Din DE ALBERT QUESNEL
DEC 1991

Keep aside for Eleanor

Dec. 1956.

B/O # 41.

To
Mother
With Love
Wallace & Jane

Eaton named U.K. high commissioner

The Canadian Press

The Conservative government has named Toronto department store tycoon Fredrik Eaton as high commissioner to Britain.

The appointment of Eaton, 53, on Friday ended months of speculation about who would get the prized job with a long tradition as a patronage plum.

Eaton, a big contributor to Tory coffers, is the second eldest of four brothers who inherited the Eaton department store chain.

Eaton is president of Eaton's of Canada and chairman of the T. Eaton Co. Ltd., which holds other family interests.

He replaces former Liberal finance minister Donald Macdonald, who returned to his law practice.

Eaton donated $1,000 last year to the Conservatives, while Eaton's of Canada Ltd. donated $40,000.

MEMORY'S WALL

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF FLORA McCREA EATON

Illustrated with 16 pages of photographs

TORONTO was still a small town, and the Eaton organization a local phenomenon, when Flora McCrea, from the village of Omemee in Ontario, first met young John Craig Eaton. Flora McCrea had come to Toronto to learn to be a nurse. Her marriage to John Eaton changed that plan and plunged her as a young bride into the Victorian society of Ontario's capital city. When, on the death of his father, Timothy Eaton, her husband became President of The T. Eaton Company, she was brought into close association with an organization that was soon to become national in its scope.

In her autobiography, *Memory's Wall,* Lady Eaton has much to say of the Company of which she was for years an active director. Timothy Eaton, the founder of the business, was a remarkable man whose innovations worked a revolution in merchandising in Canada. The mail order business he established made of the Eaton's catalogue the most widely read volume in the isolated homesteads of a country whose empty spaces were being rapidly filled, in the boom years of settlement before 1911. Lady Eaton first saw the West in the early years of the present century when she went with her husband to inspect possible sites for an Eaton's store in Winnipeg. She has recorded the growth of the country as she saw it at first hand

(Continued on back flap)

MEMORY'S WALL

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
FLORA McCREA EATON

Among the beautiful pictures
That hang on Memory's wall . . .

ALICE CARY

Randolph Macdonald

LADY EATON

At work in the library of *Eaton Hall*, 1956.

MEMORY'S WALL

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
FLORA McCREA EATON

WITH A FOREWORD BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
ARTHUR MEIGHEN

Toronto
CLARKE, IRWIN & COMPANY LIMITED
1956

Printed in Canada

To My Children	*And My Grandchildren*
Timothy Craig	
John David	John Craig II Frederic Stefan Thor Edgar George Ross
Edgar Allison	
Gilbert McCrea	Timothy Craig II Nancy Ann
Florence Mary (Mrs. Frank F. McEachren)	Gilbert Flavelle Signy Elizabeth (adopted)
Evlyn Beatrice (adopted) (Mrs. Russel T. Payton)	Lynn Constance Russel II (adopted)

ILLUSTRATIONS

PREFACE

To my children and grandchildren:

AT LAST I have attempted the story of my life and times. Perhaps it is not quite in the vein which you intended when you used to beg me to consider the project, but, even so, I think I have covered many of the things you wanted written: my childhood, friends and relatives, travels, and events great and small as I experienced them.

This undertaking really began when my grandson, John Craig Eaton II, then ten years old, asked me to take him to Omemee "where you lived when you were a little girl". A short while later Uncle Arthur (my brother) decided to make reproductions of family daguerreotype portraits for all our grandchildren, his and mine, and he suggested that I assist him by compiling the notes to accompany the pictures. That called for a great deal of research, both on his part and mine. The last time he talked with me before his death he remarked that all the portraits were in order, and he urged me to carry on from there.

I have gone into considerable detail concerning the environment and events of my early impressionable years, perhaps because it is pleasant to remember happy, far-off times, but also, I think, in the hope that even at this late date you will be enabled to know me a little better, and understand why I am as I am!

FLORA MCCREA EATON

Eaton Hall, King City, Ontario
September, 1956

FOREWORD

THIS BOOK is a truly Canadian product. First, it was written by Lady Eaton, a talented woman of Canadian birth and parentage. It stems from an immigrant of Northern Ireland who in early life made this country his home, and who, without advantage other than what flows from courage, resolution and toil, builded among us an institution greater than has been. While in its first sentence this modest volume is described by its author as the story of her life and times it is really much more than that. It deals with those associated with her life and work much more than with herself, and especially with those associated with the great business entity which was growing up to huge dimensions before their eyes.

Inevitably the figure of Timothy Eaton is very much in view, and always with admiration. Nor does that of his brilliant son suffer even by comparison. Both of these men were bound to the author by ties of affection.

It is my opinion that nothing in Lady Eaton's book is dealt with more ably than her own girlhood. After seeing and experiencing all or very much of good that the world has to offer, she plainly prizes most the simple homely teaching and habits that were honoured in her home. No tribute is withheld in devotion to her parents. Limitations are acknowledged faithfully, but always graciously. Never is there lost to sight her primary purpose, to paint a true picture of the founders down to the present generation of the Eaton household.

Every reader and particularly those who can remember

the event as heralded by newspapers of those days, will be eager to reach, as one does early in these pages, an account of the marriage which was to unite the rapidly advancing, yes, the already proven, son and chosen successor of Timothy Eaton with the comely, competent village maiden who now, at the climax of a crowded life, modestly takes her place as historian of the Eaton family. This family, widely extended as it is at present, can be said to be in large measure her own.

As one wends his way through the mazes of this remarkable woman's activities he finds himself filled with admiration that one person without rarely adventitious circumstances could achieve so much. In the fields of active charity alone—and they are many—she has been a tireless and effective leader throughout a comparatively long life, often involving the assumption and, as well, the discharging of continuing responsibilities. She is one of those of whom it can be said that she passed not by on the other side. In the good things of this world as in its burdens, which, indeed, are in reality many times the same, she has shown a capacity to share abundantly. Like the poet Landor, and perhaps more intently than he, she has never ceased to

warm both hands before the fire of life.

ARTHUR MEIGHEN

MEMORY'S WALL

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
FLORA McCREA EATON

CHAPTER I

MANY, MANY years ago on a bleak November night in the tiny village of Omemee, Ontario, a woman-child was born. I was that baby, and from the standpoint of practically the whole community, I was also a calamity. In the opinion of the villagers—all of them friends of our family and filled with kindly concern—the McCrea household was already quite large enough with its seven children, the eldest now twenty-one years old; besides, my father had been seriously ill and everyone knew that his financial resources stood at a low ebb.

Nevertheless a warm welcome awaited me within the red brick house that was to be the background for so many happy memories, and the neighbours' anxieties proved groundless. John and Jane McCrea loved all their children equally and dispensed justice without prejudice or favour; no wonder the four sons and four daughters grew up accepting, literally and inevitably, the Commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother." It was with no thought of the reward promised, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," yet I cannot help noting the fulfilment of Scripture in the fact that most of our family group have passed their allotted threescore years and ten, some of them living into their nineties, and all, without exception, retaining their mental faculties and reasonable physical fitness.

Perhaps we have survived because of the happy, healthy life our parents made for us in those early years. Then too, the mere everyday business of living was less complicated

in many ways. There were no buttons to turn on to bring the latest world news into the home, no television to hold the eye and leave the hands idle in a darkened room, no moving pictures. Whatever pleasures or entertainment we had were home-made or part of the village life. Father and Mother had one great quality in common: they were both eager to "know", to be enlightened on new developments. They read history and geography avidly. They were keen Bible students; the maps of the Holy Land were as familiar to them as those of Canada or the United States. Shakespeare was discussed without self-consciousness around our dinner-table. Scott, Dickens, Barrie were their favourite authors. To my parents *A Window in Thrums* seemed to portray life in Omemee. They kept abreast of current events through the pages of the Montreal *Star,* the Toronto *Daily Mail,* and the *Saturday Night* under E. B. Sheppard.

Both our parents shared actively in the affairs of church and community. Father served in almost every capacity in the village Council except as Reeve—a post which he did not want. He was often sent as representative to County meetings, was for years a member of the School Board, and a Trustee of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Every Sunday he conducted the young men's Bible Class, and as a voluntary lay speaker or preacher was frequently away, morning or evening, to take the service in one of the churches in the country districts. Mother was a member of the Ladies' Aid and the Women's Missionary Society, of which she was made a life member by that organization. During the Boer War she helped to gather together a group of Omemee women who knitted and contributed comforts for the men who had joined up and left for South Africa. She was a studious person who always found a practical means of giving expression to her sympathies and

As a child, I thought my parents knew everything. Now, on due reflection, I still think they were a very knowledgeable pair. At all times they were good compan-

ions in this mutual pastime, just as in the ordering of their household and the distribution of duties.

Our life followed a simple pattern, yet because we had no extra resources and in any case "modern improvements" were still some distance off in the future, work was constant and every routine involved a special skill. Mother was the commander-in-chief. To each of us she allotted tasks according to age and ability. The washing of dishes and cleaning of the dining-room, the making of beds and general tidying of the rooms was divided among the girls. My earliest important job was the care of fourteen lamps; their chimneys had to be polished, wicks trimmed and oil bowls refilled daily before I left for school.

At that period there was no plumbing, gas or electricity in country or villages. Therefore hand basins and water pitchers were common articles in every bedroom; for a warm sponge bath it was first necessary to make a trip to the kitchen for a pitcherful of hot water from the cookstove tank or kettle. This was "soft" water (drainage from roof and eavestroughs) pumped up from the big cistern in the cellar. "Hard" water for drinking and cooking use came to us from the pump which stood in the summer kitchen. It always delivered a drink of fine cool water but the lime content made it unsuitable for washing purposes.

My brothers were the hewers of wood and drawers of water. It was a regular part of their duties to carry the pails of water upstairs to refill the pitchers, keep the kitchen supplied with both hard and soft kinds, refill the woodboxes and remove the ashes. On Saturday mornings they were out in the yard bright and early to saw wood in the required length for the various stoves, split kindling and pile all neatly for next week's use. Saturdays were climactic in other ways too, for that was the day for a general cleaning of boots and rubbers, and then, after all the jobs were finished, for a bath for each member of the family. The

same big wooden tub served us for Monday washday and Saturday bath night.

Sundays were special, though we were not a household given to saving up its religion for once-a-week airing; not at all! Grace before meat was said at every meal and we had family prayers after breakfast. Father read the Scripture for the day, offered a short prayer, and then we all joined in saying the Lord's Prayer. But on Sundays we were part of the whole community going churchward in their best clothes, intent on the message from the pulpit, eager to participate in the service of worship and song. All of us at one time or another were members of the choir, and by stages pupils or teachers in the Sunday School. You could hardly consider our Sabbath a day of rest. Yet it was a vastly satisfying day, and it ended almost always in the same way, with an hour of music in the parlour. Father, who had taught all his children to read music, would play the flute; one of my sisters would preside at the cabinet organ (to be supplanted later by a piano); my eldest brother, Harper, would volunteer some flourishes on his cornet; my brother, John, would pick up his viola, and the rest of us would sing, led by Mother's pretty soprano voice. Often we would venture into a difficult church anthem and go over it half a dozen times in an attempt to improve the effect. If the contraltos were a little weak, Father would say, "Let's try it once more." In those days no one was afraid to contribute a natural talent, however untrained, to a group effort. Perhaps our readiness to participate was due to the fact that we had no opportunity to hear great performers as young people do today, on radio or record-players; we were not frightened by impossible standards.

Monday started the week's busy rounds again, with Mother in command as usual. Though the daily chores had to be done without fail, there was plenty of variety even in a modest village household such as ours where so

many activities were dictated by the seasons. Mother canned fruits, made jellies, jams and mincemeat. She cured hams for our table, using my Great-Aunt Sarah's smoke-house, and knew precisely the right mixture of maple wood and corn cobs for the slow fire, and the length of time needed to produce the best flavour. I have never tasted more delicious baked hams than those that came to our table in Omemee. Father's vegetable garden produced an abundance for summer use and enough to carry us through the winter. Such things as carrots, beets, celery were taken up and set in moist sand in the cellar; potatoes and turnips were stored in a bin; cabbages and onions were ranged along shelves. There were also outdoor pits in which cabbages, potatoes and apples were quite successfully stored, undisturbed, over winter, and these supplies would be the final bridge between last year's crop and the next.

In those days there were no imported green vegetables or early fruits. A woman who looked well to the ways of her household and family appetites was constantly planning and anticipating from one season to the next. In March, for instance, our table would have a special treat of rhubarb, stewed or in pies, from roots cut the previous September and bedded in damp sand in the cellar. Oranges made a triumphant appearance in the stores just before the 24th of May, and the excitement of peeling and eating them is all agreeably mixed up in my mind with the sound of firecrackers on the Queen's Birthday. Orange juice the year round was unheard of, but home-made black currant juice was known to be good for the system and delicious as well. Babies in the eighties and nineties were given scraped apples, turnips and carrots; young people's diets also featured lots of raw things. In a lifetime of observation of child feeding I have seen the pendulum swing its full arc and back again, for today, in contrast with the practices of twenty or thirty years ago, infants two or three months old are given meats, vegetables and fruits even as they were in my youth, though now these supplemental foods

are prepared especially for babies and sold in small tins, while in my day a mother simply offered a spoonful or two from her own plate to the child in her lap.

Father "took barter" in business, as the old saying had it, and during the winter months our summer kitchen became our deep-freeze, the rafters hung with sides of beef, pork, mutton, and turkeys, geese, chickens, most of which represented payment for accounts rendered. The term, "minute steak", had not been invented, but I remember how we sometimes cut paper-thin slices from the beef and quickly pan-broiled them, without defrosting, over a hot fire. They were excellent eating.

We kept chickens and so had fresh eggs most of the year. When the hens were laying well, Mother would pack surplus eggs in great crocks containing a lime solution; these would be stored in the cellar to be used for cooking later in the year. Butter was packed in crocks too, against the lean season. This was butter of our own churning, and the cream came from our two cows.

Surely nothing has eased housekeeping so much as mechanical refrigeration! In my childhood the evaporation method of cooling was often resorted to: wet paper was wrapped around a jar and the contents would stay a little lower in temperature than the surrounding air. Most of the village families were fortunate enough to have ice-houses, and in later years ice-boxes in the kitchen, but at one period it was customary to cool the cans of fresh milk in tall buckets of cold water. The big heavy containers were placed on a sloping drainboard and the water was changed as often as necessary till it remained cool; after that the cans were suspended by long ropes into the well to remain for some hours until the rich cream had formed on top and the milk could be run off.

Butter-making was tedious hand work, whether one used the dash type churn or the more capacious barrel churn with its slowly revolving handle (we owned both kinds) but there were always compensations: that first drink

of cool buttermilk, which I love now as I did then, and a pat of fresh butter waiting to team up with bread still warm from the oven. The last two always seemed to synchronize in our kitchen—home-made bread and home-made butter on the same day, sometimes very nearly the same hour.

When my assignments indoors were finished and there was time to roam, I could visit Father in his workshop a few steps away. Father was a cabinet-maker, and had served his apprenticeship with the well-known furniture firm of Jacques & Hays of Simcoe Street, Toronto. In the mid-nineteenth century Jacques & Hays' designs and craftsmanship had gathered fame abroad as well as in Canada, having won medals at exhibitions in the United States and England. Collectors of Victorian furniture today consider Jacques & Hays' pieces among the best expressions of taste of that period. In Father's shop in Omemee many dining and bedroom suites were turned out for the people of the locality. He worked in walnut or in oak, in the style of the day which often called for added carved ornamentation. We still have some of his pieces in our family. From time to time he took on young apprentices, and as they almost always had their meals with us they became part of our establishment.

Later, as business became brisker, Father installed some machinery which was run by horse-power, and this development was a constant source of interest to his youngest child. The horses were actually ponies, not much more than fifteen hands, and they were called Tony and Darky. The big turn wheel was in the yard behind the workshop; it was covered with a platform and had a long wooden pole to which one horse would be hitched. A steel shaft passed through a boxing into the workshop and drove the saws, planes and turning machines. Around the turntable ran a track of tanbark. When he wished to start or stop his power system Father would simply call out from the workshop

door "Giddyap, Darky," or "Whoa, Tony," depending on which horse was on duty at the time. I loved the action, the whirr of the machines and the smell of the wood. With my friends from next door—there were several my age—I would watch from the yard gateway; we had our own game of trying to anticipate Father's commands so we could shout out in chorus with him. Sometimes I was allowed to ride a pony bareback. Mostly, though, our greatest fun was to play in the shavings and sawdust, and often we gathered up these cabinet-making left-overs to take into our houses for kindling.

Such were the lovely, untroubled summer mornings of long ago. I can still smell the wood scent, the apple blossoms, the lilies-of-the-valley in the garden, and hear the hum of bees and the carolling of the birds. There was the occasional clatter from the chicken-house not far away, and sometimes the bleat of a new calf. As evening descended the day's sounds gave way to the slow tramp of cows coming in from pasture to be milked, the tuning-up of the frogs in the pond not far away, and the distinctive flat cries of the night swallows high overhead. Our village was at peace; it had earned its night's repose.

"So many McCreas!" people have frequently remarked when I have been relating stories from my past. It's true, for eight children in one family do add up, and not only in numbers but in long-term influences on each other, and perhaps especially on the youngest. As this is my personal chronicle I feel I should append here a thumbnail sketch of each member of the family.

Amy was the eldest, my Big Sister who was twenty-one at the time I was born. A beautiful and gifted girl, the tallest of all the McCrea daughters, she was a teacher by nature as well as by training. For a time she had taught school at Bethany, some miles away; after she returned home she introduced me to my three R's and to piano scales. In Omemee she had a large music class, played the

organ in church, taught the Infants' Class in Sunday School, and still had plenty of time to help with the constant sewing which went on in every self-respecting home at that time. Mother had found her an apt pupil with the needle many years before (it was a proud family tradition that "Amy learned to make perfect buttonholes when she was four years old!") and until she was married my big sister made all my clothes. Amy was a superlative cook too, and sometimes would remark, "If I had to earn my living again, I would be a cook and have my choice of the best residential district to live in; I would be monarch of all I surveyed." But I am also positive she would never have given up her music, her talent for crayon sketches, her beautiful needlework, and her interest in English, history, poetry. She was a constant joy to us all.

Harper was the eldest son, tall, slim, very fair. He loved music, played the cornet in the village band, sang in the choir. Frequently he would help Father in the cabinet shop, and through that his interests broadened to the building field. With two of his friends, Henry and George Mulligan, he left for Rochester, N.Y., to work as a builder, and while there he became seriously ill. On his return home our doctor diagnosed his malady as rheumatic fever, and after ten days of great suffering Harper died, at the age of twenty-eight.

Elle, the second daughter, had a gift for organization, along with a fine sense of humour. She became Mother's second-in-command in the housekeeping department, but always found time to amuse the younger girls and boys with her story-telling for which she had a happy knack. She taught in Sunday School, worked for the Women's Missionary Society, and if she had lived today would have been a real asset to the Red Cross and Community Chest. Her genius for fund-collecting for our various church projects was phenomenal, and indeed any job she turned her hand to was accomplished with real zest.

John, I have always thought, was born serious, possessed of an overpowering sense of duty. He adored Mother and was constantly thinking of her comfort. For example: Mother used to have severe migraines which would keep her in bed for several days. During an attack she couldn't take nourishment, but once it had passed she always wanted, first, a smoked herring and a baked potato, then some fresh fish. John was inevitably the one to get up early that morning of recovery and go fishing before school so that Mother would have her fresh brook trout!

He became a builder, an enthusiastic student in house layout. Before any of us had heard of modern kitchens or plumbing or twentieth century heating methods, he had remodelled the house, to include a very convenient kitchen and bathroom. He installed the first acetylene gas lighting we aspired to. John would have made a fine architect, and this could easily have been his future if he had not suffered under a cruel, tyrannical teacher during his first year or so in high school. All the pupils were terrified of that schoolmaster, whose habit was to spring from behind and beat them with a heavy ruler. Possibly the others were able to shrug off their experience in later years, but in poor, hypersensitive John's case it was lasting. He refused to finish secondary school and retired more and more within himself, to become what we know today, in the light of psychology, as an introvert. Nevertheless John can still look back on a life filled with interest and hobbies. Model-making claimed his attention for years, and in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, in a room reserved for the complete collection, there are now displayed his beautifully detailed models of the early buildings in the Township of Emily where Omemee is situated. They are used by the teachers in Toronto public schools to illustrate Canadian history, showing how the first settlers in Upper Canada constructed their houses and churches and laid out their pioneer farms. I am delighted to have in my possession one of John's first models: the dairy at our uncle's farm

in Ops Township, and this remarkable example of his craft now stands in the Great Hall at my home, *Eaton Hall*. Everything is made to perfect scale—the building, the equipment, even the smallest utensils used in dairying a half century ago. For some of the minute details John found it necessary to fashion the actual tools first. His patience was inexhaustible.

Anna and John were the gentlest members of our family group, invariably considerate of others, and never giving their parents the slightest trouble. Anna was clever and quick to learn; she had her senior matriculation at the age of sixteen, and after Model School and Normal School became a teacher in Toronto where she received high commendation from her inspectors. She loved music, had the gift of absolute pitch, and studied at the Conservatory of Music in Toronto during her teaching years. But the two careers proved too much for her, injured her health and made it impossible for her to take the final examinations in piano. Her delight in fine music, together with her naturally courageous spirit, sustained her during the later years of her life when she suffered from crippling arthritis. Her end came tragically, and actually it was caused by her consideration for others.

Anna had been staying with me at *Eaton Hall* while her nurse was away on vacation. On the last Sunday in September she bade me good-bye with some reluctance. "Usually," she said, laughing, "I'm the one that's saying good-bye to you because you're going on a journey, but this time I'm the traveller." She had been persuaded to join another woman on a short motor trip through southern Ontario. I had a feeling then that I should have kept my sister with me until she could return to her own quiet, supervised home life which was so necessary to her welfare, but this was not to be.

On the 4th of October came the message that Anna had drowned. The car in which they were making the trip had been left for a few minutes driverless, had backed

down on to the wharf at Port Elgin, and plunged into sixteen feet of water. During the investigation it was suggested that the accident had been caused by the vibration from the trucks which were constantly passing—and the car had been parked at a place where there was a slight slope toward the harbour. My sister was hopelessly trapped. For years she had been unable to get in or out of a vehicle without help, and her crippled hands could neither open nor shut the door of a car or a house or a bathroom.

It was an accident that should never have happened.

William S. Here was a McCrea unlike the rest of us in every way. Even in appearance he was different: dark-skinned, black-haired, rarely smiling, yet handsome nevertheless. From infancy he was difficult, a continual trial to my parents. On mature consideration I would say he was one of those people apparently born to be "agin the government". He was a dreadful tease. William had a mechanical turn of mind, worked at various jobs, and finally went to live in Winnipeg. He served in the First World War with great credit. After his return he developed arthritis and eventually became an invalid. Arthur, the youngest of the boys, was in touch regularly with William, and thus I was always kept informed about him and knew that he had good care, but I never saw this brother again after he moved to the West.

Arthur—more truthfully, "Uncle Arthur", because he was called that by all his friends, young and old, as well as by his nieces and nephews—was a great pal of mine, and I was fortunate indeed to have such a lovable, happy boy as comrade and brother. He played on the cricket, baseball and hockey teams in Omemee; he sang in the choir and at one time played the violin. He had an enormous capacity for making friends and for keeping them. He was also a worker. In school vacations he went out with the harvest crews; later he became a Massey-Harris agent and did well; next he worked with our Uncle Isaac McNeilly in his general store. That was the period when Uncle Arthur

splurged on the first bicycle ever to be seen on the main street of Omemee, and sometimes, to my great joy, I was permitted to ride it. As girls in those days did not possess such functional apparel as slacks or shorts or even divided skirts, it was no mean achievement to control layers of petticoats while learning to stay upright on a man's bicycle, but learn I did—even though it involved rising at 4 a.m., to have my private fun with the "wheel" up and down the country roads before the neighbours were about.

A good many years later Uncle Arthur was invited by my father-in-law to take a position with the T. Eaton Company Ltd., as the firm was then known. My brother considered the offer carefully (he was a most methodical man) and finally accepted. Just after he had settled in, the Governor, as Mr. Timothy Eaton was always referred to at his place of business, summoned Arthur to the President's private office and put some questions to him. Just what had been Arthur's training in business, and how had Uncle Isaac McNeilly conducted his retail establishment? My brother answered, crisply yet fully, and when he had finished the Governor said, "Just continue as your uncle trained you, for this is only a bigger general store."

Uncle Arthur had a great sense of responsibility for those under his direction, and he took infinite pains in training each employee to make the most of his ability. From time to time still, I hear from people whom Arthur McCrea trained and helped to advance in business; they always speak of his kindness, firmness and his loyalty to all associated with him. He was very much loved.

Flora, myself—and as all the rest of this book has to do with me, I leave it to you to judge the sort of person I am.

CHAPTER II

OMEMEE SEEMED to me a wonderful place, full of interesting people and exciting things to do at all seasons of the year. Looking back on it from this vantage-point of my seventies, I still think my early estimate was not far wrong. In those days a village such as ours was a complete unit within the life of Canada; perhaps you might say it was in its vigorous middle period—a generation or two removed from its log-cabin beginnings but as yet untouched by city influences

The largest part of the village was on the main street between the bridge over the Pigeon River on the east, up to and including the Sherin home on the west. On both sides were business places and residences, some of the structures part shop, part house where the proprietor and his family lived. In the centre of the village at the four corners stood McNeilly's Dry Goods, Hardware and Groceries (my uncle's store), Young's Hotel with the village pump in front, Tisdall's Groceries and R. J. Mulligan's drug store. Our house, *Tully Lark* (named after my mother's childhood home in Ireland, and, so far as I have been able to discover, having reference to a local bird) was in this vicinity on the north side. On the south, at the corner of Sturgeon Street, stood Bradburn's Hotel—a Georgian-type house, square, with a wide hall, fine staircase, and finished outside with the traditional verandah to accommodate rocking-chairs for the guests. This was considered the best hotel in town, and Mrs. Bradburn saw to it that the bar was run strictly according to the law of the

times, and that her meals were of a standard calculated to bring back the numerous commercial travellers time and time again.

There were three hotels in Omemee, and they held a mysterious fascination for us youngsters. I can still picture the family and staff of Clarke's Hotel, still remember glimpses of the shining equipment of the bar when the green shutter doors swung back and forth. Even walking on the other side of the street one could get a whiff of the acrid odour of liquor. Young's Hotel was memorable principally as a background for old George Young, the immensely fat owner, who from spring to early winter was to be seen seated in a Windsor chair outside his bar door. His costume was always the same: white shirt, no jacket, trousers held up by conspicuous braces, and a black-banded straw hat.

The drug store was the forerunner of the social centres of today, and Mr. Mulligan, a kindly man, was very popular with the young lads of the village. His store had the telegraph agency, and some of the boys learned telegraphy from him, while others did their apprenticeship in pharmacy with him after school hours. Each of the grocery stores had its quota of "biscuit-barrel" regulars who gathered nightly for a gossip.

The churches, though not all geographically in the centre of the community, were certainly the heart and soul of its life. The Presbyterian church was at the extreme end of Main Street, the Anglican at the opposite end; the Wesleyan Methodist Church and parsonage stood to the west of Bradburn's Hotel; and near the Anglican church the Salvation Army had taken over an old red brick hall for their barracks. They held lively meetings there, but the young officers, men and women sent to organize Army work in the district, had no personal friends at the outset. I was reminded of that situation just a few years ago when I was taking part in the opening ceremonies of one of their Homes in Toronto. In mentioning my admiration for this

great organization, I said, "I have known the Salvation Army for more years than I care to remember, for when I was quite a little girl they came into Omemee. Having no personal friends in the village, often on Sunday two or three of their young officers would come to have dinner or supper with us." At tea following the speeches, Colonel Peacock came up to me and said, "Lady Eaton, I would like you to know that I was one of those young officers who enjoyed the hospitality of your parents, and I want to tell you how much it meant to us to know your father and mother."

Many of the most eagerly anticipated events in our village life were the church-sponsored occasions. Sometimes each congregation had a Sunday School picnic—generally in McGee's Grove west of town, where big oaks and maples and lovely springy turf made an ideal setting. Rope swings would be put up for the little ones' fun, and there were always patient teen-agers standing by, to push us back and forth. Baseball matches, races, various old-time games would make up the afternoon program; then came the climax of the day, the picnic supper, supplied from dozens of home-packed baskets bulging with good country fare, and served at long tables under the trees. Before we sat down, everyone joined in singing grace:

> Be present at our table, Lord,
> Be here and everywhere adored—
> These creatures bless and grant that we
> May feast in Paradise with Thee.

Sometimes the three churches organized a combined excursion. Sturgeon Point down the river, not far from Lindsay, might be the objective, and we would go by morning train to Lindsay and then board the river boat to reach the Point. Such ambitious outings always warranted a band, and so our boat trip would be gay with crashing cymbals and brass, and on the way home we had accompaniment for sing-songs. Occasionally Bobcaygeon or Orillia would be the destination for these all-village excursions. The routine would be the same—a train trip morning

and evening, a boat ride, countless baskets of good things to eat, a program in which all ages participated. Simple pleasures, viewed from this year of 1956, yet I find it refreshing to look back and relive those happy times, and especially to recall the unselfishness of the older people who spared no effort to make the outings so completely delightful for all the children.

In wintertime there were two special church occasions I vividly remember. They came fairly close together, one being the Anglican Christmas Tree and the other the Methodist Sunday School Anniversary in January. It was always amazing how attendance increased in the Anglican Sunday School during December, fell off sharply after Christmas, only to rise with the same phenomenal speed in the Methodist Sunday School and continue at a high level until the big Anniversary night supper, concert, and distribution of gifts.

Once, at an Anniversary concert, I had a place in the program with a short recitation. I began in good fettle, but on reaching the line, "Then shouted out Amen!" I was completely stopped and couldn't think of another word. I stood there, red-faced, miserable, when suddenly the Superintendent boomed out in a voice everyone could hear, "Just begin at the beginning again, Flora, and it may come." Well, Flora did, but it did not. And I know that my sister Amy was right when she remarked next day, "Of course if you don't memorize perfectly you must expect to be stuck."

I must have been a headstrong youngster for my memory is filled with childish escapades, some of them having a happy ending, others deserving and getting punishment. I had little fear, for games with my brothers had reduced whatever natural caution a girl has. My eldest brother, Harper, used to have an exciting routine for me when I was hardly more than four years old. He would order me to "stand straight, with feet out" parallel with the

baseboard in our kitchen. Then he would say, "I'll back away and when I say 'jump', you jump and I'll catch you." At the given word I would spring into his arms. We would go through the performance over and over again, measuring the improvement in my leap, and Harper seemed to find it as much fun as I did.

One day when still of an age too young for school I climbed up a tall ladder propped against the house. Mother, happening by, saw me sitting crouched between the last two rungs, a few feet away from the highest point of our roof. "Just sit there and I'll come up too," she said quietly, and got me down safely in spite of her state of shock.

Our next-door neighbours were the Currys, who ran a dry goods store and millinery shop; their granddaughters, Ethel Clarke and Ada Sheppard, were my constant companions, along with Leonie Calder, daughter of the editor and owner of the Omemee *Mirror*, whose house and pressroom were just beyond the Currys' place. We made a play-house in the Currys' unused stable, sometimes arranged a tea-party there and on one occasion invited our adult relatives—after rifling their pantries for the cakes and sugar and cream. It was in the stable play-house that I had one of my near-disasters. An old saddle hanging on the wall had been a constant temptation; this time my eye travelled from saddle to one of the beams over the coal bin. Could I make my plan work? Well, I could try. I threw the saddle over the beam, climbed along and with care got myself ensconced. I began to experiment by posting gently and then my enthusiasm got the better of me and I tried rocking from side to side. Naturally there could be but one *finale*: I went head first into the coal bin. I was a sorry sight when I picked myself up, for my head, hands, clothes were black, and after I got home Mother had to strip and bathe me before she could find the abrasions and treat them.

Punishment usually consisted of isolation in my room, or being deprived of something. Once in a while I was given the hairbrush treatment and undoubtedly deserved it,

At right: The earliest photograph of Flora McCrea.

Below: The McCrea family about 1890. From left, standing: Elle, John, Anna; seated: Amy, Father, Mother, Harper; foreground: Flora, Arthur, William.

Tully Lark the second, to which the McCreas moved after the fire.

The golden wedding anniversary. From left, standing: Mrs. John McCrea, John, Elle, Clifford Mulligan, his mother and father; seated: Anna, Flora, John and Jane McCrea with baby Timothy Eaton between them, John Craig Eaton, and Arthur McCrea.

but other methods were even more effective with me. I remember a certain occasion when, without forewarning, I had left Sunday School with a friend and gone to her place which was some three miles from the village. About five o'clock my father arrived to take me home. He didn't scold, he just said, "Flora, why did you not ask permission?" Then we walked home the whole distance without another word from either of us. It was the longest walk I ever endured. I never went AWOL again.

Omemee had a "mountain", or at least a high hill called Mount Nebo, a pond, a river, and was ringed about with hills and dipping roads. These features of course remain, although modern highway construction has lowered the pitch of some of the hills and straightened the village's approaches. But in my childhood all these topographical endowments were utilized to the full for outdoor fun. Mount Nebo was a walk of about a mile and a half from our home which faced it, but neither that nor the steep climb to the top deterred us from pleasant August picnics there. In berry time Father often took one or two of us by canoe down the Pigeon River to a farm about three miles away. Each of us would have a tin cup for gathering, and when this was full of the lovely wild raspberries we would empty it into the big pail and go back through the thorny patches for more.

Every season, as I look back, seemed to have its high point of something different to observe or do, generally in the company of friends and indeed entire families of friends. A village child fifty or sixty years ago was fortunate in having the acquaintance of the whole community, as contrasted with a city child today, who outside of school hours may be limited to contacts with three or four families, the friends of the parents. When I mention such names as the Cornwalls, the Stevensons, the Adams, the Johnsons, the Norrises, the McPhersons, it is because they remain such a warm and happy memory half a century later. I remember,

too, the charming, gentle ways of people I was taken to visit occasionally in the country—in particular, Mr. and Mrs. Race, who lived on the Orange Line and who made any caller welcome indeed. I often accompanied my father to his country appointments when he preached, and we always had dinner, a very bountiful one, with the Races when he took the services at the Orange Line. This hamlet got its name from the Orange Lodge which was very active there. On the opposite side of the township line was a Roman Catholic settlement at Downeyville which was commonly called "the Cross" because the church stood on a corner of the crossroads.

One of our special family outings in early autumn concerned the utilitarian matter of getting fresh fillings for the straw mattresses that supported the regulation feather bed in each room. This was part of the household preparations for winter. Already the stoves had been put back in place, moved in from the summer kitchen, and the stovepipes, which had been taken down in spring, cleaned and stored under covers, were up again. Now was the time to make a trip to Uncle David's farm in Raeboro, so three or four of us would drive out in the light waggon, and like as not I would be sitting on the pile of empty mattress covers. Aunt Margaret and her family received us, and the afternoon became a picnic event of filling the mattress ticks with fragrant straw from the freshly threshed grain. I always begged to be allowed to have one night on my straw mattress without feather bed—if only for the joy next morning of being able to do a quick job of bed-making. It was an exacting routine, almost an art, to put sheets and bedding over nineteenth century feather mattresses and achieve a smooth surface for the top coverlet of knitted lace or patchwork quilt. Yet, until the introduction of the hard mattress some years later, every housewife and her daughters accepted this daily chore as their inevitable lot.

Another seasonal event, one involving the whole village, was the run-off in spring. Creeks and field drainage would

swell and pour down from the surrounding hills to the pond, and occasionally the damage would be severe. In the early days the dam between the flour mill and the carding mill was built of logs. When the pressure of water became too great, the logs would give way and pile up against the log bridge; this in turn would weaken with the force of raging water and battering timbers, and a complete span of the bridge sometimes washed out. Everyone gathered on the banks to watch the millers and their help battle with the flood. One of them, Massey by name, was impressively energetic in spite of his very short, very fat figure. The irreverent young of the village—myself included—put some of their own words to a Salvation Army hymn, of which I remember only the line, "Old Massey, he passed over and the dam gave way," though I can still hum the tune.

Wintertime brought its special excitements. The pond made a wonderful skating rink, and sometimes there would be at least three miles of smooth, perfect ice. The protruding stumps, which might have been a cause for complaint, were turned into an asset. My brothers and their friends would go out after supper armed with axes, coal oil and matches, and by the time the skaters had assembled the stumps were blazing, and the scene, of shining ice, leaping flames, gliding figures, became a fairyland. There was no music but the ring of skates on ice and the shouts and laughter of youth.

The sheet of ice was a standing invitation to hockey enthusiasts and Omemee never lacked a team ready to play Lindsay, Peterborough or Millbrook. Sometimes there would be an accident when one of the boys, impatient for the final freeze-up, would take a chance on what we called "rubber ice". On one such occasion it was due to the quick thinking of my brother Arthur and his friend, Ted Lamb, that a tragedy was averted. They were just about to go home when they heard a piercing yell from near the middle

of the pond and saw young Joe Graham floundering about in the icy water and unable to help himself, what with the weight of his overcoat and the flimsiness of the ice around the hole. Between them, Arthur and Ted pushed out a board and my brother crawled to the end to give Joe a hand. Again the nearby ice swayed and cracked, this time tossing Arthur into the water. Fortunately he was able to grab the board with one hand while hanging on to Joe with the other, and while Ted cautiously pulled the board, inch by inch, toward shore, Arthur was able to make progress, slowly, breaking off the ice until he found it too solid to budge and knew that they could risk the attempt to climb out. Joe was delivered, a shivering, sodden mass, to his mother's house; then Arthur made for home. I remember the incident well: the spreading puddles of water all over our Saturday-scrubbed kitchen floor; the stir as Mother got him undressed, pausing only to shove me out of the room, and how my brother was made to sit there in hot blankets, with his feet in a tub of hot water, until all the chill and shock had passed.

Trotting races were sometimes held on the frozen pond. I could watch them from a bedroom window in our house, see both horses and men steaming in the February air as they strained ahead. The vehicle used in such contests was a very lightweight cutter, a type of sleigh with only one set of runners.

Another scene that stays in my mind was the procession of big draft sleighs, piled high with logs, which used to cross the pond to the sawmill at the southeast corner. Three or five logs, depending on their girth, were held in place on each sleigh by heavy chains to prevent rolling. The weight of the load and the crisp cold combined to make a screeching sound on the hard-packed snow of the village streets, and mingled with that would be the jingle of the sleigh bells and the creak of harness. Each driver carried oats and hay for his horses, and blankets with which to cover them; generally he sat on these, but on a zero day

the driver would jump down and walk beside his plodding horses to get warm and unstiffened.

Every able-bodied child in the village joined in the fun of "catching on", as it was called then, before the term "thumbing a ride" or "hitchhiking" was invented. We would stay on our first catch till we saw another good one approaching, then we would drop off and wait by the side of the road till the second sleigh was alongside. Parents were practically unanimous in disapproving of this game, but on a fine winter day what youngster could be expected to pause and remember the warnings issued at the breakfast-table! One day, however, we realized the wisdom behind those words. Annie McCaffery, a popular girl in our schoolroom, had caught on to a sleigh loaded with logs, and in jumping off she fell; her leg was crushed by the runners and the doctor had no alternative but to amputate below the knee. Annie was the best patient I have ever known—cheerful and gay always, never complaining, and eventually taking quite happily and nimbly to the wooden leg which she wore. Her parents, of course, could not adjust to the situation so readily. No family in our village had a great deal of money, but some had more than others. Annie's father worked at the tannery, and her mother was a laundress, but nobody thought a jot the less of them for that, and indeed all the McCafferys were highly respected and liked. The five children were brought up with love and great care, given a high school education, and were able to go forth and make good lives for themselves.

As soon as the hills and roads had a good covering of snow, all younger Omemee turned out with hand sleighs and toboggans. William English, the local carriage and waggon builder, made his children a bob sleigh which was an exact miniature of the big farm sleighs; it was painted bright red with a touch of floral decoration; the runners were of steel and very smooth, and it could go the farthest and the fastest of any turnout on the hills. Four could ride on it. One moonlight night I was counting myself

lucky to be one of the four. We were travelling at great speed down the curving hill road on the east of the village, when suddenly on the bend we overturned. I was pitched headlong into the frozen crust of snow and broke my way through it with nose and eyes. Because of all my bruises and scratches my sister tried to persuade me to hurry home but I decided to stay on. For years afterward the sharp winter cold would bring a change of colour to my lips and nose which had taken the brunt of that accident; yet I suppose my stubbornness at the time would be counted proper medical procedure today, for now we know that ice is the remedy to apply to prevent swelling.

Peterborough, to which I was taken occasionally by Mother or my sisters, seemed to me a veritable metropolis with its big stores and churches, its three horse-drawn street-cars to convey people around the main section. Some of the shops, I was surprised to find, carried just one line of goods, such as Neill's Footwear; this was rather different from Omemee's retail centre, where a customer could purchase a pair of boots, a dress-length, a pound of tea, a bar of soap and picture postcards over a single counter.

