingwood, Melbourne, third son of illiterate though not indigent Irish immigrants John Wren, labourer, and his wife Margaret, née Nester. Leaving school at 12 to work in a wood-yard and then as a boot clicker, Wren supplemented his 7s. 6d. weekly wage by circulating betting cards, bookmaking and small-scale usury. Although short and 'bandy' from an ill-set fracture, he was a feisty 'scrapper', handy cricketer and prospective Collingwood footballer. Laid off work during the 1890s depression, Wren launched his Johnston Street totalizator in 1893 with a stake bolstered, so he boasted, by Carbine's 1890 Melbourne Cup victory and subsequent gambling coups. The 'tote' was later to net him £20,000 per annum. It was popular for its unique defences and scrupulous dealing in a suburb mistrustful of police and enthusiastic about betting. His demotic City Tattersalls Club (1903) drew attention to similarly illicit, though tolerated, punting in elite venues. Senator Andrew Dawson, formerly 'the world's first Labor

(of chocolate fame). We met both these and other friends and clients at these evenings at the Bank, returning home sometimes in the beautiful MacRobertson limousine¹⁸.

Aunty May had a pretty singing voice and would often sing to us with Mama's accompaniment. My favorite's were "Mona My Own Love", because that was my own name, and I felt a personal interest in it, and of course "Love's Old Sweet Song", of which I shall never grow tired.

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Papa kept a strap behind the door at home when we were little, and if we were naughty he would take us in to "smell the strap". That was always quite enough punishment for us, and I can never remember his ever using the strap in any other way. Sometimes he would play the piano for us, or perhaps sing "My Poor Old Dog Tray", which I thought the saddest song in all the world. We would beg him to sing it for us in all its pathetic detail, and then would try to sneak away to hide our tears from him. He loved all of us dearly, and had our photographs all taken singly and framed together in one long; frame, which he hung beside the couch in the front room, where he spent so much of his time later on.

Nothing would hurt me more; when I had done anything amiss, than for Mama to say that I could not possibly be her" little girl. The awful thought used to go round and round in my mind that perhaps I do indeed belong to somebody else, and I felt would rather die that belong to another mother than mine. Whatever faults I may have had (and they were legion, alas), I have it to my credit that never once did I close my eyes in slumber without first telling my mother how sorry I was for causing her pain, and begging her forgiveness. In later years she told me how much this had meant to her.

It was a tradition in our home that the family must always be together for Christmas dinner, and I shall never forget one Christmas morning in East Melbourne when I, in

premier', lectured there on 'theoretical socialism' with Wren in the chair. (Source: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120651b.htm>)

¹⁸ ROBERTSON, Sir MACPHERSON (1859-1945), industrialist and philanthropist, was born on 6 September 1859 at Ballarat, Victoria, eldest of seven children of Macpherson David Robertson, carpenter, and his wife Margaret, née Brown. His father, born in Uruguay of Scottish parents, came to Victoria from Leith, Scotland, and the family lived precariously while he moved between gold-seeking and work as a builder. In 1869 he dispatched his family to Scotland, while he went to Fiji. Macpherson blamed his father for the penury that forced him to leave school and become a breadwinner. When the family was reunited in Melbourne in 1874, he served an apprenticeship with the Victoria Confectionery Co. and gained experience with other confectionery firms. In 1880 Robertson began making novelty sweets in the bathroom at home in Fitzroy, hawking them to local shopkeepers. The business expanded quickly, drawing in most of the family. By the late 1880s MacRobertson's Steam Confectionery Works with over thirty employees had begun to expand by acquiring and demolishing nearby housing. A family disagreement followed his marriage on 8 July 1886 to Elizabeth Alice Hedington (d.1932) at North Carlton, and he left the business to found the American Candy Co. His skills, however, were indispensable and within a few years he returned, although bitterly resenting presentation of the enterprise as his father's. Robertson was the driving force behind the firm's phenomenal expansion. Some of his flair for product innovation, eye-catching packaging and skilful promotion reflected his world tour of 1893, when he worked in the United States of America. His impressions of 'Colossal America' were published in the Ballarat Courier in 1894. Robertson introduced chewing-gum and fairy floss to Australia, promoting Pepsin Gum through his cycling school, and through testimonials from prominent sportsmen. Employees and customers were offered prizes for sweet-wrapper designs, advertising jingles and messages for 'conversation lollies'. (Source: <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110427b.htm>).

my eagerness to show Aunty May my Christmas gifts from Santa, set out after Mass and breakfast to walk over to the Bank. In my happiness that morning I forgot about Christmas dinner and when Aunty asked me to stay for Christmas dinner with them I accepted. Imagine my dismay when, arriving happily home some time during the afternoon, I was greeted by a deluge of recriminations from the family. Great were my sorrow and regret when it was brought home to me that I had been the only one absent on that very special day from that very special dinner! I really believe that not one member of the family realised how greatly this affected my extremely sensitive nature, but I remember that I fled away by myself and indulged in a veritable passion of tears. I felt that I had committed an unforgivable crime.

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Mama kept up her painting until too insistent small fingers began dabbling in wet paint on palette and brush or just finished picture, forcing her at length to put them away for-ever - not before, however, she had managed to paint many lovely pictures, a number of which always adorned the walls at home. It seemed strange to me that my two sisters and I, who almost invariably shared the same likes and dislikes, had three distinct favorites amongst Mama's pictures. She promised them to us individually, and those three pictures now hang in an honoured place in our three homes respectively. Mine is a painting of snow on river and trees, and I've always loved it - I, to whom the thought of winter has always been a menace!

Papa's health now began to fail perceptibly. The illness, which had begun during one of his trips to the Border in connection with his duties as Customs Officer, developed as time went on, and completely mystified the doctors. Our dear friend and Physician, Dr. Florance McGillicuddy, visited him daily during his ever lengthening spells away from the Office, and would often play the piano to him as he lay on the couch in the drawing-room. Papa was passionately fond of music, and it was his dearest wish that his beloved daughter Ilma should become a great pianiste. She had indeed great talent, obtaining her A.T.C.L. at the age of fourteen or fifteen, and could have gone far had my father lived.

At about this time, my baby brother Neville was born, but he, too, like my little sister, Lorna, died at the age of four and a half months, having been delicate from birth. It was very soon after Neville's death that Papa and Mama accompanied by Dr. McGillicuddy, went to see the Collins St. Specialist, Dr Grant. He diagnosed the complaint as Addison's, and stated that in his opinion Papa would not live longer than twelve months¹⁹. This was a terrible blow indeed to my darling mother, but with great fortitude she bore up under it for the sake of her husband and children. The great steadfast faith which had always burned brightly within her soul was more than ever in evidence now, and she managed to smile bravely in this as in every other adversity.

¹⁹ Addison's disease is an endocrine or hormonal disorder that occurs in all age groups and afflicts men and women equally. The disease is characterized by weight loss, muscle weakness, fatigue, low blood pressure, and sometimes darkening of the skin in both exposed and non-exposed parts of the body. Addison's disease occurs when the adrenal glands do not produce enough of the hormone cortisol and, in some cases, the hormone aldosterone. The disease is also called adrenal insufficiency, or hypocortisolism.

