

LADY SHELLEY'S CENTURY OLD DIARY PUBLISHED

Anecdotes by Beautiful Woman of Intimate Meetings With Those Who Made History in Her Day

By JEANNETTE L. GILDER

AFTER a century of oblivion the diaries of Lady Shelley, wife of the dashing, irresponsible but fascinating Sir John Shelley, have been edited and will be published in the course of a few days (Seribner). Mr. Richard Edgcumbe, who edited these diaries, has done his work exceptionally well and we owe him a debt of gratitude for bringing to light these wonderfully intimate pen and ink pictures of some of the most famous men and women who were making history a century ago.

Lady Shelley had no thought when she wrote these diaries that they would ever be published. If she had they would undoubtedly lack much of that spontaneity of expression and enthusiasm which is their great charm. Both her own and her husband's attractions made her on intimate terms with people who were shaping the destinies of Europe a century ago. Her portrait of the Duke of Wellington in 1815 as he appeared in private life is an especially valuable contribution to our knowledge of a great man of whose private life so little has been written.

Lady Shelley was also intimately acquainted with the Empress Marie Louise, Metternich, Canova, Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Brougham and others and she knew of Napoleon Bonaparte from those who were intimately associated with him. She writes about all of these interesting people in a perfectly simple, natural manner and certainly makes us better acquainted with the Iron Duke than most of his biographers.

Sir John Shelley was a man about town, something of a gambler not only with cards but at the races, a lover of high living, admired of men and petted by women, for he was a brilliant conversationalist, light hearted and full of fun.

When he married Frances Winkley the fine ladies of London shrugged their shoulders and tried to snub the young couple who had taken from them a man with whom they all flirted and whose society they so thoroughly enjoyed. Lady Shelley was rich, young, beautiful and, in every way, and her husband never regretted her choice. Whether she regretted hers she does not say, but it is easy to see in reading her diaries that while he may have been an attractive over he was hardly an ideal husband.

During her first London season, she was only 19 when she married Sir John, many tales were whispered into her ears of his unworthiness. She was told she was wasting her affections on a profligate and that she did not possess his undivided love. These cruel things were said to her under the guise of friendship, by men who had sought her fortune and by women who were jealous of her. Among the ladies who made the loudest outcry was Lady Boringdon, Lady Jersey's sister, who was married to a man she despised and was desperately in love with Sir John Shelley. She tried by every artifice to induce him to go off with her, but he did not yield to her blandishments, and later she eloped with Lord Arthur Paget.

Young Wife Miserably Jealous.

A woman who did give her trouble and of whom the young bride was miserably jealous was Lady Haggerstone, who was married to a foolish, rich, old man who cared nothing about her goings-on and who welcomed the agreeable society which Sir John Shelley brought to his house. Although this lady was old enough to have been Sir John's mother, he had for many years been her devoted admirer. "The first struggles of my young married life," writes Lady Shelley, "was to break her chains, for she had to wish to be loved even after her marriage."

Lady Haggerstone, by the way, was the sister of the famous Mrs. Fitzherbert, and it was through the latter that Sir John owed his intimacy with the Prince of Wales, afterward George IV. Sir John often spoke to his wife of the dulness of the supper parties at the palace when the two sisters, the Prince and himself composed the party. Occasionally the dulness of these parties was relieved by one of Sir John's practical jokes. On one occasion as he entered the room he saw the Prince kneeling at the feet of Mrs. Fitzherbert in an attitude which suggested prayer rather than devotion to a woman.

The broad expanses of the royal form, an attitude of supplication, so excited Sir John's sense of the ludicrous that he gave the royal posterior a vigorous push which sent his Royal Highness sprawling at his lady's feet!

With a terrible oath his Royal Highness regained his feet and advanced toward his tormentor, who wisely made his escape a toutes jambes. The Prince there and then declared that he had already put up with much, but that this outrage should receive condign punishment.

Eventually the two sisters succeeded in making peace and things went on as before.

