

I N T E R V A L

- by -

Marc Anthony .

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~~1943~~ QUINER WORLD.

Marc Anthony.

I. Chapter.

I made a resolution that I would start to write at the beginning of this year. I have for a very long time wanted to do this. (Having had a full and very colourful life, so much I have lived through, things enjoyed and things deeply felt, and of many interesting people it has been my good fortune to meet and know intimately. Of lovely places I have visited and of wondrous kindnesses I have received, and the gift of music that was given me. And through music I seem to be perpetually surrounded by much that has given me much happiness and enriched my mind. Music brought me close to people who otherwise I might never have met. I started to play the piano at the age of nine. When Mrs. Millen who looked after me at school discovered I could play the piano she dragged me off the next day to two teachers. I so well remember first to a Miss Kuchler and then to a Mr. Fisher. They both pronounced the same judgment on my ability at ^{the} piano. For naturally at that age I showed off to the best of my ability. It was decided I was to be left alone to work out my musical career. I played by ear and by ear I was going to continue. Study would not have been easy for anyone who had the natural sense of music I had. It was just a gift and I much preferred to be left alone to develop that gift. I much appreciated the wise decision of those two teachers. I know I could never have practised or learned scales. I had a wonderful time at school because of my piano-playing. I was asked everywhere much to the annoyance of many of the boys. I can hear them saying as they so often did: "You know you are only asked to parties because you can play a piano." My answer would be: "Of course, I am, but you ~~all~~ can't do anything to entertain at all." And from that time onwards I seemed to have done little else but play a piano. It has been my Cleopatra. My mother and

Father were both Armenians. They were born in Calcutta. My father migrated to Penang at a very young age and set up business there. His first wife was killed in a carriage accident by whom he had three children, two girls and a boy. It was at a luncheon party of twelve women and quite by chance my father turned up. It pleased the women so much that they insisted he, the only man, must join the table and so they were thirteen. That same afternoon his wife was killed. After that my father became most superstitious of the number "13" and natural enough. After the tragedy he returned to Calcutta for a rest and a change, and there he met my mother whose family he had known slightly before. After a lapse of time he fell in love with my mother and married her. She was a Miss Regina Gregory a gentle creature of great charm with beautiful deep eyes. She could wear masses of jewels for breakfast and still not look wrong. She possessed great quietness and had elegant taste. Both my parents were highly cultured and believed in God and everything that was good and noble. They helped everyone who came their way, always kind and generous. And sometimes, I fear, almost too kind. My mother had six children, one died in infancy and I was the youngest and today only two of us are alive. As a child I was the delicate one, never well, and I am certain I was never expected to live long, my earliest recollections being the cod liver oil bottle, it seemed to follow me everywhere I went. My sisters were educated at a Convent in Calcutta and we three boys sent to the school of Dollar Academy in Scotland to be looked after and cared for by the loveable Mrs. Millen. No mother cared for her own children more than Mrs. Millen cared for all us boys in her charge. We were brought up in a beautiful home, full of beautiful things. I can see that elegant drawing room now with its enormous gilt mirrors, concert grand Broadwood piano, fine glass and china, good furniture and lace curtains at the bow window, and all the good things that seemed to belong to good Scottish families. As boys we were always allowed in the drawing room after lessons.

We were taught to value and appreciate beautiful things. And rightly, that ought to be an important part of everyone's education. Church-going was never made a necessity with us, but because of that and the way we were brought up we always just went. The only thing that became a big blunder was if anyone sent us a tuck-box. That was never necessary, as we were always given plenty of good food, sweets, cake and jam. My pocket-money was a penny a week until I was twelve, then twopence until I was fourteen and then sixpence until I was eighteen, but one never just thought much of money. Mrs. Millen saw to it that we all had our Post Office savings book, and all our gifts of birthday and Christmas money was quickly put into that book. I remember being intensely happy all through those school years. And I know that I really shed tears the day I ~~had~~ realised I had left school. I instinctively knew a wonderful part of my life was over. I must not forget to say, as a child, I only played with dolls, I hated all other toys and when I left Penang to come to school, I travelled on a Japanese Maru ship, accompanied by my old ayah Meda, and a married step-sister and her husband. I so well remember bringing several dolls with me on that voyage. Some thing told me ~~inside~~ that little boys do not play with dolls and one night while I was left alone in my bunk, while my ayah went to eat, I crept out quietly and took all the dolls and dropped them ~~in~~ over board. It was a sad moment in my life and the dolls were done with for good and all. In those days I was a queer strange silent child and seldom spoke. But I certainly made up for all that later on. For if there is one thing I love today it is conversation. I left school at the age of eighteen I do not remember passing any exams or winning any prizes, I was not clever at all. I remember getting one prize for an essay I wrote on the subject of "alcohol," why I got it I cannot think. I have that prize today in my possession. I was dreadful ~~against~~ at games, in fact I loathed all of them

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but when winter came and the ~~ice~~ pond was covered with thick ice then I was able to show off again, because I was quite a good skater. When I left school I was put into ^a ~~the~~ bank, a vacancy was found for me in the Clydesdale Bank at Dollar. The idea revolted me, for by this time I was madly stage-struck, only the theatre interested me. But poor ^{poor} ~~dear~~ Mrs. Millen fainted away at any mention on the subject. I had been doing a tremendous amount of amateur theatricals and composing music and ^{writing} lyrics, and my mind was emersed only in the theatre. But I seemed to be in a trap, I could not hurt Mrs. Millen and my parents were in Penang and except for their occasional trips over to Britain, I saw little of them and felt I knew them not at all. So I went through with my three years of banking experience. I know I ^{drive} ~~drive~~ them all mad at the bank, as I did nothing right. But on looking back, they were quite pleasant years. I had Glasgow and Edinburgh quite near and good theatrical companies, ^{came} to both these towns, so I was able to see all current shows and keep up my theatrical interest. But I felt mad inside, for everything I was doing, I was not only doing bad, but I felt I was also wasting my life. So now I must go right back to my first show in London, it was "THE CHINESE HONEYMOON". I must have been ten years old at the time I saw "THE CHINESE HONEYMOON", which was being palyed at Terry's Theatre in the Strand. Terry's Theatre does not exist any more. This took me into a new world, the world of the theatre, and I became stage-struck at once. I so well remember turning to my brother Jack at the end of the show and saying: "She'll be famous". And he seemed quite unconcerned and just said: "Who"? And I answered: "Why, Lillie Elsie of course." But I plainly saw it meant nothing to him, he just enjoyed the show, while I was carried away rapturously by the beauty and charm of Lilly Elsie and the way she sang that haunting song "Egypt, my Cleopatra." What that song had to do with the Chinese honeymoon of course, was of no consequence at all.

It happened to be a beautiful song and sung by a beautiful person and as far as I was concerned surely that was enough. From then on I followed the career of Lilly Elsie, always looking for her name in the current shows in Glasgow and Edinburgh. I was fairly lucky and always got permission to see most of the shows I wanted to see. So I saw Lilly Elsie quite frequently, and knew the day must come when her star must shine to the world in all its full blaze and glory. I spent all my pocket money buying up her picture postcards. I never went to school without them in my lesson books. And many was the time they would slip out and fall to the ground, frequently before the master's eyes. But my worried face always got them back, but always on the promise to leave them at home in the future, which of course, I didn't. At least I was a faithful lover! I shall never forget the furor Lilly Elsie created when she played the lead in "See See" at the King's Theatre, Glasgow, during one Christmas. The Glasgow public simply went mad over her, her beauty seemed more radiant than ever. Frank Tours was ^{the} a good-looking conductor, he, too, seemed thrilled with her and maybe she with him a little as well. For the exchange of smiles between them brought magic to the theatre. It was during the tour of "See See" that Lilly Elsie was chosen by George Edwards to play the widow in the ever famous "MERRY WIDOW" production at Daly's Theatre in London. "See See" ended Lilly Elsie's touring days, and "THE MERRY WIDOW" commenced her fame in London. About "THE MERRY WIDOW" I will write a separate chapter. It all played such a big part in my life. It was only as recently as 1939, soon after the outbreak of war, at the "Spotted Dog Club" where I was playing, that Lilly Elsie was brought specially for me to meet. My eyes fell out with excitement, for indeed had I not waited many years for this to happen! I must say I was not disappointed in any way. That lovely deep-speaking voice of hers, her great charm and rose-petal beauty was all there. It has been wonderful knowing her and I feel I fully deserve that privilege. My hero-worship

never faltered. No other actress has ever swept me as she did. As an artist she was one of those rare things that happen in a lifetime. And I am indeed happy that she happened in my lifetime. It was only after the ~~war~~ first Great War that I returned to this country in May 1919, just before Peace was signed in June. I ^{had} spent those four years in my own home in Penang. So it was on getting back to this country in 1919 that I was able to start my own career in London, and in the ~~twelve~~ four years that have since elapsed I seem to have met most everybody. As the song says "MY FIRST LOVE" will always be "MY LAST LOVE" - Lilly Elsie.

Chapter II.

AS I have already said I arrived back in this country from Penang during the summer of 1919. It was the month of May. And how exciting it felt to be in my beloved London again, and that the awful war was over. How wonderful it was to be back amongst the theatres and to see the new stars. I had been away for five and a half years and starved of the theatre and music: "THE MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS" and "CHU-CHIN-CHOW" ^{had} ~~have~~ been running for several years and there was "KISSING TIME" at the Wintergarden Theatre and Beatrice Lillie of whom I had heard and ^{read} ~~heard~~ so much about in "OH JOY", also Albert de Courville's "JOY BELLS" at the Hippodrome, Gertrude Elliatt in "THE EYES OF YOUTH", Nigel Playfair's big success "THE BEGGAR'S OPERA" at the Lyric Theatre, ^m ~~Ham~~ersmith and several others too numerous to mention. Dear old Mary Lloyd was still going strong in the Music Hall. I had returned to this country to become a composer and I just had to get myself into the theatre world. For a whirl-pool it certainly is, where hearts can be made happy and then broken. However, I must say I was not lacking in the courage that goes with determined youth. I was so thrilled with Jose Collins, her wonderful personality and glorious voice that after seeing the matinee of "THE MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS" I joined the big queue and saw it again the same evening. After that I never missed a Jose Collins First Night. Jose is a loveable creature, warm and kind, and it has been a great pleasure to me knowing her. Her own book on the theatre and all she has to say about "Daly's Theatre" is well worth reading. "CHU-CHIN-CHOW" pleased me because of its beautiful music. I knew the music of both these shows well, for I had been running my own orchestra at Penang at the Eastern ^{ly} Oriental Hotel and also at Raffles' Hotel at Singapore. Phyllis Dare still ^{lovely} ~~lovely~~ as ever and dancing beautifully was enchanting audiences at the Wintergarden. Beatrice Lilly was fast building up a great career for herself, there was something new in this quaint personality and (Oh Joy)

afforded her a grand ~~time~~ part. I so well remember Tom Powers since the American star in it, I have not/seen, in my opinion, a better juvenile lead. Leslie Henson was someone new to me and he greatly reminded me of Edmund Payne of the old Gaiety days. How much I had heard and read of de Courville's Hippodrome Revue and here I was seeing his "JOY BELLS", with Shirley Kellogg who really could sing and put a song over, and the Gang-Plank where the chorus girls danced, sang, and threw souvenirs to the stalls. It certainly was a good show. The amount I managed to squeeze into a day, for I was also looking around to find myself a small flat, I must get myself a home, an address and a telephone number, that was very necessary as I hated hotel life. During my wanderings I found myself in Chelsea one day and to my great joy I found my footsteps stray into Glebe Place, quite by accident. This pretty little street with uniformed houses on one side and quaint looking red brick studios and lime-trees on the other side and at the end of the street an old cottage. I quickly decided I must live in this street. So I started knocking each door beginning with No. 1, and when I got to number 10, to my surprise and delight, there was the top floor flat empty. I saw it and took it at once, and there I have remained ever since, now twenty-four years. Certainly, it has been a happy home for me, and I bless the days that strayed my footsteps to Glebe Place. The little cottage in Glebe Place can be found in every Guide Book, the oldest in London and was one of Henry VIII ^{HUNTING} hinting lodges. It certainly enhances the street with infinite charm. I felt once I settled myself in a home, all else would follow. And how right I was.

Chapter III.

My entrance to the Night Club world was pure accident. Nothing was further from my mind than night clubs. I had never been in one and the word had never entered my mind. One moonlight night late in September 1919 I found myself wandering into Ham Yard, I was of an explorative nature and here I was admiring the quaintness of this so-called Yard, maybe it was the moonlight, but here appeared something that I had read about in books of Montmartre. This Yard did not seem to belong to London, it was seething with atmosphere, and then I beheld a heavy dark door that opened and closed with lots of amusing people going in or coming out, so I presumed there must be a cafe upstairs through that door. And up I went, I signed my name in a book and left my coat, and then went up a few more steps and entered a large room, where there were masses of people eating and drinking at tables and all seemed happy and gay. How I got passed the door-keeper and signed the book and calmly walked in will always be a mystery to me. For, of course, here was I in a Night Club, and not being a member I should not have been admitted. But I suppose it ^{just} had to be that way for me that night. I quickly sat myself at a table and ordered a coffee from the waiter, I felt a mixture of fear and nervousness, I felt ^{all} so/alone and everybody else seemed to know one another. It was all so very strange and exciting, this conglomeration of people. I felt I must remain just quiet and watch. Then I suddenly spied a lovely grand piano, the piano seemed alone too, for nobody was playing it. Then the piano saw me and said: "Come along and play me" and I said: "No, I feel much too shy", and the piano said: "Now, don't be silly, come along". . . . and I went. I summed up all my courage, and there I was playing that piano, I just took command and let myself go. The evening was definitely mine. I must have played for well over an hour on end. Each time I stopped for a few seconds, I was applauded and had to go on and on till eventually I did stop and returned to my table.

CHAPTER IV.

George Hill could make me feel very angry at times but there was something very endearing about that rugged Bohemian personality of his. For indeed, he was a true Bohemian. It was at the Ham Bone Club I first met Melville Gidfon, if ever there was a charmer at the piano, it was Mel, and that seductive voice of his. It is now some years since Mel passed on, but he will never be forgotten. His Co-optimist days will keep him ever fresh in all our memories of an artist that never failed to touch the heart strings. I also met Philip Braham there, he was at the time ^{conductor} Charlotte ~~ace~~ and a composer of many good ~~revue~~ songs, including the ever famous "Lime House Blues". Pa Braham did a lot to help me to get my songs published, gave me great encouragement and good advice. Gene Goossens was often there too and I can never forget his brilliant conducting for a season of the Diaghelleff Russian Ballet. May Hallett always dressed in something Chinese and her husband Teddy Edwards, ^{SAVA} ~~Saba~~, the sculptor and caricaturist, Epstein and his famous model Delores, who committed suicide and ^EMaggie Albanast and endless personalities that mattered and others struggling to do so.... all seemed one in this mad search for fame. It was indeed a picture made up of a strange pattern. Fred and Adele Astaire soon made their appearance during their first success in "STOP FLIRTING" at the Shaftesbury Theatre. They were surely two of the most ^{CHARMING} ~~natural~~ and natural people possible. Fred who has now reached the ^{FAME} ~~penacle~~ of dancing on the screen and Adele who is ~~now~~ Lady Charles Cavendish. Out of this nightly chaos there was Emile, the waiter, who talked to me often of his hopes and dreams of opening a Night Club and only, of course, if I would play for him. I only had to say the word, and he would go right away and look for premises. Emile possessed a charming and kindly personality, an Italian.

I left the Ham Bone after fourteen months and my next engagement in London was "NOISES OFF" in C.B. Cochrane's production

of "LITTLE NELLIE KELLY" at the New Oxford Theatre. I remained in this production during its ^{re-running} run of six months, and in the meantime, Emile was looking for premises for his Club. One morning he rang me up in great haste: "Come at once, I've found something." So down I went and behind where the Piccadilly Theatre stands today was the unique premises which was known as the "Bullfrog's Club"; where I got the idea of such a name, I can't think, but I called it the Bullfrogs. It became very famous and to this day people still talk about it. From the very start the "Bullfrogs" became a success and when I look back on the energy I gave out in those days, I just don't know where it all came from. Here again we were patronised by all the leading theatre lights. I can see now such a glittering personalities as Ivor Novello, Talula Bankhead Noel Coward, Gladys Cooper, Frank Vesper, Margaret Bannerman, Herminione Baddely, David Tennant, Francis Laking etc. etc. No one could possibly have been nicer to work for than Emile. He was the most generous person ever and if he had only kept his head and possessed more balance, he would have had a fortune in his lap. But two things were his downfall; gambling and the wrong sort of women, and I'm afraid it was the wrong sort of women that eventually returned him to Italy. Poor Emile, I sincerely hope he is well now. I have to thank him for much kindness and understanding and a damned good salary. And he has always something to be proud of "The Bullfrogs". It will never be forgotten. There is scarcely a day in the year that goes by that someone does not mention to me these happy times there, where one could spend a few bob, have a wonderful three-course dinner for 2/6d., including coffee, or wonderful bacon and eggs, or kippers for supper for 1/6d. Happy days!

CHAPTER V.

My six months in "LITTLE NEELY KELLY" was a charming period. It was a lovely show, one of Cochrane's best, and every night the theatre was packed. Sonnie Hale, Roy Royston, June and Anita Elson and Ralph Whitehead, the American juvenile, were the stars. The show had a superb chorus of lovely young girls and excellent good-looking boys, all wonderful dancers. The music of George M. Cohans was melodious from start to finish and full of hit-numbers. It was wonderful to be connected with this lovely show and a sad night indeed when the curtain went down for the last performance. Why it came off, I can never think, it could have easily run for another six months. It was June's first leading part and she certainly was extremely lovely in it, sang and danced with great charm, superbly partnered by Roy Royston, I must say that period of six months was one of the happiest in my life.

CHAPTER VI.

The death of Maggie Albanesi at the age of twenty-three was a catastrophe to the stage world and to her personal friends. I was stunned when a friend phoned me up one Sunday to tell me the news. It just did not seem possible, that such a vital flame - as indeed was Maggie - should exist no more. Her short life had been so full, yes indeed her cup overflowed, one succession of success after another. I saw her in most of her plays and got to know her during my term at the Ham Bone Club. What a future she had, but it just wasn't to be, and sometimes I think that her exit from this life was very beautiful indeed. She went in her fullness and has left behind a memory that will never be forgotten. I never enter the St. Martin's Theatre, but the gay, frail, spirit of Maggie comes forward to greet me.

CHAPTER VII.

On February 9th, 1920 I made my debut at the London Coliseum with my own compositions. I saw by the papers that Sir Oswald Stoll was putting on a series of works by young composers. So up I called one morning to the Stoll offices with a suitcase full of my own compositions. I was admitted and allowed to play over some of my work and to my amazement and joy two songs were chosen at once. The one a foxtrot dance number and the other a ballad. I was told I would be included in the programme of 9th February. The intermission spot was given over for this series. I suggested having a singer to do my ballad number, that was agreed upon, but I must find a singer myself. I was also asked to conduct, but at this I said "No". I'd much rather ~~request~~ Mr. Dove, the Coliseum conductor, do that for me, as I had never done any conducting in my life and wouldn't do justice at it or to my music, I'd preferred just to take the call at the end ^{with} of the singer. I was most emphatic and because I just seemed to know what I wanted, everything I suggested went through. There were two or three rehearsals beforehand with the orchestra and all I had to do was to bring the singer along. Over the finding of a singer I had a stroke of luck. For in the flat beneath me lived Miss Ethel Peake, an operatic soprano. I approached her and straight away *she* said 'yes' and was delighted at the idea and she seemed to like my song very much. It was called "If you could come to me" and the words were by my sister Katie. I must say it all became a very exciting period for me and I shall never forget the first rehearsal when Ethel Peake and myself stepped onto the huge empty stage at the Coliseum and the orchestra was playing the refrain of "If you could come to me". I just couldn't believe my ears, it all sounded so beautiful. Besides, what an exciting house the Coliseum was! Ethel Peake was splendid and sang beautifully. And I must say I felt completely in the clouds. I remained for

two weeks the intermission turn, and was the only composer of a series and I believe there were fourteen altogether. I was the only one who got a two weeks' engagement. It certainly was a thrilling feeling when I was asked to remain for the second week. Taking calls for each performance was a new excitement for me too. To my delight the publishers Ascheberg Hopwood and Crewe came forward and published my song and it achieved quite a considerable success. I have to thank Ethel Peake a great deal for all the help she gave me and for singing my song so beautifully. On the programme for those two weeks were several fine artists, such as Malcolm Scott, Margaret Cooper, Mark Hambourg, Ethel Hook, Grock & partner and Violet Vanborough. It was exciting seeing all these famous stars and ~~knowing~~ feeling myself so close to them, being able to speak to them, touch them and be part of the whole programme. Margaret Cooper impressed me a great deal; I used to stand in the wings and watched her turn every performance. No one has taken her place as a singer of songs at the piano. Her sad death robbed the theatre of a truly fine artist. It was also most exciting for me to get my first press and photographs in the papers. That final night at the Coliseum made me feel very sad indeed, for I was saying good-bye to so many kind friends, especially those in the orchestra and Mr. Dove, their splendid conductor.

