

**Joan Priestley's Memoir Notes**  
**Probably mostly written c. 1956**  
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**Transcribed, edited, introduced and annotated**  
**By**  
**Ron Wawman 2012**

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## Joan Priestley's Memoir Notes

### Introduction

In 1956 Joan Priestley, the eighth daughter of the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould, then in her 70<sup>th</sup> year, wrote a series of notes in a red exercise book. It is evident from several of the entries in the exercise book that Joan was intending to write her father's biography. Thus on page 11 of the transcription, and under a heading:

#### How to Start,

Joan firmly stated:

1. *Sabine Baring-Gould the subject of this memoir.*
2. *the motive of this book is to give a story of his life, his character and career.*

There is another abortive **Start** to be found on page 19 of the transcription. In neither case did Joan get beyond a few sub-headings and brief statements.

In general the exercise book consists of a collection of disparate thoughts and recollections about Joan's father, her childhood and siblings, Lew House, Lew Trenchard Church, Life in Dinan in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, her horses and aspects of her married life in India – mostly to do with horses and horse riding. The narrative, such as it was, often jumped backwards and forwards from page to page. Sometimes Joan indicated how to follow the sequence. Sometimes the editor has been forced to find his own path by trial and error.

There are numerous mistakes in Joan's account. It seems likely that Joan relied heavily on memory. Unfortunately her personal memories, unreliable collective family memories and snatches of information gleaned and hazily recalled from Sabine's Reminiscences sometimes appear to have become fused and presented as her personal recollections. It is necessary to bear in mind that the reminiscence and opinions that Joan entered in the notebook were probably jotted down as they came into her mind and before she could verify them by reference to other documents or people.

For reasons that are not apparent Joan never seemed to get round to correcting the errors or developing her thoughts and putting them in order. It could well be that Joan simply found that she had bitten off far more than she was able to chew. So it was that the memoir was never completed by Joan. However the notes were passed on to her nephew, The Rev. Bickford Dickinson who undoubtedly drew on them when he was writing his biography *Sabine Baring-Gould, Squarson, Writer and Folklorist* that was published in 1970.

Apart from the exercise book there is also a series of four short loose notes expanding on certain aspects of Joan's memoirs. It is probable that these were written at a later date, possibly at the request of Bickford Dickinson when he was writing his biography.

Both exercise book and loose notes are now owned by Mrs. Elizabeth Dickinson who has deposited them on permanent loan at the Devon Record Office. I am grateful to Elizabeth for her encouragement and for making the memoirs available to me to transcribe and research and publish. I am also grateful to Mrs. Claire Stewart-Richardson for permission to publish the memoirs of her grandmother.

Despite the drawbacks the notes are an invaluable source of pointers to family life in the Baring-Gould household, particularly during Joan's childhood. They also include Joan's pains-taking efforts to put forward her very personal if somewhat disjointed and at times repetitive description of the character, appearance and achievements of the father she clearly adored. Her attempt to describe her mother were less successful.

The first 32 pages in the notebook were numbered by Joan. These numbers are shown in the transcription in italics as they will help the reader to understand the extent to which the narrative jumped about from page to page.

Throughout the memoirs there are occasional spelling mistakes. These the editor has indicated thus: *[sic]*. Similarly the occasional illegible or uncertain word is indicated thus: *[?]*. There is a small number of notes by the editor in the body of the transcription. These are also in italics

To assist the reader further, sixty explanatory footnotes have been added by the editor.

Ron Wawman  
March 2012

## I: Joan's Exercise Book Notes

*Page 1*

### **Sundial**

The sundial over the porch at Lew came from the Manor House at Pridhamsleigh once owned by the Goulds. On it the arms and E.G. 1696

One of the village legends was that seven persons met under an ancient oak by the slate quarry to lay the ghost of the White Lady of Lew. One of the party was, however, so drunk that he could not remember the right words. Accordingly all they were able to effect was to conjure her into the shape of a white owl.

It is supposed to be a lucky sign when there are white owls at Lew.

*In pencil* (See page 28. The Granite Pillar)

*Page 2*

**Lew House** lies in a valley facing south. Has before it a wooded range of hill some 600 ft. above the sea.

Behind the house is a steep incline thickly wooded which is called the Glen.

Where the long room is<sup>1</sup> there was a steep green bank which ran up to the path above and a high stone wall, a continuation of the one in the Avenue, Red painted wooden gates, the road and then the pig sties. [*sic*]

**The Glen** was a mass of bluebells, primroses and white wild violets. The white violets nestled under the old trees. There was always a rush to get them as my mother loved them as she did all flowers. They were just a part of her being.

The old Cedar tree hundreds of years old was brought down by a gale, about 1932? A photo of me sitting on the sawed up trunk was taken by Madge<sup>2</sup> when we did the portraits at Lew which were getting in such a (See page 11) dilapidated condition. I feared they would fade into oblivion.<sup>3</sup> The old tree, hundreds of years old, was kept going during my father's life by digging a trench around it and filling it with bullock's blood – a few days later one would see the old tree "sitting up and taking notice."

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<sup>1</sup> The Long Room: The room above the Cloisters in the North Wing of Lew House.

<sup>2</sup> Madge: Wife of the Rev. Bickford Dickinson, grandson of Sabine Baring-Gould.

<sup>3</sup> Around 1939, Joan became increasingly concerned about the future of Lew House which had been seriously neglected by her brother, Edward. She was particularly concerned over what might become of the portraits and therefore arranged for them all to be photographed. Where possible, she also wrote a brief description and history of the subject in each portrait. The negatives were given by Joan to her nephew, Sabine, for safe keeping and are now owned by Merriol Almond, who has placed them on permanent loan to the Devon Record Office where they are held in the Baring-Gould Archive, Box no 5203. At some point Sabine Baring-Gould's grandson, Julian Baring-Gould, was given a set of prints with the same details by Joan, '*his favourite aunt.*' An excellent digital album has recently been created using this material by Julian's son, also named Sabine.

**The Tower house** with several granite steps opposite my father's Library was used as a convalescent room should any of the numerous family have an infectious disease.<sup>4</sup> The Bees loved the roof – and for years had made honey under the tyles [*sic*] till the ceiling oozed honey – then something had to be done about it, and hundreds of lbs of honey were extracted. “Exit the Bees.”

Below it is a granite arched doorway where fruit was stored on bruches [?] – in the room of the Tower house there was [*narrative continued on page 12*] a fireplace with old Dutch tyles. [*sic*] Mainly in appearance mostly religious subjects. The frieze work of the room was painted Royal blue with coloured spots in the Dutch style.

**The Avenue** towards Lew Mill is of old oak trees, in the spring it is a golden walk of daffys – pery-winkles and sorrow.<sup>5</sup>

‘Madam’ is here supposed to walk in deep concentration, when the moon is at its full.

Wm. Grant who once rented the Ramps<sup>6</sup> was walking in the road, looked over the wall and saw ‘the Lady’ whom he took for one of our Governesses, he was sweet on “Miss Gray” – he called her but she appeared not to hear, and suddenly vanished into space before his eyes.

As children we would play hiding [*narrative continued on page 13*] seek in the dark – often when I was seeker sitting on the granite step of the front door. I would hear the gravel crunch as if someone was walking past within reach, and would put out my hand and say ‘I’ve got you’ to find my hand had closed on nothing – the same has happened in the gallery when I have distinctly heard steps, and the switch [*sic*] of a silk skirt pass within an inch of my nose, yet switching on a torch there has been nothing to see – we were brought up on these strange happenings and thought nothing of them – we “took it in our stride” as our moderns would say.

[*The narrative now reverted to the bottom of Page 3*]

Several parishes around are supposed to be haunted by Church-grims – Lew church, S Michael's, is a white-pig or two white pigs yoked [*sic*] [*narrative continued on page 4*] together with a silver chain.<sup>7</sup>

My father had a gold ring with an eye in enamel on it. An old-fashioned gift made to friends after a funeral.

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<sup>4</sup> The accuracy of this statement is dubious. The tower was certainly used in 1890 in a vain attempt to prevent further infection by disinfecting children on their return from Bude in the middle of a scarlet fever outbreak. Rooms in the house were converted to ‘wards’ to accommodate patients during the scarlet fever outbreak that followed. See *Our Scarlet Fever Attack*, Church Monthly. Vol II, Jan-Apr pp 20,40-41,64-65,89-90.

<sup>5</sup> Sorrow: Joan was probably referring to sorrel or possibly yarrow.

<sup>6</sup> In his diary, 23 August 1886, Sabine tells how Mr A Grant, the brother of Mrs Sperling was staying at the rectory (now known as Combe Trenchard) and not at the Ramps, when he saw this ghost. The story is repeated in full in *Early Reminiscences* p. 160. The account here is an imperfect recall by Joan of what is written in *Early Reminiscences*. The governess was a Miss Wilson.

<sup>7</sup> Church-grims: *Early Reminiscences* p 126

A fragment of the actual rush-wick that was used in the rush-light that burned in the bedroom of Charles II after his apoplectic seizure in 1685 is preserved at Lew (or was in my father's time)

Old Madam had iron bars put across the hall chimney with spikes upwards. The other chimneys she had sheet iron extinguishers made to be put up the chimneys inverted. Should a burglar descend into one of these his weight would bring him down. Sabine removed the contrivance from the hall chimney and preserved it at the house.<sup>8</sup>

**My father** built the house upon the Ramps.

*[narrative continued on page 5]*

#### The Lake Quarry

My father erected in 1885 on the lake a boathouse.

