Prepared for the twentieth-century?

A Life of Emily Bonnycastle Mayne (AIMÉE)
1872-1958

by

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work that has not been previously submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of a woman’s life that identifies how an upper-middle-class upbringing, that included attempted tertiary education, induced her into a marriage and life-style that was the antithesis of her early aspirations. Her life in the early twentieth-century was to engender a sense of grievance that embittered relations with her family. While she was to take advantage of her travels to undertake a lecturing career, her sense of personal fulfilment was only to be met during the 1940s ‘Blitz’ of London. Her rich life-story is the essence of this thesis.

David Lambert and Alan Lester among others have written that Biography remains a powerful way of narrating the past. Philip Zeigler considers that the all-important job of biographers is above all to understand their subjects and to convey that understanding to their readers. An essential element of this study is therefore not only of 'the Life' but also of 'the Times'.

The 1890s in Britain was a decade of diverse middle-class anxieties about the emerging status and roles of young women. Perhaps it is inevitable that residual reactionary pressures, impacting here on women of the upper-middle-class, inhibited the trumpeted social and educational advances. In this context one woman's experiences challenge some generalizations made by those historians who have extolled the period as one during which women were enabled to take advantage of opportunities provided by tertiary education.

Aimée Mayne's life-story—her background and her understanding of life, her education, and her aspirations—provides an example of an upper-middle-class English female, born into a period that might have been life-changing for young women of her upbringing, especially one with her social and financial advantages. Aimée had been encouraged to pursue a university education, but her father’s death had a major impact on her life choices.

Although not unique in the lingering context of late-Victorian family expectations, it was the then widowed mother's action in withdrawing her daughter from Bedford College which crushed her daughter's ambitions. Forced to live as her mother's companion, she accepted a marriage proposal to escape from home. Married life in India and elsewhere abroad, though interesting, was at times frustrating and often an unhappy experience. It did not meet the aspirations she cherished as a young woman.
This biography documents a casualty of a changing world, with its lingering restrictions on how many women could run their lives. The diverse influences that shaped this woman's experiences and identity were expected to provide agency to her—but she was unable to take advantage of what was on offer. Consequently, her life in the twentieth-century was a story of personal disappointments, overshadowed by an unhappy marriage. Far from her upper-middle-class background and education preparing her for the twentieth-century, Aimée Mayne's early expectations of her future as an independent woman were to be unfulfilled.
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AIMÉE AND HER FAMILY

(From Family photographic archive)

Mr. Barnett c. 1890                    Mrs. Barnett, c.1890      Brother Archie Barnett 1901

The schoolgirl, c. 1885           The undergraduate, 1894

The fiancée, 1897
The sportswoman, 1901

The cyclist, 1910

The 'Burra Mem', 1910

The lecturer, 1920
The Family in Jersey, 1927. (L->R Arthur, Helen, Edward, Margaret, Archie, Isa, Aimée)
Sample of 1897 diary pages and of Aimée's memoir *Annette*, both referring to the famine
INTRODUCTION

This is a study of a woman of the British upper-middle-class, whose story is full of colour—of living in India; of family relationships; of travel; of the Blitz. She kept diaries, she wrote an intimate memoir. This thesis explores her emotional conflicts, with a revealing analysis that includes revelations about a woman brought up in the late-Victorian period, encompassing her sex-life and the turmoils of an unhappy marriage.¹ Her story places an obligation on the biographer to produce an informed, interesting and readable scrutiny of a full existence.

Biography sits comfortably with more traditional forms of history, argued historian Jeremy Popkin, who has written extensively on the subject. There is a relationship between biography on the one hand and history and autobiography on the other that provides substance to the individual life history in its own right.² In a review of Barbara Caine’s Biography and History Popkin noted that in a postmodernist world ‘suspicious of grand narratives of collective experience’, Caine’s recognition of the relationship is valid. Biography adds to history through providing substance to specific ‘locations and circumstances’. Historians, Caine has observed, have traditionally considered biography as an inferior means for exposing the past, while postmodernists have questioned its basic premise—the notion that there is any coherence in the notion of an individual life. Caine contended that modern biographers, particularly those interested in women’s lives, have demonstrated biography’s historical and vital relevance.³

Gender ideology was a key factor that ruled young women’s lives at the end of the nineteenth-century and recent research into the restrictions it imposed has been extensive.⁴ A major question I discuss is how and whether the vaunted educational and social advances for English women in the late nineteenth-century benefited the subject of this biography during her life in the twentieth-century. Born into an upper-middle-class family in 1874, Aimée Mayne had all the late-Victorian privileges of a

comfortable London home and schooling. Her tertiary education was to be cut short by family circumstances that led to an unfortunate marriage, years in India, and to ongoing dissatisfaction with her life in the twentieth-century.