Sir John was at that time like the Page in "Le Mariage de Figaro" and his pranks were tolerated—pranks which would have caused others to be tabooed for life. The set called "the Cream" could not get on at all without Sir John Shelley's fun and that honest gaieté de cœur which sprang from wonderful health and animal spirits. So great was his sense of humor that he could banter and come and every unwelcome monitor, even when he came in the shape of a dun.

Lady Shelley apparently knew how to manage her husband and she did this by letting him alone. "I made it a point," she writes, "never to interfere in any way with my husband's mode of life; and I never kept him from the society even of persons whose conduct I could not admire."

Lord Nelson Called With Wife.

Lady Shelley gives us an interesting account of Nelson and his affair with Lady Hamilton. She got it direct from Lady Spencer, whose husband, Lord Spencer, appointed Nelson commander of the Mediterranean fleet. "The day before he was to sail," said Lady Spencer, "he called upon me as usual, but on leaving he took a most solemn farewell, saying that if he fell he depended upon my kindness to his wife—an angel whose prayers had saved his life."

inland in the Mediterranean. After the battle of the Nile Nelson went to Naples and was bewitched by Lady Hamilton.

"On his return to England everything was changed. He treated the wife for whom, at parting, he had professed such deep affection, with every mark of dislike and even of contempt. Her conduct during Nelson's absence had been most exemplary.

"Some little time after his return I invited Lady Nelson and him to dinner. Having more than once declined the invitation, Nelson at last brought her. Such a contrast I never beheld. A trifling circumstance marked it very strongly.

"After dinner Lady Nelson, who sat opposite to her husband by the way, he never spoke during dinner and looked bluer than all the devils, perhaps injudiciously but with a good intention, peeled some walnuts and offered them to him in a glass. As she handed it across the table Nelson pushed it away from him so roughly that the glass broke against one of the dishes. There was an awkward pause; and then Lady Nelson burst into tears.

"When we retired to the drawing room she told me how she was situated." The world was at that time divided in opinion as to the nature of the intimacy which existed between Lady Hamilton and Nelson. In my opinion the letters just published put it beyond a doubt. Nelson was always most anxious that the friendship should be considered platonic. But Lady Spencer always thought that it was criminal. She was often blamed for this by Lord Spencer's mother, who was firmly convinced to the contrary.

One day she came to her daughter-in-law and said: "Lavinia, I think you will now agree that you have been to blame in your opinion of Lady Hamilton. I have just assisted at a private sacrament with them both, which Nelson has taken before he embarked. After the service was over Nelson took Lady Hamilton's hand, and facing the priest said: 'Emma, I have taken the sacrament with you this day to prove to the world that our friendship is pure and innocent, and of this I call God to witness!'"

What a horrible sacrilege! And this is the man whom Southey holds up as a model for all sailors! True, his public life is worthy of our highest admiration. If only it were possible to draw a veil across the private life of that great hero!

Saw Much of Byron.

Lady Shelley saw a good deal of Lord Byron, as she was on visiting terms with his sister, Mrs. Leigh, Col. Leigh having been an old friend of her husband's. One time they were at Col. Leigh's near Newmarket for the shooting. Lord Byron was there at the same time.

"Mrs. Leigh told me that she spent most of the night writing a poem which is to be called 'The Corsair.' As he did not leave his room until after midnight our intercourse was restricted. He is decidedly handsome and can be very agreeable. He seems to be easily put out by trifles and at times looks terribly savage. He was very patient with Mrs. Leigh's children, who are not in the least in awe of him. He bore their distracting intrusions into his room with imperturbable good humor. Mrs. Leigh has evidently great moral influence over her brother, who listens to her occasional admonitions with a sort of playful acquiescence. But I doubt the permanence of their effect upon his wayward nature. Her manner toward him is decidedly maternal; it is as though she were removing a thoughtless child. She looks very much older than her brother and does not make the most of herself. She is dowdy in her dress and seems to be quite indifferent to personal appearances. She is extremely good, and I like her much. Col. Leigh is an old friend of Shelley's and belongs to that select coterie who can boast of a close intimacy with the Prince of Wales. My husband is never so gay, and apparently never so happy, as when he is in the company of those who, like Col. Leigh, have been through the fire with him."