I suppose it was natural that I should have shown a special interest in the methods of retailing. I was in and out of Uncle Isaac McNeilly's store constantly, and when I grew to a responsible age, say eleven or twelve, Father quite often asked me to "keep shop" for him while he was away attending a County meeting or speaking at a church affair. Father's store never had the steady traffic of Uncle Isaac's, of course, but it was regularly open for business, and it was a rule that one of the family should be on hand to take messages or show samples of the furniture and wood finishes to any customer who might drop in.

Another storekeeper relative, a great favourite with us all, was Uncle Tom McNeilly, my mother's youngest brother. We saw him only once in a great while as he had moved many years before to British Columbia, where he had pros-

pected for gold in the days before the Canadian Pacific went through, and over the same rugged country which the railway later opened up. At the time I first knew him he had settled in Ladner, B.C., where he operated a general store, much like Uncle Isaac's in Omemee. When the two of them would come to have dinner or supper at our place I would decide, once again, that these uncles were the best-dressed men I had ever seen. Uncle Tom had a slight edge over Uncle Isaac because of the magnificent polished agate —one of a collection he had picked up in his prospecting days—which hung on his heavy watch chain and which was a constant attraction for me. Both men were in what is now called the "white collar" class, owning their own businesses and employing staff. They did not have to wear working clothes as did shopkeepers who manufactured their own wares—such as Father, who was more often than not in his shirtsleeves. Nevertheless he was meticulous about changing to suit coat or other jacket before mealtimes, and he insisted that the boys from the shop do likewise.

These evenings when the two uncles were present were lively with conversation about Canada, the West, immigration—and retail business. Eaton's mail-order catalogue would be brought out (we always had one handy) and the two general-storekeepers would thumb through it, study the pictures and prices, and shake their heads gravely. "I don't know how they do it and still make money," they would say. And then someone in the group would mention the current Eaton's advertising which showed a picture of ten delivery waggons drawn up before the store, and would recall the unanimous village skepticism on that subject, to wit, "*No* company could have that many delivery waggons!"

If it happened to be the month of January, another voice in the family group would certainly pipe up, "Is Mrs. Cochrane home yet?" Any reference to Eaton's was bound to remind us of this fellow-citizen, a doctor's widow, whose custom it was every year without fail to leave for Toronto after New Year's Day to shop for bargains in the January

white sale. She would be away for weeks, and on her return the "finds" she unpacked, in towelling and sheetings, cottons for aprons and curtains, would be the talk of Omemee.

The rest of us, unable to undertake an annual shopping jaunt to far-away Toronto, would content ourselves with a further vigorous hunt through the catalogue, and some pleasant day-dreaming about which investment we could hope to make next.

In Omemee even today there are people who date life and events from before or after The Big Fire. For at least eight families it was a major catastrophe.

The month was August, hot and tinder-dry, a pleasant vacation time for me, for I had been spending some weeks with our friends, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Switzer, at their farm six miles out of town. One night Mrs. Switzer awakened me, and together we looked through the frilly white curtains at my bedroom window and watched the lurid reflection of a great fire on the night sky. One could have read a newspaper by the light of it. Some passer-by in cart or buggy must have called in at the Switzers' to give them the news, for this was long before the general advent of the telephone.

Next morning a village neighbour came clattering up to the farmhouse to take me home, *immediately*. His name and face I have forgotten now, but the horror that awaited me in Omemee I can never forget. There was no McCrea home. What furnishings were salvageable after the fire had swept through our rooms had been moved into a very small house much farther up the main street and on the opposite side. Only smouldering ruins remained of my father's store and such other familiar landmarks as Clarke's Hotel, Young's Hotel, Mulligan's drug store and house, Tisdall's Grocery, the Omemee *Mirror* plant, the Currys' house and store.

There were many versions of the origin of the fire, but

the fact was finally established that it had started in either the stables or driving shed of Clarke's Hotel, diagonally opposite our place and directly across from the Currys'. One of my brothers had been at a party that night and returned home later than usual; he smelled the smoke and rushed in to rouse my parents, but before he could explain what was happening the dreaded shout of "Fire, Fire!" was heard from the streets and the church bells began their clangour.

From midnight till daylight the village volunteers fought the flames; before morning they had extra aid from the fire brigades summoned from Peterborough and Lindsay, and eventually the holocaust was subdued. It was the irony of fate that our house, a solid brick building, had protected the properties to the west and although they were very old, run-down frame structures they were all saved while ours was a burnt-out skeleton. Next to the Mulligans lived the Norrises in a large brick house with store attached. For a time it was feared that the fire would spread to their property and they began to move their belongings out. To get the big square piano through the window was a difficult job, and several times it had to be manoeuvered back into the house before it could be taken out. Such exasperating delay caused Jim Norris, the son in charge of the operation, to exclaim feelingly, "This piano is insured. If any of it is going to be burned, it is *all* going to be burned!"—and so he would push the legs back through the window.

I have never been able to understand why my mother insisted on sending for me that morning. I was too young to be of any real help, everything in Omemee was in the greatest confusion, and the house into which we had moved at such short notice was much too small. I can only suppose Mother felt that if she had all of her family around her, at least that much of life would be normal. In later years I have observed that when joy or trouble of any kind touches a family group at any point there is an immediate urge to gather together and share the results of it. It is this

sort of compulsion that gives soul and meaning to family life, and to close friendships. Sometimes it is so intense that one becomes conscious of an insistent need to visit or communicate with relative or friend that day, that hour, that very minute! Such has happened to me many times—and almost as often I have had full confirmation of the mental connection between persons. I make no claim to understand thought telepathy, but I do confess I have learned to act upon the mental message, yet without making a fetish of it.

School life was a happy time for me, although it cannot be said that I was a brilliant pupil as were others in my family. The spelling bees, part of every Friday afternoon's program, stay in my mind as one of the special attractions, and I have a notion that such insistence on spelling made children more aware of the formation of words than today's "look and say" system. The spirit of daily competition within a classroom was an essential part of education in my day. In First Book, as Grade One was called then, we had a teacher, a very good one, who used this method frequently for mental arithmetic. She would begin by calling out numbers such as 3-5-7-9-15, and then ask each pupil in turn for the correct total. Figures were never a strong point with me, but this type of lesson had its appeal because it seemed like a game.

Keeping a schoolroom warm in winter was a heavy extra responsibility for the teacher. Each room in our school had a huge stove and a pile of firewood. The caretaker would lay and light the fires each morning, but he was forbidden to come in and interrupt lessons during the day, so the teacher was wholly responsible, although in the higher forms the older boys were assigned to the job.

In Second Book I had a friend of my sister, Miss May Marr, as teacher, a sweet person and possessed of that God-given spark which dedicates certain teachers to their profession and which makes learning a delight for their pupils.

All of us wanted to do our best for Miss Marr, yet at one point, in a matter of behaviour, I failed. It was a beautiful autumn day, and some of us had run down to the edge of the pond. I ventured out on one of the logs to try and reach something floating on the surface of the water, lost my balance and went in up to my waist. I knew I wouldn't be exactly welcomed at home, so I walked very quietly into the classroom, dripping water all the way. Miss Marr, telling my mother about the episode afterward, said, "I suddenly looked up from my desk to see a river of water running toward me." Thus at eleven o'clock in the morning I was sent home to get a hot bath and a change of clothes. People in those days were in perpetual fear of "catching their death of cold" especially from a sudden immersion, but I was never of that school of thought, and to this day I prefer cold baths to any other kind.

My next teacher after Miss Marr was my sister Anna, and this situation was at the start rather embarrassing for both of us. However, the spotlight quickly passed from "teacher's little sister", to a certain boy who was much older than the rest of the class. He was a truculent bully type, and because of persistently playing hookey over the years he had never had the disciplining treatment of going to school with his proper age group. In every way possible he tried to intimidate my sister, and one day she decided she could stand no more. "Jack, come up here," she ordered, and he went up to the front with a cocky smile on his face. Then she reached for the strap that was standard classroom equipment and said, "Jack, put out your hand." With all of her ninety-five pounds behind it she gave him one stroke across his outstretched hand. He winced and his face went very red. "That will do," she said. "Go back to your seat and behave." At recess Jack was the centre of a group of boys who were hanging onto his every word. "You fellows better behave," he was saying. "Gee, Miss McCrea put an awful sting in that strap." From that day forward everything went smoothly in Anna's class.

It was while I was attending high school that a tragedy, all too common at that time, engulfed our family. We had heard of a severe case of diphtheria in the country nearby, but paid no particular attention to the report until my eldest nephew, Harper Mulligan, who happened to be staying with us, became listless and quite unlike his normal vigorous eight-year-old self. His father dropped in to see him, and much to my disappointment (I was devoted to Amy's children and always enchanted when allowed to take care of them) he decided to take him home. Within another day or two both Harper and his baby brother, two years old, became seriously ill. A McGill medical student, Will Cook, was in Omemee for the Christmas holidays, and he volunteered to go to Peterborough for the anti-toxin, which at that time was barely known and far from perfect. My brother-in-law accepted his offer gladly but the serum arrived too late, and the two boys died on New Year's Day. The remaining middle child was given the treatment, and while he did not develop diphtheria he did become ill, covered with a rash, and the doctor feared scarlet fever. All three, father, mother and young Clifford, were quarantined, their only communication with us or their neighbours being through the doctor. One evening the chimney of their house caught fire and ignited the wall. The villagers gathered promptly, and men rushed pails of water from the town pump just across the street, but then the dismaying question arose: *who* would enter the quarantined house? Ethel Clarke's mother, a tiny sprite of a woman, took matters into her own capable hands. She walked up to the man at the head of the line and said, "Give me that pail. I'm not afraid to go in." And of course the conscience-stricken men followed her and the fire was put out.

When the quarantine time was up and the family again free to go and come at will, it was found that all three were suffering from nervous shock. Some time later arrangements were completed for my sister and her husband to take a trip to the British Isles, leaving Clifford with us, or,

more accurately, with me. That was my first experience in taking full charge of an energetic six-year-old and I was sure I had been given the job because I was able to run so fast! When his parents returned, restored in health and outlook, Clifford reported tersely, "Auntie Flora is a fine child-trainer but now I'm glad to be back with you."

In a large family such as ours emergencies of any kind were shared by all, according to each person's capacities. It was my sister Elle's illness at home that took me out of high school in my final year. When I was a very little girl I used to think "high school" meant a classroom up a flight of stairs, but in course of time as I pored over Algebra and Latin textbooks I learned the real significance of the term. I got through my various grades, though without any outstanding performance, and perhaps would have been able to pass the matriculation examinations if I had stayed on. My parents grieved over this sudden stoppage of my education but I did not share their feeling, either then or through the later years. I have always been conscious that the absorption of knowledge must be a continuing project, without end. I have kept an open mind, I trust, and have gone on to learn day by day. I hope I shall keep on doing so as long as I live.

CHAPTER III

WHEN I WAS eighteen I was filled with a restless stirring and dissatisfaction. The music studies which I had taken up a year or so before had lost their initial appeal. One reason was that the teacher, a Lindsay organist, who came once a week to instruct our Omemee class of eight, had moved away, and his successor evinced little enthusiasm for out-of-town trips to village groups. So, in spite of having shown considerable progress with my piano work, I abandoned the idea of making music a major pursuit, and instead I decided to become a nurse.

This new plan meant that I would go to Toronto for my training, and my parents were not too happy about that. Nevertheless they did not put any real difficulty in my way, knowing that my sister was already established in the city as a teacher and that we had some good family friends there.

I remember very vividly indeed those two special days, one of good-byes in Omemee and the other of introduction to the iodoform atmosphere of a big hospital. The day I left home I felt very mature. My trunk and bag were driven to the station but I preferred to walk with my two friends as I had done so many times before, just to see the train come in and make a note of who got off or got on, if anybody. But this time I would not be hurrying back to give the family the news, for today I was the traveller and on my way to an exciting larger world of new faces and new tasks.

An interesting cross-section of them awaited me two days later when I reported in at the Toronto General Hospital as a student nurse. There was, to begin with, Miss Snively,

the Superintendent of Nurses; a handsome woman, fairly tall, very erect, with a mass of white hair very carefully arranged. An imposing figure, and to my young eyes rather stern and forbidding, she wore, as always, black silk with white at the neck and wrists. I was asked various questions, then sent to a surgical ward where there was a senior nurse with a black band on her cap and a junior who had not yet won this supreme mark of attainment.

In those days the Toronto General Hospital was on Gerrard Street East—a nice-looking, rambling old building which had been added to many times, but seldom for the express purpose of convenience. There were long passages from one ward to another, bridges between buildings with the result that nurses and internes walked miles in one day. The architectural patchwork, together with the dust from the streets and the smoke from factories near by, made the place a constant battleground against dirt—and at that time it was the student nurses, armed with brushes, pails, dust-mops, who were expected to wage the war. That sort of energetic housekeeping was familiar to me, and I could do it thoroughly and cheerfully. Taking temperatures and pulse, washing hands and faces of patients before meals were more taxing jobs. I was never quite sure if I was reading the thermometer correctly. On the other hand, I liked rolling bandages, folding dressings, making wipes. Bed-making was a rigorous technique then as now: the corners had to be square, everything mathematically perfect, the patient included.

Occasionally, on a Sunday or a nurse's day off, I was left alone while the senior went to lunch. On one such occasion Dr. Herbert Bruce came in and asked for the head nurse; I explained and said I would go for her. He replied, "No, I think you can do what I need quite well. Bring me the dressing tray, please." So, to my great joy, I made rounds with the surgeon, and only later discovered that Dr. Bruce was feared as well as admired by the senior nurses. The beginner did not know how to be afraid! I must have

acquitted myself adequately, for from that day to this, through all his years of public service and public honours (he was Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario in the thirties) Dr. Bruce has always greeted me with a smile.

When my three months' probation was up I was again called in to the Presence and given another examination, including written and oral questions. Then Miss Snively said, "I don't think you are fitted to be a nurse. You are much too slow." That was the sole criticism she had to make, but there was nothing I could do except bow to the inevitable, and out. I went to my room immediately and packed my belongings. Then, because Anna was teaching at Lansdowne Avenue school on the other side of the city and I wouldn't see her until evening, I decided to go to our friends, Mrs. Keele and her daughters, for lunch.

A lot of happiness and success in anybody's life can be traced to other people's kindness, and here, as I look back on it, was a case in point at the Keeles'. Two of her daughters were teachers and they came home regularly for lunch; when I recounted the developments at the hospital one of them spoke up and described an advertisement for a student nurse which she had seen in the paper that morning. "As soon as I get back from afternoon class, I'll go there with you," she said, and so it was arranged.

I may have been slow, as Miss Snively said, but I was undefeated and undeflated, and still determined to be a nurse. The thought of giving up and going back to Omemee never occurred to me.

That afternoon Miss Keele and I went to Rotherham House, Isabella Street, a private hospital owned and directed by Dr. Holford Walker. I was interviewed by him and by his superintendent, was accepted, and I moved in that evening.

I have nothing but happy memories of Rotherham House. It was a small hospital—not more than eighteen or twenty beds. At that period, long before the great expansion in hospital services with their private wings and

specialized sections such as we now have in Canada, the well-run private hospital met a definite need, especially for people who required and could pay for the best service and an atmosphere of quiet. Dr. and Mrs. Walker were persons of the highest character and they gave scrupulous oversight to every detail in Rotherham House. The rooms were tastefully furnished, the patients' dishes were china, and the silver was a good pattern of English plate. The food was excellent.

I was in a cheerful frame of mind when I unpacked my bags in the large bedroom which I was to share with the other two student nurses. Unlike the T.G.H. where no probationer received an allowance, Rotherham House was prepared to pay me $9 a month for my services the first year, and $12 for the second. There would be regular lectures to the three pupils by Dr. Walker and his associates, including the nursing superintendent. I was on my way to a real career at last.

At first my duties consisted of helping the graduate nurses with their patients, but soon I was assigned patients of my own to care for. I was taught massage, at least enough to remove strain and induce sleep. Rotherham had been in the beginning organized almost exclusively for remedial baths and treatment for rheumatism and circulatory and digestive disorders, but at the time I entered, a department of surgery had been added. Another student and I learned to prepare and restore to order the small operating-room, clean and arrange the instruments for sterilization. Within six months I was threading the needles while my fellow-pupil counted sponges; I learned to do dressings and make charts. The really challenging part of our training had begun and I was enjoying every minute of it.

I had some interesting patients, among whom was the distinguished barrister, B. B. Osler, Q.C. (it was still the reign of Queen Victoria). He was the legal, and some thought the most brilliant, member of the famous Osler family—brother of Edmund, the financier, later to become

Sir Edmund, and of William, later renowned as Sir William Osler, the great physician, lecturer and author.

Mr. Osler was suffering from serious nervous tension; this affected circulation and digestion, and he suffered acutely from insomnia; any sudden noise disturbed him. His family was much concerned. Mrs. Osler (his second wife) had engaged the room next to his in order to be with her husband at all times. His brother, Dr. William Osler, made a special trip up from Johns Hopkins in Baltimore to spend a day with the patient and to discuss the case with Dr. Walker.

I had been detailed to assist the graduate nurse in charge, and within a few days I was doing most of the minor tasks for Mr. Osler's comfort. We got along very well and he began to call me "Omemee". When I asked him why, he replied, "I know you come from Omemee and I know your uncle, Isaac McNeilly, well, for I have often done County business with him. Besides, I like the sound of 'Omemee', and I think it suits you."

Part of his treatment was an irrigation which was given just before he settled down for the night. One evening I was in the midst of this project, assisted by Mrs. Osler, when suddenly the cord holding the irrigation can broke. I caught the can but the tepid contents emptied over patient and bed. There could hardly have been a worse accident for a nervous case! However, Mrs. Osler quietly went to work to help me change sheets and pyjamas. When we finished, she said, "That was an accident. Don't mention it to anyone," and he added, "No one will ever know of it but we three." I was most grateful for the consideration and kind thought, but I knew that walls had ears and that I must report it at once. As soon as I could leave I went immediately to the Superintendent who had retired to her room.

"What brings you here at this hour, Nurse McCrea?" she asked in some surprise.

"I've come to tell you that I'm going home in the morning," I replied.

"Why?" she asked.

"Because I've nearly drowned B. B. Osler."

This unexpected explanation made her laugh, and the crisis was eased. "An unfortunate accident to be sure, but it was not your fault and you were quite right to come to me and report it at once. Now perhaps you'll consider postponing your return to Omemee."

In every respect Rotherham House had a pleasant atmosphere for patients and staff alike. There was no special sitting-room for nurses but we were allowed to receive our visitors in the patients' drawing-room. Superintendent, housekeeper and nurses had their meals together, and except for the seating at the table there was no rigid rule; we were just a friendly group around the board. The nurses were nearly always on twenty-four-hour duty, but as there were fewer surgical cases than those taking medical treatment and physiotherapy, the night bells seldom rang.

One day there was great excitement when Dr. Walker announced that a new patient was coming in that evening, no other than young Mr. Jack Eaton, son of Timothy Eaton, the founder and President of The T. Eaton Company Limited. The doctor assigned a senior nurse to take care of the new patient, then swept his eyes over us younger nurses and remarked, "Routine life in a hospital is going to be trying for a young man. You must do what you can in your free time to make things pleasant and agreeable for him." One young man more or less was not an upsetting prospect for me, for I had grown up with four brothers and their many friends, among whom I was just another chum. It was quite normal at my age that there should be one or two with whom I thought I was in love for a short time, but none of these affairs assumed serious proportions. Therefore, an invitation from the doctor to help while away the tedious hours for Jack Eaton was an undertaking that was going to be fun.

The other student nurses wondered out loud "whether he would be good for flowers or candies". Sad for them, and to their utter amazement, it was not long before I was the one receiving the gifts. Our new patient was not seriously ill, and within a few days he was up and dressed, and Dr. Walker permitted him to come and go during afternoon hours. So the youngest student nurse and the youngest patient would run into each other, by accident at first, then perhaps by a little strategy on his part, in the corridor, on the porch, in the drawing-room in the evenings. This was by no means the typical nurse's romance—"having taken his pulse, she married him." Jack was never one of my patients, so there was no opportunity for him to build up a sense of gratitude for bedside ministrations into a feeling of love.

Who can say how the attraction between young man and young woman begins, or why? Certainly I was most unsophisticated, with a rather puritanical outlook, and, being a country girl, I suspected that he liked me because I had the manners of one unaccustomed to the social advantages of those born and bred to them—those girls who made their bow to society by a coming-out ball or début. I never did come out; like Topsy, I "just growed".

Yet it was only a matter of weeks before Jack Eaton made it quite plain to me that he was serious.

Mr. and Mrs. Eaton called to see their son frequently, each time in smart turnout with coachman and team. Jack owned a beautiful mare called Nancy, and the coachman brought her over daily, harnessed to a smart light buggy. Jack was also owner of a White Steamer automobile, two-seater, which caused all eyes to pop; but it was the horses that fascinated me. All this evidence of wealth made me feel that it was not my kind of life.

I was soon in difficulty with the hospital authorities, and it happened this way. One afternoon, without a word to me beforehand, Jack was waiting at the corner of Isabella and Church Streets when I was walking along to have my

hours off. At his invitation I got into the buggy, sat beside him and he drove me to my destination. One of the junior nurses, alas, was returning from her morning off, saw us, and told the others she had seen me driving away. Next morning Dr. Walker sought me out and asked if this was true. "Why, yes," I said, feeling quite innocent of any breach of discipline. But it seemed I was wrong, for the doctor explained that he considered it unwise for a young nurse to be seen driving with a young man, a patient of the hospital, and made it clear that he preferred I would not do so again. This made sense to me, and when I repeated the conversation to Jack he, too, agreed that the doctor was right.

Within a few days I received an invitation from Mrs. Eaton to go there for dinner. "Jack will drive you over," she said. I puzzled over this new problem, then finally took it to the doctor and asked what I should do. To my great relief he said, "This is an invitation, and it is quite correct that you should accept it."

For a young girl accustomed to a simple life the experience of that small dinner-party in the Eaton's big house at the corner of Spadina Road and Lowther Avenue, was breath-taking. At first I was shy among such luxurious surroundings but Mr. Eaton was so charming, kind, and had such a wonderful smile that I succumbed to his personality almost immediately and no longer felt I was meeting strangers. Mrs. Eaton was most cordial too. She was a beautiful woman with the most lovely snow-white, wavy hair which was carefully dressed then and always as long as she lived. Her figure was nearly perfect and she had a fine taste in clothes. She was a lithe, graceful woman, and in temperament full of a sense of humour and mischief. It was easy to see that her husband adored her. No two persons, parents of a young man who was paying me serious attention, could have been kinder than they were, yet I must report truthfully that it was always Mr. Eaton who

gave me a feeling of warmth and understanding and put me completely at my ease.

At the hospital Dr. and Mrs. Walker, constantly interested in their nurses' welfare, showed me special kindness. One day I was called to the doctor's office. He told me that Jack and his parents had consulted him, that Jack wanted to propose to me, and that Mr. and Mrs. Eaton were most pleased with this decision. Said Dr. Walker, "I have told Jack that, although you were signed on for another year of the course, I would not let that stand in the way, and that if you cared for him I would waive my right." The young man did not wish to have a long engagement, the doctor continued, and if I cared and my parents approved, there was no reason to wait. "But," said Dr. Walker, "I must have your parents' approval first," and without further delay he arranged for me to have a week-end off to go home.

Jack joined me in Omemee and asked my father for his consent to our engagement and marriage. Father had no thought of withholding his approval but he did ask, half-seriously and half in fun, "Why did you need to come to Omemee to find a wife?" Later, the two of us alone, Father told me he rather feared an easy life in luxury would not be good for me, as it was foreign to what I had known. Fortunately he lived long enough to realize that luxury did not necessarily lead to an easy life and that I had the necessary qualities to meet the difficulties which arose and to become strengthened in those principles he had lived by and instilled in me. My family all liked Jack from the first meeting, and over the years became steadily more devoted to him.

We became engaged on the twenty-third of March, 1901. Dr. Walker released me from my signed agreement to spend two years in training. Thus, in less than a year, I was terminating my second major subject, nursing. All restrictions had been removed from my driving out with Jack Eaton on my day off or other free hours. It was arranged that I leave the hospital at the end of March, and

as soon as I returned to Omemee my parents announced my engagement. Then began the busy round. My fiancé came for the week-ends, and I made the trip to Toronto several times. Although my trousseau was very simple, time was pressing, for the wedding day had been set for May 8th. As usual, my sister Amy was a tower of strength. After our marriage she laughingly confessed to us, "When you set the date for your wedding I thought to myself 'I shall never live through all that has to be done in that time,' but now I'm glad you insisted. If it had been longer, we should all have died!"

Looking back, it seems to me that all our friends were helping in some way with the preparations; and practically the whole village was showing how happy it was for me in my happiness. Jack immediately made friends with everybody. A shy young man himself, he felt perfectly at home in our unassuming, friendly Omemee life; without the strain of formal occasions he was at his best, and soon was accepted by all our relatives and acquaintances as one of us. The girls of my age and younger—those still waiting for their first encounter with romance—wondered openly if there was a "Jack *Simpson*" in Toronto too!

It was a very simple wedding in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the building this time relieved of its plainness by huge bouquets of calla lilies, and long-stemmed American Beauty roses as tall as trees, in the approved fashion of the day. The time was set for high noon, because of the guests who would come from Toronto. Mr. Eaton had ordered a special train, for, just shortly before, he had been badly crippled by an accident while driving his high-spirited team and thus could not contemplate an all-day journey under ordinary circumstances. But, characteristically generous, he asked me for a list of our friends who would be making the trip from Toronto and invited them to travel with him. A few hours before the ceremony it was obvious that the Omemee Livery Stable could not supply enough carriages,

so extras had to be ordered from Lindsay and Peterborough. The Bobcaygeon *Independent* had its observer present, who wrote in the next issue, "all the rubber-tired carriages from Lindsay and all the rubber-necked people from Omemee were at Miss Flora McCrea's wedding."

Mrs. John Lang played the wedding music, and we were both a little surprised, though not perturbed, when, owing to a mix-up in the cues, I walked up the aisle with my father to the strains of "O, Promise Me That Some Day You and I". My dress was of white chiffon over white taffeta, with shirring on the bodice and long sleeves; it was a drop-shoulder style (now fashionable again, fifty years later); there was a short train, and the skirt was trimmed with several flounces of finely pleated chiffon, the top one set in with fine Alençon lace, matching the finishing touches on bodice and sleeves. The dress had a very high, boned collar. My veil was tulle, very long but with a short front section over my face. By some error the florist had neglected to send the orange-blossoms, but my bouquet, composed of white roses, lilies-of-the-valley and white heather, provided enough sprays for a reasonably good substitute for the traditional headdress. My sister Anna was maid of honour, wearing an organdy gown of white printed in turquoise blue, with a picture hat. My brothers, John and Arthur, were ushers; Mr. Frank McMahon was Jack's best man. I wore a pearl and diamond circle brooch, the gift of my fiancé.

It all seems a far-off dream as I recall that day now, yet some of the details stand out clearly. My going-away costume, for example, made by the same Toronto dressmaker who designed the wedding gown: navy-blue homespun suit with short, tight jacket, long flaring skirt, navy taffeta blouse with stiff, high choker collar; a hat of taffeta and straw in the same blue. On my jacket I wore Mr. Eaton's gift, a pendant watch of gold and black enamel with a *fleur de lis* picked out in diamonds and pearls.

The wedding cake was made in Omemee at McPherson's

Bakery. As was customary then, the caterers supplied small boxes of cake, which, together with a card announcing names and date, were sent to all friends unable to attend. Catering had seemed to be a problem during the early discussions but it was finally solved by having the Toronto firm of Webb's take it over. The reception was in our own house of course, the wedding group, with Jack's parents and mine, at a large table; all the others seated at small tables which were packed in to cover literally every square foot of space. (After all the family weddings I have been involved in over the years, I keep wondering why no one thought of a marquee for mine.) There was a great gathering of friends at the Sturgeon Street crossing to see us off; many of them met Mr. and Mrs. Eaton who came out to wave us good-bye. This was to be Mr. Eaton's only visit to Omemee, but Mrs. Eaton made the trip with me several times.

The backgrounds of the Eaton and McCrea families were similar. Both came from Northern Ireland to seek their fortune in the new land. Mr. Eaton was a posthumous child. My father's parents died of a fever contracted *en route* to Canada and were buried in Quebec. Mr. Eaton was an avid reader, a hard worker with an intensely practical vein and a definite objective. My father, too, was an omnivorous reader and hard worker, but he was a philosopher and artist by nature, as demonstrated in his beautiful wood-carvings. Mr. Eaton lived to see his objective realized, more quickly and successfully than even he had dared to hope. My father, in spite of many vicissitudes, retained his philosophical outlook and lived his life happily to the end, never having made a fortune, indeed probably never having wanted one. Our parents had much in common, but the Eatons were wealthy while the McCreas were just comfortable. My mother used to say, "Money is the root of all evil, but it could be a very useful root," meaning that it *could* grow in the direction of good. This was an implication I have tried never to forget.

CHAPTER IV

AND so our new life together began. So far as age was concerned we were well matched, as I was twenty and Jack just four years older, and in the matter of strict Christian upbringing, and indeed tastes and interests, we were not dissimilar. Yet sometimes I would find myself pondering with a certain amount of anxiety on the great difference in our separate backgrounds. My world had been so small in comparison to his! Toronto had been my farthest venture away from my parents' home, but Jack had travelled around the world in his twenty-first year, and places like New York and Paris and Cairo which were merely names to me were realities for him.

Our meeting, engagement and wedding had all happened at such a whirlwind pace that we had had little chance to know each other. Now in the lovely early summer days of our Muskoka honeymoon we were having our first opportunity to learn and understand. Perhaps the very speed of our romance helped us to adjust quickly and make a solid foundation for marriage.

Jack Eaton could have been a "spoiled" young man, but it is to his everlasting credit, and his parents' too, that no one could have applied the term truthfully to him. He was very handsome, tall, broad-shouldered but slim. His head was the exact shape of his father's, and he had as well the blue, blue eyes and direct look of Timothy Eaton. From his mother Jack had inherited beautifully formed small hands and feet and a natural wave in his chestnut hair that had a gold tinge to it. There was an air of elegance in

the way he moved, and this too had come from the Beatties, his mother's side. He had a very ready smile that was entirely his own; to him everyone, high or low, was a friend.

I am quite sure that no two young people ever started married life with more idealism. We were very much in love; we were also very serious, and we did not expect that the whole future for us would be one long honeymoon. In later years friends have remarked how fortunate it was that Jack and I were so well suited to each other; I think we were, yet perhaps this was due as much to the early lessons we learned and applied as to the happy accident of Nature. Jack was strong-willed, and so was I; both of us quickly recognized this fact and set ourselves to learn to give and take. Now, after my many years of living and observing, I firmly believe that a woman needs to know intuitively when it is wise to be immovable, and when it is better to yield to her husband's decision. She must be very right indeed if she insists on her point of view as the only possible one! The "fifty-fifty" arrangement, which sounds so fair, is not enough; sometimes it requires the whole one hundred per cent. The result, a continuing, happy marriage, is well worth the effort, even though at the time it is anything but easy to give up one's own conviction of being completely in the right.

Mrs. Eaton had lent us her summer home, *Ravenscrag*, at Windermere on Lake Rosseau. For the first time I was complete mistress of a household, planner of menus and cook too. Within a few days I discovered what was to be a guiding rule for the rest of my home-making career—that my husband liked plain, substantial, well-cooked food, such things as chops and rice pudding, and was inclined to suspect any of my attempts at variation. Almost every day we would take a tour in the canoe or launch around the lake, meeting the year-round inhabitants, but the main activity for Jack was the overhauling of his father's steam yacht, *Wanda,* in preparation for the summer season. He

was helped by the engineer but nevertheless Jack worked as though this was the main business in life—and here again I was learning to know the man I had married. He was always absorbed and contented over a complex piece of machinery, and any job he took on, whether involving major decisions at a Board table or the paintwork on a boat rail, was deemed worthy of complete concentration.

Our Muskoka honeymoon lasted till the middle of June, when Mr. and Mrs. Eaton were planning to come to spend the summer there. My husband was delighted that, with the co-operation of the captain and engineer, the *Wanda* was in perfect shape, every inch of brass gleaming, before his father's arrival. We went to Muskoka Wharf to meet Mr. and Mrs. Eaton and as they came aboard the captain broke out the ensign of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club. I had prepared a leg of spring lamb with all the trimmings, and the general enjoyment of this around the table in the dining saloon as the *Wanda* glided north past Muskoka's green shores made me feel that I had made some progress towards being an acceptable daughter-in-law. At *Ravenscrag* the flag was hoisted and there was a pleasant bustle around the place as Mrs. Eaton settled things to her liking and prepared to receive her summer guests. Jack and I said our good-byes and thanks, returned to Muskoka Wharf on the *Wanda,* and took the train for Toronto.

Mr. and Mrs. Eaton had made us a wedding gift of a house completely furnished. It was situated at 90 Walmer Road (now changed to 121, I think), the northernmost of a new group of four charming, medium-sized houses which had recently been built on the east side of this new street. There was a vacant lot to the north of us, then a block of semi-detached dwellings, and then more open space stretching to Dupont Street. At that period the district north from Bloor Street, between Brunswick Avenue and St. George Street, was of fairly recent development, and above Bernard Avenue there were more vacant lots than houses. The location was ideal for us, as the street car on Dupont was

just a short walk away, and it was not much farther to Jack's parents' house at the corner of Spadina Road and Lowther. Bloor, with its street cars, was a block to the south. We could, and did often, indulge in the popular Toronto evening pastime of taking the "Belt Line" trip, along Bloor, down Spadina, east on King Street, up Sherbourne and back west on Bloor Street—all for one five-cent ticket (or six for a quarter) for the hour's ride. It was a favourite way to cool off, as the summer cars were open, with seats arranged crosswise.

The new house was ready for us and we settled in quickly. Having been accustomed to doing everything in a house and looking after the comfort of others, I began what was an appalling discipline for me: to learn to accept the help of one full-time maid and a regular weekly charwoman. As the months went by I managed to organize the division of duties, leaving some to myself, for I quickly saw that a fair-sized house on three floors needed more attention than one pair of hands could give it, especially when there was a man to be considered. Jack had come from a well-staffed home; he was used to being waited upon. He was inclined to leave the bathroom untidy and clothes strewn about, but he soon realized that what he left undone I did, and he made a rapid transformation into one of the neatest, tidiest persons I have ever known. He cleaned his own shoes and kept the kit of polishes and brushes in apple-pie order. I am reminded of one occasion when we had a young Englishman visiting us. As the first one up in the morning, I noticed his lonely-looking shoes sitting outside his door. Fortunately I knew that bit of English routine, so I picked them up, took them back to our bedroom and presented them to Jack. He thought it was a great joke, gave the shoes a fine polish and returned them to the guest-room door before he knocked to say in an assumed English voice, "Bath, sir." Afterwards our visitor mentioned his pleasure in finding his shoes cleaned; he had stayed in other houses in Canada but when he put his shoes out

they were never given any attention and he had almost concluded this amenity was not practised here. A very agreeable guest—but he never knew who his boot-black was!

Almost from the first week we moved in, ours was open house, with friends for meals or overnight. It had been so in my parents' home and in the Eatons' house too, so nothing could be more natural for both of us than that we should be prepared at all times to entertain. A tour of the house was always part of the program, and Jack and I were delighted to be the conductors and point out all the "modern" contrivances and new twentieth century furniture styles which Mrs. Eaton had carefully planned for us. We made good new friends, especially among our Walmer Road neighbours, the Pinkertons, the Roaches and the Watsons.

Jack and I were great baseball fans that first summer; we seldom missed going to the games in Exhibition Park. One morning Jack telephoned me from the office and said, "I'll be coming up for you at the usual time, darling, and I'm bringing guests: the Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria and the Crown Princess." I suppose he heard me catch my breath in dismay, for he hastened to add, "They are just people like you and me. I think you will like them." They were very nice indeed, and I was glad that someone in Europe had given them a letter of introduction to Jack before they left on this unofficial tour of North America. They thoroughly enjoyed the baseball game and the hot roasted peanuts without which no ball game could be complete. When we were coming away Jack inquired if there was any place we could take them, and almost in the same instant he and I both realized that they did not want to leave us, and so we invited them to come home to dinner. Like our other visitors, the Prince and Princess showed special interest in our house and professed to be charmed after they had inspected it from top to bottom. Some months afterward they sent us autographed photo-

graphs of themselves in court dress and again expressed their pleasure in their visit to Toronto. A good many years later I was at their lodge in the Bavarian mountains, and discovered it to be just about the size of our Walmer Road house. Perhaps this similarity had made them feel at home with us.

When Mr. Eaton was in town for a day or two he would come to luncheon or dinner, and always seemed to enjoy seeing us in our new establishment. He never stayed overnight at Walmer Road, because his injured leg gave him considerable trouble and everything at his city home was organized for his comfort. Once or twice Mrs. Eaton came down from Muskoka and she took great pleasure in being an overnight guest with us. The cameraderie between Jack and his mother was always fascinating to observe. They played tricks and practical jokes on each other constantly, the victim enjoying it as much as the perpetrator. Although Mrs. Eaton had been born in Canada, her temperament was truly Irish; she was never far from laughter or tears, she was quick-tempered, but, like a summer storm, the sudden anger would disappear and the sunny side of her nature would be in full view again.

As the neighbourhood began to develop and we saw new ground being broken for more houses, Jack and I decided to buy a fifty-foot lot north of our house, and very shortly we did some pioneering with this new space: we built a two-car garage. People have since told me that this was the first of such structures, designed especially for the purpose and placed near the house, to go up in Toronto. At any rate, it meant real convenience for us, for now Jack could keep his Winton (successor to his White Steamer) close by, instead of having to leave it at his father's carriage-house or at the Store with the delivery waggons. It was characteristic of Jack's foresight, convinced as he was that the automobile age was upon us, that although we owned but one car the garage was built for two. Mechanical transport and good roads were often the topic of conver-

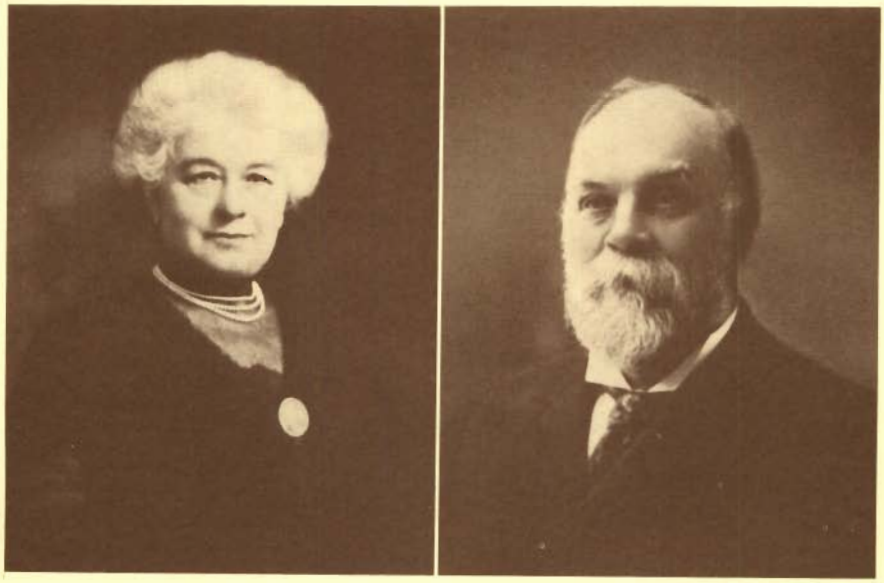
sation between his father and himself that summer, and it was around this time that Mr. Timothy Eaton decided to launch his own demonstration of a well-built road. He employed a construction outfit to build a model road one mile long for public use; it began at the church on the hill at Islington and finished at the crossroads adjacent to the Eaton farm. Later, when the surface failed to measure up to Mr. Eaton's standard, he ordered the road rebuilt. It was a matter of some pride to the whole family: one drove on to it with a bump from very rutty mud and gravel, rode smoothly for one mile precisely, then came off with another pronounced bump. From that comparatively limited beginning came the impetus for Ontario's "Good Roads" program through the following years.