CHAPTER VIII

So much seems crowded in so short a time, the years flew by and I didn't seem to go wrong. Life was certainly very lovely. I had so much energy and this theatre bug had ~~even~~ eaten into my soul. The Bullfrog's Club was a smashing success and at the same time my name was appearing on several West End Theatre programmes. I could stop Albert de Courville on the steps outside the Empire Theatre introduce myself and in no time I was back in his office, sold a song and in less than a week's time Daphne Pollard was singing it at the Empire in the "Rainbow Revue". That gigantic revue which featured Gershwin's music, his first big show in London and before he was really well known. Very soon after that his famous song "Swanee" swept the world and I was at the Hippodrome First Night when it was sung by Ladie Cliff. How that audience went wild with excitement and how beautifully Ladie sang and danced it, and how superbly de Courville staged and produced the song. It certainly remains something I can never forget. I remember de Courville telling me how much he believed in Gershwin and at the same time he was slightly disappointed with the "Rainbow" score. I personally thought it a very fine and tuneful score. This Gershwin, someone at that time very new, but it was not very long after the "Rainbow" that the song "Swanee" came along and established that name of Gershwin which was to be followed by a score of success upon success, which culminated in the "Rhapsody in Blue" and his fine music of "Porgy and Bess". Gershwin's early death brought a fine and talented career to an end. But his music will live on. The first edition of the "Rainbow" ran only about eight weeks. The first night was a catastrophe. Jack Edge, the principal comedian, complained at the end of the show before the first night audience that he was badly served as principal comedian and had no material to justify his position. Grace Hayes, the personality star, was booed by the audience after her first song. She quickly

left the stage in tears in the middle of her third song. The second half of the programme was given over to a troupe of coloured artists, a sort of Blackbirds Show. They overstayed their welcome and were also booed. The show ended in catcalls and much unpleasantness, and during the playing of "God save the King" at the end, everybody in the stalls seems to be fighting or ~~saxi~~ weeping, to say nothing of the consternation going on on the stage amongst the artists. This costly revue was doomed. Poor de Courville, he had really staged something worthy and beautiful, but the public did not like it. So after about eight weeks, a second edition was given and some of my music came in ~~with~~ ^{to} this ^e for Daphne Pollard who became the new star. The song I wrote for Daphne Pollard was called "Hustle with your Bustle". It proved a big success for both of us and afterwards Daphne Pollard sang it at the Greenwich Village Revue in New York, produced by ~~George~~ John Murray Anderson where it again proved even a bigger success for me. Jack Haskell/^{who} produced this song of mine both here and in New York told me afterwards that had I gone to New York for the opening, my future would have been assured in America. However, as I was doing much work in the theatre in London that was interesting, I felt that a trip to America was something that would come along at the right moment, and I was to force no issues. I have always longed to go to America and have admired much music that has come from its composers Gershwin, Berlin, Jerome Kern, Victor Herbert, Rudolph Friml, Vincent Youmans to name a few of them. My life was being a very active one and my excellent press, no matter what I did, greatly encouraged me. But at times, a dreadful disappointment came along. I seemed to die completely, but soon gained courage and youth forgets ~~not~~ very quickly. No one tried to help me more than P.G. Woodhouse. Two letters from him I reproduce here, one to W.H. Berry and the other to Austin Hurgon regarding "The Golden Moth", the Ivor Novello musical comedy which was running so successfully at the Adelphi Theatre. Woodhouse wanted the inclusion of my two songs

de Porter
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and a new edition. Both Berry and Hurgon on hearing these two songs were unanimous over their success value to the show and with their inclusion predicted a further six months run.

Copy of letter I. to Austin Hurgon.

4, Onslow Square,
S.W.7.

9th March, 1922.

Dear Tommy,

The bearer of this Mr. Anthony, has got some great music, including two corking songs for Berry in Act 3. Do let him play his stuff over to you. There is one that might suit Cicely Debenham, and also you could probably use some of it at the Gaiety. But notice chiefly, "Parisian Roses" and "I wish I were a Butterfly", songs which are the ones I think would do for Berry. I sail for America on Saturday with G.G. (George Grossmith) in connection with a show we are doing there with Kern. I shall only be there two weeks, but this would mean a delay if you wanted me to write the lyrics of these numbers. But they are in such shape that any lyricist could fix them up in ten minutes. The words of the refrain are written and all they need is an introductory verse and perhaps a second verse. Don't let these songs slip. Goodness knows, we have had enough trouble getting a third act number for Berry and I think either of these would be a riot.

Yours ever,

P. G. W.

Copy of letter II. to W.H. Berry

4, Onslow Square,
S.W.7.

9th March, 1922.

Dear Bill,

I think I've got your woman's song for act 3 at last. Will you give the bearer of this Mr. Anthony five minutes as soon as you can and let him play you his "Parisian Rose" and "I wish I were a Butterfly". They are the real goods. At present he has

only the refrains, but it will be simple to write the verses. The "Parisian Rose" was apparently written as a straight number, but I can just see what you ^{would} do with it codding it in your act 3 costume. Unfortunately, I am sailing for America for a short visit on Saturday so that I could not write the lyrics without some delay. But any old lyrist could fix it up as the refrain words are written. Good luck to you, see you when I get back,

Yours ever,

P.G.

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So, naturally, I was elated at my good fortune and the kind help of Mr. Woodhouse. But that good fortune was not to be and I never found out quite why. Many reasons were given to me, one was that Novello would allow no one else's music to go into his show ~~X~~ My ^{good} ~~foos~~ luck in having the two songs that Woodhouse liked and wanted for the show was pure accident. They just happened to be two songs I had and were not composed for any special show, rhyme or reason, but they appealed to Woodhouse and as he was the author of the book "The Golden ^{of} Moth", I never dreamed his wish for their inclusion into the show could possibly be rejected. As surely what matters most to authors, composer and management was to further the run for all concerned. But Woodhouse was leaving for America immediately and I lost a good man to fight for my cause and his at the same time. To my great disappointment "The Golden Moth" came off. I can never forget how kind and charming W.H. Berry was to me over all that happened; I only remember little of what he said: "We were set for another six months easily with your two songs, Marc, what a pity for all of us". I fully realised how much all that would have meant for me, just another big step on the run of the ladder. But it was just not to be. To my sorrow, I never recaptured Woodhouse again and today I hear he is a prisoner in Germany. A delicious person. However, there was always more de Courville's revues coming on, which led on to Charlot revues, Cochrane revues and so many excellent cabarets to compose for, to say nothing of Jimmy White's productions at the Daly's Theatre

NB: This piece of handwritten text was originally glued to page 19 of the typescript and is intended to have been inserted after the X on line 13 of that page

X.

I was loth to believe this. I have always felt that Howell to be a generous minded person. And I'm afraid it was the best story of any one blaming someone else.

At the Bullfrog Club I was soon to make the acquaintance of Ernest Meyer, the impresario. What a loveable and charming kind person. We used to sit for hours after the Club at the Criterion having coffee and kippers, chatting about the old theatre days. Little did I think, that ~~he~~ he was beginning to take an interest in me. So a ~~few~~ knock here and there seemed of no account, they were just part and parcel of life, especially the life of the theatre. I luckily had the energy and ambition to triumph over my disappointments. And I ~~still~~ think I still possess that ability. But alas today the type of managers have so changed, I, too, have grown older, a new generation has come along, it's still the same old fight. The artist is always up against the money question, getting his proper payment, price knocked down and sometimes getting no payment at all. For years I had Ernest Meyer looking after my affairs, ~~in~~ since then nothing has been easy. During the years Ernest Meyer interested himself in my work, I made real money. But poor man, he was killed in Berlin, a street accident. It was by no means easy to find anyone to take his place. In fact, I never found anyone to take the place of Ernest Meyer. Another such person did not exist. He was a lovely warm-hearted and generous kind soul and much loved by those who knew him. His passing away most certainly left a void in my life and career and my bank balance has never been the same. I realise only too well that had he lived I should have gone on and on and never looked back. So once again I was lost and innumerable difficulties presented themselves, having to look after my own affairs.

CHAPTER IX

During my stay at the Ham Bone Club, I met a society hostess, a most effusive creature, much over-dressed, perfumed and bejewelled. She felt she must do something for me, so I was to be invited to one of her big gatherings at Carlton House Terrace, where she would introduce me to everyone worth while and thus bring me into prominence amongst the right people. All this sounded splendid and I was delighted to write out for her my name and address. In due course I received the gilt-edged invitation. I accepted with delight. The evening approached and I timed my entry to the party, not to arrive too early, but to get there when perhaps most of the other guests had arrived. As I was being ushered into her enormous ballroom, I always remember the glittering chandeliers, for I have a passion for them. My hostess spied and as I approached her, to my horror she called out to everyone around: "Ah, here comes my new pianist friend, Michael Angelo." She had in her excitement mixed my name up. I just died instantly as I gave her a limp handshake and felt the eyes of crowds upon me. I longed to step on a trap door and disappear for ever. However, I soon vanished and lost myself in the crowd of guests and arrived at the buffet with a pink ice cream and a wafer in my hand. I felt I could make no comeback on what had happened, so I soon slipped away quietly from the party and came home to bed. That was the end of my society hostess. I never saw her again and I doubt if she ever realised the mistake she made, and as I know she expected me to play at her party, she must have thought I had let her down very badly.

Ever since I started playing in night clubs I have always felt that my contribution to music has been a background for conversation. Soft music while people talked. My good fortune was to be borne with a pleasant touch. I am intensely musical and equally sentimental, and in my playing of light and popular music, I feel I can justly say that I give to it all a correct

sense of meaning and expression. The relationship of words to music being very important. Two pianists I have always much admired, Carroll Gibbons and Leslie Hutchinson ("Hutch"), they are, of course, completely different in style. I have learned much from the dynamic style of Hutch, who has a masterly domination of the keyboard. His playing and singing has become tremendous box office, though his piano work comes first. He possesses a magnificent sense of timing over his singing and his diction is perfect. I always will remember a unique occasion at Anton Dolin's ~~Billings~~ Studio when Hutch was playing Dolin's Bechstein Grand Piano, he was playing and singing Cole Porter's song hit of the moment "Love for Sale", when all of a sudden Dolin seemed to make a leap down his stairs from his bedroom and started to improvise a dance to it all. It was all so spontaneous and vital, I remember I crept to the fireside and discovered tears coming into my eyes. It was so real and fine. This absurd combination of Hutch and Dolin, and yet a fusion of tremendous art and sincerity.

CHAPTER X.

It was the beginning of the year 1926 that Ernest Meyer took me to the Daly Theatre and introduced me to the late Jimmy White. I shall always remember that palatial office of his, the thick carpet and the ornate furnishings and the wonderful flowers everywhere, the grand piano, which of course, was quite out of tune. I believe it was always out of tune. How nervous I was when I was confronted by all this, and the blue piercing eyes of Jimmy White. But I scored a hit with him immediately. Ernest Meyer did all the talking, and I remained dumb and just played. I was at once asked to write a song for Jay Laurier for the coming production of "Riquette" starring Jay Laurier and Anne Croft. I brought the number for Jay Laurier the next morning. It was passed immediately.

Laurier just said the right thing directly I finished playing it over; how I adore him for his kind words. My first song being right was naturally most important, that lead on for me to write a song for Anne Croft and the ever famous duet "Teach me to dance" which gained enormous success for me ~~sung by~~, it being encored several times each performance, sung by Jay Laurier and Anne Croft. All this got me well set with Jimmy White and all I looked forward to was for this show to open at Daly's Theatre. It opened in Glasgow first and I got excellent press for my numbers. For some unknown reason so much got mixed up. The two productions of Jimmy White's on tour "Riquette" and "Yvonne" became completely altered. Billy Merson took over "Riquette" and called it "My Son John" with Anne Croft, and many of the musical numbers also got mixed up in the re-hash to suit Merson and in the end I only had one song in it when it opened at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London. Ivy Tresmand starred at Daly's in "Yvonne" with Jean Gerrard and Hal Sherman and only one song of mine went into that, namely "Teach me to dance". Again this song proved to be an enormous success for me, so much so that the management inserted an advertisement in the "Evening News" as follows:

E N O R M O U S
 GENE GERRARD, most
 brilliant English
 comedian, has been intro-
 duced into the cast of
 'YVONNE' at Daly's. When
 he and HAL SHERMAN sing
 "Teach me to Dance" the
 effect is simply enormous
 Mark Lester IVY TRESMAND Arthur Pusey
 as

"YVONNE"
 at
 Maria Minetti D A L Y ' S Theatre Dennis Hoey

Every Evening at 8.15
 Matinees: Wed
 & Sat at 2.30

TEACH ME TO DANCE
 The most sensational number
 ever seen on any musical
 comedy stage is performed
 at Daly's nightly
 by
 GENE GERRARD
 and
 HAL SHERMAN
 Mark Lester IVY TRESMAND Arthur Pusey
 as

"YVONNE"
 at
 Maria Minetti D A L Y ' S Theatre Dennis Hoey

Every Evening at 8.15
 Matinees: Wednesday
 & Saturdays at 2.30

But "Yvonne" was no great success and Ivy Tresmand utterly failed to the position of leading lady at Daly's Theatre. It was Hal Sherman and Jean Gerrard who kept the show going, and even they in the end could not make it into a long run. The pity of it all was that Ivy Tresmand who had the choice of two shows for herself, *Loose* shows in my opinion the wrong ones to star herself in, she should have chosen "Riquette", the Anne Croft part and the music in it would have altogether ~~more~~ suited her much better. *And* But in my opinion, Ivy Tresmand, charming dancer and soubrette as she was, was never a leading lady. Another composer in the "Yvonne" production was Vernon Duke, he wrote one really very beautiful song called "Wait until it is moonlight", to this day I play its charming refrain. Vernon Duke went to America soon after the show came off and I remember him so well saying to me: "Don't waste your time here, Marc, you'll never get on". How right he was. Recently during these war years, he has had great success with the music he wrote for the production of "Cabin in the Sky" starring that great artiste Ethel Waters. The "Cabin in the Sky" music is really most tuneful and clever.

The next blow that came to me was Jimmy White's sudden death. I could see myself staring at the posters in the street, screaming at me in huge print "Jimmy White commits suicide". I felt at once, there's my bank balance gone west again. I knew I was going to make lots more money from that source and now suicide, Jimmy White, dead. I felt dismal and sad. I had got on so well with Jimmy White and he had been extremely pleasant to me and I felt he greatly believed in me. It's a queer world indeed. Jimmy White certainly tried to bring back Daly's Theatre to the George Edward standard. He was lavish with his productions, but lacked choice in the musical plays he chose, at least over most of them, and I'm afraid He failed with this project. Daly's Theatre went from bad to worse, until eventually, that house of glorious memories was pulled down and a Warner Cinema built in its place. It will always remain one of my favourite theatres, for didn't the "Merry

Widow" make its bow with Lily Elsie there in 1907. And I am at least happy to think, I did have one song success there..... and now the Warner Cinema. How ugly and how unromantic, after the glittering days of George Edward. During this period I was also doing much music for the Percy Athos floor shows at the Princes Piccadilly. They were by far the finest floor shows this country has seen. Athos was a great director with a fine sense of the artistic quality needed for such productions. Princes at this ^e period was the place to go to and dine and dance at and have supper. A glorious room with its black ebony dance floor, two fine bands and a stage. The Athos Follies was a most ambitious show, beautiful girls, gorgeous costumes and clever dancing acts. Each show lasted about six months, they were indeed expensive productions and Athos was lavish to a degree to have only the best materials for costumes and his decor when necessary had a touch of genius about them. He was a man of immense good taste. Many of his Follies girls graduated to great heights and some married well. One of his daintiest and prettiest, Molly O'Shan married Emelyn Williams, Molly was exquisite always and possessed great charm. I composed for six of these shows and they were good times for me. Athos was a joy to work for and the most encouraging person. Then to change the policy, he went to America and brought Frances Day^{back} with him followed by other artists such as Jack Smith, Tracey and Hay, dancers, of exceptional merit, Ben Blue and Jean Austin. This I must say was a very successful change, new blood is always good. Frances Day very quickly reached stardom and Jack Smith had a smashing success too. Tracey and Hay were equally successful and were engaged to dance later in the "Blue Train" Musical which brought Lily Elsie back to the stage. I was, of course, at that first night, what excitement in the theatre. Lily Elsie back again, what would she be like? Believe me, she was marvellous. Bobby Howes conquered London on that first night. He was superb, a new comedian was born, but it was really Lily Elsie's first night

all London turned up in their best bib and tucker to see their
beLoved Elsie again. A little later she appeared with Ivor
 Novello in his play "The Truth Game". In this she certainly let
 the world know how to wear Norman Hartnell gowns. Hartnell
 certainly excelled himself and his creations for Lily Elsie were
 masterpieces, but should we forget, he had a masterpiece to dress.
 In "The Biffy" Robert Hale production, I wrote the only
 song for Teddie Gerrard who was ^{the} star. How I adored Teddie.
 I got good press again, but the show wasn't too good and perhaps
 that's why the song stood out. It was certainly tremendous relief
 the one bit of music. After Teddie left, Binnie Hale, then
 extremely young, took on the part. My song was called "Non-stop
 Love". It had an extremely good lyric by Clifford Seyler. Robert
 Hale was another splendid person for me to be associated with,
 he was lovely to everybody and in his daughter Binnie he has
 certainly given us by far one of our cleverest revue artistes of
 today. I had the pleasure quite recently to accompany Binnie for
 two war charity concerts, I have never played for a more delightful
 and ~~easy~~ ^{easy} artiste. Personally, I don't think we made
 nearly enough fuss of her, she is completely brilliant, no matter
 what she does, and her imitations are surely the best and funniest
 ever.

At the Palladium de Courville put on his mammoth revue "THE WHIRL OF THE WORLD". It ran for ten months and was a fine show, in it I had perhaps my most successful number "DANCING JIM", I think that was in 1928. The song was sung by Leslie Sarony then later by Nervo Knox and in the end by the Pound Sisters (Lorna and Toots). The orchestration of "Dancing Jim" I must say/^{was}terrific and the song went over very big for me. Leslie Sarony on the first night scored a very big success and did at least five dancing routines to the chorus. This number was later done in a Schubert revue in New York and later all over the States. Soon followed C.B. Cochrane's revue "STILL DANCING" In this I had two numbers, I cannot say I was too pleased with either, the only thing perhaps that pleased me was, as there were at least eight composers attached to this show, Cochrane had built us all alphabetically, and as my name begins with "A" Marc Anthony looked good on top of it all. Also during the interval the reprise music played by the orchestra was one of my numbers. In the Charlot Revue "YES" which followed, I had a very tuneful song called "SYMPATHETIC JANE" with lyrics by Douglas Furber sung by Nora Blaney. "Yes" was by no means a Charlot best revue and did not run long. This very moment, October 1943, at the London Coliseum I have a number called "THIS HEAVEN" with words by Douglas Furber, having recaptured him again after all these years in the revue "IT'S FOOLISH BUT IT'S FUN". Charlot was a manager and producer I held great esteem for. I should have liked to have done lots more work with him, no one had a better sense of the intimate revue and for picking out clever artists. In his time he made many fine stars, to name a few; Jack Buchanan, Gertrude Lawrence, Beatrice Lillie, Walter Williams, Audette Myrtle, Binnie Hale. If only we had Charlot in our midst today, he would, I feel sure, make a star of beautiful Margaret McGrath. I have only recently met Margaret and seen her play only in "LISBON STORY" now at the Hippodrome. Here indeed is star material. A lovely creature to

look upon, vital, young and bursting with energy. I hope George Black can see all this and will do something about it or are we perhaps to lose Margaret McGrath to America as we have lost so many good artists before. It will be interesting to see what happens to Margaret as times goes by. But helas we have no Charlot today in this war and the present musical show standard falls far beneath that of the last war. Nor are the popular songs of today nearly as good as in the last war. Charlot and Cochrane were^{then} at their best and continued for many years after to keep up a high standard in revues and musical plays. They had fine artists to deal with and found fine shows for them to star them. Alice Delysia is still going strong today entertaining troops in Egypt for ENSA. May the British and Free French honour this great artiste for her fine contribution of entertainment of fighting men in this war. Yes, Alice Delysia, you are a great person. Early in the war Delysia appeared at the Cafe de Paris and sang one of my songs. I was most happy about this as I took a chance one day and phoned up Delysia to tell her I had a song I thought would interest her, could I come and play it over to her. She said: Come at once. So over I went and at once on hearing it she bought it for her engagement at the Cafe de Paris where she appeared for two weeks. It had a charming melody and clever lyric by Katherine North. To be in Delysia's company is always exhilarating. She exudes all that is gay and whitty and sends you home always feeling on top of the world.

CHAPTER XI.

During 1926-27 I composed the scores for two musical plays. The plots were from my own mind, but I had to find someone to write them. That was not quite so easy but I did find them and they were written. For the lyrics I found Ruth Siebier and we worked together for many months. The first was a light musical play called "THE CINDERELLA FELLER". My star artiste in view for this being Bobby Howes. I had approached Bobby and wanted him to hear the music, but anxious as he showed himself to listen to the score, and hear what it was all about, our meeting and audition never came about. Very shortly after this it was announced in the papers that Bobby Howes and Binnie Hale were going to co-star in "MR. CINDERS". So as far as I was concerned, that was the end of my "CINDERELLA FELLER". Naturally I had given many auditions before many people and perhaps too many people knew what my play was all about, though several important people tried to help me over it. Still I felt pretty certain that out of my idea had been born "MR. CINDERS". Not that there was the slightest similarity between the two shows. But one good idea can so easily lead to an even better one. "MR. CINDERS" as everyone remembers, was an enormous success. My other score was more on operatta lines, a story set in Russia, very colourful and, in my opinion, by far the best music I have ever composed. Adrienne Brune sang the music for me always at the auditions and indeed beautifully did she sing it. After one big audition I gave Hannan ~~Swaffer~~ Swaffer wrote a glowing account of the music in an article in the "Express".

NB: This typewritten material was originally stapled to p. 29 of the typescript and was intended to be inserted at the bottom of that page as Hanner Swaffer's article in the Express

MANAGERS, PLEASE NOTE.

Managers who say they cannot find English musical plays should hear Marc Anthony's new work.

Adrienne Brune sang it over the other day. One of its numbers "BALALEIKA MUSIC", will, I am assured, be a sensation - if ever some London manager condescends to stage it. "It would set an audience alight," they tell me.

It wants now a book, or, rather, it wants a manager with enough vision to take Marc Anthony's music and Bruce Sievier's lyrics, and build up the rest, in the way that an American manager would do. Why should an author write a book?

These English authors and composers have to go on struggling. Meanwhile, we get "Good News". Marc Anthony, clever composer though he is, has had to earn a living as a night club pianist.

