

THE
POWYS
NEWSLETTER

SIX
1983

Seven of the eleven children of Charles Francis
and Mary Cowper Johnson Powys published books.
The POWYS NEWSLETTER reviews Powys scholarship
in America, and presents unpublished works
primarily by

John Cowper Powys, 1872-1963
Theodore Francis Powys, 1875-1953
Llewelyn Powys, 1884-1939

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NEWSLETTER

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NOTE

The hope was to present only unpublished works by the Powyses, but three of these selections have had limited distribution previously -- those by Littleton, Theodore, and William. For these we thank, respectively, an unknown newspaper (1933), *The Countryman* (1934), and *Dorset* (1976), from two of which permission has been requested.

R.L. Blackmore, Editor

TO KEEP,

TO GIVE

Lucy Amelia Penny's delightful reminiscences of her family require primary position in this number of the *Powys Newsletter*. Indeed, her words are needed both to introduce and to conclude a publication that gathers words from all her adult brothers and sisters. Short of printing her memoir twice, I can only suggest turning to page 29 to read it first -- and then, after hearing each member of the family, coming again to the youngest Powys as she brings their story full circle.

Now, with Lucy Penny's first appearance in print, ten of the eleven sons and daughters of Mary Cowper Johnson Powys and the Reverend Charles Francis Powys have published. Only Gertrude, the painter (represented here by two paintings and part of a letter), and Emily, who died at thirteen, did not put words on to paper for outsiders to read. Such rare plenty has teased all commentators on the Powyses to seek hints about an ancient of human puzzles, the need to create, the itch to write. Some would trace the Powys-Johnson family tree, or analyze the parents and the suasive eldest brother, or gauge the tensions within post-Darwinian youths reared in an Anglican vicarage of stable piety. [*Powys Newsletter Three* carries a Harvest Thanksgiving sermon written by the father in 1894, just before Lucy Penny's fourth birthday.]

Why did they write? "To make a penny," yes. But fame seems to have been small spur in light of the distant hamlets where most Powyses chose to live, quite clear of crowd and literary perquisites. The selections here printed may point some small clues about the Powysian zeal to keep, and to give. The O.E.D.'s entry for *keep* tells of a verb seemingly without antecedents or cognates in other languages arriving from the "vulgar stratum of the language. . . suddenly into literary use c 1000" with a wealth of meanings and subsequent accretions: "to seize, lay hold of. . . to seek after. . . to take in, contain. . . to take in with the eyes, ears or mind. . . to regard, to care. . . to take care, to heed. . . to guard, preserve. . . ." The Powyses wrote to keep and save what they saw and heard and thought and felt. And, in the first instance, to share with the family, to give what they would keep.

R.L. Blackmore

John Cowper Powys
b. 8 October 1872

TWO LETTERS TO HIS MOTHER

A POEM FOR HIS WIFE

[No date.
Postmarked: Rome
24 April 1899]

My dear Mother

Willie and Margaret went this morning to a great festival at the Church of St. Joseph where they heard some beautiful music and saw an individual dressed in such gorgeous robes that they took him for a Cardinal. For myself I walked round and round the Forum until I was tired. This afternoon we all sat on a wall in the Forum Boarium while Margaret sketched the Temple of Fortune. One is not troubled there by foreign sight-seers. The old Jewish quarter used to be near and now the people of that part are more picturesque and more native than elsewhere in Rome. The view of the Aventine with its ruins and churches, palms and cypresses, of the Tiber with the remains of an old Roman bridge stretching out into the water, of the mediaeval tower of S. Maria Cosmedin (built in the 8th century), of the old house of Cola Rienzi and lastly of the round temple of Hercules, make that wall one of the most delightful seats in Rome.

While Willie took Margaret to have tea, I found my way to the Pyramid of Cestius where the graves of Keats and Shelley are. I came to locked iron gates over which or through which I could see the Pyramid of a dark grey colour surrounded by tall cypresses and fir trees and all manner of gorgeous flowers in pots. Or rather I should say the iron gates led into a cemetery separated from the Pyramid by a high wall and full of trees and flowers. Here is the grave of Shelley overhung with white roses and two huge laurel wreaths given probably by the Italian government who venerated him as an upholder of liberty. Keats' grave is in a corner of a more deserted little plot under the pyramid without trees and without flowers.

I had considerable difficulty in getting in -- the girl who answered a bell which hung over the iron gates outside the cemetery explained to me that for some reason or other the Cestius part was shut. I walked back to the nearest shop and got change filling my pocket with coppers these I presented in handfuls to the girl who at last opened a little gate in the wall and I was at the goal of my pilgrimage. There is a small white tomb-

stone with a rough lyre at the top and on it the words

Here lies what is mortal of
a young English Poet

who on his deathbed in the bitterness of his heart at the malicious power of his
enemies wished that there should be written on his grave --

Here lies one whose name was writ in water

Only violet leaves covered the grave -- no wreaths and no flowers. I am going to buy a
large laurel wreath to put there with a line of his own last sonnet

"Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art"

your affectionate John



[Postmarked: Rome
1 May 1899]
Hotel Avanzi
Via Capa le Case
Rome
May 1st

My dear Mother

We were very glad to be back again in Rome last night for although certain things at Naples are wonderful and unique one does not feel as happy there as here. Margaret has been made quite ill by the jolting in the uneven streets of Naples -- she is asleep now but if she is not better when she wakes I shall buy her some medicine from the English Chemist. We shall start on our return journey on Thursday or Friday and hope to reach England early on Monday.