Papa's lovely fair hair, with its soft waves, had now rapidly turned to shining silver, and, although only forty-eight, he looked quite an old man. Mama was only thirty six and looked almost like his daughter, as he leant heavily on her arm as they walked. He was always making plans for her and for us when he would no longer be with us. We children would watch and wait for him as he alighted from the tram each evening. Then we would run up Simpson St. to meet him and carry his Brief bag. It was the drawing of a tooth on the last Friday of his life that hastened the end. The dentist should never have drawn it, and Papa collapsed in the chair. On the Sunday he died. He stood in direct line of succession to the much coveted position of Collector of customs for Melbourne, but alas! It was not for him. He was only forty nine at the time of his death. The words "My poor children" were upon his lips, and his beautiful soul welled by the Last Rites of the Church he loved so well, and whose teachings he strictly followed. I always think of Papa with his Rosary entwined about his wrist, and I cannot remember that he ever called Mama by any other name than "dear".

We were now living in Hotham St., and my sisters and I were sleeping upstairs at the back of the house. Mama and Papa occupied one of the front rooms downstairs, and I will never forget how Mama struggled to reach us early on that Sunday morning to tell us Papa was dying. She fell on every step in her anguish, but she managed to get us all downstairs in time to hear those last words "My poor children"!

I was only eight years old when we were left fatherless. Mama was alone now to look after us - a widow with five children at the age of thirty-seven! I shall always remember her cry of anguish when Papa drew his last breath, and the husband whom she so dearly loved left her forever in this world.

Those were lonely days and nights indeed following the death of my father. My two sisters and I were in deep mourning from head to foot. Nowadays children of course do not go into mourning, but then it was quite the usual thing.

The little family drew closer and closer together as the days passed, and I can remember the loneliness of the Family Rosary recited each night in the room in which Papa had breathed his last. We all moved downstairs now to be with Mama and to try to ease her loneliness and sorrow. Aunt May was kind and good to us but the plans she would make were never what we wanted. She suggested once that two of us might go to live with her, but we felt that we would allow nothing on earth to separate us. All we wanted as a family was to be together.

Papa did not by any means leave us destitute, but money has habit of disappearing very rapidly when it is all going out and none coming in. Mama was determined that we should go on with our education at all cost. Ilma was the greatest sufferer, really, as all her musical plans had to go with the wind. She studied typing and shorthand for awhile at Vacluse, but after awhile she took up teaching the piano, and worked up quite a good connection, but there was very little money in that in those days.

Verna and I still kept on at Vacluse, and darling Mama managed somehow. We moved over to a place called "Woodstock" in Erin after Papa's death, and during the Christmas holidays following we went to stay at the Grand Hotel, Mornington, for a week or two. I think it was Aunt May's idea to get Mama away from sad associations for Christmas. That was an extremely hot summer I remember, and I feel

sure that the holiday away was not nearly as enjoyable for Mama as it was for us. Children can generally manage to have a good time.

It was shortly after the death of my father that Rev. Father T. A. Campbell C.ss.R., came to give a Mission at St. John's, East Melbourne. In the kindness of his great and wonderful heart, he took compassion upon the three little fatherless girls in their deep mourning, and became our lifelong friend and counsellor. It seemed to us that God, in His great mercy, had sent this wonderful friend to help fill the place of Papa in our lives, and nobody could ever know the happiness his beautiful letters and periodical visits meant to us. He was indeed the greatest and best friend our family ever had, and the example of his saintly life was an inspiration to us forever.

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My mother's youngest brother, Uncle Gilbert, was living in Melbourne at that time, and often came to see us, bringing with him a friend named Mr Summers. This Mr Summers was very kind to me, and sent me for my tenth birthday a really beautiful doll, which I christened "Maureen".

I generally had a principal part in all the Junior plays at school now, being "Snow White", "Hiawatha", and many other lovely characters. I dearly loved acting. As time went on I played "Mercia" in "The Sign of the Cross", the Queen in "Belshazza", "Miriam", and "Placida, Christian Martyr" - in the latter plays being directed by the Very Rev. Father Lockington, S.J. He was a wonderful speaker, and demanded perfection in others. I remember one night when he stood at the far end of the big concert hall and I stood on the stage saying "No! Ten thousand times - No!" over and over again until he was satisfied. I was almost in tears. He gave much of his very valuable time to us in this way, and we were very proud at the great honour he thus bestowed upon us. We always tried to do our very best for him.

I believed in Father Christmas until I was quite big, and I remember one Christmas Eve my mother going out alone to do some shopping, refusing, to allow any of us to accompany her. It was very late when she arrived home, and we were very worried about her. I thought she was going to faint. However, she had accomplished what she had set out to do, and, although I saw that she had been empty-handed on her arrival home, a lovely big doll's bed greeted me at the foot of my bed when I awakened on Christmas morning. Mama told me long afterwards that she had hidden the parcels on the verandah before coming in that night. That was when I knew that Santa Claus came no more to our house.

About this time a new terrace house was under construction in George St., not far from us, and Mama put in first claim to rent the corner house, which was rather larger and nicer in appearance than the others. She thought it might be a good idea to take some "paying guests" to help swell the dwindling funds, so with that end in view we moved once again - the last move for me until my marriage years later! It was a lovely clean new house, and we felt very happy taking over. We searched the map of Ireland for a suitable name, and settled on "Kilfenora", and we had a name board lettered accordingly.

We had a maid named Agnes at "Kilfenora", and she was very satisfactory and easy to get on with. Mama was a beautiful cook, and served delicious meals to our "paying

guests” – too delicious and too cheap alas! to make any profit at all. Poor Agnes had an affection of the throat and had to leave us, and she died shortly afterwards. She was our last of a very long list of maids. From then on Mama did everything herself, with the help we could give and occasionally a woman would come in for a few hours work. Gradually, we just let a room or two, but that wasn't very satisfactory either, and we did not always care for the people who applied for rooms.

Feeling that it would be far better to be living on our own again, Mama learned the art of Massage and Hairdressing from a lady whom we knew, and she eventually opened a Salon on the Block in Collins St. I shall never forget the loneliness of coming home from school each day to find no mother waiting with a smile to greet us. Instead, she would come home late from the City, tired and weary, and our hearts would ache for her. That business did not last long for lack of customers, and Mama was forced to abandon it at a great loss.

Once she took a position playing the piano at an open-air Picture Theatre at some faraway suburb, and that time became a nightmare for us. We would peer through the front room window at home, watching and waiting for Mama to come that long lonely way late at night, and finally came the night of a sudden and terrible storm. The gutters outside our place were like running rivers and the wind and rain were frightening. We watched in fear and trembling for the return of our dear one, and at long last saw her struggling through the teeming rain and wind. Her umbrella had blown inside out, and she was drenched and exhausted. That was the last straw and we absolutely refused to allow her to go there again.

As soon as Verna was old enough, she sat for an Examination at Zercho's Business College, and was lucky and clever enough to win a Scholarship. She studied Shorthand and Typing, very soon becoming expert, and was engaged as typiste by the Victoria Insurance Coy. at the princely salary of fifteen shillings a week! Commencing there as the only typiste, she very soon found herself at the head of several other girls, although her salary did not rise as rapidly as she.