The Late Guy Saunders who was at that time manager for Firth Sheppard and Leslie Henson, took a great interest in this music of mine and did all he could in his power to help me. He got the play written and some time later I played over this music to Eric Maschwitz leaving the book behind with him. He was most enthusiastic on the music and said he might be able to get it done on the B.B.C. first. So the play remained with him for quite a long time at Broadcasting House. After about six months I read to my horror in the papers that Maschwit^z was presenting the musical play "THE BALALEIKA" at the Adelphi Theatre. This certainly upset me considerably. I wrote to him for return of the play and I have in my possession now two letters from him. "THE BALAL/EIKA" had no similarity whatever to my Russian show. The two letters from Maschwitz I now reproduce.

One of the leading songs of my Russian score was called "Balaleika Music". Naturally all this affected me dreadfully and here again was I stranded with the really superb score of fine melodies. My score was a hundred times better and more Russian in texture than the score of "THE BALALEIKA". It was during the run of "THE BALALEIKA" I met Maschwitz at one of Bobby Clarks' parties. Towards the end of the evening Maschwitz and I found ourselves chatting and he brought up the subject of my beautiful music as he so justly called it and said: "What a pity nothing has happened about it." I am afraid I was a bit non-pulsed and taken off my guard and merely answered: "What a pity". So many of my friends when they read the notices about the coming production of "THE BALALEIKA" phoned and wrote congratulating me, thinking, of course, it must be my show. I must say it all made me feel pretty awful.

At the Hippodrome in the Julian Wyllie revue "BETTER DAYS" Stanley Lupino was singing a song of mine, also the dance bands were all playing a successful number called "I THANK THE MOON". As a dance number this was having great success and many records were made of it. Chappels, the publishers, also brought out a ballad of mine called "LADY OF MY DREAMS". Then in the spring of 1930 Anton Dolin returned from America and put on a dance show at the Coliseum called "AWAY FROM THE BLUES". In this show he featured two fine numbers of mine which I composed especially for him "STEP OUT" and "SHADOWS AROUND ME BLUES". Once again I got fine press.

Dolin being a superb person to compose for. He always knows exactly what he wants and you can't help giving him the goods. His tremendous energy and generosity of mind plus his good feeling for music provide you with all the inspiration needed. I have written several dance melodies for Dolin and I feel he has had quite my best work. Later on I was to write more for him. The "La Jana" waltz when he brought her from Germany and danced with her at Giro's Club. "Ballerina in the Moonlight" I also wrote for him and Markover, and they actually did dance this together and in/open air and by moonlight at Folkestone some years ago. I also wrote for him and Belita Jepson-Turner their dance called "Debut" for the Nijinsky Matinee. It being Belita's dance debut with Dolin at His Majesty's Theatre. He had been training her for two years. Of course, we all knew Belita as the superb skating star, and though it was not in her to be a great dancer, her dancing tuition helped her greatly with her skating. I must say as a skater she positively thrilled me and when she skated in the Mogador Revue in Paris she looked enchanting and was brilliant in all the variety of work she did on her skates. She is now having enormous and deserved success in America on stage and screen work. During 1931 I did some music for a film; I am afraid it turned out to be a dreadful picture and all my songs came out vile. The whole thing was done so badly. This country does not seem to be able to make good musical films and after so many sumptuous and costly ones we have seen from Hollywood, I think our film industry here fully realises they cannot compete. In the Gwen Farrar Revue "After Dinner" I had three excellent numbers. Now this was really a good revue, but why it was ever put on at the Gaiety Theatre, I cannot think. The Gaiety, a completely wrong house for intimate revues, and had this gone to a smaller house such as the Comedy Theatre, it would certainly have been a success. At the Gaiety it ran for two weeks; "After Dinner" was a most tasteful revue, clever sketches and really tuneful music. Then in 1937 I came in for good honours in the

B.B.C. Song Competition with my song called "Deep Dream River". Colin Knox devoted most of his column in "The Daily Mail" praising this song of mine and Laurence Wright, the publishers, brought it out, but to my disappointment, this song got me nowhere. The publishers did nothing to boost it, and once again it was put on the shelf. My strenuous work in the Night Clubs and a constant series of disappointments, I allowed a few years to slip by. New managements were creeping into the theatre world and I felt some of them had never heard of me. New young composers, direct from Oxford and Cambridge, seemed to be selling jingling tunes for cheap money, and instead of the manager being the man who one had to sell and play the music to, it was the star you had to get to know and write the material for him or her. In fact, I saw everything going a different way round and the difficulty to get paid seemed to become worse. So much insincerity had to be employed and so much making friends with this one and that one, as they may do a new show. All this became foreign for me to cope with. But I have not lost confidence in myself, for to create music, ~~it~~ is a thing I will always do and the gift of melody will always be within me.

CHAPTER XII

that
There has been much/I should like to record here, things I have been grateful to the theatre for. Productions that stood out in my mind and performances that are never to be forgotten, and all in the last twenty-four years.

The Diaghileff production of "The Sleeping Princess" at the old Alhambra Theatre and C.B. Cochran's production of "The Miracle" at the Lyceum Theatre. These two productions were treats that will probably never happen for the British public again. But I pray and hope for the generations that are growing up that they will. But as no Diaghileff exists any more and the like of C.B. Cochran is not likely to exist in such a big and enterprising way either. So I feel grateful these two fine productions happened for me. They were two things so very differ-

ent from each other, but they were two things that embodied the same elegance of texture. Everything that was refined and artistic of purity and great beauty. "The Sleeping Beauty" - the dance parade that embodied all the finest in the world surely that ~~Diaghileff~~ Diaghileff should summon together, the scenery, costumes and orchestra of the same magnitude. The last word in everything that the name Diaghileff stood for, surely his greatest achievement. Something that took on a spiritual quality. And so I felt in "The Miracle ~~Miracle~~" C.B. Cochran evold the same quality of spiritual beauty. The devastating beauty of Lady Diana Manners as the Madonna, never have I beheld anything to equal this something of the unreal that she gave with her beauty, poise, and substance of quality. In fact, words fail me. Perhaps these two fine productions will stand out in my memory more vividly than anything else.

CHAPTER XIII

I was a regular first-nighter for years and some of them stand out most vividly and will always remain in my memory.

The Astaires, Fred and Adele, in their first musicalnonsense "Stop Flirting" their vitality and glorious dancing, it was an uproarious night. They followed with two more shows "Lady be Good" and "Funny Face". Then Adele left Fred to become Lady Charles Cavendish. And when "Gay Divorce" was brought to the Palace Theatre, Fred was parterened by the Glamourous Claire Luce. Edith Day bewitched London by her joyous personality in "Irene" and she could both sing and dance and as a whole "Irene" was a brilliant musical production. Robert Hale as "Madame Lucy" gave one of his greatest performances. After "Irene" Edith Day went back to America for some years, but fortunately for her many admirers she was soon to return again and to Drury Lane where she again scored great honours in "Rosemarie", "Desert Song" and "The Showboat". Jose Collins continued at Daly's Theatre for many years and then went on to the Gaiety Theatre. Her voice still the best of its kind for operetta. Then at the Winter-garden Theatre "The Twinkle-Toes" of Dorothy ~~Dixon~~ ^{Dickson} completely won all hearts in "Sally" and she followed on with the same success in "The Cabaret Girl" and "Tip-Toes". In "Sally" she was quite the loveliest thing I have seen since Lilly Elsie. And of course I followed "Meggie Albanesi in every play she did. Her performance in "The Bill of Divorcement" was perhaps her finest part, and also her finest play by Clemence Dane. Noel Coward was coming along with glittering plays, revues, and operettes. His were indeed exciting first nights. The audience keyed up, what had he up his sleeve this time? I am a tremendous Coward fan and I admire him immensely. To mention a few of his productions that pleased me most "The Wortex" and "Hayfever", "This Year of Grace", "Bitter-Sweet", "Word is Music", "Private Lives", "Tonight at 8.30" and "Present Laughter". What pleasure Coward was giving us, and perhaps his music pleased me most of all.

There is not a day in the year that I do not play Coward melodies, so tuneful, sentimental and such good lyrics. The score of "Bitter-Sweet", his best, is tuneful from cover to cover. "I'll see you again" will always rank as one of the loveliest waltz songs to be found in operettas. In this melody he ranks with Franz Lehar. And in bringing Peggy Wood from America, to be his leading lady in "Bitter-Sweet", he certainly presented us to a charming and dignified artiste. Peggy Wood scored a tremendous hit on her first night here, as did Evelyn Laye, who played the part in New York, win all hearts. Coward and Gertrude Lawrence in "Private Lives" and "Tonight at 8.30" were the most perfect team. The excitement at the Pavillon on the first night of "This Year of Grace" was also something to remember. One succession of brilliant songs and sketches, fine settings and costumes with Maisie Gay, more brilliant than ever, and Sonnie Hale, Jessie Mathews and Tilly Losch, all so very good. I must not forget Ivy ~~and S.D.~~ St and Hellier, who scored such an enormous success in "Bitter Sweet" and repeated it again in "Words and Music". Just recently I ~~said~~ ^{said} through a delirious ~~matinee~~ of complete joy and laughter at Coward's last and best comedy "Present Laughter". The pity of it all I feel is that Coward can never go one funnier than "Present Laughter". In my opinion, it is by far his best comedy. As an actor I ^{sd} rather watch him on the stage than anyone else. He entirely fascinates and pleases me. Tallulah Bankhead was creating much furore by her glamour and husky voice. I liked her in two plays immensely "The Dancers" with Gerald du Maurier and "They Knew ~~what~~ they Wanted", at the St. Martin's Theatre. Most of her other plays were poor vehicles. And so Tallulah, after seven years over here, left for Hollywood and did many films, - still not quite up to the mark. Then one morning after the first night of "The Little Foxes" on Broadway, Tallulah woke up to read her press and realise she had become a real great big star. May we see her back here again after the war, ^{we} for all long to

hunts

~~see~~ hear that voice again. I miss The ~~Lunch~~ on the first visit as I was in Paris working at the time, but I saw them when they came to play in "Reunion in Vienna", I nearly went mad, what a gorgeous full-blooded and exciting pair of personalities! I saw the play at least five times. What an exciting second act this play had and what a spectacular woman Lynn Fontaine is. Evelyn Laye was packing Daly's Theatre in "Madame Pompadour" and how good and beautiful she was in this operette. Later Evelyn and Carl Brisson played in the revival of "The Merry Widow", a really good revival and Evelyn was a charming widow, so young and lovely to look at, and Carl Brisson captured all hearts by his good looks and Danish charm, a truly delightful pair. It was a good production and worthy of the tradition of Daly's Theatre and the memory of George Edwards. Evelyn in C.B. Cochran's production of "Helen" was even more beautiful than ever. & I became an enormous fan of Sybil Thorndyke's too, I saw her first in "The Lie", a truly fine play and Sybil was magnificent in this. Then came Shaw's "St. Joan" and Sybil was most certainly "The Maid" a moving and spiritual performance. Finally Co-starring with Emelyn Williams, she gave a truly remarkable performance in "The Corn is Green". Emelyn Williams had already given us his brilliant thriller "Night Must Fall" plus his moving performance in it with Angela Baddeley, and soon followed "The Corn is Green". These are my two favourite Emelyn Williams Plays. I look forward to many more exciting and fine plays from him. Hermine Baddeley as the disgusting and - lying - slut-child in "The Likes of 'er" reveal great genius I thought. She has done some remarkable work in revues since and possesses a natural comic sense. Binnie Hale, as I already said, is a superb artiste. Beatrice Lillie I loved in her early days ~~in~~ of Charlot revues. But after her return from America she never quite pulled her weight except, in my opinion, at the Cafe de Paris Restaurant as a cabaret artiste, and as such she was the finest ~~finest~~ of all. Bea's art never seemed to go further than five

rows of stalls. She forgot the rest of the theatre. Her art and herself are two entirely separate things, they never seem to meet. She possesses a tremendous brilliance of the comic. To me the female Charlie Chaplin. But, unfortunately, she gives out no warmth. I know in New York she packs the theatre and is loved by the American public. She is 'The New Yorker'. Ina Clare I thought a magnificent actress. Her play "Biography" did not click here, I cannot think why. She was superb in it and in my opinion the most accomplished single artiste America has sent us in legitimate work. The first night of Somerset Maughan's brilliant play "Our Betters" revealed ^{the} beautiful Cartier quality of Margaret Bannerman who carried the play with her brittle and superb performance. This was a great triumph for Bunny. She was surrounded by a magnificent cast, but it was for Margaret Bannerman that the gallery yelled for amid thunderous applause at the end. Florence Mills with her exquisite sad voice singing "The Sleepy Hills of Tennessee" I will never forget, in C.B. Cochran's revue "Dover Street to Dixie". Hers was a poignant blackbird personality. She sang straight into your heart. Here was a lovable and warm creature, ~~but~~ alas, too frail to last long. She has never been replaced. "The Du Barry" at His Majesty's Theatre brought us the dazzling red-haired siren Anny Ahlers. She possessed tremendous spark and brilliance, so vital and yet she, too, like a flame, went out. A tragic end to a great future. All Alice Delysia's first nights were always exciting. A very great artiste. Her "Mother of Pearl" was an outstanding performance in the Cochran production at the Gaiety Theatre. These are some of the artistes who brought us exciting pre-war first nights, to say nothing of the audiences who contributed no less glitter than the artistes they came to see and applaud.

THE BALLET.

While I was still a schoolboy I was taken to see ballet-dancing - at the Old Empire Theatre. The first name I remembered was Adeline Genée. I thought it all wonderful. The excitement of being in a theatre always thrilled me, the starting of the orchestra, the lights being lowered, and then the music, colour and movement of the dancers. It was the hall that appealed to me; Genée in "Coppelia", what wonderment it all was. Then some years later I was taken to the Empire again, this time to see Lydia Kyasht. The same excitement overtook me. Soon after that the name of Anna Pavlova was beginning to sweep the world and I was about eighteen at the time. I was reading about Pavlova in the daily papers and seeing her pictures in the magazines. So my next trip to London about the summer of 1912 I found to my joy and excitement that Pavlova was dancing at the Palace Theatre with Michael Mordkin as her partner. Perhaps I was now at a better age to appreciate dancing. I found Pavlova entrancing and sheer delight, I was completely carried away by her beauty and brilliance, and her famous "Swan" dance, which has since made ballet history, perhaps appealed to me most of all. Mordkin I thought a perfect and virile partner. I found myself always joining the crowd at the stage door after the show to see Pavlova come out. The crowd that always waited for her was a seething mass of people. I went about six times to see Pavlova during my stay in London that summer. On one occasion at the stage door, Pavlova's car drew up and as I was nearest to the kerb, I smiled at her chauffeur and took the liberty of standing by the chauffeur on her car. He must have been a very nice chauffeur, for he let me stand there. When Pavlova came out and eventually got into her car, she spied me and to my great excitement she gave me some flowers from her bouquet. I jumped off as her car moved on and my delight and excitement was so tremendous that I know I ran all the way home, to show my flowers and tell my exciting news. Those flowers were pressed

in my Bible and remained there for many years. Is there anything more exciting than to be carried off your feet? Pavlova was perhaps the first dancer I fully realised and appreciated, and with Genée and Kyasht, they laid the foundation stone for my love of ballet. A love that has grown greater and greater as the years went by. It was in the year 1920 that I first saw the Diaghileff Russian Ballet and it was at the Empire Theatre again. I came away from it all bewildered, it touched everything in me. I felt at once that this surely was the greatest art in the theatre and I knew it was going to be the art that I would always love and enjoy, but I felt there was much I had to learn from it all. It touched me emotionally more than anything else has ever done in the theatre and has remained my favourite form of enjoyment. Surely it embodies all that is the finest in music, decor, costumes and dancing. I followed the Diaghileff Ballet for ever afterwards, both in London and Paris. Of course, we all had our favourite dancers and I certainly had mine. Once again I lived in the excitement of the gallery. These gallery-ites, who were they? What were they and where did they come from? This nightly seething mass of ballet lovers, mad and excited to applaud and yell out their pent-up feelings. Karsavina soon became my favourite as did Massine. I used to come out of the theatre dazed and in a dream by all I had seen. "Boutique Fantasque" - "Swan-Lake" - "Aurora's Wedding" - "Les Sylphides" - and "Scheherazade", these surely were my favourites. I saw them over and over again. Then the ballet would leave and all one longed for was ^{for} its return. It was as if the gallery-ites too, disappeared into their cubby-holes only to reappear again when the ballet returned. And so one began to get acquainted with new names as new ballerinas sprang to prominence. The spirit-like quality of Olga Spessiva was next to attract me, ~~I thought her completely wonderful and years later I was to see her again when she danced for the Camargo Society at the Savoy Theatre in 1921, partnered by Anton Dolin~~

It was in the memorable production of "THE SLEEPING PRINCESS" 1921/22 that I first became acquainted with Olga Spessiva. Her exquisite dancing of the Princess Aurora on the opening night caused a furor. Her fairy-like quality combined with a virtuoso technique will remain long in my memory. She seemed like a bird on wings. Later during the season Diaghileff brought back to the ballet from her retirement one of Russia's greatest ballerinas VERA TRETYAKOVA. I was also immensely thrilled by her performance which resembled a piece of fragile porcelain of "The Princess Aurora". It is a lamentable fact when one looks back on this great production to realise that it ended up a tragic financial failure for Diaghileff and must have indeed broken his heart. The next to attract my attention was our own British-born dancer ANTON DOLIN. It was at the London Coliseum that Anton Dolin caused such a sensation in "THE BLUE TRAIN". The "BLUE TRAIN" was Nijinska's finest work, if not a sensational piece of work, especially thought out for one male dancer and that dancer being Dolin. If Dolin has to be eternally grateful to Nijinska for her amazing Choreography, Nijinska has certainly to thank Dolin for his immense skill and acrobatics. Dolin certainly made this ballet a one-man show. He was "THE BEAU GOSSE" and nightly London was at his feet. From then onwards I followed Dolin in all that he did.

The partnership of Dolin and Nentchinova was a most perfect one. They were both inspired by each other and their performances reached great artistic heights.

During the Camargo Society Season of Ballet at the Savoy Theatre, Dolin was partnered Olga Spessiva in "GISELLE". Their performance of "Giselle" was the most inspired fusion of two great artists that I have ever seen in ballet. Their team work was perfection in every way.

As a classical dancer, in my opinion, Dolin is still the best. As a support in an adagio, he has not been surpassed in his generation. As Count Albrecht in "Giselle" ~~was the greatest~~ his emotional and technical rendering in this ~~part~~

classic role is considered one of the greatest such performances of all times. Dolin has proved himself a versatile artist. He can swing from the romantic and classic, such as "SWAN-LAKE" and "CIGARETTES" to the modern "BLUEBEARD". Dolin became premier danseur in the Diaghiloff-Ballet when he made his debut in 1924, dancing the role of Daphnis in "Daphnis and Chloe". Shortly he followed on with his sensational success in "THE BLUE TRAIN" and as "THE ~~HERBERT~~ BLUEBIRD" in the famous pas de deux I have never found his performance to be equalled or bettered. As a classic dancer in the world of ballet he has achieved international fame, having danced all the leading classic roles throughout the capitals of Europe, Australia and the United States of America. He possesses a noble bearing and as the Prince in "SWANLAKE" he brings great brooding to the role. He is always a prince, as he possesses a bird-like quality when he dances "THE BLUEBIRD". Dolin's career has gone on from triumph to triumph and in America today he is acknowledged as the finest classical dancer of our times.

If I may quote Mr. Arnold Haskell who rightly says "He can raise applause from an audience of connoisseurs for his work in "THE SWAN-LAKE" or from a music-hall audience in an apache dance. Both dances he can do better than anyone else at the present day". Dolin also did much to help Lillian Bayliss on many occasions when he appeared for the Sadlers Wells Company. It was at Sadlers Wells that Dolin created the part of Satan for the ballet of "Job", the choreography being by Miss Ninette de Valois. This ballet brought a triumph for both. Dolin's Satan was a most virile and spectacular performance. I myself found the ballet and its music dull, apart from Dolin. Miss de Valois was indeed lucky to have the cooperation of Dolin. It has been since revived by the Sadlers Wells Company, but achieved no great success. Where the critics first praised this work, they failed to do so the second time on its subsequent revival.

In 1935 Dolin with Alicia Markova organised the Markova-Dolin-Ballet, financed by Mrs. Laura Henderson. This Company was by far the best British Ballet Company that this country has known. It had successful seasons in London and long tours in the Provinces. This first-class Company was the most ambitious group of British dancers yet brought together. The Company ran for two years and it was in the Provinces that ~~the Company~~^{it} gathered a growing ballet public that was to appreciate so many other subsequent ballet companies that were to follow. It was superbly dressed and could boast of the highest standard in ballet dancing. It was during the London Season at the Duke of York's Theatre that the ballet "DAVID" had its premiere for which Jacob ~~Rakitskin~~^{Epstein} designed the much discussed drop-curtain. This being Epstein's first work for the ballet. Alicia Markova has gone on from strength to strength, and in America ~~today~~ she is hailed as the Taglione of today. Her outstanding role being "GISELLE" partnered by Dolin as Count Albrecht. Their Giselle has played to packed houses throughout America and has received unanimous praise from both critics and public alike.

"GISELLE" at Met Holds Audience Spellbound.
by Robert Coleman.

"Daily Mirror", Wednesday, April 28th, 1943.

"The marvelous MARKOVA surpassed herself in the title role. Her dancing was magnificent and her acting wonderful. In the mad and death scenes, she had handkerchiefs dabbing moist eyes throughout the house. And there were audible sobs.

Were Newton alive today he would restate his laws of gravity, or charge MARKOVA with being an enchantress. Never have we seen a ballerina so bouyant. By comparison a feather becomes heavy as lead, a fleecy cloud a wing of steel.

Her delicacy of movement, her technical perfection, her emotional projection were stunning.

A fitting companion piece to Markova's Giselle was Dolin's distinguished Count Albrecht. His dynamic, brilliant realisation of the frenzied dance of death in the second act was particularly stirring, pulling the patrons forward to the edges of their chairs.

Dolin has no equal as Albrecht. The role is a pitfall for any but a great artist. And Dolin is a great artist."

