

Dan sailed aboard the H.M.S. Bothnia and arrived in America 12 days later from where he proceeded by rail to the company's estate situated half way between Lexington and Richmond in Virginia. There they had 4000 acres of ore bearing land on which was being built the Victoria Iron Furnace, designed to produce some 1200 tons of iron ore a week. Everybody went out of their way to impress Dan and he arrived back in England two months later in great spirits and completely satisfied that the income from business would not only compensate for the falling revenues from the Garnstone estate, but also make him exceedingly rich.

In the spring of 1881 the articles of association of the 'Iron and Steel Works Association of Virginia Limited' were drawn up and Dan became one of the four directors and its largest shareholder. At the same time he invested large amounts of money into various other companies recommended or directors or colleagues in the iron concern, these included the Hawkes Nest Coal Company (in liquidation by 1888), Walmesley le Tavernier (shares worth half their value by 1888), the General Expenditure Assurance Company (in liquidation by 1883) and the Bodega Wine Company (in liquidation by 1888).

Meanwhile back in England Leila spent the autumn at Garnstone with her children:

September 16th. Winnie's 6th birthday – stormy at first then we drove in to Hereford and did some shopping, lunched at the (Bishop's) Palace – bought some trifles for the child and drove to Garnons. Had tea and home again – cold.

17th. Drove early to Kings Pyon in Winnie's new pony cart – pony very troublesome. Hal riding. Sargent nearly cured the trick. In afternoon drove to Burton Court for Lawn Tennis – home late.

18th. Hal to Kington House Show. "Plum" won in Harness – 1st Prize. Winnie rode her pony while I walked.

19th. To Dilwyn to Church to hear Mr Harvey play the organ which he did remarkably well – 2 lovely hymns. No letter yet from Dan – very trying.

20th. Mr Redmayne (architect) arrived to help us with the Panelling of staircase and after lunch Mrs Arbuthnot's party from Burton Court for Lawn Tennis.

A photograph of the main staircase at Garnstone pre W.W.1 shows it to have been completely Victorianised with oak panelling to the walls, barley twist balustrades and heavy moulded oak handrail sweeping down to a complicated newell post arrangement at the bottom.

1st. November Got 2 Telegrams from Queenstown and Liverpool – Delayed by bad weather – Met Dan at Shrewsbury Station on our way to Hawkstone – found him well and in great spirits – such a kind reception by all. Staying there were Ld and Ly Stormont, Gen. and Mrs Goodlake, G Hill, Mr and Mrs Wingfield, Mr Clarke Shornhill. Weather quite beautiful – 2 fine days shooting. We separated on Thursday the 4th. and returned to find dear Fitz better.

5th. F left us en route to London. The next week was most pleasantly spent – riding – walking and enjoying home life together.

12th. D. to town on business – saw Fitz and heart he had passed his Medical exam for the Militia and will shortly be gazetted to the West York commanded by Col Gunter.

17th. Dan, Hal and I to Town for a few days. Hal and I to Theo's – 19 Gt Cumberland Place. We found him better than we expected though there were occasional signs of mental disturbance. We had bad weather and we stayed till the 21st.

Leila's eldest brother Sir Theo Metcalfe who was a tall heavily built man had not had a happy life. Blindness in one eye after a rather solitary childhood had had been followed by a career as Chief Magistrate of Delhi where he had proved himself a 'brave and resolute man'. His wife Charlotte had died just eighteen days after the birth of their first child and during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 he had only just succeeded in escaping from the rebels before they completely ransacked and destroyed his father's beautiful house and all its contents. Fortunately his infant son had been given to devoted native servants and they smuggled him away in disguise, Theo's extraordinary escape from Delhi disguised as an Indian has been well documented in the book by William Dalrymple entitled 'The Last Mogul'. When the English came to take back Delhi from the rebels, Theo's help proved invaluable for he had such an extraordinary knowledge of the city, but after success was achieved he exerted a terrible revenge on any natives whom he suspected of being

involved. He 'proved himself one of the most enthusiastic bounty hunters and hangmen' and even erected a gallows within the remains of Metcalfe House where any offenders would be strung up from the charred beams of the roof. According to a letter published in The Times 'Metcalfe is every day trying and hanging all he can catch', indeed, so frightening was Theo's reputation that he soon became a sort of Delhi Bogieman whose name alone was enough to cause terror. On one occasion a native jeweller came to offer his wares to a white membsaab, and she, thinking he was rather overcharging, threatened to report him to Metcalfe Sahib, whereupon he 'bolted in such a hurry he left his treasures behind and never again showed his face.' Eventually public opinion in England turned against him and he was prohibited from taking up any sort of post back in India, whereupon he retired to England and became a loving uncle to his sister Leila's children. He possessed a 'happy genial temperament' and was a 'great society man, although it must be added extremely extravagant.'

25th. A lovely frosty morning – a complete Christmas day and one we all enjoyed. The Church was only partly decorated.

26th. Being a most beautiful day for a walk. Hal and I walked to Dilwyn Church and heard a very lovely service and good sermon following.

27th. A child's party for Winnie and Xmas Tree – the snow fearful but our friends still came – Arbuthnots, Warwicks e.t.c.

January of 1881 began with Leila holding a concert in Weobley Church in aid of the Church lighting. It was quite a family affair with Leila singing and playing the harp, her niece Miss Bayley on the piano and Sir George Cornwall singing. Fitz drew the picture on the cover of the programme and Dan made a speech.

January 13th. At 3 o'clock a good number assembled and the programme was sketched by Fitz – we made in all £25. Mrs Arbuthnot too unwell to sing. Mrs Bodley and Miss Gough played and sang. We made altogether £25 for our Church lighting which will help us considerably. After it was over Dan made a nice little speech thanking all for their presence.

Garnstone Jan 13th. 1881.

Hand Bell Ringers

Song "Absent yet present"

Mrs Peploe

Duet Violincello and Piano

Sir George Cornwall and Mrs Peploe

Song

Mrs Lionel Benson

Duet Harp and Piano

Mrs Peploe and Miss Bayley

Song "There be none of her daughters"

Mrs Arbuthnot and Harp acct.

Hand Bell Ringers

Song "Tom Bowling"

Sir George Cornwall

Song "Where the Violet Blows"

Mr Benson

Duet Harp and Piano

Mrs Peploe and Miss Bayley

Song Violincello acct.

Mrs Peploe and Sir G. Cornwall

Policeman's Song and Chorus

Handbell Ringers.

All our friends stayed to tea and the young ones Danced till late. The next day we were all very coldy – and the day being so bad with frost snow and fog, the de Wintons stayed till Saturday. We had a very merry evening.

February

15th. D.'s 52 birthday – very well and deeply interested in his "Iron Company". Fitz gazetted on that day to the W. York Militia.

March

12th. Hal went on a visit to Col. Thursby for acting.

In June 1881 Leila was a judge at the Congress of Needlework held in the Royal Albert Hall, and the other judges included her sister Lady Clive Bayley, the Duchess of Leeds and Lady Stanley of Alderney:

June

5th June. Whitsunday and very busy one out of Town for a fortnight including a week at Ascot (Leila's sister Emily Lady Clive Bayley had be now retired with her husband from India and purchased a house at Ascot where she would live for the rest of her life). Very busy with the arranging and judging of needlework at Albert Hall.

26th. Anniversary of our 21st Wedding Day. Both the dear boys home well and happy and our Winnie all we could wish her to be. So we have much to be thankful for.



A picture by Fitz of his mother showing her smoking a cigar

August

12th. Our Lawn Tennis party but the steady rain prevented all such idea and not till the evening could we go out for a turn. However the farmers rejoice in it as the thing they most needed for which we are deeply thankful.

29th. Hal to Downton Hall for the Ludlow Bow Meeting.

1st September – we all started for partridge Shooting – a fine day – sport fair – 25 brace. Had lunch at Sarnesfield under a hedge – the boys very happy – hurt my foot. That evening Lady Esther Cochrane joined us and on the 2nd. She and Winnie and I drove to Wistaston and had lunch with the shooters. Fitz making this sketch of Winnie and Butty – a fearful dark cloud passed over us making us fear rain but it passed off and we took a long drive to Newport.

October found Dan and Leila paying a visit to Tintagel in Cornwall

5th. At 6.30 were we called and in an hour we started leaving behind us the most grateful hearts for all the kindness showered upon us at this dear little house. It was a bitter morning and thankfully we accepted the loan of a large rug which helped to keep out the keen wind. We had a drive of 20 miles to Launceston and from thence a journey of ten more hours with numerous stoppings en route. At Exeter we met Mr James Noel and travelled with him as far as Berkeley Road. This was a pleasant break in our journey – at last we reached Moorhampton and then Garnstone finding our dear Hal to welcome us in the Hall and our little Winnie safe and happy in her own wee bed.

15th. Having done all our work (in London) started by 10.15 train home – good journey and the colouring of the Autumn tints surprisingly beautiful – but alas we found sad destruction at home in the Park and fields. One very big Oak and lovely Spruce gone.