My two brothers came to Vacluse with me until they reached the age of seven years, after which Mama had to send them to the Christian Brothers' College (Parade). I can remember walking home from school one hot day - the three of us - with a penny simply burning a hole in my pocket. Reaching the lolly shop near the corner of Punt Road, we went in and asked for a penny bottle of Ginger Beer (that was the price of stone Ginger Beer in those days) and three glasses. I saw nothing out of the ordinary in this until I saw the horrified look on Mama's face when I told her! I hadn't thought about the poor woman in the shop having to go to the trouble of washing three glasses – and all for one penny! Another day we arrived home seated grandly in a carriage, coachman and all complete! But I loved to ride standing on the back of my brother Kemp's tricycle, and when we lived in Erin St. we would often travel over to George St. in this way to watch the progress of our new home.

Ilma and Verna had managed to keep up their music lessons until now. Ilma leaned the piano from Mr A. Montague at Allan's while Verna had Violin lessons from his son, Leonard. These lessons had eventually to be abandoned, however, with the money ever going. It was a great pity for both girls, as they loved and practised their music so well. At one time Ilma used to practice for six hours a day! She was clever

at school, too, being in Matriculation Class at the age of fourteen, but she was so unassuming that none of us really ever realised this. Verna was clever at school, too, and won a Gold Medal for being Dux of her class.

I shall here draw a veil over my own achievements at school. Some subjects I liked, and managed pretty well. Others I simply hated. We used to have a terrific lot of homework to do every night, and many a night found me in tears, struggling with impossible Parsing and Analysis. Why the latter were ever invented I never could imagine, and but for darling Mama's help I should never have mastered them. Mama was marvellous at Parsing and Analysis, and as for spelling, well you just couldn't trick her! I realise now that she must have been a brilliant scholar, but of course she did not mention the fact, and I have never been able to find out from anybody who knew her at school, of course. She could always help me with my lessons, and seemed never to have forgotten all she had learned at school.

Every Sunday morning the whole family would troop down to seven-thirty Mass at St John's. Mama, always an early riser, would be all ready to set out when the first bell rang at seven o'clock – and she kept that up until the end of her days! I have never known such faith as hers. Never once did it waver - and she had a life full of trials. She had a magnificent devotion to the Sacred Heart, and the hymn she loved best of all was "O Jesus open wide thy heart, and let me rest therein", and my eyes still fill with tears when I hear it. She dearly loved Benediction, and she would always whisper to me to sing "O Salutaris" etc with the choir. It seemed to please her so much if I did so.

On the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week, we would walk through the Fitzroy Gardens to St Patrick's for the Tennebrae. We always kept close together in the Gardens, walking arm in arm and keeping step with each other. We knew nothing of the dark forms that might be lurking behind the great trunks of the beautiful trees lining our pathway, but God sent His Holy Angels, I think, to protect us always.

We used to do the Black Fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and I can still feel the awful emptiness of those days - that is, as regards my inside. Of course we were not obliged to do the fast, but we always wanted to do it with Mama. Breakfast on Good Friday would consist of one Hot Cross Bun with jam, and a cup of weak black tea. Sometimes we would go to St Patrick's for part of the Three Hours from noon. Our lunch would consist of some fruit and bread and jam, and then we would go down to St John's for the Stations of the Cross at 3 o'clock. The evening meal generally consisted of curried salmon and rice with potato. The Black Fast excluded meat or meat soup, butter, cheese, milk, eggs, lard or dripping. How lightly we fare nowadays!

On Saturday afternoons we would often go to West's Pictures over Princes Bridge. It was a great barn of a place, but we loved it, and, best of all, we could get in for sixpence apiece. Verna used generally to pay for me, as she was earning then, and we used to save tram fares by walking all the way! Sometimes we would be taken to see a play, but mostly we made our own amusement at home. I liked nothing better than to read a good book, and everybody knew what to give me for my birthday. I loved all Ethel Turner's books, and others of similar character. On one Prize Day at the Convent I was the delighted recipient of seven prizes, six of which were books, the

seventh being a silver medal for Early and Regular Attendance! I could scarcely wait to get home to commence reading.

On every St. Patrick's day, as far back as I can remember at seven o'clock in the morning Mama would play all the Irish airs she could think of, thrilling us through and through. This was a tradition in our home, and one that Mama never missed. Although Australians to the backbone, our Irish blood would always come to the fore on that day, stimulated by those stirring tunes played in Mama's inimitable manner. Then we would pin on our shamrocks and run helter-skelter down to Mass. Mama was very loyal to her Irish ancestry.

When Ilma was eighteen she put up her hair and made her debut. Mama went with her to the first big Ball, and they both looked lovely. Mama was still slim, and I remember she had a beautiful evening frock of black net sparkling all over with jet spangles. The train she carried looped over her arm with black velvet ribbon, and I thought her beautiful. Ilma was, of course, all in white. She was very pretty, and Mama told me afterwards that she really was the bell of the ball.

Later on, Verna too made her debut, and I used to go with her to rehearsals beforehand. When the great night came Mama accompanied her also, and again I thought them lovely in their finery.

Mama had a plum-coloured gown I loved. The bodice was velvet, and was attached to a high-waisted skirt with a short train. She used to look superb in it. I liked her, too, in a smart suit consisting of a black cloth jacket and shepherd's plaid skirt. She always had very good taste, and used to make most of our clothes when we were children.

One terrible day I remember - the day that our darling mother took ill, and Dr. MacGillicuddy diagnosed her illness as pleurisy, ordering her away immediately. We arranged for her to go up and stay with our dear friends, the Loughnans, at Ringwood. This lovely country home had always been a haven to us, and we had a standing invitation to go there as of ten as we wished. We were always sure of a wonderful welcome, and could stay as long as we liked. Mama left us to carry on as well as possible, but oh! How lonely we were! And how worried as to the health of our dear Mother! I used to dread coming home from school those days. It seemed a different place without Mother, and we all felt very gloomy.

During this period, I was invited to the birthday party of one of my friends at school one evening, but all the joy had gone out of it for me, despite the fact that I had a pair of lovely new "Merry Maiden" shoes! Ilma and Verna helped to make me ready for the party, but it wasn't the same, and on my return home there was no loving mother waiting to hear about everything.

Mama's trip up to Ringwood did her the world of good, and great was our joy when she returned to her loving family quite fit and well again.

Sometimes we would go up to Loughnan's for the day on a Sunday, catching the train at Richmond Station after early Mass. Mr Loughnan would meet us at the Ringwood Station with the buggy and his horse "Wonga". I shall never forget how greatly we

enjoyed those trips to Ringwood! "Pine Mont" was situated right on the top of a great hill, and the road wound round and round until eventually it reached the top. The house was roomy and comfortable with a very wide passage up the centre. The two front rooms were bedroom and drawing-room respectively, then came two more bedrooms, with the great dining-room, which we loved best of all, on the right, and the kitchen, from which came always the most delicious odours. Those wonderful dinners in the dining-room, with Mr Loughman carving the great joint at one end, and his sister serving the vegetables at the other. Mr. Loughnan was a giant of a man - about six feet six inches, I think - and always looked enormous to me. What fun we used to have! There was a big old-fashioned gramophone, the big funnel kind with the cylinder shaped records. It would scratch and squeak and grind, before it eventually produced a voice or tune, and then we would hear "In the Valley Where the Blue Birds Sing", or some such song. Then we would dance, and Mr. Loughnan taught me to do the Schottische. We must have looked funny, as I reached only to somewhere about his waist. He used to sing rather well, too, in an extremely deep bass voice. Mama played all his songs for him, one after another, from "Drinking" to "Down in the Deep". He would wade through them all, making the most of such a willing accompanist. He was very fond of Mama, although they used to have some terrific arguments about religion. I think he used to say things just to tease Mama, knowing well how staunch she was to her Faith, but we would feel ourselves becoming hotter und hotter in our discomfort. These arguments always ended in a friendly manner, and everybody was happy. Mr. Loughnan would also recite to us in his great big voice - mostly Banjo Paterson's poems, such as "McGuinness's Christening".

