

My Mothers side, up to her marriage

Charles and Eliza(my grandparents).

My maternal Grandmother was born in Lavenham, Suffolk around the late 1830's or early 1840's. Her mother was the daughter of a "gentleman farmer" so we have been told, whose name was John Butler, and I believe his wife's name was Honor. He had but one child, a daughter Mary, who, was a very attractive, high spirited girl with beautiful curling chestnut coloured hair. When Mary needed any money she would go to the village barber and sell one of her curls telling him to take it from underneath where it would not show. She was a fearless horsewoman, riding her horse around at a full gallop. Once when she was racing round, one of the farm hands called after her,

"Mary ! Mary ! We can see all you have got!"

"You won't see more than God has made!" was her memorable reply.

Birth of Eliza

When Mary was fifteen and staying with friends, the family doctor took advantage of her, and the result was Eliza, my grandmother, who was born before Mary was sixteen years old. Eliza was always very reticent about her birth. She had a happy childhood and was rather a pious little girl given to holding prayer meetings in the meadows for the local village children.

She remembered that a certain gentleman whom she did not know used to come riding through the road, dismount and picking her up in his arms would say.

"My little girl ! My little girl !" And then ride away again.

She was never told who her father was. When Eliza was about three years old Mary Butler married a local farmer, John Kett, who loved little Eliza and adopted her as his own, loving her dearly. Sadly, Mary and John had no more children.

Eliza was a clever girl, starting her education as a pupil teacher in a Dame's school. Then when she was about nineteen, she won in 1858, one of the first scholarships arranged, so we were told, by Queen Victoria, to enable her to go to Whitelands College in Putney. She left in 1852 with Second Class Honours, taking her first post as head teacher of the girls section at Tor National school in Torquay. This school survived until quite recent years. She was very happy there until she left to get married in the early 1860's.

Eliza's marriage

The head master of the boys' section was a John Daniel Brown from Colchester. He wrote to his younger brother, Charles, in Colchester telling him about this lovely girl, Eliza Kett, saying that they must not let her go out of the family. Charles went to Torquay to investigate, saw Eliza and was completely captivated by her. She loved him dearly even though he took great delight in shocking her Victorian sensibilities. While attending a party one evening he excused himself from her side for a moment or two. Soon after this a young lady came in the room and began to dance with the young men in a most unheard of fashion for as she danced she kicked her legs up into the air, disclosing her long lacy underwear. This young lady later revealed herself as none other than the irrepressible Charlie Brown. Eliza was duly very shocked and it took some time for her to forgive him. She did so, and they were married setting up home in Colchester. He, having a business in the town of "Cabinet, and Furniture Maker", made most of the furniture for his bride with his own hands. Some of it is still in use to this day, somewhere in Berkshire, being used by his great-grand children.

Charles and Eliza called their first home "Torquay House", and when they moved from

there to another house in Alexandra Road, they called it "Tor House". Charles was a convivial man rather given to champagne. Such was his liking for it, that he was known as "Champagne Charlie". After some time he began to drink to excess, much to the horror of the pious, Victorian mind of Eliza. He rode every where on horseback in those days before the motor car had been invented. The stories go that one day he was so drunk that he fell off his horse and was found by his groom lying in the middle of the road with the horse standing guard over him. Then on another occasion when he was "half seas over" the limit, he arrived home to find that Eliza had locked him out of the house. After calling to and cajolling with Eliza to let him in, but, having no response, he called a policeman, gave him a pound to break the door down, then still on his horse he rode in over the broken door.

The Children

Charles and Eliza had nine children: Lillian, Arthur, Rosina (or Rosie, as she preferred to be called) Mary, Ernie, who later became Bob, Amy, Jack, Nelly, and little Reggie.

Lillian married one Frank King who was employed by my grandfather in his business and by the time little Nelly was four years old he was an aunt to little Lillian King.

Soon after this my grandfather died, leaving Eliza a widow at quite a young age of about forty-three, with nine children, the youngest being little two year Reggie.

As well as making furniture and outfitting yachts he also made coffins and was pall bearer at many funerals. It was while being a pall-bearer and having to walk very slowly behind the coffin that he caught pneumonia and died within three days. When he died, the firm paid Eliza certain amount of money each month for some time, but it never seemed enough. So she went back to teaching, which was something she knew she could do to provide for her family, charging two shillings per week unless they were boarders.