After Byron's marriage, at the request of Mrs. Leigh, Lady Shelley called on Lady Byron at Piccadilly Terrace.

"On the way Mrs. Leigh spoke a good deal about Byron, to whom she is much attached. She is by no means insensible to her brother's faults and hopes that a good wife will be his salvation. Very few young men have been so run after and spoiled by women as Lord Byron has been, and marriage will, she hopes, have a sobering effect upon him. I fancy, however, from the little I saw of him, that he will not be at all easy to manage."

"We mounted the stairs and were about to be ushered into the drawing room when the door suddenly opened and Lord Byron stood before us. I was for the moment taken aback at his sudden appearance, but I contrived to utter a few words by way of congratulation. Lord Byron did not seem to think that the matter was adapted to good wishes and looked as though he resented my intrusion into the house. At least I thought so, as he received my congratulations so coldly, and the expression on his face was almost demoralizing."

Met Wellington After Waterloo.

"Lady Byron received us courteously, but I felt at once that she is not the sort of woman with whom I could ever be intimate. Mrs. Leigh seems to be fond of her. At all events, she is very grateful to her for taking the tremendous responsibility which such a marriage entails. I was not sorry when the visit was over. I felt like a young person who has inadvertently dipped her finger into boiling water."

Lady Shelley speaks more of the Duke of Wellington than of any other one person in the course of her diaries. At the time of which she writes he was the hero of the world. He had just won the victory at Waterloo and was the lion of the hour. "The Duke," she writes, "had gained victories and received honors enough to turn the brain of an ordinary great man, but he retains that simplicity of character and manner which is still his distinguishing excellence." At a dinner given to the Duke at Wauwatam there were present the Prince Regent, the Duke of York and Cambridge, not to mention ninety lesser personages, most of them dukes and earls.

The Duke of Wellington and Lady Shelley at Malmston, 1815.

"After the King's health and that of the Prince Regent had been drunk the latter proposed the health of old Lord Mornington, which was drunk with enthusiasm. The Prince then proposed the health of the Duke of Wellington in a very neat speech. When the Duke rose to reply he had a broad smile on his face and seemed to regard all the pageantry and the honors of that day as nonsense and fun. It seemed as though all these honors concerned any one rather than himself.

"At last the Duke began: 'I want words to express—' The Prince Regent promptly interposed: 'My dear fellow, we know your actions, and we will excuse your words, so sit down.' 'This the Duke did, with all the delight of a schoolboy who has been given an unexpected holiday.

"The Prince then drank Lord Wellington's health, who made an elaborate and eloquent speech, attributing the success and prosperity of his family to



Lady Shelley From a miniature by G. Sanders in the possession of Spencer Shelley.

Wellington, Byron, George IV., Talleyrand, Marie Louise and Other Notables at Close Range

the protection of the King and the Prince Regent, a protection which had given them a fair field to display whatever talents they happened to possess.

"In the evening there was a ball, and the Duke of Wellington danced a polonaise. Blücher joined in that, and then danced a country dance in the German fashion with an allemande, skipping down the middle of the room with Lady Burghersh. Old Platoff performed what he called a national dance with Miss Fitzroy. It consisted in stamping his feet like a horse and nodding his head. The whole thing was exquisitely ludicrous and the Duke could not help joining in the general laughter. During the whole evening the Duke was making jokes with his nieces and appeared to enjoy the ball quite as much as they did.

"The Duke of Wellington during the evening said to Shelley: 'I think if Bonaparte had attacked in person when first we entered Spain we should have been best. But latterly if there had been any sort of equality in numbers we should have conquered in any event—I mean whether Bonaparte had commanded in person or not.'

"He also said that if the option were given him of fighting Bonaparte with an equal number of troops or any other General with 20,000 more troops he should choose the latter."

Mounted Duke's War Horse.