Many were the happy holidays my sisters and I spent at "Pine Mont", too, sleeping in the big bed in the front room. Sometimes I, being always in the middle, used to feel that I was smothering. It was wonderful to wake up in the morning to the singing of the birds and the quietude of the country. I loved the noise of the magpie squabbling outside our window, and the mooing of the cows somewhere in the distance.

The house had a lovely wide verandah almost right around it, with swinging hammocks to lie in, and the view of the surrounding country was superb. We loved to lie out under the row of tall pine which gave the house its name, or to pick sweet five-crown apples from the trees, and go for a long walk with Mr. Loughnan over his property, munching the apples along the way. After a long tramp, we would come home ravenous to devour the delicious dinner set before us by Miss Loughnan. She always seemed to have just baked a batch of wonderful hot scones, and we could have as many as we wished. It was a glorious place for a holiday. How fortunate we were to have had such friends in those days! Mr. Loughnan was, I think, the Manager of the Melb. & Metropolitan Board of Works until his retirement, but he was essentially a country man at heart. His kindness - and that of dear Miss Loughnan - will never be forgotten by us. They have long since departed, and the beautiful mountain property has been alas! divided up into many properties now. I doubt if I should care to go to Ringwood again, where everything has changed so much since our happy holiday there.

Sometimes, too, we would go for a picnic to Eltham. It was easy to travel there from our place, as we could catch the train at West Richmond Station, which was quite close to us. We would walk to the bank of the creek at Eltham, where I remember quince trees grew wild, and we thought it very pretty. It was always good to get out

into the country for while, and the lunch we took and the billy we boiled always tasted so good.

Mama took a great pride in our hair, and would spend a long time brushing it, sprinkling it too with "Koko" to make its growth even more luxuriant. We three girls all had very thick and long heads of hair. Ilma's was beautifully curly and easy to do, and Verna wore hers in two shiny long plaits of incredible thickness, changing it to one plait as she grew older. Sometimes they used to wear golden brown ribbon, which were exactly the same colour as their hair. As for me, well a friend of mine once remarked that his first thought of me was of "a little girl weighed down by hair". I think it was about forty inches long.

Sometimes, I remember, I would dream and wake up in a great fright, so Mama taught me this little prayer, which I still often say:-

Before the closing of this day,
 Creator, we Thee humbly pray;
 That for Thy wonted mercy's sake
 Thou us unto protection take.
 May nothing in our minds excite
 Vain dreams and phantoms of the night.
 Keep off our enemies that so
 Our bodies no uncleanness know.
 To Jesus from the Virgin sprung
 May glory be given and praises sung,
 Like to God the Father be
 And Holy Ghost eternally.

.....

Next door to us two babies were born - one in the upstairs flat to Mr and Mrs Mitchell, and one downstairs to Mr. and Mrs. Bryant - within a week or so of each other. This was a great thrill for us, as we all loved babies dearly. The baby girl and her mother and father soon moved away, but the other, Frankie Mitchell, grew up beside us there next door. We were all devoted to Frankie, and I especially used to haunt the Mitchell flat. I would take the babe for long walks while his mother got her work done, as he was rather cross. It was not until I had babies of my own that I realised just what a boon I must have been to her. Frankie was a lovely little fellow, and when he was old enough to toddle into our house her was there as often as possible. He used to call Mama "Mum M'Ginson", as he could not say "McGuinness".

Every Saturday evening, immediately after tea, the German Band would take up its stand opposite "Kilfenora", just outside the walls of "Mena House" Private Hospital. Their music was really delightful, and many times we would ask them, when they came over to the house to collect donations, to play certain numbers for us. When the war came they disappeared, and we often wondered what had become of them. Maybe they were interned.

I do not specifically mention the 1914-1916 War years, as they did not particularly affect our small family in East Melbourne. With no radio to keep us constantly informed of events over seas, we knew very little really of the grim happenings of war. Apart from the ever increasing casualty lists posted up outside the Newspaper

Offices, and an occasional "Herald Extraordinary", the war seemed rather remote from our little world. Our beloved Father Campbell was a Chaplain to the 24th Battalion, and of course we corresponded with him regularly, and we used to send tins of food, etc, to the soldiers. We were thankful that our own brothers were only small boys at that time.

During the epidemic of Pneumonic Influenza, which swept so disastrously through Melbourne, we hung a small medal of St. Roch from the light in the centre of the drawing room at home, and, although we were in the middle of the epidemic, with neighbours all around us down with it, we maintained a miraculous safety throughout. I remember that we were compelled to wear masks sprinkled with creosote to Mass and how stuffy they felt.

When the time came for me to leave school I was very sad indeed, and would dearly love to have stayed another year. The nuns, strangely enough, seemed loath to let me go, too, and offered me a free year, but I felt it would be unfair to Ilma and Verna, who had been helping to carry the burden of the family for some time, if I did not try to earn my living also.

After all the years of the "money going", it was rather a relief when at last it had gone. It had hung like the sword of Damocles above our head. For so long that the relief of its removal was quite considerable. We hired a typewriter by the week, and Verna proceeded to instruct me in Shorthand and-Typing at home. I disliked very much the thought of a business career, and wanted greatly to be an actress. I had always been interested in elocution and acting, Shorthand I thought a dreadful invention, and I still do not know how I eventually did manage to overcome its difficulties – to a certain extent, at any rate, I spent hours, too, typing "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog", and "Now is the time for all wise men to come to the aid of the party", but I'm afraid my heart was never in shorthand and typing.

My first position was with Detmold Pty. Ltd., Flinders Lane. Detmold's was a vast place, and of course the whole business world was a new one to me. I shared a small office with a Miss Knubley, and liked her a lot. We got on extremely well together, even spending our lunch hour with each other - often at the mid-day Organ Recitals at the Melbourne Town Hall. These Recitals were excellent (as well as free! and we would hurry through our cut lunches to be over there in time.

After being some months at Detmold I accepted a position offered me by a friend of ours, Mr T. J. O'Brien, Estate Agent), becoming his typiste. Verna was now typiste in the offices of the Australian Catholic Federation, and Ilma was at Allan's Music Warehouse, in charge of the Player Department. We used to walk through the Gardens together each morning, and became as well known to the passers by as they to us, I think. We had nicknames for most of them, and in after years even met some of them! We used to time ourselves by them, and would know whether or not we were late by noting the place where we passed them. It was difficult to refrain from smiling a friendly greeting as they went by, knowing them all so well by sight.