Most of her pupils came from the many army camps around the town. My mother, Nelly, enjoyed name dropping so we were told of Major X's daughter and Captain Lapham's daughter coming to the school. She and her sisters were often asked to a childrens' party in one military camp or other that were situated in the town. A carriage would be sent to Tor House for the young ladies and they would be driven in style to the camp where there would be a soldier at the gate to wave them through, calling out,

"This way to Captain Lapham's party !"

When Nelly was about sixteen, the National schools began to take on in popularity and consequently Eliza's classes dwindled. So Nelly decided to do something to earn money. She tried being a governess but she found that she was expected to be a nanny to the baby of the family as well.

So she started up a class of children on her own in Tor House. She went round the smaller cottages canvassing for children, putting her charges as low as one shilling a week.

She very soon had forty pupils and so was able to hand over to Eliza £2 pounds per week for several years. Although Eliza had engaged at her school for many years a certain Herr Waldo to teach her pupils German, and a Monsieur du Pre for French, it was not possible to keep this up any more.

John, the father of Charles

Charles Brown, his brother Daniel, and sister, Susanna, were the children of John Brown, Cabinet Maker, of St John's Street. It was this John Brown who made family history.

In the year 1812, the coffin containing the body of Queen Caroline rested overnight in Colchester on the way to Harwich and thence to Brunswick. It is understood that the people of Colchester refused to allow her to leave England with the coffin plate inscribed,

| Caroline of Brunswick |

They employed John Brown of St John's Street, our great-grandfather to make another which read,

Here Lies Caroline, the Injured Queen of England

In the dead of night our great-grandfather Brown substituted the new coffin plate. The substitution was not discovered until the body of the Queen had left England.

Our mother Nelly Brown, was told of this many times, and was very proud of this.

Charles carried on in the Cabinet Makers and Yacht Outfitters firm until he died.
Daniel became a school master in Torquay.

Susanna married to a Dr. John Turner who, I believe, started the Turner Village for mentally handicapped persons at the bottom of North Hill, Colchester. Nelly said that "Uncle Turner" was always very good to his widowed sister-in-law, Eliza. He always sent them a ten pound turkey for Christmas, besides other gifts during the year.

Eliza also took in the odd recommended paying student as a boarder. One of these was Lome Strathern, a young Scotsman, who fell in love with, and later married Eliza's daughter, Rosie. Another lad was Herbert Eagle who fell in love with Nelly, but Eliza thought she was much too young at fifteen so sent Herbert away.

By the time Charles died, the eldest girl, Lillian, was married to one Frank King who was employed by my grandfather in his cabineting business. He, Frank, came to live in Tor House bringing Lillian, his wife, and baby girl, also Lillian. This made my mother, little Nelly, an aunt at four years old. Frank, an earnest young man, took up the roll of father figure and head of the household.

Eliza started a school in Tor House, charging two shillings per week, which thrived until Nelly left home to be married at the age of twenty four. Lillian began teaching here and was known as "Mrs King" by all the pupils, including her four younger brothers and Nelly. All through her life my mother referred to Lillian as "my sister, Mrs King".

Frank was always remembered with affection by Eliza's younger four little children, and with respect by the five older ones. He guided Eliza over money matters and became a father figure to them all. My mother always remembered the long walks on Sundays after church, which was three times a day when they were small. He would take them walking from Colchester to Wivenhoe where they might have a glass of lemonade to fortify them for the long walk back home. He was Eliza's right hand until her eldest son, Arthur, was old enough to go into his father's business.

Arthur had no liking for this. He wanted to be a veterinary, so he took a job on a farm to learn all as much as he could about animals. Eliza was very put out over this. When he came home from work she insisted that as he smelled of stables and horses he must use the back area steps and back door to come into the house.

He married, at twenty two, Alice, a woman ten years older than himself who helped him, loved him, and pushed him through his many exams so that he, Arthur Oakely Brown, became a much loved doctor. He became head surgeon of a field hospital in France during the 1914-1918 war.