There was a lovely little wooden Boathouse with a red painted corrugated roof – On a board in front was written the following chronogram by the Rev. J.M. Gatrill.<sup>9</sup>

They breaD upon the Waters Cast.  
In CertaIn trust to fInd,  
SInCe Well thou know'st God's eye doth Mark  
Where fIshes eyes are blind

D=500+W=10, (510) +C=(610)+1 (611)  
+C (711)+I (712) +I (713) +I (714) +C (814) +W (824)  
+M (1824) + W (1834) + I (1835) + L (1885)

*[narrative continued on page 6]*

#### Marianne Perkin

The Lew witch – was a picturesque old woman when I knew her. She lived in one of the Quarry cottages, and was a great character. She hated her sister and was said to have followed the funeral shouting and dancing.

She was kind to us children, gave us metheglin an intoxicating drink which she made out of whisky and honey – which resembled Drambuie [*sic*] (the Scotch drink)

She had a little farm. A cow which on one occasion rammed its horn up under her chin. She had a large hole, which she had stuck over with sticking plaster, and it healed up very quickly. She hated with bitter hatred her neighbours.<sup>10</sup>

*[narrative continued on page 7]*

#### Lew Church

The original church had been founded probably by S Petrock about the year 560.

The present structure is on the foundations of one consecrated on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1261, when it was re-dedicated to St Peter.

It was again rebuilt about 1520 and rich in carved oak, and the screen and benches were erected in 1523-4 when Anthony Monk and his wife Elizabeth lived in the manor-house.

<sup>8</sup> Old Madam's iron bars: *Early Reminiscences* p. 154

<sup>9</sup> Chronogram: *Further Reminiscences* p 155

<sup>10</sup> Marianne Perkin: This description is very similar to that of the Marianne who featured in *Early Reminiscences* pp 137-139. As elsewhere in the memoirs it is possible that Joan was confusing her own memories with Sabine's memoirs as recounted in his *Reminiscences*.

My great great grandfather William B-G. b.1770. d. 1846 swept away the screen and all the benches in 1832, and filled the church from end to end with deal pews painted mustard yellow

**Sabine Baring-Gould's ambition** at the age of 17 was

1. To restore the parish church and secondly to restore and re-construct the manor-house.

My father happily recovered some 9 or 10 of the bench ends and sufficient fragments of the screen.

*[narrative continued on page 8]*

**The re-erection of the screen** begun in 1899 and completed in 1915.

Carved by the Misses Pinwell of Plympton.

The panel paintings of our Lord's life were done by Margaret Rowe nee Baring-Gould b. 1870. How she hated doing them, as her work was not good enough for my father, who wanted everything perfect.

There was a pew in front of the reading desk reserved for women who desired to be churched.

One of the bench ends has Elizabeth Monk in a horned head-dress, and beneath her a jester.

The avenue of limes leading to the church were planted about 1694 when John Truscott was nominated as Rector in 1692 by Henry Gould

The lectern is an eagle of carved oak which has been gilded *[sic]*

*[narrative continued on page 9]*

Quoting uncle Arthur BG re Pater's sermons, is an exciting description of them which no one could better "His sermons were simplicity itself and very homely. His points were definite, his doctrine crystal clear. They were illuminated and illustrated by stories of experiences of his own that kept the congregation interested and alert"

People from all around would come to hear him preach.

His sermons were all too short. He would say that if anyone had anything to say it could be said in 15 minutes. After that they would be repeating themselves, and end in boring their congregation.

If an unfortunate curate preached too long there would be a loud sigh, a clearing of the throat, and my father would stand up. The wretched curate in confusion would hurriedly give the blessing.

*[The narrative here reverted to Page 3]*

On Jan 12<sup>th</sup> 1877 SBG began the restoration of the church first by the demolition of the deal pews, which he replaced with carved oak benches, old and new

2. the altar was a deal box on legs.

The painting of the crucifixion showing the dying Saviour on the cross, in the light of the setting sun dipping under the western horizon among dark clouds dyed red was

bought by my father on his honeymoon when they visited Rheims. Painted by a local artist named LAVIDIERE.

PAUL DESCHWANDEN painted an altar picture for Lew Church representing the “Adoration of the Magi” 1871

*[The narrative now moved forward to page 10.]*

When about the age of 40 he inherited on the death of his father, the family estate.

One of England’s most informative writers. An authority unquestioned on things that matter in the natural history of Social England.

*[The narrative now moved forward to the bottom of page 13.]*

**My father’s Library** had long broad windows (6 in number facing south) looking onto the fountain and drive. He happened one day to look out in time to save my sister Titus (Felicitas) from *[narrative continued on page 14]* a watery grave in the fountain. The fountain has a little Alsatian goose boy. In each arm he holds a goose from their beaks water flows. Harry,<sup>11</sup> Titus and I were looking for goldfish at the bottom, and Harry and I nudged each other and with one accord tipped Titus in, her feet only clinging on to the granite rim. We both ran away and she would undoubtedly have drowned had not my father run out to her rescue. I remember the spanking we had across his knee with a carpet slipper.

Another time I remember when planking was erected to repair the roof over the ballroom. John, Cicely and I were having a merry game chasing each other around, when Cicely suddenly disappeared between the planks and fell to the ground. The workmen below we saw carrying her – unconscious into the house. We thought *[narrative continued on page 15]* she was dead so we both went and hid ourselves.<sup>12</sup>

#### **What fun our childhood memories are.**

What dreadful children we were – we would hide in haystacks and pea shoot everyone passing on the roads. Make little boxes on wheels racing each other down the hill from Lewdown past Lew on the Tavistock Road, frightening the horses and carriages and dogcarts, and carthorses as we sped by. I have always had a long scar on my wrist and arm from trying to check my box on wheels when the Sperling’s carriage horses were rearing up with fright. The wheels were just rims with no rubber, and the rim cut into my arm – but we never took any notice of such things, and our chief aim was to hide anything of the sort so as not to be found out.

*[narrative continued in page 16]*

We had a hateful old governess for years<sup>13</sup> who would wack (*sic*) us across her knee with her bony hands, which left wheals for a week after. We would be taken into the kitchen garden where peaches and nectarines laden with fruit, gooseberries and currants on the bushes abounded and were told we might eat five gooseberries each

<sup>11</sup> In her loose notes probably written at a later date, Joan tells the same story but featuring brother John rather than Harry. Harry was 17 months older than Joan. Felicitas was 4 years older than Joan

<sup>12</sup> John was 3 years younger than Joan. Cicely was 2 years younger than Joan

<sup>13</sup> Miss Priscilla Biggs

and some currants. Needless to say we stuffed our knickers with every conceivable kind of fruit which we would divide up after in our bedrooms, to have midnight feasts. If we were caught the old hag would stand at the door and would administer a hefty smack as we passed by in our nightys (*sic*) – the boys never got wacked half as hard, they were more favoured, and always pushed us girls first.

*[narrative continued on page 17]*

My father's library had a large fireplace. Books surrounded the room. A half partition was across the lower part and my father's standing desk on the window side stood against the partition. In the front part where the door opened into the drawing room from the ceiling hung a lovely painted mermaid like a chandelier. After my father's death my brothers gave this to my sister Margaret who was then living in a house she had built on the Hargerburg [?] above Zus----- [?]<sup>14</sup> where it had originally been bought by my father. Alas it has now disappeared as her house was sold with all its contents when the great war of 1939 broke out. She returned home just in time and lost everything – my poor dear sister Margaret Rowe

*[narrative continued on page 18]*

My father inspired his workmen to do great works. Many of the ceilings were carried out by the local mason William White. The iron gates by Willie Roberts who was my father's "village blacksmith" of Lewdown.

There is a story connected with Wm White. When my father wanted the wall entrance to the drive built up Wm White was ill and said he had been bewitched – his days numbered – and had taken to his bed. My father, most anxious to get the wall built, impressed on White that he could have no faith in God, and said that if he got up, every brick he laid my father would say a prayer for his recovery. At last he inveigled White to start on the wall and as he got keener on his work, he forgot his ailment, my father telling him all the time that by the time the wall *[narrative continued on page 19]* was built he would be completely recovered – which truly happened.<sup>15</sup>

In the Hall there is an old settle where Madam (the ghost) has been seen so often by visitors to the house in Old Days – one night my elder sisters were away at a ball. My father was always anxious for our return and would be watchful even if he went to bed. About 2 am he thought he heard the coach and pair coming up the drive (I should have mentioned that the drive was laid with crunched slate from the slate quarries around) he rose from his bed and came downstairs and opened the front door to find it was a false alarm – as he passed the settle he heard the most uncanny laugh in his ear – as if to say "sold again"<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Joan's memory of place names was faulty. The only significant place the editor can locate in Germany beginning with ZUS is Züschen, which lies below the hills known as the Rothaargebirge. This may be the location of the house.

<sup>15</sup> In her loose notes Joan wrote that White had been bewitched – ill wished – ie. Influenced for ills. This member of the local White family of masons was probably Arthur White, whose recovery from illness came about through being persuaded to undertake making the mouldings for the ballroom – much more intricate than brick work! See *An Old Country Home* pp93-95.

<sup>16</sup> In his diary Sabine gave a contemporaneous and thus much more reliable version of this story. See 23 August 1886. Sabine did not go to bed but waited up writing in the Hall for daughters Mary and Daisy together with his half-sister Leila, who were at a ball in the nearby village of Broadwoodwidge.

He always wished to see “Madam” the ghost, but this was denied him as it *[narrative continued on page 20]* was to the rest of the family, it was always people unconnected with the family who saw her. Why??