On the day before the battle of Waterloo the Duke rode Copenhagen. His famous battle horse, to the Prussian headquarters to ascertain whether he might depend upon old Blücher's cooperation, and it was agreed between them that night that if need be the Prussians would come to his support with all speed. If Wellington was not attacked that night then the Prussians and the British were to make a joint attack on June 19. The Duke rode Copenhagen on June 17 over sixty miles. On the 19th he rode Copenhagen throughout the entire battle and next day to Brussels, where on the Duke dismounting "this noble animal kicked up his heels and scampered half over the town before he was caught."

One day in Paris Lady Shelley dined at 3 o'clock in order to ride with the Duke, who offered to mount her on Copenhagen, "but," she writes, "I found Copenhagen the most difficult horse to sit of any I had ever ridden. If the Duke had not been there I should have been frightened. He said: 'I believe you think the glory greater than the pleasure in riding him.'"

In one of Lady Shelley's talks with the Duke of Wellington he told her that he would have gone to America if the war there (1812) had not been put an end to before the spring, to which she said: "Thank God you did not go there. For the sharpshooters would have taken too sure an aim."

"No," he said, "I should never have run any risk. I never expose myself except when it is necessary, and I should always have been properly guarded. It is very wrong in a commander to expose himself unnecessarily."

On June 15, 1815, as everybody knows, the Duchess of Richmond gave a ball at Brussels and the Duke of Wellington was present at it. "During that evening the Prince of Orange arrived in order to receive his instructions. While they were looking over the maps in the presence of the Duke of Richmond Wellington said: 'If the Prussians are beat, which I think is very probable, we shall be obliged to retreat. If we do that is the spot where we must lick those fellows.' He pointed with his finger to the exact spot where, three days later, the battle was fought. The Duke of Richmond tells me that he at once marked the map with a pencil, and that mark I saw."

Predicted Site of Battle.

"The Duke of Wellington had some time previously written to Lord Bathurst in these words: 'If Brussels is to be defended there is a spot near Waterloo where it can be done.' 'I mention this on the best possible authority to show that the Duke was not taken by surprise, as people say that he was. 'The Duke of Wellington,' writes Lady Shelley, 'told me that after the battle he gave orders to the peasantry to burn the dead left upon the field. The Duke of Richmond says that there was great difficulty in persuading them to do so. In many instances they preferred to cover the bodies lightly with earth, with the worst consequences. As he was passing along the forest of Soignies the Duke saw a little dog scratching the ground. On his return he noticed that the dog had succeeded in removing the earth from a body and was actually lying upon it.' It was through the Duke of Wellington that Lady Shelley met Talleyrand. The Duke took her and her husband to dine at Lord Stewart's."

"It was the most delightful dinner. Although I did not sit by the Duke I saw a great deal of him both before and after dinner. I sat between the Prince of Orange and Metternich. Talleyrand and Schwarzenberg were opposite. I never saw so disheveled a countenance as Talleyrand's. He has no very marked features, is pale, has a crafty expression, and a most villainous mouth. His flimsy laugh still haunts me.

"After dinner we retired to a small apartment, where I noticed a bust of the Duc de Montequieu. Talleyrand told us the following anecdote. He said that one day Bonaparte, in a towering passion, gave him his congé as Grand Chamberlain. I retired to my apartment, and in an hour a servant entered and announced, 'Monsieur le Grand Chambellan de l'Empereur.' It was Montequieu, who had come to pay his respects to me."

"Talleyrand repeated the last sentence in a most malicious manner, called Montequieu bête, and added, 'Voilà ce qu'on appelle gentleman, n'est ce pas?' 'Talleyrand may be clever, but he has evidently a very little mind, or he would not dwell on such an incident. At dinner Metternich was very entertaining. I wonder if one may believe what he said? 'He told me that he was the person who announced to Marie Louise that Bonaparte had made a proposal for her hand. She asked, 'Est-ce que mon père le veut?' Metternich replied, 'Il ne veut pas vous contraindre.' 'Alors j'y consens,' said Marie Louise."

"It was Metternich, again, who told her of the Emperor's escape from Elba. When the Empress heard this she remarked: 'Mes devoirs sont en contradiction. Dites à mon père qu'il faut qu'il oublie que j'ai plus de quinze ans. Je me mets sous sa tutelle.'"