He and Alice lived in Swindon in a house named "Norbury" until Alice died. A few years later Arthur re-married one of Alice's friends and seemed very happy. When he died aged about seventy, there was a column in the local newspaper about his funeral, which was attended by about two hundred people including doctors and nursing staff from local hospitals.

Arthur and Alice had one child, a son, named Valentine to whom they were devoted, giving

him the best education possible and sending him on to Sandhurst from where he became an army officer serving in the 1914-1918 war. He, poor fellow was killed on November 11th 1918, the very day of the armistice. (?)

Arthur found that he, Valentine, had run up considerable debts amounting to about £1000, which in those days was a fortune. Arthur said it would take him a lifetime to re-pay these debts. Whether he paid these debts I do not know; he did not communicate with the family very much apart from a birthday cheque to my mother each year and five shillings a week to his then widowed sister, Rosie.

Eliza's eldest daughter, Lillian, who married Frank King, had one little girl also named Lillian. This little girl married a John Goodchild who was lame in one leg. He became a church vicar in, I believe, Halesworth, Suffolk, being known as the "lame vicar". They had but one child who followed in his father's footsteps and became a church vicar somewhere in Suffolk. My mother, Nelly went to stay there now and again.

Eliza's second daughter, Amy, died at thirty-eight with what was called in those days "galloping consumption", brought on by an unfortunate love affair with someone named "Tom". This Amy was very beloved being the confidant and comforting friend to all the family.

My mother always remembers her wearing a pretty, colourful apron. This apron played a wonderful role the early years of her married life. Her first born, a son, little Bobby, died at twenty one months old from meningitis and as my grieving heart broken little mother sat by his cot watching him, he sat up in bed, and with glowing eyes, held out his little arms to someone unseen by other eyes and said,

"Pretty ! Pretty !".

This was the name he had for Amy in her pretty apron. But Amy had died some months earlier. Nelly had then a wonderful sense of peace as her baby passed into the waiting arms of "Pretty". Who shall say that Pretty Amy was not there for Bobby ? Nelly always believed it was so, and this belief helped her to come to terms with her great loss.

Rosie continued to live in Tor House for some years after she was married to a young Scotsman, Lome Strathern, He had come to Colchester to work and ended up lodging with Eliza.

He, Lome, was from a very good, old Scots family. I believe one of his cousins was High Sheriff of Glasgow at one time. Rosie and her four children, Donald, Olive. Marjory, and Fairly, always claimed decent from Robert the Bruce, of Scotland who married Joanna Strathern.

Lome and my mother, Nelly, were firm friends throughout his short life. He died of diabetes at forty two. His daughter, Marjory, also died of diabetes when she was about sixty. Medicine has come a very long way since those days before insulin injections and tablets.

On one of his visits to see Nelly he stayed to dinner. I dimly remember him as a black bearded young man. This dinner was evidently a pie of some kind and Nelly gave him a generous helping leaving the dish empty. When my father came in to his dinner I piped up with accusing four year old voice,

"There would have been a piece of pie for your dinner, but Mummy gave it to Uncle Lome!"

My father just laughed and assured me that he did not mind Uncle Lome having a piece of pie.

Of Lome and Rosie's four children Olive was the eldest. She was a fun loving girl and rather high spirited. When he, Lome was dying, he said to Rosie,

"I don't know what you will do with that girl, Olive!"

Olive became a telephonist in Colchester exchange and married a man named Gould who

was also employed by the GPO. This man claimed a kinship with Nat Gould, the author of all those stories of "THE TURF". They lived in Mile End road, Colchester all their lives. They had no children, devoting their lives to their niece, Anita, daughter of Olive's sister Marjory. Olive's husband died at the age of about fifty but Olive was nearly ninety when she died.

Marjory, Olive's sister married George Gilbertson, the son of a Major Gilbertson who had been stationed in India in the early 1900's who had married an Eurasian girl. On his return to England he was stationed in Colchester, living next door to Rosie Strathern. Naturally the children became firm friends. The Gilbertsons had three daughters, Olive, Kitty, Flossy, and one son, George. It was to George, who looked very Indian, that Marjory married after he had a nasty accident on his motor-bike. After a while Marjory, George, and Anita went to live in Selhurst Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, taking Rosie, now an old lady of nearly seventy, with them.