At the ball given for the coming of age of my eldest sister, Mary, where about 300 guests were invited, on leaving, more than half of them asked my mother why they had not been introduced to the lovely old lady with white hair dressed in black velvet who sat in a chair under one of the pictures in the ballroom.

We were a high spirited happy-go-lucky family, children without a care in the world, loving our home and loathe to leave it.

### **Curiosities to outsiders –**

A trained nurse we had sometimes ‘hit the nail on the head’ when she said the Baring-Goulds “Say what others think”

*[narrative continued on page 21]*

### **Building**

When my father’s masons were building or doing repair work, he would always visit them in the dogcart driven by our coachman Charlie Dustan. Much to our amusement, and to the joy of the workmen small bells were attached to the cobs breast plate. These would jingle, and announce my father’s arrival and the men would be hard at work by the time he had arrived and dismounted. One of the greatest mysteries of the world is how the British workman ever erects any buildings or constructs anything – when seen they are invariably having ‘their piece’ sitting and smoking or discoursing to a mate above or below with some instrument idle in their hand –

*[Here the narrative jumped forward to page 23]*

### **How to start**

1. Sabine Baring-Gould the subject of this memoir
2. The motive of this book is to give a story of his life, his character and career

*[The narrative now returned to page 22]*

Born on Jan. 28 1834 in a corner house in Dix’s Field Exeter and was baptized in S Sidwell’s church.

He was the son of Edward BG, a cavalry officer in the East India Company 26 Madras Cavalry Regt., and Sophia Charlotte daughter of Admiral Francis Godolphin Bond, RN.

He had a sister, Margaret, b.1835 and a younger brother William born in 1836.

When young his mother described him as sweet, docile and affectionate.

In 1809 *[sic]* his father took a house at Bratton Clovelly, 4 ½ miles from Lew House, Lewdown, the family estate which was then occupied by Sabine’s grandfather and grandmother

*[narrative continued on page 23]*

### **Appearance**

As a boy he was very fair with blue eyes set widely apart. They lit up and sparkled as he spoke or listened, and his whole face shone with a quiet eagerness. His nose was aquiline and he had a prominent chin.

His mouth was well formed and sensitive and kindness [?] showed the spontaneity of his character. He was tall about 6 ft 1", lean in person, very upright and carried himself well. This he retained all through his long life. He never sat down when writing. He stood for hours a day at his desk. The deal desk was built to his order by his carpenter.<sup>17</sup> It was made like a school desk but with long legs the height that suited him – with big heavy blocks for the legs to stand in to keep the desk from shifting about.

In the coldest weather he walked about the estate bare-headed and without an overcoat – his hands clasped behind his back.

*[narrative continued on page 24]*

Late in life known as the Literary Grand Old Man of Devon

### **Character**

Great personality and immense energy.

His books were brilliantly written.

His accounts of places interesting, fresh and bracing as the air of Dartmoor.

His stories were full of movement, vigorously told and full of information.

He had a wealth of imagination.

His characters life like, striking and original and full of character. Courteous [?] somewhat intolerant.

In his description of scenery he was a master of his art, they are painted vividly, he had a keen eye for colour and effect.

**The Characters in his novels** formed as if into life as he wrote. There was something rather uncanny about this, as if a spirit had taken possession of his pen as he wrote. He would say when asked "I find the characters forming, as if the figures in the story took possession of one. They create themselves as I write."

*[narrative continued on page 25]*

Lew Trenchard Manor – sold by Sir Thomas Monk to Henry Gould in 1626.

Remained the residence of the family of Gould till 1736 when Wm. Drake Gould came into the estates of Edward Gould of Staverton. At this time a great deal of Lew House was pulled down. Coins in the walls and about the foundations of Edward II and Edward III downwards.

### **Character**

His versatility was amazing.

See page 32

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<sup>17</sup> Samuel Dawe of Hollycott, Lewdown.

His love of Dartmoor was intense. His moors could cure all ills. Whatever disease or colds his children contracted, the great cure would be to “Send them off to the Moor and they will soon recover”<sup>18</sup>

He was broad minded and took a broadminded view of the world and his fellow men. He was not a prohibitionist in any capacity.

*[narrative continued on page 26]*

### **Books**

**The Lives of the Saints** took him 8 years to write. These books are on the ‘index’ of the Roman Catholic Church which he considered a compliment to his researches. The Saint’s lives were shown as human entities.

### **Songs of the West**

Took 15 years to collect

He liked ‘The Gaverocks’ and thought this novel one of his best, though often attacked.

On the Resurrection Morning was written by him at the age of 27 a few months before his mother died of Cancer, to comfort himself and others who dearly loved her and to prepare them for their great bereavement. Queen Victoria derived much comfort from this hymn in the early days of her widowhood.

*[narrative continued on page 27]*

### **Books and Hymns**

Onward Christian Soldiers was written in Whitsun 1864 (was hurriedly written in 15 minutes for the Bridge Mission School to beguile the time which they marched for over a mile up a steep hill to St Peter’s to celebrate the Feast on Whit-Tuesday at Horbury)<sup>19</sup>

“Legendary History of Northumbria” is in the York Cathedral Library - unpublished

“Legendary History of Northumbria” Fruits of long researches on which he spent 15 years in the Exeter Cathedral Library. Both remain unpublished.

His beautiful translation of the verses of the Icelandic poet Ingeman<sup>20</sup> “Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow” was published in ---<sup>21</sup> after his travels in Iceland – where he went.

*[narrative continued on page 28)*

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<sup>18</sup> This assertion of Sabine’s belief in the curative properties of Dartmoor is amply supported by entries in his diaries and comments in letters. What is frustrating is not knowing where exactly on Dartmoor he sent the children or took himself when ill.

<sup>19</sup> Sabine arrived in Horbury at Whitsun 1864. The hymn was published on 15 October 1864 and was almost certainly written 2 or 3 weeks before that. The first public performance was at the Horbury Whit Tuesday Sunday school March on 16 May 1865. See Lister K, *Half My Life*, Charnwood, 2002

<sup>20</sup> Bernhardt S Ingemann 1789-1862

<sup>21</sup> Published 1867

**A Granite Pillar** in the road on the corner which had a hollow in the top, it is prehistoric. In Sabine's grandfather's days the farmers would take the rain water out of the hollow in the top and sprinkle their cattle with it, in order to make their milk plentiful. His grandfather did not approve of this superstition, took it down and buried it, but when Sabine came into the property he dug it up and replaced it.<sup>22</sup>

*[narrative continued on page 29]*

### **Strange Experiences**

About a week after Sabine had attended his sister's wedding at Lew Trenchard in 1857 and he had returned to Sussex – he was sitting in his room trying to make a very important decision of the greatest importance which would determine his after life. He longed for his sister to consult her and wondered would he write but decided that her reply would reach him too late and that he must make his own decision.

Two days later he received a letter from his sister, who was spending part of her honeymoon in North Wales, saying "What is it you want of me? Last night you came to my bedside and said "Margaret, write to me; I have something very particular I want to consult you about" Do tell me if there is anything in this."<sup>23</sup>

*[narrative continued on page 30]*

### **Grace BG his wife**

At Horbury Grace taught a class at the Mission School.

One day as Whitsuntide was approaching he called at her father's house and found G almost in tears because she could not attend the "Feast" "And why not?" he enquired. "Because" she said "I have not a new hat" "Never mind" said he "You'll look quite as pretty in your old hat as the other people in their new ones."

She was a very beautiful girl with a lovely face. Red brown eyes. Fair complexion and a mass of golden (like old gold) hair which fell far below her waist. Well curved eyebrows and an adorable short straight nose with fine delicate nostrils and a sweet sensitive mouth.

Sabine fell in love with her and the wedding took place at Horbury in 1868.

*[narrative continued on page 3]*

They were very happy together. G had a reserved nature, but was full of fun.

There were 15 children . She upheld the family prestige at Dalton Vicarage, East Mersea Rectory and finally in the ancestral home at Lew Trenchard.

In Dinan he was most popular with the nuns at the Sacre le Coeur where some of the children went to school daily. They would push each other out of the way to speak to him through the grid. He would joke with them in French and he would look forward to their visits

*[narrative continued on page 32]*

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<sup>22</sup> The stone had been incorporated in the wall of the mill leat, but was dug up when the leat was repaired and was lying on the surface when Sabine found it. It was re-erected by Sabine in 1880 on the recommendation of the Rev. W Lukis, the antiquary.

<sup>23</sup> This account closely resembled an entry in the Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould, dated 5 January 1881

**Dartmoor** he and everything connected with the history and antiquity of the West. He was President of the Royal Institution of Cornwall and was presented with the Henwood Gold Medal for his contributions to the literature of the archaeology of the county.

With Mr Robert Burnard he excavated the hut circles and camps on Dartmoor – and he was later made President of the Devonshire Association in 1896. He was also a member of the Council of the Devonshire Association of its Folk Lore and Barrow Committees as well as of the committee for preparing a list of ancient monuments that was to be preserved and protected.

*[There are no more manuscript page numbers from this point in the notebook]*

### **Strange Events**

Carriage and pair returning from a dance and the horses coachman saw the ghost  
My fathers evening [?] experience of the laugh.

Everything centred around Papa – once when Prince shied, reared and the wheels of the dogcart which I was driving went up a bank and turned over, Prince kicked the dogcart to bits. Two of us escaped but our only thought was that Papa would have no dogcart, which he preferred to use to visit his parishioners and workmen.

*[There are four blank pages in the notebook at his point before the narrative resumed.]*

In June 1881 he came to Lew Trenchard and became squarson there. My father was never so happy as when he was building. He would love to have been a rich man so as to build his ideal village and anything else he fancied.

