

IDA JOSEPHINE RYDER

Letters 1911-15.

Place names and family names are in bold to make them easier to pick out.

28th October 1911 SS Massilia (Anchor Line): My darling darling **Violet**, Here we are just on board. The train 2 hours late. There was a railway accident which kept us back, not our train fortunately, but we must have just missed it. We passed it very slowly, most of the carriages smashed to little bits, & they had we hear the ** ** forces.

We got board at 6.30, hardly had any food. We have a cargo of horses on board, & our cabin faces them. No time for more. How dreadful it was to have to part from my 4 precious darlings. *** you all & shall always be thinking of you. You won't be able to read this scribble.

In great haste. Fondest love to you, **Lisle, Ernle, Bobbie**.

I am your loving Mother.

5th November SS Massilia (Anchor Line): My darling little **Violet**, I still must call you that as you are in spite of your long legs, my little girl always. It is so difficult writing on board ship. You will find it almost impossible to read my writing, for it is such a scribble & I am writing on my knee. We miss you all so dreadfully you cannot think how much. I especially do when I go to bed & it is all quiet. I wonder what you are all doing & if you miss us, & how **Bobby** (aged 3) is behaving & if he ever asks after me. This will reach you about your birthday (*her 11th*), & I do wish you darling many many happy returns of the day & send you oceans of love & great hugs. The watch was really intended as your birthday gift but if I can find some small thing at **Port Said** I hope to send it to you *am. I shall not have time I fancy to do more than close this & post it when we reach there so I am writing a few days ahead. We had it dreadfully rough the first few day. It was unfortunate starting our journey like that before we had got our sea legs. Even I gave way twice! I consider **Margaret & Enid** quite sailors, for we had it quite exceptionally rough, waves mountains high seeping all over the bows & making one feel very miserable. Our cabin is very small & dark. It is really only fit for two, but still we are so glad to have it (*to*) ourselves. Our cabin faces a lot of horses. I expect **Margaret & Enid** have told you most of the news, & I must keep a little for the others. I wish you were her to come & nestle close to me like you used to. You were all so good & brave when we left.

We have some nice passengers on board, & **M & E** are quite enjoying themselves & look so pretty & nice. Well darling I have a good many letters to write, so will only add much love & lots & lots of kisses. I shall so love having your letters. We stop nowhere except **Port Said**. I hope you will have a lovely birthday.

Darling **Violet**, I am your loving Mother.

We received all your letters safely this morning at **Port Said** - & thank you ever & ever so much my darling. I am so glad **Bobbie** is better. No time for more. We are going through the canal now. I am sending you a buckle which I got at **Port Said**. You will want *** on a narrow belt. I hope it will reach you the 23rd.

18th November SS Massilia (Anchor Line): In the Indian Ocean 4 days from **Bombay**.

My darling Violet, Next Wednesday morning we reach Bombay. We are a day late owing to the bad weather we have had. Today it is so windy it is almost impossible to write, the paper all blowing about, so I am writing in pencil. It is Sunday. One of the gentlemen on board read the service in the music saloon. The hymns were "Thine for ever God of love" & "O God our help in ages past". Last Sunday we had "The King of love our Shepherd is" & "Eternal Father". The collection goes to the Seamen's Mission.

It was lovely getting a great Budget (*sic*) of letters at Port Said. How I did enjoy getting my first news of all my darlings in England. I thank you so much for your sweet letters. You cannot think

how I treasure the letters. I am now longing again for letters. I expect Father¹ will have them & will bring them *** for us to see. I do hope dear little Bobbie is quite himself again. I thought we should leave several things behind – it is quite wonderful we got off at all. When the French governess comes I shall like to hear all about her, so mind you write to tell me.

You would so enjoy a voyage Violet. There is a Committee of Amusement who are always getting up some game or other. We all take part young & old. The other night we had to ** present a play that had been acted in London. **Margaret** went as the orchid, painted a kid in gold, that was “orr-kid”! & **Enid** went as HMS Pinafore. **M**& put a safety pin in front, you see pin-afore!

I went as Mikado, had my visiting card & had “my card O”! Then there was a prize for the best design & a prize for the best number of guesses. **Margaret** was third in the guesses, but there was only one prize. Also **Margaret** I think made up the 3rd best Limerick. Miss Fenn will tell you what a Limerick is. Then we had to hunt about for advertisements in the ship, placed about in different places & guess what they were. My partner Mrs Monsell & I were very bad at the latter. I was knocked out of the semi-finals of deck tennis, but am in the finals of the shuffle board, a new game to me. Tomorrow all the finals are to be played off & more sports are coming off, which I shall have to tell you about later.

It was very rough again yesterday morning & both **Margaret & Enid** were sick. I tell my quick (??). You will soon be thinking of your holidays, & I shall hear about your birthday. I wonder if those lovely violets under the school window have flowered as well as they always do.

I am so sorry my writing is so bad, you will not be able to read it. Major Oldham on board is an R.E. & Major Wilson is a R.A. (Gunner). Capt. & Mrs Gladstone are in the 30th Lancers. Mr Monsell is a barrister. Mr & Mrs Collins are in the Sherwood Forresters, & there are many nice people besides. There are about 5 lady missionaries.

Darling I must end this scribble & post it in Bombay. We are going to **Mussoorie** until April now as Col. Bythell could not get a passage sooner.

With fondest love & many many kisses & hugs. I am your loving mother.

21st January 1912 Srinagar, Kashmir: My darling darling **Violet**, How very kind of **Ethel**² to take you to the Pantomime. I am longing to hear all about your visit. Everybody has been so kind to you *** so much to make you happy, so altho' so far away we have been quite comforted. We are always thinking and talking of you. You will find Dorothy on your return to **Eastbourne**. I am sure will do your best to make her & Jean Cowie very happy, for their parents are also away. Tell me how you like Jean's Gramophone. Poor Father has such very bad toothache. He has hardly had any sleep for two nights, & nothing seems to do him any good. Dentists & piano tuners as someone told me do not come up here until March or April, & so many people have had toothache & all patiently waiting for the dentist.

Margaret has painted a portrait of **Enid** in oils & has done it beautifully, it is exactly like her & I am delighted with it. Everyone who has seen it says it is very good. I am copying some pictures out of Major Molineux's book of Kashmir, but am enlarging them more than twice as large. **Margaret** was beaten in the finals of the badminton tournament, we did so hope she would win. There is nothing very much to write about this week. There are the usual little (?) dinner parties either out of the house or in view **. What book are you reading now? “Blackman” just jumped onto my lap & nearly smudged all my letter. He is such a beautiful dog, how you would all love him. Your hair has taken very kindly to the “English Barbers” but is still very faithful to me. **Margaret** sang the other night when we had a dinner party so sweetly she sang “Give(?) a Body meet a Body”. Doesn't she rite splendid letters. **Enid** & I always envy her. Will you give Miss Fenn my love & thank very much for her letters. I may not have time to write to her this week. It was so kind of Captain

1 Colonel Charles Ryder (1868-1945) CB, CIE, DSO. See his correspondence.

2 Probably Ethel Augusta Thomson b. 1861, daughter of Julia Money's younger sister Mary, Charles Ryder's first cousin.

Redfern to take you & **Lisle** to the R** & to give you a book each. They must be very nice ones. Mrs Hawkins gave you a lovely treat (?) too. I must end now, with fondest love & many many kisses to you all. I am darling your loving mother.

18th February, Srinagar, Kashmir: My darling little Violet, We were so happy with all the letters now received last mail, to hear that Mlle Rolls (?) had arrived & that you were all settling down so nicely. It is such a pity we have to post our letters to you just a few hours before we get yours, so that we just miss answering them. I do hope you will be nice & kind to Mlle Rolls & that she will be happy. Mrs Cowie wrote & said Jean liked you. I am very pleased at this. We were very much touched at a dear little **Lisle's** letters, so sad that he could go (*not?*) to the School of Art but I hope Miss Fenn will be able to arrange it somehow one day, because we know how fond **Lisle** is of drawing & he has quite a talent. **Margaret & Enid** have done several pretty sketches & are improving rapidly we have lately been going out most days. I expect later on we shall be able to send you home some to see. It is a great advance *** that you are painting a bird at the School of Art. I hope we shall soon have you getting a prize. I suppose you will go up to receive **Margaret's & Enid's** prizes. I wonder if Jean is going to draw & paint like her father. Dorothy is also fond of drawing I think. There is a concert tomorrow at the Club at which I am singing there (*sic*) times. **Margaret** has designed & painted a wonderful poster for it, which everyone has admired very much. I am feeling so nervous, some (?) I think I shall have to give up singing altogether owing to my nervousness. We thought very often of **Bobby** on his birthday I am belonging to hear how he s*uch (?) it & if he was very excited. I suppose that very neat expression from **Ernie** often comes in, "Jai fi**cs" (!)!! There is a huge bed of violet's, so pretty & sweet in front of the house. Father has been out all day shooting. Everyone is talking so much that I must end this with fondest love & many great hugs & kisses to you all. I am my darling **Violet** your loving mother.

(undated) H.B. Medina (Houseboat), Srinagar: my darling dearest Violet, we are sorry to hear that the "Princess" is giving you so much trouble, but glad that there is no fault to find in her beauty! It must be beautiful. I should love to see her now. It was very kind of Jean & everyone else to give **Bobby** a birthday present. We are going for a 5 days' trip down the river with the de Lotbinières. Father is going to shoot first with Col. De L. & Will catch us up in his motor & I think those 2 are going to shoot most days & Mrs de L. & I will be in & out of each other's boch (?) all day long I expect doing a lot of talking. Our boat here is tied up in a most lovely spot. We went out sketching yesterday on the **Dal Lake** & had a great day. You must not expect much of a letter day. One way or another we have been very busy & left our letters to the last minute. We are just moving off & will stop our boat & post our letters when we reach the post office. I find it almost impossible to write, the natives are so confusing & there are so many orders to give about starting on our small voyage of 5 days! **Margaret** is longing to see her prizes, they must be lovely books. You must have been proud fetching them at the prize giving. I hope little darling you will be receiving your own soon. Jean seems such a dear little girl. I expect you have grown very fond of her. I will write a longer letter next time, this is such a scrap. Please give my love to Miss, I am owing her a letter. *orth (?). Fondest Love to you all & many many kisses. I am my darling **Violet**, your loving mother.

I am very glad you like the gym, it must be such fun.

26th March, Kashmir: My darling little **Violet**, Grannie³ has asked you to spend your Easter holidays with her. How very much you will enjoy it. I wish I could be there to. I expect once more you will pay the "wild colh (?)"! & Neddy (?)⁴ is to be there to. I wonder if Jean is going to Bedford & will be with her mother, perhaps you will travel together.

I did like the pictures you drew of pussy very much & think it is wonderful how you have got her different attitude. She has grown a great beauty I can see, so grown & improved since I left. We are having tea with Mrs de Lotbinière today & will reach the Stuart Fraser's who are staying there he is

3 Ida's mother, Josephine Grigg (1846-1918) lived in Bedford.

4 Ida's nephew Hugh Edward the son of Kitty and Hugh Wake.

to be the new Resident & **Ernie's** Godfather as you know. We are dining with them on Thursday, our last evening in **Srinagar**. **Margaret** will wear her pink dress & **Enid** her blue satin & I my sapphire blue velvet & choose to match! You say you like to know what we are wearing & of course you remember all our clothes. We have worn our tailor made tweeds that we went away in a great deal they are so useful. Three ekkas⁵ of luggage went off yesterday. They are something like high coster carts with a shaky cover (*small sketch*). The pony is often nearly pulled off its feet, the shafts are nowhere near the pony! As you can see most of the ponies have all their ribs shewing & rather broken knees, & very small poor little beasts. I pity them they are so cruelly treated. Well I must end now. Miss Fenn was think I am never going to write to her, but when I am in **Mussoorie** I hope to write her a nice long letter & I know she sees all our news. There isn't very much to write about now. We are very busy packing as we leave next Friday. With many great hugs & kisses & fondest Love to you all, I am very darling **Violet** your loving mother.

24th April, Hollow Oak, **Mussoorie**: WRECK OF TITANIC (at head of page).

My darling darling Violet, I wonder if this will find you at Grannie's, or if you & **Lisle** will be back again in **Eastbourne**. How very sweet & kind of Grannie to have you, & how hugely delighted **Lisle** must have been to have been invited too. I am longing to have a letter telling me of all your doings. I hope you saw Auntie **Mary** & Cousin **Ethel**. Ethel has been ill with influenza, but I hope she (*has*) long recovered. Your letters are delightful Violet, I cannot tell you how we enjoy reading them. I can almost hear you talking to me. Every detail we love.