As we came in to Rome by the train last night we passed all along the great aqueducts which give one a splendid feeling of coming to the capital of the world where the people are (or were) supplied with water on such a magnificent scale. I do not think that any city I shall ever see again will have the same effect upon me as Rome -- the huge ruins of the old world here have a power over all that is best in one to an extent which no mere beauty or novelty or charm could ever have. No intervening events seem really to have been strong enough to destroy the great Classic world. Calm and quiet it remains and will remain as long as this little planet -- But you are tired of hearing me harp so long upon the same string -- -- --

I saw some English sailors in Rome the other day. They seemed to be taking a great interest in all they met with. There are numberless jackdaws here and swallows, the latter we continually see circling round the ruins; we have seen a hawk on the Via Appia and heard a nightingale on the Janiculum. Besides the Forum Romanum there are fine ruins of the Fora of the Emperors -- especially of Augustus, Nerva, Trajan and Vespasian. I am going to see the Vatican sculptures again today if Margaret is well enough, to be left. We have a very pleasant room here and the people (landlord and lady and waiters) are as kind as possible.

your affectionate John

Margaret Alice
from Jack.

White Lily fair as foam of all the sea
Rose Bloom sweet as bloom of all the year
Take this last gift from me
And in Thy maiden pity shed one tear
And nigh one nigh ~~to~~ ^{with} him who
weepeth here.

Littleton Charles Powys
b. 25 April 1874

THE STONE CHAT

Towards the end of November last year I was working at the bottom of the garden among the young apple trees in the orchard when I was surprised to see a solitary stone chat. It is a bird I am very fond of, always so cheerful, so talkative, and so brave; and further I always associate it with country scenes, in themselves most pleasing and healthgiving, downs and highlands and moors, gorse and heather.

I watched the little bird for a while as he flitted from apple tree to apple tree, changing his diet from time to time, sometimes annexing some insect concealed in the bark of a tree, sometimes picking up a worm from a rubbish heap that lay near by; and then away over a hedge he went, and I thought of him no more.

Next morning we were in the drawingroom, when on looking out of the window I saw on the terrace wall within 10ft. of us the stone chat again; and very determined he was that we should take full stock of him and his attractive presence. This we could not but do; out came our book of birds, and we compared his colouring with that of the illustration; and for something like a quarter of an hour he moved about within easy reach of us, giving us a splendid opportunity of admiring his brick-red breast, his dark head and black throat, the white bands on the sides of the neck, and the patches of white on his brown wings: he was so well made, too, so robust, and held himself so well. And from that day onwards for weeks that little bird stayed about the garden. I could say to my friends: "Come down and see my stone chat," and he would always be there and apparently quite happy.

One friend of mine, whose interest in birds has always been great, said he thought it strange that it should be alone in a garden so near a town, so remote from its natural habitat; so I again referred to my book, and there I read: "In autumn many usual haunts are deserted and single birds appear in unexpected places." And I liked having the bird with me in the garden, not only because he was so pleasant and bright a companion, but because by the life he was living he clearly showed that he had learnt the very secret of existence. We live so much in crowds, we are so dependent one upon another, that we are apt to forget that each one of us is born into this world alone, and that it is alone that each one of us must pass out of it, and that it is wise to learn how to be happy alone. This secret my little friend the stone chat knew; day after day he lived his life alone in contented self-dependence: --

Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery.

About the middle of February a friend called who had not been in the garden during those winter months, and I said, "Come and see my stone chat"; she said, "Yesterday was Valentine's Day. He will have gone a-courting." I pooh-poohed the suggestion, for it was still very cold; but sure enough he was gone; nowhere could he be found; that irresistible urge had come upon him, and, after all, my book did say, "Birds return to their breeding-places in February or March."

Theodore Francis Powys
b. 20 December 1875

OUR COTTAGE IN DORSET

I do not know that I have seen a cottage so much like a doll's house as ours. An ugly one, too. But here in this haunted village, where even a hedgehog has his fancies, a little ugliness may often hide more comfort than displeasure. I hate the dainty cottage of modern nicety; the build of ours is far more to my mind. One is supposed to sigh, as though one should worship, when the door is opened and one beholds a jade carving. I would prefer to see a black bottle, that a poor man may at least become better acquainted with.

Only see our cottage as it is, my dear friends. A doll's house made of bricks that once were red, and now by the damp sea mists have lost their colour; martins' nests under the eaves, in which the birds twitter at night as if they tell God's secrets. A half acre of grassy garden, the sound of trains when the wind is in the north, and the buzzing of inquisitive gnats is all we have to boast of.