He could paint in oils and water colours and there is a beautiful painting in oils of his which my eldest brother has in his flat of a high peak above a lake with two streams, one swan just rising off the lake. This painting was done in Iceland. The mountain top catches the crimson from the setting sun.

How he loved his days on Dartmoor, taking his workmen. They would dig up prehistoric remains many of which are now in the British Museum.

One day in November 1891 whilst out on this errand with a companion having worked till the close of day my father lost his way and in the dark got into a bog. Fortunately he carried with him a long bamboo cane which he had the presence of mind to hold horizontally and stretched out between his two hands. He sank to his armpits and by this means held himself up. He never forgot the dreadful dragging and sucking at his limbs – so great that his leather gaiters that extended to his knees were dragged off and sucked under.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Redmire, Bodmin Moor, not Dartmoor. The companion was Mr. Thomas of the Ordnance Survey. See *Further Reminiscences* pp 246-252

He distained fiction and he who writes not because he will, but because he must, will never be represented by his best.<sup>25</sup> He would say “I always put off as long as possible the evil day for beginning a new novel”

Reviewers and critics, taking him seriously to task for his want of care in the manipulation of his plots, suggested that he wrote too much, and that if he would write less he would do better work. But my father took no notice of reviewers and their ways – such advice was absolutely thrown away. One of these writers says ‘Baring-Gould was never intended to write the prosaic novel. His experiments in this direction have only gone to emphasize his real genius. He is a romancer, pure and simple, and he can tell a story as few others can. The mild subtleties of modern civilized life are out of his endeavours. His affections rank with the barbarous and ‘Elijah’<sup>26</sup> was his greatest achievement.

It is our firm and deliberate belief that B-G has an imaginary and literary equipment which might amply suffice to make him one of the greatest contemporary writers of Romantic fiction, but he chooses to ignore his birthright, and to give himself away with a recklessness which would be incredible if he did not put it in evidence once, twice, or it may be three times a year.

### SBG

His object was to draw in his novels three types of woman

1. The highest possible type
2. The frivolous ordinary woman
3. The self-sacrificing woman who gives herself for others

(see page24.)<sup>27</sup> Characters in his novels

He was a law unto himself, unrestricted by conventionalities or rules, undeterred by the fear of critics. He had a vivid imagination, his characters became alive and real for instance his first veritable work of fiction was *Mehalah*, which deals with the Essex salt marshes published in 1880.

Trevor Allen writes in John O’London’s weekly “Among Mersea folk it has remained a classic. A farmer I met at Virley on the Blackwater, pointed to some choked ruins by his house and said “You might like to look at those ruins. That’s the church where *Mehalah* was married” Like all the older people living around Mersea he talked of *Mehalah* and *Redbow* [*sic*] as actual persons he had known or heard of. Not just fictional characters in a book.

He loved his native land Devonshire – his descriptions of scenery are accurate and reliable though he casts a glamour over his scenes giving them an importance and charm unnoticed by the unobservant.

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<sup>25</sup> Joan did not put this saying onto context. She was probably quoting her father. If so it could be he was expressing his awareness that his own negative feelings about writing a stream of novels simply to fund the restoration of Lew House had an adverse effect on their quality.

<sup>26</sup> It seems almost certain that Joan meant *Mehalah*. Sabine did not publish anything entitled *Elijah*.

<sup>27</sup> Page 24 in Joan’s exercise book becomes page 12 of this transcription.

It was his love of beauty that attracted him first to my mother with her beautiful features and wonderful old gold coloured hair which fell in all its glory to beyond her waist.

He married Grace Taylor on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1869 [*sic*] a girl still in her teens. She died in 1916. Her death nearly broke his heart. He would slip out at night silently and alone to say prayers over her grave. His boyishness left him after her death and never returned. On the memorial over her grave he put a Latin inscription which meant "Half my soul"

#### **Abilities** See p.10<sup>28</sup>

He was industrious, energetic and versatile. He wrote almost everything – a really admirable novelist and was an authority on folklore, old ballads and their survival in the past, topography, popular biography, history, archaeology, ecclesiology, He always had time for practical jokes – often the life sized head of the 'Man in Armour' on the front stairs was taken out and placed in visitor's beds when they came to stay.

An old friend of my mother's Miss Deason once when she came to stay said she had been ordered a glass of wine every day by her Dr. One evening my father pressed her to take two. He had previously put a rubber bulb with long tubing under her plate which he squeezed making the plate jump up and down. She looked horrified at her plate for a few minutes, then got up and asked permission to leave the table thinking she had had a drop too much.

Though my father never had a dog of his own I am convinced he loved animals and was only afraid he would be weak with them. I had a beautiful Collie which he much admired. "Bruce" would sit by him at table and gaze at my father with pleading soulful eyes while he carved for the many sitting round the table. Every now and then a choice bit would go into Bruce's mouth and if I remonstrated my father would say "How could anyone resist those beautiful pleading eyes?" We have a photo of my father sitting on the fountain steps with his hand resting on Bruce's head as if in blessing and I am sure Bruce is with him now.

As a pet he had a bat which became quite tame, it would sit on his knee to drink milk or on his shoulder, it loved to be made much of.

#### **Health**

He was ordained in 1864 in the Gothic palace at Ripon on Whit Sunday. He was delicate as a child and all through his life his lungs gave him trouble. Most winters he got bronchitis unless he went abroad early.

#### **Character**

He was enthusiastic, full of zeal, humble, original with a great sense of humour He could be sarcastic, scathing and contemptuous of people with small minds and good opinions of themselves or snobs.

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<sup>28</sup> Page 10 in the notebook; page 9 of the transcription

He had strong convictions and he stood by what he thought was right in his own light. He was sensitive, easily hurt. Had unbounded interests on almost any subject. He took his BA in 1857. In architecture, Art of every kind and antiquity he reveled.

### Appearance

His bearing: he was tall, very upright, he stood at a high desk when writing, never sat – when walking he always walked with his hands behind his back, with head slightly forward when in concentration. He was very short sighted and would peer with his book held up close to his eyes when reading with his glasses pushed up on his forehead. He could read minute print. He had a few favourite books he would pick up at odd moments. One was Gilbert's 'Bab Ballads'<sup>29</sup> he would chuckle with delight, and read and chuckle over, his shoulders heaving as he chuckled with delight.

Having so many children and being so short sighted, as we passed in the passages, he would put his dear hand on one's head and say "Which one are you, dear?"

When very young, I was sitting curled up behind the curtain in a far corner of the dining room, when my father and Mr Gatrill his old friend were smoking their pipes<sup>30</sup> over a large log fire. Gatrill – How many children have you, Sabine? Pater "Fourteen now, one died, thank God"

This puzzled me for years, but I understand now. Working as he had to, having one less mouth to feed<sup>31</sup>

How he worked, how he could write with the vast property to keep up, with endless workmen depending on him as well, God alone knows.

Of all the flowers my father loved was the Harebell. He says "I wonder if planted on my grave they would flower there? I should joy [*sic*] to have the little bell dancing in the wind and lulling me in my last sleep"

But just as we look to meet friends and relatives in hereafter, so do we look to happy meetings in the same Land of Light with our beloved flowers.

### **Character**

My father had quite the sweetest, most loving yet alert face I have ever seen.

Whatever he set out to do, he did. No one could distract him from his purpose. He could be firm and stern – he had great faith, was religious. Kind hearted and trusted everyone. When his temper was roused which was on very rare occasions it was violent. He had great charm, was impetuous at times and had strong likes and dislikes. He had little patience with anyone who bored him or wasted his time.

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<sup>29</sup> A book of light verse by W S Gilbert whose childhood nickname was Bab. Illustrated by his own comic sketches.

<sup>30</sup> In 1898 Sabine started smoking a pipe using 'Pinoza,' a medicated tobacco. See letter to Mary Dickinson 28 December 1898. Joan would have been 11 years old then.

<sup>31</sup> There is no evidence to support Joan's conclusion. On the contrary Sabine was often distressed by illness in his children and may well have had a prolonged grief reaction to the death of Beatrice in 1876 at the age of 3.. It is more likely that the young Joan misheard the conversation. Sabine probably said something along the lines of "*Fourteen now. Only one died, thank God.*" This would have undoubtedly reflected his true sentiments.

He had a poetic nature. He loved the beauties of nature and could express himself in the words of a poet.

He loved good music and wreathed<sup>32</sup> under false or harsh notes. He was worldly and spiritual. He had a strong personality.

### **How Julian got his name**

One day when SBG was in the church at Staverton which he visited on being informed by the vicar that the church was being restored, the ledger stones torn up and thrown in the graveyard, and our family vaults filled up with concrete all that remained were the bones and memorials of our ancestors.

Just below the Chancel step was the grave of Julian Rowe daughter of Edward Gould of Combe. She died in 1696. As he held the skull of Julian Rowe in his hand, a telegram was brought into the church announcing that Mama who was then at Mersea, had given birth to a son – “Then Julian shall be his name” said my father.

### **Start**

Sabine BG the subject of this memoir was born Jan 28<sup>th</sup> 1834 at Exeter, baptized at S Sidwell's. He was the eldest son of Edward BG a Cavalry officer in the East India Co. and Sophia Charlotte daughter of Admiral Francis Godolphin Bond RN. He had a sister Margaret born in 1835 and a younger brother William born in 1836. Three families were represented in the name for his grandmother was a Sabine.

