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# *The Abinger Chronicle*

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## *The Abinger Chronicle*

appears eight times a year. While many of the Contributors are local to the Abinger district, or frequent visitors to it, many come from far afield.

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THE EDITOR

CHERRY COTTAGE

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# *The Abinger Chronicle*

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## WINTER FRUITS

I have picked December's rose hips red  
and set them on my table, there to speed  
these winter weeks. A rosy fine array  
of tufted berries, downy wild and gay.  
I will not cut the shiny berried holly  
nor climb for ancient mistletoe's pale folly.  
A laughing motley crew my rose hips are,  
a garden's gift and pleasing winter fare.

S.S.

## THE MUSEUM

The museum at Wallington was a low-roofed airless attic, lit by a large unopenable skylight, and stuffed with a jumble of outlandish curiosities, collected and housed there long ago by Sir Walter Trevelyan, an antiquarian, geological, teatotalitarian cousin of my grandfather. Round the walls stood several cabinets of shallow drawers filled with sea-shells, fossils, lepidoptera, and other animal vegetable and mineral litter; while in the middle of the room were two large glass-topped cases, exhibiting stones more pleasing to the eye, crystals, felsspars, malachite, serpentine and syenite, among them a long thin green bottle, half-filled with liquid, which a mildewed label described as "Water from the Dead Sea." A number of miscellaneous objects were lying in corners or upon the

cabinets: a Malay kris, an antique flint and steel apparatus, an extinct Great Awk's egg and a spinning wheel from the Faroe Islands, a cane through which poisoned arrows were blown by South American Indians, and two magnificent narwhale tusks, the largest nearly ten feet long. The walls were adorned with various primitive weapons: an Australian boomerang, a few Esquimaux harpoons, several shields of hide, a half-a-dozen African assegais. These last had an irresistible fascination for my school-boy imagination. Though smaller and less terrible, were they not much the same as the far-shadowing ashen spears that had once quivered in the grasp of Hector and Asteropaeus and Achilles?

At length the temptation became too powerful to resist: and one summer morning, before the housemaids were astir, I stole furtively up to the museum, and taking down one of the spears, slipped out of the house with it by a ground-floor window, and fled through the woods to a solitary meadow, where I spent a blissful hour rediscovering and practising the art of Homeric spear-throwing. After several clumsy failures, I found that I must grasp the shaft at a certain nodal point, so that I could shake it in such a way as to set up two separate vibrations before and behind my hand. I now experienced the rapture of being able to fling the spear a considerable distance with a lovely level flight, till slanting downwards it fixed its point in the ground with quivering tail, "lusting to glut itself on the flesh of men," as Homer says. But there was no living flesh within sight except that of a few sheep and cows in the next field; and I scarcely felt reckless enough to imitate the prowess of Ajax or Don Quixote among the flocks and herds. There were indeed rabbits down by the Wansbeck side; but they were likely to prove no easy target; and it was now time to be hurrying home, if my escapade was not to be discovered.



After a few such early morning adventures, which resulted in several of the spears being broken, instead of bringing them home to the museum, I took to finding hiding-places for them in the woods. Within a mound not far from one of the large ponds there was an ice-house, a tomb-like structure of solid stone masonry built two hundred years ago by our ancestors, to store in it blocks of ice cut from the pond for summer use. Long ago, the door had been walled up, save for a gap of two feet or so at the top, through which I could let down my spears, resting them on a ledge, probably the threshold of the old entry. But once or twice I bunglingly let a spear fall to the bottom of the dungeon, perhaps ten feet lower down. There I suppose they still lie rusting and rotting. After that I hid them in a pile of brushwood. But one day, to my consternation, my father told us how one of the gardeners had brought him an old spear with a broken shaft, which he had found hidden in a wood-pile not far from the house. My father had, or pretended to have, no explanation of this very strange discovery; and to my great relief no more was said about it. But from that day onward my Homeric exploits came to an abrupt end.

\* \* \* \*

My father used to tell me that although he and his sisters, when they were children were the possessors of tin soldiers, they were more interested in certain tin civilians, whom they baptised with such names as Jemima Stiggins, John Periwinkle, etc., and whose family history and adventures they would narrate and discuss together at great length. But sometimes they would array their tin armies for battle, and then occasionally their uncle Macaulay would take part in their games. If, as sometimes happened, they were producing the battle Lake Regillus, the time would come when the enemies of the Romans would be routed,

And flyers and pursuers  
Were mingled in a mass,  
And far away the battle  
Went roaring through the pass.

Their uncle would have collected a number of books and built with them a mountain pass for this final scene; and then they would all, instructed and led by him, "roar" through the pass together.