We have had a thunderstorm off & on for about 4 days & lots of rain, & it has interfered with the tennis, but it will do our seeds good. They are all coming up fast. Fancy **Margaret** & **Enid** went exploring behind our house this afternoon & found a lot of wild lupins, & a lovely flowering thistle, besides other pretty flowers. I am singing at a concert tomorrow. This afternoon I went out calling. I wore my blue tailor made & the blue hat with cornflowers & other blue flowers on it. Do you remember it? **M** & **E** like it so much. I think I have lumbago, anyhow my back is very stiff. Margaret & Enid always look so sweet & pretty. I don't think I have seen anyone appear who can touch them. Of course the clothes look very fresh and pretty. They are improving very much at tennis, & of course the more they play the better they will be. You would like to peep into our drawing-room, we think it looks very pretty. The Cretonne (?) looks ever so nice, & the white curtains with the rose border looks prettier even than I expected. 15 pictures that Colonel Bythell has asked me to keep him, help to make the room extra nice. How much I miss you darling & I would simply love to take you in my arms & hug you. I often & often think of my Violet. I am so glad you are taking to practising regularly & I expect you are getting on famously. You will be so very very glad if you can play one day. I think **Enid** often regrets that she did not take to playing more seriously. **Lisle** seems very clever making aeroplanes etc. I sometimes think when he's a ** he really will invent something & perhaps make his name. The wreck of the "Titanic", has been such a dreadful thing, that the "Oceana"⁶ is almost nothing in comparison. Of course if you have all heard of the Titanic running on an iceberg, wasn't it awful **Violet**. There were not enough boats to save everyone & the band played almost until the ship went down, & they played that him "Nearer my God to Thee". How brave they were.

I saw some beautiful Siamese cats the other day when I went to call. They have bright blue eyes & in their habits can move like dogs. Just now **Margaret** is reading with Judy on her lap. "Blackman" is near her feet. Father is also reading in another easy chair. **Enid** is playing the Quaker Girl Valse & it's 9 ** in the morning. Jean Cowie must be a dear little girl & she seems so very happy with you all, & her people think her very improved. We had no letters from you this mail. I expect you

5 A one-horse carriage used in northern India, commonly used as cabs, or private hire vehicles.

6 The SS Oceana was a P&O passenger liner and cargo vessel, built in 1888 by Harland and Wolff of Belfast. Originally assigned to carry passengers and mail between London and Australia, she was later assigned to routes between London and British India. On 16 March 1912 the ship collided in the Strait of Dover with the Pisagua, a German-registered four-masted steel hulled barque. As a result the Oceana sank off Beachy Head on the East Sussex coast with a loss of nine lives.

missed owing to Good Friday. With fondest love & many many kisses to you all. I am darling Violet, your loving mother.

15th May, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: FANCY DRESS BALL (*at head of page*).

My darling darling Violet, By now you are back in Eastbourne, & I expect you & **Lisle** have heaps to tell Miss Fenn & the little ones. You had a very happy time at **Bedford**. I am so glad to hear you can roll & skull (*sic*). I can imagine the fun you had. Aunt **Blanche**⁷ was very kind in taking you about. Father has just heard that we may be going to **Shillong** next April. So there will be another move, that Colonel Hodgson is thinking of taking 6 months & then retiring after that. We have had quite a gay week first the races, then the polo & then two dances. **Margaret & Enid** looked perfectly sweet & everybody thinks them very pretty & charming. For the dances they got their programmes fall & seemed to enjoy them ever so much. **Violet**, you would have loved to have seen them. Of course they wore their white satins to their first dances. **Enid** does her hair rather differently to what she used to in England, & it is much more becoming. Today we had tennis & it went off very satisfactorily. The first day of the races, a poor horse had to be killed. It fell & broke its leg in 2 parts, the jockey wasn't hurt. The horse was called Gazelle & it was a great racer, but very naughty & difficult to ride. They say it had killed 2 men, so perhaps it was a good thing that it had to be finally killed itself, but it was very sad. Uncle **Harry**⁸ is at **Meerul** (?) Staying with the 13th Hussars doing a course of riding & exam. I asked him to come & stay with us, but he couldn't manage it. Your letters are simply splendid darling & I do love them so. I am so glad you are having to play so *** practising regularly. It is getting late, & as we were at a dance last night I must end this. With many great hugs & I miss you dreadfully Violet & all of you. Fondest love to all I am your loving mother.

13th June, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: My darling little **Violet**, You are going to write just like **Margaret** one day I think. I mean to say that your thoughts flow easily. While it always comes (*sic*) difficult to **Enid** & me. We do love your letters darling, even to hear that *** has a new trim with handles, & almost like a garden is interesting. & that Mr Bedford has a new suit (!) You are a funny little girl **Violet**.

Well we have been having a very gay week, everything seems to be happening in the same week. On Saturday we three went to the Rink. It was **Margaret's** 2nd time, & she got on quite nicely. Father came home on Monday from **Simla**. In the evening we dined at the Savoy Hotel with Capt. Sheringham & Mrs **eane & then went to the theatre & saw "The School for Scandal", which was very good. Thursday was the fancy dress Ball at the Savoy hotel. **Margaret & Enid** both looked lovely. **Margaret's** dress was most effective, red velvet bodice with tabs round the waist, a very large muslin collar & pointed lace à la Vandyck! large sleeves & red sateen skirt, very full red shoes, black rosettes. Her body is had little rows of black velvet bows across the front, & her hair was beautifully done just like the pictures by **Enid** & ropes of pearls (of great price!) intertwined in her hair. She really looked so sweet, & so did Enid, quite lovely as Juliet (?) blue sateen covered over with silver gauze. **Enid** got some broad silver braid & embroidered it with beads & pearls all round the yoke, & girdle, & hanging bag. It was quite a work of art & she made herself a beautiful Juliet cap & her hair hung like a cape round her shoulders, & her hair was very much admired (*a simple sketch*). It has grown very long since she put it up. Everyone thought she ought to have had the prize. She ought to have considering it was all made by her & that she had made all our three dresses. Mine was a green satin, a very pretty shade, & I had a fischu of my blonde lace high waisted, a black velvet band & pati buckle. It was just like this picture after Romany. **Enid** powdered my hair & did it in masses of curls. I wore my gold shoes. Our first prize was Rs 100 & the 2nd prize was a silver chain bag (purse) which Mrs Thuillier got in the Survey. Her dress was like the Duchess of Devonshire. We got to bed at 4 am! Father did not come, he is not very fond of dancing.

7 Ida's younger sister (1878-1974).

8 Henry Grigg was Captain 1/3rd Battalion, Gurkha Rifles. In action at Neuve Chapelle Captain Grigg was wounded, and at Festubert where he was later killed 16th May 1915.

Wednesday we spent quietly at home, at least mainly so. **Margaret & Enid** went to an "at home" which they say was very dull. Father & I went to the Club & tried to play tennis in the rain. Tonight we go to the dinner & dance at the Charleville Hotel. Friday we dine out & Saturday with a dance. On Monday we have a dinner party of 10. Capt. & Mrs Cowie are coming.

I congratulate you **Violet** on swimming the length of the baths, that was splendid. I hope your colds have all gone. I expect you often see Grannie & Aunt **Blanche**. I expect the latter often pops in! altho' they are a long way off. The redouble (*sic*) Bus ought to help them but I know Grannie will not get into a motor bus. I have to write to Grannie now so will only add my most fondest love & many many hugs & kisses to you all. I am my darling **Violet**, your loving mother.

PS. Please tell Miss Fenn, that we always get the welsons (?) quite safely.

17th July, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: My darling **Violet**, your letters are simply delightful & so dear to me. This morning **Margaret & Enid** have gone to the Rink. Father came home early from his office yesterday so seedy with a bad cold on his chest. We are going to a dance at the Savoy Hotel but gave it up. This evening **Margaret & Enid** (*are*) with Major & Mrs Tandy, Jean's Uncle & Aunt, & father & I were going to another dinner party but we have given up that. Father is now sleeping after a very bad night. We have a dinner party ourselves tomorrow night. I wonder if he will be fit enough to attend. The day after, Friday he is going to **Bangalore** for 3 weeks. It's a horrid long time, but he has to go for a Survey Conference. **Margaret's & Enid's** dresses, shoes, gloves & hats are all beginning to show signs of hardware of the season we are having.

I am so delighted to hear of your swimming successes. Why **Violet**, I believe I shall hear of you assuming from the Pier to **Hastings** quietly one morning with a boat behind you!! Like the lady I told you of in **Eastbourne**. You must certainly be the best swimmer of the girls now, for **M. & Enid** cannot do what you can now. It is nice Jean is getting on so well too. You will enjoy your sea bathing so much more now, & perhaps Dr Holman will come in the holidays & take you as he used to for the early morning dip. Enid is making some embroidery collars & cuffs most beautifully. How sweet **Ernie & Bobby** must look playing cricket & I love **Bobbie's** expression of "isn't it goodly?" He has such a pretty way of talking. I do hope his dear little baby language will not be all gone when I come home. All baby's talk goes away only too soon & I know he is growing a big boy. When one is away it is so funny, but I always imagine you in my thoughts for being just as I left you. I see from your photo, you are much fatter in the face & **Lisle** too, in the postcard Aunt **Blanche** sent us of you taken at **Bedford**. Miss Fenn says she has not seen that one. I think being fatter must be a great improvement to you. **Margaret & Enid** are both thinner which is a pity. **Lisle** seems to be getting on splendidly in every way with his lessons & c*** & *alling it is nice. Mrs Cowie told me her mother was so pleased with Jean's playing & the natural way she sat down and played when she was asked without any fuss. **Enid** seldom touches the piano & **Margaret** hardly ever sings, it is rather a grief to me, for I feel that all the money that was spent on us **ead & on Madam Petrelli has been wasted. I know there isn't very much time with so much going on, but one can make this if one is keen. Your Puss sounds a very beautiful cat. Father is awake so I will end this with a very great deal of love & such numbers & numbers of kisses & God bless you my darling **Violet**, I am your loving mother.

15th August, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: My darling little **Violet**, **Margaret & Enid** are doing most delightful pictures for the Exhibition in aid of the Soldiers & Sailors families – **Kashmir** scenes enlarged & a great improvement on what they have already done. I have done two but mine are rather poor efforts. Any of the pictures are to be sold by auction. I can fancy mine being knocked down for 1/- & hanging in some poor hut! There are to be prizes for the best. The landscape **Enid** has done is better than any **Margaret** has done so far, but then I always think **Margaret's** figures & animals are her best point. It *a**s so much every day that we get little more time of the painting, but I cannot describe the mould I found yesterday (*on*) a pair of new white satin shoes never yet worn covered with green mould. They were in that brown box of mine with a canvas cover, such a strong well-made box & issues all carefully wrapped up in paper.

There is to be a masked dance on the 12th of Sept. ladies all to wear masks & ask the men for the dances, rather fun but nervous work! Mrs Cowie sent me Jean's letter to read, a great deal about you all, so I thoroughly enjoyed it. My darling little girl I do miss very very much. I should love to have you following me about & perching in window sills. The spare room our (?) I am particularly thinking of, never mind every day that passes is a day nearer our meeting

how is your book getting on, the one you are writing. Margaret keeps a Diary, we are not allowed to see it! But I should think it would be most interesting one day.⁹ I believed she describes every person she meets, & also there are little drawings & photos put in every now & again. 2 books are filled already I think. How kind of Colonel Bythell to go & see you all again. I fear **Bobbie** gave him a hot (?) time!

I expect I shall have a letter from Colonel Bythell in a day or too. Fancy Uncle **Tommie's**¹⁰ address is now: El. Bambishi Grigg, XIIth Soudanese Regt. Omdurman. He holds in the Egyptian Army the rank of "Major El Bambishi" means that - Well I must write other that is now.

With a very great deal of love & many kisses to you all. I am my darling Violet your loving mother.

12th Sept, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: My darling little Violet, We have run out of our overland. I found I came out from England with a fat packet of double lined paper, which I bought at the Army & Navy Stores for the little ones to write on!! Someday I must try & send it home. Father has written to miss Fenn. I meant him to have told Miss Fenn that I shall be quite pleased for you to go with Miss Colville to the Crystal Palace & show your cat, & to sleep a night in London. I am sure Miss Colville will take great care of you & you would enjoy the little expedition. So will you tell Miss Fenn I consent. I am so sorry to hear that Nellie is leaving & poor Miss Fenn will be put to much trouble hunting for another maid. My establishment is also upset, for my good cook & table servant have gone & I have two in their place not half as good, & as we keep open house & entertain so much it is rather tiresome.

We are very likely going to motor into **Lucknow** with Mr King RE, who is in the Survey & we shall be about 4 days on the road, & will stay at Hotels & rest houses every night. The motor only holds 3, but one of us will sit on the Petrol! We shall have grand fun. We shall stay at the Civil Military Hotel in **Lucknow**, & there are many interesting things to see in **Lucknow**, the Residency & Bailey Gate, so noted in the days of the Mutiny. Capt. Cowran (?) Says he will go to Church with us our first Sunday to one of the parade services. **M. & Enid** think it will be so nice to be surrounded by uniforms!!! It will be their first experience of it. The 8th Hussars out in **Lucknow** & of course their uniform is rather fine but we hope our thoughts will not wander at all! It is soon Aunty **Blanche's** Birthday & I have written to her now. Hers is on the 26th, Uncle **Teddie's**¹¹ on the 28th & Aunty **Kitty's**¹² on the 16th, Aunt **Mary's**¹³ (of **Bedford**) on the 16th & there is of course **Margaret** that date. We are so glad that you have such a nice lot of fruit this year. Father says it's his pruning!! Goodbye my darling little girl. Fondest love & many kisses to you all. I am your loving mother.