### **Picture of Iceland painted by SBG in Oils**

A beautiful formation of rock rising clean cut, high up into a duck egg blue sky at sunrise with a pink glow from the rising sun on the side of rock formation. A blue haze at the foot of other rocky formations below this in indigo blue, a pond starting from indigo and brightening towards edge of picture with slight reflection of the mountain in rock reflecting a pink glow. Two swans are on the pond. One has just risen off the water casting ripples on the water from which it has just risen. This picture is with my brother Edward 1955 at 63 Westminster Gardens

I was asked to go to Oxford with Mrs -----<sup>33</sup> her son was at Brasenose College. My mother made a long red coat with some black astrican [*sic*] fur on the collar for me to wear there (how I hated the coat) but apparently a budding artist there did a picture of me in it, which I did not see when finished – the creature swore he would marry me one day, but I never saw him again. “The Red Coat” seems to have made a great impression - years after a journalist who had been to Lew Trenchard asked my sister Titus “which of her sisters it could have been who drove him in a dogcart to the station in a red coat with a mass of golden hair to her waist – but as most of us had golden hair. She did not remember the ‘hated’ coat her sister Joan had to wear.

My father was hard on the boys to make men of them.

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<sup>32</sup> Wreathed: Read writhed

<sup>33</sup> Joan left this blank. Presumably Mrs Bussell, the mother of the Rev. Frederick Bussell, ( a close associate of Sabine in his endeavours to collect the Songs of the West) was the name she could not recall. They lived at the cottage on the Ramps.

Edward aged 18 was sent off to America with hardly a penny in his pocket. (My beloved brother Harry, 1 ½ yrs older than me was also sent out there) but he was a born English Squire and couldn't adapt himself to the country of USA and how miserable he was out there no one knew but me – we were part of each other (as ---- [?] old br) at last he came home to look for another job, by then I had returned from India with my first born to my home still looking very young, and I remember Harry saying “Joan I can't believe you are married and have a baby, it is like a dream. How I wish we were back in the happy days at home. My husband would never let me ask him to stay with us in Derbyshire because he would have had to pay his journey money and I couldn't not having one penny, but how I have lamented it ever since, for my beloved brother was sent out to the Devon Estates in Malay, soon after where he died a few months later. It was the most unhealthy station, a terrible death all alone with none of his family near or no white man near him.

I remember after coming home from India, driving my father into Tavistock in the dog-cart, saying as we passed Brent Tor, standing up high on our left against a vivid blue sky, with the sun full on the Tor with its granite rocks and purple heather, with the beautiful landscape stretching all around us – dreamily saying “One has to go abroad and come home again to realise how beautiful everything is in our England.” My father grunted – I looked at him and saw a great look of surprise on his face then – a sweet smile of appreciation – but no comment.

He loved God, the Universe, the Earth, and the beautiful things of the world - I think, people, unless he knew and loved them, and people who could create things and make the world more beautiful or interesting, meant little to him. (thus his search into antiquity)

**Elements** Temperamental (difficult for the average person to understand) He had so much force he had to drive ahead with his ideas. So little time to describe all the wonders of the Earth, all the interesting things to be found on it. He searched for knowledge, and got impatient with people who could give him nothing but small chat and a waste of time

With saw in hand roaming over the property cutting ivy off the trees was relaxation and a joy of living. How he loved to be off on his precious Dartmoor or roaming the countryside exploring.

### **Horses**

I know one horse (a cob) Czar would have followed me to the death, we were absolutely in unison. I had only to get off and he would wind in and out of horses at a check or a meet like a dog. The master (Cooke Hurle) and the meet were flabbergasted. Czar was a wild creature, so was I and we just understood each other. He would never follow any other member of the family when they rode or hunted him. Czar and later my “Sea Gull” in India were part of me.

Returning from a hard day's hunting, the meet was beyond Launceston (from which my home 'Lew Trenchard House' was 10 miles and having a good run of 15 miles point, hacking home 12 miles and passing Lifton (5 miles from my home) a barrow organ was playing dance music. Czar and I both felt it in our blood and Czar literally danced through Lifton to the music and how I loved him and the music.

I was a strange, sentimental, fay, creature at 17, but I would always creep into the stable when I knew Charlie Dustan and his underlings were at lunch to tell Czar all my troubles and love for him and I knew he understood, as later when I married Willm Priestley and went to India (his present to me on our marriage was an untrained 'Whalen' [*sic*] from Australia which no one was able to ride. We understood each other from the start and my 'Seagull' was the most wonderful horse 16-3 hands anyone could have possessed. He was a Prutigian (pidgeoned toed) he would never let any man ride him. I won numerous P. to P. races and Championships as heavyweight hunter and in ----- [?] jumps in nearly every show in India. He was a lovely horse, perfect in --- [?] of his noble body.

I have many lovely horses. 'Puritan' and 'Dawn' I hunted in Watkin Williams Wynne<sup>34</sup> country. Both had been raced and were mad to go at the jumps during the hunts. My beautiful little "Torpedo" a heavyweight polo pony bought from the Melvilles lame.

He had won the high jump at the Dublin Show. I hunted him in the Melville country and no £300 gns [*sic*] horse could hold a candle to him. Unfortunately, on our return to India I had to sell him (on my husband's orders) to Miss Munro Walker who I hear could do nothing with him. "Farewell my beloved Torpedo" I felt a traitor, as so often I have felt when abandoning or selling my beloved animals, but I had no choice then. Had I been single and able nothing on this earth would have induced me to part with my beloved animals, which have always meant so much, and more to me than human beings.

My father said once Joan's "Horses and dogs mean more to her than her family" He could never say "Country" because that has always to me come first. I could sacrifice any thing on this earth for my Country. Nothing is more beautiful to me than my England – not its people – most of whom are parasites, they take all and everything they can for personal gain. They care naught alas for our beautiful England, except to bleed and drain her of her life's blood. I write this in 1956, where every industrial trial get all they can out of her, bleed her to death for their personal gain.

Pray God, Britain will again be a Great Country, as I believe she will be once again.

### **Family Notes Again**

When we were in Dinan France, for 2 years, when my father was broke and had to sell all the horses (Carriage and hunters) and recuperate by taking a pension in Dinan, my sister Diana, used to buy or borrow 6d novels always in red – she used to lick these to rouge her cheeks. My dear father (thoroughly taken in) used to say "At least this move has done Diana good, from being a pale child she has now a beautiful complexion",<sup>35</sup>

To learn French we children (I was then 14) were sent out marketing with our beloved "Felicitas," French cook. She would prod a dirty rusty hairpin to scoop butter from a cake (at least 4 ft high and 2 ft broad) to sample and go from one to another till she

<sup>34</sup> The Sir Watkin Williams Wynne (or North Wales) Hunt in Cheshire, at a time when the Priestleys rented a house in the area

<sup>35</sup> In a letter to Mary dated 2 December 1900 Sabine wrote: *Di is blooming like a rose in June and the mother at the convent would not believe that she had not painted her cheeks, so conceive how blooming she must be. She has a prodigious appetite*

decided to buy 2 or 3 lbs. The sights in the market made me quite sick. The pigs were brought for miles to the market tied up in a sack and Recked [*sic*] along the miles. Calves would be piled high in the centre of the market in the blazing sun, with all four feet tied together, thrown on top of each other. Eels – in the fish market – were skinned alive. I was always sick after when I had to eat them cooked.

The Bastille where prisoners were kept was terrible, filthy wet dark dungeons where prisoners had been kept for years chained, v heavy chains (which were still there) infested by bats, so numerous in each cell, that with a stick one could kill hundreds. We were in Dinan at the time of the Boer War, when the French loathed the British. From the pension we had to walk  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile to the Convent “The Sacre Bonne Coeur” every day, under an arch. Men’s urinals were placed in the open (like small basins against the arch) as we passed by the Poileaus<sup>36</sup> or French men turned their fountains towards us as we went under the arch – not only this, we were pelted with rotten cabbages, eggs and muck on our way to the convent from windows and doorways, followed by the urchins of the town in their Sabots chucking things at us. We only had to turn round and pretend to chase them when they would turn round like the cowards they were and clatter in the opposite direction. Women (driving dogs in carts to market (very fat ones) would stop to squat in the streets to relieve themselves as there was no privacy to share anywhere, in those days in the suburbs of France. My father would take us with some French archaeologist to see different villages of interest. The Frenchman would without thought stop on the way to relieve himself in front of us children walking behind. My father would say in a cross voice, “Come on children” as we naturally always stopped to look.

At the age of 14 I fell violently in love with Harry Richardson, a Capt. in 2<sup>nd</sup> Durham Light Infantry who fought in the Boer War, a tall fair very handsome fellow, his family lived in Dinan then, and his sister and young brothers were great friends of ours – we corresponded when he went back to Africa for a bit, then when we left France I heard no more from him – and it wasn’t for many many years after I heard from him again, living in poverty in Vancouver.

I loved Dinan, we had a very happy time there. For many years after we left it was the talk of the town how the B-Gs walked from End to End across the Viaduct, many hundreds of feet above the river, we used to bet each other as children we wouldn’t do it, how I hated doing it, but no B-G could ever shirk or show fear – better risk death than disgrace. This bridge or viaduct was famous for suicide – the water often broke their fall so many survived.