16th. Bright cold day – we wandered about inspecting all the havoc that had been made.

18th. Hard at work in the garden arranging Iris bed for the summer. Drove to Pyon and on to Chadnor and Dunwood.



A sketch by Fitz of Ann Lloyd who worked at Garnstone nearly her whole life - aged 90.

19th. Had a glorious ride with Dan – in and out of all the Farms then to Sarnesfield to arrange shooting. Fitz arrived very late.

20th. Went in the afternoon to Dilwyn Harvest Thanksgiving – the church very lovely.

24th. Late in the afternoon by train to 3 Cocks Station where we met Mr and Mrs Rolls going as well to Gwernyfed – the new house built by young Mr Tom Wood of the Guards – a very good substantial built house to hold a great many. The party was increased by Mr and Mrs Rhys Wingfield, Mrs Wood and 3 daughters, Col Smyth, Mr Brownlow and Mr Mott.
(Some years later Gwernyfed was rented by Hal's future brother-in-law, Glen Kidston, and it became the setting for many family stories.)

November

11th. The two last guests departed and we strolled about and put our guinea pigs into safe covert in summer house. On the 10th. we received the good news of Fitz's success in the qualifying exam

for the army – 11th out of 200. It is a very good performance and will enable him to get almost any regiment he likes. Many kind words have been sent. Our party finished with one fiasco – the Butler incapacitated for work from drink! – dismissed.

16th. D to Weobley the Hereford. F. and I went to Yazor and Upperton – then to Moorhampton for Dan – dined at Sarnesfield to meet his relations.

17th. Cold. D to shoot at Sarnesfield and then on to Dilwyn for Ploughing Match dinner. F and I drove to see the Ploughing and then home by Pyon. The dinner was a success and D. much better satisfied with the tone of feeling among the farmers.

24th. Tremendous wind. Winnie rode to Pyon – “Pet” kicked tremendously but the child was not thrown. After lunch D and I had a most charming gallop over fields – both horses fresh.

December

Dan arrived bringing nothing but good news with him of every transaction with which he had to do. The Wine business – Iron Company – Company Bodega – Hill Street House e.t.c., e.t.c.”Goodness and mercy have followed me” . I can say nothing but feel such deep humble gratitude for all His mercy. – “If riches increase, set not your heart on them”.

4th. A drizzly uncomfortable day, but walked to church. Fitz not well and so he stayed at home and drew this sketch of Winnie’s Pony. It is just like the dear little heart (Here there is inserted a sketch of “Pet” Garnstone Dec 4th 1881).

14th. D off by early Train to London for General Meeting for Iron Company. Very successful

The New Year of 1882 began with a happy greeting to Dan and Leila from their daughter Winnie:

“Eh! Bien cher Papa, eh bien chere Maman, je vous souhaite une bonne heureuse annee. J’espere que Dans cette annee qui commence je vous soie toujours obeissante et cherchant toujours de vous faire plaisir – ce sout la les voeux lex plus sincere de votre petite fillee qui vous aimee de tout sou coeur – Winnie”

January 6th. After a late breakfast we started for our long drive home and very glad always to feel that nothing can exceed the comfort of Garnstone. A windy showery day but D and I took a short walk – this was Winnie’s first real visit from home and after her first shyness had passed off she was very happy. Her fancy dress was that of a French peasant – simple but very pretty.

13th Winnie rode and after lunch D and I went first to try and find Mary Parry, my good old servant who is living on a wild common down a fearful road. The ride home over Weobley Common was most enjoyable through a wood and then down a steep and very deep muddy path. This brought us out again near Bush Bank close at home.

Leila did not always enjoy such a happy relationship with her servants. In 1993 Peter Davies reminisced about his great grandmother who lived to be 104 and lived at Weobley all her life. She worked in the laundry at Garnstone and Leila liked to check up on her household. “One morning great grannie didn’t take any notice of her, and some time later she came back and rebuked her for not curtseying, “No, Madam,” she said, “I was busy.....and what’s more, the number of times you come in and out I’ve got tired of dropping my stinking quarters to you.”

April

24th. Hal’s 21st. birthday. The morning opened very brightly. The first present he received being from the servants – a pair of silver backed brushes. Later a Bay and Rook Rifle, cigar case and other trifles – and at 3.30 the event of the day took place. Four of the Tenants with Mr Crook and others came to Garnstone to present a lovely watch and chain, and from the Teachers and scholars a Bible and prayer book in remembrance of the occasion. The speech by Mr Pitt our oldest Tenant was most touching. Hal returned thanks and then his father in a few remarks told them how deeply touched he was with their thoughts for his boy. We both felt it most keenly and then all drank our healths. We afterwards went out and met Mrs Taylor who most kindly came to give Hal a silver cigarette case – we spent a quiet evening.

Many years later Hal was standing on a platform at Edinburgh Station when suddenly he was pushed in the back by someone in the crowd. He subsequently realised that someone had stolen his gold watch and chain gifted to him from the tenants!

Mr Pitt of Chadnor was one of the most distinguished breeders of Hereford Cattle at that time in the world and had founded his herd in 1842 from 4 celebrated cows of the day. When he gave up his tenancy of Chadnor in 1883 and sold his herd, 91 animals were sold averaging £375 each, and the average of £695 for 12 two year old heifers had never before been equalled in England for any breed.

25th., To Town in a saloon carriage at the station met our dear Fitz who had arrived from Darmstadt.

Here there is inserted a Newspaper cutting from the Hereford Times:

Coming of Age Festivities at Garnstone Castle.

Last Easter we had the pleasure of reporting the proceedings in connection with a very interesting event which occurred at Garnstone Castle, near Weobley, the seat of Major Daniel Peploe Peploe. As soon as it had become known, a short time previously, that Mr Daniel Henry Peploe, of Trinity college, Cambridge, the eldest son of the Gallant Major, attained his majority on the 24th. April, several of the principal tenants on the estate met together and resolved to present him with a token of their best wishes on that auspicious day. Their intentions soon became known to others, who also desired to testify their respect and goodwill, and apparently everyone in the neighbourhood who knew the 'young squire had a good word to say of him, not simply because he was the son and heir of a genial old English gentleman but because of his own inherent good qualities'. The testimonial was primarily intended to be of a very modest character, but considerably over the estimated amount was quickly and cheerfully contributed, and the presentation assumed the form of a splendid gold watch, with chain and seals, and a framed illuminated address costing close upon £100. Acceding to the earnest wishes of the subscribers, Major Peploe and family, who were at their town residence at the time, it being the London season, came down to Garnstone Castle specially on the 24th April to receive the neighbourly tokens of goodwill, and the presentation was made in an unostentatious manner at the Castle. Advantage of the occasion was, however, very suitably taken by the teachers and scholars of Weobley schools, who followed the gift of the watch and chain with the present of a handsome Bible and Prayer Book, and the servants of the family also testified at the same time their admiration of their young master by presenting him with an ornamental and useful set of antique silver hair brushes. The address, which was signed by the tenants and well wishers of the family of Peploe, after stating the usual wishes incident to such an occasion, added the expression of hope that the frank and genial bearing which had marked his character in the past might develop feelings of mutual confidence and regard between them. That sentence and the source from which the presents came amply portray the kindly feelings which distinguish the hero of the occasion. There were numerous presents by private friends, but of those it is not in our province to speak. The reply of the young heir was in excellent keeping with the spirit of the affair, and reflecting the good feelings which occurred in the address and in the brief but sincere speeches of the deputation of the presenters.

As we have remarked, Major and Mrs Peploe and family came down from London on the 24th April specially for the presentation, and it was then arranged, as the household was at the town residence, that the usual festivities incident to such an occasion as coming of age of the heir to an extensive and valuable estate should be postponed until the first week in August. The household returned to Garnstone a week or two ago, and a programme of festive events to occupy a week was arranged:

The Dinner to the Labourers was held in a large marquee erected in that portion of the park opposite the Castle, and was rendered of additional importance by a presentation on the part of the labourers of the home estate, that is of the Major's own workmen. glorious summer weather favoured the event. In fact, it seemed to be the first day this summer on which the sun has shone out with all its beneficent influence. A grand day for haymaking, and the one on which the farmers

no doubt reluctantly spared their invaluable assistants, and it is much to their credit that they did let them have the desired half holiday. The dinner, which was a bountiful and well managed affair, catered by Mr Bedford of the Royal Oak Hotel, Leominster, was partaken of about 4 o'clock, by which time most of the guests had arrived many of them accompanied into the park by their wives and families. in readiness for a ramble through the beautiful Castle grounds afterwards. The genuineness of the host's consideration for the men's enjoyment was shown in the fact that cook, grateful nut brown October ale from the Castle cellars was provided ad libitum instead of the caterer of the dinner being obliged to carry ale from Leominster through the hot weather. The tables were set off with a number of handsome plants from the Major's conservatories. The company numbered about two hundred, and showed a thorough appreciation of the entertainment. There was an adequate number of waiters, and there was no delay in the attendance, the following gentlemen among others were kindly present to carve – Rev J.S.Crook, vicar of Weobley, Rev George Herbert, vicar of Kings Pyon (of which living Major Peploe is the patron), Mr H Samson, Mr Bigglestone, Mr Preece, Mr Stephens and co. The Rev J.S. Crook said grace, which was sung before the meal at the lead of Mrs Peploe.