I argue that Aimée Mayne’s education and aspirations created false expectations for her. As a very young woman, she apparently aspired towards a serious career, eschewing marriage and children. The anticipated prospects aroused initially by commencement and abandonment of tertiary education, and later by embracing her ‘memsahib’ life in India, instilled a sense of frustrated discontent that embittered her in later life, to the detriment of relations with her husband, her family and the wider community. After a period of lecturing, her initial ideals to make her own way were really only to be realised through her work during the London ‘Blitz’ in the 1940s.

Aimée Mayne’s story is uncovered and reviewed against the social, cultural and political background to her early idealism. I place her as a symbol of emergent British upper-middle-class womanhood, in the first half of the twentieth-century, often isolated from her peers because of her earlier frustrated expectations—she was, I argue, a victim of the gender beliefs at the time that still saw young women of her class destined for marriage. My investigation contributes to the body of work on the lives of upper-middle-class women, providing one more example to illuminate their experiences as products of the late Victorian nineteenth-century.

Her life has five clearly definable periods: her childhood through to her leaving university, 1872-1896; followed by her life in India 1897-1916; family life in Canada, the USA, UK and Jersey, 1916-1931; travels, mainly with her husband Arthur, through Europe, the USA and southern Africa during the 1930s; and living on her own in London during World War II until 1944.

My investigation of Aimée’s development into a mature woman necessitated a deep engagement with a very wide range of the secondary sources relevant to this period and this woman’s life. They are discussed in this introduction. Of particular significance are the multitude of writings on late Victorian Britain, on the social and political climate, the attitudes and behaviours of the various components of the middle-class and the societal expectations placed on males and females. In addition, I have studied the effects of religion and other belief systems, such as Theosophy; I consider the advances in education for women in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Finally, I have mined the extensive literature on the British Raj to discuss how India affected the British women who lived there, together with the contribution such women made to their communities and to the country, under the Raj. It must be remembered
that, in this context, British India was a predominantly masculine society (and British women were at best tolerated).  

**Middle-Class Society in late-Victorian Britain**

Late Victorian Britain was a period of significant political and social change. The British Liberal government had created under William Gladstone a ‘civilisation’ based on ‘Free Trade, classical scholarship, strict religious observance, public probity and reformist zeal’, as George Dangerfield put it. There was an emerging realisation of the state of the working-class. More than one Londoner in three lived in ‘families huddled six to a room; more than one in eight died in the workhouse’. 

However, in the second half of the nineteenth-century there were attempts under way to remediate these squalid conditions and to raise the status of working-class children. Concurrent with later measures that were part of the series of legislative actions, known collectively as the ‘Factory Acts’ dating from 1802, the Education Act introduced compulsory and free elementary education in 1876, followed by the Prevention of Cruelty to, and Protection of, Children Act 1889, (the ‘Children’s Charter’) and the Education Act 1891 that attempted to further ensure free education to all children. John Tosh noted that it was these two later pieces of legislation that marked a change in how society was becoming aware of obligations towards the working class.

No study of this period can be undertaken without consideration of the British class structure, although it is beyond the scope of this study to attempt here a delineation of what constituted the ‘middle-class’. As Linda Young comments, the formation of the middle-class ‘is easier to document than to define’. She draws on E.P. Thompson’s view of class, not as a ‘category’ ‘but something…recognizable in relations between people’, a very practical approach. David Cannadine, among others, discussed this in some detail. Suffice to say, as Bernard Porter wrote, in the late nineteenth-century the classes lived in different worlds, unable sometimes even to communicate with each other, except at the level of giving and taking orders. This

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8 Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, p.159.
greatly affected peoples’ views and values on virtually every matter.\textsuperscript{11} As Gwen Raverat concluded, ‘for nearly seventy years, the English middle-classes were locked up in a great fortress of unreality and pretence.’\textsuperscript{12} Carol Hall has argued further the middle-class was held together by ideas and ideals about masculinity and femininity, together with an opposition to the gentry and the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{13} How best then to identify the ‘middle-class’?

Carol Dyhouse considered that ‘class’ is best identified through individuals’ personal experiences of family life.\textsuperscript{14} They were far more influenced by their class situation—in particular their class functions—than by any more general ‘national’ discourse.\textsuperscript{15} A prime example of this is Aimée herself: her birth into an upper-middle-class family was a major factor in determining her future, albeit contrary to her own expectations of life, as will be discussed. It was no mere accident that her upbringing was in London. The Metropolis was the centre to which the wealthy middle-class gravitated.