Anyone can look into our garden; we do not hide ourselves behind bullrushes. But no one cares to, for there are no sweets to see. Though a week or two ago, and for three days too, there was something even in our garden to look at. For a long while we did not plant our flower knot that we made a year ago. But after a thunderstorm when there was water to be had my wife planted a splendid geranium. I helped, too, and Susan, who is not yet two years old, watched, but in a reflective manner that boded no good. The next day this same Susan came with me to admire our new plant that already had a lovely red blossom.

The plot had been Susan's playground, where she could dig with her little wooden spade, casting the dust of the earth into her hair with unlimited satisfaction. She stood with me and looked.

On the third day Susan approached the bed alone, as if she had a serious task to do, which indeed she had, for seizing the stem of the geranium she immediately pulled it up.

It is best to be born a nettle when a baby is about, or something at least in which it can take no sort of interest.

When the geranium was gone, our garden, I thought, was more at its ease, for to appear dull and untidy is an act of policy in these ungentle times. We are so very ordinary and common here, that even the bees look a little ashamed of their company when they take a sip of honey from the white clover.

Of course we are proud of our weeping ash, but we dare not hope that our weeping ash is proud of us. Though I think the pile of faggots that we have in the back garden really consider us as people of imagination because we have prepared for a cold winter, when I shall chop the firewood and wonder why I can never remember good poetry as I used to do.

If you look for sweet williams beside our door, you will only find bindweed, and in the garden you will only see haycocks where there should be potatoes.

When the grass is cut I make the haycocks, and can hide behind one of them so that I am not noticed from the road. But all things tend to their end, and even the finest haycock will settle at last into the earth. So that when November comes a little heap of sodden grass is all that remains. I suppose I ought to be more tidy, but one is as one is made to be.

A home is sweet to childhood, and sweet to age. I like to see the same fields each day. Even the very plainness of our cottage attracts me the more to it. I do not care to roam as I used to do over the far hills. My horizon is closing in. I now find myself more pleasantly diverted sitting at my ease under the ash tree than stepping briskly in a wanton manner over the high downs. The tide is at the ebb and I draw to home. Gentle Pan is my guide and comforter, for this god can pipe and dance as well in our little corner as upon a mount in Samos.

I have more pleasure now in carrying water to the stupid hens and to bold cock Richard than I used to have in viewing the West Bay and the Solent from our highest hill.

A tiny midget runs over my page. It is tormented by my pen. I cease to write.

Gertrude Mary Powys
b. 6 October 1877

ON THE DEATH OF LITTLETON'S WIFE

[16 September 1942]

Littleton is very brave, but he is sometimes overcome by this great sorrow. Mabel looks beautiful as if her head was cut out of marble or, I should say, as if her head was an old Greek marble head carved 2,500 years ago with all that beauty of long ago. Littleton wants me to make a drawing of her which I did after tea -- quietly in her room while the wind swayed the curtain. This drawing pleased Littleton. I was afraid my hand might fail me. I liked to be alone with dear Mabel -- it was a privilege to see such victorious peace after this sad illness. . . .

I have just made a wreath of rosemary and scented geranium etc. from Chydyok with marigolds from Littleton's garden -- a golden crown, and it, with Littleton's cross he has just made, are together in a place of great honour.

PAINTINGS:

Gertrude Mary Powys

Mary Cowper Johnson Powys

b. 11 September 1849

Peter Powys Grey, son of Marian, writes about his aunt's and grandmother's work:

SELF-PORTRAIT BY GERTRUDE POWYS (c. 1903): This delicate oil was one of a series of four, painted by Gertrude of herself and her three younger sisters, Marian, Philippa and Lucy, while in her twenties and before the distinctive style of her mature paintings evolved during and after her studies in Paris, 1913 and 1914.

"CHYDYOK" BY GERTRUDE POWYS was painted in September, 1924, a few scant months after she and her sister Philippa (Katie) had moved to this remote house on the downs above East Chaldon, Dorset. A superbly realized painting in her mature style, it was shown at one of her rare exhibitions, by the Cooling Galleries in London during 1937. There it was purchased by her brother William. The cloud shadow in the foreground (Moving towards the house? Or away from the house?) is a daring conceit, adding monumentality and drama to the house, which Gertrude almost surely had already resolved would be a meeting place and refuge for the family, now that the Vicarage at Montacute could no longer serve them as such. For nigh on to thirty years, Chydyok possessed just this centrality for brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews. The strength, the composed richness, the balance of this oil are poorly conveyed by black-and-white photography, which misses the magnificent *flatness* of the original. Almost invisibly, Gertrude inserted a "GMP" monogram in the cart-track at lower center -- a rare exception to the quietly impersonal distance of most of her canvasses.

WATERCOLOR BY MARY COWPER JOHNSON: Juxtaposing light and dark in a manner suggestive of her later predilections, the remarkable mother-to-be of the Powys brothers and sisters painted this watercolor about 1867, when she was barely eighteen. Seldom recognized for her own largely sublimated artistic achievements, Mary Johnson in her teens displayed an outgoing imagination and even, for her time, a certain adventurousness.



