

## **Reminiscences of William George Herbert Cross From 1860 to 1882 (Written in the 1930s) To My Dear Children**

It has always been a source of profound regret to me and I believe to my brothers and sisters, that we knew so little of the history of our Father and Mother. To avoid any such regrets on your part should you, as I imagine, be interested in knowing something of my past, I have decided to try and give you a more or less full account of my life, provided I am spared long enough and am able to do so, during the intervals between writing to my numerous absent ones.

To begin with I will give you an idea as to who my parents were. On my Father's side I can only go back as far as my grandfather, George Cross, who owned a flourishing drapery, haberdashery and tailoring business in Winslow, Bucks, where my father was born. He also owned seven farms all of which he managed himself, so he must have been a pretty energetic man. He married three times, my Father being by his first wife, by whom he had also his eldest son William and his daughter Ann. By his second wife he had no issue, but by the third, a Miss Fountain, he had George, Mary, Walter and Charlotte.

William went to Australia during the gold boom and after a time his letters ceased and nothing definite was heard further of him. George also went to Australia after grandfather's death, tried sheep farming, got married and drifted around for a time, settling finally in New Zealand, where he left a family of several girls. He never returned to England, but some of the (old) girls have been over. Uncle Edgar knows them. Walter went to sea, but didn't do well and later married a doubtful kind of girl and started living in grand style. How he did it was not apparent, but he had a fine house at Maidenhead and pulled it off for some time. Finally he went too far, forged a cheque and I believe got jailed. Later Aunt Ann sent him to Australia with his family. I never heard anything about him afterwards.

When a young man my Father who had always wished to take holy orders, had trouble with his father, who wanted him to follow on in the business. Finally his father kicked him out and told him to do what he liked. He went to London, got a small day job and studied at the London University at night until he took his degree and was ordained. I understand that his first curacy was at Buckingham, where he married a Miss Sarah Jones. They had been sweethearts since about six years old. By her he had my sister Amy, but Sarah died later.

About 1858 he went to Charlbury, near Oxford, where my Uncle Samuel Russell was vicar, and there he met my Mother who was keeping her brother's house. They were married in about 1859 and in 1860, June 15th I was born. About a year later Father was offered the living of Mursley, Bucks, within four miles of Winslow. Here my brothers and sisters were all born and the family lived there until Father died in November 1884.

My mother was a grandchild of John Russell the artist, who was of a Guildford family, and youngest but one of Thomas Russell's children. A brief history of the Russell's is given in the attached cuttings from The Magazine of Art. Of her brothers and sisters, Samuel was, as mentioned Vicar of Charlbury, Jane married to Dr. Mainwaring Sherlock who lived at Chertsey on Thames, John who went to Australia, where he died about 1886, Hannah married to Henry Webb of Wimbledon, mother of Beatrice and Winifred, and Thomas who, like his father was a schoolmaster and of whom I shall have to talk later.

My first real recollection is of the wedding day of the Prince of Wales (Edward VII) to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. We had a little pony carriage and that day my Father drove Mother, Amy and me to Winslow. I remember perfectly when we entered the Market Square seeing all the flags flying and when we went into the house someone pinned a white rosette with the Prince of Wales's feathers on my chest. That was March 10th, 1863.

By the way when Auntie Maude came out to San Juan, she brought the very same strap with which Father used to strap Amy and me to the back seat of the carriage. It was then still in good condition, but the heat here dried it out and we didn't take care of it. That was a good piece of leather as she came in 1897. It came on one of her trunks.

One day my little dog "Dash", which used always to run behind or along side the carriage, stopped suddenly to drink out of a puddle, and before Father could pull up, the wheel was over him killing him instantaneously. It impressed me greatly.

When Father received the living of Mursley the church was in very poor condition and as soon as he was able he

decided to have it thoroughly restored. It dated back some six centuries, being of gothic style. After some years of hard work raising funds by one means or another he completed the work and the church was reopened in May 1867. For months before my Mother was coaching me in reading the psalms, hymns, etc., as I was to be in the choir. It was a great occasion for the village and there was a grand tea and games on our lawn in the afternoon.