From where in Britain did the upper-middle-class first emerge? W. D. Rubinstein found that the wealthy middle-class was divided into ‘metropolitan-banking-commercial’ and ‘provincial-industrial’. The centre of wealth-making in late nineteenth-century Britain was London, rather than the industrial towns of the north of England. Most top London fortunes were left by those in commerce and finance, while wealth in the north was earned in manufacturing, despite the plethora of merchants in provincial trade centres such as Liverpool, Glasgow and Leeds and the Scottish industrial centres. By the middle of the nineteenth-century the middle-class was developing into a unified culture.\textsuperscript{16} The growth of its wealthy upper levels was to lead to its inclusion in the governing strata. Cannadine noted that ‘the status elite and the wealth elite were essentially the same people.’\textsuperscript{17}

The composition and functions of the ruling elites changed. The late nineteenth-century was one of challenge for the traditional ruling (upper-) class, which had based

\textsuperscript{12} Gwen Raverat, \textit{Period Piece}, London, Faber and Faber, 1953, p.104.
\textsuperscript{13} Carol Hall, \textit{White, Male and Middle Class}, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992, p.70.
\textsuperscript{14} Carol Dyhouse, \textit{No distinction of sex? Women in British universities 1870-1939}, London, UCL Press, 1995, p.186. Hall, also made the point that the composition of the (upper) middle-class was ‘less documented and theorized than it is on the working-class’, \textit{White, Male and Middle Class}, p.94.
\textsuperscript{15} Porter, \textit{The Absent-Minded Imperialists}, p.311.
its power and authority on land. Nancy Ellenberger described the plutocratic middle-
class families that suddenly appeared in the highest circles of Society, with an
accompanying decay in the probity and refinement of aristocratic life. Sons of the
upper-middle-classes, educated at public schools and Oxbridge, usurped places in the
civil service and the professions. Careers in politics came to require talents and
concentration beyond the abilities of Ellenberger’s ‘dilettante gentleman statesmen’.\(^\text{18}\)

Adding to the pressures on the upper class during this period, serious doubts were
being raised about the health of the British ‘race’ (no longer so dominant throughout its
Empire). From 1870 the British birth rate began to decline.\(^\text{19}\) Scientists and medical
men warned that ‘the right types’ were not breeding in sufficient numbers; feminists
were blamed for attacking the heart of family relations—marriage and motherhood—
thus deterring middle-class young women from performing their proper function.\(^\text{20}\) As
Lesley Hall concluded, there was a strong inclination towards smaller families, for
reasons that are not wholly clear, though they would have included economic and social
factors. It was also the period when contraceptive devices were coming into use.\(^\text{21}\) Hall
noted that their use was primarily by the professional and administrative classes.\(^\text{22}\)

The way gender featured in the process of class formation was crucial to the
social relations of citizenship, since it positioned women primarily within the home. In
practice, however, it was to be shown as impossible to sustain the artificial demarcation
between private lives and public commitments. Accordingly, there emerged an
alternative set of equal rights espoused by a small but vocal minority of Victorian
women expressing a distinct philosophy reflecting a strong sense of female identity.\(^\text{23}\)

For women not to work reflected the success of their men—whether father or
husband. The education of girls was to prepare them for courtship and marriage.\(^\text{24}\) Yet
the role of the wife and mother was a significant one in the household and Patricia


\(^{20}\) Ibid.

\(^{21}\) Lesley A. Hall, *Sex, Gender and Social Change in Britain since 1880*, London, Macmillan, 2000, p.29.

\(^{22}\) Ibid. p.66.

\(^{23}\) This was not without its detractors: ‘No impartial witness,’ observed *The Daily Telegraph*, ‘could doubt implications for the claims of women to a wider public and political life: we shall be rather at a loss for good arguments to level at them when they try to enter the House of Commons. Of course they may break down…if a motion…is rejected…may break into tears…’ Jane Martin, *Women and the Politics of School in Victorian and Edwardian England*, Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1999, p.38.

\(^{24}\) Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*, p.63.
Branca disputed assumptions that Victorian codes of middle-class domesticity required women to be merely ornamental and confined to the parlour. Branca identified female education as one of the obvious ways in which the middle-class aped the manners of the upper-class. The Victorian middle-class recognised that knowledge was power, as Simon Morgan commented. Branca noted that ‘Middle-class parents desiring to improve their social standing would send their daughters off to boarding school’. By the 1880s women were perceived as capable beings, rather than as passive victims; the vast majority of middle-class housewives coped with quarrelsome servants while struggling with ‘creative accounting’. Branca argued that almost all the studies of Victorian women focus on discontent and on the history of women as being the history of the inarticulate. By contrast, she placed the middle-class woman as a positive element of British social history, as mistress of the house—with domestics and as a mother devoting herself intensively to the care and attention of her children. On the other hand, Carol Dyhouse noted that many women seemed to have shared the experience of having ‘sofa-ridden mothers’. She concluded that this must have impressed on their daughters that they were expected to represent their mothers, as well as nurse them. Clearly there was a range of experiences, with some middle-class women supremely able to run a household, while others, for whatever reason, sagged under the responsibility.