Pages 16-17 show Gertrude Powys's painting of Chydock. Spread across two side by side page it cannot be reproduced here and the monochrome reproduction (as with the paintings reproduced on page 15 and 18) does not do her work justice.

Here is a link to Gertrude's painting of Chydyok:

<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/chydyok-dorset-60030/search/actor:powys-gertrude-mary-18771952>

The site also includes Gertrude's other paintings



Albert Reginald Powys
b. 16 July 1881

THE RETURN FROM PRISON CAMP

Isobel Powys Marks writes: *My Father was taken prisoner in the German spring offensive of 1918, and spent the main part of his captivity at Mainz. He was a Captain in the Yorkshire Regiment -- Princess Alexandra's Own Yorkshire Regiment -- and had spent some months in France, in the front line and at base, since early September, 1917. I received this letter while boarding at Sherborne Girls' School. This was our first news of him since the collapse of Germany earlier in the month.*

[letterhead] THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
with the
British Prisoners of War Interned in Holland

S.S. Porto
Hook of Holland
27 Nov 1918

I am writing to you not Mother because I shall see her first, as soon as I can.

Dear Isobel,

I am free at last on my way home. I will tell you how I got here. I hope to see you soon. You can send this on to Uncle Littleton.

I will begin with the German revolution. On a Saturday morning one of the German officers came into the camp at Mainz from Cologne. He was in civilian clothes. Very soon the rumour went round the camp of what was on. He told all the other German officers and they all put on civilians (mufti). There was no roll call of prisoners as the German sentries said the Revolutionists were coming to the camp at 10:00, and that we could go out, but the Commanding English officer told us to stay in, so we waited. The only thing we did was to rush the parcel office to get our parcels and letters, whole heaps of held up letters. But the Revolutionists never came, and in a day or two the German officers put on uniform again and carried their swords. They had sworn to obey the Workmens and Soldiers Council. We were then allowed out free to walk about the town. Mainz was very quiet and we enjoyed ourselves. I looked at the Cathedral and Museum and did all the things tourists do.

A week after the armistice was signed. We paid for our passage on a Dutch boat to Rotterdam, a small boat that was taking cargo from town to town. There were only places for 200 officers on board. Very fortunately I drew one of these by lot. So we started down the Rhine, on a Tuesday, last Tuesday. We stopped at Bingem the first night and as I only had a place on deck and it was very cold I could not sleep so I spent much of the time walking about the town alone. The next day we started down the Rhine gorge between the high hills all covered with rocks and terraced vineyards with old castles all over the place on islands and on the tops of precipices. I was glad to see

this and the weather was fine. My partner lost most of our food so I only had 9 biscuits a day and some dripping. We got to Coblenz where we stopped an hour. There I went out to buy bread but could get none, only a bag of apples about 6 pence each, small apples too. We stopped at Bonn that night and I slept well on deck near the funnel over the engine room on some hot iron plates. We could not get on our journey because of the fog. Some of our fellows found a 'pub' where an Italian gave free drinks to any who called for it. Very soon the boat was empty and all his champagne and brandy was finished. I did not go. It seemed to me a little undignified. Still it was friendly of him. All the towns we went through were bedecked with flags more than any I have ever seen in England, and the Rhine bridges were crowded with troops going home, mostly without officers as far as I could see and certainly without order. The flags were put up to cheer the returning troops, I found out.

We got to Cologne (Koln) on Thursday afternoon and I went into the town and had a look at the cathedral. Then I went to a hotel to get a bath but all the baths were taken by our fellows so I tried to find a Public Bath Place. A German civilian whom I asked for this spent 1 hour and 1/4 helping me to find it, taking me about. At last I got a good hot bath. I slept comfortably on the boat that night, for all but a few officers had taken rooms at the hotels. I spent the evening at a cafe drinking beer and watching the German people. All I met were quite friendly. They are an odd race. When they thought they were winning they were cruel, when they lose they lick your boots. The meals at the hotels were very poor and dear. I had two breakfasts, one at one hotel and one at another, and all I got was three slices of thin bread, poor jam and three thin slices of a bad cake. I then went and had another bath and back to the boat which was not to leave till the next day.

A friend of mine then told me that he was trying to get a pass out of the soldiers council to go by train. He managed to get this in exchange for some soap and cocoa from a German soldier who helped him. The German soldier added my name to the pass which was a species of forgery and also took us to the station and got us on the train with our luggage. We met a German civilian on the train who had been interned in England. I was glad to hear that since 1917 March he had the same food as the Germans had given us and that he did not like it. Still he helped us a lot, put himself out to do so, and when he left us told the guard of the train to look after us.