I want my readers to realise that I was a fan of Dolin's long before I knew him and had seen him in all his roles. It is in the pure classic that I admire him most, although I equally appreciate his enormous versatility as a dancer. Dolin is a man of the theatre primarily and brought his classical experience into the lighter field of the theatre with equal success in cabaret, music-hall, pantomime or revue. For Dolin became what is termed "box-office" and was constantly sought after. It was at the London Hippodrome shortly before the war that Dolin and Markova brought their art into the Pantomime Season there.

Massine with his exhilarating personality and wonderful eyes became a great favourite of mine. I think I saw him in all his famous roles and rarely has an artist moved me to such a pitch of excitement. One of his most memorable ballets will always be "THE THREE-CORNERED HAT" and with Lydia Lopokova their Can-Can in "LA BOUTIQUE FANTASTIQUE" will remain for ever in my memory. His romantic and elegant hussar in "BEAU DANUBE" and his brilliant Peruvian solo dance in "GAITE PARISIENNE" were both exceptional pieces of dancework. To say that Massine possesses great glitter is to say the least of him. For the last thirty years his name has made ballet history. He and Dolin have brought acknowledged progress to the art of the Ballet.

Serge Lifar was an unusual and glamorous personality in his early Diaghileff days. Diaghileff exploited this personality of Lifar in a few charming and modern ballets. Lifar was no classical dancer, nor was he character, perhaps romantic, but at the most he was merely a ballet novelty and nothing more. After Diaghileff's death Lifar went to pieces and was no more a dancer of any merits. At the Paris Opera House his ballets went from bad to worse.

Michael Fokine, who died recently during these war years in America, was surely Diaghileff's finest choreographer. Perhaps his two finest works which will always remain with the ballet will be "SWAN-LAKE" and "LES SYLPHIDES". "Swan-lake" will always be my favourite ballet, but for sheer romantic purity nothing has eclipsed "LES SYLPHIDES".

I saw Pavlova for the last time about two years before she died with her company at Covent Garden ^{Opera} House. Already I was to witness the coming end of a great artiste. And without quite realising the truth, I found myself walking out in the interval and wondered why and what had happened to Pavlova and her company. Everything seemed tawdry and second-rate, shoddy

scenery, soiled dresses and a poor half-hearted company. Even Pavlova herself seemed to be lacking in her old spirit and had lost the sparkle of her eyes. I even forget who her partner was. But I do know I went cold all over and left the theatre. Never again to see Pavlova, but sad to say soon afterwards to hear of her death. If only great artists could retire from their public when at their heights - how much more wonderful their memory would be!

I am a follower of the Russians and the European element that combines with the Russians, for to continually have to watch English Ballet would bore me beyond distinction. It should be the aim of every British dancer of merit to want to mix himself up with the Russian Ballet. To name a few outstanding British dancers who have done so are:- Phyllis Beddells, Vera Sabina, Lydia Sokolova, Markova and Dolin.

Miss Ninette de Valois, who has been the Director of the SadlersWells Ballet Company for many years, was a member of the Diaghileff Company and in her varied career ~~xxxxxxx~~ had danced in musical comedy and the lighter field of the theatre. All this vast experience was surely of the greatest help to Miss de Valois when she started as director of the Sadlers Wells Company. Miss de Valois undoubtedly possesses a strong mind, otherwise she could have never surmounted so many difficulties, and today in the year 1944 she has alone by her great efforts brought Sadlers Wells to where it is. All through these war years her Company had been dancing to packed houses, both in London and The Provinces. I go seldom to see this Company so it will be unfair of me perhaps to criticise, but I went at the beginning to see their production of "THE SLEEPING PRINCESS". To be quite truthful, I went full of excitement at the thought of this production and booked myself a good seat with my mind fully made up to enjoy it all. But sad to say, I came away bitterly disappointed. There was certainly no kick to this production; I thought the scenery and costumes most uninspiring,

of
and outside/the excellent performance of Miss June Brae as
"The Lilac Fairy" , I am afraid the whole thing left me dead,
dead cold. In my opinion the one important brain that has
emerged out of Sadlers Wells is Frederick Ashton. He has done
many fine ballets and has been the backbone of their repertoire,
but I would like to see Ashton spread his wings, for I am certain
that his brilliant mind will not let him or his admirers down.
In my opinion he is the real "find" of the Sadlers Wells Company.
During these war years the Sadlers Wells Company has been by
far the best company operating here, so the war has indeed been
a good "break" for them. So in the year of 1943 Mr. Arnold
Haskell turns to the Sadlers Wells Company as his only shop-
window and gives us his latest book "The National Ballet". Mr.
Haskell naturally yearns for the Russians, but because he is
stuck over here, the next best thing for him to write about is
surely the Sadlers Wells Company. But he is inconsistent and
inaccurate and the pity is that amongst the copious literature
written about the Ballet today, the younger generation is misled
into believing so much of all this must be true.

Robert Helpman has been acclaimed during these war years for his work both as choreographer and dancer for the Sadler's Wells Company. As a dancer, in my opinion, he possesses no merits whatsoever, for Helpman can handle none of the classic roles. I recently saw his performance in the "Swan Lake Ballet" and as the Prince he lacked everything the poetic role required. He merely mimed the role to hell, completely over-acted the part and as a partner to Margot Fontayne he was negligible. I fully realise his over-acting was nothing more or less than to cover up his short-comings. That Helpman can only shine in lesser works is more than obvious. But I must admire him for at least admitting to me that he is no classical dancer. That he possesses a dramatic flair for acting a story to music, is undeniable, and the more macabre the story, the better. But I do not call that ballet. I, unfortunately, have so far not seen his much discussed and highly praised work "Hamlet", but from all accounts this work is again a dramatic story set to music and not ballet. "The Miracle of the Gorbals" I did see; it greatly disappointed me. The drop curtain was shockingly obvious, and the Meanwood Street Scene was by no means an inspired piece of work. It might have been a street scene in any straight play and ballet surely demands from the artist something more of mood and fancy, and not reality. Helpman coped quite cleverly with his crowd scene and never failed to blend them with the excellent score by Bliss. But what of the story, I felt what was intended by Helpman never quite came off. However, the audience yelled and screamed their heads off, and can Mr. Helpman want more than that, certainly not. In Miss Margot Fontayne the Wells Company have a charming artist, maybe I should say ballerina. Miss Fontayne may yet go far; she possesses lightness and style combined with much beauty. I forgive much if the eye is pleased and Miss Fontayne most certainly does do that. She also has a quality that much enhances her, so I predict a future for Miss Fontayne, if she is given the chance to breathe, and by that I mean that

she gets a move on and gets herself mixed up with a good Russian cum ~~an~~ national company and becomes one of several stars and be properly partnered. In my opinion it is a great mistake for any artist to be content to be the sole star of one company, for too long a period for that is bound to make you stale.

In Gordon Hamilton the Wells Company have a fine character dancer. The moment Hamilton steps on the stage, he fills it with much magic; he is always intelligent and interesting to watch. Hamilton can grace any company with his talent. In fact, he is the only member of the Wells Company who resembles a Russian dancer.

During this year of 1945, the Wells Company have at long last returned to their old home The Sadler's Wells Theatre and they should be content to stay there. During these war years a new ballet audience has come forward; values have gone to hell and only a few remember the good old days. So I for one look forward to the opening of Covent Garden Opera House with all its glitter of gold and red, which I hope will be during the summer of 1946. May real ballet return with all its greatness with its stars whom we have missed for so many years.

That our own British ballet stars Markova and Dolin have lead the ballet in America is a fact that I am vastly proud of, and that they may return to Covent Garden in 1946 is indeed a wonderful thought.

"THE MERRY WIDOW" 1907.

I saw the original production of "THE MERRY WIDOW" under the George Edward management at Daly's Theatre 61 times. I was a schoolboy at the time and during my visits to London I seemed to live at Daly's Theatre. Every odd pound I had I changed into 20 shillings which meant twenty more visits to the gallery. The gallery audience all knew me and generally, ^{always} ~~always~~, no matter when I arrived, they pushed up and made room for me in the front row. I must have become a sort of character in that gallery, for in the intervals I was always being bought sweets, lemonade and ices. I suppose I became a habitue of the gallery. Once during the month of August I was present at every evening performance and Matinee, to see my beloved Lilly Elsie. I soon knew every line of the dialogue, the words of the songs and could already play the music from cover to cover. In fact I could have understudied anybody at a moment's notice. Everything connected with this superb production was the breath of life to me. Lilly Elsie was surely the personification of everything that was beautiful and completely perfect as Sonia, the widow. Her memory will remain for ever. The casting of the whole of this George Edward production was perfect. In fact, it was an all-star cast, beautiful decor and costumes and perfect lighting and a superb orchestra. There was glamour and sparkle about it all. Today all that has gone into the Hollywood film world. I so well remember that in ~~M~~ the shop window of Maison Lewis in Regent Street Lilly Elsie's "Merry Widow" hat was on view. Crowds always on the pavement looking at it. Crowds again always waited to see her at the stage door after every performance. And how often was I there myself to cheer with the crowd when our beloved vision appeared. George Edwards glamorous period has never since been recaptured by any subsequent manager. Franz L har's music captured London at once. "The Merry Widow" waltz was being heard everywhere, and Lilly Elsie's picture postcards

were being sold by the thousands. Perhaps one of my most cherished possessions today is my own fine collection of her picture postcards. I felt so proud that the Lilly Elsie I had seen in "THE CHINESE HONEYMOON" and predicted such a future for, had been rightly chosen to be our own "Merry Widow". That Joseph Coyne had been chosen to play the part of Prince Danilo was also a fine piece of casting. Coyne's drunk scene in the first Act was a masterpiece of acting. They were a perfect pair of stage lovers. The part of Natalie was gloriously sung and acted by the stately Elizabeth Firth and who could be better than George Graves as the Baron Popoff. The exquisite charm of Mabel Russell, who played Frou-Frou, first and then followed by Gabrielle Ray, was also something to remember. Here indeed was a production that fitted like a jigsaw puzzle, each part perfectly played and each touch of the ^{Ray's} heart in the orchestra equally to matter. The fine dramatic moments in the play were brought out by most sincere acting both by Lilly Elsie and Joseph Coyne. Perhaps my favourite moment came in Act III, Sonia's entrance at Maxime's Restaurant; to find Danilo at the supper table surrounded by the Maxime girls. In the two subsequent revivals, this fine dramatic point seemed to be completely left out. The beautiful singing came from Elizabeth Firth and Robert Evett. Robert Evett as Jolidon was a perfect tenor, if ever there was one, and his beautiful singing of the Arbour song has never been surpassed since. The chorus men and ladies made sense throughout the whole production and did not just appear as dummies out of a shop window to prop up the scenery, a state of affairs one so often sees today as far as the chorus is concerned. How thrilled Franz Lehar must have been when he came to conduct for the opening performance. I had the pleasure of meeting him about the year 1924, I asked who he thought was the loveliest "Merry Widow" of all and to my joy he, of course, said: Your Lilly Elsie. And I know he meant what he said.

Lilly Elsie may not have had a big voice, but she sang with great charm and sweetness, a true voice, which was important and the size of Daly's Theatre suited her voice and personality admirably. I saw several other "widows" in the Provinces, both in Glasgow and Edinburgh, all quite good perhaps, quite pretty and with good voices, but none of them possessed the charm and glamour of Lilly Elsie. I found myself again in London and this time to see the end of "THE MERRY WIDOW", the last night was announced in all the papers. I rushed at once to buy a seat, but to my disappointment, the house was already "sold out". In fact, people who had bought seats were re-selling them at enormous prices. Boxes were being sold for Gns.50, stalls Gns. 10 and 5. I also read that Daly's Theatre was being decorated with rambler roses for the last performance and that Franz Lehar was coming especially to conduct. So, of course, I had to be there. I haunted the box office for a lucky chance for an odd ticket that might be returned, but what with the prices soaring up and the crowds there daily, I soon saw my luck was clean out. So the only thing left to do was to engage a messenger boy and try the Pit. I paid for a messenger boy to stand at the Pit queue from eight in the morning till twelve o'clock; if I remember rightly at 1/6 an hour. When I arrived at twelve o'clock to take up my position at the Pit, I was delighted to see that where I stood - in spite of the crowd - I was all right and sure of a place. We were standing four deep and soon became six deep and ended up by being crushed like sardines eight deep. The crowds standing for the Pit and Galleries, seemed by this time standing all round Leicester Square and it was indeed an amazing sight by six o'clock in the evening. I took sandwiches and chocolates with me and bought fruit and lemonade from the various vendors who were doing tremendous business. This was indeed an amusing crowd in spite of the awful fatigue. People were fainting, while others were armed with flasks to keep their

spirits up. Then just before 8 o'cl. the queue began to move in; at last I would be inside the Theatre and seated. How tired I was because this was before the days of the stools. Then all of a sudden a black cloud came over me, I could hear the Commissioner at the Pit entrance calling out "No more standing room". This cannot be true, I thought. What did the awful man mean?! But ~~de~~las he was only too true, with only a few in front of me and millions behind, left in a hopeless state of utter disappointment. I went dazed, for I couldn't believe such a thing possible. I must have collapsed, for a charming elderly lady was consoling me. She took my arm and led me into a nearby Pub, ordered me a Guinness which I drank and I remember so well it tasted like poison. It was my first drink and my first Pub. Poison or not, I would have drunk anything at that moment. I felt so utterly tired, sad and broken. My beloved "Merry Widow" having its final night and I of all people not there! I must have fallen into a dead sleep and slept for over two hours. Then all of a sudden that dear lady woke me up and said: "Come on, dearie, the show is nearly over, just go and join the crowd coming out, you have enough imagination and will feel you were there all the time." She seemed to give me one push, and there I was in that smartly dressed crowd coming out of the front entrance. I so well remember snatching some of the red rambler roses from the crowd. My imagination once more did not let me down! I then returned to the stage door and waited with the crowd to see Lilly Elsie come out and join in the cheering which was greater than ever this time. Then saddened by the reaction of all that had happened, I walked home in an ugly tired dream. It was only some days later I found out that two rows of the Pit had been added to the stalls and I suppose being ~~in~~ the back row of the stalls they went for Gns. 5 a piece. So that was why I never got in!

REVUES AND PEOPLE.

A revue of much splendour and talent that I liked very much was the C.B. Cochran production "The League of Notions" at the Old Oxford Theatre, produced and revised by John Murray Anderson. This revue I saw over twenty times. It was something new from start to finish, excellent music, lovely costumes and decor and clever artists, featuring the ~~elixer~~ famous Dolly Sisters. They seemed to be able to do everything, and yet really could do nothing and possess practically no talent, but they did have tremendous energy and speed, big ugly smiling faces and much personality. They sang in a four-poster bed, sang with their Collie dogs, did their pony-trot, wore masses of ~~ostrich~~ ostrich plumes and wore spangled gowns, and of course always loaded with costly real jewellery. Though they could neither sing nor dance, they never stopped doing both. They were certainly most exhilarating and dazzling. No sister-act never worked so hard. They afterwards went over to Paris where they remained for several years, conquering all before them. Paris was certainly their Mecca. The Trix Sisters were also in the show, a charming and tuneful act with the piano. Helen played and sang and Josephine sang and draped herself by the piano. They were the hit of the show the first night. Earl Leslie did much exhausting dancing and was a pleasing and attractive personality. The show girls were beautiful, some came specially from America to help dazzle up the show, and certainly they were good-lookers. This revue ran for many months and was a great success. Years later I met John Mary Anderson, a man of much wit and good taste. I have memories of many amusing supper parties with him at the Cafe Royal. "The Whirligig" revue at the Palace Theatre, a de Courville production, gave us Maisie Gay at her funniest. Here was a delicious comedienne of immense talent. Her humour appealed to the entire house. After the "Whirligig", Maisie Gay did many fine shows and will be most remembered by her Charlot and Cochran revues. Today, hélas,

poor Maisie Gay lies bed-ridden in retirement, suffering from an acute form of rheumatism. She is indeed a great loss to our theatre and her thousands of admirers, including myself. Maisie Gay was my favourite ~~music-hall~~ ^{revue} comedienne, as Marie Lloyd was my favourite music hall comedienne. My two favourite comedians were Nelson Keys and Little Titch. Nelson Keys versatile and dapper, I saw in many revues from Charlot's "Buzz-Buzz" til "Spread it Abroad", The brilliant Denis Freeman production at the Saville Theatre. After this I saw Nelson Keys in pantomime, his last show. He played the "dame", oh, such a pity, as he was completely unsuited to the part. Soon after that I heard he was ill and knowing him very well, called on him at his Stratton Street Flat. I saw him for a few minutes only, he was, *helas*, too ill. I next heard in a few days' time he was gone..... I saw Little Titch dozens of times, he always did exactly the same turn, but I laughed just the same every time. "A to Z" was one of Charlot's best revues at the Prince of Wales Theatre. It ran into several editions, featuring Beatrice Lillie, Gertrude Lawrence, Jack Buchanan, the Trix Sisters and Teddie Gerrard. Teddie Gerrard was the original of "Limehouse Blues" and fine and really Chinese was she in this excellent song. Teddie was a strange exotic creature and famed for her beautiful back, so much so that at the Palace Theatre in a previous revue she sang her famous song "We're so glad to see your back, dear lady" She certainly had a very beautiful back. Teddie was one of the smartest women in revue, she always looked as if she had just stepped out of a band-box. She has since died during these war years. Gertrude Lawrence who Charlot made into a star, in his revue "A to Z", has gone from triumph to triumph. Who can ever forget her when she co-starred with Noel Coward in "Private Lives" and "Tonight at 8.30". Their team work was perfect. They were our Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontaine of the States. During these war years, Gertrude Lawrence has become

one of the biggest stars on Broadway and one of the highest salaried. She is an intelligent and highly attractive artiste who knows how to wear sumptuous cloths and always a delight for the eye. I personally long to see her and Noel Coward act again and I sincerely hope, I shall in the future . In the days from 1919 onwards and for many years I went regularly once a week to see the variety programmes at the London Coliseum. I saw many fine artistes and I often wondered what has happened to some of them. Some, helas, have died and others, no doubt, retired. There was Margaret Cooper and her piano, Malcolm Scott, who a ways ran up and down the stage singing of Catherine Parr. These two, I know, died many years ago. Then I remember Mark Hambourg, who I feared would crash his piano to pieces any moment. Ethel Hook, who sang delightful ballads, Grock; the clown of all clowns, Nellie and Sarah Kouns, the mirror voice sbpranos, an artistic and highly musical turn, "Clarice Mayne and That", with their catchy songs, the Louie Fuller dancers, so dreamy and soft with their new innovation of coloured lighting, Sarah Bernhard, a pathetic aging woman, I am afraid she gave me cold shudders, Seymour Hicks and lovely Osobel Elsom in their clever sketch "Waiting for a Lady", the dainty Japanese Prima Donna singing "Butterfly" quite exquisitely. Then came silent film stars from Hollywood making personal appearances, such as Nazimova and others. Also Fanny Ward as the flapper grannie, sixty but looks~~ed~~ eighteen, but, helas, she too, frightened me. Sir Oswald Stoll had indeed every reason to be proud of his high-grade Variety House, the beautiful London Coliseum. I was present at the first night of ~~the~~ the return of Laurette Taylor in "One Night in Rome" under C.B. Cochran's management at the Garrick Theatre. The moment the curtain went up, rude demonstrations occurred in the gallery. Stink bombs were thrown on the stage and rowdism and every form of annoyance broke out. The gallery couldn't see as there was apparently something wrong with the scenery. Miss Taylor.

made an appeal to the gallery, then later Mr. Cochran appealed on behalf of the artists, but it was no good, the play couldn't proceed. The curtain had to be lowered and everyone went home, not seeing the end of the play. It was indeed an unusual first night, and what all the rowdism was about - nobody quite found out. A few nights later, a second first night was given. I was reissued my seat again; this time the play went through. I thought it quite an interesting play, but it never recovered from its first night's upheaval. It ran a few weeks, and then ended. Laurette Taylor I thought a charming and cultured artiste. She had previously during the war years captured London by her performance of ~~X~~Peg of Peg in "Peg o' my Heart". This play was specially written for her by her husband Hartley Manners. C.B. Cochran was indeed a valuable asset ^{to} ~~in~~ the entertainment world during his tenancy of the London Pavillon. On the tiny stage of the Pavillon, Cochran staged many fine revues and brought before the public many fine artists, scenic designers and composers of merit. Perhaps the star that will always be associated with C.B. Cochran is Alice Delysia. She appeared in the best of his productions, always an exciting artiste. Cochran's first nights were always an occasion, he created glitter and excitement. "Trini", "the most beautiful girl in the world," - Cochran knew no bounds, such was his electric light billing, and how right Cochran was. Trini was indeed beautiful. No theatre in London has a finer position than the Pavillon - Piccadilly Circus, and Cochran was most certainly the right man to wield this theatre with his magic wand of entertainment. But again, a good thing had to go, the Pavillon now is a dreary cinema with all its glamour gone.

Surely one of the most brilliant and original acts ever presented in the music hall and circus was that of "Barbette" here indeed was a new and novel female impersonator. I wonder how many people were completely taken in by the beautiful and glamorous Barbette, until the curtain call at the end, when Barbette would ^{take} his extremely chic wig off. I know I was the first time I saw him at the Olympia Circus. Barbette was a first class act, quite apart from its sumptuous make-up. Here was the reincarnation of Gaby Delys. The same super-drocks, feathered train and head-dress of ostrich plumes, the graceful legs, feet, and artistic hands. After his spectacular entrance came a graceful disrobing and Barbette looking like a lithe young maiden would demonstrate his act, first on the tight rope and later to harrow his audience, on the trapeze. I saw Barbette many times, both in the circus world here and in Paris, and at the London Colosseum and Palladium. I got to know him very well and found him a highly intelligent person and extremely good company. He certainly had a fund of knowledge to impart and could order a meal better than anyone I know and possessed tremendous elegance and smartness off the stage. An altogether unique personality. A few years before the war Barbette contracted an appalling form of paralysis; he was bed-ridden and unable to work for quite two years. Now I hear he has slightly recovered and is able to move once more in the theatre world where he belongs. A recent picture sent to me from America, cut out of a magazine, depicts Barbette with a pupil, the caption underneath says: "Lessons in Aerial Ballet, given by Barbette, the Aerial Director." The act of Barbette may exist no longer, but I am happy to think that the art of Barbette continues to promote new artists.