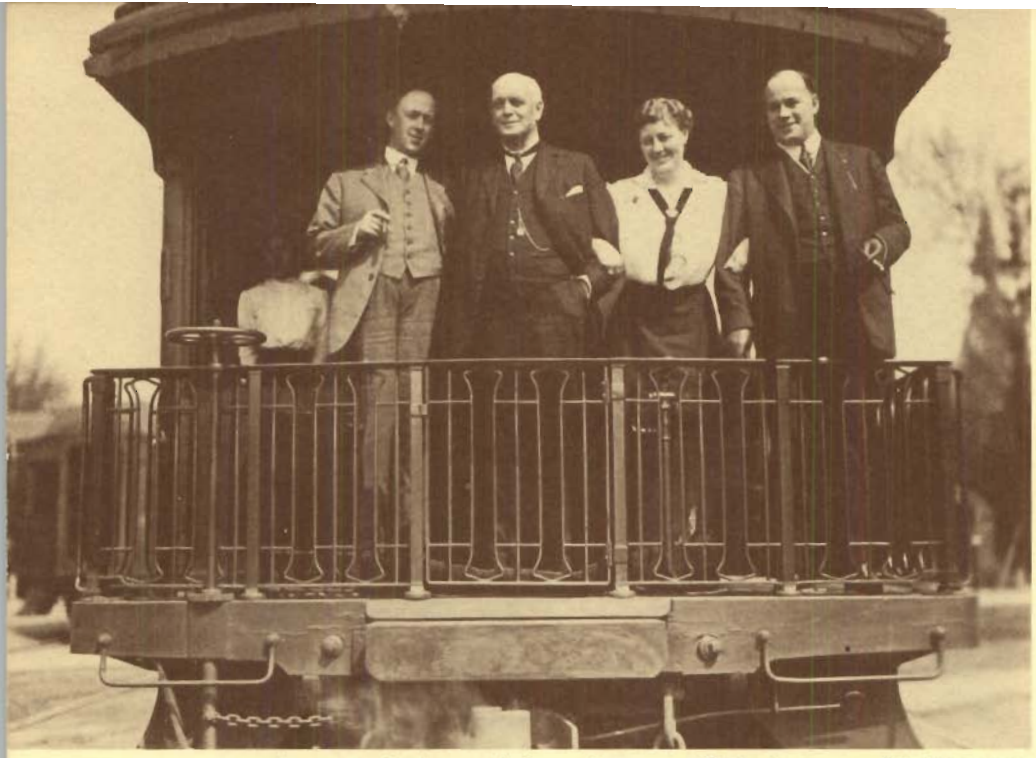
Toronto fifty years ago was a beautiful city. The lake, the bay, the Island were an important part of its life, because people lived closer to the waterfront; the expansion north of St. Clair Avenue, west to the Humber, northeast beyond Broadview Avenue had not yet begun. Queen's Park was a gem and the university campus a lovely spot. There every summer in the open air the Ben Greet Players used to play Shakespeare, and I still recall the rapture of my first evening there, sitting on one of the folding chairs. Instead of stage scenery the company used big lettered signs which were changed according to the action: "The Castle", the "Forest of Arden", etc. Shakespeare's words were like music as spoken in the balmy air, with no distraction of motor horns or sound of airplanes. It seems to me that summer evenings were longer, more lingering, warmer then. Or was it just that I was young and in a state of enchantment?

Family picnics to High Park, which had acres of dense woodland and was a wonderful place to pick an armful of wild flowers, were standard outings. If one felt in the mood for a longer jaunt one could walk along the sandy road of Bloor Street, past the cluster of houses in Swansea, past

Jane and John McCrea shortly after their marriage.

Margaret and Timothy Eaton at the beginning of the twentieth century.





On the rear platform of the private car *Eatonia,* 1907: W. Fletcher Eaton, John Beattie, Mrs. John Eaton, John Craig Eaton.

The steam yacht, *Florence.*

fields with cows, then come out to the banks of the Humber River and explore the two Old Mills—one of them still preserved in 1956, the other, now gone, situated to the north, nearer the village of Lambton Mills. Unspoiled countryside was easy to reach from almost any starting-point in Toronto. I remember one gay picnic I enjoyed that summer of 1901. With my sister Anna and a few friends, including Mrs. E. R. Wood, I was taken to Davisville, a crossroads hamlet now remembered chiefly in the name of Davisville Avenue and the gleaming new subway station at its Yonge Street corner. There was nothing but peaceful farmland for miles around, and when I discovered a big old cherry tree heavy with fruit I was, of course, in my natural element! Nothing would do but I must climb it and pick some cherries; once well up and settled on a stout branch I stayed there, blissfully eating my fill of the ripe fruit, while the rest of the party laughed and called to me from below.

Toronto's daily life was leisurely and pleasant, but on the main streets there was plenty of traffic of its kind: big drays, clattering waggons, delivery vans, and for daily work-out the red fire-reels, all of them horse-drawn. Runaway horses were one of the city's hazards of those days. To see a foaming horse, with traces flying and waggon tipping drunkenly, zigzag across busy thoroughfares, sometimes up on the sidewalks into a crowd of people trying to scatter, was an awful experience. Generally the poor maddened animal would be caught by some intrepid bystander, or occasionally it would stop from sheer fatigue and wait, peacefully enough, until its driver caught up with it. The Humane Society, which now does such a fine work with small animals, was originally the protector of the hundreds and hundreds of horses that were vital to the city's life.

"Society" too depended on the horse, and there were many beautiful equipages and fine, high-stepping horses for the conveying of ladies and gentlemen back and forth on their endless social rounds. Indeed everybody in those days

seemed to be conscious of good horseflesh, and there were probably just as many, if not more, small stables for buggies and gigs behind ordinary-sized houses as there were carriage-houses to serve the big mansions. Blacksmiths did a good business.

Toronto in winter always seemed to have snow in abundance. Municipal snow removal was a development for the far-off future, and a good covering of snow was essential for the regular winter change-over from wheeled vehicles to sleighs. To shop or call, the leading families sallied forth in open sleighs, sitting against fur robes slung over the back of the seat; the coachman in bearskin cape and cap sat straight as a ramrod on his perch in front; and, all in all, it was a lively turnout, made still merrier with the jingle of the bells as the horses trotted along.

At other seasons the open victorias were the preferred conveyance, and in summertime the ladies were almost always equipped with silk parasols. On a fine day Jarvis Street, Queen's Park, St. George Street—the "good addresses" in Toronto at that time—could provide quite a spectacle of private carriages with smartly dressed occupants out to take the air. A fashionable wedding at church or home always drew a crowd of onlookers, and with good reason, for the pace of arrival and departure was much slower and more dignified than we know it today, and there was time to recognize all the guests and study their costumes.

Race week at the Woodbine was undoubtedly the high spot in the social season. That was the period when every woman in the members' enclosure wore a new outfit every single day of the meet, and competition for word-of-mouth selection of "best-dressed lady" was strong indeed. People drove in their carriages to attend, and one of my vivid recollections is the picture of Miss Melvin-Jones, daughter of Sir Lyman and Lady Melvin-Jones, driving her own team of magnificent bays all the way from the family mansion at Prince Arthur and St. George Street to the Woodbine on the eastern fringe of the city, and arriving

in a state of faultless perfection of costume. People used to gather at points where she was sure to pass, just to enjoy the sight: the haughty, fair young woman, not beautiful but with a complexion and an hour-glass figure that were together the talk of Toronto, handling her high-steppers with great skill, while the coachman sat with stiffly folded arms on a tiger seat at the rear of the high carriage.

Miss Melvin-Jones, I think, was the personification of the best Toronto society in the early nineteen-hundreds. At the time I write of, she was probably still in her twenties, and because of Lady Melvin-Jones' frail health the family's social duties had been shouldered early by the only child. She was a gifted musician, and also a linguist. Such were her poise, background, wealth and uncompromising standards that I never once heard her addressed or referred to by her first name. Many people were frankly frightened of her—and probably I was one of them, until I met her. It was at an afternoon reception, and the woman I had been chatting with was greeted on the other side by Miss Melvin-Jones. I could see my friend's nervousness, but she said valiantly, "Miss Melvin-Jones, have you met Mrs. Jack Eaton?"

"No," replied the young lady, "but I've been hoping for the opportunity," and with great charm and smiling wit led me into an animated conversation.

Through her father's connections Miss Melvin-Jones knew a great many of the leading figures in business and the professions. The Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and his wife, childless themselves, became her devoted friends; she was a constant visitor to their home, now called Laurier House, in Ottawa. Years later, as Mrs. T. Crawford Brown, wife of a Presbyterian minister, she was still an interesting figure in Toronto society, holding strictly to the formality to which she had been trained in an earlier day.

A half-century ago entertaining was done largely at home. Everybody in the social circle had a receiving day,

and if for any reason one did not wish to receive on the regular day one inserted a notice in the morning newspapers to the effect that "Mrs. X will not receive this Wednesday or again this season." Government House was generally a strong focal point of society, although just after the turn of the century there was some whispered disappointment among Toronto people that Sir Oliver Mowat, the Lieutenant-Governor, and his sister were not *quite* as active in the matter of entertaining as could be desired. Government House was then a big formal mansion located at the southwest corner of Simcoe and King Streets, the famous intersection popularly known as "administration, education, damnation and salvation," because opposite Government House stood the original Upper Canada College buildings, across from them a saloon, and on the southeast corner St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

Miss Mowat's receiving day was Thursday, and it was the custom for ladies of the community to call, register, and drink a cup of tea. All the families living along the streets in that vicinity kept Thursday too, up as far as Willcocks and Spadina. North from Bloor Street the receiving day was Friday, as I well remember, because I found I must adhere to the arrangement.

Until I came to Toronto as a bride I had never worn a formal evening gown, but I was soon caught up in the routine. Many a brilliant ball took place each fall and winter against the background of a spacious home with its Victorian double-parlours, entrance hall and library. These were the exclusive events, and it would have been unthinkable that *any* guest present would be unknown to the host and hostess, or, worse still, uninvited! Hotels and assembly halls were used chiefly for club or charity balls. In all cases, however, whether the party was at home or in a public place, the rules of dress were strictly observed. All gentlemen wore tails and white tie; ladies appeared in their finest; and both ladies and gentlemen kept their white kid gloves on, the evening through. Men enjoyed the com-

fort of dinner jacket and black tie only on all-male occasions; before the year 1914 even a small dinner party for close friends or relatives justified full evening dress. The word, "make-up", if used at all in polite conversation, carried with it severe condemnation. To apply colour to the face would have been to put oneself immediately in the class of "painted Jezebels". Powder was always used, more or less, but a deeply tinted pink powder was certainly questionable! Lipstick and nail varnish were unknown, but smart women did pride themselves on polished nails, achieved through energetic wielding of the chamois buffer.

For theatre or supper at a restaurant the ladies preferred black or dark colours but this was far from drab in effect, as that was the heyday of ornamentation in clothes. One of the most interesting costume periods I have lived through—and there have been many!—was the time, 1905 or thereabouts, when women added enormous picture hats, plumed and ribboned, to their low-necked evening gowns for every occasion except a ball. It was hardly a practical style, for sitting in the orchestra seats of the theatre a woman was put to the necessity of removing her hat, including the long hatpins which held it on, and trying to balance the vast creation on her knees during the performance.

Do I hear someone ask, "But *was* there a theatre in Toronto fifty years ago?" There were several, and all in flourishing condition from the turn of the century until after the First World War when movies became the chief attraction. The Grand Opera House, Shea's, the old Princess and the Royal Alexandra played to well-filled houses. I saw my first opera performed at the Grand; it was *Parsifal* and beautifully presented. I must have had opera in my bones for I was enraptured with this experience and indeed have loved that music-drama of Wagner's ever since. Jack had taken a box on the ground floor for, to our great delight, his parents were our guests for the occasion. Mr. Eaton, who had formerly insisted that the ballet was the only part of opera he liked, enjoyed the evening, and later

declared that "it was worth the struggle of getting there to hear such music." As *Parsifal* is a very long opera, five o'clock was curtain time, and at the end of the first act one hour was allowed the audience for dinner. We went by carriage from the Grand Opera House on Adelaide Street to the Queen's Hotel on Front Street (where the Royal York now stands) and had one of their excellent meals in the big nineteenth century dining-room. The Queen's was the favourite stopping-place for many of Canada's statesmen all through its long career; in its later years of the nineteen-twenties Hon. G. Howard Ferguson, Ontario's Premier, and Mrs. Ferguson followed the tradition and made it their headquarters while the parliamentary sessions were on.

Concerts used to be held in the huge glass house of the Allan Gardens on the south side of Carlton Street—a lovely spot and a popular one in the years before Massey Hall was built. As soon as the new concert hall opened, it quickly became the music centre of the city. To this day when I enter Massey Hall I have a feeling of gratitude for this great gift from a great man, Hart Massey, the grandfather of our present Governor-General, Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey. It was Hart Massey's intention that good concerts should be held there for all the people to enjoy, and to that end the price of a ticket was not to exceed 25¢. This arrangement held for some time, but as with all gifts or bequests carrying long-term stipulations, the rule had to be changed to keep pace with the growth of the city and its prosperity. Public-spirited donors are so apt to forget the simple axiom that times change, and so must the conditions attached to their benefactions. Wider powers should be given to Boards of Trustees, and there should be greater flexibility in the appointment or replacing of Trustees. I recall a case in England, where a Benefit had been set up many years ago for needy elderly women; year by year the money was to be used to buy spinning-wheels for any woman applying for such assistance. The spinning-wheel passed out as a means of earning a living, yet the fund continued

to accumulate, and when I last heard of it the Government was seeking legal means to make the money available directly to those in need.

Church was an essential part of life, and every family had its active affiliation. Jack and I attended Trinity Methodist Church on Bloor Street West, joining his parents in the Eaton pew. There were numerous churches of different denominations in the district, and one of the pleasant memories I have is of sitting on my father-in-law's front porch after morning service and meeting groups of friends who would pause to greet him on their way home. Nobody was in a rush then; the motor-car had not become so ubiquitous as to force a split-second time-table on families. Afternoon Sunday School was a year-round engagement for all decently-brought-up children, and the churches were as well filled for evening services as for morning.

It never occurred to me to join in the hue and cry about "Toronto the Good", for church and home had been the centre of our activities during all those years of Sundays in Omemee. That was one part of my new life that indeed came naturally, and one which I haven't changed. I still like my Sabbaths to be "special".

CHAPTER V

Two YEARS after our marriage, in the month of May, our first child was born. There was great rejoicing for he was the first male Eaton of his generation, and it was a foregone conclusion that he could not be called anything but Timothy, for his grandfather, and Craig for his father. The house on Walmer Road became all excitement and stir with this addition to the group, and it seemed necessary to alter the entire adult schedule to suit our son's daily routine. I can confess now, in the calmness of age, that Timothy was one of those unfortunate first babies on whom all the "latest" methods were tried, even to a starvation diet. He survived my over-zealous efforts, but he was a small child and is today the shortest member of my family.

Timothy's mechanical aptitudes emerged at a very early age. Before he was two years old we realized we must keep a close watch on his experiments. One time, left alone in the sewing-room for a few moments, he picked up a knitting needle to see what would happen when he poked it into the electric outlet. Result: a ghastly shock for him, and blown-out fuses for the whole house. When I reprimanded him and warned him never to do that again, he said meekly, "I won't, Mummie. It hurt." Nevertheless there were always new challenges to tempt him. It was a year or two later when I heard a crash in the garage one evening just before Jack was due from the Store. I hurried out to find the door hanging by one roller, and young Timothy sitting in my husband's electric car which had been backed into the door. I was pretty shaken and brought the child into the house

to wait for his father. Jack took a serious view of it too, especially when in the course of their man-to-man talk he asked, "Timothy, why did you do that?" and the child replied, "Well, you see, Daddy, I was s'prised, for I had done it in the morning, both forward and back, and nothing happened."

By this time our garage was hardly big enough, for I too, had a car, an electric runabout. I wasn't really interested. Several years before, Jack had given me a nice bay horse and a smart basket trap with a coachman's seat behind. I used to drive downtown or anywhere and thoroughly enjoyed it. But cars were in Jack's blood, and with characteristic persistence and after months of persuasion he won me over to the idea of a car of my own. Electrics were rarities on Toronto streets then, and plenty of stares followed me on my worried course. On my first indoctrination it seemed that nothing could be simpler to manage than this elegant little box supported on rubber-tired carriage wheels. In front of the driver was a guide wheel on which was placed a smaller metal circle with a straight bar; this bar had four positions to make contact—one, two, three forward, and the fourth for reversing. There was also a foot brake.

I used the car fairly frequently yet never quite succeeded in having full confidence in it or in myself. One morning I put myself into the street car rails on Bloor near Spadina; as the points were turned for Spadina and my thin rubber tires were stuck in the rails I perforce had to turn on to Spadina and had some difficulty getting back on my Bloor course. Another time I was driving a friend home, and as I turned from Bloor to Bedford Road the wheel did not come round far enough and so the car moved straight on, up over the pavement and through the closed ornamental gate of Miss Veales' School for Young Ladies. I had enough sense to shut off the power and push hard on the brake, but before we came to a standstill Miss Veales'

gate was flat on the driveway and we were reposing on top of it.

Motoring in those early days was a constant adventure, because of the condition of the roads, the limitations of the cars, and the lack of any handy assistance as we have it today. Some twenty years ago Timothy and John David and I were on a motor tour of the Gaspé Peninsula and New Brunswick, the boys doing the driving in two-hour shifts. In New Brunswick we encountered a partially completed highway being put through a swamp. Rain the night before had worsened conditions, and pretty soon we were solidly mired. The boys cheerfully went to get help, and while they were gone I decided to stretch my legs. I stepped out of the car into ankle-deep mud. Eventually a Government bull-dozer came by and pulled us out, and on our way to Fredericton I remarked how that incident reminded me of almost daily adventures years before. I said, "I always sat still when we got stuck, until your father had tried several times to use engine power to get us out, then I announced that I would go for help. I generally managed to find a farmer with a team of horses to come and haul us out, and I met some very nice, friendly people that way." Both the boys said, "Mother, you must write a book on early motoring."

The motor-car invaded my life at a time when I much preferred horses as a means of locomotion. But nothing could stop the march of mechanical progress, and even I learned to drive fairly competently after those first trials with the electric. Once, just after one of the boys had received his driver's licence, I had asked him to drive me over to Miss Ethel Shepherd's place, about eight miles from *Eaton Hall.* The car was a new seven-passenger Franklin. At that time I had become nervous about handling the wheel—it was a complex, if you like—and the family sensed it. When we were leaving Miss Shepherd's, my son stood beside the car and said, "Now, Mother, you drive us home." I tried to evade it, but he said, "Look, you were

driving cars when some of the women on the highways today hadn't even seen one. You're a good driver, so get in and take us home." Such flattery was too much for me, and I did as ordered. When we got to our own front door, John turned to me triumphantly and said, "There now, what did I tell you!"

Early in 1904 transportation of a different kind was much on our minds. At that time Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Eaton had made arrangements to go by train to Atlantic City, and Jack planned to go down with them to see them comfortably settled in their hotel. When they boarded the train in the Union Station, Toronto, it was found that through some error Mr. and Mrs. Eaton's drawing-room had been sold twice, and the other party, Mr. and Mrs. Bert Cox, (he is remembered today as Senator H. C. Cox, President of Canada Life) were already in occupancy. Bert immediately said, "Jack, we'll move out at once; your father and mother must have the drawing-room." At first Jack's parents refused to consider the suggestion, but finally they had to bend to their young friends' kindness.

It was this mix-up in reservations, and the constant concern all of us had for Mr. Eaton's difficulty in getting about, that compelled Jack to look into the possibility of having a private car for railway travel. He started inquiries in New York, and on his return home he continued his quest with the C.P.R. in Montreal. Within a few weeks the car was ordered, and eventually delivered.

The *Eatonia,* as it was christened, covered countless thousands of miles up, down and across Canada, and into the United States. It simplified travelling for Mr. and Mrs. Eaton and was often a family headquarters as others joined them on their journeys. Frequently my husband used it on his trips to western towns where hotel accommodation was sometimes scanty. I always felt that the *Eatonia* was the most luxurious kind of travel, though I must say there was nothing for show, but everything for comfort and

ease of service. The car contained two large bedrooms and a bathroom with shower; the dining-room was of a size to seat eight or ten without crowding; and the large observation-lounge and platform at rear were inviting places to sit and read or enjoy the scenery. Two stewards, Kirk and Carter, were always on duty, and they knew their business perfectly.

Whether Mr. Eaton approved wholeheartedly of the private car I can't remember now; he might very well have considered it a needless extravagance on the part of his son. Yet Jack and I, and the others of the Eaton family, realized that the cost was in all ways justified, and that this was a modest enough reward to a fine man who had spent his life in hard work without thought of personal pleasures. I never used the *Eatonia* after my husband's death, although Mrs. Eaton found it useful from time to time. Following her death the car was sold to Sir Edward Beatty, President of the C.P.R.

Those first few years of married life were filled with new experiences for me, and one of the most important, of course, was my constantly expanding acquaintance with the Eaton organization. Within a week or so after our honeymoon Jack had taken me on a tour of all departments, services and warehouses. He insisted on showing me that there were indeed ten delivery waggons—and more—despite my home town's skepticism; I saw the stables, and the horses who knew every street and corner on their routes; the Accounting Offices, the Mail Order Department from which the best dress fabrics of my girlhood used to come; and all the counters and sections that served the Toronto public.

Jack was already a Vice-President of the Company at the time of our marriage. Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Eaton had had four sons and two daughters. One of the sons had drowned at an early age; the accident had happened in a small garden pool, and Mrs. Eaton could never after-

ward overcome her horror of such places. The eldest son, Edward Y. Eaton, developed in early manhood the disease of diabetes which then could have but one fatal end; he was to die in his thirties, leaving his wife and two young children. The Timothy Eatons' second son, W. Fletcher Eaton, had moved to Oshawa to manage an Eaton factory there, and later went to Hamilton to head a much larger operation for the Company. The two daughters, Josephine (Mrs. T. M. M. Burnside) and Margaret (Mrs. C. E. Burden), were already married at the time I entered the family circle.

My husband, John Craig Eaton, was the youngest child. He had been born in Toronto, in the grey brick house at 4 Orde Street, which now forms the west portion of the Royal Conservatory of Music's residence for women students. The Eaton family lived at that address for a good many years, and during that period were active members of the old Elm Street Methodist Church congregation, a few blocks away.

Jack had been introduced to Store policies and methods at an early age. Often during his school years he had begged his father to let him come down on Saturdays to help in the Parcel Department. The boiler-rooms of the Store fascinated him as a teen-ager, and occasionally the Chief Engineer would invite him to put on a pair of overalls and help wipe down the engines. Later Mr. Eaton saw to it that his son got regular employee experience, and a regular employee pay envelope, in such departments as the Wages Office, the Notions and Dress Goods, and as a floor walker. He learned by doing. More than once his father told me that Jack's executive ability had been quickly proved during those departmental stages in his career.

It was Eaton business that took me on my first trip to the Canadian West. For some time Jack had been eager to open a branch store in Winnipeg. He had discussed the scheme with his father many times, and finally Mr. Eaton

said to him, "Go, spy out the land and bring me back a report, but be sure you take Florrie McCrea with you." This was the name he always used for me, from the day I met him till the day he died, and with his North-of-Ireland tongue it had a very nice sound.

So Jack and I left by train for Winnipeg, and for me this first trip around the north shore of Lake Superior, through the Ontario forests, and then into the prairies of Manitoba, of which I had heard so much, was an exciting adventure. Most of the daylight hours we spent on the rear platform or in the observation car—and I am reminded of an interesting social occasion that had its inauguration in the lounge car the morning of our arrival. A distinguished elderly gentleman had gone through to the open platform; the door had shut with a bang, dropping the lock into place, and when he tried to return he found himself a prisoner on the outside. My husband went to the rescue. When our fellow-traveller was safely inside, he said, "To whom am I indebted for my release?" Jack gave his name, and the stranger said, "And I am Daniel MacMillan of Winnipeg." That afternoon a message came to our hotel, asking us to tea at Government House, for, as we surmised, it was the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Sir Daniel MacMillan, who had been locked out. He was a most agreeable acquaintance, and typical of the sturdy character of our pioneer westerners. In chatting while the train slowed for the station he described his introduction to Winnipeg many years before, when he and his bride sat in a box-car with boxes for seats, and during a heavy rain that came straight through the roof he had held an umbrella over Mrs. MacMillan's head to keep her dry.

Jack's cousin, R. Y. Eaton, met us in Winnipeg, and on that very first day I learned about Winnipeg mud. It was of a gluey consistency, dirty yellow in colour, and the carriage wheels would sink into holes six or eight inches deep. The splashes of it that settled on our boots and clothes were most difficult to remove, and always left a

permanent stain. It could only be washed off waggon wheels at the expense of the paintwork—as was discovered later on when the new Store set up its delivery system.

Jack and I spent a good part of our days driving about to look at possible sites, and I still have a clear picture in my memory of the muddy streets, board sidewalks, little houses of new lumber, and the generally sprawled, busy, disorganized look of a city in its birth throes. We stayed at the Mariaggio Hotel, now long since disappeared. It was a curious place, situated on a side street. Only the sitting-room of our suite had windows, and toward the middle of the room there was a great arch hung with chenille curtains; beyond them was the bedroom and off it a bathroom. The water was so limey and hard that one of our Winnipeg friends remarked it would be easy to commit murder with it: "Just pick up a handful and throw it at your enemy; if it hits him he'll drop dead instantly." The hotel service was, at best, sketchy. One day in the dining-room I noticed raspberries listed on the menu card and immediately ordered them. We finished our main course, and then waited, five minutes, ten minutes, and possibly a half-hour. Finally Jack spoke up, chuckling, "They had to send out to buy your berries," and, sure enough, at that moment I saw our waiter hurry along the street carrying a box of raspberries.

That, you must remember, was more than fifty years ago. The fine modern city of Winnipeg now has an excellent water supply, and what I consider one of the best hotels anywhere for service of every kind, the Fort Garry.

Jack's investigations on the spot bore out his convictions that Eaton's should have a store there. This represented a major step, as up to that time Eaton's service to Canadians living outside the Toronto area had been handled entirely through the Mail Order Department. Some of the Directors, older than my husband, were afraid of this expansion; they did not consider "Mr. J. C.", as he was known in business hours, mature enough in his judgment. Never-

theless Mr. Timothy Eaton approved Jack's plan, and the property at the corner of Portage Avenue and Hargrave was purchased and work of excavation begun.

The building was to cover one block and rise six stories. But a new difficulty developed. Some months after our return to Toronto, Mr. E. R. Wood, the well-known financier and a close friend of my father-in-law, came back from a western business survey undertaken for the trust company with which he was associated, and immediately called on Mr. Eaton. This was Mr. Wood's verdict concerning Winnipeg Eaton's as reported to me the next day by my husband. "There's a hole in the ground there so big that it will never be needed during your lifetime or mine." Mr. Eaton was much troubled. Although no word of reproach to my husband was uttered, he did say, "John, do you think five floors will do?" Jack acceded to the suggestion, while still confident in his original scheme. How right he was in his estimate was proved before two years had passed, for, already short of space, the Winnipeg store had to add another floor. Today of course it is a huge structure of nine stories and basement, with auxiliary buildings for warehouses, and so on.

The year 1904-5 was one of feverish activity for Jack, with trips back and forth to Winnipeg, and mounting excitement in the air as he waited impatiently, like a small boy, to show his "baby" to his father. Finally the opening day was set for July 6th, 1905. As Winnipeg hotel accommodation was still very limited, the family visitors from Toronto were put up in a large, comfortably furnished residence called Stribel House, on Donald Street, a property which had been bought at the same time as the store site. We all travelled together in a private car and a sleeper which Mr. Timothy Eaton had chartered (his own private car was not delivered until some months later). Our party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Eaton, Mrs. E. Y. Eaton, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Burden, my husband and myself, and our

little Timothy. Mr. Eaton's physician, Dr. E. E. King, and a masseur accompanied him.

We spent a full week in Winnipeg, and for all of us there was a great deal to do and see, and many interesting people to meet. We toured the store, watched its final preparation for the public opening, and chatted with the men chosen to manage it. All had been selected with Jack's approval, and some had been sought out by him personally. A. A. Gilroy, Store Manager, and Sam Wilson, H. M. Tucker, Mr. Forrester, Frank Carpenter—they were among his first selections. He chose John Scott, chauffeur and mechanic, to manage the new garage. Miss Foote, our Head Cashier in Toronto, went out to organize the Cash Department in Winnipeg.

At 11 a.m. on July 6th the store was to be opened. A few minutes before, Mr. Timothy Eaton, holding his grandson Timothy on his knee, was wheeled in his rolling chair into an elevator on the Donald Street side. The rest of the family were already grouped near the elevators. Attendants had been assigned to all the store entrances, and everything was in readiness when my young Timothy, aged two, guided by his grandfather, pressed the button. A bell sounded and all the street doors opened simultaneously. Thousands of people rushed in from the streets, but for a one-hour inspection trip only. At one o'clock a luncheon was served to representatives of Church, State, the railway, banks, and other businesses. The Mayor of Winnipeg tendered his welcome to Eaton's, and there were many speeches of congratulations, and from far-away points telegraphed messages of good wishes. The atmosphere was charged with a feeling of jubilation, and for all of us, especially my husband, the occasion was a triumph.

At two o'clock the store reopened, this time to do its regular business. Each member of the family took up a position on the main floor. I served in the Ribbon Circle, Mrs. E. Y. Eaton sat behind a cash register, and Mrs. Burden sold in the Ladies' Handkerchiefs. Mrs. Timothy Eaton

moved about as a dignified supervisor. This was my first job with the Company and for an hour's work I was paid 50¢. We were all paid by cheque, and I still have mine as a treasured souvenir.

Until the Eaton organization opened in Winnipeg, the one-cent piece had never been used there. For example, a newspaper which would sell for one or two cents in eastern Canada, was five cents in the western city. Knowing this, Jack had arranged to have $500 in coppers on hand for the opening, and with a certain malice aforethought, as well as serious determination to operate in exactly the same way as in the Toronto store, he had ordered merchandise to be plainly marked 98¢, $1.98, $5.98 and so on. One of his friends had bet him that this system would never be accepted in Winnipeg, and, true enough, the public showed some suspicion of the odd numbers and spurned their two cents' change that first day. Within twenty-four hours the management had a solution: donation boxes for all Winnipeg societies caring for needy children were installed, and customers could drop their pennies into these. For a little more than two months these organizations had a steady stream of contributions from this source, and then the amounts in the boxes began to dwindle. Winnipeg shoppers had learned to accept their change, and the one-cent piece became established in the west.

For the next few months our home life was rather unsettled. A new baby, whether it be human or commercial, has to be carefully tended if it is to thrive, so Jack spent a part of every month in Winnipeg. Directors, managers, mechanics, engineers were constantly moving back and forth to help the staff there iron out any difficulties. Even during this busy first year, the social life of the employees was being considered. Various clubs were formed for hockey, football, and in the following summer for baseball. There were organized dances and picnics and skating parties. The proportion of Eaton employees who went out

from Ontario to Manitoba to man the Winnipeg store was considerable, but, though the change was drastic, very few wanted to come back, except for an occasional visit. They seemed to prefer the western climate and the feeling of freedom to develop and expand which was so much a part of the Winnipeg atmosphere in those early years of the twentieth century.

I sensed it too, on my occasional trips with my husband. At that time the Canadian West was absorbing a greater proportion of immigrants than any other part of the country, and just to stroll through the new Eaton's and see the colourful native dress of Eastern Europeans was fascinating for me. Churches with the onion towers of the Greek Orthodox faith were rising here and there in the city. The mixture of tongues, including those of our western Indian tribes, heard on the Winnipeg streets impressed me, because this was so different from English-speaking Toronto. Today, of course, Ontario has peoples from many lands, and with them the probability of a more diversified culture in the future.

On the first of July, a year after the Winnipeg opening, a picnic was held at Portage la Prairie for the employees and their families. It was great fun, and Jack and I were glad we had made a special point of attending. On the 6th was the big Anniversary celebration when the chief feature in the store was a huge cake adorned with the two dates in icing and one giant candle. Every customer that day was given a box of cake—and so successful was this birthday celebration that the same pattern has been followed on each anniversary since.

It was Mr. Timothy Eaton who gave me my real grounding in business. In the later years of his life he rolled about the Store in his wheel chair and he always liked to have me beside him. I often felt Mr. Eaton had a touch of the "fey", like many of the Irish, and have sometimes wondered if he had a premonition that I would

be needed as one of the business directors one day. Anyhow, I'm sure I paced every foot of every floor in our Toronto store with him—slowly, because he would like to see everything, and ask my opinion from time to time. "Florrie McCrea, what do you think of this?" he would say. One day we stopped beside the railing of the big open light well that ran from main floor to roof. "Do you like these things?" he asked me. "Do you think we could do without this and turn it into floor space?" We discussed the pros and cons then and there, and decided the opening served no real purpose and that it might better be utilized for department expansion. A few weeks later the construction work was done, and the ornamental light well only a memory.

One Saturday in the pre-Easter season we were going through the Millinery Department just after lunch. There were throngs of shoppers in front of every counter and mirror. Mr. Eaton stopped the young man who was wheeling his chair and said, "Go tell Rogerson I want to see him," pointing to the Department Manager's office. The young man came back and with more truthfulness than tact said, "Sir, Mr. Rogerson is asleep." Mr. Eaton's only remark was "Very well. Let us go on," but years later Mr. Rogerson told me the aftermath. "On Monday morning," he said, "I was called to the Governor's office. I went in and said, 'Good morning, sir.' The Governor looked up and said, 'Good morning, Rogerson. Rogerson, do you know you were asleep on Saturday afternoon a week before Easter?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Why were you asleep?' 'Because, sir, I knew there were six better men than me out in the department.' 'Oh. Thank you, Rogerson, that's all.'

"So," Mr. Rogerson recalled with a broad smile, "I left, feeling that that was over and done with. But on Tuesday morning I got another summons to the Governor's office, and when I went in he said to me, 'Good morning, Rogerson. Rogerson, go out and get me thirty men like those

six you say you have on your millinery floor.' The Governor had called my bluff!"

There may be some who will claim I cannot prove it, but I believe I am right in saying that Mr. Timothy Eaton was the first man in Canada, or for that matter on this continent, to concern himself with the lot of the worker. He was constantly seeking ways to improve the environment and welfare of his staff. He also believed all customers should be treated fairly, uniformly—and that in itself was a rather radical idea in his day. "Dickering", the logical concomitant of bartering, was practised regularly in the Canada of the nineteenth century; Mr. Eaton recognized it as a waste of time and money, and an injustice to those who were not "sharp traders". In his earliest storekeeping ventures in Canada, the young Irishman had quickly perceived that if he could get free of the current habit of long-standing accounts, which might be settled by his customers once every six or eight months or even a year—and then perhaps at so much on the dollar after some "dickering"—he could sell at a lower profit and thus enjoy a distinct advantage in the competition for new trade. That way he could introduce the plan of a fixed price; it would be plainly marked on all merchandise and every customer would have the opportunity to buy at that price.

These were his dreams of better business, but they had to wait for fulfilment until he had made the move from St. Mary's to Toronto. His first store had been a short-term venture in the village of Kirkton, where he bartered goods with the farmers. Just after his marriage he and his bride had moved to St. Mary's, a few miles away, and it was here that the idea of branching out into a department store was born. He and his partners had been doing a good business in groceries and hardware, when one day Mrs. Eaton suggested that the store might stock some ladies' hats. "But," she added, "they ought to be nicely trimmed." "All right," her husband said, "if I buy the hats will you

trim them?" She agreed, and until they moved to the city, Mrs. Timothy Eaton was actively in charge of plumes, feathers, veils and flowers, and their precise arrangement on the hats.

The old brick store in St. Mary's still stands, and the bold name of "Eaton" along one wall refuses to be obliterated by successive layers of paint. No matter how often the paintbrush is applied year by year, the shadowy lettering eventually appears. We take it as a good omen!

On December 8th, 1869, T. Eaton & Co. opened for business at the southwest corner of Queen and Yonge Streets in Toronto. It was a modest little place of 24 feet frontage and 60 feet depth, and definitely not in the fashionable shopping area of Toronto. The "best" people made their purchases in the district around the St. Lawrence Market and from King Street south to Front. But Timothy Eaton's capital wasn't enough to launch him in this part of town, and he counted himself lucky to buy out the retail dry goods business of one James Jennings, known as the Britannia House, and get it—stock, building and goodwill—for the sum of $6,500.

The first advertisement, appearing in *The Globe,* opened with an announcement of the change of ownership, signed by J. Jennings, and bespoke his customers' "cordial and generous support" of his successor. Immediately below was Mr. Eaton's first message to the citizens of Toronto. "With excellent facilities for the importation of their Goods from the British and Foreign Markets, they (T. Eaton & Co.) hope to secure a moderate share of public patronage. Nothing will be wanting on their part to secure this end, by the constant exercise of energy and attention to the wants of their customers." They offered from the present stock, "by way of clearing it off rapidly and making way for their Spring imports," the following inducements: "over 4,000 yds. WINCEYS from 5¢ per yd." and "over 13,000 yds. FANCY DRESS GOODS, newest styles, from 10¢ per yd." Velveteen and other jackets, and all Millinery Goods,

were going to be sold at EXACTLY HALF the market price. And down toward the bottom of the column was the electrifying statement: "We propose to sell our goods for CASH only—in selling goods to have only one price."

Some of the local merchants predicted that the young unknown from St. Mary's was bound to fail. Nobody could insist on selling for cash, and stay in business! But the values at T. Eaton & Co. continued to attract customers and in steadily increasing numbers, and within a few months the owner was employing two men, one woman and a boy.

Two other points of Mr. Eaton's policy became the talk of the town. His motto, "Goods satisfactory or money refunded," was novel indeed at that period when a purchase was generally final and the dissatisfied customer had no redress. Mr. Eaton also laid down a principle of his business that merchandise must be honestly described at all times. On one occasion he stopped beside the front counter to correct a sales clerk's description of a bolt of cloth. "It is *not* all wool, Madam," he told the customer, "it is half cotton." The incident was typical. That merchandise must be exactly as represented, and that it must be represented exactly as it was—this was his guiding policy in establishing public confidence. For the Store and the whole organization there has never been any deviation from that policy as first enunciated in 1869.

A few years ago during a trip abroad I was asked to address the luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club in Newry, Northern Ireland. They had suggested that I speak of the growth of Canada and the expansion of Eaton's which was parallel with it. At the close of my speech I asked if there were any questions, and almost simultaneously half a dozen voices called out, "Tell us about the Mail Order Department." Apparently these Irish businessmen had heard of the scope and volume of Eaton's mail order busi-

ness, but they wanted to know how and why it had been started.

Actually, it was rather an accident. The first catalogue was printed in the early eighteen-eighties; it was designed as a booklet to be handed out to visitors at the Canadian Industrial Exhibition in Toronto. Naturally, people took the booklets home with them, studied them under the lamplight of their farm kitchens, and soon the orders began to pour in. "It was necessary," said a Company report, with a note of some surprise, "for one woman to devote her entire time to the filling of the orders, with the aid of a small boy to do the parcelling."

So began the famous Eaton mail order catalogue. Mr. Eaton was quick to realize that, no matter how isolated a settler's home might be from towns, stores, neighbours, or the end of the railway line, there was always a postal service. Therefore a customer could order goods by mail and know that his parcel would be delivered to the point where he picked up his letters. What Mr. Eaton did not foresee—and it was a discovery that pleased him greatly—was the educational use of the catalogue. New settlers from Europe took to Eaton's catalogue as their best and easiest home text-book for the study of the English language. As every item of merchandise was illustrated, the relationship between words and objects could be quickly grasped. School teachers kept a copy of Eaton's catalogue in their one-room schools across the prairies, and I remember seeing a charming letter from a priest in northern Manitoba asking if the President could possibly spare twelve copies of the new edition, as these were "most urgently needed for the instruction of the children of the parish".

The catalogue became a real part of Canadian life. It has even been commemorated in the name of a Saskatchewan town—a thriving community named Eatonia, situated not far from Saskatoon. When the railway was put through and the local people were asked to choose a name for the station and eventually their municipality, the unanimous

decision was "Eaton", because it had played such a leading role in their lives. However, on finding that this was too close in sound to another village farther along the railway line, they added the extra syllable.

As I look back into the far past, one of the matters of great joy and thankfulness for me is the realization that Timothy Eaton lived long enough to see how well and truly he had laid the foundations of his business. It was he who chose the site of the present main store in Toronto —for within ten years after establishing in the city he saw that he must move in order to accommodate more stock and more customers. He bought property to the north of Queen Street, on the west side of Yonge, tore down three existing stores there and erected a fine new building, "modern" for those days, and especially in the matter of big plate-glass windows paralleling Yonge Street sidewalk. In 1883 he opened for business there, and from that time forward seldom a year passed without further expansion as to space or equipment. In 1885 the first telephone was installed. A year later the first portion of the Queen Street section of the Store was built, joining up neatly with the rear of the Yonge Street building. That was the year, too, for the first Eaton's elevator—one of Toronto's earliest—and the rule was that customers should use it to ride *up* only; the stairs were available for the down trip!

It was in the eighteen-eighties that Timothy Eaton inaugurated the first foreign buying trip for the Store; he went himself, seeking new sources of merchandise, studying British and European markets. Today the Eaton organization has buying offices in many countries, and our experts go up and down the world looking for the new or unusual things that will appeal to the Canadian public.

The first Santa Claus parade (1905) had the special blessing of Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Eaton, for both of them loved children and events designed for children. I took my young Timothy to see the parade, though I'm sure I

was just as excited a spectator as he was. My husband was an enthusiastic supporter of the whole plan, and that first year he decided he must be more than an onlooker—he would ride in his own car in the parade. He enjoyed the experience so much that he continued the custom for the rest of his life. It was Jack's decision, too, that all "marshals" responsible for the good order and timing of the procession should be Store men of managerial level. Later, it was decided that a doctor must be present; he generally rides on one of the decorated vans, inconspicuous yet with his bag handy in case of any emergency.