We loved the Carnivals and would watch it from some Hotel verandah in the town and would afterward join the dancers and people in the avenues of trees. Every one had confetti and would throw it at the person they wanted to dance with. I remember

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<sup>36</sup> Poileaus: In her loose memoir notes when describing this situation, Joan used the term *poilus*. *Poil* is French for hair and the literal translation of *poilus* is ‘hairy ones.’ The word *Poileaus* does not exist. Joan freely admitted that her knowledge of French was limited but she may well have understood from her childhood experiences that this was a derogatory term and so used it simply to emphasise that the men were ill-kempt and their behaviour gross. The nickname, *poilus*, given to French infantrymen in the First World War, had an honourable connotation and does not seem to be of any particular relevance here.

my mother laughing at it all when she got a handful in her mouth, which made her choke and splutter, and we had to beat her on the back and put our hands in her mouth to get the stuff out. The man had bolted or we would have been on him like tigers. My father was delighted and thought it a great joke.

In this convent there were masses of baby graves – with a big tear on the gravestone. We asked our Sister Ina Mare Marie A’Sain what they were, she tried to explain to us that they were the children of the nuns who had died – she said “We are married to our Lord Christ and we must submit ourselves to our priests.” We didn’t understand what she meant, but my father was horrified when we told him. There was an English girl in the convent called Winifred. She told us they were forcing her to be a nun. Her parents had separated and she had been left at the convent and forsaken by both her parents. She had a brother and she implored us to post her letter to him to save her, which we did. We used to smuggle English books into her but soon after we left France all the convents were disbanded.

Our dear Marie A’Sain always said she would die before this happened, which she did. We wouldn’t speak French and she was the only nun who could speak English, so she was told off to take charge of us and try to teach us French. She was a dear old soul, her clothes were terrible, hard and coarse, and she would have to kneel (as the other nuns in turn) all night at the altar in the perishing cold of the winter on stone, Her hands were knarled, [*sic*] swollen and always blue, she was a saint if ever there was one. We loved her and hated deceiving her, when we so often told her “Our church had a Saint’s Day, so we would not be at school the next day.” We had many such days and would have to go off and hide in the woods or go on the river all day, in case Papa saw us. It was always worth going without food all day and often the French peasants gave us milk or bread. We got known and they adored us- didn’t we teach them English?

Every shop when we left could put “English spoken” on their doors. We would guzzle on their lovely cakes without payment. Whether they got it from Papa eventually we did not know or care. I have never tasted cake like it since or never shall now. I went back to Dinan with friends years after and could walk straight to the penchant [*sic*] we had but could not remember the name,<sup>37</sup> the people showed me over the house. I could remember every room and the garden with lovely cherry trees. And the Earth lavatory at the end of the garden with seats for father, mother and five children in different sizes – still as it was in our day, though 20 years later.

*At the end of the notebook after several blank pages, the following is written:*

My father would sing after dinner in the Ballroom (where there was a grand piano) the old Songs of the West, accompanied by my sister, Vera – he had a good voice and he impressed us (his children) greatly and we would implore him to sing another and another and we would join in the chorus. We loved “Madam will you talk. Madam will you walk with me” and “Tom Pearce, Tom Pearce –lend me your grey mare.” We all hunted except Vera and were always in need of horses. Our hunters always did three days a week sometimes going seven to ten miles to a meet and coming back that distance, always at the top of a hunt and they always kept fit – so did we – and we

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<sup>37</sup> Villa Penthiuèvre

were part and partial [*sic*] of our horses, they loved us, and we loved them. I told our horses all my troubles and they would rest their soft muzzles against my cheeks to pretend they understood – especially my CZAR a bay thoroughbred.

He enjoyed collecting the Songs of the West and thought he had done one of his best works in collecting the old songs of Devon and Cornwall. He spent 15 years in doing so and travelled all over the country. The “Flurry song” and the May song were known only to two very old men. The last of the long line of folk singers direct descendants of the minstrels and ballad singers of Elizabethan days. The former at Helstone and the latter at Padstow. These melodies and words would have all died out completely. Links with the past when history and tradition was related and expressed in ballads would have vanished forever had it not been for my beloved father. Perhaps in time England will realize what they owe him.

But at present this filthy Zaz [*Jazz?*] and Crooning predominate this mad world.

As a young boy he was interested when he heard the peasants singing at their work he would prick his ears and take down the words of any he did not already know so as to preserve them.

Later in life he preserved “The Songs of the West.” For 12 years he gathered from the old men the quaint words and tunes which had been passed on for many generations, more than 200 songs were collected in this way. He would visit the Inns and treat them to drinks. His friend the Rev H Fleetwood Sheppard would accompany him to take down the tunes as Sabine was unable to do this, though he could play little songs on the piano very sweetly, had a good voice and would sing them.

Sabine in his spare time would go round his property with a saw in his hand. He hated to see ivy strangling a tree – he loved trees and his property was always kept well planted.

Painting at Lew by Ed. Tyck “The Viaticum to the Dying”

A very sweet expressed portrait of my father SB-G by M P DESCHWANDEN 1873 now in Edward’s flat.

Portraits painted at Lew b EDOUARD TYCK of Antwerp

Painted a “Flemish girl in the dress of the 16th century, leaving her house for the market” for my father.

The headpiece and bust of a French peasant girl at the well with her cruche [*?*] was painted by Lawless, an Irishman, but was incomplete so was completed by my father.

Luigi Ghedina of Cortina d’Ampezzo painted Mama when they were at Cortina 1868 which was unsatisfactory. He had to make he look upwards, whereas her eyes were invariably cast down. This was so unnatural to my father that he got Head, a local artist to alter the direction of the eyes which was a fatal blunder for it threw all the

muscles of the brow and cheek wrong and this made a caricature of the picture as my father says in his Reminiscences p.268. Now in BGs<sup>38</sup> flat

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<sup>38</sup> The term 'BG' clearly refers to her brother, Edward, who, as head of the family, was now 'the BG' It is of interest that during his last years when Edward and Marian had taken over management of Lew House, Sabine, in a letter to Mary referred, with some irritation, to Edward as 'BG.'

## II

### The Loose Memoir Notes of Joan Priestley

*These unsigned notes, written by Joan Priestley, are now in the possession of Elizabeth Dickinson. The notes are undated but it would seem likely that they were written in response to a request from the Rev. Bickford Dickinson to his aunt Joan for recollections of her father. This was at a time when Bickford was researching his biography of Sabine Baring-Gould, published in 1970.<sup>39</sup>*

#### First set of loose notes

##### For Family Portraits

John Dunning was nearly 50 years old when he married Elizabeth Baring, daughter of John Baring of Larkbeare and sister of the founders of the great house of Baring Bros. He married her in 1780.

He became Baron Ashburton in 1782. He died in 1785 of paralysis leaving a son, Richard Barré Dunning to succeed him, and to inherit a fortune of £180,000.

Of Papa a very sweet expressioned one at BG's flat painted  
by M. P. DESCHWANDEN 1873

Tablet in St Peter's Lew Trenchard in memory of Margaret Gould who died in 1662  
reads

Here lies the gentle Margaret  
A Pearl in gold right neatly set

##### Brent Tor

A subaqueous volcanic cone crowned by a little church  
The base of the hill has been fortified.

Church at Lew has fine bench ends.

White had been bewitched – ill wished ie influenced for ill.

Lew church was founded by S. Petrock about the year 560.

The Domesday Lew became a Royal manor with a knight's fee and responsible for the levy of three horsemen to serve the king.

No mention is made of a Manor house till the reign of Henry III when it was in possession of the Trenchards; silver coins of the time of Edward II have been found in the walls and below the floors. From the Trenchards the estate passed to the Monks of Potheridge by marriage.

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<sup>39</sup> Dickinson BHC, *Sabine Baring-Gould, Squarson, Writer and Folklorist 1834-1934*, Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1970

In James I's reign Sir Thomas Monk fell into difficulties over debts and Henry Gould purchased the Manor House from him in 1626. See page 75 Further Reminiscences by SBG.

## Second Set of Loose Notes

When I married in 1907 I had to leave my ancestral home in Devon, my famous father, author and squarson whom I adored. Happy memories of childhood being one of 15 children. The only blur on our childhood was a pig of a governess<sup>40</sup> who thrashed us on our posteriors with her hard leathery hand which left wheals of finger marks for days after. We would make a point of being very naughty while we were about it, hoping we would be sent to my father's library where he would deal with us the same treatment except with a carpet slipper which never hurt half as much.

We had a disused quarry in the grounds which a misguided grandfather was persuaded to mine hoping thereby to recover losses he had made gambling,<sup>41</sup> this afterwards was flooded with water,<sup>42</sup> which was then 70 ft deep, we had many adventures on this lake and it was a wonder any of us survived. Not content with the rowing boats, old hip baths which were then used in the Manor House and thrown away, were recovered, the holes plugged up, boards nailed across and paddles made, in which we would row about the fearsome quarry. A waterfall in the middle fell from the rocks 200 ft above and we would get under this and try to sink the opposite one on the end of the boat from which the one rowing was sitting. On one occasion my sister Mary went into the water, disappeared twice before she was grabbed by the hair and dragged into the boat half drowned, we then only thought of our own skins and rushed her ashore, removed her clothes, made a bonfire and dried them so no one would know what had happened, re clothed her and disappeared, but mercifully in the meantime she had recovered and the secret was kept for many years after.<sup>43</sup>

There was a fascinating boathouse made like a Swiss Chalet, the roof painted red, where the boat was kept below, and a larger room, with a veranda looking on the lake above. We would spend days there away from the house living on what we could find to cook for ourselves.

Once my brother Harry and I were rabbiting in the fields above and a rabbit ran over the edge. My brother ran after it to fire another shot, his foot slipped and I heard a horrible rumbling of falling stones and rock. I shouted his name sick with fear over the edge never expecting to see him alive again, rushed down to the lake around a safe part to find him hanging on the a young bush or tree which had fortunately held. I got the boat out and rowed round to get him. This episode understandably accounted for a terrible nightmare I had for 2 or 3 years when I would wake up in a cold sweat crying out to my father not to throw himself over the edge of the rocks to the lake below.