~~When~~ Wendy ~~and~~ Toye must have been in her early teens when I first got to know her. She was dancing in one of Anton Ddin's productions at the Coliseum. She was indeed a clever little artiste and I have seen her bring the house down when

she did her Mexican dance. She possessed great talent as a dancer, but today her name can be seen on most of the posters connected with the George Black productions as arranger for the dances.

Frances Day I met in London the day she arrived from America. Percy Athos brought her over for the "Athos Follies" at Princes. She had previously danced in the cabaret at Texas ~~and~~ Guinans Night Club in New York. She was, if I remember, first billed as "Dolly Day". She soon changed the "Dolly" to "Frances", worked very hard and was determined to become a star. For the last many years she has certainly become a real star, both in musical productions and films. Today she is one of our very few real box office artists. She possesses great glamour and a crazy mad mop of platinum ^{blonde} ~~blonde~~ hair, which she uses to great advantage. ~~She~~ Her voice may be tiny, but it is true and sweet, and her personality is certainly glittering. She can wear the craziest of frocks and recently in "Dubarry was a Lady" she cavorted about the stage in the most sumptuous of crinolines. Always a joy to the eye.

Denis Freeman today is attached to the Legation Francaise in Cairo. I have known Denis for many years, and I must say he is the best company in the world. He is co-author of the book "The Road to Bordeaux", which is well worth reading. He is one of the few people I know who really possesses the art of conversation. Before the war, he produced two fine revues in the West End "Spread it Abroad" ~~and~~ was a fine success, then followed "Floodlight" - perhaps not so successful. But Denis Freeman's work as producer in both these revues revealed a man of valuable talent for the theatre. The theatre, I am sure, will welcome him back after the war as he is indeed vital and possesses a great flair.

Can one forget the good looks and biyish charm of Tom Douglas, especially in his two big successes "Merton of the Movies" at the Shaftesbury Theatre and "Fata Morgana" at the Criterion Theatre.

I was intriduced to Tommie one evning at Rules ^Restaurant by Margaret Susa and got to know him very well. He possessed infinite and loveable charm. After his first two successes poor Tommy found it difficult to find suitable plays for this boyish personality of his, and sad to say, he suffered a succession of failures. He returned to America, I am afraid a bit broken and sad. Today I hear he is running a successful Antique business in Hollywood.

ANTON DOLIN.

I met Anton Dolin at one ~~of~~^{of} Madleine Cohen's big gathering of celebrities at her Regent's Park home. I was playing on the lovely piano that was the pride of the Cohen family. On this piano stood a fine autographed photo of Caruso, Caruso had once sung at a previous party. While I was playing, Dolin approached me and I must admit was most complimentary and said several charming things about my music and my touch. But strange to say, I disliked his tone of voice and thought he was very patronising, and I am afraid, this our first meeting was a great disappointment to me. Dolin, whom I had seen dance and admired so very much and now Dolin whom I had just met - well, I was not impressed at all, at any rate, that is how I felt. I saw him no more and after many months had gone by I heard that he had taken the studio in Glebe Place right opposite my flat. I am afraid I was not impressed by the news. Eventually, Dolin moved in and we were to pass each other many times on the street. I must say he always spoke to me and invited me to pop in and see him at any odd time. But I didn't, as I never pop in on people any way. These casual meetings went on for several weeks. Then one afternoon while I was resting on my bed, my bell rang and down I went to see who was at my door and to my surprise it was Dolin. He just darted up my stairs saying: "Well, as you won't pop in on me, I have popped in on you." As I followed him up, much out of breath, at the speed things were happening, his next remark was: "Come on, play for me, you know I greatly admire you on the piano." So I just went to my piano and played. He started to sway and move in rhythm at once, my poor little room shook, I thought my china ornaments were all going to crash to the floor any moment. Then he said: "Come over to my studio now and play for me there where I have plenty of room to dance." I was so relieved that I was bounding down the stairs after him, banging the front door and across the street into his lovely spacious studio and before I had time to think, I found myself playing his beautiful Bechstein grand piano, and there before me Dolin dancing, and creating something quite beautiful to any melody I was playing. At the same time his mother ignoring us was ~~mooving~~^{mooving} in and out of the studio getting tea ready. Already my opinion of Dolin had completely changed. This time I found him exhilarating, charming and friendly. Yes, indeed, I was wrong on my first impression. I must have remained

mooving

at his studio many hours and I know that when I eventually left something inside me said: "You have made a new and real friend. I had a desperate longing to return very soon to his studio, to his piano and his impish good company. My wish was granted and our friendship grew and grew as years went by. Those years that Dolin stayed in Glebe Place ~~wasxxxxxxxx~~ will always remain a wonderful period to remember. Years full of interesting incidents, of my constantly meeting delightful and intelligent people, and of playing the piano to my heart's delight, inspired as I had rarely been before and composing some of my best music which Dolin danced to. Of wonderful parties and gatherings where all the arts of the theatre mingled, when one lost all count of time.

It would be the early dawn as I would creep up my stairs to bed, my mind still much too enlivened~~ed~~ by all that had happened to sleep. I would lie awake and think so much, so many marvellous people, so much talent and on most occasions Dolin would dance to his guests as I played. At all these gatherings artists were only too glad to contribute their talent. Evelyn Laye would sing "Zigeuner" from "Bitter Sweet" another time would be Lea Seidl sing that enchanting song as only Lea could sing "Why did you kiss my heart awake"? from "Fredericke", or it might be Jose Collins bursting to sing something from "The Maid in the Mountains", or Marguerite Namara. Another time it would be Barbette telling amazing and risky stories of Buenos Aires or of bullfights in Madrid, or a cathedral somewhere in Italy. Then Dame Ethel Smythe would call to play over some glorious music she had composed for a new ballet. Rowland Leigh would be a constant visitor, snooping in and out, smoking everybody's ^{else's} cigarettes but his own.

John Murray

~~Leon Marie~~ Anderson and Eric Charell were also constant visitors, to say nothing of several Russian ballet dancers of repute and Poppoea Van-Da saying: "How badly everybody was dancing at Covent Garden last night." And very often amidst much noise and chatter that brilliant artist Mischa de La Motte would be singing coloratura grand opera at the piano. The studio was a constant stream of ballet pupils who had come for class, of odd [&] women who came to watch, who looked like birds of prey. And at the piano would be dear Turner, Dolin's pianist, who always played for the lessons so brilliantly. Dolin was constantly bringing over to London new artists, people he believed in. Amongst the first he brought over was young Ergitta from Berlin. Brigitta was in her early teens when Dolin trained her for stardom. Today she is Vera Zorina and the whole world has heard of her. The young dancer Paul Haakon Dolin brought from New York. Dolin starred this young dancer at the Coliseum and Haakon/proved himself ^{more than} to be a dancer of great ability. La Jana Dolin also brought from Berlin. She was indeed a beautiful creature, wore the most sumptuous gowns and possessed perfect taste and charm. Dolin presented La Jana at Giro's Club where she made a tremendous success. Then came Belita Japson Turner and her mother Queen. They would arrive amidst much clatter and Queen would enter the studio amidst much rustle of silks and a million feather boas, she always made a real stage entrance. Belita's lessons always being more important than anybody else's. The word Belita resounded a million times - poor Belita. She grew too tall to become a first-class dancer, but on the other hand that mattered little, for she certainly was a first-class skater and today is to be seen in ^{many} Hollywood films. Another time it would be a visit by Willy Clarkson, who sat himself in the most comfortable armchair and refused to budge till Dolin paid his bill. This was indeed a madhouse, with Dolin always in the midst of the chaos. The telephone never ceased ringing, nobody, of course ^{ever} answered the door bell.

Dolin's unbounded energy seemed to take hold of everyone of us, there was no rest, everyone worked or did something and, of course, no order of any kind, just crazy Irish Haphazardness Food was of no consequence, one just ate any old time, while everyone always talked at the same time and no one listened much to any one - yet Dolin was the centre of it all - his personality dominated. Then dead-tired, he would order everyone out of his studio, rush up to his bedroom and flop on his bed. I, too, was ordered out and would go back to my own flat, scarcely would I enter my bedroom, when my phone bell would ring, it would be Dolin: "Come round at once, let's do a show, anything you like and have supper at the Savoy". And bang went the receiver. That was that with my evening arranged. At other times he would make appointments with me, I would wait hours, and hours and he would never turn up. I returned home livid and a rude letter I wrote him at once. The rude letter would be returned - so that didn't work. Then followed rows galore; when all my clean cushions would be thrown out of my top window into the street. And if it was not me, it would be Kate Goodson, his secretary, poor Kate. The next minute would find us all in a taxi on the way to the Savoy for a meal. With the change of his mood, he was able to change ours at a moment's notice. It couldn't be true, but it was. Dolin just knew how to turn your rage and tears into laughter at the right moment. Of course, there were other charming and quieter ~~quiter~~ /times at the studio with perhaps lovely Eleanor Watts and Darling Turia Campbell, and for a ~~plum~~ change a charming and quiet evening of sense. Always on my birthdays Dolin gave wonderful parties for me - sixty people would be asked, but 160 would turn up. The party went on till all the hours of the morning and everyone performed at these parties. The Cabaret turned out magnificent, only Barbara Hutton could have ever afforded to pay for such a mass of talent. But with us it was different. Everyone longed to perform - so it was free. The only time I met Diaghileff was at one of Dolin's

parties, the last one he attended in London before he died. He was like a lovely soft tame Russian bear. I scarcely spoke to him, I felt I only wanted to watch him. -Se-m--

So my friendship that started badly, developed into something more real and sincere than I ever had with anyone else. I composed much music for Dolin, and I must truly say he got by far my best work. He was always so encouraging, it became easy to deliver him the goods. "Ballerina in the Moonlight" - "The La Jana Waltz" - "Step out" - "Shadows around me blues" - "Debut", these I consider quite five of my best compositions. I also spent many pleasurable holidays on the Continent with Dolin. We travelled always by car all over France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and the Austrian Tyrol, staying at numerous wonderful places: Venice, Innsbruck, Zurich, Santa Marguerita and the whole of the French Riviera. What memories they have given me, those wonderful holidays! Dolin was indeed a wonderful person to travel with and like myself, he was a lover of wonderful churches. We visited many. My scrap books and photo albums are full of those holiday memories of the past and peaceful years. Our friendship had indeed become something real, its foundation solid. I could be and always was of immense help to him where his work was concerned, in fact his career was much more important to me than my own was to myself. So if I neglected myself for Dolin, I did this with the greatest pleasure. His generosity and encouragement to others in their various fields of work was always something to wonder at. A completely unconceited person, but nevertheless ^{always} ~~always~~ sure of himself. His strength of body was equal to his strength of mind. He was a tremendous worker, and if ^{he} owes much to Princess Astafieva for the ballet training she gave him, he also owes much to Poppoea Van-Da. Dolin was indeed up against two hard and exacting schools of thought. But Dolin appreciates and values his friends, one can tell him "off" and he takes it. Praise and adulation have never spoiled him. The "imp" will always remain in him - an Irish imp at that.

PARTIES.

Through new friends I was making in the various clubs I played at, I found myself being constantly asked to wonderful parties. Parties where I met delightful people, listened to delightful talk and ate much good food amongst happy people till all hours of the morning. ^{For} ~~But~~ time mattered little. The first good parties I went to were those given by the beautiful Faith Bevin. Faith with her lovely red hair had been playing in the long run of "The Maid of the Mountains". If I remember correctly, her house was in St. John's Wood and always somebody would send a car to take me from the Bullfrog's Club to it. They were certainly grand gatherings of leading lights of the theatre world. Cressie and Billy Leonard were always there and they certainly had the knack of make^{ing} a party go. In fact no matter at whose party you met Cressie, she always was the heart and soul of the gathering. Billie used to invariably bring me back home in his car, and in spite of my heart always being in my mouth, I got back safely. Not by any means because he was tight, only that he was Irish. About this time I also got to know Sir Hamilton and Lady Margaret Grant. I played for all their parties, some times at the piano alone and ~~some~~ other times I would take along an orchestra. I always played for their children's parties and I am happy to say that I do not think I ever missed one of their Christmas gatherings. I will always look back on these Christmas parties as the best I have ever been to. Margaret would transform the whole house into a Christmas setting. The Christmas tree in the drawing room being a triumph of taste and delight to everyone. Then the sumptuous ~~supper~~ supper where one gave a gasp as one entered the dining room - a blaze with tall red candles and floral decoration of masses of vivid red geraniums. Each year a new decorative scheme would be thought of equally exciting. Champagne and all good Christmas fare flowed - and of course, lovely presents for everyone. Margaret more beautiful always than anyone else at her parties, with Sir Hamilton were perhaps two of the most charming hosts I have ever

come across. All their parties at Onslow Square will long remain in my memory, for their special feeling of goodwill and kindness to everyone. Today Margaret Grant, a widow, lives at Hampton Court Palace. In her spacious and tasteful ~~apartment~~ apartment there she creates the same happy atmosphere for all her friends who visit her. Hampton Court Palace is indeed the setting Sir Hamilton would wish for his beautiful wife. Tony, as Sir Hamilton was known to all his friends, was indeed a person of immense charm, always kindly and gentle and in whose company it was always a joy to be ~~in~~. I believe I was one of his wife's friends he liked. No compliment could please me more. During the period I played at the Bat Club, I got friendly with Bobby Clark and always played at all his excellent parties. His home had beautiful spacious rooms and I guess nearly a hundred people, sometimes attended these parties. Bobby, a superb host, was the heart and soul of his parties. His gay personality carried all before him, singing all the old popular songs, dancing, eating and drinking till all the hours of the ~~noon~~ evening. It was about this period that the Bright Young People sprang into existence. They were indeed a disturbing element. I knew them all individually, but am thankful to say I rarely went to their gatherings. I am afraid I thought them a pretty dreary lot and a menace. They were destructive and ~~utterly~~ ~~entirely~~/unamusing. They gate-crashed at so many parties that would have been otherwise quite pleasant evenings. I must admit I found them anything but bright, rather morbid and always rude and ill-mannered. Today most of them are dead. One prominent member Brenda Dean Paull is alive. I always remember eighteen years ago when I played at the Florida Club in Bruton Mews, at that time one of the leading Night Clubs in London, Lady Dean Paull introduced me to her daughter Brenda, a lovely, charming, fresh young person. I thought at once and said to her mother "You ^{will} lose her soon and into the peerage." But alas no, Brenda took another turning and featured much in the Police News instead through being a drug addict. Michael Stevens, who was shot by Mrs. Barney, I first met in Paris. On several occasions he did his level best

to ~~try~~ persuade me to try drugs. When he saw he had no hope of success, he vanished and some months later in London his picture appeared in all London papers as being the victim of the Barney case. I spent my time avoiding this set, but they were none too easy to altogether avoid. They kept bobbing up in all clubs and got into most parties somehow or other. Their one object seemed to be to spoil everyone else's pleasure and fun. While I played at the Florida Club, George Raft was the solo dancer and cabaret act. He was by no means much of a success. I can remember taking no notice of him at all, that happened before he became the big Hollywood film star. Today the Florida Club and practically all Bruton Mews ~~exist~~ no longer. It was bombed during the blitz in October 1941, about which I will tell more later on. Many delightful parties were also given by Hermione ~~and~~ Baddeley and David Tennant after they married at their charming flat in the Adelphi. But perhaps their best party was their Mozart Costume Ball held elsewhere. Everybody kept strictly to the period and the effect which was carried out in detail, from the waiters to the guests, remains in my memory as a picture of great beauty. Hermione, gay and pretty, dancing merrily in her lovely period gown, escaped as a cinderella from the party straight to a nursing home in the early hours of the morning, where a few hours later she gave birth to a son.

Two lovely parties I attended were given by Felix Harboard in Glebe Place. They were both fancy dress. At one of these parties he transformed his studio into a street, ^{scene} in Paris with gay cafes, striped awnings, trees, checked table cloths and pots of geraniums. The effect unbelievably perfect and gay.

Oliver Messel's parties in Yeoman's Row were indeed memorable ones. His studio simply glittered with stage and Hollywood film stars. At the last ~~one~~ of his parties I attended, a waiter or ~~gust~~ dropped by mistake a heavy syphon on my big toe; I staggered to a chair, almost in a faint, but soon had to be helped down the stairs and into a taxi taking me home. Needless to

say I had a sleepless night of agony and next day had to send for a doctor.

Charming parties were given by Judy and Simon Orde at their beautiful house in Gilbert Street. Judy and her two daughters, *Eleanor* ~~Elena~~ and Bunty made up a trio of three of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. Later *Eleanor* ~~Elena~~, who married and became Lady Campbell Orde, gave delightful Russian ballet parties at her home.

These were indeed memorable parties that stand out in my mind from 1919-1939 - those twenty years which made up a gay and colourful pattern of much enjoyment.

HOLIDAYS ABROAD.

I visited Marocco four summers running, I made Tangier my headquarters and found the atmosphere there most pleasing and tranquil to the mind. $3\frac{1}{2}$ days from London and you found yourself in a warm and sunny tropical clime, where vivid colours charmed your eyes and the soft mild air made you feel deliciously lazy and completely satisfied. The Hotel I chose gave me a room on the groundfloor with French windows that opened into a tiny garden, this little garden was enchanting, so much seemed to grow in it: masses of jasmin and honeysuckle in bloom, fig-trees and grape vine, and gorgeous vivid oriental flowers, and far away in the distance - against a real blue sky - was a minoret. All this I could see as I lay in bed in the mornings having my coffee and rolls and melon. Who could wish for more?

See I am a maniac for views, for if I once photograph a good view on my mind, I find I can always turn it on - no matter where I am. And I soon found Tangier was full of lovely views. I used to sit at the Cafe Central for hours each evening watching the lights of day change into miriads of hues right up to midnight, watching the crowds of gaily bedecked Arabs and Moors, and the haphazard traffic, the flowers and fruit and junk-sellers, the guides and the noisy gay children, who played in the streets and around the Cafe tables. It was wonderful to sit alone and ~~watch~~ watch all this. Everyone seemed so happy and contented. Then to watch groups of Spanish families taking the air or sitting at tables, eating the creamiest of cream-cakes and ice cream galore. The women, so picturesque, and often very fat, with oiled/^{jet-}black hair, so vivacious in their chatter ~~and~~ while fanning themselves to keep cool. The lithe/~~thin~~ papas were taking the children for a stroll and buying them sweetmeats. I found Tangier Cafe ~~the~~ life very entertaining, I must say. So much intrigue seemed to be happening everywhere. The huge open market was indeed a wonderful sight and until you see the melons for sale there,

believe me, you have never seen melons before! After my first sight of these melons, I expected to have a nightmare of millions of melons falling down on my head. Needless to say, they were delicious to eat. Also lovely fresh figs and for two francs you could purchase a bouquet of lovely flowers so charmingly arranged. Wherever you turn, right or left, you seemed to be confronted always with a lovely view and perhaps one of the loveliest is from the Terrace of the El Minza Hotel. I used to tell all tourists to be sure and see this view before leaving Tangier. I loved the smells of Tangier - they were so exciting and all so much part of the atmosphere. The narrow native streets so clogged with shops of all kinds, most picturesque and untidy - and everywhere so much noisy talk and bustle.

From Tangier char-abancs literally flew to everywhere; I visited Fez for a week and here again was riotous colour, gay minarets and ultramarine blue skies. Lovely shops, hotels, and cafes everywhere. In the evenings there was something magic about the city. I also visited Rabat - another beautifully laid out town, one part of it a miniature Paris and the other part the old Moroccan town. I also crossed the frontier into Spain and saw a bull-fight; I made myself sit through this belly-aching sport - and I felt any moment I shall be sick. Never again I hope to see a bull-fight. It all horrified me - however, brave the matadors might be, the poor bull is in for a sure kill in the end. It took days before my stomach felt normal again, so I was glad to return to Tangier and watch the children playing and stealing lumps of sugar from the cafe tables. I found the people of the town delightfully friendly and easy-going. They lived a sleepy languid existence, loved lots of leisure and were most tolerant and kind to the miriads of children everywhere. But it is my sorrow to say, they apparently hated cats, for the spectacle of lost and hungry and sick-looking cats seemed legion. They were just everywhere prowling about, looking for any morsel of food they could find. Being a lover of cats, this struck me poignantly.

On another holiday I visited Copenhagen. I arrived at midnight, stumbled dead-tired into the first Hotel and fell asleep. The next day I prowled about the city and in my wanderings ran into Carl Brisson and his wife, of course, they were Danes, but I had forgotten about that and it was a delightful surprise meeting them. As usual, they were charming to me. My first evening, I went to a revue, the theatre being by the Tivoli Gardens, and to my surprise who should I find performing in the show, but another friend of mine Gustav Wally. He practically took me by the hand and showed me round the town during my three weeks stay there. Every evening after the show he'd take me to some new Night Club or Dance Hall. Then one evening I ventured further out to a sea-side summer resort. As I entered the beautiful ^{Belle-Vue} ~~Belle-Vue~~ Hotel, I found myself looking at an enlarged photograph; I thought to myself, surely, I know that face and sure enough it was Arthur Young, the clever pianist. He was playing at the Hotel, so I sent my name in to him at once. He was equally surprised at seeing me and entertained me to a delightful evening. I found Copenhagen a beautiful clean town and the people so good-looking. Nobody seemed poor here, no slums . . . the food everywhere delicious, in fact, I spent all my money eating in restaurants. The musical comedy uniforms you saw everywhere so gay. I hated leaving when my time was up. My last afternoon I went to say good-bye to the charming Mermaid on the Rock "Den Lille Havfrue" I had looked at it so often and admired it so much, this symbol of Copenhagen!