Several times over the years I have gone to see the parade form up before 7 a.m., at the car-barns on Lansdowne Ave., and it has always been a delight to witness the enthusiasm of the high school and college boys and girls engaged to march in their fairyland costumes, and wave to the thousands of people over the miles of route. They get paid for their work, certainly, but no money could buy the zest and good spirits they put into this annual attraction for Toronto children.

Timothy Eaton lived to see the success of many "firsts" in his department store business. If he could visit the Eaton organization in 1956 he would find his name displayed over the entrance to fifty-nine stores, situated as far east as Corner Brook, Newfoundland, as far west as Victoria, B.C., and located to serve all the populous centres across the country. He would discover his little mail order catalogue now grown to a 500-page book with more than 7,000 illustrations, and printed in both English and French. Four huge mail order centres are necessary to handle the business that arises from the catalogue and from the more than three hundred mail order offices scattered throughout Canada.

Perhaps, though, these current statistics would not surprise him overmuch. I remember a comment he made in my hearing one day. A business friend was present, and after discussing the expansion of Eaton's to Winnipeg,

he turned to my father-in-law and said, "How much bigger do you think your business will be?" Mr. Eaton replied, "I have already been mistaken in my estimate three times, so I don't intend to attempt to foretell its growth again. All depends on the integrity of those who are to follow after me."

I feel he would be happy if he could visit the Eaton organization today. I believe he would still say it was the calibre of the men and women within that organization which had made it great.

CHAPTER VI

FOR SEVERAL WINTERS I had been troubled by a throat condition, and after trying many things the doctor suggested that probably my vocal chords needed exercise of a certain kind—in short, singing. So I went about listening to our Toronto vocalists and inquiring as to teachers and their methods. Finally I decided to go to Arthur Blight, a teacher of growing stature and a young man who sang very well himself, with great smoothness of production over a wide voice range. For a while I took lessons daily, and after a few weeks there was a noticeable improvement in my throat. By then, of course, the delight of studying and trying to develop my voice had taken hold, and I couldn't dream of giving up my weekly lesson with him and regular practice at home. It was with no thought of platform performance that I did this, but simply for my own enjoyment, and as an interesting extension of one of my girlhood hobbies in Omemee.

One day Mr. Blight asked me to take part in his monthly studio soirée. Said he, "I know of no better way to find out whether you are absorbing the training I am endeavoring to give you. You may be perfectly at ease singing for me or in your own home, but when you sing for a group, no matter whether you know them well or not, something is bound to happen. There's a feeling of tenseness, breathing becomes hard to control, the eye and the mind are affected by the slightest detail, and all this will be reflected in the voice. Also you will be criticized by the other students, who are always quite frank with each other."

However he smiled reassuringly and added, "The first time is the worst."

It went over not badly, and after that initial ordeal I sang quite frequently for friends or for small gatherings where they needed some voluntary help. My teacher's statement, "the first time is the worst", was not exactly borne out in my experience, for no matter how often I took part in a program I always had the same terrible sinking feeling beforehand, as though my stomach had fallen out. I would fume to myself, "Why did I ever promise to sing! I'll never do it again." Then when it was over and I knew everything had gone off reasonably well, I would recover some confidence and even hope there might be a next time.

One afternoon in January, 1907, I was just starting my lesson when my husband telephoned. "Darling, father wants you to come over to his office and pour tea for him." "But," I said, "I've only begun." "You'll never be sorry if you come now," Jack replied. As he had been encouraging me in my new studies, I knew something important was on his mind, else he would not have disturbed us, so, making my excuses to Mr. Blight, I left at once.

Mr. Eaton greeted me warmly. "Thank you for coming, Florrie McCrea. I need you," he said. He looked pale and I sensed he was not feeling well, but we went through the pleasant routine of afternoon tea in his office quite according to custom. He had often asked me to drop in and serve it for him; sometimes there would be a visitor or two, or one of the Managers.

That afternoon, as soon as tea was over, Jack saw his father off in his limousine and then we followed him home and remained with him till Mrs. Eaton came in. During the night he developed a high fever and a chest cold.

As so often happens in a busy family with many interests, the anxiety over Mr. Eaton's condition was complicated with a decision concerning an important engagement out of town. The Margaret Eaton School of

Literature and Expression—founded, built and endowed by Mrs. Timothy Eaton, and very dear to her heart—had entered a group in a drama competition which was to open in Ottawa the next evening. All members of the family who were free to go had planned to leave in the morning. As Mr. Eaton appeared to be no worse and they were assured that everything possible was being done for him and that it would certainly be a let-down for the school if Mrs. Eaton and the others were not present, they agreed to continue with the plan. Jack was one of the party to escort his mother, and probably I would have gone along too but for a cryptic little conversation with Mr. Rogerson of the Millinery Department who had called to inquire at the Eaton residence the night before. I repeated the assurance we had had from the doctor, but speaking of the Ottawa trip I remarked, "I don't want to go. I'd like to be here if I can be of any use." Quite simply he said, "Don't go."

There was no change in Mr. Eaton's condition until the second day following, when his lungs began to fill. Mrs. Eaton and Jack had kept in close touch with me, and, informed of the sudden turn, they caught the first train back, but Grandfather slipped quietly away the evening before their return.

I may be wrong, but I felt at the time that he was very tired of the unequal strain between his physical limitations and his mental and spiritual powers which were in full vigour. The quickness of his mind to grasp a situation and see a solution was phenomenal. His memory was unimpaired. He never hesitated for a word or a fact. But he was indeed discouraged and thoroughly wearied by the effort required to move about and do what he wanted and needed to do. Those last hours of watching by his bedside reminded me constantly of the Scripture, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word." It was as peaceful as that.

For me had ended a period of my life when I knew I could appeal at any moment with any problem to an un-

failing source of comfort and help. No longer would he gently chide me for something that he considered ill-advised. I have spent the rest of my life being grateful that it was given to me to sit at a great man's feet and learn. When trouble was to come to me later, I realized that it was Timothy Eaton who had taught me to weigh matters and make a decision, no matter how difficult it might be. His wonderful companionship, his sense of humour and enjoyment of people and places and all good things have been an extra strength to me all through these later years. That I was free to spend many hours with him was my good fortune, and the knowledge that he was fond of me is still an inspiration, half a century after his passing.

Mr. Eaton's death was a great shock to all, but especially to my husband. The load of responsibilities that shifted now to Jack's shoulders was great indeed, and while he had a group of very able men to share it with him, nevertheless all final decisions were his alone. In his early thirties he was left a commercial empire. That he ruled it well is history. His father's death was a deep personal loss, for these two had been close, and increasingly during Mr. Eaton's last years the President, when presented with a problem by one of the Store executives, would say "Ask John." My husband mourned his father, and for the rest of his life never once departed from the principles by which the first President had risen and ruled. Even in small matters Jack followed in his father's footsteps. Timothy Eaton was a non-smoker and non-drinker; my husband smoked and enjoyed a drink, but it would have been unthinkable for him to have indulged in either habit on Company territory, even in the privacy of his own office. The rule for all store employees became automatically his, and this scrupulousness of conduct is maintained today by my son, John David Eaton, and his Directors. Eaton's long-standing rule against smoking on the premises got unexpected support two or three years ago when a new Toronto city ordinance banned smoking in retail stores.

Such a policy is more than ever necessary today when so many synthetic fabrics and other materials are highly inflammable.

For Jack and myself life moved on with a quickening pace. The Winnipeg store had proved itself thoroughly justified, and now other needs arose: expansion in Toronto and a new Mail Order depot to serve the western provinces. A large warehouse was started at Regina, and while this was under way my husband went out frequently to watch the progress. On one such visit he accidentally walked on to the wet cement floor, and though he stepped back quickly he left a perfect imprint of his feet. John Webster, moved from the Winnipeg staff to head the Regina development, had a high regard for the President, and, being Irish, thought this incident was a happy augury. He ordered a frame put around the footprints until they were dry—and when I was in Regina in the nineteen-fifties I was taken to see this memento of the long-ago past.

It was in the spring of 1907 that the great passenger ship, the Cunarder *Lusitania* was much talked of. She was being rushed to completion on the Clyde, and her size and luxurious appointments were something more than a nine days' wonder the world over. All new ventures interested my husband, so when his colleagues began to urge him to make the first trip from New York, I knew he was tempted to consider an ocean voyage, the first occasion this happened in our years together. Our enthusiasm grew, and so did the plan.

We were at *Kawandag,* our Muskoka summer home, and our guests of the moment were Mr. and Mrs. William Dobie, our closest friends. We talked to them about a trip to Europe aboard the *Lusitania,* and Mr. Dobie, though a busy man as President of Gillette's, agreed that if he could make satisfactory arrangements at his office and factory he would like nothing better than that we four should travel abroad together.

With their growing family at the beginning of the year 1910. Timothy was then seven, John David a few months old.

From the Archives of Eaton's of Canada

Excavating with hand shovels, horses and waggons for the construction of the Winnipeg store, September, 1904.

Eaton's Santa Claus parade is a gala annual event for Toronto children.

That arrangement was good for at least a day. Then, out fishing with our neighbour, Harry Barker, my husband proposed that he and his wife should join us, and over that week-end the party increased to six. Fortunately not all the friends he asked could pick up and leave, because even the *Lusitania* would not have contained them. He always wanted all his friends to share pleasures with him; such was his nature.

At that time young Timothy had developed a minor ailment, but there was never any question of leaving him behind, for he had always travelled with us. However, our physician advised against taking the child this time. When Jack and I showed our unwillingness to accept this idea, the doctor proposed an operation which, if done at once, would give Timothy time to make a complete recovery and so be fit to travel by the date of sailing which was six weeks away. We agreed, but to our dismay, even when the little patient's recovery seemed well established, the doctor again urged us to leave Timothy at home. We were seriously disturbed by this pronouncement, for our four-year-old was very precious to us and still our total family. My husband put forward the idea of taking the doctor with us, but I could see no reason for that, and I knew I could take care of Timothy perfectly well; besides he had a devoted Irish nurse who would accompany us. However, the medico had so upset my lord and master that he insisted on having the doctor join the party, and also invited the doctor's wife—an Omemee girl of whom I was very fond. The preliminary arrangement was that the doctor would see Timothy safely settled in England and return, but that was not what happened, and for the duration of the trip our party had a doctor in attendance whom none of us needed. I had some acid thoughts in this connection, but outwardly I tried to accept the situation with as good grace as possible.

So our party had grown to eight, not counting Timothy and his nurse, and had become almost an immovable body, with my husband supplying the irresistible force. He realized

that something must be done to organize the venture properly, so he asked J. J. Vaughan, then secretary to him and the Board of Directors (later to be a Company Vice-President), to come along too, taking charge of transportation, luggage and currency. That was when I really got to know Mr. Vaughan and appreciate his wonderful qualities of heart and mind. He was always cheery, always ready for any emergency. His stewardship was so fine that we arrived back in Toronto with every piece of baggage, every account carefully checked and satisfactory to all, and for him the grateful devotion of every member of the party.

This voyage, on the first trip of the *Lusitania* from New York to Liverpool, was a gala undertaking. The Royal Suite had been engaged for us—as a gift from the Company—and when I entered the sitting-room I thought there must be some mistake. Smilax hung in festoons from the ceiling and in every possible place, proclaiming the ultimate in décor in those days, and besides there were bowls of orchids and great vases of roses. The accommodation was fabulous: the sitting-room opened into a sunroom at one end, and from the other side a door led to a private dining-room. Our family group had three double bedrooms, each with bath. All the rooms were beautifully finished and furnished. It was like a luxurious home within a floating city. Ships in those days, long before the competition of air travel, offered such accommodation as a lure to the careless spenders of the period; today I know of no ships, except the *Caronia,* a luxury world-cruiser, which apportion so much space to private suites.

During the crossing the women of the party talked eagerly about where they intended to go and especially how we would use our time in Paris. Mrs. Dobie always said the same thing: "I've always wanted a Paris hat and when I get there I'm going to have the biggest and best that money can buy." This amused Jack so much that instead of calling her Annie, which was her name, he

christened her Hattie. Before we disembarked all of us were calling her Hattie, and Hattie she remained ever afterwards.

When we reached Liverpool, the head of our London buying office was there to meet us and with him a friend of my husband's, Eddie Hodgson. Eddie had worked as a pharmacist in the T. Eaton Co., and studied overtime to be able to qualify for medical training. He had found he could expedite his plan by moving to England, and when he heard we were travelling on the *Lusitania* he had made a special effort to come to Liverpool to greet us. I had never met him before, but today, so many years later, Dr. Hodgson and his wife are numbered among my dear old friends.

Liverpool was my first taste of English life, and dinner that evening introduced me to whitebait, now one of my favourite articles of diet. We remained in the city for several days, enjoying the sights, and one night attending the theatre where George Alexander and Phyllis Neilson Terry were playing. It was a magnificent production of a Restoration drama, superbly costumed and beautifully acted. I remember sitting there in a dream-like state all evening, but a certain event within the next hour brought me to a rude awakening.

On the way back to the hotel I was riding in one limousine, and my husband was with others of the party in the second. In my car the doctor was sitting in the seat beside the driver. As we went through the lower part of the town, a drunken man came out of an alley, and, enraged to have an automobile cross his path, raised his heavy stick and made a swipe with it, catching the doctor on the back of the head. We stopped at once, and very shortly a policeman appeared and took the man into custody, also asking for our names and address. The doctor had a slight concussion which caused a dazed condition, but next day he was feeling quite normal—until he and I both had a jump in temperature when we received notices that we were to appear in court on the following Monday morning. A fine introduction to England!

But no one argues with the law, and so I went to court to be a witness, as I was the only person who had seen what happened. The Bible was in a filthy condition and when the Judge ordered me to kiss the Book I tried to evade it. He said sternly, "Madam, I said *kiss the Book!*" which I then did. He asked me to describe the event which led to the arrest of the prisoner, and I told him as well as I could. At one point he made some remark which brought a reply from me, "Wouldn't you think so, sir?" He smiled and remarked, "Madam, I am asking the questions."

The other members of our touring party—all of them present in the courtroom—said afterwards they wished they could have had a picture of me on the witness stand, and another in my seat towards the front of the room among the Saturday-night celebrants—women with black eyes and bandages around their heads, and a sorry-looking lot of men as well. For the rest of our trip I was continually teased about my famous first appearance in a Monday morning court in Liverpool.

Cars had been arranged to take us from Liverpool to London. As was usual then, they were open, and all the women were tied up in layers of veils, wraps and quantities of rugs. In spite of these precautions we were decidedly chilly. When we reached Manchester, our first pause, I was appalled when I got a glimpse of myself in the mirror. There had been a slight fog as we were leaving Liverpool and it had continued more or less all the way to Manchester. My face was a muddy green; it immediately reminded me of a dirty sponge. Next day, resuming our trip, we encountered more of the fog, but I was better prepared for the effects of it. At times the bitter taste of the air we swallowed was almost choking. But fog was forgotten when we reached London—just at dusk when the lights were winking on. Piccadilly was a delightful surprise for me: so brilliantly lit and gay, and with Eros, the fountain, behaving beautifully. The flower girls were picking up their baskets and preparing to leave. I had not been prepared for this

animated scene, and for that reason I suppose I enjoyed it all the more.

The Hotel Metropole, one of the best and most highly respected in England, was our London headquarters. It was situated in a V between two streets, Northumberland and Craven, and the building followed a flatiron shape. We were not quite finished registering when I missed Timothy. The nurse had been sorting their baggage and in our preoccupation he had slipped off and followed his natural bent. He had discovered a wire running along the baseboard and happily began to trace it to its destination, which happened to be the porter's desk. " 'E's 'ere, Miss," announced the porter.

When we went down to dinner a table had been reserved, and, as customary then, our party used that table throughout our stay. I suppose that nine people from Canada—a country so little known then in England—were enough to shock the correct British clientele at the Metropole. We had lots to say and were a merry group though, to our ideas, perfectly correct too. We had no thought of attracting attention to ourselves, but probably our Canadian voices and laughter could not be expected to go unnoticed. Near us sat a couple—she the unbendable dowager type, he rather retiring in appearance. The *grande dame* raised her lorgnette and studied each one of us, coolly and carefully, as one would examine the figures in Madame Tussaud's. She apparently thought we could not see or had no sensitivity, but all of us were quickly aware that we were being appraised. Mrs. Dobie, quick-witted as always, seized the large English soup spoon, put it to her eye in imitation of the lorgnette and, just as deliberately, fastened a cool, thorough gaze on the dowager. Down went the lorgnette and up came a deep red blush over the face of each of our two unknown neighbours. Not a word was spoken between the two tables, and the group at ours remained perfectly quiet as though not noticing what was going on.

But the end was not yet.

Next day the Lord Mayor's Procession was to take place. The hotel manager sought me out to ask if I would mind admitting one of the Metropole's resident clients to our sitting-room for the purpose of taking photographs—our suite being the ideal location, at the point of the "flatiron", to view the pageant. I consulted my husband who gave his consent. When the Metropole's long-term resident arrived, he was none other than the reserved husband of our dowager! Poor soul—he was most embarrassed and wished to withdraw, but Jack made him feel we would be disappointed if he did not stay. So he set up his camera, and took some excellent pictures—black and white of course —and he sent my husband a set of them.

The behaviour of his wife the previous evening was typical of what one might expect from the well-bred but insular English type of that day. She did not think she was rude but she was one of those superior beings who are born into a circle of family friends of generations. No one was introduced because anyone who was anyone knew everyone! All others were rank outsiders, and I know the dear dowager looked upon us as uncouth Colonials. The episode stayed in my mind because it was comparable to certain encounters I had with the close-knit Toronto society when I was a bride. I was welcomed by friends of the Eaton family but there was a group of people who, I am quite sure, felt just as superior as my dowager type, and for anyone who wanted to try to make that exclusive circle it was just as easy as to gain access to the Crown Jewels in the Tower. Probably they were basically fine people, yet it is sad to remember that the men were kindlier and more gracious than their spouses. It did not bother me, and it was sometimes even amusing, for I knew, young as I was, that they were chasing the shadow instead of taking the substance. It is a fact that people who are really great, the kind one feels it is an honour to know, are always simple and courteous. I am reminded of my Uncle Isaac's remark

to me once. "Flora," he said, "you're proud of your new dress, aren't you?" I was and said so. I have never forgotten his reply. "Flora, dear, there's only one pride worth having. That is, to be too proud to do anything mean." That bit of wisdom could be usefully applied by anyone, and the result would be a better way of living for all of us.

The haughty dowager type of Englishwoman is now seen mostly on the stage. Since my first visit, much has happened to both England and Canada. Two World Wars and increased travel back and forth have expanded our horizons in every way. It is no longer what one has but what one *does* that matters.

My husband made sure I saw all the places which most people see on a first visit to London: Westminster Abbey, the Tate Gallery, the Tower of London and the Beefeaters, Tower Bridge, the huge white marble edifice of St. Paul's surrounded by the grimy small buildings and narrow streets, Buckingham Palace and the Changing of the Guard, the Houses of Parliament at sunset. Our days were full, with sight-seeing in the morning, a drive to one of the famous inns, such as The Compleat Angler, for tea, and then the theatre in the evening. *The Merry Widow* was having an enormous success at that time, and I saw Ellalane Terriss in the role of the leading lady. We visited Windsor Castle and had tea at The Cockpit, famous as the place where cock-fights were once held regularly.

After London, Paris, as always, was a great contrast, with its wide avenues and boulevards, uniform type of architecture, beautifully tailored parks. The extravagant beauty of Saint Cloud and Versailles staggered me. We were fortunate in timing our visit for that season's last Sunday on which the fountains would play. The cost is so enormous that they are turned on for just one hour, from three to four p.m., on the first Sunday of each month during the summer. There was a tremendous crowd assembled to watch this lovely spectacle, but some of the joy of the

occasion was spoiled for me by the memory of the greed and oppression which had led to the downfall of the monarchs who had designed this fairyland.

In Paris we altered our travel plan in order to go to Switzerland. Jack and I had received a cordial invitation, through our Company representative, Norman Bolton, to visit Mr. Saurer, founder and president of the Saurer Machine Co., at that time manufacturers of most of the embroidery machinery in use the world over. Our whole party went first to Zurich, then toured the country, and were charmed with the clean, shining appearance of everything. When we arrived at Interlaken to spend the night, the children were playing in the street. The game was new to us, but without any preamble, and with no knowledge of our language, the children drew us into their game and with gestures showed us how to play it. There we were, ten adult Canadians on the street of a foreign town, romping about with the children who belonged there! I afterwards learned the game was called "Diabolo"; it was played with a spinning top, and each player had to strike it with a stick and keep it in motion. While it lasted we had great fun, all of us, Swiss and Canadian. I've often wondered what might happen if a group of foreigners tried the same thing in a village or town in Canada. I doubt if we, as a general thing, accept the stranger within our gates with such simple kindness and courtesy. At the time of our Swiss visit the tourist season was well past, most of the hotels were closed, and there was almost the feeling here and there of a deserted village. Our young hosts were certainly not prompted by mercenary considerations, but were merely showing a native sense of hospitality.

On the following Sunday—the day of the election of the President of Switzerland—Mr. Bolton, my husband and I were taken by Mr. Saurer and his son Hippolyte by car to their home at Arbon. They were an imposing pair, so distinguished, so tall—Hippolyte 6 feet 7 inches. When we reached their home we were admitted through iron

gates to a court centred by a fountain. On one side was the factory covered with vines, and on the other the Schloss, a romantic sixteenth century survival. Again we went through iron gates, this time to a large vaulted hall, and then up a broad staircase to the second floor which was the older Saurers' home. Above that, on the third floor, was Hippolyte's residence. Both Mesdames Saurers greeted us, and we met other members of each family.

It is hard to imagine the size and design and furnishings of that ancient Schloss. The ceilings were so high they almost disappeared from view as one looked up; the rooms were enormous and numerous; it would have been easy for a stranger to become hopelessly lost in the place. Jack and I remained for the night, and next day Hippolyte Saurer drove us to rejoin our party, and entertained the whole group on an interesting tour of the neighbourhood.

Thus began a friendship which has endured for many years.

Once, when visiting my friends in Switzerland, we motored up to Partenkirchen in Austria. The Saurers organized folk dancing, and the young people turned out in their ledern hose and dirndl dresses. My hosts asked if I would care to dance. Unsuspectingly I said "Yes, I'd love to," and with that a fine-looking Austrian lad was called over and introduced. With great grace he swept off his Alpine headgear, bowed and gave me his hand. That was one of the most exciting dances I have ever had. I knew no word of German, he no word of English, but he put me through the intricate steps easily, rhythmically. The waltz step occurred at regular intervals, and, in the European manner, it was always done in one direction. My head began to whirl, so I courageously reversed him. He was so pleased that he smiled and instructed his comrades how to do this new "twist", and soon all the dancers in the room were trying the innovation, the menfolk bowing their thanks to me as they waltzed by. Perhaps my bold experiment has left a permanent influence on the Austrian Alpine

dance; at any rate, I remember the occasion as a delightful episode in my European travels, and I am grateful once again to the Saurers for giving me the experience. The older generation of the family has long since passed from the scene, but Hippolyte's wife and their daughter, Anita, who was an engaging five-year-old when I met her first, are still my warm friends. Anita is a doctor, practising in Zurich, and highly regarded by the medical profession there.

I had my first enchanting glimpses of Ireland during the 1907 European tour. Portglenone, where Timothy Eaton had served his apprenticeship, and Ballymena, his birthplace, were important stops on our program, and later we visited some of my parents' relatives whom I was meeting for the first time. We motored through the winding ways, through quaint villages with whitewashed, thatched cottages over which red fuchsias scrambled up the roof, even to the chimney-tops. Armagh, Cork, Killarney were some of the towns visited, and one morning we walked out on the Giant's Causeway. Dublin was charming and full of interest, with its Trinity College, Phoenix Park, the College of Arms and the Abbey Players. The soft, lilting Irish voices fascinated me, and I could have listened to them forever. But time was running out, and we were soon at Queenstown waiting for our ship, the *Adriatic*.

At the dockside we were much entertained by the numerous vendors, male and female, who were doing a last rushing trade in Irish souvenirs. One of the women was impudently persistent. I continued to say "No" very firmly but she, just as determined, kept up her attacks. Suddenly a light dawned on me. I remembered having seen Harry Barker tip her over-liberally when he bought some trinket. When she next circled me, saying "Beautiful lady, won't you buy from me?" and again I refused, she flung at me, "Ye arr a beautiful lady, but ye have a harrd face." That was too much for my sense of humour, so I called her back and asked, "Did that gentleman with the dark hair and

moustache tell you to follow me?" "Yes, ma'am." "Very well," I added, "I want you to take this and don't leave him till the ship sails." "God bless ye, ma'am," said she and turned all her wiles in Mr. Barker's direction. She did a thorough job and it was a very embarrassed man who went up the gangplank to the screaming refrain, "Help a poor soul, sirr. Buy something!" At last he threw her an Irish shilling. From tears to smiles the change was instantaneous. "God bless ye, sirr, and a good journey to ye'all."

The *Adriatic* had everything for the amusement and comfort of its passengers, even a swimming pool which was quite an innovation. There were Turkish baths and a massage room. I decided for a massage, shampoo and Turkish bath, and when the bath attendant was rubbing me, she exclaimed, "Lor', ma'am, the muck's just rolling out of you." Till then I had not realized how much one absorbed of the earth while motoring for days in an open car. When I was finished, I joined our party again, and Jack, after one look at me, said, "Flora, did you have your hair bleached?" "No, darling, just washed." My skin, as well as my hair, had become very blonde again after that vigorous treatment.

Our return voyage was most pleasant, and I remember how we walked miles around the promenade deck and played shuffleboard. My birthday, November 26th, coincided with our landing date, so we celebrated at dinner the night before. A group of friends were waiting to meet us at the dock, people from our New York office and Mr. Dobie's brother and his wife. No sooner had we shaken hands than they said, "You are invited to dinner with us tonight to celebrate our American Thanksgiving." So we had a very happy evening with them. When we arrived in Toronto two days later, friends of each member of the party had clustered at the station; it seemed like a continuous welcome home. My sister, Anna, had our house on

Walmer Road ready for us. Mrs. Eaton wanted us for lunch that day. It was good to feel that we had been missed, and, as with all the travelling I have since done, wonderful to be home again.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEXT ten years were to be filled with memorable events for me. Our family would add to its numbers, we would change our city address, make a host of new friends, and become involved in the work and anxiety of a World War. I would also learn more about Canada and Europe through further opportunities to travel.

Mrs. Timothy Eaton had always enjoyed travelling but was reluctant to cross the ocean without a man of her family along to manage things. More and more she was depending on Jack, and he seldom missed dropping in at least once a day at her house, either on his way to business or coming home in the evening. One night when he arrived for dinner, he said, "Florrie, how would you like to go to England?" You can imagine my answer. "Well, begin packing. Mother would like to take a trip and I've told her we'll go with her."

Again, a fairly sizable party formed up. Mrs. Burnside had separated from her husband some time before, and it was part of the agreement that the daughter, Iris, would spend half of each year with her father in England; therefore, mother and daughter would be with us on this crossing. Mrs. Eaton invited Mrs. E. Y. Eaton to come along too. I packed bags for young Timothy as well as for his father and myself, for naturally we never dreamed of leaving him at home. Nathan Mills, one of the Store Managers, and an old family friend of the Eaton's, was leaving at the same time on business, and he offered to supervise baggage which for this party—extended by one

nurse and one maid—came to fifty-two pieces. Poor man! By the time we reached London and he had seen to the sorting and distribution of every piece of luggage, he had an acute attack of hiccoughs and it was necessary for us to summon medical aid. The treatment was drastic, but in two days all was well.

Mrs. Eaton visited all her old haunts and old friends and we went to a number of theatres together. Her capacity for enjoyment was demonstrated to the full. She loved having her son with her, and whenever the two of them were together they always found cause for laughter and merry exploits. To her he was perpetually the prankish small boy, and I know he took special pleasure in living up to her expectations. Often he would tease her into the "high kick", by holding out his hat and raising it a few inches at a time. She seldom missed. When one of us would applaud, she would say, "Don't forget I took a fencing lesson regularly each week for years!" Once, some years later in Muskoka, she accepted, on the spur of the moment, Jack's suggestion that she try out the new horse he had just bought for me. Without ado she mounted and took a few turns up and down the drive. She was then almost eighty years old.

It was some time after the trip with Mrs. Eaton that my husband's hobbies expanded to lake sailing. He bought a sailing vessel of the kind used on the Maritimes coast; not a yacht but a thoroughly comfortable vessel, both in calm and in storm. The *Tekla* measured ninety-four feet over all, was broad of beam, and carried an immense amount of sail when the wind was just right. The ship was equipped with an auxiliary engine which we needed at times to make port. On board the *Tekla* I found myself in a new and completely happy element. It was music to hear the sails fill and listen to the rhythmic squeaks and flaps as the gusts of wind tightened or slackened the canvas. We used to sail on fine afternoons, nearly always having dinner on board. On week-ends we would make for Kingston,

or Charlotte on the American side. We could sleep four or five and we had a crew of ten.

One week-end in September, during my husband's absence from town on business, I persuaded Arthur, my brother, to join me on a trip to Kingston. When we left Toronto harbour the weather was perfect and the wind just right. I spent the afternoon lazily in a deck chair with a rug wrapped around me. I decided to go to bed early and so when the wind changed I was sound asleep —but not for long. When I sat up it seemed as if the *Tekla* was engaging in a steeplechase with a rock-and-roll thrown in as a modern touch. Once or twice my brother or the Captain looked in to see if I was all right. Suddenly there was a great, quivering motion, and at that minute the outer side of my berth became just a loose piece of wood gripped in my hand. I let it drop and reached for the head of the bed, and till the storm abated just before dawn I clung to that bedhead with both hands.

The same huge shudder of the *Tekla* had shot Arthur from his berth on to the floor. I heard him shout from the companionway, "Flora, are you all right?" I was and I told him to go back to his berth and hold on.

When at last we went on deck in the morning, what a sight! Everywhere chaos: tin cans, soggy hats and socks, grapefruit and orange peels, a broken kitchen chair, the crew's clay pipes. The seas had washed over the deck all night long. The Captain had had the mainsail taken in to just enough to keep steering power. He and the whole crew had been violently seasick, were wet to the skin and thoroughly battered. It was some time before anyone could get a hot drink, let alone a meal, for the galley was in terrible shape, and, though the actual storm had passed, Lake Ontario was in one of her sullen moods, giving us a very nasty roll from the east.

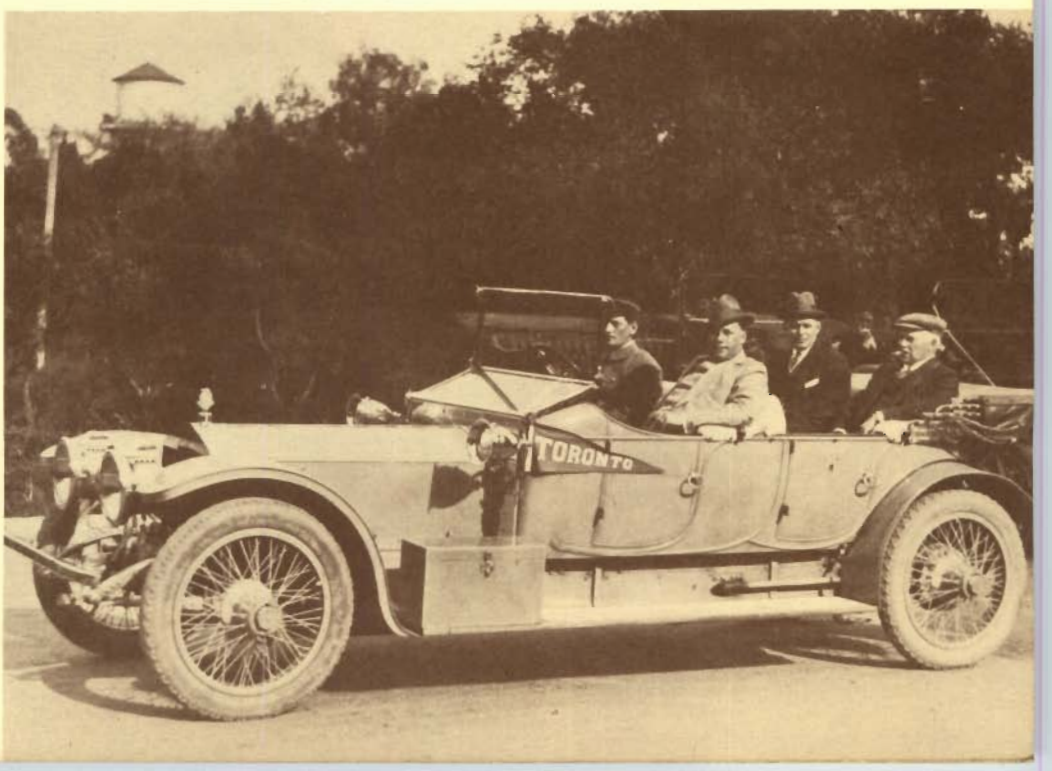
Nevertheless I still loved the *Tekla,* and I had a glorious day aboard on September 26th. Eight days later, on October 4th, 1909, my second son, John David, was born. Before

the end of the month I had the last sail of the season; on that occasion the lake was mirror-like in its calmness, and the only excitement of the trip was watching our guest, a young nephew interested in homing pigeons, release some of his birds, one by one, in the hope that the person on duty at home in Toronto would be fulfilling his part of the bargain by recording their times of arrival.

With the change that came with Jack's Presidency of the Company, and with the expanding needs of our household, we realized that our cosy Walmer Road home was becoming inadequate. We looked about for a desirable site. I had always wanted more outdoor space, but many of the properties I took Jack to see were rejected, quite sensibly, as being too far away from his business. Finally we settled on Mrs. Arthur's place on the hill above Davenport Road. It was next to *Spadina,* the home of her brother, Albert Austin, on the west, and Albert Nordheimer's *Glen Edythe* on the east. All three were spacious semi-country estates, with no crowding of streets nearby, for between Davenport Road and Dupont Street and, again, north to St. Clair there were practically no houses at that time. I would have been happy to move into Mrs. Arthur's quite charming house, but Jack felt that this was the time to build the sort of place he wanted, and so the two of us began conferences with Frank Wickson of the architectural firm of Wickson & Gregg. As always, Jack immersed himself in this new enterprise, insisting on just what he wanted, when and where he wanted it. Plans were prepared in great haste—so much so, that the architect's drawings were only able to keep one floor ahead of the builders! We knew this was an expensive way to build a house, changing plans when the actual construction was going on; nevertheless we were launched on the project and Jack wanted to see it through with all speed. We decided to call our new home *Ardwold*—an Irish name meaning a high, green hill. I remember how one of the associate

Lady Eaton, after her first flight across the English Channel.

Sir John in his Rolls-Royce, *Yellowbird*, a favourite. Behind him, wearing a cap, is William Dobie.



At left: Feeding the pigeons outside St. Mark's Cathedral, Venice.

Below: On board the *Lusitania* on its maiden voyage from New York in 1907.

architects remarked, as the three of us stood on the brow of the hill looking over the city to the lake, "I would like to live in a favourable position such as this. Not only have you a splendid view—but imagine being able to look out at four hundred and fifty thousand people who work for you!" That figure, as Jack reminded him, was a considerable exaggeration.

While *Ardwold* was under way, I went with my sister and Jack's cousin, Mr. R. W. Eaton, and his wife, on a trip abroad. We decided to make London our headquarters and to rent a furnished house, as I had both the children with me, and did not wish to keep them confined to a hotel. We were fortunate in getting Mr. Stanley Mappin's house, complete with staff. It was situated across the road from Kensington Gardens, and so, while the adults of the party enjoyed the gay season in London, the children had only to cross the road to sail their boats on the Round Pond and buy balloons from the old woman at the gate. Later, when we went to the Continent, I left the boys and their nurse at Eastbourne, where I found them a complete suite in one of the houses on the sea front. Meals were served in the boys' own sitting-room. The cheerful housemaid became one of their favourite new friends, and John David, around two years old, was to greet me a few weeks later with a rich Cockney accent acquired from her.

Mr. R. W. Eaton knew the Continent well, and it was a delight for the rest of us to follow his lead into the quaint or famous places of France, Germany and Austria. Vienna was in its full magnificence as the heart of the Austrian-Hungarian empire, and on the day we visited the portion of the Winter Palace open to sightseers we saw the Emperor himself, Franz Joseph, emerge from one of the entrances and with the aid of two footmen settle in his carriage. He drove past us, and even then he seemed an old man, though he was to reign for a number of years

more, and to join with the Kaiser in forcing a terrible war on the whole Western world.

The opera season was over but we visited the building. I liked it better than the Paris opera house; the auditorium was simpler in design, yet there was richness in appointments everywhere—the boxes upholstered in crimson brocade, and walls and ceiling done in white and gold. The gleam of gilt and crystal in chandeliers, etc., seemed right and proper in this setting. All the corridors were carpeted and the doors to the boxes padded to exclude any noise that might disturb the performance.

Sacher's for lunch was a must on our program; so too the Prater where there were many people riding by on fine horses. And just to sit at a table in an open café, sipping Viennese coffee and nibbling at their delicious pastries, while a string orchestra played Strauss somewhere near at hand, was for me a pleasurable experience.

Looking back, it seems that that trip stays rather vividly in my mind because of several figures of twentieth century history with whom we *almost* rubbed shoulders! Returning to France via Switzerland we spent several days with our good friends, the Saurers, at Arbon. The town is situated on Lake Constance, and on the opposite shore, in German territory, was anchored the much-discussed first Zeppelin designed and built by Count Zeppelin. Several times we stood in the garden of the Schloss staring up into the sun, watching the manoeuvres of the great airship as it floated over us—probably with the Count in charge. He was constantly in the neighbourhood and was a friend of the senior Saurer.

On our return voyage to New York one of our fellow-passengers was Admiral Togo, famous for his success in blockading the Russians at Port Arthur in 1904 and winning the subsequent naval battle for Japan. Every day he strolled about the promenade deck, and as my small sons took their airing there regularly with the nurse they struck up acquaintance. No affairs of state were discussed; it was just

a simple matter of John David running up to the Admiral to say, "Hello, man," and the Admiral, smiling broadly, replying, "Hello, boy."

My husband met us in New York. In the motor-car driving up from the Union Station in Toronto, Jack turned to me casually and said, "We'll just go up and have a look at *Ardwold,* so you can see how it is getting on." We did—and to my complete amazement and dismay, I found *Ardwold* was very nearly finished and my husband had moved everything, down to the last cushion and cup and saucer, from our happy little Walmer Road house and I was never to live there again. It was done with the idea of giving me a wonderful surprise, and I'm sure my reaction was disappointing. I could hardly speak, and I had a hard time keeping back the tears. The boys probably sensed my state of shock, for John David sat on the bottom step of the big staircase and began to wail, "I don't like this hotel . . . I want to go home!" Timothy was a little more philosophical; he had already begun investigating corners, closets, window fastenings.

However, there was still much to be done, and I soon became so involved in the many details needing attention that I began to feel this was home after all.

The house has gone now, demolished to make way for the new streets put through after I decided to make my main headquarters in the country. Perhaps for the sake of my grandchildren who never saw it, I should give a brief description of *Ardwold* where their parents and grandparents had many happy years.

The building was of Georgian design but translated with a good deal of flexibility to suit our needs. The brick and stone work was done by Thomson Bros., and done beautifully. The roof had a "lantern" section rising above the third storey; from the ground this feature looked like an incidental finishing touch, but actually it was a small room and we used to go up there from time to time to enjoy the miles and miles of view and the fine sunsets. On

the west end of the third floor was the very large nursery, with small kitchen, dining-room and little sitting-room close by. Three bedrooms and baths and combined sewing and linen room were part of the nursery suite. On this floor too, in the east wing set at right angles to the main house, was the service wing. But certainly the most interesting innovation of the third floor was the small hospital which Jack and I had decided to install. One room was completely tiled in white, had a machine for spraying and another for sterilizing. Two bedrooms and a bathroom were set aside for patients, and a small room was given over to a doctor's washing-up routine. One major operation was done in our "hospital", and many minor ones, but its main use was to isolate anyone with a communicable disease. The idea had seemed daring during the early discussion stages, yet it proved exceedingly worth-while through all the years we lived at *Ardwold.*

The second floor contained our own suite—large bedroom, sitting-room, two bathrooms and dressing-room. There were four other big bedrooms and on the west end a closed porch. I could reach the nursery floor easily by the elevator at the east end or the stairway at the west end of the main corridor—and the corridor itself was a handsome architectural feature, open along one side to give a view of the Great Hall and its high windows.

On the main floor were dining-room, sun porch and music room toward the east end. A centre door and hallway led to the garden on the south, and to the brow of the hill. On the west side of the hallway was the library panelled in walnut, the billiard room and lounge combined, finished in Circassian walnut. But the Great Hall, because of its height, its comfortable air, and huge stone fireplace, always seemed to be the core of the plan. Here we had our Aeolian organ which could be played either manually or mechanically, and it was almost routine for Jack to go to the organ after dinner each night and play. He loved music, indeed had a special joy in all beautiful things

(though, like me, he couldn't find beauty in much of the modern painting), and for the organ he assembled a fine library of records. While the actual playing was mechanical he took great care with the stopping and tempi and volume control, with the result that he became a skilled and sensitive interpreter. The mechanical pipe organ gave him great pleasure. Not so the player piano which stood in the lounge of the billiard room; he tired of that quickly, because it was "so mechanical", and ordered the mechanism removed. My special Steinway stood in the music room, and it was much used—not only for my practising but by our friends among the musicians who gave us many delightful evenings.