The governess I have already mentioned was a real Spartan. We were only allowed into the walled garden on occasions and then were told we were only to eat six

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<sup>40</sup> Miss Priscilla Biggs

<sup>41</sup> According to Sabine, lime was first quarried at Lew Trenchard in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by William Drake Gould. The quarry was not one of great grandfather William Baring-Gould's unsuccessful speculations

<sup>42</sup> The quarry lake was created by Sabine. On 29 September 1883, Grace cut the last turf to allow the stream from the Glen to flow into the quarry. *Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*, Devon Record Office. Baring-Gould Archive Box 5203

<sup>43</sup> Mary was 18 years older than Joan. Joan therefore cannot possibly have been involved in an incident when Mary, as a child, almost drowned in the lake. This would seem to have been a collective Baring-Gould childhood memory.

gooseberries, one or two greengages etc. Consequently we would stuff our knickers with fruit of allsorts, sometimes we were lucky and got away with it, when we would await the opportunity to store it somewhere and divide it up later, but on other occasions (when the one who was told off to distract her attention as we filed past her as she sat at the garden door) she would hit out at us and if the fruit was ripe there would be a horrible squelch and the juice would run down our legs and we would be severely punished. This woman, Miss Biggs, had sadistic instincts and our parents, who saw very little of us, could not have known what a tyrant she was. A few years after when she was dismissed and became a nun, we got a bit of our own back rifling her boxes which she had left behind.

I would wait for hours over a rabbit hole when a child would sometimes manage to catch a young rabbit, which I would tame, though I have often heard people say a wild rabbit cannot be tamed. I can give the lie to this. Another wild rabbit I tamed was dropped from a hawk's beak. As it flew over my head I clapped my hand and shouted. Frightened, it dropped the small rabbit which fell in the hedge among soft leaves, this became a great little pet, and when I let it loose after a couple of years, it would come to me when I went into the fields alone and called it.

Squirrels, owls, mice, a badger and many birds did we tame, but not cage after we had tamed them.

Most of us were very keen on horses and hunting and though at times the stables were full there were never enough horses to go round and we would be grateful to be lent anything so as not to be out of a hunt.

We would go to dances to neighbouring squire's homes, sometimes 10 to 15 miles in the carriage and pair and we often felt very sick on the way and would turn the footman off to ride behind the carriage and take his place on the box when we weren't to many to take him. Often our coachman, Charlie Dustan, would have done himself well when we were dancing and we would put him inside the carriage and take turns to drive the pair home. On two occasions do I remember down the drive where there were thick rhododendron bushes each side, the horses would stop dead, snort rear and refuse to pass. We grew up with the idea that the house and grounds were haunted and when we played hide and seek in the dark we would hear footsteps crunching on the gravel within arms distance, try and clasp it, to find nothing, and often have I heard the swish of skirts and light footsteps in the gallery pass close to me and see nothing.

One day a sister was looking into the fountain near the house when my brother John and I crept up pushed her in head foremost with her feet over the top, we ran away to hide in case anyone had seen us. Luckily my father had, from his library window and he came out and saved my sister from drowning.<sup>44</sup>

On another occasion some slates were being repaired on the roof and a scaffolding was erected and three of us were chasing each other round the stringed planks whilst the workmen were having their lunch below. Suddenly while I was chasing my sister, Cicely, she fell through a hole where the scaffold should have joined and fell several

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<sup>44</sup> In her exercise book memoir notes Joan wrote that it was Harry rather than John who was involved in this prank and Felicitas was the unfortunate sister who was pushed in. Felicitas was 4 years older than Joan while Harry was 17 months older than Joan. John was 3 years younger than Joan

feet below. My brother Harry<sup>45</sup> and I felt very frightened she had been killed and did not dare to appear to find out in case she had been and wept our eyes red upstairs in the attic. When our tummies got empty we stole out and then learnt that she had only sprained her ankle very badly, so we rated her soundly for having wasted so much of our time lamenting her loss.

We ran wild for a bit after our hateful governess left, so when I was sent off to a boarding school, I felt like a caged bird beating for ever my wings against the bars, it was torture to me and I would spend hours praying in the holidays that I would get ill or break a limb the day before I was due back at school. It may be owing to this I have rebelled against anyone who has tried to dominate or rule my life for me.

Perhaps it was the love of adventure, the thought of seeing foreign lands (but not leaving my beloved family, dog and home) that induced me to marry the man I did, for immediately I had done it I again felt trapped and it was only after we had arrived in India, a few weeks after, that my interest in things and places got the better of my fearful homesickness. I was young, good looking, fond of every kind of sport and people and they made a great fuss of me. My husband had ordered a beautiful Whalen, "Pratigan" horse to be waiting for me on arrival. There was much talk and anxiety because since the horse had been landed no one had been able to remain on his back for more than a few seconds. However I insisted on having a saddle put on. I talked to and petted my beautiful "Seagull" Several men mounted on their mounts to ride with me or pick me up. I then mounted and my horse (I think) felt as proud as I did, arched his neck and went off like a lamb much to the astonishment of my cavaliers. Never would he, all the years I had him, tolerate a man on his back. He was a grand horse and carried me well in endless hunts at home and abroad, many a P. to P. race did I win on him, and he would sweep the board at horse shows in hunter classes and jumping.

When the great war broke out I had to leave him behind. Lady Willindon<sup>46</sup> the then governor's wife wanted him and the Capt of the BG<sup>47</sup> was a great friend of mine. Then soon after he broke his leg being groomed and had to be shot.

In the market in Bombay one day I saw a beautiful little greyhound with eyes like a fawns, pools of misery looked out of those eyes behind a small wooden cage. I bought her for 10Rps and took her out to Santa Cruz where we lived. There was then no other woman living out there, the kennels and the Jackall Club which consisted of a lot of tents under the trees, where the men would come out to at night. I called her Fawn and she was a faithful friend for many years. Soon after I got a magnificent Kangaroo hound the same colour called Roy. Those two had many families and they would ride with me in the jungle and would tackle and kill anything. Roy would run alongside a pig, make a leap, break a vertebra in its neck and it would fall as dead as a door nail. Up country we would have great hunts after grey wolf, jackal, black buck and in Ceylon, elk and panther. One of my greyhounds which slept under my bed was taken by a panther one night. I never woke though the panther must have come through the window and over my head as its fang marks were there in the morning.

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<sup>45</sup> Cicely was 2 years younger than Joan

<sup>46</sup> Lady Willindon: Marie Freeman-Thomas, wife of Lord Willingdon, then Governor of Bombay and later Governor and Viceroy of India

<sup>47</sup> BG: Probably the Governor's Body Guard.

When I arrived at Newralia<sup>48</sup> alone, a horse was lent me to exercise and told me I could take a terrier out with me to exercise. I left the day after I arrived at 6 am on horseback to find the circular ride. I rode on for several hours expecting to come round, then my horse got so tired I had to get off and rest him and the dog, then walked and walked till the jungle got very dense. Then I made up my mind I must return the way I had come, carrying the dog in my arms and leading my horse very tired and woebegone. A panther crossed the path and slunk into the jungle, the dog trembled in my arms, the horse snorted and refused to move for some time. It was getting late in the afternoon and we had miles to go. Then to make things worse there was a great chattering noise, the leaves of the trees rustled all round and several monkeys jumping from tree to tree followed us overhead pelting us with berries which splashed on us leaving gory stains. The moon was out and stars twinkling in the clear sky, when we suddenly emerged from the jungle into the open. And, joy of joys, there were other little lights twinkling near the ground – most of Newralia had turned out on bicycles and on foot to try and find us.

It was the jungle life I loved most in India.

Once on a duck shoot we were taking our different stands round a lake. I was pushing my way through tangled growth when I saw (the only place I could possibly get through) an enormous python curled up. I could see no head so had to fire into this enormous coil. As I did so, two heads appeared beside the larger head of the body, two uncurled themselves and glided away, but the larger body remained with a big part of it blown away. I then fired again at its head and got over it as quickly as I could to take up my position, as the shots had disturbed the duck. After the shoot we found the reptile, a python, which we then had great difficulty in getting the natives to carry in on a charpoy. It measured 25 ft. When cut open, there must have been thousands and thousands of eggs inside the body. On another occasion we found a dead python which had swallowed a black buck save for its horns and head which looked as if it belonged to the snakes body. Not the worst part of the day was sitting or lying dog tired round the camp fire at night drinking hot rum before we retired to our tents for the night. Following the spour [*sic*] of a wounded beast one day crawling through the jungle I came face to face with a yellow wild dog. We gazed at each other for a few seconds, then it slunk off. This was a warning to pack up and go as we would get no more game if they were about.

One of the most perfect scenes I have ever seen was in Mahableshtar.<sup>49</sup> Looking down on the plains below one saw hills undulating away to the horizon – Mount Everest in all her majesty, with a crimson carpet laid at her feet in the Himalayas with a cloudless blue sky.

I was fortunate in travelling out to India with General Bruce and Colonel Norton on their way out to tackle Mount Everest.<sup>50</sup> I have always longed to meet explorers and

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<sup>48</sup> Newralia: More correctly Nawara Eliya: Now a popular holiday hill resort in Sri Lanka. It is unclear whether this is the Newralia described by Joan or whether there was a place with the same name near Bombay. It is clear that from the preceding account that Joan did hunt panther in Ceylon. As this account includes the sighting of a panther it can be concluded that this Newralia was in Ceylon

<sup>49</sup> Mahabaleshtar: This town is in the coastal hills to the south of Mumbai. Mount Everest, around 1000 miles away, could not possibly have been seen from there. Joan was possibly confusing the views from different locations.