It should be noted at this point that this was during the period of the first Great Depression, lasting from the early 1870s to the mid 1890s, resulting in ‘a new state of mind of uneasiness and gloom’ about the prospects of the British economy. It was notable for some significant changes in Britain’s economic position. While not discounting its devastating effects on the unemployed and under-employed, the Great Depression had a major impact on the middle-class. Incomes were reduced to the point where some grown-up daughters could not be supported at home, even during their father’s lifetime. These socio-economic factors affected a wide range of women, with

27 Ibid. p.151.
many middle-class families unable to provide for their daughters’ livelihoods. This became a recurrent preoccupation of Victorian commentators. As Leonore Davidoff commented, girls and women were particularly vulnerable to sudden economic shifts, due to financial pressures on the family, because they were economically dependant, as well as socially, on home affiliations.32

Although there was a surplus of young, single women in Britain, from the middle of the century,33 in the last quarter of the nineteenth-century the status of middle-class women was improving. Tertiary and vocational education was on the rise, there were enhanced job prospects, with the demand for women in employment, chiefly in education, in nursing, or as health inspectors or in secretarial and clerical work.34 Moreover, there was, as Tosh described, the emergence of the ‘New Woman’ of the British upper-middle-class in the last two decades of the nineteenth-century—women who smoked, bicycled and lived away from family. This was ‘the revolt of the daughters’, with their insistence on no chaperone and a general refusal to live life by the patriarchal rules.35 This also represented ‘challenges to patriarchal convention’ as Tosh discussed later.36

The cultural context

It is now apposite to discuss briefly some of the major cultural influences on upper-middle-class young women, as they grew up in the last three decades of the nineteenth-century. The first of these implied pressures was often religion, principally either of the Nonconformist or of the Anglican variety. It was believed throughout the Victorian era that domestic seclusion gave a proper basis for a truly religious life: women naturally occupied the domestic sphere; they were seen as more ‘naturally’ religious than men.37 The religious census of 1851 made it clear that attendance at church or chapel was a practice much more associated with the middle-class than the working-class. It is true that, as Sarah Williams and others have argued, many working-class women were still religious, but equally many were effectively excluded from attending organised

35 Tosh, A Man’s Place, pp.150-153.
churches, due to the scarcity of churches in rapidly expanding urban centres, high pew rents and expectations of respectable clothing.

In her analysis of the powerful nineteenth-century ‘thematic triumvirate’ of religion, gender and family life, Williams argued that, as yet, historians have failed to move beyond ‘a hegemonic preoccupation with evangelicalism and its emphasis on a highly feminised, domesticated piety’. By adhering to the static tableau of middle-class family religion first articulated by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall over twenty years ago, she argued, historians have replicated the same Victorian homilies on female moral superiority that demand our critical scrutiny, creating a picture that elides the social and spiritual diversity of popular family religion. Working-class religiosity, for example, often operated on the peripheries of Christian culture. Women and men combined church-based practices with folk myths and shared rituals that were often attributed a hallowed status. The syncretism of popular religious culture meant that family bibles often lay alongside lucky charms and protective amulets. To rethink modern domestic spirituality, Williams suggested alternative methodological approaches such as oral history and an exploration of material culture. Only in this way, she believes, will we fully appreciate the local, denominational and class-specific forms that religion took.38

Nevertheless, as Hugh McLeod commented, ‘The whole tone was so clearly set by [the] social superiors’.39 Religious belief had become ‘a character and function of class’ rather than as a basis for a wider social unity; adherence to evangelical Protestant forms was part of ‘respectability, if not gentility, offering individuals an identity and a community in a society that was changing rapidly’.40 Another contemporary source recorded that this respectability bestowed on middle-class women a particular identity, distinctive from the ‘aristocratic ideals of the lady’.41

An alternative belief-system was one result of this period of soul-searching: Theosophy. Joy Dixon has researched Theosophy as an important belief of the time—based on an eclectic blend of science, spiritualism, and both ‘Eastern’ and Christian mysticism—that appealed primarily to men and women of the professional-middle-

40 Davidoff, Family Fortunes, p.76.
41 ‘Any individual male or female could be redeemed through Christ, and when facing death or bankruptcy, religious belief provided explanation and meaning’, C.P. Melville and J. Fox, Unpublished Diary of a Visit to Bingley Hall, Birmingham, 1819 Brl 669392, cited in Ibid., p.77.
class. Their privileged access to the resources of the public sphere enabled them to
exercise an influence far greater than the relatively small membership of the
Theosophical Society would suggest. In the late nineteenth-century, the ‘scientific
spirituality’ (my words) of the Theosophical Society mainly attracted professional men.
In the early twentieth century Theosophy was increasingly dominated by women, and
the ‘feminization’ of the movement produced a complex reconfiguration of class and
gender relations, embedded in forms of spirituality such as mysticism and occultism.42

The social scientific thinkers throughout the culture also developed an interest in
Science. The emergence of the disciplines of sociology and anthropology had been
prominent in the 1850s and 1860s. Thomas Heyck drew attention to the main themes of
Victorian philosophical and intellectual life in Britain as also being pervaded by new
analytical disciplines. They had begun to crystallize in the early nineteenth century,
including chemistry, mineralogy, geology, and comparative anatomy. The state
expanded its role in knowledge production, manifested by the opening of museums and
state institutions such as the School of Mines and medical schools.43