We were all great walkers - we had to be, to save fares! and anyone "setting" out to catch us could not do so unless he ran. It used to take us about twenty minutes, briskly walking, to reach our offices, and we were always in a hurry. One

acquaintance of ours caught up to us as we reached Swanston St. one morning, and informed us that he had been trying to catch us since we left home. I suppose all this walking stood us in good stead, as we were never really sick. We generally wore white blouses (a clean one every day!), with navy tie and skirts. We found this uniform the most economical, as well as being neat, clean and tidy. Verna was clever at home dressmaking, which was extremely lucky for us. She made most of our clothes and made them well, too! This was a great saving, as we had very little money to spend on ourselves. Periodically Mama would say "I do wish somebody would tidy up the linen-press." The linen press was an enormous cupboard on the upstairs landing at "Kilfenora", and, although originally meant to be a linen press, it gradually became the dumping ground over the years, for many other objects than linen, including, of course, the inevitable old letters. Somebody would volunteer, and commence operations on the linen press with great gusto. Hours afterwards Mama would call the volunteer to dinner, and she would rise slowly from the great miscellaneous heap on the floor about her, throw everything back higgledy-piggledy into the linen press, bang the door shut, and hurriedly depart. Thus the linen-press never would enjoy that perfect tidiness we all wished for it but could not achieve.

Mama had a great trunk of fancy costumes, etc., which had accumulated through the years, and it was our delight to dress up occasionally. Verna especially made an excellent Fairy Prince, with very long stockings for tights, and a felt hat turned up at the side with ostrich feathers. She, ostensibly the quiet one of the family as far as outsiders were concerned, would have us convulsed with laughter at her antics in this costume.

I myself went through a period when I was "Shakespeare mad". I used to perform the Opiate Scene from "Romeo and Juliet", and would practise stage falls without warning all over the place. The family gradually became used to seeing me suddenly fall in my tracks, although it must have been rather alarming at first. My brother Kemp had a great flair for drawing, and studied Draughting at the Collingwood Technical School after leaving C.B.C. At the early age of sixteen; he was the only Draughtsman employed at Noyes Brothers, and could have had a permanent position there, but he felt that he lacked the practical knowledge needed. He left to go to a workshop in South Melbourne, where he could obtain this knowledge. This meant very early rising, so that he could walk all the way from East to South Melbourne, and be there by eight o'clock. He was receiving only a very small wage, of course, while learning, and could not afford tram fares. In the evening he would come home, have dinner, and then make his way over to the Technical School at Collingwood to keep up his drawing lessons. He would study late into the night at home and I used to wonder how he kept going.

At about this time, I met Mr. and Mrs. Fred. Niblo (she was Josephine Cohan, sister of the famous George M. Cohan) and their young son Fred. I was still very keen to be an actress, and Mrs. Niblo was kind enough to take quite an interest in me. Mama and I used to visit her at her lovely home in Tintern Avenue, Toorak, and once I went with them all to a big theatrical matinee at the old Theatre Royal (now gone forever), and sat with them in their Box. I was very thrilled that day. On her return to America Mrs Niblo continued to correspond with me, writing me beautiful letters about her life over there, but alas she died long before the time she had planned to come back to Australia. I was indeed very sad at the death of so dear a friend, and I still treasure her

lovely letters to me. I shall always feel proud to have known and loved Mrs. Fred Niblo.

The years were gradually passing for us all in our home in pretty, tree-lined George Street. I loved this street - and especially "Kilfenora" on the corner. There we lived in an atmosphere of love and happiness, sheltered always by the care and devotion of our beloved mother. I had no wish to live anywhere else in the world but in that house on the corner which meant home to me, and to which I was always glad to come back. "Home, Home, Sweet Home" - that was what "Kilfenora" was for us all - made so, indeed, by the presence of that precious mother who had sacrificed so much for us. Of herself she never seemed to think - our joys were her joys, and our sorrows, too!

We had a lovely tablecloth in our dining-room, made of heavy plush, self-embossed with a rose pattern in terracotta shade. One day at "Kilfenora" Mama was brushing some scraps from the thick pile of the cloth when a rusty darning needle, hidden in the cloth, ran through the side of her hand. We managed to get her somehow to St Vincent's Hospital where they removed the needle, but oh that poor hand! It was swollen and discoloured for many weeks, and the pain was excruciating. That was indeed a dreadful time. There was so little we could do to help. We hadn't even heard of Asperin in those days!

My youngest brother, Kings ton, was now about fourteen, and told Mama that he wanted to be a Redemptorist Missioner. It was love and admiration for our dear Father Campbell that first attracted King to that Order. However, he felt he had a vocation to the priesthood, and we had to face parting with him. It was indeed a sad thought for Mama. King seemed only such a little boy, and being the youngest was made much of by us all. It was arranged that he should go to St. Clement's College, Galong, New South Wales, to the Juniorate of the Redemptorists, and I shall always remember the day we watched his train move slowly out of Spencer St. Station²⁰. He looked so small and lonely setting out alone on that long journey - he who had never been away from home for more than a short while at a time - and our hearts, knowing that we would not see him again for twelve months, were sad indeed. My mother faced this - as every other trial - bravely and with great faith, setting, as always, a wonderful example to us all.

On Sunday morning after Mama, we used to wash our hair. Being so long and thick it took ages to dry and Sunday morning seemed to best time to do it. On one of these occasions I remember a visitor arriving and I found myself trapped in the dining room, (turbanned head and all!) I had only just time to slip behind the sideboard before Mama ushered him in. He stayed and stayed, while all the time I was trusting to Providence that I would not sneeze or anything. Imagine, too, the predicament in which Mama found herself. She knew I was there, and had to try and make intelligent

²⁰ The Redemptorist Order was left the Galong property between Yass and Harden, NSW, by John Ryan, the son of Ned Ryan, the original Galong squatter and built a Monastery there in 1918. St. Clements Monastery was a high school, leading to the Leaving Certificate for about 60 boarders at a time. Students came mainly from the eastern states to do their five high school years in Galong. They lived in dormitories and learnt the classics as well as modern subjects. Many of the graduated students went on to become priests. The Monastery School closed at the end of 1975 (see <http://www.capitalregion.org.au/harden/culturalmap/places/galmon.htm>)

conversation while all the time her mind was centred on me! Happily the visitor departed still innocent of my presence.

We had a lovely tablecloth in our dining-room, made of a very heavy chenille or plush deeply embossed with a rose pattern in a terracotta shade. One day at "Kilfenora" Mama was brushing some scraps from the thick pile, when a rusty darning needle, hidden in the cloth, ran through the side of her hand. We managed to get her somehow to St Vincent's Hospital, where the needle was removed, but oh! that poor hand! It was swollen and discoloured for many weeks, and the pain Mama suffered was excruciating. That was indeed a dreadful time, as pain for our mother meant pain for us all, and there was so little we could do to help. We hadn't even heard of Asperin in those days!

In the matter of our choice of friends Mama was very strict, and although she did not put her thoughts into so many words, we could always sense her disapproval or otherwise. We would never encourage a friendship of which we felt she did not altogether approve.