2nd October, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: My darling little Violet, Your letters are delightfully long, interesting & amusing. I am afraid I cannot make mine so. Father & Capt Cowran came back from th their shoot about 7:30 pm last night. We had also **Capt Riall**¹⁴ & Mr Shaw RA dining with us. Capt. Cowran is staying with us until tomorrow when he goes down to Lucknow, then **Captain Riall** will come to stay with us. The shooters got 22 pheasants, 2 chikor¹⁵ & 1 Hakha (a little deer) & they had a very pleasant time. "Blackman" who went out with them behaved very well & retrieved a lot of the pheasants, wasn't it useful of him, but he has come back so thin. The shooters

9 In the possession of her granddaughter Selina Walker.

10 Stanley Thomas Grigg (1882-1948), Ida's youngest brother.

11 Edward Taylor Grigg (1871-1936), Ida's eldest brother later a tea planter in Ceylon.

12 Kathleen Mary Grigg (1877-1938)

13 Mary Ann Grigg (1838-1922), sister to Ida's father Edward Evans Grigg (1844-1909).

14 Claud Ohineas Bookey Riall (1876-1952) soon to marry Margaret.

15 A type of partridge.

& "Blackman" walked back about 20 miles so he is very tired & quiet today. It was a pity you were all out when Aunt **Lizzie**¹⁶ came to see you. It would be much better if people would just send a postcard to say when they are coming. I wonder if Harriet has already left, we shall often miss her, but she was not always clean & I expect Miss Fenn will rejoice in getting somebody cleaner. The garden sounds very pretty, what a nice lot of plants Miss Fenn has got in store to plant out. I think she is wonderful, thinking ahead. How I would love to see you all, we are always thinking & talking of you all. All our friends are quite interested in the news from home now! The Fancy dress dance last Monday was ever so nice. Our hosts were 3 men, **Capt Riall**, Mr Shaw & Mr Somerville, & they all danced beautifully so we had a very good time & came back at 3:30 am! Enid & I got up at 8 o'clock the following morning, so we were a bit sleepy during the rest of the day. Dear old **Margaret** is always able to sleep longer. I am so pleased to hear you have made yourself a blouse, well done, **Violet**! Enid is making herself a beautiful one. All the yoke she has embroidered herself & the sleeves, cuffs. She has also trimmed up our solar toppees & made them look very pretty.

Lisle wrote such a nice long letter, the longest he has ever written. Give him a great big kiss from me for it & tell him it is very dear to me. How kind of Grannie to send you all some money. Darling little **Violet** I will close this with my fondest love to you all, & numbers & numbers of kisses. I am your loving mother.

30th October, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: My darling darling Violet, This should reach you about your birthday & I cannot tell you how many very loving wishes it takes. May God bless you & may you have a very happy day & many returns of the 23rd of Nov. I should love to kiss & hug my little girl, but although so (*many*) miles divide us we shall be thinking & talking of you constantly. Father & I send you 10/- & a little gold elephant, which I want you to take down to Brufords or Clements & have it put on a gold safety pin. I tried to get it done out here, but Indian jewellers pins & fastenings are rather poor & it would be better to get a good strong safety pin. I wonder how you will spend your birthday & what you will do by yourself with the 10/-. I will ask Miss Fenn to get the safety pin separately.

Father is going off to **Kashmir** tomorrow & we shall miss him & be very lonely until we go down to **Lucknow**. **Mussoorie** is quite empty now. The tennis club that used to be so crowded, & its 15 courts in full use seem very dismal. We are busy mending, making & geno*** for **Lucknow**. Our excitements last week were the departure of Mr Somerville, arrival of Mr Chase & then Mr Mason. The latter I think may come up for the weekend Saturday. Our chaplain Mr Ragg has asked us three to lunch with him next Sunday to meet the Archdeacon of Lucknow. On Friday next week they are coming to have tea with us I think.

Our my letters difficult to read? Or would you like me to write more plainly? I can hardly believe my little Violet is 14 years old. With lots of love & kisses to you all. I am my darling **Violet**, your loving mother.

2nd December, Srinagar, Kashmir: My darling darling **Violet**, This will arrive about Xmas & it takes such lots & lots of love & kisses & good wishes. How I wish I could kiss you in person & see all the things in your stockings. Your letters are a great joy to us & we so look forward to the mail day. As I expect you to & the letters you get on Saturday now don't you?

I am sure Margaret & Enid have told you all the news, & I shall be telling you the same perhaps in different words. You would love our houseboat, it is very snug but very cold at night. I sleep between blankets & have crowds on my bed & the heavy cocker spaniel on my feet. Even then I do not feel warm. There are 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, our sitting room & a tiny hall on the boat. When it is very cold & sunny we like sitting on the upper part, or outside on top of the boat. From there we see all the lovely scenery. **Margaret** & **Enid** have made very pretty sketches. You will like seeing them one day. Today we went to see the woodcarving shop where father is having a screen, a tea table & another table carved from walnut wood, such a beautiful carving.

16 (not identified)

This afternoon we reach **Srinagar** & all rather excited to see the place & our future abode. Later here we are in Mrs de Lotbinière's house, it is such a nice one. It will quite spoil us for any other in India I should think. It is like a rather large English house & so completely furnished. We have lots of room & my only regret is that I cannot have you all with me here. I do miss you my dearest little girl so much & all of you. I am glad that you are well & so pleased you are 5th in this ½ term. I call that splendid because you have been ill. I never expected to hear of your getting such a good place. I have a lot of letters to write for Xmas so will only add my fondest love & more kisses than I can count. I am my darling Violet, your loving mother.

Margaret & Enid are looking so rosy & well.

23rd December, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: My darling darling **Violet**, I am very very delighted with your sweet Xmas present to us. I think the Doglegs are beautifully made, & I am most proud of them. You cannot think how very useful they will be. I can hardly believe that you have got on so fast with your work & can crochet so well. Splendid **Violet**! Many many thanks darling. We all had such nice Xmas letters from you. You are very good about writing. How kind it was of Mrs Erskine to ask you all to tea & I am very glad the small boys were good. This is not really your turn for a letter but I did not want to let this mail go by without telling you how pleased I am with your doglegs. I don't think I shall have time to write to miss Fenn this week but I will to thank her for the Calendar. Please give her my love.

I heard from Mr Mason that he was going to see you all, it would be very kind of him. I believe Captain Cowran & Mr Somerville may also go & see you. They are both in the Kings Own Regt. & are to be stationed at **Dover**, they are both very nice. Ask Mr Somerville if he is the "Great Hawkeye"?! When he was staying with us, we pretended to be red Indians & he was the "brave Hawkeye". **Margaret** was "Sunfool" (because she always tripped over bad ground!) & **Enid** was called the "Papoose". Captain Cowran has shot leopards & tigers. Ask him if his tiger & also Mr Somerville's Tiger was as large as Grandpapa shot, in the hall. I must end this. My fondest Love to you all & many kisses. I am darling your loving mother.

24th December 1911, Srinagar, Kashmir: My darling little Violet, Tonight I am urging you all hang up your stockings, what excitement. I do hope you will be happy with what you get. Xmas to us can never be the same without our dear little ones round us, but we must always be looking forward. Today is Sunday I could not go to Church as I have such a swollen neck & had fever Monday from it. We have all been vaccinated, but do not know yet if it is going to take. **Enid's** & my arm look the most interesting so far. **Margaret & Enid** look very pretty, they have lovely colours. They are rather excited going out to their first dinner party tomorrow night. The party will be Major Wigram, our 4 selves, Mr & Mrs Radcliffe, Miss Thomas, Capt Oliver & Mr Phelps. Dr Neva (?) Who is attending me is very doubtful about my going & poor Father has frantic toothache & there is no dentist, so nothing seems to do him any good, it is so distressing to see him.

Can you imagine our great joy hearing that **Margaret** had won the Duke's prize, what an honour! & what a surprise. We are so pleased to hear of dear **Enid's** price too. Now **Violet** please write & tell me you have a prize too. **Margaret** was so unhappy when she had scarlet fever, for she felt she would be very handicapped for prices. "Winkie" feels very cold tonight. She is sitting inside the Fender. Sometimes all three dogs put their paws inside & hold their heads up to warm their waistcoats! I am so sorry to hear darling you have had a cold, but long ere this I hope it has gone. I expect pussy was very sympathetic & was perhaps glad to sit on your lap near a fire. He must be a great beauty now. I do hope you will show when there is a cat show. Miss Colville will be able to help you & Miss Fenn how to do it. **Margaret & Enid** helped to decorate the Church and did the Font which was considered especially pretty. Mr Mason RE is coming to stay tomorrow for a few days. He is a great mountain climber, by that I mean he is very fond of climbing them & takes beautiful photographs. Dinner is nearly ready so I must stop. I should so like to see your new dresses Miss Fenn has made the you. I do not know when you will wear the buckle I sent you which I got at Port Said, perhaps when you are a little older, but I did not see anything I really liked the

you. Darling little **Violet**, God bless you & great hugs & kisses, from your loving mother.

1st January 1912, Hollow Oak, Mussoorie: My darling little **Violet**, as it is the first, I must wish you a very very Happy New Year. When this reaches you January will have more than started. We all congratulate you warmly on getting a Highly & a V. H. Commended for Pussy. I think it was splendid considering how many she had to compete against. I really did not expect you to have such luck. We were all very interested in hearing of your journey & pussy being lost in the chimney!! There is so much we would like to ask you. What was your address in **London**? Were you in lodgings or with friends of Miss Colville's? Where did you get your meals etc. etc.?

You write excellent letters & they are such a pleasure to us I am so glad you were able to go to the Crystal Palace & see so many good cats. Oh! **Violet** I cannot tell you how much we miss our darling "Blackman" if you could only have seen him, he was the greatest pet you could imagine. He was so gentle & so soft & silly, & very sporting & simply devoted to us all. **Enid** of course was just like a hospital nurse to him. You can see her can't you coaxing him & trying to get food down him. Poor dog, we really miss him every day. It's quite dreadful to get so fond of an animal.

Uncle **Harry** left this afternoon, so the house seems rather quiet & sad, as if several people had left instead of only one. He is going to **Barilly** (?) first to join his regiment & then in two or three weeks they go back to **Almora** (?). **Margaret** & I are in the church choir & we have been busy singing carols etc. for Xmas. I sang a Carol solo with a chorus & also another solo "Angels ever Bright & Fair". We sang these on Xmas Eve & again last Sunday. **Margaret** & **Enid** said it went off quite nicely. I think I prefer singing in a Church to any other place. I like being accompanied by the organ. **Enid** is getting on better every day with her painting. She seems to be making great strides. Her last picture is a winter would, it is quite lovely we think. Then she has done two or three very pretty ones of our **Khara** shooting trip, made pictures from the rough sketches she did while there.

Margaret is doing original illustrations, famous Queens, she has done 8 so far. I think they are so clever. We hope to both **Margaret** & **Enid** could have exhibited something in the **Calcutta** show, but unfortunately the prospectus has not arrived yet & now it is too late to send them down to **Calcutta**. Medals were to have been given. Father shot a "khaka" yesterday & Uncle **Harry** won the other day. I had a cake made for Uncle **Harry** to take away with him! I was so pleased with it.

I think I have told you all my news. How sensible of you to get a muff, it must look rather sweet & will help to keep your dear little fingers warm. I am glad Aunty **Blanche** gave you a jewel case, Violet, How should I find your hand kneeling (*sic*) drawer if I perved into it?!! We have occasional fits of tidying out, but it is very cold to stand about in the bedrooms when arranging things. It was very kind of Mr Mason to go & see you all & he gave a glowing account of you all. With many many kisses & fondest love to you all. Darling **Violet** I am your loving mother.

PS 2nd Jan: Another sad thing has happened. My darling "Winkie" was taken off by a leopard last night, just outside our bathroom doors. We actually heard the wh** proceeds. A bark from Winkie, a huge spit, scuffle & screamer from Winkie & then silence. She was taken off immediately outside our doors & we opened our doors at once & yet could do nothing. All the servants went off to search with lanterns, but no good. My poor faithful little friend of 5 years. We had a very sad night. Fancy losing two dogs in one week. Winkie had her coat & collar on & I hope we shall trace them.

* * *

2nd December 1912, Khara Bungalow, Srivaliks (?): My darling darling **Violet**, Here is Dec. I can hardly believe it. I do hope little sweetheart your Christmas will be a very happy one and that your stocking will be full of all the things you want. How dearly I should like to be at home with you all. However it is another year gone & the more that pass, the better for bringing us together.

I had great fun last night. We heard that a leopard had killed a buffalo, & so Captain Couran & I sat up all night in what they call a "Machan" (?) – A thing like this (a sketch of a viewing platform up a tree). I have drawn it so badly. Will you try & explain it to **Bobbie**. We got up into this Machan at 5 pm & stayed there until 6 am the next day; hardly moved an eyelid! I heard the Leopard surging (?)

round, it was most exciting, but unfortunately it did not come & eat that buffalo; so it was impossible to see to shoot it was a very dark night & the moon did not rise until 1.30. I cannot describe how cold it was. We are running very short of paper so I can only send my letters to everyone, but I send you all a double amount of love & I hope you will (*illegible*).

My dearest **Violet**, I am your loving Mother.

23rd January 1913, Hollow Oak, **Mussoorie**, My darling darling **Violet**, What a number of parties you have invitations for. I hope you will enjoy them all very much. I would love to see you & **Lisle** dressed for the evening. I expect your Roman satin dress looks very pretty the net tunics (?) over it. I shall like to hear who your partners were. Is Capt Redfern still in **Eastbourne**? It was ever so kind of him to give you a fan for Xmas. I should like to borrow it sometime. I have just lost my little white one with gold spangles – do you remember it? I had another like it in black & they have been so useful. I have a large fans but they are not being used now.