The period also spawned pseudo-sciences. Peter Bowler wrote that this was also
the Age of the Sages that gave rise to new scientific enquiry, the more spurious of
which, including Phrenology, were to be debunked.44 Prominent among the enduring
intellectuals was Charles Darwin,45 who had produced a new and crude mechanism by
which evolution of species might be explained, although the general formulation of
some of the key notions commonly seen as ‘Darwinian’ should more properly be
assigned to the philosopher Herbert Spencer, now referred to as a Social-Darwinist. The
latter was a ‘self-made’ thinker who had alighted upon a jumbled fund of scattered facts

42 Joy Dixon, Gender, Politics, and Culture in the New Age: Theosophy in England, 1880-1935, Ph.D.,
Rutgers The State University of New Jersey - New Brunswick, 1993 cited in Ibid, p.112. See also
Joy Dixon, Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
University Press, 2001 and ‘Modernity, Heterodoxy and the transformation of religion cultures’ in
Morgan and de Vries, Women, Gender and Religious Cultures in Britain.
43 Thomas William Heyck, ‘The Organisation of Knowledge in Victorian Britain’, Victorian Studies,
vol.49, no.1, 2006, pp.165-167. [EBL access record]
44 For a comprehensive discussion on phrenology, see L. Livianos-Aldana, et al., ‘F.J. Gall and the
[EBL access record]
45 Darwin believed that ‘the chief distinction between the sexes was biologically based. Men were
capable of deep thought, reasoning or imagination, whereas women the powers of intuition…
characteristics of the lower races, and therefore of a past or lower state of civilisation’. Katharina
Rowold, The Educated Woman: Minds, Bodies, and Women’s Higher Education in Britain,
Germany and Spain, 1865-1914, Hoboken, Taylor and Francis, 2009, p.25. [EBL access record]
and speculations, seen as a search for ‘mutual echoes’ between zoology and economics.\textsuperscript{46}

As Susan Kingsley Kent wrote, ‘in cultural and intellectual terms the promulgation of Darwinist and social-Darwinist theories of evolution and ‘racial’ determination undercut the assumptions about human nature…’\textsuperscript{47} However, it was Spencer’s work that provided an ‘overarching intellectual frame work for liberal social scientists in the 180s’.\textsuperscript{48}

The medical advances and beliefs of the late Victorian period were significant. Francesco Cordasco recorded the development of new goals in medical education; the clinic and laboratory in the mid nineteenth-century; the spread of laboratory teaching and the continued struggle for the evolving laboratory curriculum to the end of the nineteenth-century. Moreover, the development of a university standard in medical education accompanied by the changing student populations in medicine in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a preparation for new challenges in medical education to the mid twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{49}

In view of the resistance to women’s education in many quarters, it is all the more remarkable that the late nineteenth-century in England and early twentieth-century was a period of advances in the field of tertiary education for women. As Jane Martin noted, in London and elsewhere, members of the first women’s movement in England were pressing for education, economic and social rights for women. Although there was a lingering belief that ‘the mental powers necessary for university education were commonly considered to be less developed in women than in men’,\textsuperscript{50} higher education was slowly opened up to them, professions such as medicine admitted their first female entrants and the suffrage organisations used the traditions of female philanthropy to gain access to government, administration and the law. Incidentally, the Victorians made little attempt to hide the class nature of education, which also had a distinct


\textsuperscript{49} Francesco Cordasco, ‘Becoming a Physician: Medical Education in Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States.’ \textit{USA Today}, 125 (2620), 1997, p.96.


\textsuperscript{50} Rowold, \textit{The Educated Woman}, p.8.
gender dynamic; a pattern was soon established that rendered the expansion of girls’
education in institutions specifically catering for women.51

The late nineteenth-century saw the first of the female doctors who were part of
the surge in medical graduates which took advantage of the growth of medical
education through the Victorian age. Patricia Hollis concluded that the concept that
women undertaking tertiary education would damage their reproductive capacities, and
indeed damage their offspring, was dismissed by prominent educational pioneers of the
time.52 This shibboleth was also discussed by Deirdre Raftery.53

However, there was still opposition to this new world for women.54 Reactionary
Victorian views on women, marriage and education had to be complementary with
women’s place in the home. In Harriet Martineau’s Autobiography, published in 1877
she had argued that a wide-ranging education, including history and natural philosophy,
was not incompatible with women’s domestic duties. ‘The best housekeeper is an
educated woman.’55

The later part of this discussion has focussed on how education was equipping
women for life in the twentieth-century, but can I extrapolate this scenario to the lives
of British women in India? Was an educated woman equipped for life in India where
Aimée found herself after her marriage?