That same year I went to boarding school at Brackley Nots. where my Uncle Tom (Thomas Russell) was headmaster. I learned to skate that winter when we had six weeks of continuous frost in November and December. My recollections of that school were not very happy ones. The boys were chiefly farmers' sons and were rather a rough lot, although amongst the boarders later on there were some nice fellows, Dick Smith and Jack Buckeridge and others. Unfortunately my Aunt July (Judy we called her) was a very unsympathetic person, which didn't add to my comfort or enjoyment of life there

On one occasion Father sent me a bob and I went out after dinner to buy a pocket knife, returning just in time for afternoon school. We had arithmetic that day and I took my new acquisition to sharpen my slate pencil. My neighbour of course asked me where I got it and I turned to answer, still sharpening my pencil. The man who sold it told me "It would never fear any man's bread and cheese." It did not fear my finger for at that moment owing to my looking at the questioner, it took of nearly the whole of my thumbnail. I tied my handkerchief tightly around it and it soon stopped bleeding. However, before going to bed Aunt sent for me to see the wound. The rag was stuck tight to the place but, instead of soaking it in warm water to remove it she gave it a pull which nearly made me faint with the pain and reopened the wound. The new nail came shorter than the old one and it is still noticeably so.

One Sunday we got wet as it was raining when we came from church and she told me to put on my slippers which were very thin. As luck would have it, after Uncle said grace for dinner and we were all standing outside the form, someone tilted the table over and it fell right on my toes. A couple of days later a farmer boy running at play trod on one of the injured toes with his hob-nailed boots. When I tried to take off my boot at bedtime it was stuck and the under-master had to pull it for me. It was stuck with blood. I have been unfortunate and both my big toenails are wrecks from so many blows.

A man who lived some three houses from the school was a bit of a crank and had adorned the wall of his garden with busts of famous men, which the fellows dubbed Walsh's graven images! One night someone in the senior dormitory suggested: " Say fellows lets go and throw down old Walsh's graven images," so they got out through the window and knocked them all down. My wasn't there a rumpus the next morning. Our next door neighbour was a cranky old photographer who had his studio next to the school, with a glass roof. One of our amusements was to shoot stones with our catapults over the school roof to drop on his glass. Of course he got furious. One day this happened just as we were going to class and he rushed with a bucket of water and threw it into the high window just over the headmaster's desk. Fortunately he hadn't come in.

There was a high broad wall between his garden and the playground and his wife had some tortoises. One of our amusements was to watch for them and drop a big stone on them which buried them in the soft soil. When he saw a ball go over he would watch for the boy who dropped (rom the wall to get it, and try to catch him with his stick, but at the end of the garden the wall was very low and although there was a drop of about six feet on the other side we used to rush down the path and jump the wall before he could catch us. His wife was a dressmaker. One night the boys went outside his window and said loud enough for him to hear: "Let's go and ring old Whitepump's bell." They had tied a string to the bell and to a lamppost opposite. The old man went to wait for the ring to catch the offender, but grabbed one of his wife's customers who ran into the string. His name was Blackwell, hence Whitepump! The poor old fellow's life was by no means peaceable.

This was Magdalene College School at Brackley, Northamptonshire, not Notts as I said before.

In 1870 Uncle Tom was offered a school which was to be established at Westward Ho, N. Devon. Several of the Brackley boarders including myself, went there. Uncle Edgar who was then seven, also went. Westward Ho is a delightful seaside place, about three miles from Bideford and one from Northam and overlooks the Northam Burrows and Bideford Bay, with Lundy Island in the distance. The first golf course in England was on the Burrows and it would be difficult to find a better one. The club gave us leave to play there, so my first experience of golf was at ten years old.

The school was all right at first, but Uncle got into financial difficulties later on and things didn't go on well. Finally he had to give it up and started on his own in another house. At first there were about a dozen boys all boarders, then at the new place only about six. From there he had to move into two other houses going down the hill and finally started up again at Bideford.