"Metternich told me that when the news arrived that Bonaparte was actually in the hands of the English he was instructed to break the news to Marie Louise. He speaks of Bonaparte as if he adored him, but this, I am assured, is not the case."

Dined with Talleyrand.

Some days later Lady Shelley again dined with Talleyrand, who in spite of his amiability toward her she could not help disliking.

"I sat next him at dinner. The soup had been placed in the middle of the table. Talleyrand stood up and began to ladle it out. As he did so he threw down a great decanter of water with his elbow and broke it into a thousand pieces. This did not seem to disconcert him in the least—at any rate it did not make him very cross. We had a sumptuous repast and ended with a large course of fish. I wondered whether we were destined to eat our dinner all over again."

"During the whole repast the general conversation was upon eating. Every dish was discussed, and the antiquity of every bottle of wine supplied the most eloquent annotations. Talleyrand himself analyzed the dinner with as much interest and seriousness as if he had been discussing some political question of importance."

It was while in France that Lady Shelley met Sir Walter Scott, of whom she writes: "His first appearance is not prepossessing. A club foot, white eyelashes and a clumsy figure. He has no any expression when his face is in repose; but, upon an instant, some remark will lighten up his whole countenance and you discover the man of genius. His conversation reminds me of his poems—the same ideas and images recurring, and often the same careless manner of expressing them."

Anxious to See Marie Louise.

"I was most anxious to see Marie Louise and to form my own opinion of a personage about whom there has been so much discussion. Presently a slight rustling announced her approach and then the Empress of the French, very simply attired, walked into the room. Her Majesty was preceded by Gen. Niepperg, her cavalry d'honneur, and was followed by her lady-in-waiting, Marie Louise, though not regularly handsome, has an animated and expressive countenance, and her figure is fine and commanding. She looked at that moment every inch the empress and when I reflected upon her fallen state—a mother deprived of the child whom she adored—I felt for her the deepest sympathy.

"Our dinner party of six persons, including ourselves, comprised two gentlemen, Gen. Niepperg and her secretary, and her lady-in-waiting. The Empress did not allow the conversation to flag for a moment and I soon felt quite at ease with her.

"After dinner we went into the salon and I had an opportunity of speaking to Marie Louise about her son. When I told her how interesting he was and how fond everybody in Vienna was of him her eyes filled with tears. She said: 'Où, ma seule consolation c'est que je crois qu'on l'aime beaucoup. Il y a dix mois que je ne l'ai pas vu. Il s'est beaucoup amusé à danser.' 'They had told her in a letter the story of the Lion.' 'I cannot help thinking,' writes Lady Shelley, 'that Gen. Niepperg [who accompanied her on that romantic tour] had more to do with her pleasure in it than the climate. She seems to be deeply attached to him and Shelley thinks \* \* \* ' I have seldom read a more interesting book than this, its great charm being the fact that it was not written for publication, and being in diary form the conversations and incidents were written down at the moment and are not the recollections of after years. Lady Shelley must have been an unusually attractive woman, for she not only knew the distinguished men and women of her time but she was courted and fêted by them.



The Duke of Wellington and Lady Shelley at Malmston, 1815.

LABOR UNREST MAY PROVOKE BITTER CLASS WAR

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as an incitement to labor unrest in England undoubtedly has its counterpart in the United States. The easy wealth of the last generation has profoundly changed conditions in this country. Within the memory of many people now living there were no great extremes of wealth and poverty. In the country districts men lived from their own land and were sufficient unto themselves. In the cities prosperous merchants and bankers, landlords and manufacturers were on terms of easy familiarity with their customers or tenants or employees.

Since then has come the era of consolidation. Banks and stores and factories and mills have grown to gigantic dimensions so that each has lost its personal character, and in some cases its human character as well. And the cry against the trust has arisen.

With this complaint has come the hostility to those who profited by the trust. In the beginning of the process of consolidation and the swift attainment of wealth Americans were proud of those whose foresight brought them great fortunes, and they accepted the rich man as the sign of national prosperity, with the expectation that wealth would come to them also.