They had one child, a little girl, Anita, who seemed to resent the fact that her father was Anglo-Indian. She did not much care for her father's family saying they were snobbish. As far as I know never married. She took up nursing somewhere. She inherited Olive's possessions and house in Mile End road, Colchester.

Donald, or to give him his full name, Donald Brisbane Strathern, elder son of Rosie and Lome was sent after the death of Lome, his father, to the Royal Wanstead residential home for orphans in Wanstead. To get into this place, a boy had to be voted in by some one of good repute. Donald was voted in and befriended by a Major of the British Army, I believe his name was Baker, but of this I am not sure.

He, Donald, spent much of his early days at the home of this man. My memory tells me that the name of this man could be Baker. I have no means of verifying this at all. Donald became sales representative for the tailoring firm of Hector Powy. After several like positions, he went into partnership with George taking a garage, hiring out and selling second hand cars. He married, and had two daughters, but when life got on top of him for some reason I do not know, he took an overdose of pills and died aged about fifty.

Rosie's last and youngest child, a son, Fairley Steed, I know little of except that he eventually married, went to live in New Zealand, had three daughters, Joanna, Janice, and Jonquil. One of these daughters wrote a book about her wanderings around the world, calling it "Gullible Travels". She now lives somewhere in Scotland.

Mary, Eliza's fourth daughter lived unmarried at home in Tor House with her mother, Eliza, until, she, Eliza, died aged seventy in February 1908. Mary was a high spirited, attractive girl with slightly prominent blue eyes.

One young man she loved when young was Valentine, a friend of her brother Jack, in most respects an extremely eligible young man who spent many happy hours at Tor House. He liked cheerful music, so introduced Eliza to the hymns of "Sanky & Moody". He and Mary became firm friends, enjoying each other's company and walking out together, on the understanding that they took little Nelly, six years younger than Mary with them, who naturally enough resented this ruling of Eliza's. However it was not to be. Eliza put a stop to this affair when it came to her attention that Val was in the habit of going to Monte Carlo and actually gambled there. Mary naturally resented this and in some way it turned her a little against Nelly and through her life it seems that she felt a slight feeling of the same resentment towards Nelly.

Although they on friendly terms there was not much of a family bond between the two of them. Yet, when Nelly had her second baby born in Tor House, Mary was a kindly competent nurse to her. Her one feeling of resentment went no further than saying to Nelly as she handed over a baby,

"Here, take it ! You all have them but me."

Nelly, my mother, was confined to bed with me, her second little daughter when Eliza, her mother died. She got out of bed to watch the funeral cortege pass by her bedroom window. She named me Amy after the sister who had died four years previously.

After the death of Eliza, Mary took as position as companion to the invalid wife of a Baptist minister living in Ashmore Green, Berkshire. This minister was one Harry Clark. The house was called "Ash House", which is still there today. The chapel still stands but the windows are boarded up and it seems as though it will never be used again. Before she died, Harry's wife asked Mary to look after him and to marry him. With the blessing of his now grown up family Mary did just this and was fairly contented with her life. Mary and Harry had one child, a little girl they named Mavis. She was a clever, bright child, playing the organ for the congregation at the age of ten years old.

Mary and my mother kept in touch although Mary had eventually married again to a member of the Plymouth Brethren. Mavis herself also married into the Brethren Sect and had one child, a daughter, Beryl. My son, Donald, started to correspond with Beryl when they were both about ten years old but after he had mentioned in one of his letters that he had taken small parts in films we heard no more of them.

He, Donald, together with his brother, Philip, had played small parts in the film "The Divided Heart" and another part in "The Loves of Three Women." When he came home the day he had been in "The Loves Of Three Women" he said to me,

"Guess who was playing in this film ? Petula Clark!"

At eight years old he had fallen in love !

Once when Mary and Mavis came to see us when we lived on CAnvey Island she, Mary told Nelly, my mother, that she was too worldly.

"Nelly", she said, "When Jesus comes again to this world he will pass you by, because you are not ready for him".