We finally left him in 1873, if I remember right. The Pebble Ridge is one of the marvels of Westward Ho. It is an immense pile of pebbles thrown up by the sea, which keeps the sea from flooding the Burrows. It is about a mile long and I should say about fifteen or twenty feet high formed of pebbles of all sizes. There was a sea water bath where we all learnt to swim and although we used often to bathe in the sea, it was often very rough and near the river the currents were very dangerous.

Our assistant master at one time was Henry Meyrick, later married to Aunt Mary Cross. His brother went to spend a few days at the school (he was an old Brackley boy) and went bathing with some friends. The current was too strong for him and in spite of their attempts to help him he was drowned. He was buried at Northam and after Henry left I used to take a wreath to his grave every Saturday afternoon religiously.

One holiday Uncle took us all to Clovelly, a beautiful old herring fishing village, built on the side of the cliff, the street being in steps, so only horses or donkeys can travel it. We went on foot along the seafront which was mostly rocks or stones and very tiring" I imagine it was about twelve miles. We returned in the evening by road. When we were at Bideford my delight was to go to the shipyards to see the ships building, small coastal boats mostly barque or brig rigged.

After leaving Uncle's school we were at home for about a year .I think it was about the end of that time that my adventure at Salden Pond occurred. This was not an ordinary pond, but was large and deep. We had had several nights of frost and thought the ice would be safe, so Edith, Edgar and I set out for Salden. After walking a bit I found that one of my skate straps was missing, so went back to look for it, telling them not to go on the ice till I arrived. However they tried it and found it all right on one side, but there was a line which showed a difference in the thickness of the ice, probably due to the wind preventing it from forming there as soon as in the protected parts .They said that when striking it with their hands it starred, which should have been enough, but foolishly I decided to try by making a slight curve over the line. Immediately the ice bent so that I couldn't make the curve but overpassed the line some ten or twelve yards before it gave way. As I was going fast, as soon as my feet went in I was thrown full length over the surface, which saved me from going under, and broke a large hole. I tried to raise myself onto the ice but each time it broke. I managed to break my way to the line and thought I was safe, but down I went again and by that time I was feeling a bit exhausted. I was wearing a heavy Ulster down to my ankles and a long thick scarf, and the way the weight of these soaked in water was enormous.

There are two farms near the pond and my Father happened to be making his monthly visit to the owners that afternoon. He knew we were skating and as he was going up the hill overlooking the place he heard the ice cracking and ran to the top, getting there just in time to see me fall. He ran to the edge and was just going to tread on the ice when I saw him and warned him just in time.

My position was desperate, but fortunately I remembered that Edgar had his long thick scarf and told Edie to get it and throw me the end while lying on her tummy as far off as possible. I then raised myself on to the ice with her help, she sliding her body backwards to keep the distance between us until I was several yards from the hole. Next I told her to get up and go to a safe distance and then got on to my skates, fearing that the concentrated weight would be too great, but although the ice bent it stood up to it and I got to the bank without further mishap. Father told me to get home as quickly as possible, which I did, but fell once from pure exhaustion. I don't think even he realized the awfully narrow escape I had had. I knew how close a shave it was and always thank God for so miraculously saving my life.

After that year at home, which I understand now was due to financial difficulties, Henry Mayrick, who had become a great friend of the family, suggested to Father to apply to St. Mary Magdalene's choir school, where they gave boys, who had good enough voices, a free education with board etc. We had to go to London to be examined and both passed, so took our place in the school and choir, where we remained, if I remember right, about two years.

The school was rotten, and, thanks to the stingy old matron, the grub was vile. The vicar's name was Richard West, the Curate who looked after the school was Mr. Churton, and the organist and choir master Richard Redhead. The

last used to come to the school once or twice a week to give singing lessons and teach us new music for the services. One night a week there was practice after the evening service which we attended at 8PM daily. There were about 16 boys and one master, who was reading for holy orders. I didn't respect him greatly and on one occasion defied him. I forget the offense, but it was trivial and he called me to his room and jawed me a bit then told me to hold out my hand. As he wasn't supposed to use the cane, I refused and he made for me to give it me on the back, but I planted it against the wall and a deadlock ensued. Finally, he gave me an imposition, 50 lines of Virgil or something like it.