When I had put my hair up, I made my debut at the Newman Ball at the St. Kilda Town Hall. Many of my friends from Vacluse were with me, and we had several rehearsals beforehand, being perfected in the art of "walking the Lancers", and curtsying deeply to our dancing mistress, who represented the Archbishop for the time being. There were forty-two of us and we had the same number of males, of course to partner us. My partner was a Newman College Medical student, who is now one of Melbourne's leading specialists. As the night of the Ball drew near, one of my friends (a fellow debutante) caught the flu and another girl had to be found to take her place. I thought how fortunate this girl was, stepping as she did, into all my friend's lovely clothes without trouble or expense. I regret that, unlike my sisters, I did not have Mama with me when I made my debut. I went instead in a taxi with some of the other girl debutantes. Unfortunately, on arrival at the St. Kilda Town Hall; we were kept hidden away in the dressing-rooms until nearly nine o'clock, by which time most of the boys had their programmes filled. The hostesses had a worrying time trying to fill ours afterwards. We made our bows to His Grace Archbishop Mannix, and walked the Lancers, after which we danced the Hesitation Waltz in rainbow lights with our partners. It was a wonderful night for us all - yet another milestone in our lives.

Mama was always anxious to hear the news, of her family when at night we all returned to the nest and sat down to do justice to the evening meal. The windows on the Simpson Street side of "Kilfenora" were flush with the street, and sometimes as our voices would rise higher and higher in our excitement Mama would silence us by saying "Ssh! People will hear" - or some such remark. We often used to forget I'm afraid, that the street was so near.

My brother King came home at the end of each year for the Christmas holidays, and it was always hard to let him go back again. He was a happy, sunny-natured boy, and we missed him a great deal. As time went by he eventually came down to Ballarat for the Novitiate, and we all went to Ballarat on the day of his Profession. He sailed almost straight away for Ireland on the "Baltana", and it was a sad little family indeed who turned slowly away from the wharf at Port Melbourne that day.

Verna, who was a typiste at the Australian Catholic Federation Office, soon after became engaged to Laurence Kenny, and so we had our first wedding in the springtime of that same year²¹. They were married, with Nuptial Mass at St. Patrick's cathedral, where my Mother and Father were wed so many years before. The honeymoon was spent, at Marysville, after which the bridal pair came back to stay with us for awhile until the house they had bought in Simpson St. was ready for their occupation.

We were quite a small family now at "Kilfenora". Mama, Ilma, Kemp and myself – but we saw a lot of Verna, and were constantly backwards and forwards between the two houses. Mama seemed to enjoy better health now than she had in her younger days when we were all small. Ilma composed a song, which she dedicated to Mama, and which we all thought very pretty. It was entitled "That's Why I Love You", and with part of the proceeds of its sales Ilma had made an oval gold brooch, in which was framed an exquisite coloured miniature taken from the much-loved "bead blind" photograph of Mama - minus the bead blinds. On the back of the brooch were inscribed the title of the song and the date of its publication.

I had commenced taking elocution lessons again from Miss Eileen O'Keefe, and was often called upon to give items at Concerts, etc. I also did quite a lot of dramatic work as time went on, and Mama always came with me on my trips to various Concert Halls and such. I felt happier by her presence, and she liked to come. She was always my best audience needless to say!

My Uncle Gilbert returned from America for a holiday, and of course we were all very excited at meeting him again²². He, Aunt May, Mama, Ilma and I spent a fortnight at Hepburn Springs together, and many were the tales he told us of America. He was most anxious to take us back with him, and had great plans for us all. I was to become a great actress, and Kemp a Commercial Artist. Everything was practically arranged for the trip, when we all suddenly realised that we just didn't want to go and leave our- beloved Australia for good. This made Uncle Gilbert furious – naturally I suppose – and he lost no time in kicking the dust of Australia from his heels. We had one card from him when he reached Tokio, and that was the last we ever heard of him. Aunt May and Uncle Noel went to America later and made exhaustive enquiries for him, but these were without success. He disappeared completely from our lives. I often think of how different our lives might have been had we gone to America to live, and I feel very thankful that we decided to keep on being Australians.

At about this time the shattering news came from Ireland that, my brother, Kingston was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and that he was coming back to Australia for a year to recover. Soon afterwards he arrived in the Blue Funnel Liner Ulysees, and we were agreeably surprised to find him apparently well and happy. Had he come home with us then to stay for [a] while, I think he might soon have got well again. However, he would not do this, sailing on that afternoon for Sydney, and taking up again the routine of the Redemptorist life. This, as it happened, was the

²¹ Verna Evelyn (b. 1893, Echuca; d. 1971 East Melbourne) m. 1919 James Laurence Kenny (b. 1890; d. 1952)

²² I assume this was about 1920 – but certainly after WW1.

worst thing he could have done, and he has never fully recovered from the complete nervous breakdown which followed.

This was, of all the crosses my mother was called upon to bear throughout her life, the very greatest. Her life after that was one of prayer – for King’s recovery – a prayer that was indeed never to be granted in the way she hoped, during her lifetime at least. Nobody will ever really know all she suffered in connection with my brother Kingston, who from then on spent his time in and out of hospitals – mostly in. He, of whom his Novice Master had said, "He was my best Greek Scholar", found that he could not concentrate any more. He tried teaching, but all to no avail. We found it hard to realise that this was the little happy brother we had loved as well. Such are the ways of God, and who are we to question?

Aunty May and Uncle Noel were now living in Sydney. The Colonial and National Banks had amalgamated, and Uncle Noel was transferred to the Managership of the George St., Sydney Branch of the National Bank. They seldom came to Melbourne after that. Mama and I went to Adelaide to stay with my Aunty Edith and family for my annual holidays one year, and I was glad to make the acquaintance of my South Australian cousins - eight of them! I always spent my annual holidays in Mama's company, and we had some very enjoyable ones at various places.

I had taken over Verna's position as typiste at the A.C.F., and it was there that I met one day my future husband although I did not know that then, of course. Verna it was, I think, who introduced us. She had been instructing me in the intricacies of my new job before leaving me to carry on, and one day, while she was still there, in walked our Hon. secretary from Dookie - Peter J. Ryan. It was not until some time afterwards, when we met again at the Annual Summer School, that I found my heart was no longer my own. We were engaged for eight months, during which time I paid a flying visit to Dookie, and spent my very first days on a farm! Peter and I, too, were married with Nuptial Mass at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, at the beautiful High Alter where my dear parents were wed long years before. Our marriage was celebrated by our-dear friend His Lordship the Most Rev. Dr. R. Ryan, C.M., then Bishop of Geraldton, Western Australia, (now of Sale), assisted by the Very Rev. J. Lonergan, Adm. We felt very honoured that Bishop Ryan should have made his trip to Melbourne coincide with our wedding date - thus redeeming; a promise made to me on his departure for Geraldton that he would come over and perform my wedding ceremony when the time came!