This rather incensed Nelly for she answered sharply to her sister,

"Mary! When Jesus comes again I shall be as ready as you are, but I shall probably be sitting one of these children on the pot!", indicating her four little grandchildren all under five running round her feet. To this, Mary had no reasonable answer!

Once in the middle 1920's, my younger sister, little Nelly, then aged fifteen and two of Rosie's teenage sons, Donald and Fairly Strathern were staying with the then widowed Mary in "Ash House" in Ashmore Green which was hardly more than a hamlet miles from anywhere in those days, and finding themselves with no where to go and nothing to they began to do the "Charleston" in an upstairs bedroom, and play on the piano "God Bless The Prince of Wales", the only tune that Mary allowed to be played other than hymns on Sundays. Mary was so horrified at their depravity that she went out into the garden taking baby Mavis with her and walked round and round singing her favourite hymn seemingly to keep the devil at bay. She sang

"HE is coming perhaps today!"

Now, for the four younger members of Eliza's family...

Ernie, as he was called when young, or Bob as he grew older must have been dyslectic when small, for it seemed as if he could not easily learn to read. It was called laziness in the good old days. Little Nelly read to all four of the young brothers as she loved them dearly. Ernie was the eldest, Jack was two years younger, Nelly, eighteen months younger than Jack, and little Reggie was two years younger than Nelly.

All four played together and fought each other fiercely. Mother, Nelly, said she could not remember a single day that there was not a fight in the boys' room, and more often than not she would wade in with arms flailing, especially if it was her favourite brother, Jack, in need of being defended against Ernie and Reggie. Nelly would see that justice was done. Once when Eliza was taking Ernie, Jack, Reggie, and Nelly out with her she said to them with sorrow in her voice,

"The people will say 'There goes poor Mrs Brown with her naughty little children !'"

So Nelly, stung a little by her mother's voice, retorted that she would never say such things to her own little children when she grew up.

"Oh, won't you," said Eliza, "I should hate to be one of your children!"

Nelly had five children, but sadly her first born, a son, died aged nearly two years old. Of the others not one of them can remember a rough or sharp word from her. She was much given to laughter, bursting out at the drop of a hat. We were never slapped.

Perhaps Eliza had need of patience with the younger members of her family, for once when the children were small Nelly persuaded her brother Ernie to become an Ancient Briton by painting him all over with blue paint from her paint box. She then took him to the front door of Tor House, opened it and pushed him out side just at the very moment when a lady was coming up the steps to make inquiries about sending her little girl to Eliza's school. Eliza made the excuse that this was an aftermath of teaching history. One day Ernie had been asked to a picnic and Eliza lent to him Jack's best school trousers. All went well. Then the mother of the birthday child asked Ernie if he would like another jam tart which he accepted, then he put it down on his plate. A little two year old girl baby, Maggie, came toddling round to him, lost her balance, and sat down on Ernie's jam tart.

The mother saw this and picking the child up said to Ernie,
"You can eat it, Ernie, she's quite clean!"

Ernie nearly threw up. He managed to put it in his pocket instead and forgot it was there. Next day when at the Quaker School that he attended Jack thrust his hand into his pocket to bring out his handkerchief and out it came covered with jam.

There was another fight in the boy's room that night ! Forever afterwards that little girl was called "Little-Miss Maggie-Sit-Upon-a-Tart"

In later life Nelly would turn to Jack when events threatened to engulf or overwhelm her. Money was very scarce.

Jack ran away to sea when he was fourteen, starting as a boy on a sailing ship. When he came home he kept them all agog with tales of his adventures. Some were true and some a little far fetched - especially the one about when he was ship-wrecked in the Bay of Biscay.... Or the one about when he swam Shark Bay with a knife between his teeth....

Although he obtained his Master's Ticket and became a naval captain, he never had a ship. He worked for many years at the Surrey and Commercial docks as head stevedore and later in Southampton docks as Shore superintendent for the Pacific Line. They then lived in the Bittern Park district. He had married a very pretty Irish girl, Cissy O'Malley, by whom he had ten children, who live somewhere in the Southampton area even now, except the eldest son, also Jack, who followed his father's footsteps and went to sea, but after a while he jumped ship in New York, living there for rest of his life. His full name was John Thornton Brown, and when he was a teenager he would boast of the time when he would be the owner of a large house saying,

"I shall be Johnny Thornton of the Ma-a-ansion!"