I stayed about ten days in Berlin on another occasion and found it a very disappointing city. Expensive and except for the cafe and night life, which was overbrightly lit and full of over-gay and pleasure^{sp}snatching faces, I found myself mostly bored. I saw nothing in the shops that took my fancy, this seemed strange when I always brought home some souvenir that pleased me, but no such thing came my way in Berlin. This was about 1930, before the Hitler regime came to power. I left Berlin for Budapest - it was like going from an ugly dream into a beautiful one! I found

this city sizzling with excitement. I stayed at the Hungaria Hotel on the beautiful Corso. The bedroom allotted to me was the most spacious and grand room I had ever slept in. The bed a dream of comfort and the draperies and furniture elegant and in the best of taste. Here surely was an enchanting city, where music played the leading role. There seemed to be music all day long and more music at night. Gipsy bands played on the streets while you ate in open-air restaurants and children sang and danced for coins. And one just went on from cafe to cafe - listening to more and more lovely music - and ate and drank till all the hours of the morning, while the beautiful Danube just flowed almost in rhythm to the gay sparkle of Strauss and Lehar.

A motor trip through the Austrian Tyrol on another occasion pleased me a great deal. Here was fairy-like scenery, enchanting villages, rivers and lakes clear as crystal, with snow-capped mountains everywhere... soft green woods and exquisite wild flowers. I had always loved Switzerland and here the Tyrol seemed very much the same and yet it had a definite character of its own. The people seemed fresh, good-looking, happy and friendly. We eventually got to Innsbruck where we stayed for ten days. I was on this trip with Anton Dolin, Ba and Larry. Innsbruck I thought a delightful old town and its surrounding country most beautiful. When the time came to leave I was indeed sorry. From there we motored to the Sanatorium on the borders of Lake Constance where Nijinsky was residing. Dolin made this trip especially to visit Nijinsky and his wife. I was delighted that Dolin also wished me to meet Nijinsky. Madame Nijinsky knew we were coming so she was waiting for us at the entrance to this beautiful Sanatorium. She escorted us into the garden to meet her husband where we four sat and chattered. It was indeed a strange feeling, here were three normal and sane people talking to one who had been shut up for years because of his insanity. Dolin, of course, talked in Russian to Nijinsky and occasionally Nijinsky answered back quite rationally. There was little about him that suggested his tragic role in life. He seemed well and quite happy, though at times his mind seemed to wander and he would laugh. Then he seemed to return to us again. We had an excellent lunch and returned to the garden for coffee. Nijinsky then, on his wife's suggestion, took us across the gardens to show us his room, a spotlessly clean room, very comfortable, light and airy. When he saw his laundry on a chest of drawers, he quickly opened a drawer and threw it in. He evidently thought it was not quite correct for his laundry to be exposed to view. About 3 o'clock we said good-bye and left. I shall always remember this visit and seeing Nijinsky for the first time and probably - the last time. This great dancer who has left such a

memory behind. Dolin had always done much for Nijinsky, he had organised many big Charity Performances and by so doing collected big sums of money for Nijinsky's upkeep. Dolin is a born organiser and in 1938 at His Majesty's Theatre, Dolin organised a super Charity Show for Nijinsky. If I remember correctly, ~~xxxx~~ over two thousand pounds was taken at this Matinee. Dolin, with the help of Lady Juliette Duff, worked indefatigably to get together a fine programme and a fine programme it indeed turned out. Naturally, Ballet items mostly filled the programme to be relieved by John Gielgud who recited most beautifully and Martinelli from the Covent Garden Opera who sang magnificently. Serge Lifar, after much trouble and persuasion, condescended to come from Paris to dance. I had the pleasure of composing the music for the item called "DEBUT"; this was danced by Dolin and his pupil Belita Japson-Turner, it being her first public appearance as a ballet-dancer. I was naturally thrilled to have my name on a programme which included so many names of famous classical composers.

A trip across the Alps was thrilling and at times frightening. I was with Ba, Larry and Dolin, Larry was driving the car and cautious and careful as he always was, there were moments I felt my heart in my mouth. As it grew colder and colder as we climbed higher and higher, I started to grumble: "What have you brought me here for, haven't I shivered enough in London, for God's sake, let's get to the sun!" But our road over ice and slush became more and more dangerous, deep lying snow everywhere all very beautiful and grand to look at, but I can enjoy nothing if I am shivering. So I continued to grumble furiously - much to the annoyance of everybody. Suddenly there was a stop and to my horror we could go no further. The snow too deep had not been cleared from the only so-called road we were on. Fortunately, we had stopped at some mountain chalet and there we had to spend the night. It was round about 5.30 in the afternoon, if I remember correctly. I was furious at the thought of being perched up in some mountain chalet for the night, and with only a faint hope of getting away some time tomorrow, if the snow was cleared enough for our car to leave. I must have driven everybody mad by this time with my grumblings. I hugged myself close to the stove in the chalet to keep myself warm and muttered incessantly. Larry, Ba and Dolin having had enough of me, kept outside helping the men to clear the snow. I certainly did not blame them. Later, we had a wonderful meal at the chalet, that thawed me a bit and I became more human. Then I retired to bed and I can honestly say, I have never slept on a more comfortable bed in my life. Luckily I had my hot-water bag with me which helped me to feel warm and comfortable and soon I fell fast asleep. The next day it was actually possible for us to leave. How glad I was! I know the Alps are beautiful and awe-inspiring, but never again do I want to be so high up perched ~~up~~ amongst them! However, soon we were off and heading for Lugano, where we arrived in time for dinner. Lugano was heaven, so warm and colourful and the Alps so much lovelier to look at! We stayed at the beautiful

Park Hotel where we were shown every comfort. I adored Lugano, the shops, the people and the country all around was most beautiful. As we left after our few days visit, I said to Dolin: "We must return here some day again." He agreed with me and bought me a charming watch which I have to this day.

From Lugano we were on our way to St. Margherita on the Italian Riviera. We arrived as dusk was falling and wondered how we would find the Villa Welcome, when suddenly the headlights of our car illuminated the name-plate on the entrance gates of the Villa and there was also the Italian maid standing by, looking out for this carload of Englishmen. A charming Villa, lent to Dolin for our visit to St. Margherita. We found the little seaside-town very charming, gorgeous sun and excellent bathing. I soon discovered one lovely church in the town, there may have been others, but I was content with the one I had found and kept on visiting it every time I was near it, which was practically daily. This church was all gold inside with wondrous red brocade draperies, simply beautiful. I can see it all now. After a ^{week's} ~~visit~~ we left one morning quite early on our way to Venice. The thought of Venice greatly excited me. I had visited Venice once before in 1932 and had always longed to return there ~~again~~ and here, in the summer of 1937 I was on my way again. I felt almost sick with excitement. Venice will always be to me "the dream city of a thousand colours". We arrived in Venice about 8 o'clock in the evening, and such a magic night it was indeed. The sky of wondrous blue and in no time Dolin and I were speeding out in a motor launch to the Excelsior Hotel in the Lido. We were so tired, we decided to have baths and go to bed and ordered dinner in our room. I kept running to the big French windows to look out on the Adriatic. Next morning, while we were having breakfast, I said to Dolin: "I seem to recognise those voices, the people next door." And he said: "Rubbish, just like you to imagine you know someone." But how right I was; the voices were those of Ivor Novello and Peter Graves. Their rooms were on the same floor as ours and all was arranged for us to have

our bathing cabinets next to each other on the beach. We spent our evenings in Venice and ^Imost afternoons too. No city has ever fascinated me so much. I should like - some day - to spend several months in Venice and very much like to go there when I am very old - if I ever I live to be very old. So that I could just sit and dream and look at the myriads of colours and watch the pigeons in St. Mark Square. I so well understand now why ~~Dia~~ghileff wanted to die in Venice and how glad I am that he did! Dolin and I visited his grave one day. It was a lovely excursion, gliding in the gondola, in the heat of the noon day's sun and then arriving at the little island, where this great man's last remains lay. It certainly was a most befitting last resting place. I left Venice with tears in my eyes, wondering when I would visit it again, and feeling more strongly than ever that I must return.

I had been a constant visitor to Paris and the South of France between 1920-1939, and as a schoolboy I recall charming memories of a six-week visit to Rouen, the cathedral town of much beauty not forgetting Joan of Arc. Paris I grew to love more and more on each visit and during the year of 1931 I worked as pianist at "La Petite Chaise", the charming restaurant in the Rue de Grunelle of the Boulevard Raspail. La Petite Chaise was in a sixteenth century house of much charm. The place was famous for its excellent food, the prices for which considered quite high. The little room I played in was quite tiny, only 16 people could sit and eat in it comfortably and in spite of its size I had a baby-grand piano to play and entertain on. Two people with delightful personalities looked after the guests and diners. Otto Geisler from Prague was the Maitre and what a good maitre he was indeed. He just knew how to fill my little room with the right people every evening, the ones considered not right were sent to the room upstairs. And every night my room was packed from eight o'clock till midnight and always with first-class personalities.

Madame Jeanne, always in a smart black frock, was the other personality, a charming middle-aged woman, she looked after everybody and saw to the orders and the quickness of service. People came first of all to eat its good food and perhaps next to listen and not to be disturbed by my soft music. For in this particular instance I made it a point that my music should be background to conversation and eating. I achieved a great success at "La Petite Chaise", and played there for over a year. I met many charming people and made many good friends, and got to know Paris. It was altogether a delightful experience. I lived on the left bank and frequented and got to know all famous cafes and Boites, met all sorts of people and soon found Paris getting under my skin. I felt I knew Paris as well as I knew London. It was while I played at "La Petite Chaise" that

I met my charming and much-loved friend Jacqueline de Grandpré. Jacqueline possessed a lovely voice and sang both in English and French equally well. She often appeared as a professional artiste and in Brazil made quite a name for me as composer of my song "Shadows around me Blues", which she sang with much beauty. Professionally she was known as Jacqueline Morin. We have remained great friends all through the years and since the war started in 1939 it has been a sad thought in my mind wondering what has become of my dear friend.

During the winter of 1938 I spent several months staying with Dolin in Paris, while he was performing in the revue at the Mogador Theatre. With him was also starring the fourteen-year old champion-skater Belita Japson-Turner. Dolin appeared in the first half of the show and the second half was given over completely to skating. In this second half Belita proved herself a tremendous success. This was altogether a charming revue, typically French. I much enjoyed getting to know back-stage theatre-life of Paris. Dolin won for himself tremendous praise from all the French critics and at the end of the revue season, he gave a classical ~~xxx~~ dance recital at the Salle Playel. This recital was wonderfully organised for Dolin and he achieved an outstanding success to a packed house.

~~On~~ I left Paris on the 2nd September 1939 with a sad heart, wondering when I should see Paris again. I have spent the last three weeks of July in Cannes with Dolin and Otis. We motored from London by car, then Dolin returned to London and I stayed on for the whole of August in Paris. It was indeed as the Jerome Kern song says: "The last time I saw Paris." Those four weeks were full of happy and unforgettable times; and the three weeks of July in Cannes, a holiday I surely cannot forget. Everybody seemed to be on that Riviera that July! Hollywood film stars, playboys, a host of people one knew from London and many more one didn't want to know, French stars of the theatre,

and a Charles Trenet Gala night at the Casino. It was all a mad rush for one last fling of Europe before the war, and perhaps for a good many the last fling. Dolin was being photographed for the Press a great deal, Dolin ~~and~~ water-skiing was creating a big show for the on-lookers who gathered in crowds to watch him. And certainly he could do it better than anyone else. Serge Lifar had to follow Dolin to Cannes, he even followed to the same Hotel. I have a photo taken of him and Dolin on which he looks just like a frog, whatever happened to his figure I just can't think. I am afraid he was a bore and we avoided him as much as possible.

The Riviera was indeed in 1939 more than ever a "lust for living" from everybody's point of view. War clouds hung heavy so it was an all-out for a good time while it was possible. Dolin and Otis bought a house in Antibes, goodness knows why, except that it was against everyone's wish that they should do so. I went on my knees on the roadside and implored them not to do any such thing. But it must have been the will of Allah, for they bought it, a lovely new house, all waiting to be furnished and lived in. But helas, not until after the war can we know in what condition it remains. If indeed it does remain at all. It was sad to leave the Riviera, and personally I never felt for one moment that such a calamity as war could possibly happen. Something was bound to stop it; even Hitler could not be mad enough to allow a war to break out. So we motored out of Cannes one morning en route for Paris. It was the month of August, Paris seemed unusually crowded. One heard every language spoken, refugees from everywhere had herded themselves into Paris. The French like the English were kind to the refugees, and besides it was not so difficult to get into France. Paris seemed full of German spies everywhere. The Ritz Bar was always packed and one could easily detect Hitler's smart blondes. An uneasy restless atmosphere prevailed everywhere. The Cafe de la Paix like all other big cafes was crowded out. I found myself rushing around everywhere in the midst of all this,

surrounded by many friends: Philip van Dyke, Kuching, Charles, Friedl and Jacqueline. Then on the night of Thursday 31st August, Paris had a dim-out, all street lights went a dull blue. The Germans had marched into Poland and Great Britain had sent in her ultimatum. A German youth coming out of the Cafe de la Paix that evening, asked me in good English: "What does it all mean?" I tried to tell him and his last remark was: "My people in Germany know nothing of this, we only know what our Radio and newspapers want to tell us." Our friend Friedl was a German too, he was a friend of Kuching and Charles's. I found him a delightful and good-mannered person; during those few remaining weeks I saw him almost daily. He kept going backwards and forwards to the German Embassy for news. The tension was becoming worse and worse and Kuching and Charles thought our best plan was to return to London not later than Saturday 2nd of September. Jacqueline said good-bye to us on the Thursday afternoon, as she found it imperative to return to her farm in Normandie, as most of her farm-staff had already been mobilised. On the Friday night, 1st September, we had a dismal final party: Kuching, Charles, Friedl, Phillip van Dyke and myself at the Schehrazade. The atmosphere at this place was quite awful, we danced and tried to be gay - but everything seemed to be forced and unlike Paris. Paris without its gay lights was not Paris at all. I fell into bed at about five in the morning, slept soundly until I was wanted immediately on the phone the next morning. It was Friedl; he had been ordered back by the German Embassy and I was to proceed at once with my luggage and pick up Kuching and Charles at their Hotel, for we must leave for London immediately. So the first person I encountered that morning was Friedl; he was waiting outside the Hotel for me, he had changed overnight and I suddenly realised "God, he's a Nazi". It was horrible. I think in his heart he knew what was coming and hated the thought of it all. He became most formal, said his good-byes to us all and was off to the station he had to catch his train at. The next to arrive was Phillip van Dyke, he certainly softened the tense atmosphere, carrying with him masses of lovely

orchids for Kuching and various other things for me, including a small flask of Brandy. All this was so much like Phillip, always thoughtful and kind. Poor fellow he seemed utterly distressed/^{when} we we said good-bye, not quite knowing what to do with himself next. We all lunched somewhere near the Gare Du Nord, ate our last lovely meal in Paris and then did a little more shopping, buying Molyneux perfume and Eau de Cologne. At three o'clock we got into what must have been for me at least the longest and most crowded train en route for London. I eventually got to bed in my own flat - tired out - at ten o'clock that evening. I must have slept soundly, for when I woke up the next morning it was ten-thirty. Milly, my maid, brought in my breakfast and as I turned on my radio, the first voice I heard was that of Chamberlain, announcing the news that we were at war with Germany. This was shortly followed by an air raid warning, such a rude noise. I just stayed on in bed, I felt I had too much to think about and too many people I loved to be concerned over. That sad day, the 3rd September 1939! Once more, war with Germany, why, why, why had it all to happen again? and bring with it untold misery for millions?!!

THE WORLD WAR.

And so from that sad day the 3rd of September 1939 the war started on a world heavy with somber thoughts. Here in London I was determined to stay and see it through - no matter what happened. I had missed the experience of the last war, being in Penang and Singapore during its whole period. A war, that was a hell of a good time - as far as I was concerned. Still, I always had the feeling that I was missing much by being so far away from all that was happening. So this time, 25 years later, I was here in London. I was 25 years younger during the last war and I played the piano incessantly, flitting between Penang and Singapore. I had my own orchestra at the Eastern and Oriental Hotel in Penang and at other times I was playing at Raffle's Hotel in Singapore, I was invited everywhere, I entertained the troops and played for the sailors on battleships and cruisers, played at every party and even put on my own show "THE PINK POM-POMS" in Penang, which was a huge success. I seemed to be riding on the crest of the wave. It was all one mad round of gaiety. Now this time I was in London for another war. Early in September 1939 I fixed to play at "The Spotted Dog Club", a charming old-world looking club in Bruton Mews, attached to the "Florida" Club. I liked it there and as far as the job was concerned, it was completely congenial. The Club had a charming atmosphere and very nice people came to it. Life gradually became readjusted to war time conditions. One was glued daily to the radio to hear its news bulletins. Even the newspapers took on a new significance for me. I became politically minded. I often wondered what I had read before from my daily papers, certainly no political news. And so I felt a bit ashamed of myself. What did I know about this war - now the main topic for all? I am afraid I knew nothing. And what were the many causes that brought it about? So I hastened to Harrods one day and joined the library there, for I had

indeed much matter to read up. My younger friends were all joining up, one of the forces or another. More and more uniforms kept appearing daily. The good old days had gone - a new period had started. Black-out to all our windows, gas-masks lying ready in case of emergency. Then came the food ration books, everything so well organised. This island certainly took things calmly. The Germans in Europe were conquering all before them. Their propaganda so slick, their spy-system even slicker still. Time went so fast and the German war-machine so terrific. Chamberlain resigned and Churchill stepped in. Great Britain started to prepare like mad and barrage balloons went up in the air. The Germans had been preparing for ten years openly - Great Britain was only now doing something about it. But, Thank God, we were an island and we had the Fleet. Little did we realise at that time, we also had an Air Force. Small though it may have been in numbers compared to the German hordes of planes, ours grew stronger by the bravery of our splendid airmen. The Germans started raiding us by day-light and very soon did our fliers drive them out of the skies. I shall always remember that memorable evening in September 1940 when we heard the news that our boys had brought down over a hundred and eighty planes that day. One's heart leapt in excitement at such good news.

The little countries in Europe were being overrun one by one - then came the heart-breaking news that Belgium had capitulated, to be followed by the grim and epic feat of Dunkirk, where God alone came to our aid and summoned the courage in all our men here, who had boats and ships to go over and bring our weary soldiers back home. And over went every kind of craft - big and small, and returned to our shores packed out with tired and disheartened men. What nearly was a colossal defeat, turned into a glorious epic and victory. One of the best things in ^{the} film "MRS. MINNIVER" was the Dunkirk

episode. It was superbly done. ~~That was the Saturday night~~

The next ghastly shock that shook me was the fall of France in June 1940. I was in the King's Road waiting for a bus, when the newsboys rushed and shrieked about with the news selling their papers. I remember so well my bus came along and I just had to let it pass. The sad and tragic news just stunned me. Poor France, that country I love so much, where I had enjoyed so many holidays and Paris the city I held so dear to my heart and my few friends ever there. It just did not seem possible that it could be true. On top of the fall of France came Churchill's tremendous speech - perhaps one of his best. Those were indeed days of tense moments. And now we were alone in this war!

Then one Saturday night in September, I was giving a farewell party at my flat for Tony Greville, who was leaving to join his regiment the next day. That night we had our first big air raid. As yet we had ^{few} no anti aircraft guns in London. It was indeed a night filled with a new thrill of excitement and fear, as one heard the whizz and shrieks of falling bombs and soon London was a red glow of fires, which lit up the skies everywhere. I had eighteen people at my flat, the party continued and Mischa de la Motte took all his top notes as clear as a bell and I played the piano and everyone sang songs while madness reigned all over London. So that was our first christening of a real air raid, the night of Saturday 7th September 1940. It was all such a new experience that it was not quite fear that overtook us, but amazement and surprise. From all my windows one could see London lit up by fires. My party broke up about 3 o'clock the next morning.

The night raids continued - but now our guns roared. The tubes became packed with people sheltering there. Theatres which had been booming had to change their hours of performance. Most of them did Matinees only, very few closed up altogether.

I prefer^{red} to get home at nights from my work. My one and only thought was of my home, so most nights I walked from Bruton Mews through the raids and the thunder of guns - taxis were not easy to get. Perhaps my home never meant so much to me before, I felt I just had to be amongst my own belongings. Many nights I spent hours on my doorstep, fully clad and with blankets and my hot water bag, as I am on a top floor. I must say I experienced nights of terror, getting back to bed any time between 5-6 o'clock in the morning, after the all clear signal had gone. All Londoners were going through the same experience. Yet when morning came and the horror of the night before was over - life went on just as usual. Your milk was on your doorstep, your papers arrived and my precious maid Milly would always turn up and get me my breakfast. The tubes and trains ran more or less as usual and people went to work, saw the cinema, lunched and dined out with friends. Humour reached its highest peak everywhere and everyone became mately.

The night raids continued with grim ferocity, then came that memorable night of Monday 14th October 1940, when the Spotted Dog-Club and the whole of Bruton Mews was wiped out

I can remember nothing of what happened. I must have just left the piano to join a few of the members sitting round the big old-fashioned fireplace. I had all the evening been piling on coal and logs to keep the fire roaring and the Club cosy and warm. How long I was buried - I don't know, for I was knocked completely unconscious by what happened. Vague recollections came back to me long afterwards. My hair being cut off, and of being wheeled into the operating theatre at St. George's Hospital, my head being stitched up which was badly cut open and the burns on my neck attended to. Then the next morning Paul Harker standing by my bed. I asked him to ring up my friend Joe Sturgess and tell her to come along and see me if possible. Of course, Joe came at once and I asked her to ring up my maid Milly and a few other friends to tell them I was alive. The next person I remember was Adelaide Hall, poor Adelaide, her home in Bruton Mews completely wrecked. Fortunately, she had spent that night with friends in the country. Then later I was carried into an ambulance amidst such discomfort I can never forget. My head was aching and my burns burning; others in the ambulance were groaning and being sick. I know I was might grateful to Betsy Cutler for the grapes she brought me which I shared with Peter Jordan. Peter, also a victim of the night before, lay on the bunk beneath me. Eventually, the ambulance started on its journey. The awfulness of that journey to where I had no idea, was utter discomfort, one was jolted about for what seemed endless hours. Eventually we stopped and I remember being carried into a big ward, while I yelled madly to be put into the bed next to Peter Jordan. The thought that I might be put just anywhere and next to a stranger horrified me. I definitely decided I must be next to somebody I knew and liked. Then all went blank until next morning, when the nurse awoke me, the first thing she said was: "See, you are next to Captain Jordan."