After dinner it was intimated to the heir that the labourers on the home estate desired to present him with a token of their respect, so accompanied by his parents and his brother, Mr Fitzgerald C. Peploe, and his sister Miss Peploe, he was met at the principal end of the tent by Nathaniel Priday, the head drainer on the estate who briefly and respectfully stated that he wished to present a silver hunting flask and an address to him on behalf of the labourers (applause),. At Friday's request, the Rev George Herbert then read the address as follows:

To Daniel Henry Peploe Esquire

Sir – We the labourers on the Garnstone home estate, feel that we cannot let the happy occasion of the coming of age of our future master pass without giving some small proof of our affection and esteem. Many of us have watched your career from boyhood to manhood, and we feel sure that when the time comes you will show the same kindly regard for our interests that your ancestors have always shown before you. We wish you a long and prosperous life, and every happiness, and as a token of our good wishes we beg your acceptance of the accompanying flask, towards which all the labourers on the home estate have joyfully contributed. We have asked the two labourers who have served longest on the estate to sign this short address on our behalf, and we trust that you will receive it, and the small present that accompanies it, as humble but sincere proofs of our fidelity and good wishes, not only to yourself, but also towards the House of Peploe whom we are proud to serve.

Signed on behalf of the subscribers

Thomas Lloyd

James Gregg.

The presentation of the address and flask was then made amid much applause. The address was a beautiful specimen of ornamental calligraphy, from the studio of Mr William Henry Willett, art master, of Hereford, and the silver flask was a handsome and shapely specimen of the silversmith's art, both sides of it being chased and on the one face of it being engraved the monogram "D.H.P."

The Heir appeared delighted with this fresh proof of good will, and stepping forward said: "My friends, I thank you most heartily for the kindly feeling which has prompted you in presenting me with this handsome gift and address. It has given us all the greatest pleasure to see you here today, and to welcome you. And I cannot forget that it is really through the kindness of your employers at this time of harvest that we are enabled to enjoy this pleasure. As to this gift, I had already received so much kindness that I did not think it possible I could receive any more. By as now this proof of your kindness has been manifested. I can only thank you from the bottom of my heart and can assure you that it gives me the very greatest pleasure to meet you on what you are pleased in your kind address to term as this happy occasion. I am glad we have been so lucky in our weather. I only hope it has given you as much pleasure to come here as it has given us pleasure to welcome you (cheers).

After a short pause Major Peploe then stepped forward and said: I think I ought to add one word to what my son has said, because I feel sure that the kindly feeling which has induced you to make

him this handsome offering today is prompted very largely by a desire to show your respect and esteem for us also. His mother (applause) has always done the best she could for those on the estate, and as you have not had the opportunity as yet of seeing a great deal of my son, I hope we are not flattering ourselves when we say we cannot help thinking that the presentation and address of today is not only an expression of your affection and regard for him altogether but for us all. I hope you have enjoyed yourselves today (cheers). It is our wish to entertain all our friends during this week on what you no doubt understand is to me a very happy and auspicious occasion (applause). We have felt that although during this week we might entertain those of a higher station, yet we could not do better than begin the week by entertaining the workmen on the estate, thus showing our good feeling to all our friends and neighbours (applause). In conclusion the gallant Major said that he hoped the company would thoroughly enjoy themselves. They might remain as long as they liked, and if any of them wished to walk about the gardens and grounds they might do so.

Hearty cheers were then given for the Peploe family. Numbers of the men stated and enjoyed their pipes and a chat and others with their friends strolled through the gardens, admiring immensely the remarkably fine ribbon border and the other arrangements of handsome shrubs and brilliant parterres of flowers. A large flag bearing the Peploe arms was displayed on the principal tower of the castle throughout the week.

Fancy Ball

As part of the festivities a fancy ball to the friends of the family was given on Tuesday evening in the gold room of the Castle (really the library or ballroom), and it proved a most successful and brilliant event. The handsome appearance of the gold room and adjoining drawing room and ante room was enhanced by groups and other arrangements of luxuriant plants and flowers. These adornments although but of simple material, were really of such remarkable beauty as to deserve more than a passing word. The fire places in each of the rooms alluded to were filled with pleasing collections of maiden hair ferns, warm coloured begonias, caladiums, scarlet and pink and white geraniums, and larger plants and in the midst of each collection was a turret block of ice gracefully shaded with light green plants and illuminated behind with lights set in colours. The mantelpieces were hidden by banks of splendid roses, and one of these mantels of blooms elicited much admiration in consequence of the wonderful taste manifested in its arrangement and the charming effect introduced by a waving line of stephanotis through it from one end to the other. So charming was this arrangement of the queen of flowers and the blossoms that brides most love that the thought might have occurred to many

“Oh nature, nature, thou hast conquered art, She charms the sight alone, but thou the heart”.

Hanging baskets of scarlet tropeolum depending from the tops of the doorways were conspicuously pretty. Groups and other arrangements of beautiful flowers or handsome plants graced every convenient position for them on the walls and near the doorways, a magnificent hydrangia in the ballroom, and a grand epergne of very large spirea, being among the most attractive of the numerous other adornments. Round the ball room was an almost continuous line of semi circular brass brackets of lights, the latter each surrounded with small glass pendants, and when they were lighted they gave to the scene a rich and striking effect, the lovely hues of the flowers, the novel costumes of the guests, the paintings and innumerable articles of virtu in this and the adjoining rooms, all being given a still brighter tone, and reflected in ever changing pictures by the mirrors. There were all the essentials of a successful and enjoyable ball. The floor was good, the light excellent, and the music charming, and every requirement appeared at hand. It might truly have been said –

So variously seemed all things wrought,

“Twas marvel how the mind was brought

To anchor by one gloomy thought.

‘Tis certainly not appropriate even to allude to gloomy thoughts on such an occasion. The happy scene suggested that there never were any. Even the weather appeared to have been changed from gloom to happiness. At nine o’clock the sky had been shrouded with dark rolling clouds, increasing in volume and intensity of colour. The atmosphere felt charged with damp and signs of a coming heavy storm, which would have been exceedingly inappropriate to the enjoyment with the ballroom. But strange to say, almost directly after the ball had commenced the multitudinous clouds

disappeared leaving a blue Italian like sky studded with myriads of stars shining brightly, while the atmosphere became dry and delightful. Those who witnessed this transformation of nature could not but have felt a hope that it was the indication of a bright and happy life the young heir. But to have one more peep at the joyous proceedings within. Leaving the elegantly proportioned and exquisitely furnished ante room the conservatory is reached, and is also entered from the ballroom. In this conservatory everything, it may be remarked, seems to grow luxuriantly. Begonias grow all over the one wall from the floor to the roof – a remarkable freak of nature it might almost be termed – and their handsome shield like leaves look well with ferns peeping out between the clumps. (Dan and Leila were great enthusiasts of begonias, so much so that according to The Garden and Illustrated Weekly of 1879 a new variety had just been named Mrs Peploe in their honour) There are many other things in this retreat worth mentioning, but the most pleasing perhaps is the fountain and the plants of carnation malmaison, with blossoms like a T white rose, but with the perfume of a good old pink. The grateful perfume of honeysuckle also wafted from the gardens. The music for the ball was provided by Mr H.S. Gates celebrated band of Brighton who had that day arrived from Arundel Castle (the Duke of Norfolk's) where they had been playing during the Goodwood Race week. The ball programme was as follows:

Valse – “Happy thoughts”. Lancers – “Patience”. Polka – “Mother Hubbard”. Valse – “My Queen”. Polka – “Les Santerelles”. Quadrille – “Broccacio”. Valse – “Loyante”. Polka – “Old China”. Valse – “Jenesse Doree”. Valse – “Chantilly”. Highland Schottische. Valse – “Thine Apples”. Valse – “Ehren on the Rhine”. Polka – “Pretty Foot”. Lancers – “La Mascotte”. Valse – “Under the stars”. Polka - “Ans Frenndscafft”. Valse – “Chant du Ciel”. Valse – “Toujours Fidele”. Valse – “Barcarolle”.

There follows a long list of guests and characters they assumed including Leila and Winnie as “Mother of Pearl and Pearl”, Hal as a gentleman time of Louis XV, Dan – Herefordshire Hunt Club, and Fitz as Officer 3rd Battalion Princess of Own (Yorkshire) Regiment.

The Herefordshire Bow Meeting.