We have got our invitation for the Civil Service Ball. I believe there is such a crush at it, that dancing is almost impossible. There will be about 600 or more people. **Margaret & Enid** are so excited over going to **Lucknow**. We leave here tomorrow about 3.30. **Father** goes to office in the morning & we shall meet him about 6 miles down the hill. It is about a 10 mile walk for us, but it is very easy walking down hill, & we have great fun laughing & talking all the way, wondering who we shall meet & what people will be like on these different visits we are going to. The girls think it will be great fun in tents as of course they have never lived in one yet, & our camp will look quite big, for Uncle Harry is coming for about a week & Capt. Thuillier also for a few days. So there will be quite a number of tents, because all the servants have little tents too. We shall have 4 fairly large ones, & **Father's** dressing tent is a Swiss cottage tent.

The Lennox-Conynghame's have asked us to dine with them in **Dehra**. They have just brought a daughter out from home – she is about 20 & very clever, a sort of "Girton girl." We are all a little afraid to meet her! but oh! how nice to be so clever. We stay two nights with Mrs Cowie & on Sunday night leave for **Lucknow**, we marched there Monday morning at 9.30. Col. Ronaldson has offered to give us breakfast. I think I told you after 3 weeks we go to stay with Mrs Philson in **Banilly** (?), And then we go to Delhi – the new capital. Major Griffith R.E. who is putting us up has a motor and says he will take us out and shew us all the sights, so we have a lovely programme in front of us.

I hope you will enjoy your music lessons with Mr Mead – & do try very hard to play. It is such a great thing, such a pleasure & makes people more popular & appreciated especially in this country, where there are no Queen's Halls, Albert Halls etc. etc. to go to. **Enid** has improved very much, she can read quite nicely at the site, & has just learnt one of Henry VIII dances, by German (?) – when will you be able to play those? **Enid** unfortunately does not practice regularly which is such a pity, only when the spirit moves her, & that is not the way to get on unless you are a genius. & **Margaret** very rarely sings. I do hope one of my three daughters will sing or play! I must leave office soon to pack, for there is a great deal still to think of. We are taking linen & plates & crockery for our tents. It's almost like moving house. Colonel Bythell wrote & told me all about his surprise visit to you. It was Sunday evening & he mard (?) you all singing hymns. He said you had grown very much & that you were all looking so well & it was such a nice account.

With fondest love and many kisses to you all Darling **Violet**, I am your loving Mother.

18th February, C/o Colonel Philson, **Banilly**: My darling darling **Violet**, We arrived very late on Sunday night. Our train was an hour late, so we had dinner at 10 o'C. Mrs Philson came to meet us. Some of the 8th Hussars were also in the train. They are playing in the polo match. Three of the Highland Light Infantry officers came to see us off at the **Lucknow** Station. They are very full of fun, & they used to tease us & say we liked better to have tea in the British Cavalry tents, to having tea in the Infantry tents. This was at the races, polo & show (?) show. So to pay us out, they (the H.L.I.) got into our carriage & hung spurs up in it & drew spurs in chinks on the woodwork, they

behaved like schoolboys. **Margaret** tried to pay them out by drawing pipers & bagpipes, & thistles, anything to do with Islands. It was great fun, but people in England would have been very surprised at such behaviour on a railway platform.

But a dreadful thing happened all our boxes 4 containing all our clothes went to **Dehra Dun** instead of coming here, & we have not seen our boxes for three days. Yesterday there was polo & today races. This evening a dinner party & we then go on to a theatre, & I have only my tweed tailor made on. Don't you pity us **Violet! Margaret & Enid** have their blue tailor made which look a little smarter. We are very distressed about our luggage.

I heard from Aunt Hilda today & she says she is going to England on the 25th on account of Eileen. How excited Dorothy will be to see her mother next month! I am very sorry to hear that Miss Fenn's sister has been so ill with influenza & hope she is much better now.

There is a beautiful bunch of violets by my side as I write, with very sweet smelling & long stalks. They are far finer than the English ones. We saw Hamish Reid when we passed through **Dehra Dun**. I must write & tell Cousin Jim all about him. I wish I could write like you do nice long ones but I have so many letters to write every day, this is my fourth today, & then I get a headache in time. **Margaret & Enid** are splendid, but it seems the only letters **Enid** writes are the ones to England, while I have crowds of other letters besides.

With a very great deal of love & many kisses to all my darling children – I am your loving Mother.

19th March, Hollow Oak, **Mussoorie**: My darling **Violet**, We have all settled down again in Mussoorie. **Margaret & Enid** arrived last Sunday, both looking very well & full of spirits. It was delightful hearing all about their doings. I expect they have written & told you most things & you know nearly as much as I do. It is so nice having them back again, for I did miss them so.

Give a kiss to **Bobby** & tell him in answer to his last letter asking me for stamps, I send him a postcard with an Egyptian stamp on it. & we also send **Lisle** some stamps. Whatever he does not want expect he will give to **Ernle** or **Bobby**. I am so glad they are taking such an interest in their stamps. It will help them a little with their geography.

Colonel Bythell sent me another photo of himself & also **Enid** one. He says he hopes to go & see you all again one day when he goes to stay with the Gordons in Arundel Rd. when he will go for a weekend.

We have had such bad storms lately & one night when I was writing a big flash of lightning put out all our electric lights & we were suddenly left in complete darkness & had to grope about for candles.

I think I said in my last letter home that I was going out shooting with the MacKinnons. I shot 2 pheasants, the first I have ever shot – so I am rather proud of myself. Also I walked a great many miles. It is just the weather for walking, a beautiful cold feeling on one's cheeks!

I hope you will get a commended on something like it at the next Exhibition. Now of course it will be much harder for you for you are over 14 years. They really ought to alter that rule.

"Frost" & "Snow" are settling down but I wish they were tiny puppies & that we could train them ourselves. All the bulbs must be coming out now in all their glory now, & I hope you will all have a very happy Easter. My darlings I so long to see you again & the class pew in my arms. I hear you are growing such a big girlie.

Today we have packed up & sent off 8 boxes to go to **Shillong**, & I hear they will take months going thereby goods train. In answer to this letter you must address to: Mount House, **Shillong, Assam**.

On the 1st April we go to the Himalaya Club. They allow married couples to go there, in most clubs you know only men go. It is a very large building & I expect several people will be there. Some of the Highland Light Infantry are coming up to **Mussoorie** on the 1st April, but I don't know where

they will stay – perhaps at the Club too. I have been painting a good deal today but it is only a copy, one of Colonel Strahans, but it is taking a long time to do for it is quite the size of the largest of the portraits in the dining room at **Murhill**. **Enid** has a cold I believe you must have sent it to her in a letter!! It is dinner time & I must wash my hands & try & remove a lot of ink I have on my fingers. My very dearest love to you all & lots of kisses, & God bless you my darling **Violet**. I am your loving Mother.

17th April, Himalaya Club, **Mussoorie**: My darling **Violet**, I am so glad you had such a happy Easter. **Grannie** did say something about asking you to stay with her as Uncle **Tommy** wants to see you. It would be very nice if you could go. I hoped they would all try & get down to see **Eastbourne** & see you all, but I know Grannie loves her own comfy house, & is not very fond of leaving it, although the change would do her so much good.

Margaret, **Enid**, Mrs Becher (?) & myself had such a good game of tennis yesterday. You have no idea how M. & E. Have improved, **Enid** is quite good, hits low & hard & can keep up a rally. Last year I thought they would never play. I hope you still practice against the wall, & learn to stand rather far back so as to get a good length.

I have managed to pick up two old Sheffield plate candelabra in the Bazaar, which we are so pleased with. I intend having them on our dinner table with pretty shades. We shall miss the electric light in **Shillong**. Here it is in all the rooms & we can switch it off & on & it is so convenient.

On Saturday we have a dinner party of about 16. Colonel Renny-Tailyour is coming to stay with us until Sunday. He is the Acting Surveyor General & so we are asking all the Survey who are up here now to come & meet him. Today is Thursday, we leave for **Shillong** next Sunday & there is a good deal of packing to be done as we have arranged our sitting room quite prettily with books, pictures & photos & cushions & curtains & carpets.

Poor little Dorothy she will be disappointed if she doesn't see her mother soon, & she is a very affectionate little girl isn't she? I of course good not resist rushing to see all my darlings as soon as possible. I heard from Aunt **Mary**¹⁷ of Bedford last week. She generally gives me all the family news. She is quite wonderful for her age & so energetic. Can you read my letters? I am afraid my writing get very careless & untidy at times & must be rather difficult to read.

I have found homes for "Frost" & "Snow" poor little dogs. To take them to **Shillong** would have been a very long journey & as they were rather long haired dogs they would have felt the heat dreadfully. I can imagine the seeds coming up in the garden, looking so sweet at home. We shall miss next mail I'm afraid, but I will try & send a line on Sunday, our mail day being Thursdays.

There is very little news to tell you this week as we are not doing very much just now, but I must write other letters. Darling little **Violet**, I send you all more kisses than I can count and fondest love. I am simply longing to see you all. I am your loving Mother.

13th May, Mount House, **Shillong**, Assam: My darling darling **Violet**, I was delighted to get your nice long letter from **Bedford** telling me of all your doings. You must have had a very happy time there, & now you will be back in **Eastbourne** again & will have rushed to your beloved Pussy & your garden & all your own treasures. Home often seems the sweeter for going away a bit.

We are as busy as the day is long. There is so very much to be done to the house & garden. The labourers are so odd. Those working in the garden go away for the slightest shower & all the villagers bring their umbrellas, large carriage affairs! fine or wet however poor. We have invested in some of them, having broken or lost hours & the cost Rs,2/- = 2/8d in English money! We have sent to the Army & Navy Stores for some garden tools & we hope to do great things with them. Our house has the very sweetest situation. How you would love it! little **Violet**. The crows are cawing away in the pinewoods at the end of our garden, something is upsetting them, perhaps it is the coming storm, it is thundering now.

17 Mary Ann Grigg (1838-1922), Ida's father's sister.

Last night **Father** & I dined out, there were 14 of us. A Khilmargar in passing a very hot entrée dish of vegetables, placed it first on top of my bare shoulder & made me quite jump. It was quite painful. I suppose he had difficulty in passing the dish between my partner & myself, we were so tightly packed! We have run out of our overland paper, this is almost the last sheet. It is **Enid's** birthday today. She is wearing the tie (?) You all sent her – it is a very pretty colour. **Father** & I gave her a club chain bangle like we gave **Margaret** on her 18th birthday.

Well darling I will close this. My letters are not half as long as I should like them to be, but my love for you all is very great. Many many kisses to you all, I am your loving Mother.

We got a **ist journal from Miss Fenn but no letters from **Murhill** this week. The Bedford ones came all right.

24th June, **Shillong**, Assam: My darling **Violet**, **Lisle** & **Bobby**, I have written to **Ernie** & thanked him separately, for the very very pretty bow you all sent me for my birthday. Anything you sent me is most precious & I value it very much. Thank you all my darlings for remembering our birthdays. **Father** I know will be delighted with his tie, it must be kept for his return next Saturday.

You would like to see **Margaret** & **Enid** riding the new Black horse. They look so nice on it. We go very often to the stables & pet her & give her carrots, & her nose is so soft. **Enid** is enamelling a bath. You know we only have around tin tabs out here, or rather zinc baths. It is white inside & royal blue outside – it is so grand! It is going to be for the visitors use.

Margaret & **Enid** are getting to play tennis so well. They get over good hard low shots. This is only a line to thank you all for your kind & pretty birthday present which I love. I am your loving Mother.

8th July, **Shillong**, Assam: My darling **Violet**, It was so nice hearing all about you from **Grannie**. How much the boys must have enjoyed the motor boat trip. I know I did when **Uncle Teddie** took us. I have a new nib & it is writing just like a pin, it is horrid. How interesting for you to have seen the new big ship the "Inperator" (?). You will have seen many more news things than we have so. **Father** you know has never seen a flying machine yet! while **Bobby** has seen several. The Captain Couran whom you have often heard us speak of & has stayed with us, is now in France (Challons) for two months, trying to get a certificate for flying. He says it is a lovely feeling but I am sure I should be far too nervous, it always seems so dangerous.

Margaret & **Enid** are getting on so well in their American tennis tournament. They are leading so far – they have a large handicap, plus ½ 30. I do hope they win, it will be such an encouragement for they have a very humble opinion of their play. It is a tournament got up only for girls.

Last night we had a dinner party of 10. Our table looked very pretty all pink roses, Sheffield Plate Candelabra with pink silk shades. **Margaret's** table centre doyles (?), New silver & cut glass, & she painted 4 menu cards. Our dining room is red colour wash, with dark wood beams down the walls & we have read casement cloth curtain(s) & it looks very cosy at night & everyone says how English our rooms look, so unlike the ordinary Indian rooms. There is a Gymkhana today. **Margaret** & **Enid** are both taking part. **Enid** is riding with a tennis ball on a bat at a canter, but so much depends on how a horse starts, for the ball is sure to tumble off if the horse is naughty at the start.

How sweet the garden at **Murhill** must be looking. I can imagine it all. I am so delighted you are getting fond of your music & like Mr Mead. It will be oh! so nice if you can play a little when you come out. **Margaret** has quite given up playing. **Enid** I think likes it more now than she ever has. I only wish I could get her lessons.

I have several letters to write today so I must stop now. With my fondest Love to you all & many kisses & God bless you my darling Violet – I am your loving Mother.