I felt so relieved, I don't know whether I smiled at Peter or not, but it was nice and comforting to know he was so near. I asked the nurse where I was, she said: "Don't worry, you're all right, this is the War Emergency Hospital at Old Windsor." I am afraid I felt too ill and really didn't much care whether I was in Old Windsor or Timbuctoo! We were kept quiet and sleeping most of the first few days. May Hallett and Elsie Hume came to see me one day - I was still pretty ill, so made little sense. We were given pills several times a day and more pills at night to help us to sleep. The nurses were simply divine, especially the pretty Red Cross girls, they were so cheerful and gay and nothing seemed too much trouble for them to do. I asked one of the nurses to lend me her mirror, for I wanted to look at myself. But, alas, as my whole head and neck were bandaged, there was nothing of me to see in that mirror, and I am afraid I looked a very sad spectacle. Would I ever feel a human being again, for I indeed felt myself a numbed creature. But good nursing and much sleep worked miracles on me! One morning, as the doctor was on his rounds, he stopped at my bed with one of the nurses, the bandage on my neck was removed and he started to attend to the nasty wound. With a pair of pincers he began to pick out bits of various things that had got embedded in the wound, I am afraid I screamed over this painful proceeding as I had never screamed before. I was given no anaesthetic and the pain I suffered was quite frightful. After he had finished, he showed me the mass he had extracted from my neck and calmly said: "You see, I have brought part of a building out of you." I am afraid, I hated him, and from that day I could never bear the sight of him - and he knew it too. A few days later, they removed the bandage from my head and took the stitches out, but that was child's play - practically painless. Then I saw for the first time my poor head, alas with very little hair and what there was of it, a bright yellow, owing to some disinfecting that had been put on my hair. I washed my head three successive days before I felt it was thoroughly clean. I was wheeled to the bathroom and lifted into and out of

the bath and wheeled back to my bed. The shock had so affected my legs, I, of course, could not walk a step and could scarcely stand up on them. As I began to feel better, I found our ward very interesting: all kinds of casualties and some of them had many interesting stories to tell of their experiences. To pay a just tribute to the nursing staff will be difficult for me to put into words. They were superb - all of them, and our night sister, Nurse Harman, was an angel, if ever there was one. In fact, she was so loved by all the patients that we all longed for eight o'clock at night and her arrival in the ward. She was a born nurse and humanitarian: kindness and sympathy she gave to all of us and she possessed a wonderful power of healing. I know, I shall never forget her and the care and kindness she showed me. Then, one afternoon as I was dozing in my bed, a nurse came along and said: "A lady had called to see me," She mentioned some name which I did not quite catch. So I said: "Oh, yes, please, do bring her along", wondering who ~~it~~^{she} might be, and to my joy and surprise, it was no other than my beloved Lilly Elsie. She was herself living in Windsor and had heard from friends in Scotland that I was lying in the War Emergency Hospital in Old Windsor. It was indeed a great and thrilling moment for me to have Lilly Elsie by my bedside. I know I longed for a photographer to take a picture of us, but no such person was hanging around our ward. She brought me lovely flowers and fruit and cigarettes and I know from that day I began to feel better. To me it was all like a wonderful fairy-tale, to be visited by Lilly Elsie. After she left, one of the nurses came up to me and asked: "Who was the wonderful lady who came to see you?" So when I told her it was Lilly Elsie, she nearly dropped the tray she was carrying in her hands with excitement. She said: "Not the Merry Widow?" "Yes," said I, "The Merry Widow!" The news of Lilly Elsie's visit to me spread like wildfire and the entire staff of nurses and great excitement followed. They all came to my bedside to talk to me about her and I became quite a famous patient - knowing such a famous person. I know I was given an egg ^{for}

for my supper that night. Lilly Elsie called a second time to see me and brought with her thousands of cigarettes for all the other patients in the ward. We divided them up equally. She also wanted to find me a comfortable room somewhere in Windsor, when I felt well enough to leave the Hospital, but no such room was available as Windsor was packed out. So I decided to go straight to my dear friend Margaret Grant at Hampton Court Palace. I wanted to go to Margarets anyway, as I felt certain sure, I would soon pick up my strength again at Hampton Court Palace, and Margaret was, of course, the perfect friend and said I was to come directly I could leave the Hospital. This pleased me a great deal, so I decided I leave the Hospital on Friday the first of November, and Lilly Elsie kindly arranged to send her car to bring me back to London first. The doctor saw me on that Friday morning and asked: Did I think I was well enough to leave. I am afraid I merely grunted at him and said I was going. A horrid patient he must have thought me. I was also able to give one of the other patients a lift back to London that Friday afternoon. He was a Busker and all he longed for ~~is~~ was to collect his accordian which someone was looking after at Hammersmith. He told me he would play it again that evening and hoped to enjoy a good steak for his dinner. That put ideas into my own head and - sure enough - I had a good steak myself at "The Good Intent" Restaurant in Chelsea. The next day I took a Green-Line bus down to Hampton Court. Margaret Grant pampered and spoilt me and fed me on delicious food and so in the charming atmosphere of her beautiful department, I soon began to pick up strength. After ten days, I left and went to stay with Agnes Joad at Bowlhead Green; she was living in a charming cottage and as I had always liked Agnes very much, I accepted her kind invitation and once again I was surrounded by much thought and kindness. Agnes lived a really rural life, dogs and cats everywhere and the cottage seemed miles from anywhere. By this time I was feeling so much better and staying with Agnes

was great fun. She took me out for a walk once, it nearly killed me, my legs were not worth anything as yet and the walk proved too much for me. So after that I strayed no further than the garden. It being the month of November, I did not stray very much in the garden either. I played Patience, read books and wrote letters and may in bed and thought a lot.

And so on looking back on my stay in the Hospital, I was deeply touched by the unbelievable kindness that was shown to me by so many friends, who knew what a narrow shave I had had. Letters kept on pouring in for me daily, so much so that ^{the} young soldier who sorted out the letters when they arrived for the ward I was in, used to bring the pile straight to my bed, as he always said: "I know, they're all mostly for you." And I am afraid he was right. All my friends who were living in the country invited me to stay with them, and Anton Dolin cabled me from New York to go anywhere I pleased in the country at his expense and by no means to return to London. And he, like many others, sent me presents of money. Very soon, I found people had sent me cheques to the extent of £76, to say nothing of numerous presents that kept arriving such as: eggs, butter, sweets and books and magazines. Twice a week two spinster-looking women visited our ward with a trolley of books and cigarettes for "the poor boys". They were so like Douglas Bing in drag. I found them extremely funny in their serious and kind way. This was their war-work and, of course, ~~they~~ ^{they} wore tailor-made tweeds. The radio never stopped blaring out - when one half of the ward wanted it on - the other half were nearly driven mad by it. We certainly had our laughs and our grumbles. The food sometimes being too awful and what came to me was always very tepid. Of course, such trivial things could not be helped. Most of us lying there in our beds had already gone through so much, that really nothing mattered very much. Everybody around was doing their best for us, and it was a good feeling to know we were alive, when you might so easily have been dead.

January
I returned to London early/1941 and the raids continued and very fierce they were indeed. My weight had gone down to 6 stone and ^I still felt pretty shaky on my legs. But my one thought was to be at work again. The country very soon bores me and as I love London, I felt great happiness to be back home again and in my own flat. I started work almost immediately at the Wellington Club, it was an early job, 5.30 to 7.30 p.m. However, soon I found out this was not enough work, so I took on another job to follow at Punch's Club 8 o'cl. till midnight. How I found the strength to cope with all this work - I really don't know, but I do know I was right to do it, for too much work at such a time, was infinitely better than too little. It was much better for me to be in a crowded club, surrounded by people at the piano than alone at home. My nerves, ^{had} fortunately, not been badly affected by all I had gone through, though my head ached a great deal when the guns banged away, but I knew that in time that would ease off. The theatres in London had put up a fine show, few that had closed, reopened and some played only Matinées. The Windmill Theatre never closed. Cinemas were going strong too. Entertainment was necessary. To go to a good show or film was a means of relaxation.

On Monday 31st March 1941 I started playing at the White Room Club and gave up my other two jobs and to this day the 20th May 1944 I am still there. The White Room Club is decorated with great taste, dead white walls and sumptuous red satin curtains. The colour scheme of red and white being most effective. Three glittering chandeliers hang from the ceiling and my piano has a perfect setting against the window and red curtains. I played on a white piano at first which though it looked good in the room, was not a good piano. Now I have been given a really excellent Broadwood Baby Grand and if I may say so, it is by far the best piano I have ever had in a Night Club during the 24 years I have played in the club world. The Club is frequented by many theatre folk and I have reme^t many old friends and made

many new ones. Many surprisses were happening as regards the war. Rudolf Hess had landed in Scotland, in the merry month of May. Then in June, Russia was attacked and with the end of the year early in December came the harrowing news of Pearl Harbour and Japan declaring war on Britain and the U.S.A. My thoughts flew at once to Singapore where my mother and sister and many relatives lived, and to the beautiful island of Penang where I was born. So the war had reached all corners of the globe and a madness for killing and destruction had beset the world. I am afraid my thoughts were uneasy regarding Malaya, Singapore and Penang. As to what happened in the Far East, we now all know. Perhaps the best book I have so far read on the matter is "MALAYAN POSTSCRIPT" by Ian Morrison. Some of my family escaped from Penang and Singapore, while others are prisoners, but up to this date, May 1944, I still have no news of my mother and sister. They are not in Singapore and rumour has it that they fled at the last minute by ship for some destination, so far unknown. It was indeed a sad morning when I opened the Daily Telegraph issue of 16th February 1942; The front page headline reads as follows: "Premier announces Fall of Singapore". a far reaching and heavy defeat!" This was indeed a sad blow to me! A part of the world I knew so well! And what would happen to all our prisoners amongst whom I knew so many?!

I had been trying to put on weight but all this worry seemed much worse to bear than anything I had gone through myself.

During the year of 1942 I saw a few good shows at the theatres and a few good films. What with the blackout and the scarcity of taxis, I very rarely went anywhere after my work at the Club at nights. Getting home was about all I was capable of. Early in the New Year I saw the excellent revue "UP AND DOING"; this was really a first-class show. The two stars being Leslie Henson and Binnie Hale, they were both in top-form and had excellent material and were supported by an excellent company. And I must say there has not been a better revue since. "Old Acquaintance", a play by John van Druten, I enjoyed very much. Edith Evand and Marian Spencer could not have been better in the leading parts.--In April 1942 Mrs. Niven who knew my people in Singapore called to have tea with me, she had escaped by ship just before Singapore fell. All she had to tell was highly interesting, so much so that I wished I had asked several people round to listen to her amazing story. Shortly afterwards an interesting article appeared in "THE SUNDAY EXPRESS" dated 26th April 1942 entitled "The White Women of Singapore". This same article might have been written by Mrs. Niven. It was much the same tragic story. The film star that greatly attracted me during the war years was Carmen Miranda; she was Hollywood's latest find and novelty. In technicolour she is indeed a gay personality and full of Brazilian vitality, and her songs generally very good. I daresay after the war she will visit us and appear at a night haunt such as the Cafe de Paris. If she does, her success is assured.

"Scoop-Revue" opened at the Vaudeville Theatre in April 1942, my song "Vienna will dance again" was an item. I regret to say this was a poor show and only ran a few weeks. I was highly amused when I read James Agate's book "Ego Five" to read the following extract from it:

April 25th, Friday 1942

"Dull Revue at Vaudeville" "Scoop". Vienna will

dance again" "It will, but to its own quick gay pulse and not the leaden-footed drone of a Palais de Danse Crowd."

I must say I felt highly pleased that in spite of Mr. Agate's dull evening at the Vaudeville, he at least found fit to mention my song; I more than agree with what Mr. Agate says regarding "Vienna will dance again". But surely Mr. Agate knows that once a composer sells a song, the producer and management can ~~just do~~ just what they like with it and the poor composer counts for nothing any more.

My friend Gerald James had recently got over here with the Canadian Air Force; it was most pleasant seeing him again, the past where he belonged in my life being a happy and delightful period of pre-war days. Gerald was a brilliant artist and sensibly realised his metier lay in America. He first got contracted to the M.G.M. Studios, but after a short time left them for the Walt Disney Studios. Much of Gerald's work appeared in the Film "Pinocchio". Gerald in Air Force ~~uniform~~ uniform looked a dazzling person of health and attractiveness. So it did not seem possible when after only a few months over here his plane crashed somewhere off the coast of Holland and I was phoned up the said and tragic news that he was no more. He was an only son - before him had lain a promising future. Over such a matter one feels completely at a loss to know how to be of any comfort to the parents.

"THE LITTLE FOXES" I saw in October 1942 at the Piccadilly Theatre. This was a play I much enjoyed, by Lillian Hellman. Miss Hellman's other play "THE WATCH ON THE RHINE" had been running for months in London and been a tremendous success. I had seen the "WATCH ON THE RHINE" and did not care for the play at all. The acting and production were both superb, but the play never got me and I am afraid I could not understand its success. "THE LITTLE FOXES" appealed to me enormously, but sad to say, it failed. I put its failure down entirely to the fact of the film which had played for many weeks in London prior to the stage production. Bette Davies was magnificent in the film and has tremendous popularity

in London, also the film ran for many weeks and everyone saw and talked about it.

The Tenant Management put the play on magnificently; the one set was a superb piece of work and Fay Compton as the star gave a most intelligent performance and looked quite beautiful. I felt indeed sad for Fay that this play should fail for her and yet in America Talulah Bankhead carried all before her in the leading role and established herself on Broadway for keeps.

During these war years revival of ^{old} musical comedies were happening all the time, but as I do not care for revivals I did not see many of them. I knew, of course, "THE MERRY WIDOW" was bound to happen sooner or later and I knew, of course, that I would have to see it. So, I left most of the other revivals alone.

I gave up one Sunday afternoon to see Noel Coward's film "IN WHICH WE SERVE" and I must say I found it immensely entertaining and gripping. Noel Coward is indeed our most vital and creative artist of our Entertainment World. Coward has undoubtedly given me more pleasure in the theatre than anyone else has during the last twenty-five years. Towards Christmastime, I went to a wonderful party, given by Francis and Dané Sullivan at their charming studio in Chelsea. The invitations were for lunch onwards. And onwards indeed it was. It was round about 7 o'clock in the evening when I finally left the party and even then it was difficult for me to go. A really good party, wonderful food and drinks and such good hosts. There must have been sixty people gathered together and it was pleasant to be able to forget the war for a little while and enjoy good company and good conversation. About this time I was also doing a bit of entertaining at the piano for the American Rainbow Corner Club. I must say the American Boys were wonderful to play for; they are highly musical and most appreciative. I also accompanied Binnie Hale for a ^{Hospital} big Charity ~~show~~ ^{concert}. I had about half an hour's rehearsal with Binnie before the concert began and when the time came for me to step on the stage, for her act to commence, I must say that I felt ill with nerves.

And would I get through her big programme satisfactorily or would I make a mess of everything? But Binnie is so simple, easy and confident and she very soon made me feel quite at home at the piano. And if I may say so, I ~~never~~ felt I had ~~ever~~ accompanied any artist better before. We did two shows and I must say they were the greatest pleasure in the world to do. I have always been an ardent admirer of Binnie's and felt very proud to have been her accompanist. I hope some day I shall have the pleasure to play for her again. She is a swell person, a great artiste and loved by everyone. And indeed a true daughter of a great and lovable father. I also saw John Gilgud's fine production of the Oscar Wilde play "The Importance of being Earnest". John Gilgud surrounded himself with an all star cast and what a treat this production was. The theatre always packed, and the house roaring with laughter. What a play and what an author! So this brought the year of 1942 to an end. Christmas came and one made the most of a wartime Christmas. I kept open house and furiously searched the shops for plum puddings and what I could get. Out came the Christmas tree with all its decorations and one gathered around oneself as many dear friends as possible.

The revival of "THE MERRY WIDOW" opened on the evening of 4th March, 1943 at His Majesty's Theatre under the management of Jack Hilton, ex-band-leader. As I was not able to attend the first performance, I went ~~to~~ at the earliest which was its first matinee. The Theatre was packed and I must say the feeling electric. I was all keyed-up to see my beloved "Merry Widow" once again. Madge Elliott was playing the widow and Cyril Richard the Prince Danilo, George Graves ^{was} ~~was~~ back in his original part of Baron Popoff. To me the entire production went flat. Madge Elliott was certainly a flamboyant and attractive widow, but sad to say she could not sing Lehar's beautiful music. Cyril Richard lacked the romantic charm that was necessary to the part of the Prince. And George Graves had become a bit too old. The chorus looked like a lot of dummy figures in Swan & Edgar's window, and merely ^{utterly} seemed to prop up the scenery and look/bored most of the time. Carol Raye, the new musical comedy find, played Frou-Frou. I found her much too competent and she seemed to be able to do everything at the same time and do them all much too well. Her frocks were hideous and with all ~~her~~ the unquestionable talent she displayed and the applause she got, I am afraid I was utterly disappointed with her performance. She seemed to lack charm and repose. I have seen Carol Raye again quite recently in another musical comedy and I must say this time I came away charmed with her exquisite dancing; about this musical comedy I will say more of later. This time "THE MERRY WIDOW" boasted of a revolving stage. Personally, I think, it gave the play little or no value, except in Act III. It was quite effective for the Maxime scenes. The famous Merry Widow Valse had to be performed on such a small space of stage that Madge Elliot and Cyril Richard had to turn it into a dull acrobatic dance. So the lovely swing of the valse and rhythm to the music seemed completely lost. The best singing came from Miss Nancy Evans and she looked charming as Natalie. Miss Evans possesses really a very charming contralto voice, but surely the part should have been sung by a soprano. Jolidon

was played by Charles Dornig who possessed a baritone voice and his should have been a pure tenor for the part. All this may seem of little consequence, for after all, there was a war on and to cast productions was by no means an easy matter. But poor Franz Lehar suffered badly, and all his gay and tuneful music had to be transposed into lower keys and hence much of its sparkle damaged. However, the big moment came in Act III at Maximes when The Darmora Ballet danced the Can-can. This rightly brought the house down. Lehar's famous "Gold and Silver" valse was also introduced for Carol Raye who was partnered by two young men who danced like sticks. Also the famous Lehar song "Gigolette" from the Three Graces operette was introduced for Carol Raye with very stupid new words by Eric Maschwitz. It was indeed a "Merry Widow" with many new frills. But by no means ~~such~~ an improved Merry Widow. It ran only a few months and I feel it will never be revived again. Somehow or other, it all struck a note of being dead - quite dead. But Lehar's beautiful music will live for ever. On the programme I noticed that the word choreography appeared by Robert Helpman. I looked in vain for something denoting this word - but alas, I found nothing.

The actress who was undoubtedly making a stir in London was Miss Sonja Dresdel. She was appearing in a revival of "Hedda Gabler" at the Westminster Theatre. I must say I much enjoyed this revival and found Miss Dresdel to be all that the critics were saying about her. Here indeed was an emotional actress possessing ~~tremendous~~ tremendous range. Perhaps what I enjoyed most in the theatre was Noel Coward's rapturous comedy "Present Laughter" at the Haymarket Theatre. The packed theatre rocked with laughter from start to finish. This was indeed Noel Coward at his best.

About this time Françoise Rosay the famous French film star arrived over here. The Daily Telegraph printed an article by her "French Stars aided Nazis", actress's indictment. I personally thought this to be the height of bad taste on the part of Françoise Rosay; as she had been fortunate enough to have escaped out of occupied France, she might at least have left well alone and not

been so bitter regarding her ~~French~~ fellow French artistes who had to remain behind. Is her word sufficient enough to condemn those she indicted as collaborators with the Germans? I personally don't think so. Anyway, Miss Rosay was given a great welcome by British Artistes and she was soon working on a film called "Halfway House".

During August came the sad news of the death of Owen Nares; here was an actor who possessed infinite charm and good looks. I had always been an admirer of Mr. Nares; his voice was always a pleasure to listen to and he gave much to the theatre that will always be remembered. During the last war he was the matinee idol of the theatre and he starred with Lily Elsie at the Palace Theatre in a musical play called "Pamela". I did not see this production as I was in Penang and Singapore at the time, but his greatest success came when he starred with Doris Keane in "Romance". Charm is a rare quality to possess and certainly Owen Nares possessed it.

"Sunny River" at the Piccadilly Theatre, unfortunately, did not succeed. I personally thought this a charming musical play. Evelyn Laye as the star looked her loveliest and sang her best; perhaps the best song of the year was in this production "Beyond the Winding Road". This song was really beautifully sung by Evelyn Laye and Denis Noble. However, Evelyn Laye was very soon again to delight us in Pantomime as principal boy in "Cinderella" at His Majesty's Theatre. She was by far the best "boy" I had seen for a good many years and certainly one of the loveliest I had ever seen. She looked a dream of loveliness for the children to remember. By far the best musical show of the war years came to the Palladium "The U.S. Army presents Irving Berlin's all soldier show; "THIS IS THE ARMY". Now here indeed was a really great show. I went twice to see it and though I had to stand each time, I might have been sitting in an armchair, the whole show went with a tremendous swing. Lovely catchy music, wonderful dancing and clean humour all woven together with much speed and style.

One came out of the theatre in a complete state of exhilaration. The applause was deafening and non-stop all through the show. Then came The Lunts in "There shall be no night". I must say I enjoyed this play very much, it rung me emotionally and of course I wept copiously over many parts. They are certainly great performers and most interesting always to watch. The year ended with the good news of the sinking of the German battleship "THE SCHARNHORST".