The Herefordshire Bow Meeting for 1882 was given by Major and Mrs Peploe at Garnstone on Wednesday, the day following the fancy all, to which members of the Society were invited. It did not necessarily form part of the coming of age festivities, but made a pleasing and varied continuity. The arrangement was an excellent one in as much as a bow meeting while possessing superior attractions to that of a garden party, may be said to combine the advantages of both. The targets were erected in the deer park contiguous to the flower garden, on a closely grazed and comparatively level spot, between two rows of lofty elms, and refreshments and other marquees, erected by Mr Gore of Hereford were situated near the shrubbery. A more suitable and beautiful spot could scarcely have been found in the county, and although the wind was rather rough in the morning it afterwards turned into a nice pleasant breeze in a direct line with the range of shooting, and not unfavourable to good marksmanship. The weather was fine throughout the day, except once or twice, when there appeared likelihood of a shower of rain. Although the deer had gone away out of sight the scenery all around contained much that must have demanded general admiration. Close to the “butts” companion elms had grown until they joined solidly at the trunks. Of both the “joyful elm”, as it is described by a poet who has made the neighbourhood famous in verse, and “the stately oak, whose wrinkled bough have stood age after age,” the Garnstone estate is credited with growing some of the finest specimens in the county. Here and there about the park too are handsome cedar trees, chestnuts and beech in their graceful proportions every pleasing to the eye, and with “each its charm peculiar.” A slope leading from the archery ground leads, in the course of a few hundred yards. to the top of Burton Hill, a well know eminence commanding extensive views of the most fertile portions of the county.

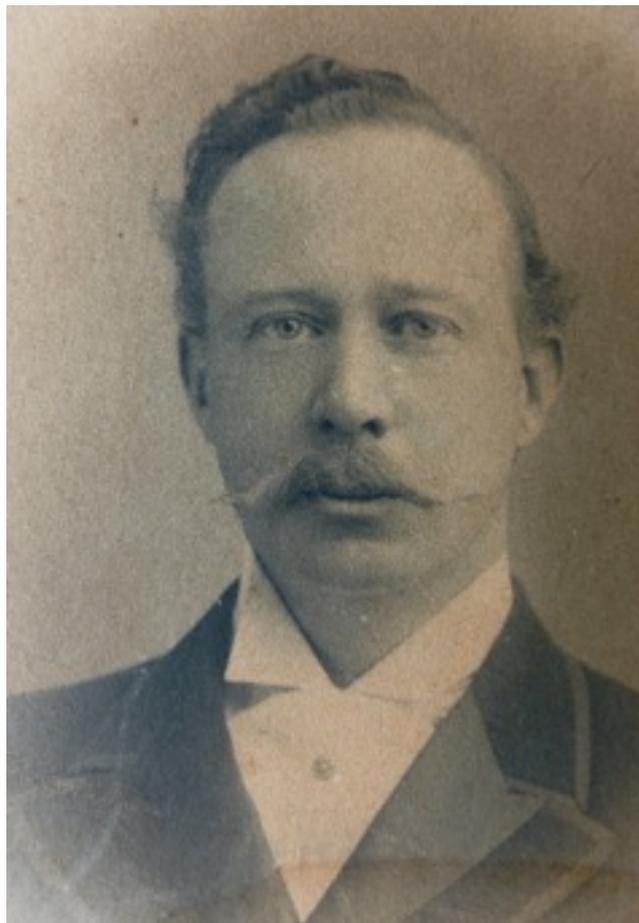
“Gaze on the noble landscape whene'er you will
When spring is clad in green – or summer harvest fill,
Or when brown autumn tints you waving Foxley Wood.”

It is always one of picturesque and romantic beauty, looking over the exceptionally fine and fertile estate of Garnstone, too, the lover of beauty would admire the contour of the castle among the surrounding trees. It must have been the sight of such a noble home that inspired Mrs Hemans to write the eloquent poetry of

“Those stately homes of England,

How beautiful they stand.”

The gardens were brilliant with the many hues of the beds of flowers, and on the various lawns visitors, whose turn it was not for archery, were playing at lawn tennis, while others strolled about the well kept grounds in the vicinity of the ribbon border. This border is probably the largest of its kind in the county. Bordering a broad gravel walk over 120 yards in length, the bank on either side is beautiful with lines of lobelia, pyrrholum, pink and variegated and scarlet geraniums, the purple ageratum, the yellow tagetes and perilla. honeysuckle in numerous places produced a grateful perfume, assisted by a quantity of the splendid old clove pinks (of which few are now grown in this country) and other carnations. It might not be incorrect to say that this party of the county must have been foremost to supplying many a “crooked stick” and many a “shaft” for the archers of olden time, so luxuriantly do trees and shrubs grow here. The ribbon border has many tall handsome shrubs around to shield it, and the lover of shrubs they would appear worthy of extra admiration. Among them was a clean shapely Harmannana, a fine Thusopsis Dolabrata, a rare specimen of the variegated Wellingtonia Gigantea, and a weeping ash whose pendent boughs dip so as to make a capacious shade. The condition of the grounds reflects great credit on Mr Biggs, the head gardener. From the front of the Castle a carriage path leads apparently straight as an arrow for the distant fine old church of Weobley, which contains handsome monuments recording the good and brave deeds of the ancestors of the “Squire of Garnstone”. The mound is also in sight where once stood the historic Weobley Castle, described by Leland as “a goodly and fine building.” But this is straying from the archery meeting. Nearly every shaft pierces the target there, a fact recalling the old proverb
“England were but a fling,
But for the crooked stick and the grey goose wing.”



Hal Peplow as a young man

But the times have passed when it was absolutely necessary for the safety of England that her archers should be the best known in modern history. And it is pleasing to see our aristocracy maintain the pastime as one of their most delightful recreations, and this season must be rightly chosen for general competition if as Campbell says

“The sportive Autumn claims by rights
An Archer for her lover.”

On the slope just above the archery ground the band of the King's (Shropshire) Light Infantry (under the direction of Bandmaster W. James) played excellently during the “overs” to the opposite row of targets.

The usual luncheon and tea were supplied under a marquee by Mr Hutton of Hereford, the caterer to the Bow Society. Dan, the host of the day, presided and after lunch proposed the loyal toasts. The health of “Dan and Mrs Peploe (the lady paramount) and Mr Daniel Peploe and the rest of this family” was proposed by the High Sheriff of the county and responded to by Dan and Mr D.H.Peploe.

Tenanry and Tradesman's Ball

On Thursday evening a ball was given to the tenantry and the tradesmen who supply the household. It took place in the gold room which was decorated the same as for the fancy ball on the previous Tuesday. Mr W. James's Quadrilla band supplied the music. There were nearly 200 guests (here the is a long list of names).

Dancing commenced at ten o'clock, the ball being opened by Mrs Peploe and Mr Henry it (the oldest tenant on the estate) and Mrs George Pitt and Daniel Henry Peploe.

At the conclusion of the supper, Dan who presided having proposed the loyal toasts.

Mr George Pitt said it was with the most unbounded pleasure that he rose to propose the health of the heir, Mr D.H. Peploe, whose coming of age they were then gathered together to celebrate (cheers). All those who had known Mr Peploe could not help having been charmed and pleased with his frank and gentlemanly manner, and he (Mr Pitt) knew he was saying what they all concurred in when at the presentation of their token of respect and well wishes to the heir on his 21st birthday, he had said that Mr Peploe was most highly thought of by them all (applause). For the last fifty years, he (Mr Pitt) had heard the house of Peploe well spoken of and he had a personal knowledge of them for the last thirty years.

Mr D.H. Peploe on rising to reply, was greeted with enthusiasm. He said he thanked them all most heartily, Mr Pitt for the very flattering way in which he had spoken of him, and the company for their very kind and hearty reception of the toast.

Dan in acknowledging the compliment that had been paid to the family, said that after replying to their most excellent speeches which were made in April last, when his tenants and other friends had made such a magnificent presentation to his son, he thought he should not have to make any more speeches. He thanked his old friends, Mr Pitt and Mr Haywood very much for the kind sentiments of regard they had expressed towards himself and his family. He begged to thank them all, on behalf of himself and Mrs Peploe, for their congratulation and good wishes. So great had been their kindness to him and his family, that he felt that any entertainment he could show them would still leave him and his family very much in their debt. Of course, this was rather a solemn occasion to him and Mrs Peploe, to find they had a son coming to years of discretion. Indeed he humorously added, his son had had the remarkable impertinence to grow nearly an inch taller than he (his father) was (laughter and applause) by which it seemed that children in these days had not such respect for their elders as they had in his young days (laughter). Mr Haywood had very truly remarked that there was great credit due to Mrs Peploe for the arrangement of this affair. He had not been very well for some time, and had taken advantage as an invalid to let her do the whole of the work, and she had really worked very hard in the matter (applause). He felt very thankful that they had so many friends. He could only thank them again very sincerely, and bid them a hearty welcome to Garnstone, where he hoped they would thoroughly enjoy themselves (cheers).

The company then returned to the ballroom, and some of the guests on leaving in brakes for home after the ball gave some hearty cheers for Major and Mrs and Mr Peploe.