Life in India
Aimée Mayne’s life included over seventeen years in India. She was one of the British
wives who accompanied their husbands on their postings throughout the subcontinent.
As with many other Anglo-Indian families, Aimée’s lineage included those who had
made careers in India—a father and brother—and she joined a husband whose alleged

51 Martin, Women and the Politics of School, pp.2,4.
52 ‘Girton suffers largely, I believe, from the determined opposition of medical men, and as for me, I
scarcely expect anything else if a medical opinion be asked in the case of any girl. The smallest
ailment always proceeds from over-brainwork!!! [sic] never from neglected conditions of health,
from too many parties, etc., etc.’ Frances Buss to Emily Davies, 13 April 1874 from Barbara
Stephen, Emily Davies and Girton College, 1927, cited in Patricia Hollis (comp), Women in
Public: Documents of the Victorian Women’s Movement, 1850-1900, London, George Allen and
Unwin, 1979, p.28.
53 ‘I have seen girls, the daughters of well-grown parents, who simply stopped growing too soon. They
are more-or-less dwarfism specimens of their kind, this being caused, I believe, by the vital
nervous force being appropriated by the mental part of the brain in learning’, cited in Deirdre
Raftery, ‘The Opening of Higher Education for Women in the Nineteenth-Century: Unexpected
54 Maria G. Grey, On the Special Requirements for Improving the Education of Girls, London, William
Ridgway, 1872, p.119. See also her ‘The Women’s Educational Movement’, The Woman
55 Alison Twells, British Women’s History - A Documentary History from the Enlightenment to World
antecedents included a long line of military men who had served in India. However, while Aimée knew something of India from her early childhood, her parents’ experiences were of living in some style, surrounded by expatriates—her father was a wealthy contractor, based in Madras. Her parents’ lives were therefore atypical of much of her own life in India, accompanying as she did her Indian Civil Service (ICS) husband to the remoter parts of central India. In effect, she was to be totally unprepared for what lay ahead of her as a bride. While her personal experiences were of course unique to her, did they reflect those of other expatriate women of the period? It is useful at this point to consider those women who were the wives of British civilians and military officers during the latter part of the nineteenth-century.\textsuperscript{56}

The historians who have discussed this fall into two categories: there are those, for example Pat Barr and Marian Fowler, who have examined the lives of British women in India—the ‘memsahibs’—as unquestioning ancillaries of Imperial India.\textsuperscript{57} Their roles were to support their husbands. They are depicted as passive supporters of the British role in India. These historians argue that the wives usually behaved impeccably, as expected by the rulers of Imperial India and according to the social mores of the times. However, the second grouping of historians, such as Mary Procida and Antoinette Burton, comprises a more revisionist school.\textsuperscript{58} The role of the women and that of the British in India is closely examined: imperial motives are queried and even the integrity of the high-and-mighty ICS itself is questioned.

When did the memsahib’s regime originate? According to William Dalrymple, the story of the British wives, missionaries and other female expatriates who arrived in increasing numbers throughout the nineteenth-century to live in India presented an abrupt social change from the previous century’s history of single men in the employ of the East India Company, the civilians and of course the military.\textsuperscript{59} Many of these men had freely entered into domestic relationships with Indian women, producing numerous offspring. Dalrymple recorded that in the late 1780s ‘ideas of racial and ethnic

\textsuperscript{56} For an exhaustive coverage of those women who sailed to India to find a husband, see Anne de Courcy, \textit{The Fishing Fleet – Husband-Hunting in the Raj}, London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2012.


\textsuperscript{59} The military were members of the three Presidency armies (the Bengal Army, the Madras Army and the Bombay Army). The first army officially called the ‘Indian Army’ was raised by the government of India in 1895, existing alongside the three long-established presidency armies. Harold E. Raugh, \textit{The Victorians at war, 1815-1914: an encyclopedia of British military history}, Santa Barbara California, ABC-CLIO, 2004, pp.173-179.
hierarchy’ then appeared, when the increasing mixed-blood community felt the weight of an official new intolerance.\(^{60}\) Indeed, Durba Ghosh argued that this was the face of British imperial dominance, established between 1760 and 1860. There was a growing sense that British and Indian interaction, wrote Ghosh, required ‘careful regulation if the British were to retain political authority’.\(^{61}\) Consequently, children of British men with Indian wives were barred from being educated in England, thus excluding them from employment in the East India Company. They were also banned from owning land, relegating them in the Anglo-Indian social hierarchy to become junior clerks and train drivers one hundred years later.\(^{62}\)

This was the prelude to the influx of British women during the nineteenth century, but historians agree that few Anglo-Indians in the Victorian age were to regard India as home. David Gilmour argued that the subcontinent was a career not a colony, a place to work and move around rather than to settle in and put down roots. There was ‘a sense of alien impermanence together with permanent vulnerability’.\(^ {63}\)

British women first began to enter India in significant numbers after the East India Company lost the power to restrict immigration in 1833. They tended to concentrate in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay although an increasing number lived in the provinces, as British imperial power expanded. Most were the wives and daughters of senior company officials, merchants, planters and of some missionaries. Until the later part of the nineteenth-century their numbers were relatively few. In 1861 females numbered no more than 19,306 out of a total British population of 125,945. It had more than doubled in the 1901 census, with 384 women per one thousand men.\(^ {64}\)

The roles of the thousands of British women who lived in India during Victorian times have traditionally been seen as supportive and secondary, because of the social prejudices and conventions of the period. However Procida has maintained that the women of the official Anglo-Indian community were much more than secondary appendages to their husbands. She saw them as active participants in a colonial state apparatus that blurred the boundary between the public and private state of its agents.\(^ {65}\) In their daily existence the British wives reinforced the gulf between the rulers and the

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\(^{62}\) Dalrymple, *White Mughals*, p.50. The term ‘Anglo-Indian’ henceforth refers to the expatriate British community living in India and not to today’s nomenclature of the mixed-race community.