We also, my two brothers and I, from our earliest nursery years, were the happy possessors not of tin, but of lead soldiers. The casualties among them were at first very heavy. Few were lucky enough to escape being trodden upon, and so losing their heads, weapons and stands. But gradually we learnt to handle them more carefully, and their numbers began to grow rapidly from hundreds to thousands. Much of our pocket-money must have gone towards purchasing those exquisitely packed cardboard boxes, each containing twenty or thirty infantrymen, or a dozen Lifeguardsmen, or Cuirassiers, all moulded, painted and packed at Nuremburg. Even now I sometimes dream of discovering and pillaging marvellous magic toy-shops, rich with countless boxes of the oldest and best soldiers, and, most precious of all, artillery—cannon, gunners, limbers, waggons, horses, drivers, and all.

Later on, during our school-holidays, we gradually developed an elaborate game, a *krieg-spiel* of our own. A large space of bare floor-boards in my bedroom, and afterwards in the museum, was kept clear for military purposes, and there many hours would be spent in arraying the English and French armies (each nearly two thousand men strong), and manipulating their conflicts. The battles were Napoleonic in character, because, the space being so limited, musket-range had to be restricted to one foot, and cannon-range to a yard. As there were three of us, two could command the armies as Wellington or Napoleon, while the third



could act the part of impartial Destiny, receiving from time to time secret instructions from the opposing generals. With every "move" both armies could advance or retire a certain distance, the infantry a hands-breadth, the cavalry about twice as far. Also with each "move" all the soldiers and cannon that were in action could fire once, the umpire Destiny deciding how many and which soldiers should be killed and wounded, and knocking them over one by one with his finger. The umpire moreover alone had knowledge and control of the morale of the combatants, deciding which body of men should advance or retire or run away or surrender as prisoners.

As with each "move" a large part of both armies had to be laboriously moved in one direction or another, it can well be imagined that a battle would often take weeks of hard work, and had sometimes to be left unfinished at the end of the holidays. But it was a wonderful game, and we continued playing it right down to our undergraduate days, and even for some years later, and should no doubt be playing it still if we were ever long enough all three together. Because like chess, it was a game and nothing more, it has not had the least tendency to make militarists of any of us.

Wellington and Napoleon had once been the well-mounted commanders of our first two boxes of English and French infantry, veterans of whom very few now survive. Napoleon has long ago lost both his legs, and has to be tied on by a thread to his horse—a white one of course, representing his famous Arab steed, Marengo. The corps-commanders all had famous names, such as Picton, Pack, Hill, Anglesey, or Marmont, Kellerman, Ney and Soult. There were several hundreds of Prussian and Russian infantry, and some Prussian cavalry. In order to equalise the two armies, the Prussians always fought on the side of the English, and the Russians of the French, a somewhat unhistorical arrangement.

In later years the younger generations of children and grand-children had to be forbidden to play with our soldiers, because it was found that, so far were they from understanding the mysteries of the game, that they had taken to setting them up in opposing ranks, and pelting them with wooden bricks and other missiles, thus ruthlessly breaking and destroying numbers of them in a most un-Napoleonic manner.

*Nunc recondita senent quiete*: the two armies now stand marshalled in close columns, horse, foot and artillery, on two shelves of a glass-doored alcove in the museum, where they go marching along eternally, a gorgeous many-coloured show of peaceable military pageantry.

R. C. TREVELYAN.

## LYRIC

I was under the sky tonight  
And there in silver, flushed with white,  
Were stars and blooms on every throne  
And each one with a song its own.  
Bright in my hand I found a flute  
But heart beat wild and lips stayed mute.

Now as I turn to find my bed  
The thoughts that singing stars have bred  
Begin to gain, high fever waning  
Shape, pattern, strength—my life sustaining.  
Empty my hand. A flute I hold no more;  
Yet song walk I who knew no note before.

GEOFFREY ELEY.



## WHITE CLOUDS

White clouds, as lovely as the thoughts of God,  
 Came floating by upon a sea of blue:  
 The autumn sunlight flowed as sweetly down,  
 As doth his grace to every waiting soul.  
 Sweet peace—my anxious thoughts pursue  
 And bring them back, as homing doves, to you.  
 How purposeless this strife and fret of thought  
 This ceaseless back and forth  
 This endless argument.

This harking back to deeds with sorrow fraught.  
 Since God alone my bitterness doth know  
 And all my sins, desires and thoughts also:  
 My restless, striving soul should seek His peace,  
 Should trust His faithfulness,  
 And find in Him, her care's surcease.

RICHARD TOWNSHEND.

## THE WARRIOR

What matter though no hope's in sight  
 He doubly fails who first despairs:  
 But he who falls in the mid fight,  
 Bequeathes his courage to his heirs.

RICHARD TOWNSHEND.