Sadly Hal's coming of age festivities were to be the last great event the Peploe family ever held at Garnstone.

That summer ill health continued to beset Dan:

3rd. Winnie and I started off early for Belstead (Maria Umphelby's farmhouse in Suffolk where the three Metcalfe sister's had spent their childhood). The day was lovely and to me the associations were so delightful and the day itself so lovely that it was full of enjoyment to me. We returned at 8.30. when Hal arrived. The days went swiftly by, the season a very pleasant one but on the 10th. Dan was taken very unwell and with a combination of gout and disordered liver he managed to make himself very unwell. On the night of the 13th. I was obliged to have a large dinner party of 18 without him. Sir Garnet Wolseley most kindly did the honours for me. Each night I had many engagements and managed as well as I could sometimes not undressing even. Dan suffered agonies and was reduced to a weak state. He is still in bed on the 21st and I see little hope of his being well enough to go out again for sometime.

July 7th. Dan still ill – it has been a long weary illness but hopes are given him of being in better health than ever. We were to have left Town on Monday for a visit, but it cannot be and our only hope is that on Thursday next we will be on our way to Garnstone. We have much to be thankful for in having had such good advice and so comfortable a room for his illness. The weather too has suited him very well. Friends have called constantly and this has cheered him very much.

Sir Garnet Wolsey was a distant relation of the Molyneux family and later became Commander-in-Chief of the British Army from 1895-1900.

Later that autumn Dan and Leila made some purchases for their home farm at Garnstone:

October

3rd. At 11 o'clock we started for Islington and soon beheld our Swiss cows which did not please us at first but soon grew upon us, especially as we found that we might have our choice of almost all the animals. We were much interested in many things – churns – milk separators – calf feeders – bee hives – poultry – inventions of all kinds. So the time slipped by – Hal and I then went back to do more shopping and finished with Chocolate at Charbonnel's in Bond Street. We dined at the Grand Hotel where I have the good luck to recover a diamond brooch I thought I had lost. We went to the Gaiety to see Robin Hood and utterly horrified I was to find myself in such a place where the vulgarity and absence of proper dress made me most uncomfortable.

4th. Hal and I again shopped then went off to the Dairy Show again where I purchase my churn and we watched the progress of Butter pressing e.t.c. and were much interested. Hal and I then went to Maple's to buy some chairs e.t.c. and to Charbonnel's for some chocolate. Hal dined at the Continental – Dan with Mr Edwards and I spent the evening with Emmie (Webb Peploe).

12th. The Hereford Races – Dan went in as Steward and Winnie and I drove by Weobley home.

20th. Henry and I drove to Shobdon and spent the afternoon there coming home late and between pulling the ponies and dark lanes it was not very pleasant. We were photographed in the morning on our different horses and in the pony carriage and pleasant remembrances they will be.

November

1st November. Weather continues very wet. This day we believe the first fires have been lighted in our big Virginia Furnace – grateful indeed are we that all has been allowed to succeed so far.

23rd. Edward Campbell died very suddenly leaving 12 children to be cared for – Dan one of the Trustees. (The Campbell children were to become favourite cousins of Hal Peploe and in first quarter of the 19th century there would rarely be a day when one of them would not be staying with the family.)

27th. D to Town to attend Funeral at Thames Ditton and joined me on 29th for a few days.

Cec 1st. D to Town to meet Trustees.

In December Dan wrote to his solicitor Mr James, also one of the Trustees of the estate under the will of Samuel Peploe d. 1845, about the need to borrow money to put into the Iron and Steel Association of Virginia. A series of technical hitches had resulted in very little pig iron being produced, and the American banks were unwilling to lend further money to enable the problems to

be sorted. The American Iron and Steel industry was facing a very severe down turn at this time, but that was of no concern to anyone at his company according to Dan:

Garnstone
Weobley
14th December 1882

My dear James

I think you are aware that I am interested in an Iron and Steel concern in Virginia U.S.A. – I am pressed for time now and cannot write a long history, but shortly, the concern is a company (Limited) of which I am chairman. Capital issued £165,000, and fully paid. My opinion was that it would be commercially wrong to issue extra capital to provide the very large amounts of material for putting a big Furnace into blast, as the need would only be temporary. All is ready to begin but our manager wires he cannot get the necessary loan. We don't yet know the reason - but must not have a hitch. There is a mortgage of £10000 on the ore property but a piece of ground of 300 acres was bought and paid for independently and on that the whole Furnace with its appurtenances has been built. The sum required is £30,000, to pay off mortgage, which would free the property entirely and the cost of the stock of ore, limestone and co. Now I am perfectly satisfied of the value of all this and am willing with my boy to lend the money at (say) 8%, raising it on this estate (Garnstone) but before going any further I wish Mr Edwardes who is the promoter of the company to have an interview with you on Tuesday next, and I hope you will be able to see him at 12.15 that day. He will lay everything before you and answer every question. I should then suggest that he and I and perhaps another Director should see you again on Thursday at the same hour. The success of the company is assured and the profits will be very large, but I need go no further into this now. Evidence will be put before you.

Believe me, very truly yours,
D.P.Peploe

Garnstone
Weobley
18th. Dec 1882

My dear James

I think your idea of borrowing sufficient to clear the Farm bought from Lord Bath a good one. I have purposely avoided writing a long history of the Iron concern. You will hear all tomorrow; it is strange but true that the depression of Iron Trade in America not only does us no harm, but might easily prove advantageous.

Yours very truly
D.P.Peploe

It is clear that Mr James thought the business decidedly risky:

Garnstone
27th. Dec 1882.

My dear James,

Many thanks for your letter. I daresay there will be no difficulty with the Bank. I am, of course, very grateful to you for the feeling which induces you to say all you can against a step which might prove disastrous, but I must reply in a few words to your letter. The only thing I would admit is one you don't mention viz the great distance of the concern, and the difficulty of supervision. But in other respects, you start with the assumption that the whole thing is, if not a fiction, certainly a delusion and probable swindle. On these points my information is very good and quite satisfactory. You say also that you regret my going so deeply into the concern. I must point out that the present transaction does not put me into the concern to the extent of £10. I simply lend £30,000 on what I believe to be perfectly sound and sufficient security. The power of taking £15000 of shares before April 1884 exists now and has existed ever since the formation of the Company and it amounts to

the power (as I said) of betting on a certainty – a year from now must make it a certainty one way or the other, and unless it turns out a certainty in the right way, you may be sure my money will not go in.

If I can get back from London tomorrow I and my boy will come in by train at 12 and see you.

Yours very truly

D.P.Peploe

Financial worries were not the only ones during the first few months of 1883. From Leila's diary:

February 2nd. Obligated to leave Garnstone very suddenly owing to bad drainage – the result of wet weather. Dan at once went to London and Winnie and I to Mrs De Winton who received us most affectionately.

The village of Weobley suffered from notoriously poor drainage at this time and after February 1883 the whole system at Garnstone had to be overhauled at considerable expense. Dan had more pressing concerns over the 'firing in of the furnace' as a further series of letters to Mr James reveals:

17 Hill Street,
Mayfair
20th February 1883

My dear James

It is quite clear there is only one thing to do – viz: to take as much as the "Economic" will lend, and provide for a further loan. But money is wanted in Virginia and I should if possible wish to send, at any rate, £5000 at once. Page has got 60,000 tons of ore and 10,000 tons of limestone mined and delivered at the Furnace. I have a charge over everything and when this ore and co is turned into pig iron I need not let go my grip of it. A telegram is sent to him this afternoon to know his financial position. If it is delayed for want of funds I must send money somehow – delay means great loss.

Yours sincerely

D.P.Peploe

17 Hill Street,
Mayfair
24th Feb 1883

My dear James

I waited to telegraph to America before writing again to you. I find that the failure of funds now will delay the blowing in of the furnace – I am perfectly satisfied with the security. I am fully convinced that even were I to die my co-director would see that there should be no loss, and I think you are aware that Mr Page will not complete the payment to the original vendors till they remove some trifling difficulty and clear the title. We cannot wait for this, and I cannot see, if the "Economic" have the money, why the £35000 is not to be had AT ONCE. I therefore assume all responsibility and by that you will kindly without any delay whatever get the £10000. Surely there can be no difficulty whatever about this, and I am very much in earnest in making this request: of the balance, £20,000 must go to the N.B.Bank, £4000 to pay off Sir Henry and I suppose £1000 retained till you get the further sum of £10000 to make up sufficient to pay Sir Gilbert Lewis (£11000).

Yours very truly

D.P.Peploe

17 Hill Street
Mayfair
26th. Feb 1883

My dear James,

All this is very unlucky, but I can say no more. Now please buckle to and get the business finished. I enclose the key of my safe in the corner of the sitting room at Garnstone (it turns to the right to unlock) and you will find the key of the deed room on one of the shelves – there are in fact two keys. They are very peculiar in shape and you will at once recognise them. I beg you to get Haywood (The Garnstone Agent) without a days delay to make the necessary valuation and report, and let the money be got. £200 per day would not pay the loss incurred by not getting the Furnace to work, besides the possibility of discredit thrown on the business if Page is unable to keep up his payments.