We often wonder if he fulfilled his dream he had about "The Ma-a-ansion"

Mother remembered her father, Charles, taking little Jack between his knees and handing

the boy a golden sovereign saying,

"This is because you are my son Jack !"

Jack took the money. Then little Nelly, feeling aggrieved, piped up with,

"I'm your girl Nelly !"

Her father kissed her and gave her a bright penny,

"Because," he said, "you are my girl Nelly !"

Four year old Nelly new something was not quite right here, but could not put her finger on it.

All Jack's children got on extremely well in Life. One became a doctor, one a master builder, having a large house complete with swimming pool in Southampton. He was Joseph Brown. Some of the others were Amy, Iris, Bobbie, Frank, Jimmy, Bessie, Denis, and Paddy. The others born in Southampton I never knew.

Jack, like his father, Charles, before him liked his "pint". Sometimes after a session at his "local" when he was walking unsteadily homewards, he would take a handful of coins from his pocket regardless of value and scatter them for children to gather. We loved him.

To go from Sidcup where we were then living, to have tea with Uncle Jack in Barking was a great treat. After tea on Sundays we would gather round the piano with either Nelly or Jack playing to sing Sanky and Moody hymns, the favourite being "Shall we gather at the River?". He had a set of Arthur Mee's Children's Encyclopedias from which we had much pleasure. We remember, too, with much affection, Cissy's mother and father who seemed to always there on the days when we went to tea. I can still hear the voice of Nan, as she was called saying sharply to one of her little grandsons when one of them asked for more "cumbercue" at the tea table. She gave him some more then said-

"Yes, here you are!. Take that! And you'll get n'more!"

When we were living on Canvey Island in the early 1920's, Nelly, my mother, had five of Jack's children to stay for a holiday by the sea. She had six of them, Iris, Joey, Bobby, Frankie, Denis, and baby Bessie who was called "My Peachy" by her adoring older sister, Iris. So, with four of her own as well, mother had quite enough to do. As it happened, my father had bought an old ex-army round "Nissen" hut made of corrugated iron and this is where they all slept on camp beds. My father was not over keen on having so many children, but he put up with it for Mother's sake.

Nelly, like Jack, loved the sea in all its moods. Frank King, her brother-in-law, had instilled it into her during his many Sunday afternoon walks to Walton on The Naze, and occasional holidays at Mersey Island. We have an old tint type photograph taken at Walton. Frank is standing up at the back next to Amy who is holding a parasol over her head. Seated is Frank's wife, Lillian, with Mary by her side, and seated on the ground are Nelly aged about six years old, and little two year old Lillian, the daughter of Lillian and Frank. Little Lillian was also six year old Nelly's niece.

One year when they were older and going on holiday to Walton Mary, for some reason decided that she did not want go so stayed at Tor House with just the little maid, Caroline, for company. All went well for three days Nelly had a strong sense of foreboding. She told Eliza that she had better go home, and when asked for an explanation, she said she thought that Mary needed her at home.

"I think Mary needs me. I had better go soon."

Eliza said she had better go if she was worried over Mary. On arriving at the bottom of Alexandra Road, she saw Mary looking for her out of the drawing room window, waiting for her.

"Oh, Nelly ! I knew you'd come! I felt so nervous on my own. I prayed you would come."

She cried, almost falling onto her little sister with relief. She had started to feel very lonely

and panicky. She was about 20 then and Nelly 14.

Then again, Mary Kett, Eliza's mother, was away in London nursing an old friend when one night she saw a vision of Eliza standing by her bedside, and heard her saying,

"Mother ! Mother !"

She packed her bags next day and arrived at Tor House just in time to be at the birth of one of her grandchildren. How does one explain such things ?

Eliza heard one day that a loving home was required for a for a sick little girl for about weeks. She answered the advertisement and received a caller at Tor House, a Mrs Harper, who explained that one day as she was driving in her carriage through a certain village she heard screams coming from a from a cottage and on making inquiries found that they came from a little girl, the niece of the woman looking after her. The child screamed because she was covered in painful sores.

Perhaps this was infantile excema, but no one knew of this then.