<sup>50</sup> British Mount Everest Expedition 1924

they were the nearest approach I have ever got to it, looking on them as heroes for even wanting to make the attempt. I was far too shy and humble to think they would want to waste their time talking to me, so I never approached them unless it was to join in conversation with others present, which was the last thing I wanted to do, as in this way one never hears what one is aching to hear from the people you want to hear talk. It is always the ones through life, one does not want to hear about, who do all the talking and so it has always been. How often have I thought, so many beautiful places and things in life are missed and lost, having to listen to people's chatter and the happiest times of my life have been spent alone.

How I always adored being at sea alone, not in the big liners, but in the merchant ships from 4 to 7000 tons. I was a bad sailor when young, but however ill I felt, if I could get into the bows of the ship on the roughest day and plunge with the ship into the trough of the ocean to rise and meet the next great roller, these gave one the wildest elation and the rest was forgotten.

After the 1<sup>st</sup> Great War we went back to India for three months and then on to Africa. We had a case of cholera on board so were flying the yellow flag and not allowed to land at Seychelles, but we went out round the Lepour<sup>51</sup> Island in the ship's boat. The sea was clear and we had a wonderful view of the numerous coloured fish. Shoals were being chased by porpoises and we picked up several as they splashed and sped past us in the fright.

When I was married in 1907 I was always being corrected by my husband William Priestley, although he was of lower birth he had perhaps a better education. My letters (when I was in India) home were of constant amusement to the men who were going to work in their offices in Bombay (we lived at Santa Cruz, 10 miles from Bombay, near the kennels of foxhounds) My husband apparently had no scruples in opening my letters home and reading them to the men in the train. I would get letters from my father with all the badly spelt words underlined in red ink. Being of a fiery nature, I wrote saying because I had been badly educated (mostly my own fault, I now own, because I was lazy and didn't want to learn) and my spelling was bad, if he ever sent me a letter so underlined I would never write home again

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<sup>51</sup> Lepour Island: There is no island in the Seychelles with this name. It seems likely that Joan was referring to an island that was used as a leper colony.

## Third set of Loose Notes

### France

When I was young I remember having the most appalling nightmares – always the same thing. That my Papa was about to throw himself into the lake (a disused quarry 90ft deep in water) from the rocks above – I would shriek out “Papa don’t, Papa don’t” so our nurse said after. This must have gone on for a long time.

The family and my parents then sold up the carriage horses and all the hunters, about 14 and left for France, 1902. Took a villa in Dinan. I was then about 15 (born in 1887)<sup>52</sup> Not long after we were told that dear Papa<sup>53</sup> was bankrupt and had had to sell most of his possessions – but that Edward B.G. his cousin had helped him out.<sup>54</sup> We were in Dinan for two years. Very happy years they were for us all

We girls had to go to a convent, the ‘Sacre Bonne Coeur’ every day. Not any of the nuns would (even if they knew it) speak English, it was an R.C. Convent and we soon realised that they were always having Saints Days, so we thought we would have Saints Days, so as to stay away from school. We used to have to go far afield in the woods and along the river so that no one would see us. This went on for some time until the nuns got suspicious and asked Papa through the little grated window. (We used to see the nuns fighting to get to it, to speak to Papa) and it was stopped.

Luckily we were tough. We were there soon after the Boer War<sup>55</sup> when the English were loathed by the French – and coming through the narrow streets from school back to the villa every day urchins would mob us in their sabots, along the cobbled streets, throwing rotten eggs, cabbages, offal etc, and the Poilus<sup>56</sup> with basin latrines along the old walls would turn around as we passed to piss on us. The urchins we would deal with by turning round suddenly and chasing them. They would turn and try to run away in their sabots and they generally got the worst of it as we would pick up the muck they had thrown at us and let them have it. I don’t think my mother or father ever realised what we had to put up with and we thought of it as part of the fun. We looked on the French as dirty uncivilized creatures – the women would up their

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<sup>52</sup> Dates in Dinan: Joan is incorrect about dates. The family travelled to Dinan on 20 October 1900 and returned to Lew in December 1901. The dates on which Joan resided in Dinan are far from clear. Joan, who was 13 when the family moved to Dinan, was almost certainly at boarding school in England at least until Easter 1901. She was 14 on 19 January 1901 and from Easter 1901 she probably remained with her parents at Dinan with the other younger children until 9 December 1901 when they returned to Lew Trenchard ahead of Sabine and Grace who returned on 17 December. Family bible entries. West Country Studies Library. Baring archive.

<sup>53</sup> It would seem from other accounts that Sabine was close to, but not quite bankrupt.

<sup>54</sup> Cousin Edward: The only Baring-Gould cousin with the name Edward was Edward Sabine, b. 1843, son of the Rev Charles Baring-Gould.

<sup>55</sup> Boer War: The family was in France during, not after, the Boer war, the dates of which were 1899-1902.

<sup>56</sup> Poilus: In her notebook memoirs when describing this situation, Joan used the term *Poileaus*. *Poil* is French for hair and the literal translation of *poilus* is ‘hairy ones.’ The word *Poileaus* does not exist. Joan freely admitted that her knowledge of French was limited but she may well have understood from her childhood experiences that this was a derogatory term and so used it simply to emphasise that the men were ill-kempt and their behaviour gross. The nickname, *poilus*, given to French infantrymen in the First World War, had an honourable connotation and does not seem to be of any particular relevance here.

clothes and do their business in the gutters no matter who were passing by – wretched dogs were harnessed to small carts laden with vegetables and an old man and woman on top flogging the poor creatures along. The market days made me sick, to see the calves, chicken, duck etc with their legs tied together thrown together in a mass in the blazing sun all day.

Eels being skinned alive in the fish market. I suppose this is why I always despised and thought the French a loathsome race of people. The individuals are charming, we had an adorable old cook called Felicitas – we were sent marketing with her (to learn French) She would go up to mounds of butter, pull a dirty hair pin out of her head and gouge a piece out of the butter mound to taste it, and on to another – have wretched fish taken out of the water tanks to feel them – pinch and pull the feathers out of live hens to see if they were young, and we would see wretched pigs tied up in sacks and beaten along the road to market. Two of my brothers saw one of the last guillotines in Dinan. They got up very early and went to the market place where it took place at sun-rise. We never could get anything out of them about it afterwards.

## Fourth Set of Loose notes

### Mother Mama<sup>57</sup>

*These notes were found, separately from the other memoirs, among the collection of letters written by Sabine to his daughter, Mary. They fit well with the other loose memoir notes given to Bickford Dickinson by Joan and are therefore included in this transcription*

We girls loved Mama, but she was reserved. Never showed us any affection. We always felt her love was for our brothers. We were brutal in our ignorance and asked her why she hadn't any sisters or brothers? Why didn't they come and stay? She would get more silent, and bury her head in the work she was doing. Years after when I was doing the family mending with her and Mrs Salter, (a woman who came in to help) they were talking about my brother Harry who died in Malaya (Harry and I were very close together. As children we did everything together (there was only 1 ½ years between us<sup>58</sup>) – Mama asked me a question but I could not answer for my head had dropped to hide my tears. (for then we thought it disgraceful to show emotion) Though my father was very emotional. The family a mixture of “reserve” and “emotion”

Papa was a great personality – everything centred around Papa – we used to have the wildest horses. One “Prince” shied in a narrow lane, Lew Mill Lane, jumped up the bank, fell over and kicked the dogcart (with two of us in it – Titus<sup>59</sup> and self) to bits – we staggered to our feet but our only thought was “what would Papa do without the dogcart” we had to leave the remains of the trap, and lead the horse home in a white lather.

Papa did the rounds every night to see if our oil lamps were out and not reading in bed – we would dim them and put our hand over the flame – Papa – from the door – would say “are you asleep children” One of us would reply (as previously arranged) “Yes, nearly Papa, but you have woken us up” Papa “Good night, my dears.” On one occasion my light did go out, next door was my father's and mother's room with a fire – I went in, stuck the paraffin lamp into the fire which of course caught fire. I threw it down rushed to the basin and jug of water and poured it on. Needless to say the flames spread over the floor. Three of us in our long nightys (*sic*) tried to stamp it out, then I said one of us must go and tell ‘them’ at supper to come up, they rushed up, Papa first and ordered us out of the room and soon got it under control. We weren't punished as far as I can remember.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Joan found it easier to write about her father, who she clearly adored, rather than her mother towards whom her feelings seem to have been confused. What she did write suggests that Grace had an unexpectedly high level of emotional reserve together with unresolved sensitivity about her origins. Although Joan was not herself reserved, it would seem that in later life she was able to empathise with her mother's reserve. Although the few surviving letters written by Grace suggest a deep love and concern for her children and grandchildren, Joan implied that Grace had difficulty communicating those feelings to her daughters.

<sup>58</sup> Harry was 17 months older than Joan

<sup>59</sup> Titus: The familiar name for Joan's sister, Felicitas. She was 4 years older than Joan.

<sup>60</sup> This brief example of Sabine's behaviour towards his children does not suggest that he was a harsh disciplinarian. It is evident from the notebook memoirs that, in contrast to the very strict governess, Miss Priscilla Biggs, Sabine was regarded as a ‘pushover’ where punishment was concerned. Joan much preferred he father's carpet slipper to the hand of Miss Biggs.