Coordinate with the appearance of the rich man was the coming of the penni-

less immigrant, which supplied the opposite extreme ready made. In some cases the newcomer changed his lot. The late Daniel O'Day, who died a director of the Standard Oil Company, used to celebrate the anniversary of the day his parents were evicted from an Irish hovel because they could not pay the rent. There were many cases like his, and a list of the immigrants of the last generation who profited enormously from the resources of the new country would include many familiar names.

Much of this newly acquired wealth has been used in the manner most likely to appeal to men and women recently translated from the poorer classes. They reach out for the material things which they have not had and which money quickly supplies. Their actions in this respect are in common with those of families on the decline, the same of whom Mr. Wells speaks. Luxury of many sorts, personal gratifications, display, hotels, automobiles, fine clothes and fine jewels: these are matters which the newly rich get hold of as soon as they can and which the people in the streets see and envy. It may be said too that part of the fun of having them is to be the subject of this same observation and envy.

The people who see others profiting so easily and largely are apt to make one of two applications to themselves. "How long will it take me to be where they are?"

say some. "Why can't I have a share in these profits too?" say others. "I helped to make them."

In the older days, when opportunity for wealth was nearer the hand of the uneducated man, the former question was the more usual and accounts in a measure for American energy and American success. It is clear that now, with the influx of new people and the taking up of natural resources, opportunities are not so easily grasped. At all events the opportunities are of a very different sort. Now the chance to rise is not in sinking oil wells for oneself, or starting a steel mill or even in opening a store, but in going to work for a corporation in the hope that the top is not too far away. To the workers down below—and most of them must perform duty there because the long term qualifications such as education are profound factors in American advancement in this new system—the question is one of getting as much as possible to make their present positions endurable, for their present positions are more apt to be permanent.

Thus there are strikes for better wages and labor unions to combat in kind combinations of capital. Up to now strikes have usually terminated in this country with the granting to the workers of better wages. Union organizers have been untable in most cases to hold their men to-

gether after higher wages have been secured. The closed shop is still far from a universal feature of the American industry. The coal strike, the express strike, the Lawrence and Passaic mill strikes, the recent waiters' strike, the taxicab strike, all closed before the organizers induced the employers to recognize the unions, much less to accept a closed shop. Where employers have met the demand for a closed shop or recognition of the union the workers have been in the more skilled trades, and even here the closed shop is far from being universally accepted.

Perhaps the subtlest effect of the spectacle of pleasure in this country has been the imitation by the poor of the vagaries of the rich. It has been said that the craze for automobiles accounts for hard times. The statement as it stands is not to be taken seriously; nevertheless it is clear that people generally are living more nearly up to their incomes, perhaps to maximum incomes, than ever before. When a break comes, whether it is general or individual, there is nothing to fall back upon.

Much of the responsibility for this evil lies with the rich themselves. The example of their display and luxury is too alluring to be withstood. If a man cannot live as a rich man all his life he tries it for a day or a week, and his humble resources vanish. Or his daughters dress

themselves better than their ready money allows, with the same result.

In a fox hunting district up the State the wife of a retired New York banker spends time wondering what has got into the people of the neighborhood. The daughters take music lessons instead of washing the dishes and the sons bet on horse races instead of following the plough.

"Conditions are dreadful," she tells you. "The village is going to the dogs. Morals simply do not exist any more. I am sure I do not know what we are coming to."

She forgets that her own daughters do no useful thing whatever and that her sons-in-law hunt foxes and send strings of horses to race meetings and do nothing else. The fact is that her own family is assumed to be an example of proper living, and that the village people copy as best they can.

It is clear that England and this country are in the throes of a process of economic readjustment. If the term can be forgiven, we are seeing with our own eyes a swiftly moving phase of human evolution, with England a stage or two in advance of us. It is not to be said that we will follow stage for stage and incident for incident the English process, but it is nevertheless true that, in the phrase of Patrick Henry, we may profit by her example.