Yours very truly
D.P.Peploe

Even Leila was becoming aware that everything was not well with the Iron Business - there is usually very little mention of it in her diary:

1st April. This was the day when we expected our Furnace in America to be in blast but we were again disappointed and having sent a telegram to ask the reason why were told it would be delayed till the 21st. This is a trial to our spirits but not to our faith in the concern as we have every cause to be thankful for all the promise of success we receive and encouragement from all who know of its existence. The boys are still here and are kindly welcomed by all our friends.

Dan also had about £10000 worth of shares in The General Expenditure Assurance Company which went into liquidation at this time putting still further financial strain on the family and by the 27th April he was suffering from complete nervous collapse. (The G.E.A. ,founded in 1874, was a curious scheme by which members would only purchase what they required from other members, and for every £ spent a coupon or bond would be issued. The members paid a discount of 5% to the company, and these discounts generated a fund which was supposed to be invested in a sound security and which in time would allow all the bonds to be redeemed in cash. Somebody wrote a caustic letter to a newspaper about the scheme under the title 'How to live upon nothing a day):

27th. Dan had a shock to his system in the demand made upon the Directors of G.E.A. to refund monies which were merely being held back till the winding up. This on top of a violent cold – he had so completely shattered his nervous system that on Sunday next the 29th. his heart was beating at 160 and he was utterly unnerved. From that time Dr Harper attended him but not till Thursday the 3rd May did he seem to realise the dangerous state he was in – Dan could not go up to bed that night without the greatest care and from that time has never left his room. He did not seem to make the progress he ought and on the Saturday I went to my old friend Sir William Gull and told him all my story of anxiety and trouble.

6th. May – Dan getting worse – more feeble - the action of the heart most violent – the lungs suffused and other symptoms very black. At 6.30 Sir William Gull came and I have to thank God that he was enabled to come and help us for otherwise there would have been no hope of his life. He and Dr Ride Jones are watching him. Fitz started for Darmstadt.

7th. D very ill.

8th. D better tho' never able to lie in bed. In the afternoon Gull pronounced him out of danger but ill still.

9th. Each day stronger.

12th. First good sleep – strength returning very steadily.

13th. A blessed change – the night far more restful – every appearance of great improvement.

Each day gradual but real benefit from the treatment.

18th. Gull came at 3.30 and gave leave for him to go down stairs – thank God!

By the following month life was getting back to normal:

June 19th. We had a large Concert where about 170 assembled – the music was very good and the flowers lovely – this was the programme (Here there is a programme headed 17 Hill Street

Tuesday June 19th. 1883). Our programme would have been larger but for Sir A Sassoon's concert for the Duchess of Albany.

There were over 15 pieces of music including songs by Verdi, Schubert, and Schumann; violin solos by Chopin and Hauser; and a harp composition by Louis XIV. Georg Henschel, the German baritone sang together with his wife - the noted American soprano and he was later head of the Royal College of Music from 1886-8. The great Madame Trebelli sang two songs and she was universally regarded as one of the greatest operatic and concert singers of her time, 'her voice was a rich brilliant mezzo soprano and her executive powers were of the highest order'. Another distinguished performer was Francesco Tost who was not only singing master to the Queen of Italy but also the teacher of the British Royal family from 1880 onwards.

August

Mr Burrell Smith (Artist) also arrived for a week's teaching.

7th. Sketch of the park (Whitfern)

8th. ditto of the Ley – My Taylor came.

9th. Cold and rainy – worked at home. Mr and Mrs Crook to dinner.

10th. Ball at Eywood.

11th Painting in the Park

During September 1883 Dan travelled back to America with Hal to look again over the Iron Furnace in Virginia. He was at this time putting increasing pressure on the trustees of Garnstone, including Mr James his solicitor, to draw up a disentailing deed to enable him to raise money on the estate. Garnstone had been entailed under the will of Samuel Peploe to the heirs of John Birch Peploe and his son Dan, and it was not possible for any heir of Garnstone either to sell or raise money on the estate without first the trustees agreeing to override this will. Mr James would have wanted Hal to be quite sure of what he was agreeing to, and would have insisted that Hal take a look at the Virginian venture for himself.

Why did Hal agree to disentail Garnstone especially as Mr James the trustee strongly advised him against such a move which he considered at best unwise and most probably foolish. Unfortunately Victorian fathers were supremely autocratic and demanded complete obedience from their children. Dan could argue the back leg of a donkey, was a pretty much compulsive gambler, and like his brother Hammer was much too hasty and completely unwilling to take advice with which he did not agree. These factors put Hal in an impossible position and in later years Hal never showed any bitterness concerning his father's impulsive behaviour over Garnstone, even after the estate had to be sold, and this clearly shows what an exceptionally charming and generous character he possessed.

5th. Our Fitz's 21st birthday! Still at Darmstadt but returning soon for his last exam for the army. A lovely day spent the morning with Annie at Fenhampton sketching. Waiting all day for news of dear Dan's arrival in America. Very anxious owing to a severe storm that passed over the Atlantic from the 2nd to the 4th. No answer from Cunard agent. Mr Redmayne (our architect) arrived to discuss Hall decoration e.t.c.

6th. Received D's telegram from New York "Very Well" which ought to have reached me the day before. The relief after the strain was almost too much and I felt quite ill – but the thankfulness was overpowering.

16th Winnie's 9th birthday. – Her present of a watch from her father gave her unfeigned delight and the grocer's shop from me was an equal source of enjoyment. The only draw back to her was the absence of both father and brother. It was a lovely day and we strolled about all day.

17th. The Vicarage children came to tea but we had a ride in the morning to Chadnor and to see the Hops – it was hot but not sultry – after tea I drove to Garnons.

21st Received 2 letters from Dan dated Washington and Victoria. Furnace well and prosperous. Drove in afternoon to fetch Emmie (Webb) Peploe and her little girl.

22nd Walked to Weobley for Emmie to see her old friends – drove in the afternoon to call at Pyon and do ditto. A lovely evening – at 9.15 Fitz returned from Germany having been examined at Dover for his last Military exam – looking well.

20th. Emmie and I drove to Pyon Church while Fitz walked with his pet Spitz – Fritz. After lunch he and I walked to Ladylift and back by Shoal's Bank.

24th. After a glorious day we had a sad downpour though the night and early morning – wrote letters and painted – gave the order for poor "Ploughboy's" death, Dan's faithful old Hunter at 2.15. Took the new Altar Cloth to the Vicarage which gave great satisfaction. Then to Kinnersley and home. Walk in the Garden – Boiler being reinstated and a new Fern House made.

October

4th. First news of Dan and Hal arriving at Queenstown – spent the day at Garnons with Lady Cotterell and sent for Dan at Leominster at 9 o'clock. They arrived at 10.30 both quite well.

Dan came back from America once again convinced the Iron business was going to make his fortune but by the end of the month the feeling of optimism was ebbing away, the Iron Furnace was going to require yet further money from Dan to keep it going:

20th. heard the news of Theo's sad illness – Dan returned from Town much depressed and with bad news.

22nd. Dismissed most of our servants as we meant to live very quietly. Each day painful details of change.

23rd. Mr (Walter) Broadwood (of Cabalva, Radnor) came and helped us by taking the Shooting off our hands for this winter. The rest of the month and far into November we were occupied by all the arrangements of the Household. Difficult to carry out – and in selling horses e.t.c. Hal being at Cirencester College and Winnie paying visits to Emmie in Town and to Annie at Ascot.

Dan wrote to Mr James again about his various choices:

The Iron and Steel Works Association of Virginia L.T.D.

41 Haymarket, S.W.

London.

27th. October 1883

Dear James

When I saw Mr Barlow he declined to give me any advice on the matter of the Virginia Debentures – I had to act for myself and consented to waive my priority as first mortgagee. From your point of view this will look like trying to lose the money. Whereas it is my only chance of saving it. The circumstances were most trying and I beg you will consider them with the utmost care. The Furnace is working perfectly well, making profits, but money is wanted and it appeared very badly wanted. It was necessary to raise money and the case stands thus; If I stand on my priority of claim no money will be forthcoming, and all I could do would be to step in and take possession of the Furnace and plant, and find the money to carry on the concern myself. Can you advise how under such circumstances I could obtain the necessary money for this purpose? And were I to exercise my power to sell I know from my personal knowledge that in the present state of the Iron Trade there would be no buyers. Now on the other hand if I accept first mortgage Debentures I enable the company to obtain the necessary means for carrying on the works, and I am confident improve my security. Should I act on my strict rights I should simply destroy a perfectly sound concern which is making profits and is looked upon as the best of its kind in America, and only injure myself. My son went out and saw the whole thing, and was fully aware of what I was going to do. Money is now coming into the Company and there is no fear of its coming to harm. It has only to tide over till the rise in prices which cannot be long postponed. I hope you most clearly understand that any other course would insure the ruin of this good property, and the loss of my money.