Dr. Vogt, head of the Conservatory of Music, played for us at *Ardwold,* and Charles Peaker and Harvey Robb were others who came several times. When Father Finn brought his fine choir from New York to Toronto he consented to give a special concert for us and the few friends we could get together quickly between noon and five o'clock on Sunday. René Le Roy, flautist of Paris, was our guest and played for a big dinner party. Harry Lauder, whom we had met on board ship, always called to see us when in Toronto, and on one occasion it happened to be my birthday and we were celebrating it with a number of guests for luncheon. He remained, of course, and became the hit of the party with his witty talk and a vigorous, though informal rendition of some of his most popular songs. Before he said good-bye he wrote in my guest book:

> There is nae place like hame. And mind ah'm tellin' ye this is a braw place. May a' the joys of life attend ye a' in the days to come, and may thae days grow into years & years & years & years —is the sincere wish of Yours faithfully
>
> HARRY LAUDER.

We had agreeable neighbours around us at *Ardwold,* and several of them became our good friends. Probably

we came to know each other better because of the rather isolated community we formed. St. Clair Avenue was not paved, of course, and often vehicles sank down to their axles in the mud. A very rickety old bridge crossed the ravine on Spadina Road, which was the street giving main access to *Ardwold,* and the few other big houses on "the hill". Frank Proctor's bungalow stood at the corner of Spadina Road and St. Clair, but all around him were farms and orchards. As the home of an enthusiastic horseman, his place used to be the rendezvous for riding groups, and quite often Jack and I, and young Timothy too, would join them and have a morning run into the country north of St. Clair.

The Nordheimers, living at *Glen Edythe,* east of us, were of an older generation and though Mrs. Nordheimer called on me, we did not know them well. She had been a Boultbee; he was head of the piano firm bearing his name, and served for some time as German Consul. Their house was large and distinguished, and I can remember great afternoon receptions there, and weddings and one or two balls. Mr. Nordheimer had a reputation for being rather "close" with his money, and one of our older friends recounted this story. The old gentleman always wore a light fawn hard-crowned hat, in shape not unlike the silk hat of those days. One morning he went into the hat store and said he wanted the ribbon band changed, as the present one looked worn. Once the band was removed, the fabric of the hat at that point, of course, was seen to be several shades darker, but Mr. Nordheimer surprised the clerk by holding out his hand and remarking, "Thank you, that will do. I won't need a new band for a while. That darker circle gives the same effect as a ribbon."

Glen Edythe's grounds were a beautiful natural park. The gate lodges stood imposingly at the main entrance from Davenport Road, and in those early days only carriages, or sleighs in winter, used that driveway. After the older Nordheimers' deaths, their son Roy brought his

pretty bride to live there. Again there were gay parties, but by that time I was of the older generation and my contacts with *Glen Edythe* continued on a formal plane with an exchange of calls at intervals.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Austin, neighbours on our west, were friendly, open-handed hosts, of the type who would never let any disparity in age stand in the way of friendship. The only fence between their place and *Ardwold* was an attractive grape arbour which bounded their vegetable garden. Mr. Austin gave us the right to use his entrance as his sister, Mrs. Arthur, had done; we seldom did, but nevertheless his thoughtful suggestion was much appreciated. Mrs. Austin was one of the leading hostesses in Toronto's music circles, and very frequently Jack and I were among the guests when she entertained visiting artists. Just before Christmas she always gave a party for the young people of their connection and acquaintance. For every social occasion, and indeed at any time, the Austins' rooms were filled with quantities of flowering plants from their greenhouses and conservatory. One of their afternoon receptions, when Maggie Teyt, the British singer, was a special guest, lingers as a glowing picture in my mind: Mrs. Austin in beetroot velvet with rose-point collar and cuffs, earrings, bracelets and plastron (ornate brooch) of beautiful deep amethysts set in gold with diamonds; all the ladies in long dresses of satin or broadcloth, set off with fur stoles and occasionally a muff; a uniformity of white kid gloves and feather-trimmed hats. How one managed all this plus a cup of tea and other things, I can't quite remember, yet I know we all did—keeping our gloves on throughout. Gentlemen were present that day, as they almost always were at the Austins' teas, and they were equally correct in frock coats and Ascot ties. A fruit punch was often served, and sometimes it was flavoured with brandy, but liquor or cocktails were never offered to afternoon guests in Toronto homes at that time. The only exception was made during the Christmas season when trays

of Madeira or Sherry would be passed to accompany the traditional Christmas cake. Normally the emphasis would be on elaborate refreshments such as marzipan cakes shaped to resemble flowers, vegetables and fruits, and other richly decorated delicacies. (Those, of course, were the days before dieting was heard of or practised.) Some hostesses preferred to be non-conformists—and I remember hearing Mrs. Beatty of Queen's Park declare that, as only *acquaintances* came to afternoon receptions, she served just simple sandwiches and cake, reserving her major culinary efforts for luncheons or dinners at which she entertained her *friends.*

But to return to *Ardwold* and our hilltop group. Ralph Connable certainly counted as a neighbour, though his big comfortable house was some distance away to the northwest. (It is now Lyndhurst Lodge for paraplegics.) People who did not know him well but only observed his many philanthropic and civic-minded acts on behalf of Toronto and its citizens were often surprised to learn that he was an American. Mr. Connable had come to Canada to head up Woolworth's, and so he was, as Jack used to say, our neighbour both downtown and uptown. It was an axiom with us that no party could be dull if Ralph Connable was present. Once, on a Sunday afternoon, after a particularly heavy snowfall, the butler came to me with a puzzled look on his face and said: "There is a gentleman at the door who wishes me to say that the Grand Duke Alexeyev, with the Grand Duchess Alexeyevna, and—and—all the little Alexeyevitches, are now outside, awaiting you in their droshky." It was Ralph Connable, of course, with wife and children, and they looked their Russian roles in fur caps and robes, all snugly tucked into a cutter behind a spanking pair of horses. I was easily persuaded into going for a drive with them.

Ralph Connable was one of the great-hearted men of his time—probably of any time. Because of his perpetual love of mischief and drollery, his wife used to worry and

fret that he would be "misunderstood"; for my part I believe that was merely a social front with which he concealed his remarkable sympathy and compassion. In the first bleak hours after my husband's death Ralph Connable came to me and said, "I want you to know there is nothing you can ask of me—no service within human power—that I will not gladly do for you." He meant it, and without reservations.

We were indeed fortunate in our *Ardwold* neighbours. Col. J. B. Maclean, the magazine publisher, and his wife were good friends on the west, where Austin Terrace was put through. Between their charming miniature estate and our property rose the cut-stone walls and towers of *Casa Loma,* Sir Henry Pellatt's fabulous castle. It was far from finished—in fact, much of the interior was never finished —but he and Lady Pellatt had made themselves comfortably at home in the east wing, and their huge conservatory was an enchanting place to linger in the evening as the lights came on, street by street, through the city far below. One time Sir Henry took me on a tour of the castle, and I realize now that this was an experience to be treasured—for how often does it happen that one is invited to peer into another person's all-consuming dream? For him that castle was more than life itself; certainly it was obvious to me following him around, up the twisting stone stairs, into the turrets, through the empty, echoing bedrooms, that he knew every detail of the design, the craftsmanship, and just as surely every effect he had hoped to achieve when he turned the first sod. When our tour was almost over and we were pausing in the corridor before a handsome carved oval frame that was still waiting for a painting, he said, "I wish I had another million dollars. What do you think I would do with it?" There was hardly time for me to answer before he went on, "I'd finish this house—and then I'd die happy."

Sir Henry gave Toronto people plenty of conversation in his day. There was his sudden rise to wealth; his par-

ticipation in the Coronation of Edward VII in 1902, when he commanded the Canadian contingent; his knighthood some years later; and in 1910 his organizing of the party of 740 men of the Queen's Own Rifles which he took over, at his own expense, to Empire manoeuvres at Aldershot; and then *Casa Loma,* and his disasters on the stock market. Many people lost money in his manipulations, but I have often heard it said—and having known him, I believe it—that no widow ever suffered by reason of Sir Henry's reverses. He took over such responsibilities even to his own detriment.

Jack and I were fond of the Pellatts. Lady Pellatt was rather shy and quiet, but a fine woman, interested in church and Girl Guide work, and a good friend to me. It was through Sir Henry that we found our farm, the almost eight hundred acres of woods, lake and pastures which surround me now as I write at my desk in *Eaton Hall.* One evening Sir Henry dropped in at *Ardwold* and asked for my husband, who, thinking it was a business matter, left me and Mrs. Dobie in the music room and went out to greet his friend in the hall. Presently the two men joined us, laughing heartily. I asked what was the joke. Sir Henry said, "I told Jack I knew of a beautiful farm near Lake Marie which he should buy. He said he didn't want a farm, so I told him to go to hell, and I'd come and talk to you, as you know something about farms." Mrs. Dobie chimed in. "You know good neighbours when you have them! You want them in the country as well as in town." "You're right," Sir Henry declared.

The matter was set aside for a time, but it was Sir Henry who later took us out to see what was then called the Ferguson Farm, and which was to be the nucleus of our *Eaton Hall* property. We went in his private car of the Metropolitan radial service which ran from Yonge Street at a point north of Bond Lake, in a diagonal line across farms to Schomberg. At a siding on the Pellatt farm he had a sleigh waiting for us, and after viewing the farm,

which was still up for sale, we drove over to Lake Marie where he gave us tea in his bungalow. Here, as in the city, he was never able to complete his plan for a permanent country home; only his fine barns, stone entrance gates and lodge were finished.

Long before we became serious farmers, it seemed fated that we had to pass through a phase of steam yachts. I had sensed for some time that sailing, which I loved, was too slow for Jack, and it did not entirely surprise me when he took me to New York one spring week and led me out to the Basin to look over some yachts. I had an uncanny feeling that there must be some flaw about yachting for the Basin was jammed with beautiful vessels, either for sale or charter. Anyway, the turnout that pleased him most was a yacht built of steel; it had been designed to the express orders of the owner who, full of the spirit of "Remember the Maine", had desired a craft capable of being used for coastguard duty in case of war. I tried to persuade Jack to charter the vessel for a year before making a final decision, but again he couldn't wait, and already was planning renovations of fittings, curtains and upholstery, and so on.

When the overhaul was completed she was indeed a beautiful gleaming white yacht. Jack insisted on changing the name to *Florence,* and so she was registered. When all the new interior appointments were in place and everything painted up and polished, Jack and I, with my mother, made the trip to New York for the final inspection. I had to agree that the *Florence* was a gem of the ocean, and comfortable too, with her sleeping accommodation for eight, a mahogany-panelled dining-saloon and a large afterdeck. Still, the question did cross my mind as to why china and crystal had to be supplied in such vast quantities; I was to have the answer later.

My husband was determined to bring the *Florence* home under her own steam, and to have his family enjoy

the trip with him. He urged my mother to join us, and though she at first remarked, laughingly, "If I could cross the Atlantic in a sailing ship that took six weeks, surely I can weather such a short voyage as one from New York to Toronto," she finally decided against it. But she did come with us, along with Amy and her husband, and the Dobies, during a day's trial run with luncheon on board. To our delight, Mr. and Mrs. Dobie elected to throw their chances in with the *Florence* for the return trip to Toronto.

So we waved "Good-bye" to our relatives on shore and they shouted *"Bon Voyage"* to us, and we were off, on our first ocean trip in a yacht. John David, still a baby, had gone on board as one of the best-natured children in the world; within a matter of hours he was being spoiled by every member of the crew of eighteen, including the Captain, the First Mate and the Second Mate. We had arranged his large basket-bed on the after-deck, and whenever he so much as raised his voice one of the men would spring over to talk to him. Neither his nurse nor I could make any headway with the crew on the subject of child discipline, and we simply accepted the situation as something that went along with our new life at sea. Timothy was old enough to enjoy the novelty, and the sailors helped him make boats and explained cheerfully, day after day, the workings of the engine and wireless rooms.

The Gulf of St. Lawrence can be a very uncomfortable piece of water for a small steamer. It made no exception on our behalf. The *Florence* seemed to corkscrew her way through it. Crashes in the dining saloon and galley informed me of the destiny of a yacht's china and crystal. The baby, however, was perfectly happy, for during this rough weather we kept him in a hammock lashed to the beams in our stateroom. A porthole, left open by accident, brought gallons of salt water splashing over Mr. and Mrs. Dobie's clothes, though when they dried out there wasn't a mark to tell the tale. We were all reminded of Mrs. Dobie's constant good luck for once, in Paris, when she was wearing a

pretty mauve evening dress, a clumsy waiter poured a stein of beer over her, and again there hadn't been a trace of the dowsing afterward.

At Quebec we lay over for a day or two, refuelling and putting things in order after the sea voyage. The sailors repainted the hull to the water line. At Montreal we visited friends on shore and received callers on board. During the passage through the St. Lawrence canal system we stopped once or twice to visit friends, and this made a pleasant change from the slow monotony of that part of the trip. One's first river lock is fascinating—watching the gates open and close, gazing at the changing level of the water, up or down as the case may be—but afterwards it becomes very uninteresting. We usually got off and walked or helped with the lines. At Kingston Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Eaton and their baby came on board to finish the trip with us, and at Whitby our party was further increased. When we steamed into Toronto harbour we were given a tumultuous welcome by R.C.Y.C. members who awaited us in a gay flotilla in the bay. Signal flags were hoisted and whistles blew, and there were loud salutes from the island ferries and lake boats. Commodore George Gooderham received us at the Yacht Club, and we later took him and others on an inspection tour of the *Florence*. It was a truly gala event, and probably well worth that initial effort.

But Toronto is not the happiest place for an owner of a steam yacht. Without going through locks at either end of Lake Ontario, one is confined to a trip to the Thousand Islands or Charlotte, N.Y. Also, I have always observed that Canadians are not a people for idle pleasure. Those who have money to support a yacht are generally hard workers. My husband was no exception. He would have been a very lonely man if he had not devoted most of his time to Company affairs, for there were no friends of his who were not fully occupied with their own businesses. Jack did take time off for golf occasionally and for a run on the *Florence* now and then, but it was three years before

we again made a long trip—this time to Quebec City. As before, Mr. and Mrs. Dobie were our guests, and we now had our three sons with us, as well as two trained nurses. I always protested against taking the children, because I felt a small vessel was too confining for them, but Jack would never agree to leaving them at home.

However, as we steamed down the lake and into the St. Lawrence there was nothing ominous in the heavens or on the water to warn me of the anxiety ahead. When we were anchored in Quebec basin, it was a beautiful evening and all the adults were about to leave for a dinner engagement in the city. One of the nurses appeared and asked me to go down to see the baby; she thought he wasn't well. As I entered the stateroom I saw that the child was in a fit of tremor and my heart sank. Convulsions! Neither of the nurses had ever seen a case of convulsions, and I had only seen one many years before, when my sister's baby had an attack. I remembered that I had seen the baby put into a warm bath and when the seizure ceased he was taken out and wrapped in a warm blanket; this was repeated as often as necessary. So I carried little Edgar up to my stateroom, sat on the floor in front of a small tub of warm water and began the treatment immediately. It was not quite seven o'clock. Meantime my husband went off in the tender to bring a doctor; but before he and Dr. Le Mesurier Carter appeared, three hours had gone by. The attacks had continued at short intervals throughout the evening. I was just lifting the baby out of the tub when the doctor came in. Very quietly he turned to the steward and said, "Bring me crushed ice quickly, please." While it was coming he questioned me as to the onset and timing of the tremors. I inquired fearfully if I had done right with the warm bath treatment. "Yes," he said, "but ice will cool the blood in his brain."

No child could have been bonnier than Edgar was that day, but at midnight his whole right side was paralyzed and his right eye closed.

The doctor sent me to rest, saying, "I'll stay with the baby and I'll call you if I need you." In the morning he told me that the child had remained awake till 3 a.m., then struggled to get his right hand to his mouth; when he couldn't move it properly he angrily put his left thumb in his mouth, and mercifully went to sleep.

Dr. Carter made arrangements for the care of his patients and office, and came home with us on the *Florence*. He told me that when he saw the child in my lap that first evening the baby was cyanosed and death was the next likely development. But Edgar recovered, though he bore marks of that attack for years. His eye required constant and quite painful treatment; when he began to walk he dragged his right foot, and these two conditions continued for several years. The illness had also been a dreadful shock to his nervous system. But by degrees his sunny disposition returned, and since growing up he has always looked the picture of health and today has a smile and a cheery word for everybody.

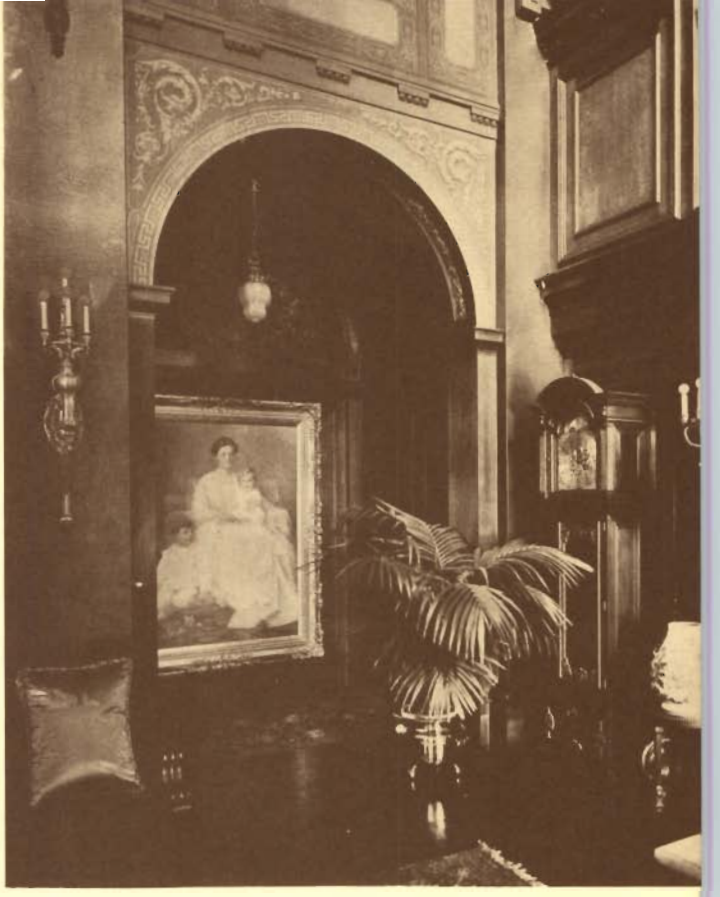
I never was on the yacht again after I left it with my sick baby. We lived on board for a week in Toronto harbour until the doctors decided it was safe to move the little patient. After Dr. Carter returned to Quebec, we had daily visits from Dr. E. G. Hodgson and Dr. John McCallum, the eye specialist. At the end of September Dr. Hodgson announced that he felt there was no more need for his visits, and that time alone would be the final healing process. In that, of course, he was completely right.

The *Florence* finished her career in the Caribbean Sea. When war broke out my husband turned the yacht over to the Government, and at Ottawa's request we had to strip it of all panelling and special furnishings, including the china, crystal and linen. After a year or more of service in the southern waters the *Florence* went down off Trinidad, victim of enemy action.

That was my last of yachts and yachting in a big way. I thoroughly agreed with the writer, Mary Roberts Rine-

hart (whom I was delighted to meet on one occasion), who stated in one of her books, "I'm all for yachts and houseboats—other people's." Small boats, whether with mechanical power or with sail or whether intended for human propulsion, are fun to have and use, and at our place in Muskoka (where two of the *Florence's* crew came with us and ran our boathouse and became very popular members of the whole establishment) we always enjoyed them.

I suppose that right now there is a fine assortment of yachts for sale or charter in Jersey yacht basin opposite Manhattan, and probably a keen young business genius is taking his innocent wife around to look them over. I'm sorry for her . . . but I wish him well.



At right: A corner of the Great Hall at *Ardwold.*

Below: The south front of *Ardwold,* with windows commanding city and lake.

At left: 1916—Sir John Eaton and his three sons. The boys wear the uniform of the Eaton Machine Gun Battery.

Below: The family group, a few months before Sir John's death. The children, from left: Timothy, Edgar, Gilbert, Florence Mary, John David.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN WAR broke out in the summer of 1914 it came home to us very quickly. We were at our place in Muskoka and had Dr. Alfred Hayward, Superintendent of the Toronto General Hospital, staying with us. A few miles away at *Ravenscrag,* Mrs. Timothy Eaton's summer home, Mr. George Nasmith was a guest. To both of these friends on a pleasant Sunday afternoon came telephoned orders from Hon. Sam Hughes, Minister of Militia, to report to Ottawa at once. "But," George Nasmith inquired in his reasonable way, "how do I get there?" The reply came hot over the phone, "How the hell do I know? Just get here quick."

Jack got busy on the telephone at once, locating the head of the Company passenger transport in Toronto, finding out all the necessary information, and he arranged the trip for the two gentlemen so that they could report in Ottawa on Monday morning.

Jack and I were soon on the move too, back to *Ardwold,* for he felt he must be in his office to stay in close touch with developments. His first act was to call a meeting of the Directors, and within a very short time after the declaration of war it was decided, and the announcement made, that any married man in the employ of Eaton's who volunteered for service would receive full pay for the duration, and any single man would receive half-pay.

Another important decision was that in any war contracts received by the Eaton firm, all profits made would be returned to the Government. The Company did handle various large war orders, for such equipment as clothing

for the troops, harness and saddles for the cavalry and horse-drawn artillery, both of which were prominent services in World War I.

Soon it was apparent to the Canadian public that there was a dangerous shortage of machine guns, the weapon which was shortly to become the deciding factor on the battlefields. My husband, at his personal expense, equipped what became known as the Eaton Machine Gun Battery.

When the Patriotic Fund was set up, he served on the organizing committee and put his energy and enthusiasm into the drive. Although he disliked public speaking, he made many appeals for funds from platforms, and took an active part in canvassing the business community.

Some months later he was asked if he would be willing to receive a title as recognition for his contribution to the war effort. This first approach was a complete surprise to us both, but after some discussion we agreed that the award was not only to Jack but also to the many people in the Store and his associates who had given him such great assistance in these voluntary enterprises, and that he must certainly accept.

In 1915 the name of John Craig Eaton appeared in the honours list, and he was made a Knight Bachelor. In the autumn of that year we received a command to attend an investiture by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught, Governor-General of Canada, at Rideau Hall, Ottawa.

Naturally I was very excited. I had been presented to the Duke and Duchess some time before and had attended many of the functions arranged for them, but I had never been present at an investiture, and never involved so intimately in an important occasion. To move among Royalty always gives me a special thrill, and so I was in a state of exalted flutter as I prepared to accompany my husband to Ottawa.

The great day arrived. Those who were to be decorated were taken aside beforehand and briefed by one of the aides. It was a wonderful moment for me when Jack's

name was called. He walked up, knelt in front of the Duke of Connaught who touched him on each shoulder with his sword and uttered the ancient command beginning, "Arise, Sir Knight . . ." I felt shivers up and down my spine, and I could hardly restrain my tears—but they were tears of pride and happiness.

We were invited to remain for luncheon following the ceremony, and as is so often the case in the Royal Family, this became a very pleasant family party. In the dining-room three large round tables were laid; the Duke presided at the first, the Princess Patricia at the centre table, and the Duchess at the third. We stood for a military grace. My husband sat beside the Princess, and I had my place at the Duchess's table. It was always a rule in Royal circles —and I believe it still obtains in diplomatic society—that a meal must be over in an hour; when one lays down knife and fork even for a minute, there is the constant risk of having the footman whisk the plate away. A guest has to be on the alert or he would leave the table hungry!

After the sweet came the dessert of fruit and it was at this luncheon that I learned, from the example of the Duchess and the Princess, how to eat a fine ripe peach with a spoon. They used a knife to cut the fruit open, removed the pit with knife and fork, and then picked up the dessert spoon and ate the two halves from the skin, in the same way as melon is eaten. This is now one of my mealtime habits, and one doesn't have the messy business of peeling the fruit.

When luncheon was finished, all the women guests turned at the door and curtsied to Their Royal Highnesses, and the men bowed. After coffee in the drawing-room the exciting event was over and the guests went their various ways—my husband and I to the private car, *Eatonia,* and then home to Toronto. On that occasion the welcome was festive indeed. Our servants were beaming, and never missed an opportunity to address "Sir John" and to hail me as "My Lady". The children—and we now had four

sons, with Gilbert the new baby in our nursery—followed suit, and for a time one of them discarded the familiar "Mummie" and "Daddy" entirely, in order to greet us ceremoniously with our new titles.

Congratulations poured in, and it made us doubly happy to know that so many friends, relatives, and associates in the Store rejoiced with us over the honour conferred upon Jack.

At the same time there were others, generally people whom we had never met, and certainly people who did not know *us,* who decided we were excellent gossip material. Titles are rare enough in Canada to make the holders conspicuous, I suppose; wealth and position in any community can always be counted upon to draw comments, informed or otherwise.

One time my husband was returning from a business trip to Montreal, travelling on the regular night train. He had gone into the smoking compartment to finish his cigar before going to bed. Two men were sitting there talking, and one began to launch forth on the subject of the Eatons, pretending to be extremely knowledgeable concerning the business, the family and in particular Sir John and his wife. Jack finally rose and reached in his pocket for his card. "Here is my card, sir," he said, "and I want you to know that everything you have been saying is a damned lie!"

Over the years friends have sometimes asked me how I deal with gossip. Frankly, it hasn't concerned me unduly; occasionally it has given me a hearty laugh. Summing up, I'd say this: gossip that isn't true shouldn't bother anybody. It is only when the story has some basis in fact that one is hurt.

Ardwold was a busy place during World War I with fund-raising concerts, and garden parties for various wartime projects. We entertained many soldiers, French,

British and American, as well as our own Canadians. Two Czechoslovakian officers formed the habit of dropping in from time to time for breakfast; they used to amuse us with their two words of English, "All right," which seemed to them suitable for any type of conversation.

My husband often held committee meetings at home. His work for the Patriotic Fund, and constant interest in soldiers' dependents and their welfare grew into an almost full-time job. Meantime I was busy with the women's activities for the Patriotic Fund, of which Sir William Mulock was the President. I was in charge of the collecting depots in Toronto's west end, responsible for making up final reports from the district groups, giving out supplies of knitting wool, bandage cotton, etc., and staying in touch daily with all sections of my territory. Most of our women had houses and children to take care of, and could only turn out for the group work during school hours. Yet there were no better canvassers or all-round workers anywhere in the city. Many of our women had real reason to know the grim meaning of a world conflict and its toll of sons and husbands.

That war, which seems almost to belong to another century as one looks back, left few families untouched. The Eatons had had their experience of shock and loss, and not the least tragic had concerned Jack's sister and his niece. In 1915 Mrs. Burnside and her daughter, Iris, then twenty years old, had decided to sail for England. We tried to persuade them not to attempt the trip during that period when the German submarines were a constant menace; Mrs. Burnside was herself dubious about the plan, but Iris, always a strong-willed girl, was intent on getting to England and seeing her father again. So they said good-bye to us and left—on the last voyage of the *Lusitania*. Among their fellow-passengers were four Managers from the Store. Of all that group of relatives and friends only one, Mrs. Burnside, came back to tell us of their ghastly ordeal off the coast of Ireland.

With each year of war there were more men in uniform, more of the heartbreaking casualty lists in the newspapers, and more fatherless families to be cared for at home. Our Patriotic Fund services doubled and trebled, and so did our collections. I can see now on my "memory's wall" the banner that stretched across headquarters on downtown Yonge Street: PATRIOTIC FUND — OBJECTIVE, $600,000 — GIVE LIBERALLY!

During that campaign I was instructed to notify my women's groups that there would be a dinner for the purpose of exchanging full reports of the canvass up to date. The tickets were a dollar each, but I was also told to announce that if any member could not afford to buy her own ticket, headquarters would supply one. I did as instructed, and I was proud to inform headquarters that we would have a full turnout and that every member would buy her own ticket. This was rather different from the plan followed by one of the other groups, composed of quite well-to-do women; in that case their captain indented for free tickets for all of them except herself.

In the summer of 1917 I had one of the most interesting experiences of my whole lifetime—by simply following the doctor's prescription. I was ordered away to the woods and the simple life, away from big houses, family, servants, money-raising drives and all the responsibilities which wartime living had brought. With my friend, Annie Pringle, and two guides and a cook I had four idyllic weeks of canoe travel and fishing in the swift, pebble-bottomed rivers of the Miramichi Valley of New Brunswick. We went by the *Eatonia* from Toronto, with Sir John as escort to see us safely started on our expedition. After he was assured in his own mind that our guides were dependable, our canoes in good shape and after he had seen us installed at our first camp site, we said good-bye at Cain's River Bridge, deep in the quiet green woods, and I had a lump in my throat while I waved farewell to him and

watched the *Eatonia* disappear around the bend, headed for home. He, too, badly needed a "leave" but he had insisted it was impossible that summer.

The diary which I kept, and which later I had privately printed to give to a few friends, is beside me as I write these lines. I find, on July 20th, 1917, Annie and I were up at 6.30 and "with some misgiving" dressed in our regulation camp outfits: flannel shirts, hunting breeks and long boots. That day I learned how to pole a canoe, for Cain's River was too shallow even for the ordinary dip of a paddle, and my guide stood in the stern, propelling the boat with an eight-foot pole, in "a graceful swinging motion similar to that of a gondolier". Before many days I was reasonably efficient with a bow pole, but never felt any confidence in my prowess at the stern. Right from the start of the trip, I found I must stay well smeared with fly dope, which was only slightly less of an annoyance than the mosquitoes. On July 21st the diary entry reads: "Wakened myself and the guides by screaming out in a nightmare, but Annie slept through it and the thunderstorm." The doctor had been right—my nerves *were* bad. On July 23rd I caught my first large trout, 12" long; we had it for noon dinner. The next day when we broke camp and moved down river, we passed "a young red deer", and later saw our "first moose standing in the river. He remained there until we were within twenty-five feet of him. Then he went up the bank and watched us." That night at the new camp site Annie and I put our clothes to soak in the river, bundling them up first in a cheesecloth bag. Next day: "Our clothes had not floated away, which was a cause for thankfulness, but they had formed an anchorage for the river foam, which looked frothy and white, but as a matter of fact was a nasty slimy brown, and we had some difficulty in getting it off. We must have looked somewhat like the peasants in France who wash linen in the river, only we sat in our canoes and washed over the side, which we decided is a vastly

superior accomplishment, as one has constantly to maintain one's balance."

I note that on July 26th I reverted to my housekeeping role. "As our cook has had bad luck with two batches of bread, and we are far from any source of supply, I decided to have a try at it. Amongst my camp things I had brought a one-compartment fireless cooker, so by moonlight and campfire I mixed the bread and set it on a warm stone in the fireless, with the injunction to the guide that no one was to touch it until I got up." But at six next morning George was waiting to hail me with a shout of joy when I stepped out of the tent. "The bread rose lovely and light," he cried. Indeed it had risen so high it pushed the lid off and overflowed into the cooker. We baked one pan of rolls in the Dutch oven, then a big loaf, and all hands reported them good.

The fireless cooker proved a real boon, and the guides never ceased to wonder at its performance. Often on the trip I would mix the ingredients of a fish chowder, set the container against the heated soap-stones, and pack the cooker into the bow of my canoe. Three or four hours later when we would stop somewhere to have our meal the chowder would be thoroughly cooked and piping hot.

Almost every day Annie and I were instructed by our guides in the serious business of casting. George was a real expert and could send a hundred and fifty feet of line curving over the river more readily than I could throw fifteen. My arm would tire and while I'd sit on the bank resting, I'd listen in on Annie's lessons from Dick, her guide. "Now watch George," he'd say. "There isn't a man on the river can cast like him. Now try it again, miss. Oh, you jerked it too quick! Now look at George. That's better. Now that's it, just draw it easy. There's a rise. Now careful. Oh, you were too quick. . ." Once after an hour of such instruction, Annie did manage to hook and land a nice trout, and felt as pleased as a school child winning a gold star, until Dick, removing the hook

out of the fish's mouth, remarked cheerfully, "Well, I guess that was just pure luck."

On August 3rd we arrived, according to schedule, at Blackville, on the railway line, and when we reached the top of the hill I heard Jack's unmistakable whistle and saw the *Eatonia* on the siding. He had decided to join us for the rest of the trip and try for some salmon. A wonderful surprise for me, but my diary also records the stern fact that "Jack hardly knew me, I was so hot and red, and greasy with fly dope." That evening Annie and I enjoyed the luxury of baths on the *Eatonia,* clean clothes and skirts again, and fresh vegetables from our *Ardwold* gardens.

Next day our camping activities resumed, but on a bigger scale to accommodate my energetic husband, his tent and gear, extra canoe and guide, and along the way our party gathered several friends of Jack's whom he wanted to have along. We were fishing the Miramichi now, going past such tiny landmarks as McKiel Brook and Burnt Hill. On August 15th we paddled across the river to see a new mine development, and there met Mr. Noah A. Timmins, one of Canada's famous mining men (after whom the city of Timmins in northern Ontario is named), and his associate, Mr. Porteous who with Mrs. Porteous was spending the summer there. At their invitation our party went down the shaft to a depth of 150 feet and watched the men drilling. The noise was fearful, and the drip of water everywhere was like the rain Annie and I had lived through a few weeks before on Cain's River.

Jack caught his salmon, a number of beauties, and every member of our group felt refreshed and contented when we left the woods and took off for the pastoral civilization of Prince Edward Island and a quick tour through Nova Scotia. A lobster picnic near Brackley Beach, P.E.I., was a fabulous treat after our steady diet of trout and salmon. In Halifax we were invited on board the Flagship H.M.S. *Leviathan,* my first experience on a ship of war.

In the last few pages of the 1917 summer diary, there

are two little scraps of history which I find interesting. At luncheon in the Chateau Frontenac, Quebec, on our way home, we found "the first intimation in a public institution of the Food Controller's suggestions being put into effect—a little card attached to the menu explaining: 'No beef or bacon Tuesdays or Fridays, and only once any other day.' "

And then the following day, after taking the ferry to Point Levis in order to board the *Eatonia,* which waited for us on the south side of the river, we saw the new span of the Quebec bridge ready to be put in place and waiting for high tide. This is what I wrote in my diary: "Owing to the unfortunate circumstances connected with this span twice before, great secrecy is being used this time as to the actual time of placing the new one, for they do not want a crowd in case the third attempt should fail." As we all know, that new span slipped into place perfectly and so far as I know has been serving ever since. What pleased me was the fact that the final, successful feat was achieved by Canadian engineers; on the first two tries the steel span had been delivered by U.S. companies.

Many Canadians remember, with a shudder, the terrible disaster of the Halifax explosion which took place on December 6, 1917. Two ships, one of them loaded with TNT, rammed in Halifax harbour, and the resulting chaos in the city, and the fires, the loss of life, and suffering of the injured, were to go down in history as one of our country's most tragic events.

At once my husband organized a small hand-picked group, including our two trained nurses from *Ardwold,* and the chief pharmacist from the Store, had the *Eatonia* and a freight car loaded with blankets, clothing, food, medical supplies, and went as quickly as possible to Halifax. They remained there for nearly a week, and because of the speed of the expedition were able to offer real help.

In that last year of the war I remained at home and

took care of my children—the four boys who ranged from teen-aged Timothy to Gilbert, an active toddler. All the doctors we knew, and our dentists too, were on overseas service—and just to keep our household healthy and continue to make a reasonably serene home life for my husband was task enough. From time to time there was the sorrowful duty of calling at the house of a friend or relative, bereaved overnight by the telegraphed message from Ottawa, "killed in action".

Gen. Sir Sam Hughes (he had been knighted and decorated a few years before), whose home was in Lindsay near my village of Omemee, had invited me to be patroness of the 109th Regiment, raised initially in that district. On one occasion I went to Lindsay to present the colours; with me were my husband, who was an Honorary Colonel, and Dr. Herbert Bruce, back on leave from his medical command at the front. The Regiment marched past, and Sir John took the salute, and I remember feeling very proud of my escort as I stood there on the dais between my husband and Dr. Bruce. Later the 109th presented me with a plaque bearing the regimental crest. When the war was over the colours of the 109th were deposited in my old church, the Wesleyan Methodist, in Omemee. Since those days that regiment, along with many others which gave distinguished service to Canada, has lost its identity in the reorganization of Army units, and I for one am sorry to see the disappearance of the old familiar names and traditions.

When the Armistice finally came, all of us, myself included, found it difficult to grasp. My youngest son, born in wartime, kept asking me, "Is there going to be no more wars, Mummie?" Perhaps I was rash enough, or hopeful enough, to say, "No, Gilbert—no more wars!"

Anyway the release of nerve tension on that first or "false" Armistice Day, a few days before the real truce was signed, was remarkable to see. Everywhere in the streets of Toronto the people went mad with joy; church bells

rang; crowds sang and capered in the streets. Jack and I walked around downtown in a heady feeling of elation, and occasionally we joined the throngs outside the newspaper offices where news bulletins were put up. It was a night to stay up, and out! At five o'clock in the morning we went into the Store and up to the lunchroom, and when the first chef came on duty he found me cooking bacon and eggs and buttering a mound of toast. We were quite a party, for several of the Managers and their wives had dropped in too.

Perhaps, looking back, we were—*all* of us everywhere, I mean—too glad war was over. We had shown we could work valiantly to win a war, yet we were not prepared to give any extra effort to maintain peace once it came.

In 1919 our family was increased by a daughter, Florence Mary. My husband was a devoted father at all times and took great pleasure with his boys, but our one little girl became the very apple of his eye. On the day she was christened, we had asked a few friends in to celebrate with us, and in the midst of the little occasion who should arrive but Tommy Church, Toronto's long-time Mayor and a great friend of Sir John, and with him Georges Carpentier, the boxer, then a name in every headline in America. Carpentier was a great success with everybody present; he was a good-looking young man, obviously well bred, and he contributed charmingly to the party by proposing a toast to Florence Mary in French.

Whenever Jack and I could get away for a week or so we found ourselves pointed in the direction of Yama Farms at Napanock, N.Y. This was a fascinating place, situated delightfully in the Catskill Mountains, with a brook running through the property. The whole enterprise had developed as a hobby of Frank Seaman, the well-known New York advertising man. Some years earlier he had decided his small cabin was too restrictive on the number of guests he wanted to entertain, and so he had followed the urgings

of his friends to renovate the old farmhouse as an inn, but run it more or less as a club for congenial people. The flat rate for each guest included not only a charming room and the best food in the world, but cigars, cigarettes, beverages all the way from lemonade to champagne, massage, barbering and hairdressing, pressing and cleaning, maid service, and all outgoing letters stamped! A guest in good standing had the privilege of putting forward the name of one of his friends, and an invitation, with a key enclosed, would be mailed, saying "Welcome to Yama Farms Inn." On the other hand, a guest found uncongenial would never receive another key and his name would be deleted from the list. I know of only one person to whom the door was firmly closed. He had spent a week with his wife at the Inn, and when he was leaving he went to the humidor and filled his cigar case.

I met numerous celebrities during those visits to Yama Farms Inn. John Burroughs, the great naturalist and writer, was one, and I enjoyed his friendship as long as he lived; Lady Russell, the "Elizabeth" who signed several best-selling books, such as *Elizabeth and Her German Garden*; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford, a nice, simple, companionable pair; the artist, Rose O'Neill, who originated the "Kewpie" in verse and doll designs; Mr. Poultney Bigelow, the distinguished historian, and others. Sometimes Mr. Seaman would gather up a few of his guests and take them for a drive in coach-and-four or plan a motor trip to some point of interest. On one such day Jack and I accompanied our host to the seventieth birthday party of Poultney Bigelow at Malden-on-Hudson, and there met Melville Clarke, the harpist, who played several selections. He became one of our good friends, visiting us in Toronto from time to time and delighting our friends with his fine music.

Melville Clarke was a prime mover in the Syracuse Music Festival, and sent a special invitation to the Dobies and to my husband and myself to attend the forthcoming event. Neither of the men could arrange to be away from

business, but Mrs. Dobie and I motored down from Toronto and were Melville Clarke's guests at the Onondaga Hotel and found ourselves included in all the social doings of the Festival.

That first evening we were with the president of the Music Festival and his wife in their box, all of us looking forward to hearing the Canadian, Edward Johnson, who had just returned to New York from his triumphs in Europe. I had not heard him sing since Mendelssohn Choir days under Dr. Torrington in Toronto. A young, handsome, slight man walked on to the stage and smiled at his audience. There was an "A-ah!" over the house and my hostess turned to me and said, "That man can make love to me whenever he likes!" The moment he began his first number we were completely captivated by the quality of his voice and his interpretation.