So we got to the last German station near the Dutch frontier at 10:20 that night: here we were told we would have to walk 6 miles to the nearest Dutch town. As we had more luggage than we could carry -- we wondered what to do, but we got two German civilians, soldiers I think who had deserted, to wheel a hand cart with our luggage to the Dutch frontier where we tipped them one pound and they left us to the Dutch guard. The German frontier guard had left its post. The Dutch guard took us on to the town about 3 miles off, a place called Venlo. There we were received by an English officer who had been sent there to receive escaped prisoners. We were the first officers who had turned up. He sent us to a hotel and told us the Government would pay all bills. Deuced good that, the stay at a hotel with the purse of the British nation to draw from. We had a rare good meal at 12 o'clock midnight with the best wine we could get and went to bed in the most comfortable Dutch bed. Mother will tell you how good they are, and she won't be surprised to hear that we were not allowed to use the bath for fear we should make it dirty. The Dutch said we were not to go on to Rotterdam without an order from them. But we got tired of waiting and on Sunday morning went to the station and bought tickets and went to Rotterdam. We went then to the Consulate whence we were sent to a hotel, to wait the boat. That was the day before yesterday. The British Consul cashed cheques for us and we spent the day and evening going about the town. The Dutch had always been very kind to us and welcomed us. At

Venlo I beat one at chess. The Consul sent us to this hotel in his motor car flying the Union Jack, and told us all bills would be paid by the Government. We were careful not to be too expensive after our first dinner of freedom at Venlo. Things were very expensive at Rotterdam. The bill for tea for 4 came to 16 shillings, simply 2 cups of tea and 3 sweet cakes each. The Consular people would I suppose check the prices. I saw all the bills and signed them to show that we had had what was on them. In Rotterdam that night we went to two cafes. The first was one that would hold about 2500 people, a sort of Olympia with a band at one end and a stage at the other. We sat there and drank a glass or two of beer and when the orchestra saw us they played "Home sweet home" and English tunes. When we got up to go he played "God save the King" right through while we stood at attention wishing he had stopped at one verse, and all the Dutch cheered. The same thing happened at the other cafe we went to only that was a smaller place. We were the only English officers there.

Yesterday we came on this boat which started today at 1 o'clock and is now at 5:30 anchored at the Hook of Holland. I'll post this letter when I get to England. I have enjoyed this trip from Mainz here like anything. It was better than any touring trip. Just fancy after being caged up so long to be free, to be coming home and to have the excitement of not knowing what was going to happen next and for everything to happen as easily as that. It could not have happened better. Some of the others who were on the Rhine boat got on this ship today but they had suffered all the discomforts of that horrid Dutch Rhine steamer stopping about at various places. I am glad they got there in time but it was much more fun going the irregular way we went.

Best of love to you.

It was quite impossible to escape from Mainz Camp. Most of us had a try but none succeeded. I'll tell you these stories when we meet.

A.R. Powys

I hope to see you soon.

Emily Marian Powys Grey
b. 27 October 1882

AND BOOKS ALL THE LONG EVENING

Palisades, New York
June 4th 1950

Dear Mr. Conrath:

I am sorry for the delay in replying to your letter but I really think you have all the information necessary for your writing about my three brothers. I always think that JCP is the novelist & critic, LIP is top as essayist and TFP a master of the short story, hard to beat. I am glad to say that both John and Theodore are leading a life of seclusion entirely in accordance with their liking, John walks up the mountain three hours every morning before breakfast and Theodore takes a shorter walk among the lanes and woods and fields of Dorset at three o'clock every afternoon. John is as full of power and magnetism as ever and Theodore as philosophical and understanding and humorous as ever he was and a great deal happier than in his younger years. Neither gentlemen ever wants to see anyone from the outside world.

Our youngest sister Lucy has now bought a cottage in Mappowder near Theodore and is living there and enjoys walking with Theodore sometimes. She loves to read and is happy in a very quiet home life.

Our sisters Gertrude and Philippa live next door to Alyse Gregory in a double cottage at the top of the beautiful high downs and cliffs near the White Nose looking out towards Portland one way and St. Albans Head the other. All this is described in Llewelyn's essays as he took the house to be near them. Our sister Gertrude is now home from Kenya where she has been staying with WEP and has made paintings of all the wild flowers in that remote country besides other fine pictures of the scenery.

We are all happy that our youngest brother Will is coming from Africa for a visit this summer. He is magnificent looking, and full of silent power, more like our Father, but with our Mothers's dark eyes and sensitivity.

My sister Philippa and I are great gardeners. We are both ashamed to have a bought vegetable in the house. She is an exact gardener, with vegetables of enormous size and perfection but I am celebrated at Snedens Landing for having more weeds and more vegetables than anyone and besides more flowers too. This Spring I was so proud to walk under full flowering apple trees that I planted myself, one with my brother Llewelyn in 1922, and all the other fruit trees are my joy and delight. With the lace in the morning and the garden in the late afternoon and books all the long evening I am very happy though living alone, except for my son coming in the weekends with his wife TY who enjoys the garden too.

They are now working with the Tibor Nagy marionettes as you can see in the present number of the Theatre Arts and there was a good review in the Times Dramatic Section May 21. It is very interesting work and is indeed a pleasure to see the show so much in the manner of the eighteenth century. It has a dramatic and literary side and dealing with people, that suits Peter very well.

Bill Parker is an old friend of Peter, at Exeter and at Harvard and ever since, but we have not seen him for several months now.