Yours truly

D.P.Peploe

Leila received the sad news of the death of her brother Theo at this time:

November 8th. Dear Theo died in Paris and was buried at Passy.

29th. His birthday - he would have been 55.

Another letter from Dan to Mr James

Garnstone
Weobley
29th. November, 1883

My dear James,

I quite approve the agreement, which I return signed. I have only to add to this that I have retained the right any time within 3 years from allotment to change £15000 into fully paid shares, and there can be no harm in this and it might be a great advantage? – tho' probably it will never be acted upon.

I find that Herbert (Vicar of Kings Pyon – the family living) has spoken to you about resigning and so enabling me to sell either the advowson or next presentation of the living of Pyon. He made the offer as soon as he heard I was in difficulties and I promptly declined. I find however that he really wished to get away and that the duty is too heavy for him. If this is so a good price ought to be obtained as it would be "immediate possession", and it would be a very good way of getting the money required.

I shall see Herbert on Saturday when I will write to you again. I have no idea how these sales are managed.

I find that in April I paid £260.10 to Mr Young. This, I think, is the cheque you enquire about.

Yours very truly
D.P.Peploe

On December 13th 1883 Walton and Lee the Estate Agents advertised Garnstone for let in The Times but no tenant appears to have been forthcoming and Leila wrote in her diary:

'All December was passed very quietly owing to the mourning and also as we wished to economise finding a large household very expensive work. (Dan was very unwell all this month).'

At this point the financial crisis claimed its first casualty and poor Fitz's career in the army was shelved. It is possible he decided that the life of the soldier was not for him, but the purchase of a commission in a smart regiment would not have been something Dan could have considered under the present circumstances. Family tradition suggests Fitz went to America 'under a cloud', but there is nothing to suggest this in Leila's diary although she was prone to missing out anything the slightest bit controversial. Fitz sailed for America in January 1884 and he would spend the best part of the remainder of his life in the New World becoming an American Citizen in 1893.

1884.

January: We have we hope found a friend who is willing that Fitz should join him on his farm in Canada and we fear that he is soon to start with him – how little we can for see events. Since the 5th we have been preparing for his start with Mr Battscombe and the dreaded day has arrived. Our beloved boy is gone today (the 18th.) with his Father to Liverpool to start in the "Pavonia" tomorrow at 1.30. I can hardly realise that he is going so far from us for the first time in our lives. Mercifully the return journey from America is quite a short one – a fortnight at the most, and therefore we may hope soon to see him again having worked hard to learn his new occupation, and to return in renewed strength for a long holiday at home.

(Here there is a newspaper extract from the Hereford Times written by George Battscombe of Woodlands, Glasbury, Radnorshire and Indian Head, North West Territory, Canada – January 3rd 1884. The article describes how a young man can establish himself as a farmer/settler with 160 acres in the North West Territory not far from Winnipeg for about £315 including a house and all the equipment required, and also the cost of a journey from England)

19th. Dan and Fitz stayed at the London and North Western Hotel with George Battscombe and his father. The next day they went down in the Tender to join the Pavonia and saw the cabins

which were very good ones – few people being onboard. He left them at 1.30 – weather calm – glass rising and every prospect of a quiet pleasant voyage. Dan got home at 8.45. 20th. Thoughts have been with our dear boy all day – he has been most likely at Queenstown at Service – the ship was to sail again at 3 o'clock. Hal and I walk to Pyon.

Dan health continued to be very poor and in February they decided to travel south partly for the weather and also to economise.

April

February 14th. Dan, Winnie and I left for London. Hal remaining at Kemble (Cirencester) and went on by Dover and Calais to Arcachon, Hotel de France (Here Dan wrote his Will and he was clearly very unwell still). Col and Mrs Dawson, Daws, Sir William and Lady Forbes, Mrs Alger and Miss Oakley being our friends – also Mr Desmares – a French Officer who was ill with consumption. Dan VERY ill but recovered sufficiently to go for change to Biarritz

They travel south through Europe for the rest of 1884 and end up in Florence in October 1885



Marble busts of Dan and Leila Peploe made by their son Fitz at his workshop in Florence

where they settle more or less continuously for the next two and a half years both to economise and to aid Dan's health.

In the late summer of 1886 the news came from England that Dan's younger brother Augustus had died aged only 52 at Chadnor Villa in Cheltenham, the house he had inherited from his aunts the Miss Webbs. His widow, Fanny who later became passionately interested in the early 20th century craze for seances and mediums, continued to live at Chadnor for a further 43 years according to an article in the Cheltenham Chronicle:

The funeral of Mrs Webb

The cremated remains of Mrs Frances Capel Webb, who died on Wednesday at Chadnor, Douro Road, Cheltenham, were on Saturday morning laid in the family grave in the Cheltenham Cemetery. Mrs Webb was the widow of Augustus H. Webb R.N. who died in 1886 at the age of 52 years. Aged 86, she had survived her husband about 43 years. Her maiden name was Curtis, and, her husband being the elder brother of the late Prebendary Webb Peploe, the famous Anglican divine, she was consequently aunt of Canon F. Webb Peploe vicar of Christ Church, Cheltenham, whose church she attended, and who officiated at the funeral. She is survived by two children, Dr J Curtis Webb, the well known Cheltenham medical specialist, and Mrs George Ram of Hove Sussex. By two of sons she was predeceased, one, Mr Cecil Webb, having been drowned in South Africa in a heroic attempt to rescue a friend while bathing, and the other Lieutenant Edmund Webb

Chadnor Villa below foreground built by the Miss Webbs in the 1840'ties and inherited by their nephew Augustus.



Augustus and Fanny Webb's daughter Millicent who married Captain Ram.



Dr Jack Curtis Webb, only surviving son of Augustus and the last member of the family to retain the name Webb

who lost his life in the Great War. Mrs Webb was a lady of brilliant gifts, and one who had won the regard of a very large circle of friends. At one time she occupied a prominent place in the life of the town, and she was especially interested in intellectual undertakings, a fact which led her to take a prominent part in fostering the University Extension movement. Among philanthropic objects in which she took a deep interest was the Sunset homes for aged women. Mrs Webb had resided at Chadnor for the past 45 years, but before coming to Cheltenham she and the late Captain Webb had a place in Tenby.

Fanny enjoyed amateur theatricals and her son Cecil had decided to become a professional actor before his accident in South Africa. Her eldest son Jack Curtis Webb became well known in Cheltenham as a Radiologist and after his retirement took to croquet. He was supposed to have been a caustic somewhat critical person and his young cousin Murray Webb Peploe found him quite intimidating. Apparently he delighted in telling malicious tales about some of his 'holier' relations and would relate that Howard Webb Peploe's nickname in the army was 'Me father, Me father', as he was always quoting his father Hanmer on any theological question. He was the second son of Hanmer and had been a Padre during W.W.1. Jack himself was divorced from his first wife and died in 1949 leaving an only daughter; he was the last member of our family to use the name Webb. Chadnor Villa had been sold by him soon after his mother's death and it was demolished in the early 1960'ties to make way for a block of flats.



Believed to be Augustus Webb,
younger son of John Birch Webb and
Annie his wife, after his retirement from
the Navy

In fact many of Dan's various nephews and nieces continued to live at Cheltenham until well into the 20th century. His brother Hanmer's son Frank was for many years Vicar of Christ Church Cheltenham, just along the road from Chadnor Villa, and he was described by one parishioner as a 'tall, rather humourless man' who never the less did much good for his parish. His youngest sister Ella carried on living at Leckhampton where her husband had been vicar for many years and was much beloved by her grandchildren, and his eldest sister Nora Croome lived nearby at Cainscross House.

In 1886 Dan decided to put Garnstone up for sale with Walton and Lee, at that time the main estate agents dealing with large estates. On the 25th June the family travel back to England for a visit and Dan wrote to his solicitor Mr James from Homburg concerning an offer for £130000 he had received for Garnstone from a Mr Farrer:

1 Mitere Promenade,
Homburg v.d. Hohe,
Germany.

My dear James

I was waiting to hear from Walton and Lee (estate agents) that all was settled with Mr Farrer to write to you, but I hear from him (Walton) that he has written to you himself.

We have accepted Farrer's offer; it is a miserable one, but he would not give a farthing more. I have, of course, given this matter every possible thought, and I am convinced that things are likely to get worse rather than better, that farmers are farming on capital and hanging on in hope of something turning up: that nothing is likely to turn up except still lower prices, the result of over production abroad: that then hardly a tenant at Garnstone who might not be expected to smash at any time, and that men are not to be found to replace them except at a ruinous reduction of Rent: that if a few farmers were thrown on my hands the road to absolute ruin would be very short, and last, but not least, that my son was strongly in favour of accepting and therefore if things were to go to the worst he would say "you had the chance of saving something and would not take it". I believe that those landowners who have nothing but land to look to must very shortly be ruined entirely, and many are ruined now. I can see no hope for the future. The Irish question will cause a lull until it is settled. After which Chamberlain must come to the front again and we know what he will do for Landlords!