\(^{65}\) Procida, ‘Feeding the Imperial Appetite’, pp.123-149.
ruled by their self-imposed isolation from Indian lives and by their haughty attitudes. Few spoke Hindi or Urdu and they confined themselves in the main to the giving of orders to domestic staff. In a review of one of Procida’s books, Bernard Porter quoted the former as arguing that compared with their counterparts at home, the British wives in India were ‘more important, actively imperialist, and less constrained by metropolitan gender patterns’ characterized, for example, by the ‘separation of spheres’ in Britain between ‘public’ (male) and ‘private’ (female).66

Writers, particularly Rudyard Kipling, have handed down an image of the typical memsahib as a frivolous, snobbish and selfish creature who flitted from bridge to tennis parties in the hills while her poor husband slaved on the plains. Barr however argued that these resemblances are of little substance—for the most part, the women loyally and stoically accepted their share of the white people’s burden, suffering harrowing ordeals while pursuing worthy causes.67 The women lived in a difficult country with bravery and competence, they endured hardships and long travels in remote areas, and they ‘tried to be ladies in all circumstances’ as Margaret Macmillan concluded.68 Fowler noted that it was the British women who humanized the Raj, who civilized it. They gave the Raj ‘its heart’, Fowler continued that bright women provided satiric wit and much wisdom, gentle ladies provided devotion to duty and calm under fire. Feeling ones supplied the balm of empathy and ardour; beautiful ones added grace and drama. All provided scope and value to their contribution to India.69

That is the kind view of Anglo-Indian women. Another perspective was provided in a letter from a despairing expatriate, Malcolm Darling, quoted by Clive Dewey, who wrote of them as having ‘empty minds and hearts trying to fill them by despising the natives’. Dewey concluded that Darling’s damming sketch of the Anglo-Indians the latter met was typical of ‘every sort of and condition of Anglo-Indian’, wherever they foregathered, in clubs and at home.70 And it was in the households that the memsahibs held sway, often running a local staff that could include half a dozen servants, each of whom had a role, and the external staff who tended to the garden and the horses. Aimée Mayne’s house-staff was never less than six, as her diaries and photographs have illustrated.

67 Barr, The Memsahibs, p.1
69 Fowler, Below the Peacock Fan, p.309.
The Anglo-Indian bungalows, presided over by the memsahibs, were important sites for cultural appropriation and transformation. But like the public spectacles of imperialism, according to Procida, such cultural interactions in the private realm did not represent any concession to the demands of the colonized peoples for autonomy and respect. Rather, the hybrid Anglo-Indian domestic culture was intended to demonstrate the colonizers’ mastery and dominance in the private arena of the empire as in the public sphere.\(^{71}\) ‘Domestic culture’ of course was based on interaction with the Indian servants. During the nineteenth-century, servants in and around the bungalow were the only group of Indians with whom memsahibs had substantial contact and accordingly this shaped their attitudes towards Indians and India in general.\(^{72}\)

As members of an official elite, and a major component of the expatriate scene, the memsahibs came to embody many of the connections and tensions between domesticity and imperialism.\(^{73}\) Although, according to Porter (in contrast to Procida’s views) they were apparently almost never feminist, nor did they conform very closely to the ‘separate spheres’ pattern. This was, he argued, because of the complicated factors of race and authority which overrode this pattern. By the side of their menfolk they were women; in relation to the native Indians, however, they were members of the imperial ‘masculine’ race. Some studies show them to have been ‘masculinized’ by this experience, Porter continued. Generally, women shied away from the ‘good works’ that would have been expected of them in Britain, for example, like ‘raising’ their Indian sisters. Instead they took up hunting and shooting and developed ideas about imperial rule, and of Indian racial inferiority that were frequently ‘harder’ than those of their husbands. Indeed, they have been charged with bringing the empire down because of their arrogance—though that might have been a function of their upper-middle-classness.\(^{74}\)

However, Porter has suggested that it may not be empirically sound to over-emphasise the ‘masculinizing’ effects of the Empire on British society. Just because the empire was ruled by men, it does not necessarily follow that the way it was ruled can be linked with this. It could have been far more influenced by the situation the rulers found themselves in, and their ruling functions, which would have been the same whether they were men or women. That may be the lesson to be drawn from the memsahibs’