12th August, Mount House, **Shillong**, Assam: My darling little **Violet**, The mail brought in lovely letters from you all, so we are all going about with happy smiling faces! I am glad to hear that Alice

is not leaving & so Miss Fenn will have less worry in looking out for another cook. We have had a great deal of trouble ourselves in that line – and it was rather awkward as Colonel Renny-Tailyour was with us. We have now what is called a "mug" cook. They wear nothing on their heads, drapery round their legs & a shawl thrown carelessly round them! & Their work is supposed to be especially good, the latter remains to be seen!

I think you must have begun your summer holidays & I hope you will have very happy ones indeed. I would love to see you driving and going off the shoot (?). We often say, fancy Violet being like that, because we used to remember you looking rather frightened in the sea & your poor little breaths coming & going in gossips! Now you must be a very brave **Violet**, & teaching your brothers to be the same. Is **Lisle** getting on nicely with his swimming? I expect it will come to him all at once like it did to you. I mean the love of it.

Our new pony is not quite such a success as Black Swan, but I think it will improve in time. We haven't found a name for him at present. I have a new nib, & I do not know anything more upsetting to one's writing. I always use a relief, but they soon wear out, & I must admit they are horrid when they are new. I expect **Margaret & Enid** will describe the new pony better than I can. It makes hideous faces when it is being groomed, showing all its teeth & pretending to bite.

It was very good news that Mr Mead thinks you have improved in your music. Perhaps in the holidays Miss Fenn might get you one of these popular vales like "Heights of gladness" to play just as a treat, but you must ask her what she thinks. **Aunty Blanche** sent me to snapshots of you all, but they are very poor ones as she said, but I love anything. In the groups I can see the garden & it looks in a very flourishing condition. You were taken with your backs to the peas! & A fine crop they look!

There is a Gymkhana on the twenty-sixth of this month & I hope **Margaret & Enid** will both ride in it. & we also hope Mr Baldwin in the 8th Hussars who is coming to stay with us will arrive in time for it.

It is pouring with rain. I do hope it will clear before this afternoon as **Father** & I are playing golf against Major & Mrs Mears in the Survey. Please thank Miss Fenn for her congratulation on **Father's** promotion to Lieut. Col. I am afraid it does not benefit us at all in the money line! I hope the christening of Miss Fenn's great-niece went off successfully. I expect it is a dear little baby. I wish Mr de Mierre (?) Was out here. I badly need to go to a dentist! Now I my news is getting very uninteresting, so I will close this with my fondest Love to you all. & crowds of kisses my darling Violet. I am your loving Mother.

I hope you will do your very best to be friendly with Joan & Jean & Dorothy.

2nd September, Mount House, **Shillong**: My darling darling **Violet**, September has come round before I was aware & it is **Margaret's** birthday very soon. I think **Father** & I are going to give her one of those new golf jersies (?), But I do wish I had sent home for it. It is almost impossible to get anything nice out here, & twice the price of anything at home.

Mr Baldwin is still here. He rode in the Gymkhana for us & was 2nd in the unsaddling race. Men had to ride unsaddling their horses, jump a ditch bareback & carry their saddles. I had nominated him & **Enid** nominated Mr Cumming. Mr Cumming just got in first by a few yards & she got such a nice prize, two silver scent bottles in a little stand, very pretty. I had to draw for Mr Baldwin's 2nd prize & lost in the draw. I never am lucky. **Margaret** and Mr Baldwin won a prize too for general knowledge stakes. **Margaret's** prize was a silver Chatalene (?) – how do you spell it **Violet**? I have made a mistake, **Enid's** prize was for the wonder race, which she won, but her partner in the unsaddling race got a silver clock. It was a very nice Gymkhana, & we all enjoyed (*it*). I am so glad **Margaret & Enid** both got prizes.

We had a dinner party last night & play the game of "20" – you know it. Today I am playing tennis. **Margaret, Enid** & Mr Baldwin are riding & are going to take their tea with them.

Margaret is doing some lovely illustrations of the "Lord of the Isles." She improves every one she does. I do hope Major Gunter will be able to get somebody to print them & then she can get an order. Wouldn't it be nice if she could get a little money that way. Please tell Miss Colville I am very interested to hear she is composing a son (*song*) & I hope it will meet with great success. & also I am glad her cat got a 1st prize.

Violet darling, thank you so much for your lovely letter. They are very precious to me. It was very kind of Mrs Hawkins to give you a motor drive and to take you, **Lisle & Ernle**; what a pleasure it must have been, a great pleasure. I simply love motoring myself – so I know what you must feel. Mrs Hawkins is such a dear & so kind. It makes me very happy that Miss Fenn is so fond of the little boys. She is so good to all of you & I know you all love her very much, so you must try to be good & keep her & make her happy too.

We took some photos today of the ponies & the house. I hope they will turn out successfully & we will send some copies home. The little peep hole glass is out of order, so they may be failures. It is always a little difficult to find time to write nice long letters when one has anyone staying in the house. There is such an inclination to talk!

Darling **Violet**, goodbye and may God bless you. Fondest love & many many kisses to you all. I am your loving Mother.

Tell **Lisle** we all thought of him on his birthday & drank his health.

30th September, Amount House, **Shillong**, Assam: My darling little **Violet**, Yesterday **Father** had a telegram saying he was to go to **Persia** so that question that there has been some doubt on is at last settled. **Father** is hugely pleased & I can imagine Major Cowie's feelings too. Men must naturally enjoy going on interesting expeditions. & I also hope they will be rewarded for all the hardships they have to endure. The date is not fixed. Anyhow we are so thankful it is not immediately. I suppose however he will go the end of Oct.

There is a Gymkhana today. The 1st event is "Affinity Stakes" Partners to ride over 2 jumps to a flag & then dismount; the lady breaks 2 bottles with stones while her partner holds the ponies. They then both mount one of the ponies & finish the course. **Enid** & Mr Cumming are doing this.

2. Event. "Walk, Trot & Canter" (Ladies only). Every time a pony breaks, it must be taken back to the point where it broke, turned round, & started again – **Margaret & Enid** are both going in for this.

3. Is a Polo ball Race – we are not going in for.

4. Costume Race. Men ride to their partners who will provide them with & dress them in a costume in which they will ride to the winning post. Marks given to the best costume & pace. Mr Meade of the 8th Gurkhas has asked me to do this with him – his costume is early Victorian. He is a very good looking fellow, fair, & just like **Bobby** but with curly hair, so he ought to look well.

5. Academy Stakes. The man to run to his partner with an envelope containing the name of an animal, which the lady draws on a blackboard. The man writes the name of the animal below the drawing & runs back to the winning post. The quickest in with the correct guess to win.

Margaret is doing this with Mr Cumming. **Enid** was to have done it with Mr Kingscote, the Army Champion tennis player (Do you remember him winning at Eastbourne beating Drustin (?) in the finals, perhaps you did not see him.), But unfortunately they sent in their entries too late & so they cannot go in for it.

The Gymkhana begins at 3 o/c this afternoon & so we shall have the lunch very punctually. We have a dinner party tomorrow, Mr Kingscote is coming. He is a gunner in **Calcutta**, so I expect we shall see him sometimes there. I played tennis against him the other day – & we were to have played yesterday but it poured with rain. Of course no one can beat him here, & in the tournament he will have to give big points.

We have a Captain Wodehouse coming to stay with us on the 3rd. He is the head of the Police in **Calcutta** & is coming up to play cricket. He is one of the 11. We have never met him, but the residents of **Shillong** try & put up people on these occasions, the "Poojah" holidays as they are called. The small hotels & boarding houses are generally full. It is rather funny putting up somebody we know nothing at all about, & equally strange for him I expect!

Aunty Blanche will have gone back to **Bedford** now. It was very sweet of her to take charge of you all while Miss Fenn had a holiday. & Miss Fenn must have been so glad of a rest & I expect she found the time to fly. **Aunty Blanche** was very kind & gave you many treats I expect. How sad about the butterflies being spoilt, they were beauty's! Our garden is a mass of flowers. We shall be very sorry to give it all up & not to have a home for some time.

I must write some other letters now. With my fondest Love to you all, & crowds of kisses my darling darling **Violet**. I am your loving Mother.

How pretty the new curtains must look in the drawing room. Give my love to Miss Fenn.

28th October, Amount House, **Shillong**, Assam: My darling Violet, The letters you address to me should now be sent to: Messrs Grindlay & Co., 11 Hastings Street, Calcutta, until I tell you of another address.

Father has already told you how to address him. He leaves on the 11th Nov: stays a week in **Calcutta** then goes to **Dehra Dun** & **Simla**, & then sales from **Karachi** for **Persia**. And we leave **Shillong** on the 29th Nov: & will stay at 6 Russell Street, **Calcutta**, in a boarding house & if we are comfortable will stay about 2 months. Those are our plans as far as we know at present. We have sold most of our things & have only curtains and a few rugs & our trap & "Black Swan". "René" we sold to a Mr Earpe. I think he has a very happy house. We saw him the other day & petted him. Now we walk everywhere, but the weather is perfect & so it is no great hardship. We get a lovely view of the snows in the early mornings. **Margaret** & **Enid** ride so well now. You will like it equally when you come out here one day, but you have some time to wait!

There is a Durbar tomorrow at Government House nearly everyone is going to it, a few medals, honours & so on are being given & of course everyone will wear uniform, so it will be a gay sight.

I am very glad you have got a tweed coat & skirt & that it will be so useful & you will look nice & tidy in it. I suppose you are beginning to wear your dresses fairly long now. Do they come to the calf of your leg or longer? You will soon be 15, getting quite a big girl, **Violet**. How I am longing & longing to see you all. Anyhow 1915 I hope will be the very latest to wait, & time will soon pass & we shall have a most lovely meeting. I do love to hear of **Ernie's** & **Bobbie's** saying(s), they are a most amusing little pair, & **Lisle** to so interesting. I always wonder what he will invent one day. He really must be an R.E. for once he gets into that Corps he will have heaps of opportunities of inventing things for it is a Scientific Corps.

We are getting a few things out from home from Mrs Palmer as we shall want new clothes for **Calcutta**. I wish you could have heard Intazim (?) Sing too. It would have been a thing to remember, but I hope you will have another opportunity. How awfully kind Mrs Cowie is in giving you little things, for instance the elephant. She is always so good & kind. We are all very fond of her & she must miss her little Fran (?) so much, for she has no one out here like I have. I have a number of letters to write to catch this mail so had better end.

God bless you my darling **Violet**, a very great number of kisses & fondest Love to you all. I am your loving Mother.

4th November, Mount House, **Shillong**, Assam: My darling Violet, God bless you & very very many happy returns of your birthday. I only wish I could take you in my arms & hug you. It is difficult to realise you are getting such a big daughter! I hope you will buy yourself something that you were like with the money we are sending you. As you know there are practically no shops here. There is a small stores place with a weird collection of a few useful things. We get our jams etc.

there when we have run out of the things we get from **Calcutta**. There is an Army & Navy Stores there (Calcutta) which I expect we shall see when we are in **Calcutta**, but I do not expect it is like the home one in **London**.

Last night the whole station gave a farewell dinner & dance to a Major & Mrs Kennedy who are leaving **Shillong** for England. We sat down 84 the dinner. The band played during dinner. The room was so prettily decorated, large green ribbon bows & ends thrown across the table. They are Irish & so we had shamrock name cards & the flowers were green & white. It sounds as if we could find green flowers here! but I mean the general effect was green & white. The tables were placed like this (*I shaped diagram*). So father and I were sitting near Royalty as we call the Earles! Most people had (?) some of their silver & we lent our candelabra. There were speeches. After dinner we danced & got back at 2 o/c, rather late & we are sleepy this morning, so you must not expect a very brilliant letter.

We saw "René" playing polo yesterday. Black Swan is not sold yet. Aunty Kitty¹⁸ & Uncle Hugh are coming home I think this month. How pleased Neddy¹⁹ will be to see them, & Ena is so sweet. It has got so cold now **Enid** and I like sitting somewhere near the sun! Of course it is not safe to sit in it! for we should get sunstroke.

I have to write several other letters now, having them all for today, which is very bad management. Again I wish you every happiness & blessing & a very great deal of love & many kisses. I am darling **Violet** your loving Mother.

1st December, 6 Russell Street, **Calcutta**: My darling **Violet**, This should reach you about Xmas & I wish you such a happy one, & lots of nice things for (*sic*) & every Xmas that passes I hope will bring us nearer together. I must send you money for our Xmas gift as I do not care to get things out here, they are so poor & unsatisfactory. Also you may be wishing for some special thing & I hope will be able to get it.

We arrived yesterday from **Shillong**. A few miles out of **Shillong** one of the tyres of our motorcar burst – such allowed report, but a new tyre was soon fixed (?) on. The next little accident was the chair I was sitting on, the stance (?) breaking under me & crushing my foot which was under it, but it was only painful for a little while. We had to change our train two or three times, & get on this team is to cross the rivers. & once we had to get up at about 4:30 am, so we all feel still rather tired after our journey. Capt Wodehouse has been so kind to us. Yesterday he took us to the Cathedral for evening service & it was a beautiful one. Today we called & shopped & in the evening went for a motor drive with Capt Wodehouse & he gave us key at Tollygunge, a big Golf Club.

It is so funny being in a boarding house. The food is rather coarse & the people look rather odd, but we do not know anybody yet. I really am so sleepy I shall have to go to bed there are to be 2 dances this week. I hope you will be asked to sum in **Eastbourne** & have a lovely time, & me Xmas be most bright for you all. My fondest Love & many kisses darling little **Violet**. I am your loving Mother.