At the supper given for the artists following the concert, it happened that Edward Johnson, the guest of honour, sat at my left. Melville Clarke had his harp in the room and wanted Mr. Johnson to sing, suggesting "Drink to me only with thine eyes". "But," he replied, "I've worked so long in opera in three languages and have only begun concert work, I don't even remember the words." I tried to help by singing them, very softly, but he still insisted it would be impossible.

We began to have an animated conversation and he asked me about my music studies. Finally, Edward Johnson made the brave suggestion that if I would do a concert with him in Toronto, he would give the evening for the benefit of any of my charities.

When Mrs. Dobie and I returned home, we were full of the personal charm and artistry of Edward Johnson, and when with our two husbands we were having dinner at *Ardwold,* Jack declared, with the concurrence of Mr. Dobie, "You are just two women bowled over by a charming man." "Well," I said, "you'll see for yourself, for I have invited

him to stay with us when he comes to Toronto, and he has promised it will be soon."

He came, he saw, and he conquered all. As Mrs. Dobie put it, "We've made a big mistake. Our two men are so mad about Edward that we don't even get a chance to speak to him." Indeed, Edward Johnson proved himself such a man's man that my husband suggested he be our guest on the *Eatonia* during his projected recital tour of Western Ontario cities in the following year.

Meantime the discussions continued about a Toronto concert in which I would participate. I protested that I had a five-months-old baby to look after, and I had seldom been near the piano to practise. However, with both Edward and Jack prodding me into action, I finally presented the idea to Mrs. Lionel Clarke, wife of Ontario's Lieutenant-Governor at that time, and head of the Women's Committee for the work of the blind. She was enthusiastic and so was her committee—an excellent band of women who saw the venture through to a triumphant conclusion.

I don't believe I ever worked so hard, before or after. I had first to choose a program, then memorize it. I worked five hours daily all summer with Joseph Quintile, the harpist, as coach. He was most exacting and would not permit the smallest error to pass. The result was that, by September, when I began rehearsals with Arthur Blight, and with Mrs. H. M. Blight at the piano, I knew every word and every note. Once again, as in the days years ago, I sang my program for the studio soirée. Edward Johnson happened to be in town and attended; his suggestions were excellent and Mr. Blight and I followed them to the letter. On each of his visits to Toronto during the next few weeks he would spare time to listen to me. When he finally declared he was satisfied, I felt heartened; I knew I could do it.

The sympathetic interest of every friend in Toronto's musical world was another strong support. Dr. Vogt suggested I do my program before the students in the Con-

servatory recital hall. "If you can keep them interested (for they will be looking for flaws), then you will have more confidence for the big concert." I accepted his advice, and a night was set, and teachers and students notified. This performance turned out to be a real ordeal, because that morning Gilbert, my five-year-old, came down with severe abdominal pain, was rushed to the hospital and operated on for appendicitis at 8.30 a.m. I spent most of the day with him, and went home only late in the afternoon when I was sure he was comfortable and doing well. This complication I was determined to keep secret, for I knew how a critical audience could say, "Of course, he blamed that awful recitative on his cold," or, as in my case, "Of course, she said she had been so worried about her child." But I had to confide in someone and I mentioned the day's developments to Paul Wells, one of Toronto's leading pianists and a teacher on the Conservatory staff. He encouraged me before my first group, and between the second and third he met me behind the stage and said, "You're doing splendidly. Everything's going to be all right."

When it was over I felt limp, but the kind comments of Dr. Vogt and Dr. Healey Willan lifted my spirits; I knew if I could rise to anywhere near their standards I could not be too amateurish. A few days later at a reception which Hon. and Mrs. Lionel Clarke gave for Edward Johnson and me before the big event, one of the guests came up to me and remarked, "You must be very nervous about singing with Edward Johnson." The meaning could not have been clearer if she had come right out and said, "Haven't you a cheek to think you can sing on the same program with Edward Johnson!" Anyway, my answer was, "Oh no, not in the least. He is a famous artist, I am an amateur, and if he thinks I can sing well enough to be on the program with him, and at his request, then why should I worry?"

It was a gala night. My husband had ordered Massey

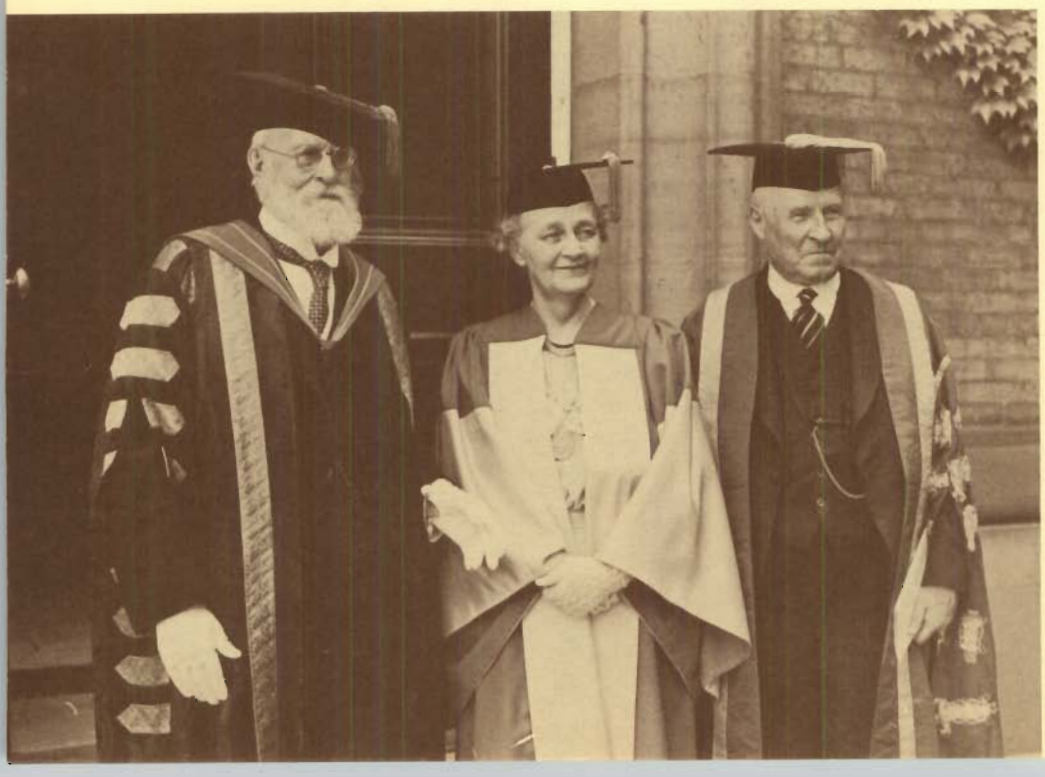
At right: World War II —inspecting the guard of honour at the formal turning over of Eaton Hall to the Royal Canadian Navy.

Below: World War I— presentation of colours to the 109th in Lindsay. At left, front, Sir Sam Hughes, at right in uniform, Colonel Herbert Bruce.

After an *Ardwold* garden party: Sir John, Edward Johnson, Lady Eaton, and Capt. Slatter, 48th Highlanders' bandmaster.

Star Newspaper Service, Toronto

When Lady Eaton received her honorary degree from the University of Toronto. Sir William Mulock, Chancellor, at left, and Dr. H. J. Cody, President, at right.



Hall's dressing-rooms, stage and aisles scrubbed. The stage's bare look had been softened with rugs, one or two lamps, and several masses of ferns and palms; Mr. Quintile's harp stood at one side. A pretty group of debutantes sold programs and ushered. Massey Hall was filled with an audience turned out in full dress. His Honour and Mrs. Clarke occupied the loge seats at the right of the stage. Mr. Justice and Mrs. Riddell, Sir William Mulock, Mr. and Mrs. William Mulock were in the Lieutenant-Governor's party.

Driving from *Ardwold* to Massey Hall with Edward Johnson and his accompanist, it was, strangely enough, the artist and not the amateur who was in a state of nerves. He told me later that for years he had always suffered from nerve tension before making his first appearance on a stage; it had been one of the hazards of his career.

However, as the hands of the clock approached the time when I must go on, and as I peeked through the curtains and saw the glittering audience, I did experience a sinking feeling. But just behind me Edward Johnson was saying, "Breathe deeply, and don't stop till you are ready to sing," and suddenly I was on my way. The storm of applause which greeted me was almost overwhelming. I was totally unprepared for it, and I had to summon up all my courage to keep bowing and smiling while it lasted. Then I gave Mrs. H. M. Blight the signal for the first song, "Bois Epais". When I closed my eyes while singing it, the reason was not "the shyness of the soloist", as one of the critics wrote, but simply for purposes of concentration. I was determined to make not the slightest error in my French.

The concert was a success. Edward and I were called to His Honour's box to receive compliments. Toward the end of the program Judge Riddell appeared on the stage with both of us and made one of his charming speeches, thanking us both for giving our time and talent in aid of the work for the blind. When it was all over Edward thanked me, declaring himself pleased with my "triumph",

and saying how good it was to be back home, singing for Canadians again. Both of us rejoiced when the Committee announced that the sum raised was the largest ever realized from a single event.

That occasion was unique in my life, and I still experience a sense of surprised delight when I recall it. The baskets and bouquets of flowers which the debutante ushers brought up to the footlights for me were almost beyond counting; no one had forewarned me that Toronto people could be so generous to one of their own amateurs!

My husband presented me with several mementoes which I still have and cherish. As a good luck gift he gave me a platinum bracelet on which the first bar of my first song was marked out in black enamel and diamonds. I wore it that night, with my gown of blue and silver brocade and drapery of silver lace. Some weeks before the concert he had ordered a diamond tiara in the shape of maple leaves. Unfortunately the points of the design were too sharp against my head, so for the actual event I wore another tiara. The beautiful maple leaves, solidly studded with diamonds and just as exquisitely wrought on the backs, were later fashioned into a brooch, and this I have worn almost constantly ever since. It pleases me, and it would have pleased Jack, to know that this brooch, made to order for me in our own Eaton's jewellery workshop, has been admired and commented upon by both H.M. Queen Mary and H.M. Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

After the experience in Massey Hall, I had confidence in holding my own with an audience, and I enjoyed filling several other concert engagements. I sang with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra during Mr. Luigi Von Kunits' leadership; it was a pleasure to work with such a fine musician and gentleman. Later I went to Regina to sing with the orchestra there. Mr. Webster, our Mail Order Manager in Regina, had initiated that plan, but alas, by the time I could keep my promise, he had died. Miss Newlands, daughter of the Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan,

wrote to me and asked if I would be their guest at Government House during my visit. I tried to excuse myself, thinking I would be a nuisance, for on any day before a concert I refrained from food and drank only orange juice, to keep my voice clear, and also I had to rest a good deal. However, Miss Newlands overcame all my excuses and when I arrived at the station I was met by one of the aides and a gallant young constable of the R.C.M.P. My accompanist, Mlle. Germaine Sanderson, and I enjoyed the quiet hospitality of Hon. H. W. Newlands and his daughter. My Regina program consisted of an aria with the orchestra, "The Lost Chord" with pipe organ and orchestra, and a group of songs with the piano. Again, as with the Toronto Symphony, I had that feeling of strength and inspiration which singing with a well-conducted orchestra seems to bring. One is not a solitary performer, one is simply part of the whole, and there is the reassuring sensation that the orchestra is supporting and sustaining one throughout.

Edward Johnson became the good friend of every member of our family. When he first visited us Florence Mary was just five months old, and a rather dignified, dainty person, even at that age. Our guest used to spend a great deal of time just watching her in her play-pen, handing her a toy from time to time, and musing on what went on in that little fair head. They continued to be wonderful friends as she grew up, and now it is her small daughter who is fascinated by Dr. Edward Johnson, and who gives him all her attention when he drops in for a chat with her parents.

When Sir John and I accompanied him on his first Ontario concert tour, via the *Eatonia* private car, we both found it a delightful experience to have a much-travelled person with us, interested in everything that interested us, and most anxious to acquire a thorough knowledge of Canada after his long absence in Europe. Our friendship

became firmly rooted, and soon it was routine for Edward to stay with us whenever he was in Toronto for a few days. He spent a month at *Kawandag,* seriously rehearsing for his next season's opera and concert tour; after the hours at the piano he became a boy again, enjoying the golf, swimming and boating excursions with the rest of us. Fiorenza, his daughter (now Mrs. George Drew) with her nurse, Tatta, stayed with us for a summer at *Kawandag* while her father was filling special engagements. And so the old, strong threads of friendship persist. Whenever circumstances permit, Edward and I are together again, re-living those days when the company was at its full quota, and we were all still young and venturesome.

Edward Johnson is a remarkable person. He has solid convictions, and when his mind is made up to action it is always because he has considered every angle of the matter and has selected the course that is right. He has never been influenced by the "mob" aspect at any time, and he never compromises his judgment in the interests of mass popularity. He continually surprises me by his grasp of political developments, here or in the world arena. He is loyalty itself, and one of the merriest of companions. He has stimulated and encouraged me when life was difficult and the way ahead looked dark indeed; he continues to be an inspiration and joy.

CHAPTER IX

OUR FIRST trip abroad after the 1914-1918 war was a delightful one, and all the details remain clearly in my mind because that was to be the last time my husband would be with me in Europe. We had the four boys with us—and indeed one of the reasons for that journey was to engage a tutor to supervise their studies and activities after school hours. We found a young man of exceptional character and ability, a Cambridge graduate, and for some years he was to be an important member of our household. (One of his most successful ventures was to produce a weekly "newspaper" at *Kawandag,* and to encourage his four charges to contribute, edit, typewrite and distribute it. I still have a file of those papers and they are amusing reading, even for a fond mother!) On that trip, too, we engaged a charming young Swiss girl as governess.

In London Jack and I decided to take a house close to Caenwood Park and this became a real haven to return to after our visits to the Continent. Most of the time the boys remained at that headquarters, with Miss Freeze, the trained nurse who had been with us for nearly ten years. My cousin, David A. Keys, was then doing work on the atom at Cambridge under the direction of the famous Sir Ernest Rutherford. Often David would be our guest in London, and when we decided to take the whole family on a trip to Switzerland we persuaded him to join us.

When we left England, one of our friends commented, "The Court now moves to Switzerland." It was quite a move, involving four boys, a nurse, my maid and Sir John's

valet, Arthur Morris, cousin David, and our two selves. But in those days the business of railway reservations, channel crossing, tickets straight through from London to Lucerne, was fairly simple. We moved up to St. Moritz, and there we added Arthur Blight and his wife, who had been visiting Italy, to our party. It was a leisurely holiday for us all; the tourist season was fairly well over, and the first autumn colouring had appeared on the mountains, to be reflected like rich jewels in the many small lakes. There were unfamiliar insects buzzing about, and one afternoon Mr. Blight was bitten on the wrist. The usual remedies were applied, but in the middle of the night his wife wakened us and we saw that his arm had swollen alarmingly and angry red lines were climbing up above the elbow. Miss Freeze recognized it at once as blood poisoning. With not a minute to lose she sterilized a razor blade, and after painting the spot with iodine made an incision an inch long. The poison gushed out. In the morning, after she had kept dressings carefully in place, she drove Mr. Blight into town to see a doctor. He did very little, except say, "Young lady, you have saved this man's life with your prompt attention."

On our return to London we stayed at the Ritz. Charlie Chaplin, then at the height of his career, was a fellow-guest, and Jack and I saw him in the foyer, surrounded by autograph hunters. When we reached our suite and told the children, one of them lamented loudly, "Wouldn't it just be Mummie and Daddy who'd see him, and they don't care at all!" We were to encounter him again that evening, at a performance of the Russian ballet. Just before the curtain went up for the second scene, Diaghilev, seated at the centre of the first gallery, stood up and shouted, "Who's here? Charlie Chap-a-lin he's here! Three cheers for your Charlie!" The audience burst into a rousing cheer, and Mr. Chaplin modestly stood up and bowed his thanks.

By the time we were departing on the *Empress of Scotland* at Southampton, the inevitable had happened—David

A. Keys had decided to take our wonderful Miss Freeze away from us. It was planned that he would return to Canada on his Christmas vacation, and the wedding would be at *Ardwold.* So all of us were involved in a happy bustle and hustle in the next few weeks. The bride's family, some of whom Jack and I had met during our wartime camping holiday, came up from Doaktown, N.B., and stayed with us. There were the usual ushers and bridesmaids, but my eyes were dotingly on the ring-bearer, our Gilbert, and the flower-girl, Florence Mary. During the ceremony she amused herself by stepping back and forth over "Freezie's" train; afterwards, going down the aisle, scattering her rose petals, she stopped to say hello to all the friends. I sang the wedding music, and Sir Joseph Flavelle, who had done some helpful kindnesses for the bride's sister before her death, presided as toastmaster. My husband sent the young couple to Montreal in the *Eatonia,* and they sailed for England. Today Dr. Keys is well known in Canada as the head of the Government's Chalk River atomic research development.

That was our last important, happy occasion as a complete family group. I suppose we celebrated New Year's, went calling and received visitors as usual, and no doubt Jack and I discussed plans for our farm near King City, and the improvements to be made there in the following spring. But these normal affairs have faded from my mind, because of the event which was so swiftly to overtake us all.

As a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway, my husband attended the monthly meetings in Montreal regularly. In January, 1922, he went as usual. A couple of days later I received a message from Grant Hall, C.P.R. Vice-President, that Sir John appeared to have a severe attack of 'flu. Mr. Hall said he would accompany him home on the night train. Often I used to go to meet Jack at the station, and, though he always protested my coming down town at 7.30 a.m., he was nevertheless appreciative. This

time some instinct warned me that I had better wait at home and prepare to receive a sick man. Dr. William Goldie came up at once in answer to my telephone call, and I have never ceased to be grateful to him for telling me the truth. He diagnosed Jack's condition as pneumonia, and he said, "It is serious."

Then began the long, losing battle. My husband was ill for seven weeks, and for one who had always been so active and filled with energy, it was an agony just to remain in bed. There were signs of improvement from time to time, and for a day or so everyone's face would brighten with fresh hope. Gilbert slept in my room, and in the early morning he'd say to me, "I'll go and see how Daddy is." I would ask him to take my love, and then he'd return with the message, "Daddy sends you his love, and a kiss, and says he had a comfortable night." Nothing cheered the patient so much as a visit from the two youngest, Gilbert and little Florence Mary, and the doctors had permitted him this pleasure as soon as the lungs had cleared.

Dr. Goldie and Dr. Duncan Graham left nothing undone. They were our good friends as well as our medical advisers. With them, some time before, my husband had organized the Sir John and Lady Eaton Chair of Medicine at the University of Toronto; they were men in whom he had the highest confidence. It was at their suggestion that we agreed to consultations, and two specialists from Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, were called in. They confirmed our doctors' diagnosis and treatment, and stated they could add nothing.

My husband, though I knew he was impatient with himself and his confinement to bed, never once complained. He was considerate of nurses and doctors and grateful to anyone who served him in any way. His faithful valet and his chauffeur took alternate hours of duty with the nurses. His mother visited him every day. When the end came she sat with me (bless her!), and her great sorrow was that Jack should have gone and not herself. "He was so

needed by so many," she said, "and lived such a useful, unselfish life, while here I am, of no use to anyone. Why couldn't it have been me?"

Gilbert seemed to feel I was his particular care. While I tried to rest he occupied himself quietly in my sitting-room, looking in from time to time to see if I slept. If I was awake, he would come in and ask, "Are you all right, Mummie?" He got hold of a piece of writing paper, scribbled on it for some time, then went over to the fireplace, dropped it in the flames and watched the smoke go up. He turned to us and said, "I was just sending a note to God, to tell Him that Daddy is on his way to heaven."

My brother, Arthur, had stayed with us at *Ardwold* during the final weeks of the vigil. He was a great comfort to me, as he saw the many callers when I could not leave my husband's bedside, and his kindness and support to the older boys was wonderful indeed. For lads in their teens the death of a much-loved father is a staggering blow. But our boys were brave too; they did what was asked of them like men.

As for me, while I was conscious of all the kindness and sympathy that flowed in from great and small, all over the world, inwardly I felt like a stone. It was an ordeal to see even my closest friends. I wished I could have rushed away into the woods and hidden like a suffering animal.

But no one can run away from either life or death. I had my children to love and care for, and I was their sole guardian; there were legal matters to be settled, and so, through the time-tried therapy of new responsibilities, I was compelled to work my way back to normal. It wasn't easy then, and sometimes still I have to do that which is not easy, but thank God, I learned in those weeks of sorrow to stand my ground and face up to whatever problems life presented to me.

The expansion of the Company was to occupy a major portion of my waking hours during the years that fol-

lowed. I had been a member of the Board of Directors for some time before my husband's death, and I remember very well how his long-expressed desire to have me associated with him in the business was actually fulfilled. Florence Mary was still a little baby, I recall, and for that reason alone I felt I had a good argument against becoming involved. However, Jack refused to let the matter drop and mentioned his idea to some of the Board members. One day, out of the blue, while I was attending a women's luncheon at a friend's home, I received an urgent telephone message to return to *Ardwold* as soon as possible. When I got home I found four Directors in conference with my husband in the billiard room. One of them acted as spokesman for the group and said, "Lady Eaton, we are here to ask you to become a Director of the Company. We are delighted that Sir John has thought of this development, and we insist that you accept the position." I was not entirely taken by surprise, because Jack and I had often discussed the idea, but I was a little dismayed by the suddenness of the attack. After taking a few moments to recover my breath I replied, "Very well, Gentlemen, if that is your wish—and I know it is my husband's—I will accept the position on one condition: that I shall always be treated as just another person on the Board and not as a woman. If I make any suggestion that such-and-such should be done, it will be accepted only on its merits and not because I happened to be the one to put forward the idea." They agreed, and I must say that in all my period of service on the Board there was never any deviation from that ruling.

The Board of Directors met every Tuesday, and at all times except when I was a thousand miles away or more, I never missed a meeting. But for me, Tuesday came a little too close to Sunday, when I generally took complete charge of my family. Our Sunday routine was church in the morning, Sunday School for the children in the afternoon, walks or drives afterwards, supper and

bed. Occasionally I used to think that whoever wrote that hymn, "O Day of Rest and Gladness" must have been a practical joker, for the Sabbath had for years been one of my busiest days of the week.

After Jack's death I was feeling far from well, and my physician insisted that, in order to do my best for both the family and the Company, I must spend Monday in bed. This became my habit for several years, and by following this simple, sensible advice I was able to carry on in both spheres.

As an Eaton's Director, I was largely interested in Company-and-employee relations, and in improvement of employee welfare and benefits. I became an active inspector of all Company buildings, in Toronto and elsewhere. As Jack's wife, I had been thoroughly imbued with the Eaton tradition. Throughout our life together he had constantly discussed business matters with me and quite frequently if he sensed that I thought poorly of a certain plan he would withhold final decision on it.

The question of employees' hours of work and holidays was always important to us both. After the 1914-1918 war, when Eaton's men had established such a magnificent record in the fighting Services, Sir John felt that something special should be done for those who came back. I know that the men themselves did not expect it; so often on their return to their jobs they would call at the President's office and thank him for the continuation of their wages while they had been away, and for the boxes of comforts sent to them regularly from the Store each week. Nevertheless my husband's mind was made up. At a big banquet held in Toronto each returned man was given an engraved commemorative medal in the form of a watch fob; and some months later Sir John inaugurated the "all-day Saturday off" policy during the summer months. Thus the five-day week which he and his father used to discuss so many years before became a fact. This was another case of Company leadership, for a good many years were to

pass before the short work week was generally adopted in Canadian business and industry.

My husband's other great goal was that the public should be served well and courteously, and to that end he realized how essential it was to have a smooth operation at all levels of the business. Sir John, I believe, spent more time on the floors of the Store than he did in his office. To know and understand the customers and the services offered to them was his constant concern.

On one of my first visits to Winnipeg after my husband's death, I made a morning tour of all the Mail Order buildings with Mr. H. M. Tucker, the head of Eaton's in that city. When we returned to his office, I looked at him and said, "Mr. Tucker, that was just useless." He asked what I meant. "Well," I said, "our people were looking for some friendly contact with us, and neither of us gave it to them. Neither one of us smiled." His reply was, "But I don't smile readily." And to that, I said, "You'll have to learn, and we're both going to do better this afternoon." After lunch we continued our tour, going this time through the Store, and I'm glad to record that Mr. Tucker smiled and I smiled and the employees smiled too. I am positive our afternoon's activities netted infinitely better results than the morning's.

One of my special undertakings as a Director had to do with our restaurant services. To tell that story I have to go back to my early months of marriage, when I would drop in at Mr. Timothy Eaton's office and sometimes stay for lunch with him. His meal was prepared in a little corner of the basement where a couple of small tables stood behind a screen. An old-time electric grill, as heavy as lead as I recall, was part of the equipment, and there his maid, Sarah, cooked Mr. Eaton's steak and made his pot of tea. That was the first attempt at the preparation and serving of meals in the Store.

Luncheon downtown gradually became more popular

with businessmen as the city grew and they found the practice of going home at noon too time-consuming. Eaton's services expanded slowly, with a Grill Room, and later a cafeteria, off which was a private dining-room where the Directors lunched. All these places were clean and dull; there was no attempt at interesting decoration, and the dishes were of railway-station type.

I began to dream of something better. Toronto badly needed a new, good restaurant, and I was groping toward the kind that would attract women as well as businessmen. Other parts of the Store were constantly being modernized, carefully equipped and stocked; lovely things from the world around came to our various departments; we had fashions from the best designers in Paris—but we still had a commonplace restaurant. On trips to New York and abroad I did some serious scouting. In London I was invited to have luncheon in the Directors' dining-room of one of the big department stores. It was a beautiful room in the classic style: Chippendale furniture, fine Oriental rugs and brocade curtains. The table appointments were of the best; in fact, here was a dining-room worthy of a fine home. With a shock I realized I could never ask this group of men to have lunch in our restaurant in Toronto!

On my return I presented my case to the Eaton Directors. I knew that what I wanted wouldn't be a cheap venture, but I felt strongly that it would be a profitable investment in the end. Alas, my suggestion was turned down; the plan was too costly, I was told, and actually wasn't "a business proposition". I said I was willing to accept the decision, but then added, "Now I would like to ask a favour. I want you to close down the restaurant we have, for I am ashamed of it."

That afternoon the President, Mr. R. Y. Eaton (Jack's cousin), came to *Ardwold* to reopen the subject, on the advice of the other Directors who had continued to discuss the matter after the morning's meeting. I was reluctant to go along with this rather sudden change of thinking—

it *could* happen that my dream would turn into a white elephant!—but after two hours' intensive discussion I agreed to move ahead on the plan of designing a new restaurant service for the Toronto store. Mr. Charles Boothe and I comprised the committee, and promptly next morning we had our first meeting. I outlined the scheme to him, and emphasized that our restaurant would be utterly different from anything ever before undertaken by the Company, or for that matter in Toronto. He asked me how I proposed to accomplish this. I had my answer ready: "I'm going to try to get Violet Ryley."

To explain how I knew the remarkable qualities of Miss Ryley, I must again delve back into the past—to the year 1909, when we were still in our Walmer Road home. With the many contacts which Jack and I made in our travels, with friends new and old constantly coming for dinner or week-ends, and with two children in the family, our house was a busy place. We kept a staff of three servants, but the complications of three half-days off per week, and separate arrangements over each Sunday were proving a little more than I could cope with. I was resolved that some solution must be found, for I was determined never to say to my husband, "We can't have anyone in for dinner tonight because it's Cook's day off."

So I went to Miss Laird, then Principal of the Lillian Massey school of Household Science at the University, and put my problem before her. "Do you think I could make my staff interchangeable?" I asked her. "Could I find someone to teach cooking and service to all three?" Miss Laird answered promptly, "I'd like you to see Violet Ryley, one of our senior students. She has to get into practical work now, for her last year's credits, and you might find she would suit you."

Thus began my first acquaintance with scientific housekeeping, especially in the departments of cooking and serving, and organization of duties. Miss Ryley came to my

house twice a week for three months. The servants enjoyed this expert coaching, and my dilemma as a harassed hostess vanished without a trace. And in Violet Ryley I had found a lifelong friend.

At the time Mr. Boothe and I were laying our plans for the new restaurant, Miss Ryley was taking a rest after a strenuous postwar job as chief dietitian for military hospitals from coast to coast. Prior to that she had inaugurated the dining-room services at Hart House. With this experience, supported by her excellent training and her own organizing talent and good taste in everything, she was most definitely the person we needed as head of our new restaurant.

Mr. Boothe and I met Miss Ryley and won her immediate interest. We hastened to the next Board meeting with our report, and it was unanimously agreed that we could engage Miss Ryley. From that time forward she worked with us, preparing lists of requirements for kitchens and restaurant, consulting with René Cera, the Paris-trained architect who had joined the Eaton organization some time before. He drew the plans for this huge new restaurant floor remodelled at the top of the main Store. For long hours together Miss Ryley and I were immersed in the selection of linen, china, silver, waitresses' uniforms; we had frequent meetings with Mr. Boothe and the architect, and never was I associated with a more enterprising, or stimulating, or harmonious group of people.

The Georgian Room, the name we had chosen because it so well suited the dignity of the first decorative scheme, opened in 1923. People close to the food industry in Canada have often stated that it revolutionized restaurant menus and service everywhere. Certainly it set a new, a quite different standard, and my cherished dreams were realized. The Georgian Room has always been one of the most popular luncheon places in Toronto. Mr. Boothe once asked Miss Ryley if the long queue waiting in the

foyer for tables didn't worry her. "No, Mr. Boothe. I'd be worried if there was no queue."

Her capacity to organize, train and hold a staff was outstanding. Many of our Georgian Room waitresses have been with us for years. One of them who just recently retired on pension was none other than Sarah, who used to prepare Mr. Timothy Eaton's lunch for him in the basement corner. She is a dear friend of all the family. A few years ago when Gilbert (down on a visit from Winnipeg) and I were shown to her table in the Georgian Room, Sarah came up to us with a warm smile, and taking one look at my big son she said, "Well, Mr. Gilbert! I don't know whether to shake your hand or tie your napkin around your neck." And Gilbert replied, "I'd like you to do both, Sarah."

Violet Ryley, like all the really busy people, always found time to respond to any call for help. Years before, I had sent out an appeal to her, after one had come to me from Rev. Peter Bryce, the beloved minister in Toronto's Earlscourt district. He had felt the need of giving the women of that locality some training in nutrition and low-cost family meals. Miss Ryley entered into the project with her usual zest and efficiency, and together we set up a three-gas-ring cooking school in Earlscourt Methodist Church. Once a week there was a good-sized audience of housewives eager to learn from an expert. Two women were assigned to each gas-ring and all who participated in each lesson were invited to take their share of the cooked food home with them later.

It was through Miss Ryley's interest that one of our Department Managers, Col. Louis Keene, C.O. of the Lorne Scots Regiment, put through an important scheme to improve the quality of the meals for troops in training during the Second War. He had observed that the Army food list was very nearly a relic of the Crimean War, and the cooks were generally soldiers assigned to a type of work

totally unfamiliar to them. He described the situation to Miss Ryley, she and I talked it over and decided we should try to do something about it. She herself set up and contributed generously to a fund for the initial organization, and after obtaining the services of Miss Elspeth Middleton, dietitian and excellent teacher, a one-year demonstration course for Army cooks was under way at Brampton, Ont. Soon Col. Keene was receiving requests from many directions for help in training men in the culinary art. One message from Camp Borden read, "We are sending you two salesmen and three house-painters. Turn them into cooks."

One of Miss Ryley's great friends and close associates was Kathleen Jeffs, head of Eaton's Montreal restaurant service. It was a matter of pride for both of us when Dr. Fred Tisdall, special adviser on health and nutrition to the R.C.A.F., came to us to ask for Miss Jeffs for the important new role of Chief Messing Officer of the Air Force. As I had seen what had been happening to various businessmen who had volunteered as "dollar-a-year" experts in Ottawa, I did some cross-examining before I could be completely persuaded to approve Miss Jeffs' release for the duration. I asked, "To whom will Miss Jeffs be responsible?" Dr. Tisdall said, "To the Chief of the Department, R.C.A.F. There will be only one officer between Miss Jeffs and the Government." Once satisfied that she would not be sidetracked or sacrificed, I called our President and got his approval for the plan, but I still had one more question in my mind. "Will Miss Jeffs be considered on the same level as male officers in the Forces?" I asked, referring by that to the payment of full salary by Eaton's during her term of service, and with her position held open for her return. To which, Mr. R. Y. Eaton replied without hesitation, "Most certainly!"

Chief Messing Officer Kathleen Jeffs left a brilliant record in a hitherto untried territory. At a postwar banquet given in her honour by the dietitians in Toronto, the ovation which greeted her just before the unveiling of her

portrait, was deafening, and no two people present were prouder than Violet Ryley and I.

Both these fine women have passed from the scene, but the high standards they set for themselves and inspired in others are still evident in all the fields they touched. Leadership of that quality does not die.

During the years I was actively working for the Company I learned how right my husband, and his father before him, had been in their assessment of employees. They used to say that anyone who works for Eaton's is bound to be 100% *for* Eaton's. It becomes natural and automatic for an Eaton employee to say "we", in speaking of the firm. The person who feels dissatisfied, and does not get this sense of oneness with the Company early, is seldom there for long; he moves off, on his own volition.

Sometimes the question has been asked me, "Is it possible to keep a personal or family influence throughout a business as vast as Eaton's of Canada?" To me this is a matter of great interest, and I have thought about it often. Certainly I realize it is physically impossible for a Director to know every employee by name, yet I feel it should be possible for the employees to know the Director, by face, name and manner!

A few years ago our Stores in Toronto were picketed by some labour union people who were attempting to organize the employees into Local 1000. No sooner had the union representatives' ambitions become known than a group of our employees banded together, without any word to Company management, to form themselves into an organization called "Loyal Eatonians". Through a levy of 10¢ per member they financed a weekly paper in which they forcefully answered the unionists' arguments, and stated in no uncertain manner that they did not want to see Eaton's changed. They wanted *their* Company to be kept a family affair.

During those weeks of union activity and strike talk,

I went down to the College Street Store one morning, arriving before 8.30. It happened to be the day when the "Loyal Eatonian" paper was being handed out at the doors. I walked around the building, spoke to the girls who were on duty, and they were glad to see me. One of the older employees said to me, "You are down very early this morning, Lady Eaton." I replied, "Well, I'm not the only one, as you know." Next I went down to the Main Store and did the same thing there.

Perhaps that was of no weighty significance in strengthening Company-employee relations, yet I felt it was one way of showing my concern during a rather tense situation. If those people who worked all day for us could stand at the Store doors from 7 a.m. until 8.30 to prove their loyalty to the Company, then I felt I could very well get up and go down among them to give them a nod of encouragement. Not a single word about the strike or the union was mentioned during my various conversations. We talked the normal, pleasant small talk of any neighbourly acquaintances meeting in the early morning.

I served as a Director of Eaton's for twenty-one years, and for seven of those I was a Vice-President. My term on the Board spanned the period from the time of my husband's Presidency, through Mr. R. Y. Eaton's and to the beginning of the term of office of my son, John David Eaton. Because of my closeness to Mr. Timothy Eaton during the long-ago days, I feel I can say I have worked with all the Eaton Presidents.

The Board meetings were an important part of my continuing education; I learned much about business, and it is my modest hope that I contributed something occasionally about humanity in general, and the psychology of women in particular. Sometimes, when the talk rose to great heights about millions of dollars, I felt I couldn't follow my fellow-Directors; and whenever I reach a point where my understanding of the issue is not clear I am

sensible enough to refrain from comment. One thing I always knew, though, and that is that there are just 100 cents in a dollar.

Any woman employee of Eaton's who reaches the twenty-five-year service mark is given a diamond ring or a watch, whichever she prefers, by the Company. Alas for me, my job finished just four years short of that goal. But truly, I am not complaining!

CHAPTER X

ONE EVENING in the nineteen-fifties I was chatting with a few members of my family and the subject of child guidance happened to come up. I remarked to my son, "On reviewing our lives since I've been your only parent, I have come to the conclusion that you could have done with less direction."

He said, "Yes, Mother, on due reflection, so must I."

His wife turned to me, murmuring a dissent. "But all your children are so nice."

"Yes," I said, "but I agree with your husband. He and the others could have got along very well with less supervision. Because I had to do the deciding and guiding alone, I overdid it. I wanted my children to be perfect."

In the years following my husband's death it was this concern for the family that took me on many travels and much shuttling back and forth across the Atlantic; it also dictated the acquisition of temporary abodes in Europe. To stay at *Ardwold* was to remind ourselves daily of the loss we had sustained; also I was determined that each of the children would receive the education best suited to his individual needs. The boys must have the guidance and friendship of men, as well.

Walter Wily, Sir John's private secretary and financial adviser for years, was one of my towers of strength in those days. He was a wonderful friend to all of us, and no problem connected with the welfare and future of the children was too great or too small for him. It was Walter who found Davidson Ketchum and brought him into our circle. Mr.

Ketchum was not with us continuously, for he was training for the bigger job which he now occupies as Professor of Psychology at the University of Toronto; but he spent the long vacation with us in Muskoka, tutor and companion of the boys, and at other times joined us on travels in Europe.

Joe McCulley, now the popular Warden of Hart House, was often one of our group, as friend and mentor. We had met him first when he was counselling at Taylor Statten's boys' camp, and my sons had a warm admiration for him after their first season there. I remember in full detail how the boys once urged me to invite Joe "and the gang" down to *Kawandag* for a week-end. I was somewhat surprised when "the gang" turned out to be exactly forty boys! Nevertheless it was a wonderful week-end for all of us; indeed it is one of my happiest memories. Joe McCulley has become one of our dear friends, and several times during the years abroad we were able to persuade him to join us on our educational travels.

The first of our expeditions took place in August of 1922. I wanted my children to see and know their own country, and following Walter Wily's carefully planned itinerary we travelled through the Canadian West, over the prairies, through the mountains, and by steamer up the Coast and into the Yukon. Our party consisted of John David, Edgar and Gilbert, their full-time tutor Mr. Middleton, their French governess, and my devoted English maid, "Sharpie". Timothy had signed on that summer for work with a survey group in Northern Ontario, and Florence Mary, still a toddler, was left at home in capable hands.

Walter had arranged things so that at every point of stop-over or change we would be met by either a bank manager or an Eatonian to give us any help that might be needed. Wherever there was an Eaton store or buying office we broke our journey and met the men in charge.

That trip was one of my better decisions; the boys and

I still love to reminisce about the people and places we discovered. The real thrill came when we boarded the ship at Prince Rupert and headed north through the waters and islands of the north Pacific for Juneau. There we changed to the train that would take us to Whitehorse and Dawson City. The roadbed followed the winding river valleys, but we were so high and the gorges so deep that we felt at times as if we had risen to the eagle's private domain. Nothing I had read or heard had prepared me for the desolation of the first ghost town we encountered. The weather-beaten shacks and shops still stood, some without glass in their windows, and only a very few of them still having signs of present habitation. In one of these almost deserted towns we watched while two men ripped up floor boards in derelict stores and saloons; they were "prospecting" for gold dust which just *might* have dropped from careless fingers or ragged pockets a quarter of a century before when the big Rush was on and "dust" was currency. We visited the Anglican Church where Canon H. J. Cody of St. Paul's, Toronto, had once been curate, and we stopped in at the cabin where Robert Service, the sourdough poet, had lived during the boom days. We saw sweet peas six to eight feet tall with each blossom as large as a pansy and marvellously fragrant; all the familiar flowers of eastern gardens seemed to grow to giant size under the long hours of sunshine in that far-north corner of Canada. Fried moose steak was frequently on our menu at our hotel in Whitehorse, and blueberry pie was the favourite dessert.

The boat trip from Juneau southward to Vancouver opened up a new experience in dramatic beauty for us. The deep bays cutting back into the mountains reminded me of Norwegian fjords, only ours were on a vaster scale. Frequently the Captain would invite the boys and me up to the bridge, and he would tease us into peering ahead and guessing as to which outlet, or between which islands, our course would be; we were never right.

Vancouver was beautiful then, as always. We were guests of our friends, the T. A. Spencers, and of Victor Spencer at Point Grey. I remember Sunday dinner at the latter's home particularly, because my state of nerves during those months caused an embarrassing *faux pas*. My fork slipped and the whole helping of green peas flew in every direction over the dining-room. One of the boys piped up, "Now Mother, that's not done!" Everybody laughed, and Col. Spencer put me at my ease again. He was a very kind host indeed, and the following week he took us on a trip up the Sound and to the logging operations of the Powell River pulp company. It was interesting to see how they attached steel cables to the enormous tree trunks, then waited for the warning whistle as the engine was started, and the tiny cables high above carried the logs to the slide or truck. This was called "aerial lumbering", for the huge trunks were manoeuvred almost entirely through the air. What I didn't like was the way the operation broke down trees in its path, sturdy groves of perhaps twenty years' growth. These were consigned to "slash", and simply left to waste away, or to become tinder for a terrible forest fire in the future. Those were the years before Canadians were fully aroused to the importance of conservation; perhaps it was methods such as I saw that stirred us into action on this matter.