I gave up the Devonshire Lace Shop in 1945, having run it since 1916 with many ups and downs and adventures of every kind, and now I am making a book called The Beauty of Lace, a sort of record of my work but mostly a book to stir the interest of the youth in this lovely art so despised and rejected at this time. I will put in my lecture announcement to give you some idea of it all.

Wishing every kind of luck with your work,

Sincerely

[signed] Marian Powys

Llewelyn Powys
b. 13 August 1884

MISS MARIAN POWYS

ARTIST AND LACE MAKER

[Press Release, 1921]

It will be of interest to not a few people in America to learn that the Devonshire Lace Shop, 60 Washington Square, has now moved to 51 West 57th Street. Since the inauguration of her business five years ago, Miss Marian Powys, by her remarkable knowledge of her subject and her no less remarkable enthusiasm about all that concerns it, has done much to initiate the fashionable world of New York into a just appreciation of this ancient and fascinating industry.

Miss Marian Powys is a good example of a woman who knew at an early age what she wanted to do and by her energy and perseverance has achieved it. From her earliest childhood she was strangely attracted by every kind of delicate fabric. She is the daughter of an English country clergyman and in the old-fashioned vicarage that was her home no crocheting or embroidery was too intricate for her dainty fingers. She herself well remembers her mother saying to her on one occasion, as the children settled themselves round the tea table, after their sewing lesson. "Marian, your touch with the needle is so light that you ought to be able to make the most wonderful lace." Words which in the light of her present position appear to have been almost clairvoyant in their prophetic insight.

It was, however, not her mother but her cousin, The Lady Mary Shirley, who first actually introduced her to the old world craft with bobbins and pillow. The Lady Mary Shirley lived at Oxford, one of the few surviving centres of the ancient industry, and it was while on a visit to her there that Miss Powys first took lessons in the delicate art in which she has now become so proficient. She declares that from the moment that she first began to manipulate the little wooden weights she realised that she had found her natural vocation. Perhaps there was something about the exquisite refinement of the work which appealed in a peculiar way to her essentially sensitive and artistic temperament. On her return to Montacute she filled the old schoolroom of her home with books on the subject and was tireless in her efforts to get in touch with all the districts of England where the industry was still in existence; and not content with this even she spent many months actually living with the cottage workers of Devonshire and Cornwall.

By her hard work in designing and making lace she soon found she had saved enough money to take her abroad on a trip to the various European countries where the ancient craft still lingers. Then she decided to come over to America and start a lace shop in New York. In 1914, she won the gold medal at the Panama Exhibition for

a lace fan designed and worked by her own hand. She has been working at 60 Washington Square ever since where she has won the absolute confidence of all who have had to do with her, and also unstinted recognition of her extraordinary knowledge of the subject from the various museums and clubs that are interested in the ancient industry.

Her wide historical knowledge of lace combined with her practical training in the actual making of its various kinds has rendered her equally efficient either in buying, selling, appraising, repairing, designing or making lace. Indeed, so conversant has she become with her special subject that it is said of her that she is able to tell the nature and date of a piece of lace merely by its touch. If this is really the case it is no wonder that managers of large up-town stores have a habit of saying to people who bring them rare lace to appraise, "Take it to 60 Washington Square. There is a little lady down there who knows lace from A to Z."

In making her move to a more convenient and more suitable position she carries with her the good wishes of many people who are following with amazement the career of this brave high-spirited English girl who undertakes anything to do with her profession with all the fire and passionate zeal of an inspired artist.

[signed] Llewelyn Powys

[handwritten on the typed release] Mr. Llewelyn Powys has recently returned from Africa, where he spent five years, hunting and studying the country. He wrote this article -- but is not particular about his name being used.

Can you use this in Dec. 15th issue?

E.L.T.

Catharine Edith Philippa Powys
b. 8 May 1886

TWO POEMS

THIS IS THE STALL

This is the stall
Where Josephine has lain
Bay was her colour
With four black legs
A good mare and strong
But somewhat wayward
In spirit
Such as her mistress
Was known to be.

TO THEODORE FRANCIS POWYS

Mighty Magician
 I thank thee for thy art
 Which here doth chase
 Dull gloom from doleful hours.

These tales of beauty and of sorrow
 Are profounder far in mould and colour
 Than ever drawn in landscape scenes.

God or Demon?
 With unequalled skill,
 With pathos or humour,
 Over our ancient earth
 I see thee stoop
 To touch the core of life;
 To adorn the sun, to clothe the clouds,
 Or dip the winter twigs in golden ore.

O! Fairy-Priest
 I bless thy magic Crook
 By which I see thee trip and turn
 Thy wayward flock.
 Feeding amidst the spring-daisies,
 Couched in ancient sunlit meadows,
 Or lured to the 'lew' of wind-swept hedges
 Thus to shun the hasty rain,
 Or measure the games of dancing flies.

I praise thee!
 Promoter of the Pottersclay.
 It's thee, through these long hours of gloom
 Who guardeth my door from wanton care --
 And the dire curse of blind man's buff.
 Instead, like witches we hurry away,
 Over the hills and down the lanes
 Where familiar sounds arrest my ear.