When thinking of my parting from Mother, home and all I held so dear in Melbourne, I am inclined to forget that. Mother must have suffered at losing me too. I had been her constant companion and roommate since Papa's death so many years before, and I had never been away from her for more than a few nights at a time. I know she must have missed me - although never, surely; as I missed her! - and yet, on our parting, I could not detect a single tear in the eye - unless it was that my own were blinded by tears! When the time came for my final departure for Dookie I thought my heart would break, and I remember that just before Peter started up the car Mama put into my arms a small basket containing a tiny tabby kitten. This helped me a lot, and Peter was always thankful to that little kitten, as it certainly distracted my attention from my own sorrow by its efforts to get out of that basket. Who can explain the power which compels one to leave Mother, Father and all one holds dear and cleave to one's

husband or wife as the case may be? This must be to make the world go on. During those first weeks of my housekeeping in the country I missed my mother dreadfully, and looked for her frequent and beautiful letters with great eagerness. What letters these were! Mama wrote a bold, flowing hand, full of character, and I wished often that I could write half so well. I myself used to write long and often to her, and so we kept in touch with each other as the weeks turned into months.

After my marriage, Mother, Ilma and Kemp, found “Kilfenora” rather too big to keep up, and, much to my sorrow, moved from my beloved home on the corner over to the top flat at Verna’s place for while, and then to Deepdene. After having lived in East Melbourne for so long, however, they soon found Deepdene too far away, and they moved back to a small house in George St. again. We used to go to Melbourne occasionally to stay at Mother’s, and what a great welcome we always received! Mama and Ilma came to Dookie sometimes, too, and I always missed them a lot when they left. When my first baby was born, Mother came up to stay for a few weeks, and Peter and I loved having her. We were all thrilled with our little boy, whom we named Peter John after his father, and Mother was very proud of her grandson.

Later' on, Mother was delighted to be able to move into a double-fronted house with a garden in Simpson St. She was really very happy there, and loved to potter about in the garden, and the owner, whom she had known for many years, promised that he would not sell the place – a promise which, alas! He did not keep! For the first time in years, I think, Mama felt a sense of security, and her letters always sounded very happy.

Ilma was married to John Kost at about this time, but always lived close to Mother. Ilma was the pianiste at the Athenaeum Theatre, and John the Conductor of the Orchestra at the same Theatre. They, too, were married at St. Patrick's, so that its great High Alter had now witnessed four of our weddings!

The place next door to Mother's was sold soon afterwards, and high narrow flats put up in its stead. I think Mama knew then that it would be only a matter of time before her house would be sold over her head, despite the landlord's promise.

I've often heard country people say that one does not know one's next - door neighbour in the City. This was not the case as far as we were concerned. Mother knew her neighbours and not only her next-door ones! She was well known and well loved in East Melbourne. One of her neighbours said to me once – “Your mother is a wonderful woman” – but I did not need to be told that!

The years were passing quickly now, and Peter and I had four sons – Peter, Barry, Adrian and Michael. Peter Junior had commenced his studies at Assumption College, Kilmore, and Michael was the baby. We spent many happy holidays with Mother at her home in Simpson Street, and my children were devoted to their beloved “Gram”. There was great rejoicing in the family when our baby girl, Rosemary Anne, was born, and we took her also to stay at the happy home in Simpson St. Alas! she left us after only nine short months, and we were left to suffer the pain and anguish of her loss. How I needed my mother's ready sympathy in those black days!

Aunty May had also died in Sydney, and it was a great sorrow to Mother that she could not have been with her at the end²³. Uncle Noel, who had retired from the Bank, eventually returned to Melbourne with his sister, and went to live in Castlemaine until his death some time afterwards²⁴.

Mother's fears about the house being sold were at last materialised, and she and Kemp, had to try and find another place in which to live. They searched day after day without success, until eventually they managed to obtain a most inconvenient flat in Hotham St., - inconvenient in that the kitchenette was upstairs and the sitting-dining-room downstairs. They moved in, and made it look very nice, but life was never the same for Mother again. There she worried about making the slightest noise, in case anybody might complain. How she studied those tenants and how little they studied her!

And so the years went on, Mother, as usual, trying to make the best of everything, and always showing a smiling face to the world. There were many hard times, though, both financially and otherwise, of which nobody knew or guessed. We would have loved her to come up to Dookie, and make her home with us, but she loved her independence, and besides she felt her place was there with Kemp. When the war broke out Kemp joined up, and she carried on alone during his absence, with Ilma, of course, just around the corner. Verna and Laurie had gone to live at Broadford for some years, and later also lived at Shepparton and Dookie respectively.

My eldest son Peter, at the age of twelve years, expressed his desire to become a doctor. He continued to do remarkably well in his studies at Assumption College, becoming Dux of each class as the years passed, and finally Dux of the School, gaining at least three First Class Honours and some minor ones. These splendid results earned him a Senior Scholarship to the University just after his sixteenth birthday. We greatly desired to send him to Newman College to commence his Medical studies but on account of his extreme youth, and also for financial reasons Mother agreed to look after his welfare at her flat in Hotham St. This was a great satisfaction to me, as I knew he would be well looked after. Mother always saw that enjoyed a hearty breakfast before leaving each morning for the University, and had a delicious and wholesome dinner awaiting his arrival home in the evening. Peter loved "Gram" dearly, as did all my boys, and his studies progressed I well under her care. However, these pleasant conditions could not last long, as my brother Kingston came home again, and there was no room for Peter in the flat. Thus it was that in his Second Year Medicine he took up residence at Newman College. Mother was very sorry to lose him and from then on life, for her, became harder. Every time an electric light was left on when it was supposed to be off my poor brother Kingston was blamed. In fact, it seemed that everything amiss in the house was laid at his door. It is good to have a scapegoat, some people find. My beloved mother endured great agonies of mind during that time, and we noticed gradually that her health was beginning to fail under the strain. Her landlady, too, who had the flat opposite Mother's was very ill, and seemed to have nobody to depend on but Mother, her daughter being away from home all day. Mother was an angel of mercy indeed to that poor soul, but all this extra work took its toll. How many times a day did she hurry up

²³ Annie May Coleman (b. 1st October, 1865, Hobart; d. 11th January 1937, Potts Point, NSW)

²⁴ Harold Noel Fosbery Kentish (b. ?, Castlemaine; d. 5th November, 1945, Castlemaine)

and down those steep stairs! On my visits to Melbourne it always amazed me how she did it. One trip up and down was enough for me!

Verna and Laurie came back to Melbourne to live at about this time, taking up residence at Kew, so Verna was able to assist Mother in many ways. Ilma was always in and out, of course, and was a great help, but they could not do anything to prevent the complaints to Mother about Kingston. These she just had to suffer in silence, until things became so unbearable that she had to part with her poor boy once more, and send him back to the hospital. He was playing the piano softly when the car arrived to take him back, and Mother felt her heart would break when he stood up to go. How different it might have been had she possessed a little home of her own with a garden where King could have taken an interest in growing things! Flat life was never invented for one such as mother, and I shall never cease to regret the fact that for those last years of her life she had to endure the caged-in feeling that was so abhorrent to her. Still she refused a home with us in Dookie – but we understood well her feeling of independence, of course. She loved doing her own work and looking after Kemp, even though she had little convenience. The big house had been a fine one in its day but was now falling to pieces for want of repairs. One day Mother was standing at the sink in her kitchenette upstairs. She moved aside to get something, and right above the spot on which she had been standing, a large piece of plaster dislodged itself from the ceiling and crashed to the floor. A moment sooner, and it would probably have killed her. This frightened us all very considerably, as may well be imagined. Try as we could to find another house or flat, however, there seemed to be none available. Wood and coal were very hard to get, too, and sometimes Mother was without proper fires during the cold winter nights. She had a good radiator, but her landlady would not permit her to use it. The only thing she could do on those occasions was to go to bed with a hot bottle. We all knew that she felt the cold terribly.