Except when the weather didn't permit it, we used to go for a walk, two and two every afternoon. One day we were surprised to see a large balloon passing overhead, and next morning the papers explained it. A crazy fellow thought he had invented a flying machine, consisting of two enormous wings which he worked by ropes, he standing on a suspended board like a swing, but as he couldn't rise from the ground, he contracted the balloon to take him up and let him go when he gave the signal. Of course, on being freed his patent collapsed and he fell at once and was impaled on the spikes of some railings with the wreck of his hopes and machine.

One of our chief amusements was sailing boat on the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens. I had a four foot boat schooner rigged, which used to beat all competitors. I bought her in company with my cousin, Herbert Russell at Westward Ho, but he soon tired of it and I bought his share.

In the winter we skated on the Round Pond, the Serpentine and sometimes on the lake in Regent's Park. During the master's vacation one year a man relieved him who was decidedly not a proper person to be in charge of young boys. He used to take us frequently to the German colony at the back of Holborn and tell us to buy sauer-kraut and other German luxuries of which he would relieve us a good share at the dinner table, and other things which didn't seem to me to be correct for one in his position. I used to wonder how they took him on at a school like ours, as he was certainly no saint. Unfortunately or perhaps fortunately, he took a liking to Edgar and used to make him walk with him instead of with another boy, and one afternoon I told Edgar to walk with me. As we were starting out he called Edgar and I made him a sign not to go, which he saw, and immediately gave me a slap on the ear which knocked me down. I wrote Father by that evening's mail and he came up to London the next day and took us away after an unsatisfactory explanation on part of the master and Mr. Churton.

During a former vacation of the regular master, a man called Burgess relieved him. He made himself very popular and taught us fretsawing and other amusements. An aunt of his lived a few blocks from the school and he used to take some of us there occasionally. Mrs. Burgess was also very good to us.

Later he started a school at Hampton Wick, just across the Thames from Kingston and when he heard we had left the Choir School, wrote Father to see if he would send us there, which he did. I always look back to the time I spent at that school as perhaps the happiest of my life. I used to spend nearly all of my pocket money in boat hire on the river with an occasional hire of a bike.

To increase my funds I tried netting hammocks, they used to call them Ashantee hammocks, from the Ashantee War. When I had one ready I used to put an ad in Exchange and Mart, a little paper for advertising such transactions and never failed to get a sale. One time I got two answers so started right away to make the second, working to late hours that night after lights were put out and managed to send it off the following afternoon. If I remember right the string and rope used to cost about a bob, the ad 3d and the selling price I think was 5/-. That helped me greatly for my boats.

Mrs. Burgess's sisters used often to go to stay with her and I and Carry Davis became great friends, real pals and she used to go on the river with me, invite me into the Master's garden, and so on. One of the fellows, Will Norman, and I were great friends, and as we didn't like the Hampton Wick church, we used to get leave to go to a church at Teddington, a walk of about 1 1/2 miles. When staying with the Burgess family, Carry used to accompany us. We would go to early Communion once, or was it twice a month, returning in time for breakfast, go again for morning service and again in the evening when Mr. and Mrs. Burgess often went with us. Quite a day's exercise, and entirely voluntary.

One thing was very enjoyable, our water picnics. We used to start out at six AM, the whole school of about twenty, and the Burgess family and two assistant masters, and would be towed up stream until dinner time, when we would tie up and go ashore. About 3PM we would start on again still upstream till about 5 o'clock when we tied up again

for tea, starting back at about 6:30 and of course rowing down stream, reaching home at about ten. For the Oxford and Cambridge boat race we used to go down the river to Mortlake, but otherwise preferred to keep to the non-tidal part, that is, above Teddington. That name is said to have derived from "tide and town." Below Teddington when the tide is low it is very easy to run aground, and while the tide is falling the current is very strong.