We had lunch in the camp, with Mr. Allan, the Scottish foreman, our genial host. The menu consisted of soup, roast beef, corn, mashed potatoes, bread and butter, two kinds of pie, cheese, tea or coffee. Mr. Allan answered all our questions about a lumberjack's life. He described the big breakfast in the early morning, and said that just as in France a little breakfast was offered at nine o'clock; dinner was at noon; supper at 6 p.m., and anyone still hungry before bedtime could have milk or tea or cocoa with biscuits. He stressed the fact that grapefruit and oranges came out by company boat several times weekly. I gathered that Mr. Allan thought mankind in general was

deteriorating rapidly, for he went on to say, "It used to be prunes, dried apples and molasses. Every man rolled up in his blanket but now, bless ye, we've got sheets and pillow-cases."

On our return trip we stopped over at Lake Louise, where the nice simple wooden chalet commanded the view of lake and glacier. The morning following our arrival we went by horseback to see the caverns beyond the adjacent ice field. It was a sobering feeling to dismount at the end of the trail, look down the vast glassy slope and realize we had to cross it by foot. Only Gilbert was allowed to ride because he was small and light on a horse's back. The guide put him on the lead horse, then walked ahead beside him, calling back encouragement to the rest of us. Some walked, some (those who hated heights) did the stretch on all fours, but eventually all of us made it, and heaved a huge sigh of relief when we were off the ice. The caverns, which were the reason for the outing, have left little impression in my mind for we were electrified when informed that the only route back to the hotel was the way we had made the outbound trip. So around 4 p.m. we turned round, and to add to the general dismay a heavy rain had begun. Within a few minutes we were soaked to the skin, and my feet rested in puddles inside my riding boots. I was most uncomfortable, for I am a side-saddle rider and at Lake Louise there were only western saddles. I had to put my right knee around the pommel most of the time and, except for lunch and the walk across the sheet of ice, I was in the saddle from ten in the morning till after six.

Some years later we did the western trip again as a family group. An immense new hotel competed with Nature's skyline at Lake Louise, but the same glacier lay there in its beautiful design, sparkling in the sun. Vancouver had grown visibly. One afternoon, looking out over the harbour, one of my sons said, "Mother, why don't we have a business in Vancouver?" I replied that already the city had four department stores which seemed enough for

the size of the community, but added, "Why do you ask?" "Because," he said, "this would be a marvellous place to sail." After the Second World War when negotiations for Eaton's purchase of the Spencer business were in the discussion stage, I reminded my son of that far-back conversation. "I am still of the same opinion," he declared.

This year, 1956, my son is making the trip to the Yukon and Alaska on his own yacht, accompanied by his wife and a group of Vancouver friends. Though it is a power boat, not a sailing vessel, his dream seems to have come true. In his love of waterways and marine transport he is exactly like his father, and when I picture my son with his party of guests on the yacht I am also reminded of what a friend of mine wrote of Sir John: "He loves a good boat and a good car, but he would like everyone to own them too. Failing that, he shares his with many."

Eventually my three eldest boys were settled in England to complete their education. Timothy was taking college tutoring and—even more important to him!—was hunting with the West Kent Hounds. John David was at Stowe. Edgar had entered a preparatory school at Winkfield Row, Bracknell.

I had sent them far away in order to give them a chance to grow up without being reminded too often that they would inherit wealth. It had become increasingly evident to me that their father's associates and relatives were of the opinion that Sir John's children should have "everything". A kindly thought, yet hardly conducive to proper training for work, and I knew that in England they would simply be part of the student body, and no one would give a second thought to their background in Canada.

For a time, therefore, I had a divided family: three boys across the ocean, and young Gilbert and Florence Mary with me at *Ardwold*. I was still fighting my nerves, resting every Monday in order to turn out for Directors' meeting on Tuesday, and worrying about my children, each in

turn. The two youngest were delicate and had had several coeliac attacks—although at that time I believe the medical term was "acidosis". The condition was not as well understood then as now, and diet control was less carefully worked out. My children's doctors believed that a warm winter climate would help prevent further attacks, and I was glad to have this advice, for here was my opportunity to take Gilbert and Florence Mary abroad, and settle somewhere in Europe where I would be not more than a day's journey from the boys at school.

I chose Cannes. I found a charming villa for our first year, but as it was a little far from town I moved to the *Villa Alexandra* for the second season. This place had been closed for some time, and I seemed to be the only person who could see any possibilities in it. The house was designed in the Moorish style, built around a paved courtyard with fountain, and it was necessary to cross this open section before one could enter the hall. Here, a caller on his first visit was inevitably startled by the life-size Nubian figures which flanked the staircase and held lamps aloft.

In a colder climate the *Villa Alexandra* would have been impossible, and frequently when the mistral blew for days on end the house was chilly, and weird also. Everything groaned or creaked or squeaked. Some of the Cannes people avowed the house was haunted, and, sure enough, we had been living there only a short time when we discovered the mystery of the bell. When every member of the household was in full view, on the terrace perhaps, the bell would shrill loudly through the house, and when we went inside to investigate, the indicator in the pantry would always be pointed to "9". But we laid that ghost well and truly. The electrician found a loose connection in one of the upstairs halls; it was so sensitive that the slightest movement, even a wind through the curtains, would touch the wires together and ring the service bell.

The *Villa Alexandra's* gardens were a delight. Camellias, mimosa and eucalyptus trees lavished their bloom and

perfume through the grounds. On moonlight nights in March and April the nightingales would sing their love songs, and their notes were like separate pearls falling into their appointed place on a necklace. How many nights did I sit at my window listening to that flood of melody and watching the dancing path of the moon over the Mediterranean! Sometimes, while loving the beauty of it all, I would find myself in tears.

But, slowly, we were coming back to normal health and spirits again. Gilbert entered a French school for boys, and Florence Mary began her French lessons at home. Every afternoon they had a date with the tortoise, Charles, and Polly, the parrot, on the terrace. Thursday being school holiday, we took weekly picnics either along the coast or into the mountains behind Grasse. We learned to know St. Pol, Antibes, Gorge du Loup, as well as the larger places such as Nice, Monte Carlo, Cap Ferrat and the fishing port of Ville Marie. Each community had its own character, each yielded something of interest to the explorer.

Cannes was to become very important to our family for another reason. It was there that I found the second daughter I had been looking for: Evlyn Beatrice, my adopted child, who was then past four years old, a bright-eyed, bright-complexioned little girl with short chestnut hair. My two daughters became friends quickly, and Florence Mary took special pleasure in showing all her treasures to her new sister, and dividing them with her. From that time forward, Florence Mary's health made noticeable improvement, and life for all of us had a happy expansion with Evlyn Beatrice's merry face and voice added to our family circle.

So far we had been in the habit of returning to Canada for each summer vacation. This of course became a big undertaking as the children grew, and their interests along with them. Closing a house, packing, catching trains and ships, meeting the rest of the family in London, sailing for home, opening houses in Toronto and Muskoka—the

routine was burdensome to me, and especially upsetting to young Gilbert who, like all coeliac children, needed peace and quiet as the major condition of his cure. On the advice of one of my medical friends in London I decided I must forgo our regular visits home for the next few years, and strive to keep to a really serene level of living. My thoughts turned immediately to the lovely old city of Florence, which had enchanted me on my first visit some time before. If I could find a comfortable house for us there, we would make that our headquarters in Europe.

The *Villa Natalia,* Via Bolognese, was, it seemed, waiting for us. It had been built for Queen Elizabeth of Roumania, the wife of King Carol I, but probably even more famous as "Carmen Sylva", the pen-name she used for many folk tales, essays and novels. She had died in 1916, a few years after Ferdinand and Queen Marie had moved into the spotlight in Roumania.

The house was a beautifully designed three-storey structure, L-shaped, in a restrained Palladian style. It rose high above the Via Bolognese, but some of its ground-floor windows looked directly on to the street. A cosy apartment by the entrance gate housed Abramo and his wife, Margarhita, the concierge. They were a faithful pair. She always had a smile as she opened the gates. He was a most willing gardener. However, as I was only a beginner in the study of Italian, and Abramo had no English, the garden showed our joint misunderstanding as to plantings, colour schemes, and so on, during the first season or so. Nevertheless it was a lovely place, laid out in the traditional Italian style with marble-chip paths and many huge urns filled with bloom according to the time of year. Sometimes it would be azalea season, or the peak period for the geraniums, or chrysanthemums; once, I remember, every pot held up a fine blue mist of garden flax. An old fig tree in one corner was the special haunt of my little girls; when the fruit was ripe they would sit up in the tree eating all the figs within reach, and spoiling their dinner. On the terrace side of the

garden stood a semi-circle of broken columns, and through these one could catch glimpses of the River Arno and its valley. Although the house itself was new, as Florence reckons time, the atmosphere was one to conjure up a feeling of the unhurried past.

Indeed, inside there was at the outset too much reminder of history. Mr. Acton, owner of the *Villa Natalia* and my landlord, was one of the English year-round residents of Florence. As an ardent collector and dealer in antiques, he had crammed the house with an amazing assortment of faded luxury from the sixteenth and seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and sometimes one had to find one's way through a space just six inches wide between great carved cabinets against the wall and fringed velvet chairs around the dining table. Each piece was ticketed with a full description *and* the selling price. I soon persuaded the owner to relieve the congested condition of the rooms and to conceal the tags. Also, for comfort and sturdiness, so necessary in a household with children, I introduced some simple couches and lounge chairs that were unabashedly of the twentieth century.

The *Villa Natalia* was our European home for several years. At Easter and in other vacation periods the boys would be with us, and on chilly nights our complete group would be comfortably gathered round a blazing fire of olive-wood in the great hooded fireplace. Our staff lent a reassuring flavour of home, for all through those years abroad we had Arthur Morris and his wife with us, and Mack, our chauffeur from *Ardwold.* Just as in France, Mack picked up a working knowledge of the local language with amazing speed. He always said that, having learned the Gaelic from his grandfather, it was easy to find his way in other tongues. With his fine brown eyes and glowing complexion he looked like an Italian and was often greeted as a native.

Mack's genius for reading maps, knowing exactly where we were and how far we had to go, made our many motor trips completely enjoyable. He had a natural faculty for

getting on with foreign police; it used to amuse me to observe how, after spending just a few days in a strange town, Mack always seemed to rate a smile and brisk salute from the police as we drove past.

I never had an uneasy moment with him, for he was always thinking of my comfort, and was almost intuitive in the way he sensed my wishes. The children loved him and he taught all of them to drive. When he died in Toronto, the year following our return, we Eatons were a sad group, every one of us having our special memories of his devotion and kindness. He had been an important part of our life for thirty-one years.

To live in Florence is to be tempted into almost daily explorations of its history and art treasures. I resolved not to waste time on hit-and-miss wanderings, but to follow a plan under the guidance of an expert. I was fortunate in having Prof. Tealdo Tealdi recommended to me. Every Tuesday he conducted us to one of the interesting places, churches, palaces, museums, beginning with the fascinating bits and pieces that survive there from pre-Renaissance times, and moving forward in orderly fashion, period by period. His knowledge of art and architecture, and his enthusiasm for explaining, fully and simply, made these weekly expeditions a delight as well as an education. A short time after the plan was initiated, he suggested we might be interested in a little preparatory study; so on each Monday evening he and his son, a photographer, came to the *Villa Natalia* to show us slides of the buildings and works of art we were to move among the next day. The magnificence of Florence became something infinitely more to us than a succession of names and guide-book references; he made us visualize the artists as flesh-and-blood people, coping with their problems and purposes.

I remember a remark one of my daughters made during our regular Tuesday "treat" in a *ristorante*, following the day's tour. We were having the girls' favourite, *bomboloni*,

which is a hole-less doughnut filled with jam, and Florentine coffee crowned with whipped cream. The young voice piped up, "I bet Brunelleschi liked *bomboloni* too. He must have got awfully tired and hungry working up there on that dome." I suppose that was the day we had had a visit to the fine Gothic cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore.

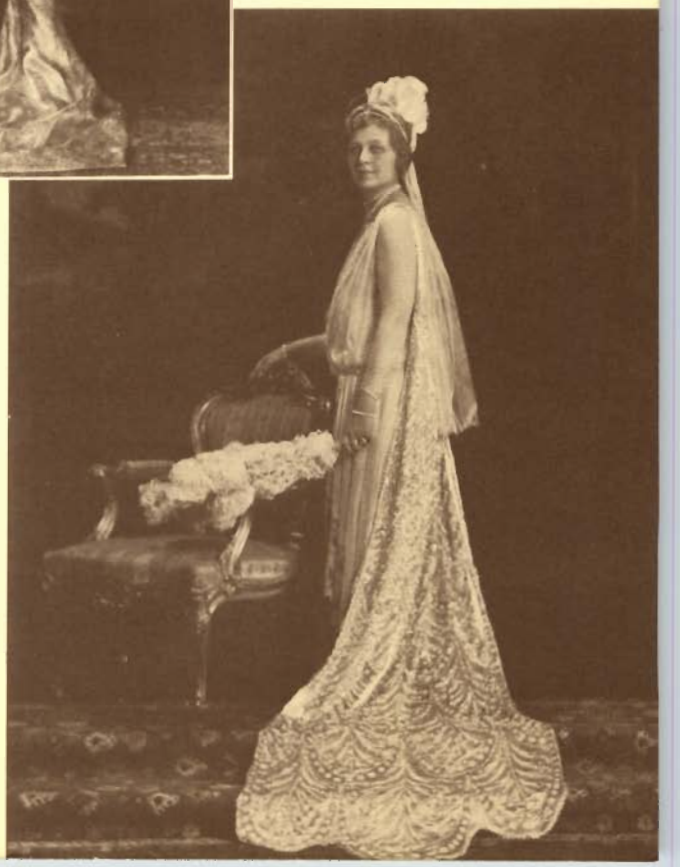
Both the girls acquired facility in the Italian language, and their enjoyment of Florence never flagged. In fact, they were happy to go back years later for a term of finishing-school at *Casa Malatesta,* under the direction of Madame L'Estrange.

Friends and relatives often visited us. My sister Anna spent one year at the *Villa Natalia,* joining us on our Tuesday jaunts, and taking special pleasure in the chamber music recitals in the Pitti Palace and the orchestra concerts to which I subscribed regularly. Anna had no Italian and sometimes found difficulty with the country's colloquialisms, even when translated into English. Once when Mrs. Acton was having tea with us, Anna mentioned our plan for taking a motor trip. She went on to say something about the weather, which had been chilly, and expressed the hope that it would be warmer, especially if we had to stay at inns without any heating arrangements.

"Oh," said Mrs. Acton, "don't let that worry you too much. Just tell them you want one or two priests in your bed."

Anna's face registered puzzlement, shock, horror, and Mrs. Acton (American-born but completely at home in her adopted city) rushed in with the explanation that a "priest" was the local term for hot-water bottle, just as in England that essential item of equipment was known as a "pig".

Florentine society was graciously hospitable. The Casardi family, in particular, became my good friends. The head of the Casardi house was also head of a long-established private banking firm in Florence. His sudden death was



Formal costumes, ranging over thirty years.

At top right: Flora McCrea in her wedding dress.

Above: Lady Eaton gowned for her concert at Massey Hall.

At right: Court presentation gown.

An artist's impression of the garden side of the *Villa Natalia*, Florence, Italy.

one of the unrecorded tragedies of the fascist regime in Italy. Mussolini's threats to take over all the nation's banking facilities had been a constant worry to Mr. Casardi, and he was expecting any moment to receive official word that his business was to be confiscated. One evening his wife had persuaded him to go with her to a concert. At intermission a messenger handed him a telegram; he opened it with a sinking heart, but the message was to the effect that his firm would be allowed to continue without government interference! Two hours later he suddenly collapsed and died. The good news had carried too much shock after all those weeks of anxious waiting.

The remaining members of the family decided to pay off all accounts and sell the firm. My close friend, Beatrice Casardi, now Signora Vigano, has been an active figure in the postwar upsurge among the arts and crafts in Florence. Her former interest in the handicrafts of the peasants on her father's estate has led her into a prosperous business, and one which dovetails happily with her husband's handweaving industry.

I have visited Florence several times since the war, and each time it is a delight to find my friendships among my former neighbours and acquaintances there growing stronger. But our *Villa Natalia* has become a *pension,* and on my first visit back I felt a lump in my throat as I moved from room to room and saw everything so different. A small corner room had been badly torn apart during the heavy bombardment exchanged across the Arno river valley at the height of the Allies' campaign in Italy. But the little fig tree still stands in the garden, and Abramo and Margarhita remain as an essential part of the establishment. When Margarhita saw me that first day I came to the gate, her face lighted up with excitement and she shouted over her shoulder, "Abramo, Abramo, venga, venga, My Lady é qui!" There were tears in all our eyes as the three of us went over the histories of the various relatives and friends, including the Morrises and Mack. Abramo and Margarhita

had stayed at the Villa throughout the war, and for twenty days and nights they had lived in the cellar while the shells screamed back and forth across the valley.

But for Margarhita and Abramo, and the others who survived those terrible days, the new regime of a freer, happier Italy is some compensation for the past, and certainly hope for the future.

My presentation at Court happened, all unexpectedly but with thrilling results for me, during our long family sojourn in Europe. We were having what amounted to a McCrea family reunion in London. My three sisters had been visiting England; and my nephew, Dr. Clifford V. Mulligan, and his wife, Isobel, were staying with me in the Hyde Park Hotel. I had had no thought of being presented, but one day toward the end of May I had had a pleasant meeting with our Canadian High Commisioner, Hon. Peter C. Larkin, and he had urged me to allow him to put in my name, and Mrs. Mulligan's, for the Court of June 12th. This was, of course, in the days of the full ceremonial Courts that marked the reign of King George V and Queen Mary. Normally it took many weeks, often months, for a "presentee" to order her gown, train, feathers, and in general prepare for this high social honour. I demurred at first, feeling that we could never accomplish all that had to be done, but Mr. Larkin brushed aside my excuses. The very next day Isobel and I began our arrangements.

That was the short-skirted era, when an outfit could be precisely described as one-third bodice, one-third skirt, one-third legs. For days I fought a battle with the dress designer, Redfern; I would *not* appear at Their Majesties' Court in a knee-length dress, and I said so at each fitting. Yet each time I went back the skirt length would have shrunk up to the point the experts thought "smart". At the last session my patience had worn thin. I showed them the length I wanted and said, "If you make it even one

inch shorter I shall wear one of my long evening dresses which I have with me. I'll put your train over it."

I won the argument.

The final preparations at the Hyde Park Hotel were hectic. The morning, which we had earlier thought we could spend "restfully", had been taken up by the hairdressers. The afternoon had had its special feature, and a thoroughly interesting one, with a garden party for Canadians given by the Earl and Countess of Clarendon at Pitt House. Isobel and I, accompanied by her husband, allowed ourselves just exactly one hour there, and we made the most of every minute of it, chatting with many friends, including the Duchess of Devonshire, wife of the former Governor-General of Canada. She was so kind as to ask to be informed when I arrived, and after she had given me a warm handshake she led me to a settee and small tea-table in a secluded corner. "I'm going to take every opportunity to sit down today," she said, "because I'll be on my feet for hours this evening." As one of Her Majesty's senior Ladies, the Duchess was present at every Court.

Back at the hotel, we found that my costume, complete, had been delivered, but Isobel's dress did not arrive until 7 p.m., the hour we were supposed to leave. (All the details of the route we were to take, the hour of departure from our residence, the gate through which we were to enter the Palace, had been sent to us well in advance.) At 6.30 I was dressed, ready to leave, but Isobel was still in her negligée which looked rather odd under her perfectly arranged headdress of coronet and feathers and veil. My sisters were with us in the suite, and so were Florence Mary and Evlyn Beatrice, up from their school in the country to see us off. When Isobel's box arrived there was a professional dresser in charge of it, and in less time than it takes to tell, the beautiful gown had been slipped over my niece's head without any disturbance of the feathers, and, with a hurried formal curtsy to our relatives, we were on our way.

I had brought my beige Lancia from Italy; it was a long, low, rather narrow car, and therefore absolutely ideal for the sidewalk sightseers who turned out in their hundreds to look at the people going to Court. Mack was driving, and Deacon, our London office chauffeur, was beside him, acting as footman. Ten minutes after leaving the hotel we were in position in the line of cars in Bird Cage Walk, and until 8.30 we sat there while the crowds passed by. The comments were uninhibited and quite refreshing as long as one kept one's sense of humour. Some young girls were more taken with our male attendants than with Isobel and me; they stared hard at Mack and Deacon—both of whom were plump, rosy men, perfectly groomed—and one cried, "Coo, look at the Siamese twins!" Another, with her eyes on Mack, said, " 'E doesn't enjoy 'is food, not 'alf." A woman pushing a wheel-chair in which was the thinnest, whitest old man I have ever seen, stopped near us. He was peering intently but obviously having difficulty seeing all he wished to see. I called out to her, "Wouldn't you like to wheel him up close?" She smiled her thanks, and replied, "Oh, thank you, ma'am, he doesn't have many pleasures." I turned to Isobel and said, "Take your train off your lap and let them see how pretty your robe is," and I did likewise. They thanked us and before they moved on they assured us, "You're the best-looking ladies we've seen, both of you."

Morris and his wife were watching for us, and they had compliments ready too. "We've looked them all over and there aren't any better," Morris declared. Several of the men from our London office, with their wives and some of the secretarial staff found us in the line-up and they also had nice things to say. Isobel and I were in a mood to enjoy every moment of the evening as the cars started to move slowly forward.

At the Palace entrance footmen opened the door and helped us out. We passed on up the stairs, over the proverbial red carpet, through lines of white-wigged *valets de chambre* in white satin breeches, white silk hose, buckled

shoes, brocade coats with jabots of lace, who directed us, with their batons, to the dressing-rooms. Inside, some of the women were putting last frantic touches to their costumes, or making use of the pause to rehearse their curtsies. Isobel and I decided to be calm and just trust that we had learned our lessons well. We had taken instructions in the Court curtsy from Miss Violet Vanbrugh, one of London's well-known actresses, and she had been an excellent teacher. She would say, "Walk up to me," then, after making us sink back on the supporting foot, she would order us to do it over again, "and remember, the earth will hold you up, and don't be afraid to step out firmly." It was important that we lift our heads after the moment of the full drop of the curtsy. She would say, "Imagine I am the King. Curtsy to me and look up, smiling. Then take three steps and do the same before the Queen." There was some difference of opinion in London about the matter of lifting one's face and smiling when presented to one's sovereign, but Miss Vanbrugh insisted on it.

All these details I tried to remember, but meantime there was much exciting distraction for the eye. At the door of the Throne Room a footman was stationed holding a wand; very expertly he flicked this under the lady's train which until that moment had been carried over her arm, and deftly spread it out. An officer took the card bearing her name, said "Move up," and the lady obeyed. One only moved as directed. We passed three such officers, the card being handed from one to the other as we proceeded. From the place where the third one stood there were just three steps necessary in order to stand in front of the King's throne. As the last officer announced the lady's name clearly, she advanced that short distance, curtsied to His Majesty, moved forward three more steps, curtsied to Her Majesty, then, taking three sidewise steps, keeping eyes towards the dais, she walked through the door to the Great Gallery.

I was glad that Miss Vanbrugh had held to her convictions about the upturned face and the smile, for both Isobel

and I were rewarded by the privilege of looking into George V's most kindly eyes and receiving a beautiful smile in return. How Their Majesties managed to retain their gracious composure during an evening of eight hundred presentations was a mystery, but also a lesson for the rest of us. Isobel and I—she was next in line behind me—must have been somewhere near the six-hundredth in the procession of presentees. Yet it was not a long-drawn-out ceremony, for that Court began at 9.30 p.m. and exactly two hours later we were leaving Buckingham Palace.

As the King and Queen left the Throne Room, preceded by the Lord Chamberlain walking backward, all the eight hundred ladies, lined up on both sides of the red carpet, curtsied twice—once to His Majesty, as he passed with his uniformed officers in attendance, and again to the Queen as she and her retinue, including the little pages carrying her train, moved by. The effect of all those slowly dipping figures reminded me of a gentle wind passing over a prairie field of grain, two undulating waves in succession. But the brilliance of the scene was beyond any comparison in my experience: the gowns and robes and jewels, the colours of the full-dress uniforms, the Beefeaters in their scarlet spaced at precise intervals along the walls.

The supper-room continued the impression of glittering splendour, and there Isobel and I resumed the pleasant conversation we had had in the dressing-room earlier with three women from India. Each wore a golden costume with matching sari, and they explained that this was the traditional choice for an event of great formality. They were the only ladies in the presentation line without trains and plumes, and their shimmering gold skirts and draperies, and many gold bracelets, made them quite distinctive among the rest.

As we left the supper-room we encountered Mr. and Mrs. Larkin, just emerging from the reception suite where ambassadors and representatives of the Dominions had gathered for their refreshments. The High Commissioner

and his wife told us that twenty-nine Canadians had been presented that night and "they made us feel proud," they both said.

On our way to the hotel Isobel and I were so happy over our evening at Buckingham Palace that we declared we'd like to go back the next night, to the Court of June 13th, and do it all over again! At any rate, some months later we did have an interesting opportunity to repeat everything we could of our Court experience. My friends of the Eaton's Girls' Club in Toronto asked if they could see the dresses and robes we had worn, and so I immediately came back with the question: would they like us to wear them and do our best curtsies? It was a wonderful evening. Isobel wore her parchment satin gown embroidered in green beads, the emerald green velvet train lined with silver lamé, the complete headdress of coronet and feathers. I turned out in my full regalia: the pink gown shading to deep rose at the hemline, the similarly shaded velvet train heavy with beading, my pink ostrich fan, my diamond tiara and feathers. We gave a little description of the general procedure of the presentation, answered questions, and when coffee was being served the girls swarmed around us to examine our costumes and study their construction.

The people of London loved their sovereigns' Courts and all the excitement along the streets during the presentation season. There was never a sign of envy or protest. They felt England had something no other country could aspire to, and they were proud of the tradition. I too have sometimes thought it is a pity that Courts have been abandoned, and the much less formal outdoor ceremony of garden-party presentations substituted.

It has been my good fortune to be presented to two of our sovereigns and their consorts: King George V and Queen Mary, and in later years to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Just before John David's marriage to Miss Signy Stephenson of Winnipeg, I had the joy of pre-

senting my future daughter-in-law to King George and Queen Mary. Then in 1937 I presented my two daughters, Florence Mary and Evlyn Beatrice, to King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. In both cases the full glory of that first Court experience was repeated, and it was fascinating for me to share in the great event with these young members of my family. On several occasions I have been a guest at the Royal garden parties, and was once honoured by a firm handclasp and friendly greeting by King George VI as he passed slowly among his throng of guests.

When I was visiting London soon after the Second World War Queen Mary summoned me to Marlborough House for an audience. Her gentle manner, easy grace and simplicity, charmed me, for through it all shone her strength of purpose and sense of duty. There was a radiance about her which enveloped her like an aura, and I think it never shone more brightly than on the day King George VI was crowned. I was fortunate enough to be in the Abbey on that occasion, and though the whole picture was historic and impressive I confess it is the figure of Queen Mary that occupies the forefront of my memory. She was the most regal of queens. She upheld and furthered the dignity of the Crown, and won a deep new affection for it from all the Commonwealth peoples; yet I realized, after my hour spent in her sitting-room at Marlborough House, that she was also a warm, fine human being, whom one could chat with easily, and in her eyes there was the unmistakable sparkle of humour too. It is good to remember her.

CHAPTER XI

ARCHITECTURE and house-planning have always fascinated me, and I could not say for certain whether this has been the cause or the result of my many building and remodelling enterprises. At any rate I have thoroughly enjoyed my experiences in this line.

After my husband bought the farm in King Township we used to have many animated discussions concerning the comfortable country home we would build some day. It was his intention to retire there. Meanwhile we used the existing small house on the property, modified it slightly and enjoyed it over the week-ends and any time we could drive out from town. Often we would bundle the whole family into the car and go out to the farm in the afternoon; Jack would fish our fine sheet of water, Lake Jonda, for a couple of hours, and we would have a leisurely dinner before returning to *Ardwold*.

Later, as the children grew, and along with them our circle of young friends and activities, I added more accommodation to the farmhouse, had its stucco exterior painted delicate pink with deep turquoise trim, and we called it the *Villa Fiori*. For a good many years we spent happy times there. The swings and tree platforms we built for our children are still in place between the house and the lake shore; nowadays it is the younger grandchildren who find them fun.

When we returned from Europe all of us were unanimously in favour of selling the *Ardwold* property, and making our permanent headquarters at King. It was a

foregone conclusion that the new house had to be big, for by the time discussions had begun with the architects, Allward & Gouinlock, two sons had married, and I knew it was inevitable that there would be other weddings on the agenda soon. I was determined that *Eaton Hall* would be ample enough for any and all family gatherings in future years. With all those peaceful rolling acres around us, a lake at the foot of the slope, and views to entice the eye in all directions, we decided to avoid the compact, rigidly tailored type of architecture and eventually agreed on an adaptation of the Norman chateau style. We kept the towers that are part of that tradition, incorporating two circular towers and one square, and making excellent use of that extra space in the interior plan, but we did not limit ourselves to the small windows of ancient France. As our farm is not far from one of the tributaries of the Humber River, it was a logical choice to specify the beautiful Humber Valley stone for the walls.

On the ground floor we have a laundry, cold rooms for fruit and vegetables, a staff dining-room and pantry, and two big rooms which, for want of better names, are known as sports room and ballroom. The truth is that these have seen more use for the activities of various organizations and fund-raising occasions than for private parties.

The first floor has the Great Hall as central feature; this connects the two wings, one of which contains library and music room, and the other the big dining-room, breakfast room in the tower section, kitchens, pantry, flower room, and also the office. What pleased and amazed me after we had moved in, was to discover that even in this much larger house there were actually fewer steps between the dining table and the cooking and serving areas of the kitchen than there had been in *Villa Fiori*. Indeed, throughout the new house the architects had given every possible thought to convenience in use and upkeep.

The second floor is equipped with day and night nurseries, staff common room, a small dining-room which I

use regularly, with kitchen and pantry off it; master suite including a tower sunroom, and four guest rooms with baths. Servants' bedrooms, pressing room, and plenty of trunk and general storage accommodation are included in the third floor layout.

Some of our special treasures from *Ardwold* are still with us, both indoors and out. Furniture and fireplaces that had been part of our environment so long, and family heirlooms from both McCrea and Eaton sides, have been fitted into the new scheme. In the garden we have retained *Ardwold's* old stone benches and the bronze figures that now decorate our lily pool. *Eaton Hall* grounds are mostly as nature left them, except that where cattle used to pasture is now a sweep of lawn, punctuated by flowering shrubberies. Throughout the acres of natural woodland we continue to plant bulbs and other plants to give colour every springtime. With no more pasturing permitted there, the trilliums have come back in full vigour, and these, with clumps of the pink lady-slippers and patches of dog's tooth violets, make Maytime a rare sight. As to bird life, I believe every species known to southern Ontario finds *Eaton Hall* a favourite stopping-place!

Gilbert Island, consisting of several acres and situated at the far side of Lake Jonda, was given a few years ago to the Recreation Department of Eaton's in Toronto. It is completely equipped for picnics and games; for water sports there are diving boards, diving tower, wading beach for small children, and boats. In summertime, even when I happen to be without guests in the house, I am seldom lonely, for I can look across the lake at the energetic groups having fun in the water and hear their shouts around the barbecue. I attend such outings only by invitation, for this part of the property is for the employees' enjoyment and without any "family" strings attached. All bookings have to be made through the Recreation Department in the Store. The Eaton Veterans like the place so much that they

book a date for next year on each anniversary outing; in 1956 their party totalled 700.

When the Second World War was upon us, it seemed as if *Eaton Hall* had been completed just in time to be of some service. Having discussed the various possibilities with my son, I decided I could help by bringing British children to live there with me for the duration. Mrs. Herbert Bruce had formed a small committee, and with Mrs. J. C. Fraser, Mrs. William Grant, Mrs. Robert Fennell and Mrs. MacBrien, I was asked to serve on it. Mrs. Vincent Massey, wife of our High Commissioner in London, worked very closely with us, keeping us informed and doing everything in her power in those first anxious months to facilitate the passage of children to Canada.

I had had a request from friends overseas to take three children—their own, a brother and sister, and a boy from Ireland, one of their distant connections. These three remained under my care for four years. Through the Committee, I received a mother, Cynthia Greville-Collins, and her three children, aged seven, five and nine months. Then, finally, came a Canadian-born mother from England, with her only child.

So, suddenly, my household expanded, and rooms and gardens were full of the laughter and squabbles of youngsters. As no money for support could be sent from Britain, this group of women and children became my responsibility at all times. I sent the older boys to Pickering College, and Primula, the oldest of the girls, was enrolled with an English girls' school that had been transferred in part to Branksome Hall, at the generous invitation of Miss Reade, the Principal there. Everybody in those difficult days was making a special effort to help, with no thought of reward. Miss Reade kept her housekeeping staff on during the summer vacation so that, on arrival in Toronto, children could be taken there and remain until they had been medically examined, before being sent on to the homes provided for

them. Doctors at the Hospital for Sick Children, themselves already overworked because of depletion of their ranks by the armed services, came on duty at outlandish hours in the morning and stayed late to give their special aid to these British children who were to be guests among us. Several of my charges had tonsillectomies without charge. Dr. Silverthorne made occasional calls at *Eaton Hall* to attend my youngest guests. He waved it off by saying, "It's such a rest to get out to the country now and then."

Although I worried frequently about all these extra responsibilities, I can look back now and realize that that was a happy time at *Eaton Hall.* I am sure I could never have got through it—what with duties at the Store, war efforts in general, and concerns for my own family — if Cynthia Collins and Evelyn Gooderham, mother of little Patricia, had not been so helpful and understanding. Early on, they said, "We'll look after the children, see to their clothes, and so on, and keep them in order," and they were scrupulous about letting me have rest periods. Indeed, they insisted that none of the children should be allowed to invade the Great Hall or main rooms unless especially invited. Sometimes one of their wards would escape and dream up some special mischief—as when young Thalia, Cynthia's daughter, got hold of a pot of bright red paint and started diligently to paint the flagstones on the terrace. When she visited me a year or two ago I showed her the still visible evidence of that escapade and we had a good laugh. Thalia is married now and has a lovely baby girl of her own.

My niece, Isobel Mulligan, and her girls would come out for week-ends whenever possible. An occasional guest was Malcolm MacDonald, then High Commissioner for Great Britain in Ottawa. He was a great favourite with the children, doing all sorts of athletic stunts for them and telling wonderful stories. Once when Their Excellencies, H.R.H. the Princess Alice and the Earl of Athlone, visited *Eaton Hall* for tea, the Governor-General asked if Malcolm

had done his parlour trick for us. I had to reply in the negative. "What a pity," said His Excellency. "He does a handspring and vaults right over the tea-table."

Bye and bye, that early war era drew to a close. A call went out for all the boys and girls of seventeen to return to Britain. Peter Eshelby said good-bye to us; he is now in the permanent Army. Paul Fry left; he now spends six months at sea and six months at home in Ireland. Primula joined the WRENS. To all of them and to the others, I had become "Auntie Flora", and still am. When the pressure of the war became heavier, and taxes and gasoline rationing made it necessary to close *Eaton Hall*, I was able to place Cynthia's three little ones with my good friend of Omemee days, Ada Shepperd—now Mrs. Albert Walker and living on a fine farm outside of Coldwater, Ont. Mrs. Greville-Collins had been summoned back to England to be near her husband, and that second separation for her two sons and daughter could have been very trying if it had not been for the completely fascinating, busy life they went to on the Walkers' farm. They learned all sorts of new skills, including milking twice a day, feeding the farm animals and keeping records, dressing chickens for the kitchen, working in the garden and fields, shovelling out trucks stuck in snowbanks. They attended the local school and church regularly, taking part in all the activities. When I visited the Greville-Collins in England after the war, staying with them at their charming house in the country, Castle Coombe, the children's father said to me, "I shall never cease to be grateful to Aunt Ada (Mrs. Walker) for what she has taught my children. I feel they are well prepared to look after themselves anywhere in this changed world."

On that trip both the Eshelby family and Mr. and Mrs. Greville-Collins insisted on discussing the matter of payment for the years the children had been with me in Canada. On my return to Toronto I consulted my son. His reply was, "That sum has been passed and forgotten as wartime expenses. Tell them the children in Britain

have more need of the money than we have." So it came about that the Eshelbys were able to establish a scholarship at Charterhouse in memory of their son, Richard, who was killed in the Far East, and also to contribute to the village war memorial. Mr. Greville-Collins found a worthy use for his funds too: he bought a boat for a group of boys apprenticed in the building trades, and donated it to their club at Putney Bridge on the Thames. I was delighted to be informed that it was to be called *The Lady Eaton,* and one time I went down with my friends to meet the coach and the enthusiastic crew. The boat has participated in annual races on the Thames and is in use almost constantly by the boys who hurry to their club when the day's work is done.

Cynthia and her family have become even closer to me as the years go by. While the war was on and she was busy working every day in a canteen, she nevertheless kept open house for my Service relatives and friends in England, insisting on giving each of them a key to her Park Lane flat and urging them to consider it their home in London. My nephew and two sons-in-law found it a great haven. All of us are devoted to the family, and I am never within a hundred miles of Cynthia without making a point of having a visit with her.

It is a special satisfaction to me to know that two of my wartime children have returned to Canada to complete their professional training, and with the eager intention of making this country their permanent home.

My "memory's wall" has many pictures of friends who came into my life all unexpectedly through the upheaval of war. *Eaton Hall* was a point of call for many young men in uniform while we were there, and of course later when we turned it over to the Navy as a convalescent home it was a place completely "in uniform". The big house did indeed find a service to contribute during the war.

I remember the time the delightful young Norwegian

airman, von Cleeve, appeared on the scene. A big fete was being held in the gardens by the Eaton Employees' War Auxiliary; there were booths with articles for sale, guessing games, tests of skill, refreshment tents. Mrs. Albert Matthews, wife of the Lieutenant-Governor, opened the affair, and before the gates closed in the evening it was estimated that some 4,000 people had been clocked through.

I asked the members of the executive to have supper with me, and von Cleeve was brought along by an acquaintance. During the meal the news leaked out that the airman had a forty-eight-hour leave, but no plans for making use of it. I invited him to stay with us and try for some fish in Lake Jonda the next day. From that time forward he spent almost every leave at *Eaton Hall*, and occasionally brought one or other of his Norwegian friends to meet us.

The following Christmas we had three airmen from overseas with us: von Cleeve, and two Englishmen who were frequently guests at my son's house. That Christmas stays prominently in my mind. Our seven British war guests played about with their toys, and I had my first three grandchildren present, including eighteen-months-old Timothy, who had come with his parents from Winnipeg. We had special toasts after dinner, and I remember von Cleeve proposing one to his hostess and saying, "If I get through this war, I shall come here to my home in Canada." Something of the same thought was expressed by one of the British pilots, as he proposed the good health of his friends, John David and Signy. Alas, neither of those fine young men was to realize his dreams. Von Cleeve was shot down on his first flight over France, and a few weeks later my son received word that his R.A.F. friend had been killed while on a bombing mission.

A year or so after, another charming young man was to take us almost by storm. At that time I was staying with my niece, Isobel and her two daughters at their house in Toronto. Dr. Mulligan was overseas, serving as M. O. with the Toronto Scottish, and he as well as the others of the

Photographs by Everett Roseborough

Eaton Hall in autumn. The house is built of stone from the Humber Valley.

The Great Hall at *Eaton Hall*, King City, Ontario.

With Paddy, her Irish hunter, for many years the darling of the *Eaton Hall* stables.

family urged me to make my home with Isobel after *Eaton Hall* was closed. I brought my faithful maid along, and she took over the cooking, doing an excellent job of it too. We had a smoothly operating, all-woman household, and for the two years of my stay I can't recall a single discordant moment.

One miserable, rainy October Saturday I had been working in my room on a speech which I was to deliver to a Salvation Army gathering that afternoon. When I came down to lunch my niece said, "A young Englishman called several times on the phone, asking for you, but he didn't leave any message. I'm sure he wants to sell you a vacuum cleaner." I thought no more about it, but at 6 p.m. when I returned, damp and chilled to the bone, and decided to thaw out in a hot bath, the young Englishman tried again. My grandniece, Flora, knocked at my bathroom door and said he was waiting on the telephone. So I hurried into a bathrobe and picked up the phone. The clipped voice said, "Charles Vyner here. I have a letter to you from my cousin who was one of the aides at Government House in Ottawa." He mentioned a name I knew. "When may I bring it to you?"

"Have you had dinner?" I asked.

"No, ma'am."

"Where are you?"

"At the Grosvenor Hotel on Yonge Street."

"Will you come to dinner with us this evening?"

He said he would be happy to do so, and I told him how to find us. So, promptly at 7 p.m. young Charles Vyner walked into our group, and was to become a most welcome visitor any time he could spend a leave away from his Fleet Air Arm training school at Goderich, Ont. On that first evening he helped wait on table, and later dried the dishes for the cook while young Flora put them away. He accepted our suggestion that he go to the hotel for his bags and spend the week-end with us. Between breakfast and church time the next morning he had put his room in

perfect order. After the service I introduced our young guest to Dr. David A. MacLennan, pastor of Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, and he invited Charles to sign our guest book for the Armed Forces. Next day Dr. MacLennan sent a post card to Charles' mother, Lady Doris Vyner, to let her and his father, Commander Vyner, know that their son had been a worshipper at our church, and that he looked well and fit.