24th December, 7 Russell Street, **Calcutta**: My darling little **Violet**, Yours very sweet Xmas gift came quite safely & I love it very much & I thank you all my darlings for your pretty present. I shall prize it very much & can hardly believe that your little fingers have made all that fine Anluh (?) lace round the border of the tray cloth. Thank you all many many times.

We have had a busy day today. It was the Viceroy's Cup day at the Races. We had lunch with Mr Calvorcoressi & a very rich Guck (?). He has everything very nice in his house. Amongst gold dessert knives & forks. It is (*the*) first time I have used them. He has everything very comfortable & he is most awfully kind to us, asking us to a great many things. We are dining with him on the 26th & then going on to dance at the "Golightly" & on Saturday we are dining & going to a theatre with him. He generally arranges a very nice party of people. **Margaret & Enid** looked very pretty in

18 Ida's sister Kathleen Mary Grigg (1877-1938) married to Hugh Wake.

19 Ida's nephew Hugh Edward the son of Kitty and Hugh.

their new dress(es) & hats at the races. You would be very proud of them, they asked it to be the prettiest girls in **Calcutta** & there are a great many pretty ones here. We have had many late nights. There seems so much going on always.

Grannie was very excited at the prospect of seeing **Aunty Kitty** & Ena so soon. When she wrote she will have rather a full house, with that party & the nurses.

Col. Bythell was coming to **Calcutta** for Xmas but is unable to come, but I think we shall meet him in **Lucknow**. I hoped to go on with this tomorrow.

25th Dec. Xmas Day. We have just returned from Church a little while ago & I thought of you & wished you much happiness.

Margaret & **Enid** are going to a dance given by General & Mrs May in the Fort & I am dining with a Mrs Radcliffe & was asked to go to another dance afterwards, but I don't think I can manage it. I am so sorry Miss Fenn is having so much worry over the servants. They are getting a great trouble at home. The Viceroy is here & everyone is so afraid he will be bombed that whenever he goes out the streets are lined with police & soldiers. He was in Church sitting quite close to us, or rather I should say the Cathedral. He is going to the dance tomorrow where we are going "Golightly". I must write a line to **Grannie** today so will end this, although there is so much I should like to write about. With a great great deal of love & thanks & many kisses my darling Violet to you all. I am your loving Mother.

8th January 1914, 7 Russell Street, **Calcutta**: My darling little **Violet**, The New Year is our *** on & it all means our meeting is nearer which is everything to us. I heard lately from Mrs Erskine who says you are all looking so bonny, & you **Violet** growing so tall. I would love *** see you in your new address, the blue satin one & also the white coat. They will be so useful when you go to stay with Aunty Clirk²⁰ (?). How awfully kind of her to ask you isn't it & quite a surprise for us all her asking you. I hope you will have had most happy holidays my darling it seems as if you were going to enjoy them.

On the 28th of this month Margaret is going to **Dacca** to stay with Mrs Bryan & Enid & I go to **Lucknow**. We shall stay at Wirtzlers (?) Hotel until the 7th when we go to the Carlton Hotel. They could not give us rooms there until that date which was rather a disappointment as we hear it is such a nice Hotel, quite new, & I believe the baths are more like the English ones, & not the round tin tub's like we generally use – like you wash "Spot" in!! We are still having a very gay time.

Margaret & **Enid** are very much admired & everyone says they are so unspoiled. **Margaret** has lost a lot of her colour & is looking rather thin just now, but **Enid** is looking better than I have seen her for some time. Many people say she is the prettiest person in **Calcutta**, but some I think admire **Margaret** most. We are going to a dance tomorrow night & on the 13th we dined with Mr Calvorcoressi & go to the State Ball, Government House after. On the 14th there is a Pondri (?) ball Mrs Pugh is giving. We dined with Mr Wise & Mr Mackay = (Lord Inchcape's son) & 15th I dine alone at Government House. 16th we all dine with a Mrs Pearce & go to a dance at the Club afterwards. There is (a) dance on the 20, 21 & 23rd. The latter we are dining with first Capt. the Hon. Douglas-Pennant. He is the future Lord Percival ? but I did not catch the name. He is in the Grenadier Guards, a very nice fellow & one of the Governor's ADCs. I think he wants me to chaperone a party including two young Baronesses, but I am not quite sure yet. But I will tell you of our party later on.

Margaret has completely lost her voice from a cold. We have had one cold on top of another & cannot get rid of them. **Grannie** says her house is full of the Wake family!

Mr Calvorcoressi is sending round his beautiful motor car so that we can do our calling comfortably! He is such a kind man & does many kind actions. Captain Couran sent me a hair from a wild elephant's tail which I am sending to **Lisle** for his museum. Capt. Couran is in the **Sudan**. **Uncle Tommy** is in another Egyptian regiment but I do not know which yet.

20 Not really legible – probably not a blood relation.

We went to a Bioscope the other night but it was a very poor one, some very silly pictures in it. Harriet sent us all such nice cards for Xmas, so kind, she always is. I have several letters as usual which I leave until the last moment to write! So darling I must end this. With fondest love & many kisses to you all. I am your loving Mother.

19th February, C/o Col. Radcliffe R.A., The Fort, **Allahabad**: My darling darling **Violet**, **Enid** & I came here last Sunday, I do play in the tennis tournament, but alas so far I have not done well & have been knocked out of most things, although we have had good games. I shall probably return to **Lucknow** on Saturday instead of going to **Calcutta** to play in the Bengal Tournament. Margaret I hope will join us in a few days. It will be nice for her to get out of the heat. I want some nice person to travel with her. This is all an alteration of our plans, but I think it is best. Mr Dudley, my partner in the tennis is also staying in this house & he is rather amusing. Col. & Mrs Radcliffe, our hosts are charming. We went to the Royal Scots dance last night & enjoyed it very much, but we got home very late & so we are rather tired. I ought to be in bed. It is quite late. The post leaves so early in the morning 10:30 am, so I must write all letters to night.

This Fort is very interesting. It is one of Akbar's Shooting boxes! It is quite delightful, our bedrooms are down an old stone staircase & our windows overlook the river, & it is such a pretty sight seeing all the boats conveying Pilgrims in many coloured garments to a very holy spot a little higher up & which we can see in the distance. They bathe there & it is supposed to cleanse them from their sins for the past year. **Enid** & I long to find time to sketch, but there seems no time to do anything with all this tennis. **Father** was very well when I heard 2 or 3 days ago. He sent some photos which I will send you tweak of **Persia**.

We have had an invitation for the Highland Gathering in **Agra**. But I fear will not be able to go. I am so sorry I cannot write more now as I must write to **Grannie**, also **Margaret** & I saw **Uncle Harry** for 2 days *** he came to watch the tennis. Good night my darling little girlie. With fondest love & many hugs & kisses to you all. I am your loving Mother.

12th March, Carlton Hotel, **Lucknow**: My darling darling **Violet**, I think this will reach you just after you have been confirmed. I shall be thinking & praying for you on the 23rd & me God's blessing be always with you. He is so great & good and kind & what a comfort it is to feel we can turn to Him at any time in our troubles & to be grateful to Him for his many loving kindnesses & how many pleasures **Violet** He sends us & always so mindful of us is He not? My darling child I am thinking of you very much now & wish I could take you in my arms & kiss you. I expect you will go to your first Communion with Miss Fenn & it will be a happy day when we can go together. This tiny note is for your eyes only, just to let you know my prayers are with you.

Your very loving Mother. **Ida** J Ryder.

15th April, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling **Violet**, Letters came from you last evening. You had been confirmed. I am very glad that the Bishop of Chichester performed the service & that all three of you were confirmed by the same Bishop. I am glad Mrs Cowie was at the service too. I have been thinking of you much & also (*on*) Easter Sunday when **Enid** & I went to communion (for **Margaret** was in bed with fever). We remembered you in our prayers & I expect you were thinking also of us. I hope you all had a very happy Easter.

Isn't Mrs Cowie a dear. She is so awfully kind. How very many things she does for you all & the treat she gives. Without asking **Father** about the riding I afraid I cannot let you know if he would consent to your learning just now. Of course you know how much I should love you to, but it is very expensive. I certainly hope to give you lessons before you come out to India, so I hope it is only a postponed pleasure. & that you will not be awfully disappointed if you do not start riding now with Jean. Of course it will be lovely for Jean, & you will be wishing you were enjoying it too, but I know my little **Violet** will understand. If Miss Fenn hears of a Governess French who can also teach German that will be very nice.

Simla is very beautiful, but rather to grand in the way of fashionable people about for us to

appreciate it as we might. We are rather fond of country walks. Our house in Mussoorie was very nice in that way, we could put on old clothes & go for a walk along pretty wild paths & meet no one.

16th April: darling Ernle's birthday – we have all wished him a very happy one. I do hope so much to be with you early next year.

Colonel Bythell is arriving today to stay at this Hotel. I expect he will sit at our table. I shall get him to tell me all about you, for of course he has seen you since I have. It will be very nice to see him. Last night we dined with a General & Mrs Williams also staying in the Hotel. Miss Williams sang after dinner. She has a very sweet voice & has been taking the leading parts in the theatricals up here – the "Arcadians" etc. She is very keen on **Margaret & Enid** acting, even taking a small part, but nothing will induce them to! Such a pity I think; very nice people act. The(y) are now getting up the "Dollar Princess" (?).

We have very nice rooms in this hotel, a double bedroom with a dressing room beyond. **Margaret** is in that, **Enid** & I sleep in the same room & it opens onto our sitting room – all furnished with good English furniture. The room is full of blossoms & Ind (?) Rhododendrons. Then we have some sketches of M's & E's photos, cushions & fur (?) Silver things about so it looks more like a bit of us.

Poor **Margaret** has been very seedy, with fever & cold. She was in bed for nearly 3 days. I was quite anxious about. She is so fond of being a Spartan!! that it is sometimes foolish. After being much better her cold seems to be returning & a little fever returning. You are so splendid about writing I always feel **Margaret & Enid** give you all the little details of daily life & leave me little to write about. I must write to **Grannie**, who like Miss Fenn is suffering from servant troubles!

With fondest love my darling children to you all – & many kisses. I your loving Mother.

How pleased you must have been to have been given those charming books as memory of your Confirmation. Did your Godmother Miss Carys Barnard ever write to you?

14th May, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling little **Violet**, There seems so little news here. I do not think we like **Simla** as much as other stations we have been to. It is so large we meet many people. They are rather great & grand but I really think we like a smaller place. I often wish we had gone to Naini Tal.

Your dresses sound very nice & useful. I always like little frills to be quite simple & unaffected over there). I wish you could see how very simply the Hon. **ainond Hardyng is dressed, just a plain coat & skirt & around hat with tiny flowers round it. We very often see her. She writes beautifully both astride & side saddle & she has a lovely house given her by one of the ADCs. I am playing in this big tennis tournament with Mr Mant. Have you started yet? **Margaret & Enid** are improving wonderfully, only wish they could play more regularly.

There was a notice in the paper the other day that **Father's** party had been attacked & robbed (?) of the baggage by brigands, but Sir Davord (?) Khan who is the Persian Consular General telephoned to find out for me & heard yesterday it was not true, so it is quite a relief to us. I slept very badly last night & my letter is most stupid. I so sorry my darling, I am so longing to talk to you, to love you & kiss you my little girl. I am glad **Ernle** had such a happy birthday he writes very sweet little letters & **Lisle's** letters are wonderfully improved.

Fondest Love to you all. I am your loving Mother.

11th June, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling little **Violet**, We are going into the hills trekking for about 3 weeks & starting the day after tomorrow. It will be such fun. We shall wear nothing but khaki, so will only take very little boxes, our shirt (?) boxes in fact & we hope to get through a lot of sketching & reading & work in quiet – really we can get not (*sic*) much in **Simla**. We are all feeling so tired. Night after night we have to sit up late. We are going into some of these forest bungalow's. It will be lovely to be in the pine woods, & we shall have time to write more. But we have had a very interesting time lately. We were all presented at the drawing by Lady Carlyle. I

believe all our curtseys were a success. I do not know how you would describe such a thing, but we were told by the ADCs or others that we did it all rightly. The Viceroy was standing by his throne between curtains just like the Kings & we'd walked along a strip of red felt until the centre opposite the throne where there was a red velvet & gold mat or rug, where we curtseyed. I really felt so nervous I felt I was walking in a dream, but I felt proud of leading **Margaret & Enid**, they looked so sweet & our names were read out. An ADC gave us the sign went to move on etc. It was rather alarming but at the same time very amusing. We all laughed very much over the different headdresses. I think **Margaret & Enid** will be able to describe them far better than I can. *** really some of the ladies looked to ridiculous with a mixture of all sorts of things on their heads, flowers, feathers & aquittes (?) & jewellery & the bouquets, some such miserable ones – a tiny bunch of flowers tied with chiffon! But many of the ladies looked beautiful.

I have to go out & do a little shopping & so must end this off. How nice it will be of **Grannie** & the others go (to) **Eastbourne** and hope you will see plenty of them. We danced last night & also went to a garden party at Viceregal Lodge. Your letters are always very precious to us. With fondest love my darling little **Violet** & to you all & many kisses. I your loving **Mother**.