I, and sometimes Edgar with me, used often to go to Wimbledon to see the Webbs, Uncle Henry, Aunt Hannah and the cousins Beatrice and Winnie. The boys were seldom there as we used to go in the afternoon. Winnie was my favorite cousin and I think the feeling was mutual. When we went to Hampton Wick the cock of the school was a boy called Bridger who promptly challenged me in every line of athletics. I beat him sculling, paddling, swimming, jumping high and long and short running. For short sprints we were fairly matched, but the final was a long race which he was sure he would win. The course chosen was to the Teddington gate of Bushy Park and back, going through the park and returning by the road, about two miles. I held myself in till we passed from the park to the road, then let out and didn't see him for the rest of the race. That made me all round champion! We used to man a four-oared racing boat and I pulled stroke. We of course played cricket during the summer and Rugby football during the winter. I liked football best.

When the time came for me to leave school, my Father started to look around to see what I could do. I wanted to be a mechanical engineer, but they feared that I should not be able to stand the hard work required, which was bosh. One day a friend told Father about the cable business and he decided that it would suit me and accordingly I was enrolled in a school for telegraph and electrical training. Premium 50 guineas.

Mr .Burgess offered to let me stay on at the school as a lodger, which was far better than living alone in lodging, so I was provided with a season ticket to Waterloo Station, from which I could walk to the school, which was in Hannover Square, near Regents Street. This school was a funny kind of business. The Manager, Mr. Jones, had his little office near the entrance, where he sat in his glass cage, reading the papers or doing nothing (he had nothing to do) and the instruction was in the hands of a Mr. Tiddy (His brother came out here and was manager of San Juan for a time). His system was very simple. As a newcomer started, he was put with the working of the "Single Needle" instrument, which was the first to be learned. Next came the "Single Current Morse" into which he would be initiated by those who were nearly through that course. And so in turn he took the other kinds of instruments finishing up with the "mirror" and last the "recorder", --the last two cable instruments. Twice a week a master would come to give us a class in mathematics and also twice a week the Professor in Electricity gave us lectures. His name was Fitzgerald and he was a real electrician. He had one defect, i.e. he stuttered, but for me it was a decided advantage as I was able to take his lectures verbatim in writing. One joke the boys had was to ask him the definition of Force. He would reply "F-f-f-force is either a p-p-p-pressure o-o-o-or a p-p-p-pull."

Unfortunately, for about two months after I Started no further pupils came in, so when I finished my six months course there was none to show the next batch the ropes. For that reason they deliberately refused my certificate and made Father pay an extra twenty guineas for another two months, a gross robbery as events proved later.

When finally they re-examined me and give me my O.K. certificate, I and another boy who left the same day, went to see the Traffic Manager of the Eastern Telegraph Co., for which the school was preparatory. His name was Ansell. He asked us when we could leave for Porthcurnow, the station in Cornwall. I wanted to ask him if I could have a fortnight leave on receiving my overseas appointment, but he cut in asking the other when he could go, getting the reply "in two weeks". Then he turned to me and said "that's a straight answer, have you got one. " I said no as I wanted to know about the leave. He told me I could depend on the fortnight, so I said "Monday. "It was Saturday. He changed at that and gave us our credentials for the PK (Porthcurnow) Manager.

I went home that afternoon and left Monday for PK, traveling all night. On reaching the station which was about 8 miles from Penzance, I went to the Manager's office and he told me to return at 8 AM next morning. Being very tired I laid down after lunch and woke up at 8:10. I jumped up thinking it was AM and was making for the Managers when I met one of the boys who had been with me in London who put me straight as to the time of day. It was in August, so quite light at 8 PM.