I am made happy.
 For now I can vouch
 When I lie cold
 That others will live to love
 The old oak posts,
 The flocks and birds
 That thrive and dwell
 On Chaldon Heights.

William Ernest Powys
b. 3 March 1888

GOOD TIMES IN THE HAY BARN

I do mind sixty-eight years ago at Abbey Farm, Montacute, how the Gaffer went off down Taunton Dean way to get married on 25 July 1907, and we had a great supper party to celebrate the occasion. 'Twas held up the wide stone steps in the apple loft above the cider cellar, that was all dark-like, with rows of cider casks, some of them holding five or six or more hogsheads of cider.

Oh, the traipising there was up and down them stone steps bringing up more and more cider from the cellar below from the best cask made from Taunton Blacks. The farmhands came along with their wives and older children, and dairyman Slade from Dorset who rented the dairy, tall and dark, with his pretty wife who showed me how to make Blue Vinney. Mr. Hull the squire's agent was there, too, to join the fun, and to see we didn't tumble about too much.

There was Charles Montacute, the old carter who'd been carter on the farm in Harding's days, a staunch baptist, stalwart and full of goodness in all his doings. Other carters were George and Jim Gaylard; shepherd Charles Masters; Joe Meach, handyman; Mr. Geard, known as Bristol Bob; Charlie Meade; Harry Davies; old James Geard; Charlie's son, Jack Masters; young Geard, son of Bristol Bob. . . . [WEP tells a number of tales about these men.]

Charles Masters, he were a fine shepherd, jealous as all shepherds should be of his sheep and his dogs. . . . And he didn't like anybody handling his sheep except himself. I remember this tale: when once the flock of ewes had been too long in Miles Hill and broken into a neighbour's turnips I found them there and brought the whole flock back through the village to the sheepyards t'other end of the farm. Oh, wasn't he angry with me for doing that. But my, what a good shepherd he was, and I've been a sheep farmer all my life and making use of the methods he used in working with sheep. . . .

Then there was Samuel Guard, a man in his sixties, who lived at Park Mill cottage under the shelter of High Wood close to the track to Bagnell. . . . He knew where the foxes' earths were and the badger sets, all their runs and where they had their cubs. He knew where the skylark had laid her eggs; what the gamekeeper was doing, and where the hen pheasant had her nest and would tell the keeper if he thought she was in danger of being molested. . . .

In his manhood Guard developed cancer, and when he was lying in bed very sick he sent a message to me at Whitcombe Bottom to come and see him as he felt he was dying. I rode over to Park Mill, and was filled with sadness at seeing him so ill, his face so pale as his pillow, when I had always known him the picture of health, happy with the pleasure of his life so connected with Nature. We talked of haymaking, harvest and all farm work. He was a brave man indeed. He had two sons in the navy; his grandchildren must be still around Chiselburgh and Chinnock.

We must remember among these workfolk their sons working on the farm who joined Kitchener's Army as volunteers at the outbreak of the '14 war and lost their young lives.

This is what I do mind of all the workfolk of the Abbey Farm, Montacute. How grateful I have been throughout my farming life for what I learnt from them, and from the Gaffer himself.

Lucy Amelia Penny

b. 22 November 1890

AND I
WAS
THE YOUNGEST

Six brothers and four sisters and I was the youngest of this large family, so for many years I only had a child's impression of my companions. My eldest brother was eighteen years old when I was born and was my Godfather. The three youngest of the family were born in Montacute Vicarage, a pleasant house, large enough for us all with a spacious garden. No electricity or gas in our house in those days -- oil lamps and candles. A little oil lamp with the wick uncovered stood on the hall slab after dark with flat candlesticks on each side. My Father's was made of real silver with his crest on it -- used only by him! No hot water pipes -- so all bath-water was carried to the bedrooms in large cans, as there was no bathroom. Fun to have baths by an open fire, but much work in carrying coal around. We had three maids to help and a Nurse till I was three years old.

I recall the excitement everywhere when brother Jack the eldest came home for the holidays from Corpus Christi College Cambridge. He would run up to the nursery and carry me downstairs on his shoulders, and he would organize all the games -- especially dramatic ones. The Phelps family living in Montacute House -- the Elizabethan mansion close by -- would join us in acting. Even Hamlet was attempted, with Jack as Hamlet. Creepy games round the dark garden sometimes at night with Jabberwock stories from Lewis Carroll's books, in which the last one of the procession was pounced upon by some one hidden in the laurel hedge. Terrifying to me!

My sister Eleanor (fifth in the family) died when she was thirteen years old from peritonitis (as it would be called now). She had had appendix pains from time to time. Nellie, as we called her, was a specially attractive child and beloved by her eldest brother -- they used to plan living together one day. My Mother had given Nellie a sketch book the year before -- and Gertrude and Nellie both had a gift for drawing. I have a painting Nellie made of a fancy dress children's ball, with chandeliers hanging from the ceiling -- this little picture Jack kept near his couch to the end of his life. I was two and a half years old when she died and remember being carried in to see her in bed, with her lovely auburn hair round her shoulders. "Don't you know Nellie, Lucy," she said. She used to show me picture books and fetch me downstairs from the

nursery. This was in 1893, and Llewelyn writes about her death in an essay called "Threnody" in *Ebony and Ivory*.