It is a wretched business, but in the present condition of affairs, what was the alternative? I believe if we live 2 years, thousands will wish they had had the same chance.

Yours very sincerely
D.P.Peploe

I Trust it may be possible to prevent the price and co from being known to everybody.

Leila mentions none of this in her diary but does talk about her visit to England. Dan remains ill and stays behind at Lake Lucerne:

July 19th. Back to England to nurse Fitz who had returned with a very bad leg which needed an operation. (This was due to an accident which he sustained whilst ranching in Canada)

Went backwards and forwards from Hal's lodgings 10 Charles Street to 15 Fitzroy Square (Hospital) where he was under Sir Joseph Lister for 9 weeks. Dan taken ill and so left Fitz and joined Dan at Gersau on the Lake of Lucerne.

27th. Left for Cadenablia. Left on the 9th October and on the 15th. took Mrs Stours rooms at 15 Via Magenta. On the 10th November we had the delight of having Fitz back again wonderfully well.

On the 29th November 1886 Dan wrote from 15 Via Magenta a letter to Mr James suggesting the Farrer offer had fallen through:

'I said I did not like the idea but that if it could be showed that there are several people who really want it, I might change my views, tho' I think our insuperable objection would be (which I have often stated) that nothing would induce me to sell (Garnstone) to a Roman Catholic or a Jew'

At the start of 1887 Dan was offered £120000 for everything at Garnstone including all the estate and contents but was this rejected, and after a visiting Herefordshire in the spring the family travelled back to Italy in May.

21st May (Jubilee Day) We all left – Winnie and I to Garnstone and Dan and the boys for Sulisberg. There a week and then on to Homburg – 95 Lomisen Street. where they stayed till the

15th September. We spent a very happy summer at home (Garnstone) – then went to Town. (98 Sloane Street) for 4 days and after a glorious passage to Calais joined our belongings at Bale and continued our journey to Cadenablia. We had exquisite weather by day and lovely moonlight nights for boating and with regret we left but felt we ought to return to Florence for Fitz to begin his work in September.

Fitz had by this time given up any idea of ranching in Canada on account of an accident to his leg and instead took up sculpture enrolling at the Florence Academy in September 1887. From an article in the New York Times of 1897:

‘He came to America some years ago and went out West on a ranch. In consequence of an accident he was obliged to leave the ranching business and spent many weeks in a hospital in a Western city. During his illness he conceived the idea of becoming a sculptor, and on his recovery went to Italy, where he went through an arduous course of study.’

In the summer of 1887 he exhibited a marble medallion at the summer exhibition of the Royal Academy in London called ‘My first love’, It was favourably received by the critics who described it as a ‘statue of remarkable merit’ and it was of ‘graceful design and execution’. The same year he produced a bronze statue of a cowboy, it was some 14" high and represented a Canadian stockman. Mrs Robert Webb-Peploe, who lived with Fitz’s cousin in Canada for some years, was given a copy as a wedding present and she greatly admired the accuracy with which Fitz had portrayed his subject, indeed all Fitz's works were remarkable for their meticulous detail.

3rd November Our dear Hal left for England to enter training with Messrs Billett and Campbell on the Stock Exchange. Weather has become mild. (Hal worked for a few years on the Stock Exchange but did not enjoy the experience)

On the 4th November 1887 Dan was walking through the streets of Florence when he collapsed from a heart attack, medical help was immediately sought but to no avail - he died later that day aged 58. Leila wrote in the following in her diary:

4th November On this day ended my long and happy married life — the details are too firmly impressed on my mind and that of my children to need another word.

From this time forward I renounce my diary. It has told of nine years of the greatest happiness, four of ill health and adversity and finally of such deep sorrow that I feel as if I now took leave of life as regards any of the happiness and joy that is generally allowed to man — and only as it concerns my children’s future can I care for any daily events that are likely to occur.

The family was very anxious that Dan should be buried in the family vault at Weobley but a considerable delay occurred owing to the action of some sailors who still held the notion that it was unlucky to set sail with a dead body on board ship. The funeral was therefore delayed until after Christmas 1887 - a month and a half after Dan's decease, and Hanmer Webb-Peploe came down with the coffin to read the sermon during the service. Weobley Church was packed with old friends from the neighbourhood and sadly the occasion marked not only the conclusion of a life but also the end of the Peploe's occupation of Garnstone as the estate was now let for 13 years to Mr Smith, a retired but wealthy stockbroker from Berkshire, and he became the new squire.

Leila stayed in Florence with Winnie for the funeral so perhaps she found such occasions too difficult - particularly as it would have brought back memories of the death of her daughter Evelyn. From her diary:

‘Hal remained and went to Garnstone with Hanmer on Friday the 23rd December. In the afternoon took place at Weobley the last ceremony on earth that could affect him whom all loved. Mercifully the weather was fine and none were wanting who could testify to their affection and respect.’

A design for an elaborate marble memorial was commissioned from the Italian architect Lorenzo Porciatti (1864-1928) who was probably a contemporary and friend of Fitz at the Academy of Fine

Arts in Florence. It was erected in Weobley Church next to the full length sculpture of Colonel John Birch and is surmounted by a marble bust of Dan sculpted by Fitz that is dated 1887. As Fitz was travelling to and fro from England to Florence during the last two months of 1887 after his father's death the bust may well have been done while Dan was still alive. Porciatti later one fame for himself by winning an award for a design of the altar to Pope Leo XIII.

In the 1980'ties the rotten oak door at the back of Weobley Church leading to the family vault under the vestry collapsed when some school children were larking about, and the church warden told me that Dan's coffin was still draped in a purple velvet and gold brocade cover all in perfect condition. There were about 5 or 6 coffins in all including one of a child, and according to Major Philip Verdin "there was one of a very tall man that belonged to Captain Daniel Peplow who lived at Garnstone as a bachelor with a staff of 15". The Verdins had the door bricked up at that time to 'protect the dignity of Major Peplow.'

That autumn Leila suffered a further bereavement for her old guardian Maria Umphelby died at Belstead in Suffolk; she had been like a mother to the three Metcalfe sisters for so much of their childhood, and particularly for Leila who was the youngest and who only had the vaguest of memories her infancy in Delhi.

"On 22nd Dec 1887 Maria Umphelby, an eminent worker for the Lord, passed peacefully from the home on earth to the rest of the home above, after a long illness of much suffering. In that pleasant farm house on the hill at Belstead, near Ipswich, she had for more than fifty ears devoted all her time and energies in training the young committed to her watchful, motherly care, for the high positions which many of them were destined to occupy. In the providence of God, Mrs Umphelby had been called to pass through severe trial in early life, and when at the age of thirty, she found shelter under her aged parents' roof with her three children, she resolved to open a school for the education of children, in which religious instruction should be the foundation and home life the condition and surroundings of her young pupils, and more than 300 thus passed under her training in the course of fifty years."

Fitz returned to Florence after the funeral on the advice of Hal who thought Leila required more support than the 13 year old Winnie alone could provide. The beginning of 1888 saw the three of them still living at 15 Via Magenta and Fitz, who was a natural athlete and could never sit still for a moment, joined the celebrated establishment of Signors Maiello and Ciullini where he leant how to use the broad sword from the two Italian masters. He even began the task of translating their manual on fencing into English with the idea of publication, but it never came to anything.

Leila herself had an unexpected opportunity to meet Queen Victoria who had been invited by the artist William Blunder Spence to stay at his villa in Fiesole for a painting holiday. From the letters of the Duchess of Sermoneta:

Palazzo Tolomei
April 2nd 1888

"so as Mrs Peplow called on me just as the carriage came round, I proposed I should take her to Fiesole and Vincigliata.

As we passed the Villa Spence, the cancello being open, she expressed a wish to see it, and I asked if we might. I was told yes, and that the family were all down join Florence.

We had scarcely entered when we met Spence father and Spence son walking towards the Cannello. On seeing my victoria, they asked who I was and returned the honours of the villa to us. We hadn't been there twenty minutes when a gardener came rushing in: "Ecco la Regina d'Inghilterra." Accordingly, in she drove with her outrider and suite in a second carriage. Mrs Peplow and I stood in the loggia and made our reverences; then, after the Spences had explained the view, she got out and came into the villa. I said to Mrs Peplow: "Now is our time; let us go. She doesn't like strangers." We got into the victoria, which was waiting at the terrace, and were quietly driving away, when there was a calling and running after us, and the gardener and one of the Spence sons over took us, and said the Queen had asked who we were, and said she knew me, and wished to speak to me if I was not gone. So we returned, and General Ponsonby called Lady

Churchill, and Lady Churchill took me in and named me to the Queen, who was very gracious to me, and presented me to “my daughter Beatrice, and then Mrs Peploe, who was also presented. We were highly pleased at our accueil, especially as the Queen is said especially to avoid strangers.”