"Sweet and Low", the revue which started in 1943, ~~was~~ ^{is} now presenting its second edition "Sweeter and Lower" in 1944. This revue brought to the fore the brilliant comedienne Hermione Gingold. The Gingold I had seen a few times before the war in various clever Norman Marshall "Gate Theatre" Revues and then again in that smart revue "Spread it abroad". However it is during these war years that the Gingold has come into her own. Today she is by far our finest intimate revue comedienne. Her pungent wit - her sense of the macabre and her pleasing musical voice, when she wants to use it, and her at times eccentric appearance, all combined to make her quite unique in the field of revue. She is indeed "something for the boys" and seems to please the present generation. And I find the Americans speak equally highly of her. In the revue "Rise above it" the Gingold and Baddeley shared honours (the two Hermiones). This was by no means a first-class show, but the two Hermiones kept it running for months. Then came "Sweet and Low" and the Gingold carried all before her. "Sweeter and Lower", the second edition, is even better than the first. In this the Gingold is supported by Henry Kendall. Henry Kendall has always been an excellent comedian and a finished artist. During 1943 and 1944 London seemed more than ever crowded with American troops. The White Room Club, where I work, ~~was~~ ^{is} full of them and I have nothing but praise to hand out to them. They possess great charm and much thought and kindness - excellent manners and certainly know how to take their liquor. I ~~found~~ ^{find} them most talented; many ~~would~~ ^{can} play the piano exceedingly well and those who sing have charming voices. There ~~was~~ ^{is} no silly shyness about them, they want to play and to sing. They have been indeed a great tonic to me - they are musically minded and wonderful in their appreciation of my playing. They most certainly brought zest to my work and I have made many charming friends amongst them. There seems scarcely an evening that Erna and I did not leave the Club with some parcel. A present or presents from our American

friends. I have now been over three years at the White Room Club and if I may say so, it is quite one of the nicest clubs in London. Though the Club is by no means in a smart street, once you are through its door, you find yourself in a most charming room of excellent taste. Dead-white walls, red satin curtains, three gay chandeliers and many mirrors. The whole atmosphere is pleasing and gay and the room is always charmingly decorated with beautiful flowers. Erna, who runs the Bar, is by far the best at her job that I have come across in all my years of club work. She is certainly worth her weight in gold to the management, but I doubt if she ^{label} gets it. Several plays I have seen this year - 1944 - deserve mention. "The rest is silence", a George Black production, unfortunately was a failure, but I am afraid it deserved to be, as it was a poor play. However, I am glad I saw this play, if only because of Miss Ann Todd who played the lead. It was exciting to see such a beautiful creature as Miss Todd, for how rare indeed beautiful women seem to be where the stage is concerned these days. Miss Todd possesses a lovely speaking voice and can make beautiful gowns mean something. I trust it won't be long before we see Miss Todd in a new play and I sincerely hope this time her great beauty will be rewarded by a better play.

"Uncle Harry" was surely a perfect production with magnificent acting from the entire cast. But I feel compelled to congratulate Michael Redgrave as "Uncle Harry", his was an outstanding performance. London was at this time agog with murder plays and "Uncle Harry" was by far the best murder. Sonja Dresdel was also very busy in a big way with murder in "This was a woman". This was by no means a good play, but I must say, it was entirely saved by Miss Dresdel's "terrifics". The love racket was quite a delightful musical, complete nonsense of course, but full of laughs and great fun. This time Carol Raye greatly charmed me; she sang well and danced quite beautifully. The show also boasted of another fine artist who we are bound to hear more often in the future: Miss Valerie Tandy. She possesses all the ingredients of star-quality.

On the morning of Tuesday 6th June came the thrilling and exciting news of our invasion of Normandy. I was not quite awake when my telephone rang and a voice asked me to turn on my radio at once. I, of course, turned on my radio and while I was having my breakfast, listened to all the exciting news being given over the air. How exciting it all made ~~me~~ me feel! That at last the invasion had taken place, and how for months past we had done nothing else but talk about and wondered when the great day would come along. And now it had happened! I know I felt sad thinking of our lads, what they must go through and how many of them would not return. How easy for me to be excited about it all, as I lay comfortably in bed having my breakfast, when so much sorrow must come to so many homes! And until the war ends, the suffering must grow greater and greater. London went strikingly empty, leave was stopped and Piccadilly looked deserted. The radio became the big attraction. Then one evening my young friend Ronald Miller gave me seats for his play "ZERO HOUR"; it had just opened at the Lyric Theatre. This play was a fine and interesting work by such a young author, who also acted charmingly in it himself. The play had a magnificent and exciting end, our invasion, so this seemed the right moment for it to have opened in London. It had good Press, especially by Mr. Beverly Baxter in the Evening Standard. Then suddenly the flying bombs started coming ~~flying~~ over London. Here indeed was a new and eerie terror struck at us! Our guns over London were of little use to protect us, as these bombs had to burst anyway. They came by day and by night, so even the blackout seemed useless. Many theatres had to close down, and "ZERO HOUR" having had just a week's run, was one of the first to close its doors. However, Ronald Miller is a young man we will hear plenty of in the near future. He has vision, vitality, and an excellent sense of the theatre, besides being an extremely charming young person.

London began evacuating once more, as tremendous damage was being caused by these robot bombs. Those who had to work and stay put, showed the same admirable courage as during the blitz. I remained in my top flat as usual, but only when immediate danger

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was overhead would I run downstairs for safety. The tubes became full of people sheltering there once again, and life took on an abnormal aspect as before.

In spite of all the horror confronting us, the war news was so good on all fronts, with the Russians sweeping all before them and our own splendid progress in Normandy and Italy! People started betting on the end of the war. Then more excitement came over the radio when on the 20th of July some ~~was~~ German General threw a bomb at Hitler and Germany seemed stalked with terror!

Then came the sad news of the death of Rex Whistler on active service in Normandy. Rex Whistler was indeed a great loss for the theatre world for he lent great enchantment to every production entrusted to him. His last work in the theatre was in the Robert Donat production of "THE IDEAL HUSBAND" by Oscar Wilde. Here his decor and costumes were indeed something to remember. The fussy period of overcrowded drawingrooms, of hick-nacks, antimacassars and aspidistras - all so beautifully set off by the beautiful costumes of the period. This was altogether a memorable production which brought Robert Donat a well deserved first success as theatrical manager. The little Westminster Theatre was packed for many months, but ~~was~~ alas also came to an end because of the flying bombs, and like so many other productions went on tour.

At the moment, the theatres, with a few exceptions, are doing poor business and if everybody felt as I do, they would be completely empty, as I have no desire to see plays or films for the time being. The excellent war news is holding all our attention and the fall of Paris seems imminent any day! So what indeed could cheer our hearts more?! - 19th August, 1944.

Perhaps people have been an obsession in my life, so I am happy to say I have earned for myself wonderful friends. During these war years, so many of my dear friends were scattered in various parts of the world, so those who remained near me became very precious indeed. Fortunately, I am fond of letter writing so I was kept busy not losing contact with those who had left the country. I seem to be writing airmail letters or airgraphs to all parts of the world. How we used to telephone each other after horrific nights of blitz and how often I felt "Thank God for Marie le Butt", darling Marie that I could run to at a moment's notice, always sympathetic and kind. And how grateful I feel to her for those innumerable cups of tea and chatter in the afternoons, for such tasty lucheons, food so beautifully prepared and served by herself. Then there was Katharine North up to the hilt in uniform and war work, but always to be relied upon. Katharine whose eyes always shone with love and kindness. Mischa de la Motte was a constant visitor at my flat, he would arrive for coffee in the mornings with a bunch of lovely roses or an egg or two and perhaps a super onion in his pocket, but ^{he} always ~~seemed~~ seemed to have something for me. Poor Mischa, always so anxious about his work. Then he would do a run through with his voice on my piano, his top notes would sound quite beautiful, his coloratura perfect. ~~But Mischa~~ He would always be in a perpetual state of nerves regarding his work. However, work did come to him and as the war years went by; more and more work came. His many visits to the Bagatelle, London's smartest restaurant only too clearly proved him to be a cabaret entertainer of great ability. Being a true artist, he was always so eager and helpful to other artists. Through Mischa I met Sonja Dresdel and to my great pleasure, he brought Eva Turner to tea at my flat one afternoon. Mischa will always be a unique personality and someone to whom I shall always be devoted. Perhaps too seldom have I seen my friend Turia Campbell during these war years, but Turia has been very busy with her work at the B.B.C. and has probably been wanted everywhere by too many other people who also love her as dearly as I do. I literally purr with happiness when I find myself in her

excellent company. My friend Eleanor Orde was mostly out of London with her two children, but on her occasional visits to London, we always met. Eleanor possesses a great gift for friendship and I am happy to count her as one of my very special friends. If anything seemed important to me, it was most certainly my pre-war friends of many years standing. Anton Dolin's mother would pay me periodical visits from her cottage in the country; she enjoyed a fling of films and theatres in London and I always enjoyed her visits. Her mind was young and active and her energy almost too much for me. She was never idle and as one might say "Up with the lark", getting me my breakfast before my maid Milly turned up, then out shopping and probably before the day was out, had seen two films. She seemed to scuttle in and out of the house like a two-year-old.

I would pay occasional visits to Poppy Vande at her house in Hampstead. With Poppy the conversation always turned on to "Ballet"; she certainly knows her ballet better than anyone else in London. She would read me extracts from the book she was writing on "Ballet". Always so good and perhaps frighteningly true. Poppy, who lives on "Bengers Baby Food" and smokes innumerable cigarettes. She will yet astound the ballet-public in this country when I pray and hope her book will duly be published. She possesses immense literary gifts and a book on her knowledge of ballet is what is badly needed today, where a vast public is growing and a waster amount of ballet punk is published. On one of my visits to Poppy, I had the great pleasure to meet Lord Alfred Douglas. I must say, I like Lord Alfred very much indeed. Here was I meeting and talking to a man, I had heard and read so much about, though he is today a man in his seventies, he still possesses great beauty and a lovely quality. The two things that struck me most about him were his hands which expressed unquestionable artistic talent and his feet, which might have been those of a dancer. Poppy kindly secured an autographed book of his poems for me. I came away very happy from this meeting. His gentle and charming manner will always remain a memory for me. May Hallett, one of my oldest friends, came hurtling back from Cairo. She had been everywhere in the Middle East for two years, entertain-

ing the troops for ENSA. May, in smart uniform, peeked hat and all, would have so much to tell me of her interesting work with ~~with~~ our troops, her perilous journeys, her handbag full of snapshots, which I, of course, had to look at. Shortly, May in her 67th year, goes out to Normandy to once again act for our troops there. She has been awarded the African Star and well she deserves it. Her friendship for me has always been terrific and vital; her worldly possessions consist of one trunk, her clothes are a wonderful assortment of nothing that goes with anything, but the result she achieves is magnificent. one might almost say, she is a cross between Leslie Henson and Nellie Wallace.

Perhaps one of my most loyal friends during these war years has been young Brian Sheridan. I have known Brian since he was a mere youth in his early teens. He has always led an amazing life of freedom and I can't think when he ever went to school, but I can remember him kicking around Montmartre Night Clubs in Paris at a very early age. At the beginning of the war he occasionally entertained at Night Clubs here in London. He did a strip-tease act and impersonations. The strip-tease was entirely tease and no strip, and his Carmen Miranda impersonation exceedingly good. Then suddenly he got the war fever and announced to me that he had joined the Navy for seven years. So it was the uniform of a sailor he chose for himself. Brian possesses astonishing good looks and he most certainly did justice to his uniform. He has seen much active service and I must say that these war years have had no effect on him whatsoever, he still retains much boyish charm and certainly does not know the meaning of the word 'fear'. During his many leaves in London, he never fails to call on me and drink innumerable cups of tea at my flat. Brian is a popular young man and will find friends amongst people in all walks of life. He once told me how kind a tart was to him and that he always visited her for a chat and a cup of tea on his leaves. Brian, always the play-boy, possesses a real and wholesome talent for enjoyment and he worships Frances Day.

Bessie Love I have seen too little of during these war years. Before the war I used to meet her over at Anton Dolin's studio and perhaps at other parties. I always greatly admired her and during these war years I have occasionally passed her in Knightsbridge or Piccadilly, and just to win a smile from her, meant immense pleasure to me, for she indeed possesses a million-dollar-smile, a smile that sends you on your way/^{happy}for the rest of the day. What a rare quality indeed to possess! Bessie Love who seems to have quite retired from the screen and stage, will always be remembered for her enchanting performance in the talkie "BROADWAY MELODY". She also possesses ~~xxx~~ the magic gift of looking incredibly young.

One of the pleasantest of new friendships I made during the war years was with Michael Redgrave and his beautiful and charming wife known on the stage as Rachel Kempson. Michael Redgrave off the stage possesses a great gentleness of character, easy to know and always interesting to talk to. He seems to leave the theatre behind him once he goes out of the stage-door and does not talk eternal 'shop' as most theatre artists do in their private life. With all the successes he has attained both in films and theatre, he possesses infinite modesty. He has a fine constructed attitude in his conversation and I am happy to say I have always felt complete harmony when in his company. Quietness is a great asset and one always feels a calm where Michael Redgrave is concerned. He and his wife are both so nice to look at, for as a I play the piano night after night, and I do nothing but view people from it, how few and far between are those "lovely to look at".

I went to several good parties given by Jeanne Stewart. ^{STUART?} Jeanne always looking so exquisite and cool and such a perfect hostess. Her beautiful Park-Lane flat, a mass of wonderful flowers - and such good food. A great pity her beauty is not more exploited in the theatre, for really lovely women are scarce these days on the stage and she is indeed a gift to the expert dress designers of today. She was indeed the glamour spot in "QUIET WEEK-END" at Wyndham's Theatre.

All through these war years, letters ~~passed~~ ^{poured} in to me from my great friend Anton Dolin in America. He was achieving great success there with the Ballet Theatre Company and because of the drabness of my own life here, his letters proved balm to my tired mind. To read of all the interesting people he was meeting over there and of successful new ballets produced by his Company was indeed a tonic to me, considering all I was going through over here. It was wonderful to know that there was a gay spot somewhere on the map, that the war had not touched, where people were living normal lives, eating and sleeping well and had no black-out or sirens.

On the 22nd of July 1944 I received a tragic letter from the Colonial Office telling me of the death of my mother and sister at an Internment Camp in Palembang, Sumatra. I believe they escaped from Singapore three days before it fell and the ship they were on, was apparently captured by the Japanese, and the letter goes on to say that they died in 1942. What their plight must have been like, how they died and what they died of, I, of course, know nothing, nor is it likely I am ever to know. All this presented an ugly picture to my mind and to think it took two years for this news to reach me. My mother being at the time 85 years old, I naturally, never expected her to survive and be alive at the end of the Japanese war, but my sister being 30 years younger, I had great hopes of. Knowing my mother as I do, I feel certain of one thing that whatever her plight was, she would show great courage. Her timidity would arise to great fortitude. Through the many storms my own mind went through, I tried to think that their end came peacefully and quickly, that theirs was "the peace that passeth all understanding".

1944 was fast coming to an end, important war events were happening at great speed. Towards the end of the year, on Christmas Eve Gwen Farrar died suddenly, another link of the past gone. Dear Gwen what fun she was and what a fine brain she possessed! The famous act of "Blaney and Farrar" will never be forgotten. Two fine artists that topped the bill wherever they appeared. Gwen, the quaint essence of comedy and exquisite cellist combined with a chic and unusual appearance. Her house in Chelsea was always full of people dropping in, where wonderful parties took place. Looking back, it all seems a jumble of complete crazyness in the midst of much chaos there was always a new show being "cooked up", or some unfortunate person being "wound", where we would laugh a lot and at other times we would be desperately annoyed. Like all fine double-acts, this fine combination came to an end when Nora Blaney married. Nora Blaney was the only counter-part of Gwen Farrar. Many attempts on Gwen's part to create a new act somehow or other always failed.

The early part of 1945 was shadowed for me, for early in January my friend Edward Cooper died. Here indeed had been a fine talent, in my opinion, completely wasted. I had known Edward for 22 years and had been instrumental in the start of his stage and musical career. He was a fine pianist and composed beautiful melodies and wrote excellent lyrics. I felt positive that Edward would very quickly rise to stardom, but sad to say he always seemed to fail me. Yet he did much fine work in the theatre and will always be remembered for his amusing piano and singing act, for which he composed all his own material. But I expected him to go much further. There was always that something that was ungettable about Edward. He seemed to waste his talent by the wayside, a disillusioned tragic person. In many Charlot-Revues he proved the most excellent "compère". I firmly believe Charlot thought he had found a new star in Edward Cooper, but Edward wasn't having any.

I saw much of my dear old friend Gwen Otter during these war years. I lunched constantly at her house and she occasionally came to me. Dear Gwen and now so deaf, and though she has bought every instrument to help her with her hearing, she seemed to have them always scattered about on the floor, anywhere and everywhere except on her ears. In fact, dear Gwen seemed to go out of her way to make it as difficult as possible for her many friends to cope with her deafness. She appeared to almost enjoy her deafness.

Evelyn Laye during February opened in "The Three Waltzes" at the Princes Theatre. She gave a remarkable performance, as actress, comedienne and vocalist. In fact, as never before, she carried the whole show on her shoulders, looking - if possible - more beautiful than ever. During March Lord Alfred Douglas, the eminent scholar and poet died, and in April came the sudden tragic news of the death of President Roosevelt. Berlin was being besieged by Russian guns and air onslaughts and in February Budapest fell to the Russians and during the month of March we captured Cologne. One was indeed living at an exciting speed. Our news bulletins over the radio became more and more exciting to listen to.

On the 3rd of May came the amazing headlines that Hitler and Goebbels had committed suicide and on Tuesday 9th May came the heartening news the whole world was waiting for, that Germany had capitulated, and as one American ^{paper} aptly put it "Germany quits". London went mad with excitement and Buckingham Palace was nightly thronged by crowds to see our much beloved King and Queen and the Princesses. It was indeed a thrill to see the floodlighting again over many of our famous buildings. Our beloved Winston Churchill was also being mobbed and cheered by the crowds everywhere he went. At long last one felt one could breathe freely again. The two dictators had brought about their own ends - the destruction of their countries. In my scrapbook I possess a most humiliating picture dated 1st May showing Mussolini and his mistress Claretta Petacci hanging head downwards having been killed and strung up

by his own people - spat at and abused. So much for one dictator. That Hitler committed suicide I feel completely sure of, with Russians about to enter Berlin, a poison pill was his only way out. That his remains were burnt and so left no trace is to me more than obvious. By that time the Hitler Myth had gone, no one much less the Germans cared what became of their Fuehrer. So ends the lives of two dictators!

Londoners turned out in thousands to see the horrors of the German Concentration Camps at Buchenwald and Belsen as shown on the films. I naturally went to see for myself the horrors that one had heard and read so much about. That the sights one saw were even more horrible than it was humanly possible to imagine, was to put it mildly. The sight of the German Women Guards at the Belsen Camp nearly made me vomit with rage, I felt I wanted to rush at them with a poisoned knife. What sort of women were these, and what type were they that they could sink so low?! And how was it going to be possible to punish such people adequately?

In France the Pétain trial was the main topic towards the end of July. Personally I thought the whole trial a horrible piece of bad taste. The 89-year old Marshal of France was sentenced to death but was commuted by General de Gaulle to life imprisonment. The various politicians of France made the most of the fact that someone must be blamed for the fall of their country and so they entrusted Pétain to carry the baby. They forgot that this time France had lost the war before she even started it. They were a rotten lot these politicians, it was rather a case of the pot calling the kettle black and each one saving his own neck.

The next excitement was the sweeping majority the Socialist Party gained at the General Election. On Friday 27th July Churchill resigned and Atlee became Premier. That was certainly a shock to my system. I was whole-heartedly for Churchill and the Conservative Government he stood for. I felt ashamed that he had been so ruthlessly thrown aside, the war he had so magnificently fought for us, not only by his fine speeches - but by his valour, he shared the dangers of war with all our Forces. Churchill at his age faced all the dangers for the people he so grandly represented. Never has there been a finer and truer statesman to this country. That he was not

allowed to finish the World War will always be a sore point with me. However, I feel ^{that} in Churchill and Eden we have an opposition to the Government which is something to be hopeful about. Give me always eloquent men of birth and breeding to govern my country.

On Sunday 29th July one read in the Sunday papers of the death of Margot Asquith. As one caption in the newspapers put it "One of the most remarkable women of the age died yesterday". I have always been a great admirer of Margot Asquith and found everything she wrote well worth reading. Her autobiography published in 1920 was highly interesting and during the war years she brought out another book called "Off the Record", which I also much enjoyed. I met Margot Asquith only twice and on each occasion found her most interesting to talk to. One of our meetings was at a fork luncheon quite the most uncomfortable and miserable way of eating a meal. At this reception we found ourselves opposite each other; I toying with some food at the end of a fork while Margot Asquith was making a determined bid to eat a real meal, however uncomfortable, and difficult it was. She informed me that it was necessary for her to eat a good meal in the middle of the day, so she bravely forged ahead. Whoever invented the idea of fork luncheons I can't think, but thank God they soon disappeared, for one generally gave up and went home bad tempered and hungry.

On Thursday 9th of August the news came through that Russia was at war with Japan and a few days after that the atom bomb fell on Hiroshima to be soon followed by another on Nagasaki. This new weapon quickly put an end to Japan and on the 15th of August the newspaper and Radio gave out the news of Japan's unconditional surrender. "THE WORLD WAR IS OVER". It all seemed almost too good to be true. London cheered "its head off" once more and more flags were hung out. So maybe

the atom bomb will turn out to have been a Godsent mercy. So let us hope that because science has reached such heights during this World War, it will be used for the benefit ~~of mankind~~ and not for the destruction of mankind.

Soon after World Peace, Noel Coward rang up the curtain at the Piccadilly Theatre with his new revue "SIGH NO MORE". In my opinion, a grand show. It was a joy to listen to Coward's fine music, the best we have had in revue for many a long day. The show possesses the usual Noel Coward touch and if I may say so - compared to the trashy musicals in town - it has breeding. The First Night audience turned up in elegant style, it was a joy to see smart evening gowns, expensive furs, flowers and jewels once again. An audience that showed its appreciation of peace and a Noel Coward First Night.

London, 15th September, 1945.