So, she, Mrs Harper, made arrangements for the child to be cared for and sent to school at her, Mrs Harper's, expense. Eliza took in this little girl who by now was given the name of May Harper. May lived at Tor House for many years and was very loved by the family. May lived at "Tor House" until she was fourteen, by which time she was cured of her illness. She became a teacher when she was older and as far as Nelly knew married very happily.

Mother as an artist

When little Offie went home to tea on Sundays she often took Nelly with her. Nelly loved the free and easy lifestyle of the Nunns, and at Diamond Place there were trees to climb, dogs and rabbits to fondle. and a pony to ride. The first time she went there she was shown into the drawing room. She was not prepared for anything so lovely as this room. The carpet was white with beautiful blue pansies on it and the furniture was Hepplewhite. The beauty of it made her stomach turn over and she was promptly physically sick on the carpet. Harriet made light of it then but reminded her of it in years to come. Nelly was very artistic and loved painting and beautiful things. She would rather have a good box of Reeves best paints, drawing paper and pencils than a doll or sweets. She often recalled the day when as a little girl she was taken "down town" to the newly opened Penny bazaar by one of her sisters and had seen, admired and wanted a pretty little tin tray. She looked good and hard before she spent her penny. Then paid for it and carried it home in raptures of joy at possessing this treasure with a beautiful German picture on it.

Alas, although it was plain to anyone that she wanted this tray, this beautiful thing, when Eliza saw it she made Nelly go straight back to change it for a stick of Evertor toffee. All through her life, Nelly never forgot the sadness and the seemingly unfairness of her mother in doing this.

The sense of loss that she had at seven years old made her see through the eyes of a child. We, her own children, always had the best of Reeves paints, and Watman paper to draw on, which we preferred to sweets ourselves.

Nelly hated dolls and sewing, yet many a time her sisters would try to instruct her, giving her a pretty piece of cloth telling her to make a dress for a doll with it. Nelly would wander around miserably with the cloth in her hand to find an elder sister with enough time to help her. It was generally Rosie. Going up to her Nelly would say in a rush of irritation,

"Needle and cotton, and please will you cut it out !".

She was never any good at darning socks either. I remember, and so does my brother, George, a certain day when he was about to go to work in the morning and she saw a hole in the heel of his sock, and decided to cobble it up until he came home in the evening. He, all

unsuspecting, put his foot up on a chair while she did the job, then he went happily off to work. After a while one of his work mates asked him who had mended his sock. He glanced down to see what was amiss and there he saw to his horror the grey sock had been cobbled up with red wool!

Moreover, Nelly had no idea how to run a house, never having been called upon to do much when living at home with four elder sisters in Tor House, and was an indifferent cook. But she was rather proud of the fact that she had made some splendid apple dumplings one day for dinner. She made some pastry, peeled and cut up the apples.

But she was over generous with the apples and did not have enough to put in the last dumpling. Her sister, Mary, complained about this, saying that she knew she would be the one to get it for dinner. While Eliza, unknowingly, was handing out the dumplings at dinner time, she, Mary, kept her eyes on that apple-less dumpling. Sure enough it landed on her dish !

She started to say something about it but was cut short by o Eliza saying,

"Nelly has worked hard at these dumplings, Mary, so enjoy them!"

Mary ate her dumpling in silence.

She was the general factotum in Tor House as she grew older, being a very good housekeeper and manager.

Nelly remembers the coldness of Tor House, of washing in cold water, of having chilblains in winter, and starched chemises that cut under the arm pit.

The only two warm rooms in the house were the kitchen, and the drawing room, which was the sanctum for Eliza and the five elder children. Here Rosie was to be found lying on a sofa enlisting whoever was at hand to "rub my poor feet". She was not the strongest of people, being always thought of as "poor Rosie", yet she lived to be seventy-five.

Once when little Nelly ventured into the drawing room she was met with a cool stare from Eliza and,

"Did you want anything, Nelly ?"

Nelly, obviously less than welcome, quickly disappeared from view and hurried down stairs to the kitchen and Caroline, the little maid of all work, and the warmth of the old kitchen range. She and Mary were always to be found in the kitchen; Mary, because she rather enjoyed cooking: and Nelly, to keep warm.