Occasionally, of course, Mother would come up to stay with us – but seldom for longer than a week or a fortnight at a time. We used to try to persuade her to change her mind and lengthen her stay, but she always had to get back for some reason or other. We knew she really loved being with us, too. She would always relax the moment she arrived in Dookie, and one could hear her joyous laughter mingled with the children's round about the house. The boys loved her visits, and could always depend upon her to drop anything she might be doing to play “Oughts and Crosses”, or ‘Birds and Beasts and Fishes” with them. She would delight them by thinking up the weirdest names of birds or animals, and would trick them over and over again. She was a great reader, too, and I used to be at my wits' end to keep her supplied with books when she came to stay. I don't think I ever knew anybody who could read a book so quickly. While engrossed in a book, she could be absolutely oblivious to her surroundings. Her power of concentration was marvellous. She spent much time, too, walking about the paddocks near the house, gathering small sticks for firewood, and always kept us well supplied while she was here. I think I can safely say that all our friends in Dookie loved her. She had such a friendly manner, and always showed interest in everybody she met.

Mother never lost her delight in the happenings about her, big and small. She loved weddings and processions. Many times we remonstrated with her for going to the latter and becoming crushed in crowds. She invariably promised she would not go

again, but could never resist when next time came. It is wonderful, I think, to retain such a power for enjoyment throughout one's life. It was so easy to please Mother. Even the smallest gift one gave her would be received with the greatest delight. "Mother's day" gave her particular joy, as we would all remember her specially on that day. She enjoyed, too, her birthday and Christmas. She would spend many hours buying presents for us all at Christmas, knowing well how much we all loved opening parcels. It was remarkable how she seemed to know just what each of us would like.

When we were girls, our friends all loved her, and many of them called her "Mother". I remember when Stella Power won the Melba Scholarship, and left the Convent to come home and live with her father, sisters and brothers in George St., not many doors from "Kilfenora". She and her two sisters, Ita and Ergoule, were very often at our home, and they were all devoted to Mother having lost their own many years before. Stella seemed to think I had a singing voice, and would give me lessons every now and then, but these would generally end in a burst of laughter. We used to have some grand musical evenings (informal) in those days, with Ilma at the piano, and some student violinists from the Conservatorium who lived nearby, to say nothing of Stella's lovely voice. We had quite a number of operatic scores, and would go through them one after the other. Those were happy days at "Kilfenora".

I suppose that darling Mother often looked back on those days of happiness when we were all young too. She must have missed us as we left that happy home one after the other but she would never think of herself - she lived for her children. Had she denied us a good Convent education and College education, she could have had many comforts for herself, but her thoughts first, last and always were for us. As a reward for that self sacrifice, she had the love of her children surrounding her until the day of her death. It would be impossible for any mother to have had greater love than that which we all felt to our dear mother.

The years were passing ever more quickly now. Mother kept on with all her various jobs about the house, making it a rule to go out for a walk - however short - every afternoon. Never a week passed without her visit to the Hospital to see King. More and more she prayed for his recovery, but accepted God's Holy Will. She would go into the City quite often, mostly window shopping, or perhaps to the pictures, which she enjoyed, never minding in the least being alone. Whenever I could go to Melbourne we went together, but alas! That was not very often. Once a month she would go to her Hour of Adoration at St Francis' Church before the Blessed Sacrament.

The years of constant mental anguish and worry were now gradually taking their toll, and Mother's health began to fail noticeably. As time went on she became very frail, and so had little or no strength left to resist the illness which was to strike her down so suddenly. My son Peter was doing his Fifth Year Medicine when he was chosen to play a leading part in the Newman College production of "The Staircase", and I had made up my mind to go to Melbourne for the opening night. The previous week-end was bitterly cold and windy, and Mother had gone into town on the Friday to have lunch with my two sisters, after which she left them to pay her usual visit to St. Francis'. That was the last day of July, and she wrote to me on that night. It was the last real letter I was ever to receive from my beloved Mother. Early on the Sunday morning she awakened suddenly in the dark, and mistook the time. She hurriedly

dressed for seven-thirty Mass, only to discover that the time was five-thirty! The wind was whining in the darkness outside, and Mother sat on her bed, waiting for the time to pass, and shivering with the cold. She was fasting, of course, as usual, so would not make a cup of tea, and eventually she set out to walk to St. John's in the biting wind and cold of the morning. All that day her cold steadily became worse, but next day she attempted to do her washing, until caught by my sister Verna and sent to bed.

This was the news that greeted me when I arrived in Melbourne the next night and by this time Mother had developed Bronchial pneumonia. She was removed to St. Vincent's Hospital, where they were able to feed her artificially, but she failed to respond to treatment, and we were forced to realise that our darling was soon to leave us. Three times a day we visited her bedside, and Peter and the boys came down from Dookie to say good bye to the "Gram" they loved so well. Peter Junr. was at St. Vincent's at the time, and Mother used to be so proud of him in his white coat. It was sad that she did not live to see him graduate in medicine the following year. I think she was happy at St. Vincent's. The nuns and nurses were all so good to her. We were delighted that Sister Philomena was in charge of the Ward, as she had been with us at Vaucluse, and was very fond of Mother. She made everything as easy as she could for us, and on that last long night when we all stayed about the bed, afraid to move away, she sent rugs and blankets and hot cups of tea to keep us warm. At a little after seven in the morning the dear life we all held so dear left this world forever, and I think the angels were waiting near to take her pure and beautiful soul to Heaven. Her sufferings on earth had been many, but her love of the Sacred Heart and her wonderful a steadfast faith had never wavered throughout her life.

We tenderly laid the weary little body to rest beside that of the beloved husband she had lost so many years before, and, I love to picture that happy meeting in Heaven when she, who had so long been faithful to his memory on earth, found haven once more in his loving arms before the Throne of God.

She had a nature that was essentially a happy one, but alas! she was never permitted to be happy for long. Her many sorrows and disappointments in life heavily outweighed her joy, but her ready smile was never very far behind the tears in all her adversities. Her sense of humour, too, endured throughout her life, and she could generally manage to see the funny side of everything. Her musical laughter was very infectious, and more than once changed a gloomy situation into a pleasant one.

When my husband first met her he said he thought she was the loveliest woman he had ever met. Another time I heard him say that no- one ever had a nicer mother-in-law than he, and I know that her other sons-in-law would willingly endorse that statement. She loved them all. Mother! Mother! What great love you inspired in the hearts of your children! Such great persons as my Beloved Mother do not really die. They live on in our hearts forever, and, as my brother once remarked, it seems that Mother is walking always beside us, but just on the other side of the wall. Someday we shall come to the opening in the wall, and meet again our darling face to face. Until then life must go on for us all, and we must try to be worthy of the great honour that was ours in having had for our mother so dear a heroine as Peg of the Gay Nineties.