Next morning the Manager gave me an examination paper in electricity, very elementary, which I answered. Then he gave me a more difficult one which I also answered in full. Then he told me to return next morning when he gave me a much more advanced paper, but I had no difficulty in answering the whole, so he told me I need not attend his

lectures, which I found were just ABC, and sent me to the operating department. That day four of my fellow pupils from the London school were sent abroad; they had been at PK for several months.

I enjoyed my short stay at PK immensely. It was a delightful seaside place, quite isolated, only the station being there, splendid bathing, comfortable quarters and excellent and plentiful food. We used to bathe every day and one morning about fifteen of us were going to the beach when we sighted a yacht at anchor, apparently quite near shore, so everybody was going to swim out to her. We all started, but she was much farther off than we thought and when I had swum a good way, I being ahead looked back and found they were all going back. I stuck to it and finally reached the yacht. They dropped a little ladder and hauled me aboard. They gave me a glass of wine and told me they were just a mile and a quarter from shore. As the wind was chill I only stayed for a few minutes and started back. I was tired when I reached the beach, but by no means done up. In the afternoon the morning crowd went to bathe and were going to do the same. Two of them got aboard, but they had to send them back in a boat! I was sorry to leave there, but the next appointment was for me so I was only there two weeks and being put ahead of all those who had left the school months before me, which proved the fraud they had put up on my Father.

As soon as I received my orders I left by the night mail and at 3 AM arrived at Didcot junction where I had to change for Oxford but found there was no train till ten o'clock, it being Sunday. However, a goods train turned up and I arranged with the guard to get to Oxford. There the train stopped a moment outside the station and he put me off with my trunk. I had to go to another station as we were on the L. N. W. and as no boy was in sight had to shoulder my trunk and tramp it. When I reached home they were all at church so I went there. When Father saw me he was a bit disturbed wondering what had happened.

I sailed a fortnight later from London, my father seeing me off from Gravesend where we dropped the pilot. We had beautiful weather all down the Channel and well into the Bay of Biscay, but I was very sick. However, I didn't miss a meal as the folks told me I should eat to have something to bring up, so they gave me a seat next the skipper just at the foot of the companion way and after each course I would run up on deck and heave it overboard. It took us eight days to reach Lisbon. I spent the day with some of the passengers and we had a dip in the river from a boat. After dinner I left with one of the fellows from the Lisbon office who took advantage of my carriage to go and look up the boys at Carcavellos, our cable station. He had met me on board and told me he would take me to CAR but couldn't go till he got off duty. When I went to see the boss next morning he wanted to know why I hadn't come right away when the boat arrived.

I found a pretty mixed crowd at CAR, but they told me that things had improved greatly as most of the old original hands had left. They must have been a tough lot and had given the station a bad reputation as often happens when a new concern starts. They have to rake up any hands they can get, desirable or no. The station had such a bad name that no decent Portuguese family would open its door to us. As I was fond of society I found this very uncomfortable and determined to make my own friends outside the station.

This I managed to do a few months after my arrival and little by little introduced such of the others who were decent enough. I may mention that for the last year I was there the same people who would not look at a cablero used to attend a monthly dance at the quarters. I was there four years.

Carcavellos is a little village and the station occupies an old palace called Quinta Nova, which was Wellington's headquarters during the war against Napoleon. Walls three feet thick, a beautiful terrace on the sea side and an imposing entrance from a large enclosed courtyard. The quarters were added and consisted of twenty rooms for the men, messroom, billiard room and library, with kitchens etc. We had a good English billiard table and a fine piano which none played when I arrived. The beach was about 500 yards from the house and the bathing was very good although frequently the sea was very rough. We had a fair cricket pitch and outfit, but seldom could get enough together to have a decent game, and I found time heavy on my hands as I could get no outdoor amusement. As soon as I could save enough I asked Father to send me a bike -52 inch penny farth --which proved a real boon and gave me plenty of exercise. Later I persuaded others to order machines and we formed a little club. I have old photographs showing the club and a group of the staff showing the entrance.