## IRGENDWO

Irgendwo sonnen sich Menschen am Strand,  
 irgendwo dehnt sich die blaue See,  
 irgendwo schimmert ein blühendes Land—  
 dunkel verhüllt ist der Weg, den ich geh'.

Irgendwo wacht ein lebendiger Geist,  
 irgendwo weiss eine Seele um Leid,  
 irgendwo leuchtet ein Tempel und weist  
 hoch aus der Zeit in die Ewigkeit.

Irgendwo wanderst du, weit hinaus  
 zieht sich dein Weg über Steine und Sand,  
 irgendwo ist eine Bleibe, ein Haus—  
 wo ist, mein Bruder, dies Irgendwo-Land?

Irgendwo schlägt man die Türe nicht zu,  
 irgendwo reicht man dem Bettler noch Brot,  
 irgendwo gönnt man dem Tiere noch Ruh'—  
 Seele, wann endet die Nacht deiner Not?

Irgendwo drehen die Sterne sich  
 draussen um flammende Welten im All,  
 irgendwo rief diese Erde mich,  
 irgendwo stillt sie auch mich einmal.

LUDWIG MARX.



## HISTOIRE D'UNE IDÉE NEUVE

Née dans une atmosphère calme et recueillie, elle grandit entourée d'amies et de compagnes aimables.

Devenue belle et forte, elle veut accomplir sa mission en ce monde.

Elle part émue, confiante, le regard plein d'enthousiasme.

Un peu craintive d'abord, elle s'avance bientôt hardiment et se dirige vers ceux qui lui semblent faits pour la comprendre.

Dès le début la froideur des regards qu'on lui jette, la fait frissonner. Elle avance néanmoins, sûre de réussir, ne voyant que la pureté de son intention.

Elle se heurte à la malveillance, à l'ironie, à la routine, aux préjugés.

Le sarcasme imbécile, l'envie haineuse lui décochent leurs traits envenimés.

Toutes ces Puissances, tantôt isolément, tantôt par groupes, l'insultent, lui jettent des pierres . . . . et même de la boue.

Très pâle, elle présente cependant un front calm aux invectives et aux moqueries.

Promenant autour d'elle ses yeux agrandis par la surprise et la souffrance, elle cherche un appui, une parole encourageante et se dirige du côté d'ou ne viennent ni pierres, ni menaces . . . . . L'indifférence égoïste et froide ne lui répond même pas et continue son chemin avec un haussement d'épaules.

Allors, elle recule lentement, la tête haute et fière, malgré ses blessures douloureuses.

Elle s'éloigne . . . . . la foule hostile ou stupide, dédaigneuse ou cruelle continue à la bafouer, à la traiter d'étrangère, de folle, . . . . . d'ennemie.

L'amour et la sympathie avaient été son partage . . . et elle se heurte à la malveillance, à la brutalité.

Elle ne craignait pas les chemins pierreux . . . .  
et les humains lui jettent des pierres.

Elle rêvait de conquêtes . . . et elle doit fuir,  
chargée d'insultes.

Le petit nombre de ceux qu'elle a gagnés à sa cause,  
est couvert de ridicule et de mépris.

Elle remonte lentement vers l'asile qui l'a vu naître  
et se réfugie dans les bras de sa mère.

Pourquoi m'ont-ils traitée ainsi, mère ? Pourquoi  
voulaien-ils me tuer ?

Ne te désespère pas, mon enfant, dit la Pensée, tu  
comprendras plus tard. Pauvres humains, s'ils sont  
égoïstes, jaloux, cruels, c'est parce qu'ils ont souffert à  
un âge où ils n'auraient dû connaître que l'amour, la  
joie et la sérénité.

Si leur intelligence est inaccessible à la vérité, aux  
idées, aux conceptions neuves, c'est qu'elle a été  
prisonnière pendant l'enfance, asservie à des travaux  
excessifs qui ne lui ont pas laissé prendre son essor ; qui  
lui ont présenté le savoir comme un tyran, et non comme  
un ami. Mais ce que tu as fait n'est pas perdu ; le bien,  
la vérité laissent des semences qui germeront.

Oublie, pardonne le dédain, les insultes, afin que  
l'amertume ne trouve pas place dans ton âme.

Repose-toi pour être forte quand sonnera l'heure où  
tu pourras reprendre ton oeuvre. Elle viendra . . . .  
et tu seras acclamée, couronnée de fleurs.

Dors . . . . je veillerai. Ainsi, la pensée à son  
enfant, la vérité.

IDA HENNESSY.



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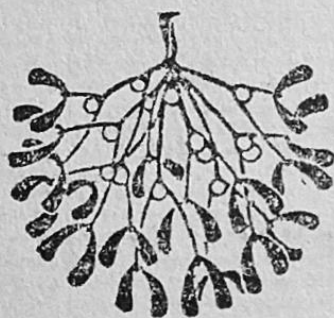
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