When I married at twenty years and went to live in Hampshire at Horsebridge on the Test, my eldest brother would spend the first night or two at our Mill on his return from giving lectures in America. I would greet the Liner at Southampton where it docked, and then we would make the journey together by train, passing Romsey to Horsebridge. This would usually be in the month of May, and I remember Jack's delight in finding a celandine still in flower as we walked by the river. My Mother died in 1914 just before the 1st world war began. This was a sorrow to all of us. My brother Jack had a special association with her and would give her many books and they would spend hours in talking and reading together. My Father, lost without her, carried on as best he could, till the end of the war, and we left the Vicarage which had been our home for more than thirty years.

My brother Littleton although so different in manner and character from John was always in close touch with him through their love of wild flowers, and constant letter writing in which they followed the events of their lives. Littleton was good looking with a fine voice, ready to help any member of the family -- an excellent schoolmaster with a sensitive understanding of each pupil which made him well liked in his profession. A lovable man, and in his old age winning and warmhearted.

Theodore was quiet, full of his own thoughts and always searching for light and truth in a world where good and evil are so near each other in us all. A good companion in walks, and with a penetrating questing mind, as I found in later life when I came to live in the same village of Mappowder and had the happiness of daily walks with him for the first three years. In spite of having seen very little of each other for thirty or forty years we at once felt at home together.

Gertrude, the artist, the most valuable and entertaining sister to us all. Always saying unexpected things, and bringing an artist's touch to everything around. Complete and independent in her own mind, she helped us to be less frightened of life and to value its beauty and its humour.

A.R.P. (Bertie) with the mind of an architect, absorbed in his work and in the strength of long ago builders and what they had made, was a sensitive man of strong character. I delighted in his occasional visits and always felt happy with him.

Marian, the lace-maker, comes next. When I was eight years old our governess left us and the two older sisters taught me. I was aware then of how different they were. May, as we called her, had been a pupil at Norwich High School, living with my Aunts in their house in the Close while she was there. She taught well -- I remember some of her lectures now; but it was lessons with Gertrude that were the happy ones. After we sat in the garden, Gertrude in a comfortable chair with wraps round her -- she had been lately at the Slade School under Mr. Touks and liked to paint whenever she could -- she put me on the schoolroom table, sitting on a kitchen chair and made a drawing of me -- which I have promised my nephew (May's son) should later on go to his home in America. At this time Gertrude made many good portraits of my Father and of others of the family -- another portrait of Llewelyn is at hand -- excellent likenesses, but with something of Gertrude's serenity passing into them; also an excellent one of my sister Katie painted in the sisters' early years at Chydyok with a favourite puss and a tray of coffee close by. Katie's wild passionate side does not appear in it -- unlike a picture of her my brother Willie painted in her old age which shows all that side of her character. His portraits are sometimes almost caricatures of the subject but always there is something true in them. His landscapes of Kenya and the West Country are a special delight to us all as they adorn our houses -- always full of life and movement of animals or Africans.

My brother John has described Llewelyn so well in his writing that he is always before us with his boyish, sunny disposition and intense interest in life from every aspect.

As girls Katie and I were together a great deal. There was only four and a half years between us so she was the leader and we shared our lives closely. Walking was always important -- in looking at her old diaries in every day's story three walks would be included. And we had a horse and dog cart which Katie often borrowed from my Father so that we could drive along the lanes we knew so well in our walks. Gardening had a steadying influence on my sister and was a real interest. At Chydyok she had to work on a very stony, poor patch of land but this was a challenge -- and she grew vegetables, while Gertrude dealt with the care of bees and their hives and the fruitage, and she planted many trees which still flourish on the bare hillsides.

My brother Willie, only two and a half years older than I am, was my special companion in our days of childhood -- and we always were happy with each other whenever we were together in after years, exactly as if the bird nesting days of long ago were still with us. Then he would climb tall trees to look into rook's or magpie's nests while I waited below. He gave me a young jackdaw once; it would fly across a field or the garden to perch on my finger!

I had a different approach to each of my beloved brothers and sisters, and feel my life has been interwoven with theirs -- and they are still near.

Mary Casey
1915 - 1980

ADRAD

*A poem for Gertrude Powys
after long looking at her painting
on the night of her birthday.*

a poem in the instant of conception
fusion of words with brain tremor is
endeavour of being throughout
as in the feats of aging Odysseus
who excelled by the aid of Athene
the oar-loving dancers
the musical Phaeacians
for at that being-in-poem
all the laws of Jews and universe
cosmos and mortal creation
cease

they resume
after the touch of the muses
with a fraction of difference
in the angle of one soul's response
to the empirical geometrical *adrasteia*
adrad at the new song
as Jacob after his dream
the poet considers the best loved stories
were always of Ulysses and Israel
until Christ stands before Pilate
and in his own body once and for all
breaks the law

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