Most of my riding was solitary and I visited all the places within a day's ride there and back. Cintra was 15 miles from CAR and was my favorite ride. I made great friends with the owners of the English hotel there, a Welsh family called Lawrence. They were then two sisters, the younger married to a man called Gram. I sometimes extended my

ride as far as a place called Mafra, where there is an immense building, a convent if I remember right. It has a flat roof and they said that 200 horsemen could drill on it. It was about 12 or 15 miles from Cintra. Cintra is a beautiful place on high ground, and very cool in summer. Lisbon was a very dirty city at that time and had the fame of giving one a fresh stink at every corner. I never saw such swarms of flies and Typhoid fever was rife as might be expected. There is an English church there and the Company had a diligence come every Sunday to take anyone to church who wished to go. I always availed myself of the opportunity. It was a nice drive of 12 miles each way.

We had a man named Broughton in the "Abstract Dept." of the office, son of the British Consul at Setubal, a place some 12 miles south of Lisbon on the southern railway, and he invited me to spend Carnival Sunday there, the second year I was at CAR I think it was. I left on my bike in time to catch the railway boat across the Tagus and rode on from there to Setubal. Going through the village and feeling hungry I looked around for somewhere to have a bite, but the only one was so dirty I hesitated about going in. However, I thought that boiled eggs would be safe so ordered some. To my horror they served them without the shells!

I reached Setubal in due course and in the evening we had a nice dance. I was in my biking dress, short pants with stockings and low shoes and went dressed as a domino, that being the easiest to improvise since it consisted of a sheet or other wrap covering the head and body and leaving the face nearly covered if not masked. As they could see my feet and a bit of stocking they couldn't make out if I was a man or a tall woman!

Next morning I rode back, but passing through the Lisbon streets I got pelted with all kinds of things, starch among other missiles and as it was raining I got into an awful mess!

The other Carnivals I used to go to where they used to get about 80 couples and we had great fun without any strong drink, only an occasional glass of light wine. One time I improvised a costume in a few hours. I took my dark blue riding dress, slashed the front of the coat with coloured ribbons, made a cape and cap of red bandana trimmed with gilt paper and cotton wool to represent ermine, put rosettes on my shoes, a feather in the cap and an imitation dagger in my belt, fixed up a black mustache and blacked my eyebrows. When I went into the office before leaving for the dance they didn't recognize me. At the dance only one person did, a girl, and when I asked her how she knew me, she said very slyly "by your legs". She was used to seeing me ride past her house! They gave me the first prize for my costume, but very soon my ermine was sticking to everybody's clothes! The costume was imitating the Charles First style.

While biking I had some experiences. One evening I was hurrying from Cintra to go on duty and my brake was a bit faulty. Going down a long slope legs over handlebar, on rounding a curve I came upon a man with two pack donkeys, one in each rut going in the same direction. I rang my bell and shouted, but he just stared. I couldn't stop in time and to go to one side of the road was a sure spill as it was very rough, so decided to fall as lightly as possible. I aimed my front wheel at the roll of the pack saddle on which he was sitting and when it struck put my arms around his neck so he fell underneath and I jumped up ready for him.

At first he showed no fight but insisted I should return with him to the judge at Cintra, which was not in my itinerary. He seized one handle of the bike so I allowed him to walk a few paces, I holding the other handle, then suddenly pushed the bike over to his side which made him let go and jump to the side. I wheeled the bike round and was mounting when the wind caught my cap and blew it off, so I stopped to pick it up. He then tried to get back again but I gave him a push and he ran to the wall (all the fences there are of stone) and picked up one as big as my head which he hurled at me. I just ducked in time and it passed over my head and without waiting for another I mounted. He then ran after me asking for money and I dropped him the few coins I had, it was pay day and spurted away.

(This ends the Reminiscences. We do not know why he did not finish them, as I am sure he wanted to do. It is a shame that he wasn't able to do so, because he led a very, very interesting life and he accomplished a great deal. During his lifetime he made a point of writing to each of his children. When you consider that they numbered six by his first wife and eight by his second, he was kept very busy writing letters. The letters which Mom and Aunt Nellie kept, are all very interesting and informative).