9th July, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling **Violet**, You look so very tall in your photo, the snap shot Mrs Cowie sent. & I see you where quite long skirts now. How I do long to see you all again. We are very uncertain of our plans at present. In **Father's** last letter he said the show might be over in Sept. or Oct. & he is not certain if he will go straight home via **Constantinople**. If he returns to India to pick us up it will take 3 months reaching India & that does seem foolish & giving endless trouble. I sometimes think it would be best for **Father** to go straight home & we to follow later when we can get a troopship. There is just a chance we might & it would save a good deal of money. Anyhow nothing is decided at present, & we must just still look forward to that happy meeting not very many months hence I hope. I shall like to hear you play the piano. **Enid** I know regrets very much she plays so little now, always being asked to play somebody's accompaniments & often having to refuse. I think if you are able to do that sort of thing gives so much pleasure at parties etc. where you go.

I envy your being able to swim so much **Violet**. I really think I must have lessons. It is quite disgraceful to think I the only member of our family who cannot. **Bobby** will soon be learning. I am most delighted to hear **Ernie** can swim a little alone. Give him a big hug for him & tell him he is a very good little boy to try so hard. **Father** will be so pleased too. It will be such a pleasure to him when he goes swimming about the sea with you & **Lisle**, what fun you will have.

I am so glad you are taken to the theatres sometimes. I know what a treat it must be. Harrowby's brother Bob Ryder is staying here for two or 3 days. He came up for the Harrow dinner & will sit at our table in the Hotel. He is so nice & very like **Bobbie**, in the face fair & blue eyes.

With oceans of love & many many kisses from your very loving Mother.

13th August, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling darling Violet, The nightdress case (?) arrived quite safely & I cannot tell you how delighted I with it. I wish I could take you in my arms & hug you for it. I think you have worked it beautifully. Many many thanks my pet for it, & to you all for your share in it. I think it is lovely & I am very proud of it, & here are heaps of kisses for it. My last nightdress has become very shabby, so it will be very useful.

Oh! **Violet** isn't this most exciting & so pathetic. I do hope & pray it will not last long²¹. This is only a scrap. Soldiers are going off every day to rejoin their regiments & everything seems to be in readiness for the enemy!

With fondest love my darling **Violet**, & thanking you so much for your sweet present. I am your loving Mother.

27th August, Faletti's Hotel Cecil, **Simla**: My darling little Violet, We are very short of note paper &

21 The outbreak of the First World War.

we live a long way from the shops – the bazaar as it is called! We are so anxious to get our home letters. We shall have been a fortnight without hearing & then I think two mails are coming close together. I expect you have heard that **Enid** & I belong to a first aid class, & we are quite experts in tying up broken limbs & bandaging, but we neither of us care for the lecture by a lady doctor before the class all about our insides, & various complaints we can get. I felt I had a pain everywhere the other day after one of her lectures – it makes us feel quite sick. We shall probably arrive rather late next time & so miss this unpleasant discussion.

Margaret has sold 2 of her pictures, illustrations for nearly £4, isn't that nice. She could I fancy have sold the other one, but she has given it to me & it hangs up on the wall now. It is called St George & for Merrie England. It is beautiful. There are 5 horses in it & they are galloping along a dusty road, or rather they are making a dust. St George's face is very fine.

I am so sorry to hear that Mr Bedford is leaving the School of Art. It seems such hard lines (?) on him.

Oh! **Violet** isn't this war terrible. We must note so many men who are fighting now. The Highland Light Infantry have sailed from **Bombay** in the overseas forces. We heard yesterday they have been put on a very dirty pilgrim ship which was never cleaned up after its last voyage & its full of "creepy crawleys" poor men! Is Madame (?) Excited over the war it? Darling **Violet** this is such a stupid letter, please forgive it, but I would simply hug & **hug** you. If I could only be with you. Fondest love & many kisses to you all. I am your loving Mother.

22nd October, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling **Violet**, Letters seem to take almost a month to reach England & so we are writing this mail for your birthday to wish you my little darling every possible good wish & oh! such happiness in the future, because of course just now the war being on spoils most things. But it cannot last forever & I hope your birthday will be a very happy one. We are sending you a cheque for £1:0:0. Please buy yourself something with it, it is from us all & you can spend it as you like. You must be so disappointed we are not able to come home just yet, but so sensible you will understand that we would if we could & I hope it will not be long postponed. Please give the cheque for £3:3:0 to Miss Fenn for our Combinations. They are just what we wanted.

I now looking at that postcard of you all it's very sweet, best of **Lisle & Bobbie**. **Lisle** is still very handsome & the cleft in his chin is still there! You all looked very well. You look the most altered **Violet**, perhaps it is your fluffy hair or being tied high back – looking quite grown-up!! It was a great pleasure to me getting that photo. **Enid** once my writing table so I will close this. With a very great number of kisses & fondest Love my darling **Violet**. I am your loving Mother.

I had two letters from **Father** last dated August 8th & his last news of us was June 1st! He hopes to come back end of Nov. & the S. General says he may go to **Mussoorie** & not **Shillong** I would much dislike the latter.

22nd October, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling little **Ernle**, We have been busy all the morning moving our room. We are on the sunny side of the Hotel & it's such a nice change but rather a nuisance & trouble hanging up all the pictures again.

I was very delighted to get the postcard photo of you all. How my little family is growing up. It is very sweet of you all & I love looking at it & so pleased to see your little hard round knees! You are trying not to laugh! No doubt you had a good deal of fun being taken.

I had two letters from **Father** last week. He hopes to be back in India the end of Nov. in these days of war I hardly like to count on it. **Ernle** I suppose you see lots of soldiers walking about in Eastbourne & many poor Belgian refugees. England must be almost a changed place, but I hope **Murhill** will be the same & that the Germans will not come near it!

Fondest Love & many kisses my darling Brownie to you all. I your loving **Mother**.

*(Undated later part of a letter to **Violet**), Faletti's Hotel Cecil, **Simla**:*

until 12 o'clock. **Margaret** dined with another party last night in the Hotel & **Enid** & I had 2 men to dine with us, a very quiet party.

We had a tremendous struggle in the mixed doubles yesterday's tournament: one set all & 4 all in the 3rd set, & we had to leave off their on account of the light failing & have to continue where we left off this afternoon; most difficult to play like that just to get those 2 games! We shall all be so nervous – unless we get to 5 all!

We have all had colds. I hope my darling little **Violet** you are very well & very happy. It must be such a dreadful disappointment to you all as it is to us over not coming home so soon, but I hope it won't be very long postponed. God bless you my pet. Fondest love & many kisses to you all, your loving Mother.

I have had no letter from Father for 7 weeks & no news of him. Major Cowie telegraphed to the Surveyor General that he was returning through the Black Sea & would reach India on the 30th of this month. As the **Dardanelles** are closed I wonder if it will affect him.

12th November, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling **Violet**, We are all feeling so sad today for we have seen in the papers that **Uncle Hugh** has been killed²² & Hamish Reid & that Cousin Kate Ward's son Bertram in the Middlesex Ryls (?) died of his wounds. I believe I right in thinking he is Cousin Kate Ward's son. Poor poor! **Aunty Kitty** & Cousin Jim. I can hardly get them out of my mind what they are suffering is what 1000's of others are also doing. The whole world is plunged in grief now, but as a lady bravely remarked the other day we must just rejoice in those that live & I think that is the only plucky way to look at things.

I hear **Uncle Harry** has gone to the war and that **Uncle Tommy** has joined a Camel Corps & was on the White Nile. They are sending more & more troops from India especially Native Cavalry & Daly I expect to hear **Wigram Money's**²³ Regt. will go. But really **Violet** the war news does seem better, the Russians are doing so well & the Germans seem disheartened & almost on the run.

I have been making enquiries for **Father!** & through a **Delhi** source I hear he & Capt Wilson were to leave **Baku** Nov: 2nd (on the Caspian Sea) reach **Petrograd** on Nov 5th for **London!!** So perhaps he is even with you now. I shall anyhow address my letters to **Eastbourne**. Please ask Miss Fenn if **Father** is not there to send it to the Foreign Office & ask them to forward it. For I can think of no other way. I hope very much he is with you all. It will be a joy to me to feel he has seen you, & oh! such a joy for you to see him. You will tell him that as far as I know he was to be stationed in **Mussoorie**, under Col. Bythell – in that case was to lose Rs.300 a month! Poor **Father!** I do not suppose **Father** has had letters from us since June 1st so you must tell him anything you can.

How interesting his journey across Russia will be & oh! how cold. I hope he will not lose his nose or hands or ears! I had a long letter from Major Cowie, so interesting. He has arrived in **Dehra Dun** & came through the Black Sea. They were stopped by the German warship "Goeben" but allowed to continue. They stopped at many ports, & it must have been a very exciting journey. Jean has very likely heard all about it from her Father.

Your letters are very sweet darling & you cannot imagine how I love them.

I do wonder where all the Belgian refugees will be put. They still seem to pour into little England.

Margaret still does beautiful illustrations, but the critics say her drawings of people are still rather incorrect. She should study anatomy more. What a help it would be to have a few more good lessons at home.

Fondest Love my darling **Violet** to you all – I your loving **Mother**.

How awfully kind of Mr Wratislaw²⁴ to go (and) see you & to give you a present.

22 1st November 1914.

23 An engagement to Enid was broken off by her (see below). As a widow she married him in 1956.

24 He was the British Commissioner with the Turco-Persian Boundary Commission, but withdrew with ill health.

3rd December, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling darling **Violet**, We have just had a wire sent through the Survey Office that **Father** is arriving in **Bombay** on the 26th, the day after Xmas. My feelings are all over the place! So to speak that. You will all be so sad at parting with him after so very few days at home, which I can imagine simply flew. You poor poor little children. I am full of sympathy for such a short lived pleasure, but we will all come home soon I hope as soon as the war is over, & be very happy again. Poor **Father**, he will feel very disappointed not to have been given some appointment by the War Office to help his country somehow just now. I pictured him helping to defend **Eastbourne**! Well (?) by his coming out, we shall feel he is fairly safe. But I wish for his sake he was coming to something more interesting than just in charge of a Survey party & losing money by it. By that I mean he will not get the same pay as he did when he was a Superintendent of a Circle with parties under him.

We are knitting mittens, long ones, comforters & making shirts for the Front.

We have only just got the telegram & so our thoughts are flying all about! If **Father** arrives on the 26th Dec: he will have Xmas Day in **Bombay** harbour or just before there. We do not know if we shall meet him here, or if we are to go to **Mussoorie**. We rather hope **Father** will be able to have a few days in **Simla**. Perhaps a letter will tell us what to do.

I really have so little news. I sure you would understand my only sending you a very stupid letter, but I send crowds & crowds of love & kisses. & I so longing to see all my darlings again. **Father** will be bombarded by questions all about you. It will be a joy to hear it all first-hand. God bless you my darling **Violet**, & maybe meet again very soon. Fondest Love to you all – I your very loving Mother.

31st December 1914, Cecil Hotel, **Simla**: My darling **Violet**, We all went to the Station to meet **Father** who arrived by the 2 o'clock mail. Your sweet letters arrived very soon after. He was travelling all the way with them. **Father** is looking very well, but far stouter than when I last saw him. We have been asking him so many questions about you all & it's delightful hearing of your sayings & doings. You are taller than Miss Fenn, so then you are taller than me, for Miss Fenn & I are much the same height I think. **Father's** ship was 2 days late. So he arrived yesterday the 30th. They had a very rough voyage.

I think we are moving to **Mussoorie** & will stay at the Himalaya Club, probably next week. We shall be very sorry indeed to leave this very comfortable Hotel & the many friends we have made here, but I think it is a cheaper place to live in than **Simla**.

I am so glad you had such nice Xmas presents. The silk scarf **Grannie** since you will be very useful & it also sounds so pretty.

Enid has framed – that means to say we bought some glass & some black or brown binding & cardboard & made a very neat frame – 2 photos of Moyle's Court²⁵. They look very nice & are above my writing table.

I do not feel very well today. Something to do with Xmas dinner I fancy! So many people in the Hotel were upset. I think it was the Indian cook's desire to excel himself in his artistic efforts for Xmas! & we suffered in consequence. So you mustn't expect much of a letter. I don't feel very strong after having had no breakfast!

What a pretty calendar Miss Fenn sent us. Please give her my love for it & I will write next mail. There seems so much to talk about & see to today. I hope my darling **Violet** this is going to be a very happy New Year, and end of the war, & that we shall all meet soon. With fondest love & many many kisses my darling **Violet**. I am your loving Mother.

Father has just under an his box and given us your pretty Xmas presents. Oh! **Violet** darling I so pleased with the collar & cuffs & the lovely card & wish I could hug you all many times for them. Thank you thank you darlings all for your present.

25 A home of the de Lisle family near Ringwood.

28th January 1915, Himalaya Club, **Mussoorie**, U. P.: My darling **Violet**, I forgot to tell **Bobbie** in my letter to him last week that we were most awfully pleased with his map, will you explain this (*to*) him. We think it very clever. Don't you think it's wonderfully clever of the little chap, **Violet**? & fancy doing it all alone.

You had some very nice presents for Xmas & so I think you must all have had a fairly happy day & the younger one is the more we appreciate Xmas, for I think it's more a time for children than grown-ups. My hands are so cold I can hardly write.