Charles had suffered a recent sorrow in the death of his sister, Elizabeth. She was two years older than he, and while serving with the WRENS had contracted sleeping sickness. I think he enjoyed visiting us because Mary, my grandniece, was the same age as Elizabeth. He and Mary became great friends, taking long walks all over Forest Hill Village, going to movies and joining groups of her friends. Once he vowed he had a wonderful time as the only man in a party of thirty-five girls, Mary's buffet supper for her old school friends. He used to tell her how he would like to settle down in a house like the Mulligans', and how he shrank from the responsibilities of an estate like *Studley Royal,* which he would inherit.

Every ten days or fortnight it became routine for the telephone to ring and the cheerful voice on the other end to begin, as always, "Charles Vyner here. May I come up?" He loved ice cream and when he knew he and his group would be "pushing off" for England soon, he said, "I'm eating all the ice cream I can possibly eat, so that I'll tire of it, for there won't be any in England." He wrote us frequently after he left. Then one day Dr. MacLennan received a letter from his mother in which she asked him to tell my niece and me that Charles had been killed; he was serving in the Far East, and on returning to the air carrier after a mission his plane had crashed. He was just nineteen years of age, one more of England's youth to give his all for freedom.

I wrote to his mother and had a wonderful letter in reply. She asked me to be sure to let her know when any

of us would be visiting England as she would like so much to meet Charles' Canadian friends.

On my first trip abroad following the war, my grandniece, Mary, accompanied me, and before we sailed on the *Queen Elizabeth* we had a cable from Lady Doris Vyner asking us to spend our first week-end with them. They were charming hosts. The beautiful old house (a Wren design) at *Studley Royal*, which is situated not far from Ripon, had been destroyed by fire some time before. During the war years it had been used as a girls' school, and the disaster had happened just at the time the movers were packing up the school equipment and the owners were looking forward to settling in their own home again. Lady Doris and her husband were using the carriage house, also designed by Wren, and built around a quaint cobblestone court. It was there that we stayed—in small, charming, perfectly proportioned guest-rooms overlooking a narrow terrace, a small garden and thence to the fields where the Vyners' cattle were grazing. The estate is large and well known in agricultural circles for its fine cattle and hogs. Fountain's Abbey, a picturesque survival from the far past, is situated in the grounds, and near it is an old stone house with mullioned windows which the owners rent to friends. It was in this house that Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, unveiled a stained glass window, a memorial to Elizabeth and Charles. We were shown the memory books of snapshots of these two who had died so young. In Charles' book, after the photographs from babyhood to the last studio portrait taken of him in the uniform of the Fleet Air Arm, there was pasted in the message from the Admiralty: "Regret to inform you . . . " The next page showed the note of sympathy from King George VI; after that, my letter from Toronto; and that was all.

We talked of Charles and lived over again our happy evenings and week-ends with him. Mary recalled some of their conversations, and mentioned his comment about liking to live in a small house instead of facing the prospect

of keeping up a big place like *Studley Royal.* His mother said, "That consoles me a little, for it's evident Charles did not feel equal to the task of caring for the estate."

When we said our good-byes, Lady Doris said, "It's not often we meet as strangers and part as friends." Through Charles we have indeed become friends, and each time I am in England I have the pleasure of seeing Commander Vyner and Lady Doris. Once, when I was visiting them, I particularly admired a beautiful new colour in their display of geraniums. Lady Doris urged me to take a plant back to Canada with me, but I had to explain that importation of growing things is very carefully controlled, and one must get a licence from Ottawa and so forth. When I was leaving, and within a few hours of catching my transatlantic plane at the airport, Lady Doris broke off a stem holding a perfect bloom, tucked it into my coat lapel, and said, "I'm sure there is no rule against a lady wearing a flower in her buttonhole." On the plane I asked the stewardess to put my flower in a glass of water. When I got home to *Eaton Hall* about twenty-four hours later, my first duty was to turn over the geranium stalk to the head gardener. From that hazardous beginning we now have hundreds of the magnificent flame-coloured geranium which I have christened our "Lady Doris" variety. Last year when I reported our success to Lady Doris, and gave her a picture of them massed in pots against our spiral staircase, she was elated and asked me to convey special congratulations to the gardener at *Eaton Hall.* "He must be very good indeed," she remarked, "for I sent several plants to the Castle of Mey but they did not thrive there." Lady Doris is an old school friend of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, and while Her Majesty's Scottish Castle of Mey was being remodelled and furnished, the Vyners were hosts to the Queen Mother at their windswept summer home near by.

Truly, life has been good to me in the matter of friendships. Some people seem to think that one does not make

new friends after middle age. That has not been my experience. This world is full of potential friendships, and all one has to do is be responsive to the opportunity to make them real and lasting.

CHAPTER XII

MY OCCUPATIONS and interests have changed from time to time, but if for any good reason I have to give up something I have worked to help, I do not lose my concern for it. When a project has proved it is no longer needed, or if I feel it is being mishandled, I give it up completely.

My life has been a busy one. Occasionally I have had deep flashes of conviction that bringing up six children must always be a full-time job for any woman. At the same time I have been aware that the person must not be totally submerged in the mother; a woman should have opportunities to extend her knowledge of the world and events, and to widen her interests and develop her talents.

A cause that is worthy can be a real challenge to one's energy and thought; also, being part of a team is not only stimulating—it can broaden contacts, and deepen respect for our fellowmen and women. My job with the Patriotic Fund in World War I showed me that. It was a privilege to work with such women as Mrs. H. P. Plumptre, the brilliant wife of the rector of St. James' and long remembered in Red Cross circles; with Mrs. Sidney Small, pioneer woman alderman in the Toronto City Council; Mrs. Arthur Van Koughnet who worked day and night in the collecting and forwarding of soldiers' comforts; and others such as Mrs. E. G. Hodgson, Mrs. R. J. Christie, Mrs. Harold Bickford, Mrs. Albert Brown, Mrs. Reginald Pellatt.

The care of the sick, the aged and the young has always engaged my interest. For some years I served on the Board of the Home for Incurable Children—and saw with my

own eyes what that group of women accomplish year by year on a basis of faith and prayer alone. I was also able to give some service as a Board member to the Belmont Homes, which were then three separate buildings given over to aged men, aged women and a refuge for girls. Since my time Dewart House has been set up under the same Board, as a home for aged couples—a real step forward in looking after our old people who have few resources. Would there were more of these facilities! Sometimes European countries are able to show us leadership in such matters. When I was in Holland two or three years ago I saw special provision for the aged, among state-sponsored apartment developments; the old couples occupied one-story blocks, to avoid the necessity of stair-climbing, and each nicely equipped apartment had a cheerful view over lawns and flower beds. If the Netherlands with its comparatively tiny land area can take action of this kind, surely we in Canada could find the space, the money and the heart to take special thought for our needy elder citizens.

Ever since the formation of the congregation of the Timothy Eaton Memorial Church (it was the gift of Mrs. Eaton and Sir John in memory of Mr. Timothy Eaton) I have been active with one group or another there. I sang in the choir for some time, and have occasionally supplied for an absentee soloist. On the death of Sir John I was asked to take his place on the Board of Trustees, and I have served there ever since. When the family later built the new chancel in memory of my husband, I was entrusted with the choosing and ordering of the vestments. This led to some interesting research. In London I went to the Dean of Westminster Abbey who was an authority on church ritual and symbols. He amused me very much by declaring that "The friends of cathedrals, aided by their architects, have done more to damage beautiful churches in England than Cromwell and his army!" He thoroughly disapproved of anything but the simplest Communion Table, absolutely plain on top, with only the Cross, candles,

and books on proper stands whether of brass, silver or gold. Flowers, he said, should never be placed higher than the level of the table, *never* on it. In Timothy Eaton Memorial Church we have adopted that rule.

I formed the Sanctuary Guild and over the years have continued as Honorary President. The Guild personnel changes from time to time, but always the same sense of devotion prevails, and both the pastor and the trustees speak highly of this group's fine service. It was Mrs. F. N. G. Starr, as convener, who did the valuable initial organizing and her interest has never waned. Just to mention her name is to be reminded of the many worthwhile endeavours in which Mrs. Starr has participated. Neither she nor her sister, Mrs. W. D. Ross, widow of a former Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, has never spared their sympathies or their purses to support causes of merit. It is a privilege to number them among one's friends.

The Art Gallery of Toronto and the Royal Ontario Museum have frequently asked me to serve on committees, and no other public institutions have given me greater feelings of pride in the standards maintained. It was during the days of Dr. Currelly's curatorship that I became interested in the Museum. He loved and knew Chinese art, and it is to him and to the support given him by Mrs. H. D. Warren that Canadians owe so much for the inauguration of what is now one of the finest—perhaps *the* finest—collections of Chinese art anywhere. Dr. Currelly, who could always make his own subject fascinating in conversation, used to tell me about some of his exciting finds and purchases. One summer he heard of an important Ming Dynasty group that was about to be offered on the market at a bargain price. Only one Museum director, Mrs. Warren, happened to be in Toronto at the time. He consulted her immediately, and asked if she thought he dared buy the collection at the price of $10,000. Mrs. Warren replied that she was of the opinion that he "dared not miss

it," and went on, "I'll advance the money till the Board meets in September." Knowing her, I was positive that if the Board had objected to the outlay she would gladly have assumed the whole investment rather than have the Museum lose the opportunity to add to its treasures. Her name appears as donor on various lovely things—laces through history, for example—now displayed in the Museum's glass cases for everyone to see and study.

I enjoyed working with Mrs. Warren in various spheres of activity. She was a stimulating person with her crisp, business-like manner, her severely plain clothes, and always her shrewd judgment on matters large and small. For years, following the death of her husband, she served as Chairman of the Board of his firm, The Gutta Percha & Rubber Company, yet at the same time kept up her interests in Girl Guides and several philanthropic organizations.

In the summer of 1939 I had accepted an invitation to luncheon with Mrs. Warren at the Ladies' Club. I always kept my engagements jotted down in a book, but occasionally forgot to consult it, as on that day. The weather was so beautiful I had said to myself at breakfast, "I'm free—I'll drive down to Lindsay and Omemee today," and so I left at 8.30 a.m. When I arrived at my destination I had an urgent call from Walter Wily in Toronto to remind me of my luncheon engagement. I was covered with confusion, and all I could do was ask him to telephone my apologies to Mrs. Warren. On arrival home that evening I was informed that another date had been set for our luncheon meeting.

That time I made sure I turned up at the right hour, right place, right day. Mrs. Clara McEachren and Mr. Charles Band were present, and very quickly my three friends came to the point: would I accept the office of Honorary President of the Community Chest? I was startled. "What!" I said, "do you really think I can be trusted in that position when I have already shown you how I can forget an engagement?" But they were persuasive,

and I believe what finally made me accept was Mr. Band's cautionary remark, "Don't think you won't have to work, even though the job is honorary, for you will!"

That was a strenuous campaign, for the war had begun by the time we were busy with executive meetings and in the pressure of wartime the public can quickly lose sight of pressing responsibilities within the local community. At one of our meetings the question of lowering the Chest's objective was brought up. My comment was, "If the need is as great as you think and say it is, wouldn't it be foolish to ask for less than will supply the need?" So the original sum was kept as our goal, and it was a wonderful satisfaction to finish the drive with the full amount in hand.

My associates were a hard-working, devoted band of men and women, giving days and evenings and weeks of their time in this vital cause. Mrs. Harry Tedman was in charge of the women's section and did a magnificent job; others I enjoyed working with were Edgar Burton, Gordon Perry, Robert Fennell, and countless men and women collectors who made their rounds to knock on doors in all weathers. I drove in from *Eaton Hall* every day of the campaign, and had a full morning's program at our King Edward Hotel headquarters before going on my speech-making rounds later.

One evening I was to address a large group in the Crystal Ballroom of the King Edward. I was nervous, perhaps tired, and so I wrote out my speech beforehand, and just hoped it would not be too obvious that I was reading it after the chairman called on me. That was a vain hope—but also a good lesson for me. When the meeting ended and I was leaving with my niece, she said, "Auntie Flora, you must never read a speech again. You talk much better than you read tonight." So I have since followed this good advice. I write out what I want to say, read it aloud at least three times, and when the hour to deliver the speech arrives I can, with the help of a few headlines on a small card, offer the points I wish to make quite naturally.

Some years later—I think it was during Mr. Robert Fennell's term of presidency—I decided I should resign from the Community Chest organization, in order to make way for another woman who could add something new and fresh in leadership. But, alas, no appointment was made to fill my place. I have always felt that a woman serving in an advisory capacity can help to keep the friendly human touch, even in a big undertaking like the annual Community Chest.

During the Second World War a good deal of my time was taken up with the wonderful war work done by the Eaton's employees. The organization had started out as an all-woman effort, and we had had an initial meeting in the Eaton's Girls' Club, with a fine panel of Red Cross speakers, such as Mrs. Wallace Campbell of Windsor, Mrs. Plumptre, Dr. Routley and others. Not to make the evening too serious, we asked the E.G.C. executive to present a short program contributed by members, and I well remember how Miss Elizabeth Yorke, the director of our Eaton's Hostess Shop, was the hit of the occasion with her original verses entitled *'Arriet and the Red Cross*, delivered in inimitable style. Dr. Routley, at the close of the meeting, asked if he could borrow Miss Yorke for the duration! Mrs. Campbell added her word of appreciation too—and indeed from that day forward she has always addressed her business letters and orders to Miss Yorke as "Dear 'Arriet".

From that meeting sprang the Eaton's Girls' War Auxiliary, with Miss Leda Henders, senior secretary in our Executive Offices, as President, and a very able committee elected to work with her. Miss Henders accepted on condition that I would join her as Honorary President, and of course I was delighted to help. From this beginning in Toronto the E.G.W.A. became virtually a national force, for in each community where there was an Eaton's store there was bound to be an active local group of women employees dedicated to aiding the war effort in every way. Soon the men asked to be included in the membership,

and so the name was changed to the Eaton Employees' War Auxiliary. Many of the girls took driving lessons in the Red Cross classes, and after hours drove trucks or ambulances on regular shifts. They studied first aid and were able to give expert voluntary service when required. Some groups visited hospitals; others made and packed comforts for overseas; still others were on regular duty at the servicemen's canteen in downtown Toronto. Their services would be too long to list here, and in any case each Auxiliary found different needs to be met, and different uses for the money raised, according to its locality. Some of the major gifts to Britain were the fully equipped tea-vans which proved so useful in the bombed-out areas, and shelters for servicewomen at their camps. These last were sent direct to Mrs. Churchill who turned them over to the Y.W.C.A. for distribution and management. Each donation of this kind bore the name of the Eaton Employees' War Auxiliary. I was proud to be the organization's Honorary President for the whole of Canada, and counted it a privilege to visit the different groups from time to time and to see the remarkable scope of the service they were rendering.

I was already a grandmother when I rode in my first hunt. I had been interested in the career of the Toronto North York Hunt for a long time, but rather as a sympathetic outsider and one who loved horses and invigorating outdoor activities of all kinds. Years ago when we were staying at the *Villa Fiori,* long before *Eaton Hall* was started, the Hunt had met there. George Beardmore was M.F.H., Charles Morris was the Huntsman, and such well-known enthusiasts as D. L. McCarthy, Hilton Tudhope, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Robinson, H. C. Cox, Lynn Plummer were among the group. I followed their cross-country route as best I could in the car, accompanied by my daughters. A few days afterward Mr. McCarthy came to see me by appointment and gave me a history of the Toronto Hunt and its urgent needs at that time, because the Master, Mr.

Beardmore, facing financial reverses, was unable to continue his generous gifts. He had built the Eglinton Hunt clubhouse and secured sufficient land for local horse shows, competitions, and a training school for children. So, from that time when I joined with a few others in helping the Hunt out of its deep waters, I had naturally been interested in following its development.

Talk of hunting and horses had been constant within the family, for my son Timothy loved this sport above all others. In England he had been Master of Great Bradley and Newmarket for three years, and in 1933 D. L. McCarthy sought him out to ask him to become Joint Master with him of the Toronto North York. Mr. McCarthy, who is now a close friend of our family, always gives Timothy credit for being a fearless rider and knowing the rules of the chase thoroughly. He is meticulous about the etiquette of hunting and the proper kit. He brought his own terrier from England and for several years used her to rout the fox from his earth.

In 1935 Mr. McCarthy resigned the mastership, and Timothy then invited Mr. Aemilius Jarvis to join. They hunted together for two seasons, and each quickly developed an affectionate respect for the other, regardless of the difference in age. One morning in late August, we were having Hunt breakfast at the *Villa Fiori*; I had been in the field with them and was feeling the usual exhilaration that comes after a good, hard ride. Master Jarvis, beside me, rose and addressed the members thus: "As you all know, my Joint Master, Timothy Craig Eaton, has resigned. We all regret it very much, no one more than I. I have asked his mother, Lady Eaton, if she will do us the honour to succeed her son as Joint Master." The warm outburst of applause amazed me. I thanked them all, and told them I would do my best to be worthy of this honour.

This I have tried to do. As a rider, I am not too bad, but I have had to recognize my limitations, both of age and of time available. But the Toronto North York Hunt con-

tinues to hold a real place in my affections. We are all friends. No one would ride by, leaving an unfortunate member on the ground or a horse running loose. Some of the old-guard members still turn out, but the majority are younger people, and every one of them so thoughtful of me and seeking my approval for every decision. Meeting with them renews my youthful spirit. I have been Joint Master with several good friends: Mr. Frank Proctor, who succeeded Mr. Jarvis; and now Mr. Clifford Sifton. Sometimes three generations of a family have hunted with us.

One morning two of my grandsons were following the horses in the station waggon. They parked at a point where we jumped a fence into the road. As I came over I noticed some lively chatter and laughter out of the corner of my eye. Later I asked the chauffeur what the joke was. He replied, "Master John said, 'Grannie doesn't do badly for an old lady, does she?' " It was a compliment in its way, and I was grateful.

The business of running *Eaton Hall Farm* has always been one of my lively concerns. We have been fortunate in our farm superintendents—first Mr. Peter Whytock, and now Mr. Gerald Walker, both of them outstanding in their knowledge and application of it to the practical development of a large property.

Away back when the farm was a new venture with us, we had started with a few Holstein-Friesians. When my husband was away in Florida, recovering from an attack of laryngitis, the farm manager asked permission to buy a nine-months-old pedigreed bull, suddenly available. It was so costly that Walter Wily advised me to be cautious. My answer was that we needed the bull in order to build up our herd; therefore we ought to buy him. Walter said, "But how can I explain to Sir John when he gets back?" I replied: "If I asked him to give me a diamond tiara he would do it, so just tell him I'd rather have the bull." So,

from the day he arrived, the animal was nicknamed "Tiara".

We have won many prizes for our stock, and in 1955 I was presented with a championship shield as the only woman breeder in Ontario. One of our great milk producers was of the famous "Rag Apple" breed, a cow known to us all as Susie. Nobody could ever look at her contours without being vastly impressed, and I remember how Princess Alice and the Earl of Athlone stood and gazed at her when we made the rounds of the stables one day. For years after, Her Royal Highness would ask me, during our visits together in London, "How is Susie?"

Loving horses, and realizing I could not continue to hunt forever, I consulted Mr. Walker and our groom, Bob Hollingsworth, about the possibility of breeding a hunter class horse. They were as enthusiastic as I was, and so we were launched. One of my breeder friends only the other day remarked how extremely fortunate we have been with only three or four mares, for we now have a complete hunt team of our own breeding, and have accumulated numerous prizes. Our hunters are from a thoroughbred dam or mare, bred to a quarter- or half-bred stallion—or sometimes in reverse order. They have good bone and are an excellent type for a big hunting country like ours in southern Ontario.

Nearly every year we have groups of breeders and other guests at *Eaton Hall* during the Royal Winter Fair season. I have been an honorary director of the Fair for some time, and find my associations there stimulating, and educational too when I can go back to the farm and discuss trends and developments with Mr. Walker.

One of my special interests in recent years has been the Canadian theatre. Drama and the stage have always delighted me as a study, and probably some of my early lore came from Mrs. Timothy Eaton, who was a talented amateur actress with a phenomenal gift for memorizing. In

the long-ago nineteen-hundreds I have seen her in Shakespearean roles in the theatre of the academy she founded, the Margaret Eaton School of Literature and Expression. Mr. Eaton had built a lovely, small copy of a Greek theatre on North Street, near the corner of the present Bloor and Bay Streets; this was the school headquarters and was under the direction of Mrs. Emma Scott-Raff (later Mrs. George Nasmith).

My first love among the arts is and always has been music, and in Toronto we can rejoice over the fact that we do have opportunities to hear much fine music year by year. But for years after the ascendancy of the movies, the legitimate theatre languished, until hard-working amateurs themselves took a hand and gave the public once more an opportunity to see live players in performance. In Stratford, Ont., Tom Patterson's fulfilled dream has been the crowning achievement, and the ultimate proof of how important these little theatre groups were, and how worthwhile were their early struggles. What gladdens my soul is that the Stratford Shakespearean Festival has become far more than the town's or the Province's or Canada's enterprise, but belongs to the world of imaginative people everywhere; it spreads before them each year a feast of art to which they can look forward confidently.

Out of the Stratford Festival has developed the Canadian Players, a touring company doing outstanding plays with the minimum of expense. I have been happy to serve as a member of their governing body. Tom Patterson's wife, Robin, took on the heavy job of managing this pioneering group, and with her is Miss Laurel Crosbie. Never were two more intrepid and enthusiastic managers! They have taken their fine troupers into the remote towns and villages in the western U. S. and Canada and through northern Ontario, driven their station waggon over thousands of miles to arrange bookings, inspect halls or auditoriums or whatever facilities might be used, and so splendid is their work and the quality of the Canadian Players' per-

formance that wherever they have once been, they are wanted back again. In this way new audiences are being created for the Stratford Festival, and indeed for any fine theatre; young artists are being employed, trained and held together for the further improvement of their work in their chosen field. Efforts of this kind, which as I well know would have been scoffed at as impossible in Canada a quarter of a century ago, are going to expand the horizon for all the arts among our people, and I for one have felt very honoured to be asked to help advance this cause.

I suppose I should admit that one of my favourite occupations is travelling. My lifetime delight in going places and seeing old friends and meeting new ones has been accelerated in recent years since air travel has become everywhere available. I seldom get into one of the comfortable big planes without remembering my first experience off the ground. It began in Muskoka, where the famous Billy Bishop, V.C., (Jack's niece's husband) and his equally famous flying friend, Colonel Billy Barker, had started an air service to Toronto. This was a year or two after the First War, when "crates", as the machines were called, were crates indeed! My husband was in Toronto, and for some reason I had decided I must get to the city quickly. Colonel Bishop said he would take me. The plane was equipped with pontoons and I boarded it at our *Kawandag* dock, after leaving word that Sir John was to be telephoned and asked to meet me with the car. I sat in the open cockpit for almost two hours as we made our "lightning" trip to the city. Jack was waiting for me at the Toronto waterfront, and never have I seen a more perturbed husband! "You, a mother of five children, risking your life in a thing like that!" On the way up Yonge Street, his driving was so erratic that I finally burst out, "Look, dear, I may have been taking a risk when I went in the plane, but that was nothing compared to the danger I am in right now!" He

couldn't help laughing and so the tension eased, and he drove to *Ardwold* in his usual careful manner.

Today I feel perfectly at home in an air liner, and I find an extra thrill in getting to my destination quickly. It points up the interesting variations in atmosphere, people and landscape. I remember how one morning, with a group of friends I left the comfortable modern hotel in Helsinki (where I had been attending the Olympic Games) and flew straight north into the Arctic Circle. We looked down on herds of reindeer feeding, and occasionally passed over Laplanders' villages. That night we were again in our formal clothes, going to a diplomat's cocktail party in the Finnish capital.

When I travel to a place already familiar to me, it gives me special pleasure to have a friend along who is new to the experience; through her eyes I can recapture my original impressions. My first postwar trip to Italy with my grandniece, Mary Mulligan, when she was just fresh from her university graduation, gave me a delightful sense of re-discovering the history and beauty of that land. One day when we were tired and hungry after a morning's sightseeing we stopped at the simple, tiny inn near the stone quarries outside of Florence; the lunch was good, but there was food for the imagination too, as we learned that this workman's eating place dated back to the days of Leonardo da Vinci. The quarries we could see from our table on the strip of pavement had been supplying building materials for the palaces and villas of Florence for hundreds of years.

Madame Jeanne Pengelly, one of Toronto's fine singers, was my companion for the gala reopening of the Vienna Opera House in the fall of 1955. I was retracing steps of many years before, but it sharpened my perception of everything to have Madame Pengelly with me. The cream and gold interior of the Opera House had been kept, but the huge sparkling chandeliers had been removed, in order to give greater visibility of the stage to all parts of the house. The "royal" red seats of Emperor Franz Joseph's day had

been replaced by a much darker crimson—and of course the most arresting development of all was the glassed-in radio and TV broadcasting room built above a tier of boxes.

Vienna was in high festival mood that week. Our hotel, the Park, was located on the outskirts of the city, which meant a fair drive to the Opera House every evening. Each night those streets were thronged with people, watching and cheering as the cars went by; it was like the turnout for a Royal wedding in England. And no wonder! That beautiful old city had been through years of oppression, occupation, and art-starvation; this moment was like a rebirth. Everywhere—at the hotels, at Sacher's for lunch, in the sidewalk cafes, the Viennese people welcomed the visitors from far places with open arms. The glitter of the scene inside the Opera House on those first few nights, the pure glory of the voices in *Fidelio* and *Don Giovanni*, and the triumphant climaxes of the orchestra seemed to break through the walls of the building and engulf the whole city.

Another trip stands out in my memory. With my good friend, Mrs. Dorothy Homuth, I toured the Near East, and we had been wise in planning our itinerary to include the great Easter festivities in Athens. We watched the King of Greece inspect his guard of *evzones*—wearing their amazing uniforms of skirts, hose-tights, embroidered jackets, turned-up ballet shoes. In front of the Armouries a huge charcoal grill, almost 20 yards long, had been set up, and over this whole lambs were roasting. The smell, in the crisp air of a spring morning in Athens, was utterly delectable! In solemn ceremony the King, after inspecting his *evzones*, accepted and ate the symbolic foods of the occasion: a bit of lamb, a hard-cooked egg, bread and salt; then he drank a health with a sweeping gesture that included his soldiers and all the onlookers. Before departing he spoke briefly, charmingly, inviting everyone to come forward and share in this traditional feast of Easter. As I never particularly like to rush to the front on such occasions,

I suppose it looked as if Mrs. Homuth and I were making up our minds about the invitation; at any rate, a handsome young officer sought us out, led us to chairs beside the King's canopy, and brought us plates and "picks" with which to eat the various delicacies. It was a delightful and unique occasion.

Mrs. Homuth and I enjoyed a trip to the American Southwest one year recently, and when we were making a leisurely return via Vancouver, we both confessed to a strong temptation to "run up" to the Yukon to see Mrs. George Black. She is the fine woman who sat in our House of Commons in Ottawa, representing her husband's constituency during his years of illness; both of them were popular figures in the life of the Capital for many years.

The idea no sooner occurred to us than we began to put it into operation. We flew north, and from our hotel in Whitehorse we telephoned Mrs. Black who was delighted to know we had come all that way to see her. Would we come to her house a little before four o'clock that afternoon? She wanted to gather some of her friends to meet us.

At a little before four, as instructed, we arrived. Martha Black was her usual charming self, full of wit and sparkle; her husband greeted us warmly too, and then left us to our feminine gossip. But I could see that Mrs. Black had something on her mind.

"Lady Eaton," she began, "in the old days I remember that your family was noted for its temperance principles."

"That is true, Mrs. Black," I said.

"Do you yourself still adhere strictly to those principles? Or do you use a little stimulant now and then?"

I answered truthfully that I did occasionally in these later years enjoy refreshment of the kind mentioned.

At which Mrs. Black turned toward the archway and called to her husband, "George, bring in the rye! The girls drink."

So we had some agreeable fortification before the tea-party began. It was a lovely visit, and the pleasure of seeing

Mrs. Black in her own Yukon setting, among her good friends, some young, some older ones who had been pioneers along with the redoubtable Martha in the early days, more than justified our sudden impulse in Vancouver.

Several times I have had to move among academic dignitaries and deliver an address from a convocation platform. Four universities have been generous enough to confer honorary degrees on me: University of Toronto, McGill University, University of Western Ontario, and Bishop's University at Lennoxville, P.Q. The occasion at McGill, in particular, was interesting, for I was guest of the University for an entire day, as the program included the formal opening ceremony of the Eaton Electronics Research Laboratory, and this was an impressive part of McGill's Founder's Day celebrations.

When the University of Toronto summoned me for convocation, I was unable to appear, as I was laid up with a heavy cold. The following week, however, Dr. Cody, then President, asked me to attend when the medical school graduates were receiving their degrees, and so this became, for me, a rather special honour, in addition to the generous act of the University. I said so too, when I faced those rows upon rows of keen, bright-eyed faces in Convocation Hall, and I stated that to a woman who had received partial training as a nurse, and who had spent many years in simple alleviation of cuts, bruises, colds and measles among her growing family, it seemed fitting that I should receive my citation among representatives of the medical profession. Although the honour conferred made me a "doctor of law", it was quite likely, I said, that my household would prefer a dose of my medicine rather than my law.

As I look backward I hear again the Scripture lesson read by a young minister from our Omemee pulpit. It was from Chapter XII, Ecclesiastes, and begins: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil

days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." In poetic language it describes the dimming of our sight, our hearing, and even the wearing-down of our molars. It is a chapter I find worth re-reading often. It reminds me that the years do add up, but it also helps me rejoice that I can still enjoy them. Sometimes I wonder why I am tired; I used not to be. Thanks to Dr. M. K. Bochner, who has operated on both my eyes, I still have perfect sight with glasses. My ears are almost too keen, for frequently I hear things not intended for me. I do without a few foods I once liked, for the good of my health, but I'm always ready nevertheless for an adventure in eating. I think I must have something of youth in my heart, for I find I am great friends with little children, young boys and girls and newly married people. I still love the outdoors, the wild life, the birds and flowers, a campfire and food cooked over it. And I am still happy to report that along the highways and byways that I have travelled, I have found more persons who have been helpful, gentle, lovable, than any other kind.

CHAPTER XIII

LIKE ANY OTHER big happy family, we love our Christmases, and last year everyone present acclaimed our program at *Eaton Hall* "the best ever". For you, my youngest grandchildren, who were perhaps too tiny to retain a memory of it, I would like to record our 1955 Christmas while all the events remain fresh and vivid in my mind.

For many years we have opened our festive season with a solemn service of devotion to God. We began at *Ardwold* when Rev. Dr. Trevor Davies was pastor of Timothy Eaton Memorial Church. Communion was celebrated at eight o'clock in the morning, for family, staff, and some of our intimate friends. Dr. Charles Peaker played the organ for us and we always took a collection for some charitable purpose. Later in the morning we had the pleasure of welcoming the Salvation Army band which came to us regularly for many years and gave us some fine sacred music on their horns and trumpets in the Great Hall.

When we moved out to the country we continued with our Christmas Communion, but fixing it at a time convenient for the ministers, organist and quartet, and at an hour of the day when our staff families would find it possible to leave their small children and be with us. So, at the end of each September, I consult my pastor and the organist, and generally we are able to arrange to hold the service some time in the two weeks before Christmas and at eight o'clock in the evening.

The Christmas trees outdoors are decorated with lights, and everything within is prepared. The Crèche figures,

which we gathered in France, Switzerland and Germany during the years abroad, are in place against their background of a thatched stable, beautifully made by our carpenter at home. A silver star shines down over the scene, and when the guests enter the Great Hall their eyes are immediately caught and held by the beautiful symbolism of the Crèche.

A small Communion table stands in readiness, covered with a linen and lace cloth; on this reposes the Communion set and an ivory crucifix, a lovely old piece given to me by a friend in Italy. Behind our altar is the window with its big wreath and one of the Michelangelo cherubs I found in Florence.

Our service opens with carols in which everyone joins, and interspersed with them are passages from the story of the Nativity, always read by one of our friends. We take special care to choose interesting carols to complement the New Testament verses; sometimes we have serious practices beforehand; last year we sang the first Canadian carol of Jean de Brébeuf, written for his Huron Indian charges: "It was in the Moon of Wintertime". Three generations of us raised our voices together, and two of my grandsons sang the part of the page in "Good King Wenceslas", with Reginald Heal supplying the rich tone for the King's words.

A collection is then taken up by my grandsons, and the staff decides to which worthy cause it will be sent. The year of Hurricane Hazel we had a generous amount to forward to the relief of homeless families in the Holland Marsh, a few miles away from *Eaton Hall.*

Then the ministers move forward to the table and the Communion service begins. Each year my own pastor from Timothy Eaton Memorial is present, and sharing the duties with him is an Anglican from one of our local churches in which I have been interested.

At the conclusion everyone mingles and greets one another in the Great Hall; then we go down to the ballroom where supper is served—the usual Christmas fare of turkey,

ham, spiced beef, Christmas cake, mince tarts, coffee and a wassail cup. The chimes play, and for us all—family, staff, "extras" to help, and friends—the Christmas season has begun. It pleases me to note that each year, even as early as October, our "extras" telephone to inquire when we will be holding our Carol Service evening, and to say they look forward to coming and helping us again.

Christmas itself is our family day, and after many experiments over the years we have now agreed that between four and five o'clock is a good time to assemble. Before the tree ceremony we have oysters on the half-shell with thin bread-and-butter, and Rhine wine for the adults. All my third generation love oysters, and it always amazes me how quickly the supply disappears. We serve them on large platters. Each guest takes a napkin, an oyster fork, a wedge of lemon and consumes as many as he desires, dropping the shells into a huge wooden salad bowl conveniently placed for the purpose. On such a high occasion I indulge in caviar, and there is one young grandson who shares my preference. Last year he sought me out and said, with some concern on his face, "Grannie I don't see any caviar," but it just then appeared and he was happy again.

Suddenly we hear the bells—Santa Claus is arriving! All the children flock to the steps of the ballroom and there they are greeted by the jolly old fellow himself who knows each name and remarks on how this or that one has grown since last year. Pandemonium takes over as soon as he begins the distribution of the presents from the tree, yet it never ceases to surprise me that even the smallest child can wait patiently for that hour or so, just looking at the trimmings and twinkling lights of the tree, but never touching anything until Santa has appeared.

When he leaves, amid a roar of cheers and an ardent invitation to come again next year, John Giordmaine, the magician, takes over. The same Santa Claus has been officiating for us since my children were small tots, and now

Giordmaine has become a regular part of our program too. He calls for helpers for his marvellous tricks, and there's always a willing response, but mystification grows on the little faces as they see broken plates and fans made whole again, and a batch of live rabbits emerging from a coat sleeve.

When dinner is announced there's a procession to the dining-room. I sit with the very youngest members of the family at the head table, for on Christmas day they are indeed the "V.I.P.'s", but as a wise precaution I ask some of the older lads to join us to help with all the business of napkins, gravy, and such.

Each Christmas someone is chosen as Master of Ceremonies; last time it was my eldest grandson. One of the youngest present proposed the toast to the Queen, and then at intervals followed toasts to our relatives and friends overseas, to those who serve in our offices abroad and who do so many courtesies for all of us when we travel, and, finally, to the Cook and the Staff. Each boy participating does his part cheerfully and clearly. After the proper toast list has been completed, the toastmaster invites extemporaneous remarks from anyone who might wish to "say a few words" or suggest another health. One after another gets up—and the dinner ends in general hilarity.

When we repair to the music room the big piano is there, inviting us to try duets, choruses, old favourites and new. Last year I sat at the piano for an hour and a half, trying my best, as accompanist, to keep up with the requests.

As they left, by pairs and families, with parcels of all shapes and sizes clutched in both hands, they told me, individually and collectively, "This is the best Christmas yet!" It warmed my heart, and I felt young again, and strong enough for anything the future might bring. We had been thirty-one at table in the dining-room, representing four generations of our family—and upstairs in the nursery were the two littlest, peacefully asleep.

A woman who has lived a long time, as I have, knows

no greater feeling of happiness and satisfaction than at such a gathering as that. Through all the changes of the years and the vicissitudes of life, we remain a very united family.

POSTSCRIPT

SINCE I FINISHED writing my memoirs I have been deeply impressed with the passing of time. I find it is much later than I thought.

In hardly more than a month, five men, all of whom had been in their individual ways important in my life, have passed on. W. Ashton Dean, who had served in the Navy in the First World War, I had known since childhood; he was a personal friend and a valued executive of Eaton's. His summer vacation and his life ended on the same day. I am sure he would have had it so, and would have said with the poet, "And may there be no moaning of the bar when I put out to sea."

R. Y. Eaton, former Eaton's President, had lived to celebrate his eighty-first birthday. He had been spending his summer vacation with his family on Georgian Bay, enjoying his chief relaxation, fishing, during that last week. He had been reminiscing happily with his wife and others that evening. Good-nights were said, and "at even, ere the sun was set," his life ended quietly.

Billy Bishop, who was my nephew by marriage, slept peacefully away. He was one of that valiant band who explored the mysteries of flight and air combat during the First World War. He went away to war a young, gay lad of nineteen. He came out of it in four years a mature man mentally, and aged physically by at least twenty-five years. Nothing like the exploits of his war years can happen again. He flew alone with no cover to his plane, no "Mae West" belt, no oxygen except what he could take from the air

around him, no communication with the ground or other planes. It has been said of him, "We shall not see his like again." He received every medal his sovereign could bestow for courage and valour. Some said Billy Bishop had a charmed life. One of his propellers was pierced by a bullet; another time his tunic was burned by a machine-gun bullet; on a third occasion a shot ripped through the top of his woollen cap. Yet he was never wounded in action.

With so many other Canadians I followed his record during those war years. I was glad and proud that I knew him. As the years rolled by we became close friends, and, while I had heard of his brave feats first hand, I confess they became dim in association with the lovable human being that he was. Billy and his devoted wife are two of the people in my life who never failed to make me feel that I was important to them. I cannot let his glorious record pass without this brief word now. I wonder, also, how we in Canada are going to keep fresh the memory of his greatness, and preserve that spirit of courage, patriotism, and those qualities of mind and heart, as a shining example for the youth who never knew his deeds.

Billy Barker was another Canadian ace who proudly wore the Victoria Cross. He lost his life after the war in a plane accident. He, too, was a close friend of mine, and the recent death of his companion, Billy Bishop, renews the memory of Barker's magnificent record.

Geoffrey O'Brian was another of that remarkable group of young airmen in those 1914-18 days. He passed away a day or two after Billy Bishop. He, too, was one of the young men whom my children and I knew well as a flyer both military and civil, and as a teacher at St. Andrew's College. When Sir Malcolm Campbell was due to race Gar Wood on the Detroit River, my eldest son asked me to fly up with him and one of his friends. Geoff O'Brian was our pilot.

From the leadership these men gave in their youth grew the Air Force of today. It was to such as these that Winston Churchill paid his tribute following the Battle

of Britain: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." My own feeling is that in a very short space of time many of the chapters of my life have been closed by the passing of these fine friends.

INDEX

Memory's Wall

WAS SET IN LINOTYPE BASKERVILLE 12 ON 13, PRINTED AND BOUND
BY McCORQUODALE AND BLADES (PRINTERS) LIMITED
JACKET DESIGN BY DAVID HALL-HUMPHERSON

(Continued from front flap)

in the course of many journeys across it from coast to coast, and the evolution of the Eaton organization as it kept pace with that growth.

She also paints charming pictures of the life of a little girl in a small Ontario town during the last years of the reign of Queen Victoria. She writes with warmth and colourful detail of a Toronto where the popular thing to do on a warm summer night was to take a ride on the "Belt Line" round the city, in an open street car. Toronto society of that day was a small, intimate, tightly woven group where the horse was king and the social event of the season was the week's racing at the Woodbine; but where the electric brougham and the steam-powered automobile were making their first timid appearance. All her life Lady Eaton has been a great traveller; she tells entertainingly of the maiden voyage of the *Lusitania*, of adventures in Edwardian England and on the Continent in the days of the open automobile, and of the countries she has visited and the people she has met.

Memory's Wall is an intensely personal human document.

MEMORY'S WALL

Eaton

CLARKE IRWIN

$5.00

Photograph by Michael Burns

LADY EATON WITH FRANCES HYLAND AND DOUGLAS CAMPBELL OF THE CANADIAN PLAYERS

As one wends his way through the mazes of this remarkable woman's activities he finds himself filled with admiration that one person without rarely adventitious circumstances could achieve so much. In the fields of active charity alone—and they are many—she has been a tireless and effective leader throughout a comparatively long life, often involving the assumption and, as well, the discharging of continuing responsibilities. She is one of those of whom it can be said that she passed not by on the other side. In the good things of this world as in its burdens, which, indeed, are in reality many times the same, she has shown a capacity to share abundantly.

From the Foreword by
THE RT. HON. ARTHUR MEIGHEN

CLARKE, IRWIN & COMPANY LIMITED