I had a long letter from Col. Ronaldson, commanding the Highland Light Infantry in France, so interesting it was, but oh! so sad. He has felt the loss of his men so much – fancy 14 officers killed & wounded (only 7 of them left) & 576 men – it's an awful lot, but many other Regts. have suffered as badly. But amongst the H.L.I. was our dear friend Capt Cameron whom you must have often heard us talk of. Capt Dudley in the Royal Fusiliers has been sent with his Regt. home & he said he would try to go & see you all. I wonder if he will. He is very tall & handsome. We knew him well in **Lucknow**.

We have rather sweet little rooms in this Club & we have our books & pictures & other treasures round us, so it feels more homely. But the rest of the Club is not so comfortable. To begin with it's not properly opened & Col. Bythell's servants are running it at present, & many of the rooms are dusty & untidy, but as we only go & have our meals in that part it does not affect us much. I hope the cooking will also improve later on. **Margaret, Enid** & I went for a very long walk yesterday about 12 miles into the jungly end of **Mussoorie**. We also visited our favourite spot "Ryder Point" – it was almost a surprise to me that we did not meet any bears or leopards for they are about at this time of the year. We took some cake in our pockets & enjoyed our day out very much.

You must have appreciated **Uncle Harry's** letter from France. I've not heard since **Suez**, so I expect you have all the latest news. **Enid** & I have just finished making & sending off to long pairs of mittens for Col. Ronaldson. **Uncle Harry** has some too. I do not expect they can have enough warm things & they must so quickly wear out.

I think **Father's** Persian rugs are arriving today & we are longing to see them, & they will help to make our room look pretty. You write such splendid letters **Violet** – very nicely expressed – & they are always a treat to read. I wish mine could be as nice, but I think letter writing is a gift! **Father** agrees with you those snapshots of me are simply horrid! But he also likes the one of us 3 taken at lunch. The Persian carpets have just come & we must unpack them. So goodbye darling. Fondest love & many kisses to you all. I my darling **Violet**, your loving Mother.

25th February, Himalaya Club, **Mussoorie**, UP: My darling little **Violet**, Although you are taller than I, you must still be my darling little girl! Your letter was awfully interesting. We were quite thrilled that it has come to such a pass that even in **Eastbourne** lights are not to be shewn after dark. I can picture you all putting up those curtains & brown paper etc. We used to all think at one time how exciting & interesting it must have been to live in the time of the Stuarts & Civil War, but now we are actually living in perilous times it's not all that we would wish, & it will be more exciting to read about what has happened 100 years hence, than to be enduring the sorrow and anxiety we are (*in*) now. We told Col. Bythell how careful they are in **Eastbourne** over the lighting & so he has written to his mother in **Southsea** asking her what is happening there & that she never tells news like that, but perhaps the authorities do not think it is necessary to start that there yet.

I have written Miss Fenn a long letter about your lessons etc. I think you would like to start riding lessons instead of gym & swimming. & **Violet** unless you are going to draw & paint very well one day perhaps you know nothing of that now to give yourself pleasure just to paint when you feel inclined. Not everyone has the same talent & so it is spending money which you might like to spend in another way. I do not know if you are fond of singing & would like to learn that with a master instead of music. If you learn riding not much money should be spent on your habit. In fact I think it's quite likely **Enid** will send you her habit complete as the chances of her riding up here in the

hills is a thing we think most unlikely & she can always use **Margaret's** when she wants to. They can arrange to go out on different days. **Enid's** habit is rather shabby but you will not mind that, it will only look as if you had hunted a lot!!! You are still growing. Then when you come out to India you can have a new one made & also **Enid**. The hat I must leave to miss Fenn, perhaps straw Panama's are being born? A bowler with your hair down would not look so nice. You can wear a soft white shirt instead of a stock just for now. I expect you will love riding, it will (*be*) a joy to you. I wonder when you will start; of course you cannot until the habit arrives, but we may send it off tweak. You know you must never ride when you are not well. You will understand.

Our letters sent last week will be about a week late as the steamer broke down. Your last letters turned up this week, so we had two the same day. I think it is quite wonderful how letters are coming through so regularly as they are, considering the many dangers of the seas.

I think each of **Margaret's** illustrations are better than the last, but she is not so keen on outdoor sketching. **Enid** & I have started to go out most afternoons to do some little bits, but it's fearfully cold. I must write to my mother now. With fondest love my darling **Violet** to you all & many kisses. I am your loving Mother.

1st April, Himalaya Club, **Mussoorie**, UP: My darling little **Violet**, Rumours are being started that the war will be over in June – oh! if it only could be. Perhaps it's rather unwise for us even mentioned June in case we are very disappointed. But too many lives have already been shed to wish us anything else but peace for the whole world. You will be having holidays now. Tomorrow is Good Friday. Easter seems early this year.

I am so interested in all you tell us about the Belgian wounded. You must enjoy talking to them. We seem to be away from all the war & signs of it especially in **Mussoorie**.

I wonder how you will enjoy the riding. It would be sad if Mr Wood had no horses left & that all had gone to the Front. Is Jean still riding too? You will like going out with her, only you will have to begin slowly first.

There is absolutely no news. We had tea with Canon & Mrs Oldham the other day & I was asked to sing. We hear that today 21 ladies arrive at the Savoy Hotel but no men! & something like that at the other hotel. So I imagine the season as far as dances etc. go, will be very dull with those who want to be gay. I cannot imagine anyone really enjoying themselves until peace has been declared.

I am sorry to hear that the baby bunnies had such a very short experience of this world. Darling **Violet** this is such a stupid letter do forgive it. With fondest love & numbers of kisses to you all. I am your loving Mother.

15th 1915, Himalaya Club, **Mussoorie**, U.P.: My darling darling **Violet**, This is not a letter but just a tiny line to tell you how very distressed I was to hear you had had such a nasty accident to your dear little foot. Poor poor **Violet**, it must have been simply horrid for you. Most painful & really rather alarming. I think you are very plucky over it all, & everyone seems to have (*been*) so kind & sympathetic & they must have been so anxious. I consider **Violet** you are the first of us all that has really been wounded seriously!

Well darling the last letters – two having come together told us your foot was getting on nicely & so we are much happier about you. Here is a double amount of love & affection for you, from your loving Mother.

29th April, Himalaya Club, **Mussoorie**, UP: My darling **Violet**, You all missed to post this week. I expect it was on account of Good Friday. Perhaps 2 letters will come this week. We should get the mail on Sunday, today is Thursday. I am glad to hear how you were well enough to walk. No doubt you will always have the scar. My sweet little **Violet**, I cannot tell you how sorry I was for you. Well **Violet**, we are really making preparations for coming home. We are trying for a Transport, but it seems so unlikely we can get one. So we are booking berths provisionally on the Kaiser-i Hind sailing on the 26th June & due to arrive on July 17th at **Tilbury Docks** but you know **Violet** it does

not do for any of us to count on it quite in these days of war. Anything might prevent our sailing. I can only say D.V. we hope to sail on 26th June. We shall travel 2nd class B! So as far as the voyage is concerned it will not be very comfortable, but you know we are not well off now & so we have to be very careful. I expect being 3 of us we shall get a cabin to ourselves. I am so so sorry to leave dear **Father** but I hope he will come home soon. So much depends on the wall. It seems so long since I saw all my darling children. So you can imagine my feelings. I am just longing & longing to see you.

The war seems never-ending & daily we see some dear friend has been killed. Our last loss was Capt. Waddell-Dudley in the Royal Fusiliers, a special friend of **Enid's** too. He wrote not so long ago & said he was wounded in the shoulder. Then I suppose the bullet was taken out & he went to fight again only to be killed. **Enid** often heard from him. He was my partner in 2 tennis tournaments & we stayed in the same house in **Allahabad**. He also hoped to have gone & seen you all in **Eastbourne** if you will remember, but had to go off to the Front very soon after his arrival in England & so hadn't time. I wonder if our friend Major Knox-Niven will be able to go & see you. He said he hoped to. He is very full of fun & we know him very well. He is now on his way home on the Transport "Varsora", or perhaps he has arrived. I expect he will go off to France soon, although he was sent home on sick leave.

I think Miss Fenn was very wise about the cooking classes. In the summer it is too hot to learn now – or so I shall be delighted for you to go on with your music lessons with Mr Meade if you like them. I wasn't sure if you liked music, but now I think you do! I have no news. We were all sorry **Enid's & Wigram's** engagement was broken off, but I suppose it is for the best & now we don't talk about it more than we can help, for naturally it is rather a painful subject. Of course they had seen very little of each other.

How pleased Mlle must have been to see her 'young man'! & so you have seen a Belgian officer. You have seen many more things than we have.

I am so sorry for poor Cousin Adelaide Reid. She can never be the same again. It was very kind of Jim to go & see you all. I think I must end my letter & write to **Grannie**. I hear **Uncle Harry** got 5 days' leave again.

With fondest love & many many kisses my darling **Violet** & to you all. I am your loving Mother.

27th May, Himalaya Club, **Mussoorie** UP: My darling **Violet**, Your letters are simply splendid & such a joy to read. Mine I feel are very stupid, There seems so little to tell you of, especially now we have become so quiet. The Himalaya Club is nearly 4 miles from the rest of the Station called the Happy Valley end where most of the residents live. The hotels are full & I believe lots is going on, but except for playing tennis at the Happy Valley Club we avoid it all. The view which used to be so pretty looking down onto **Dehra Dun** is all one pale grey & a heat haze & the snows looking towards the mountains on the other hand are very faint.

The rains will come next month & then everything will be clean & lovely skies & sunsets. You know **Margaret & Enid** had no luck with their tennis & were beaten in the 1st round. **Father** & I were more fortunate. I was in 2 semi-finals & the finals of the handicap singles I play this afternoon. As I do not feel very fit, I count of (?) being beaten, but still I shall get a 2nd prize & that will be nice.

This time next month we should be on the sea. Sometimes our hopes are raised by hearing we might get a Transport, but it's so doubtful that we have not given up our berths in the Kaiser-i-Hindi 26th June. We shall have it very ** & rough. We shall only be able to write 3 letters I think after this one to England, but I will try & post one at **Marseilles**.

We are rejoicing that into the has at last joined in & so I hope it will shorten this hateful more, & then Navy will be a help. How uncomfortable (to say the least!) The Germans must feel that every decent nation is against them.

I do hope **Violet** you have started your riding & that you are thoroughly enjoying it. It will be just a little treat for you. I am glad to hear **Enid's** habit is a bit tight for you. **Enid** has become so dreadfully thin & I don't think her figure is half as pretty as it was. I hope **Violet** you will be sensible & not try & go in for being thin.

Wasn't it sad poor Mr Dudley being killed. We all felt it so much.

Major Knox-Niven has arrived in England. I heard from him last mail. He says he hopes shortly to go & see you all. I do hope he will, he is charming & full of fun, but of course like every man he is trying his hardest to get to the war, & any moment he may be off. At present he is on sick leave.

Enid never hears from **Wigram Money** now – it is quite off, so it's a sore subject!

How lovely & lovely & lovely!!! it will be to see my darling **Violet** again and all the darling boys. When I come back to India again I will bring you back with me. We are so interested in your war news. It seems little use telling you about it, because the news we get comes out from home & then we send it back to you, so it would be all stale.

I am so glad you like your music still. I want you to play, so you shall certainly learn if you like it. The baby rabbits sound very sweet. What a lot we shall have to see. Well darling, God bless you all, & fondest Love & many kisses. I am your loving Mother.

16th July, Friday, S.S. Teesta, **Aden**: My darling darling **Violet**, we are still stuck in **Aden**, our 12th day in this place, but there really seems a chance of our getting a move on in 2 or 3 days when reinforcements arrive. You have no idea how we are longing to be off & yet I think you must have the same impatience for our arrival. You must just expect us when you see us & try & not be disappointed. It is wartime & none of us can depend on anything for certain. I certainly never expected this went (?), Owing to the attack on **Aden** keeping us here so many days.

I sent a wire to miss Fenn, "All well. Delayed **Aden**" hoping you would all understand. What is b**ing us. We are all very well in spite of fearful heat, cabin is very small & no fans, very poor food etc. no Doctor or stewardess on board, but still as usual everyone is so kind to us. There are several difficult kinds of men of war. Yesterday we had tea & saw over the "Philomel" 3rd class cruiser. Capt. Hall-Thompson was in command, such a nice man. He showed us many interesting things, a gun that practically saved the situation at Ladysmith, & a gun that fires at aeroplanes. & a gun that has killed 140 Turks! I think we are today going to see over the "Empress of Russia". We met the commander of her while having tea on board the "Philomel". General Younghusband has arrived in command of the Brigade that is expected. He is a brother of Sir Francis, **Ernie's** Godfather. If it wasn't that we are longing to see you all, we are having such an interesting time here. Of course owing to the censor we are not allowed to say very much. We must keep it all for when we meet. I only hope you have not been anxious. We are most dreadfully impatient to be off ourselves. We have prickly heat, so it's not pleasant. I wonder when once we start if we shall have any more delays. I will wire from **Marseilles**, so if you don't hear you will know that it is again the fortunes of war. Tell Jimmy Reid about us. Write to him. & I wonder if Major Knox-Niven knows where we are. His address, 16 Charing X. I wrote to him last week. I hope he hasn't gone to the war yet & we shall see him. We are so longing for your news. No letters from anybody is rather trying. It's difficult to write on board & such a wind today. Fondest love my darling little Violet & God bless you all & I really think there is a chance of our sailing in 2 or 3 days at most, but one never knows. Many kisses to you all & I long to see you all. I am your loving Mother.