\(^{71}\) Procida, ‘Feeding the Imperial Appetite’, p.124.
behaviour, Porter argued: not that their femininity had been subverted by the maleness of their menfolk, but that as human beings placed in roughly the same situation as the men, they reacted in the same ways. Moreover, as Porter further indicated, nineteenth and early twentieth-century British imperialism was not only ‘masculine in character’, but also included some conventional ‘feminine’ traits—without any input from the women. Public-school training not only stressed the ‘harder’ virtues like strength and bravery, but the softer ones like gentleness and service to the less fortunate.75

The medical fraternity of the time emphasized that women needed to shelter in hill stations from the fierce summer climatic conditions on the plains. This ‘weaker-sex’ doctrine was disputed by feminists such as Annie Steel, along with many other women who also countered this stereotype.76 Their assertions were born out by the relative mortality data disproving medical beliefs that the ‘weaker sex’ was unable to survive summer conditions on the plains. The death rate for British women was only fourteen per thousand for women, far less than the twenty per thousand for British civilians.77

Other than the wives and daughters of the civil and military officers, MacMillan noted that missionaries, doctors, nurses, nannies, governesses, companions, and secretaries comprised a sizeable minority of female expatriates in the later part of the nineteenth-century and into the twentieth. In 1911 the largest single group of women were female missionaries—over 1200 women as compared with over 1900 male missionaries.78 Many of these enjoyed an uncomfortable relationship with the Raj. As Barbara Ramusack noted, they were often regarded with suspicion: the ‘official’ British community was uncomfortable with the proselytising practices that were seen as clashing with traditional Indian beliefs.79

Beyond memsahibs and religious missionaries, there were British women outside the formal imperial establishment who went to India because of their concern for the condition of Indian women. An examination of five women by Ramusack shows how the categories of race and gender influenced efforts to promote social reforms within an

75 Ibid.
76 Kennedy, pp.118-122.
imperial relationship. Once in India these women functioned as cultural missionaries preaching a gospel of encouraging women to better themselves, based largely on models adapted from their experience in Britain. All five women were most able to cross the boundary of race as feminist allies when their skills most suited the needs of Indian women. At least three of these women became maternal imperialists who treated Indian women as daughters whom they were preparing for adult responsibilities as modern women.\textsuperscript{80}

The Empire indeed had an allure for Edwardian lady imperialists. Julia Bush argued that as emigrants, women were promised ‘freedom, employment, home-building, and unrestricted motherhood’, as well as the chance to contribute to the mighty ‘religious, national, and racial cause of Empire’. Even as ‘stay-at-homes’ their contribution was needed. Empire-building could not be left to chance, nor to male auspices alone. Bush concluded that it required organisation by ‘cultured, refined, religious women’. Thousands of leisured British ladies stood ready to answer this call, and took up imperial propaganda, education and emigration work as a congenial extension of existing philanthropic and missionary activities.\textsuperscript{81}

British society in India did not appreciate unusual women, however. ‘Women whose unconventional behaviour threatened the Raj were not easily forgiven’, concluded MacMillan.\textsuperscript{82} It was easier for women to be ahead of their time in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, because standards of acceptable behaviour were ‘more elastic’ than later during the Victorian Raj. Senior memsahibs, those who were independent of mind and unafraid of disapproval, were permitted some eccentricities and could even be mildly intellectual; they could go beyond the restraints of their time. But later in the nineteenth-century the limits of lady-like behaviour were drawn more tightly although strong characters managed to live their own lives. They even mixed with progressive Indians.\textsuperscript{83}

Dewey has provided one example of a couple who went against contemporary Anglo-Indian expectations. He described in some detail the vicissitudes of Malcolm Darling who together with his wife was posted to the Indian Civil Service in the early 1900s. Darling deplored the ‘heavy, official attitudes’ of his superiors which suggests

\textsuperscript{80} Ramusack, ‘Cultural missionaries’, p.309.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, pp.200-201, 203-204.
in turn that his seniors might have regarded him with some reservation. His wife Josie was a feminist which upset many of her female contemporaries, one of whom was reported as declaring at a dinner party that ‘the cleverest woman was inferior to the stupidest man’. The Darlings detested the British public schools and despised the current interest within Anglo-Indian society with Theosophy. Josie had become drama critic of the Indian newspaper The Pioneer that circulated widely throughout the Anglo-Indian community. One unfavourable review by Josie of an amateur production turned the local expatriate community against her. The Darlings were recognised at the time for setting themselves apart from Anglo-Indian society and it could not have helped their local expatriate standing that they ‘were conscious of their superior social backgrounds and expected their fellow expatriates to recognise it’.

Aimée Mayne shared with the Darlings the advantages of a good education. However, as noted, in imperial India wives taking initiatives were seen as inimical to accepted behaviour, risking official disapproval and social censure. I shall argue that her upbringing as an upper-middle young woman aroused false expectations in Aimée after her arrival in India—and she was discouraged from attempting to make her own way in the deeply conservative society of the Raj. It was her misfortune that her formative years—from childhood to university—were in a period of social change in Britain. Moreover, her gender and social position clashed with the entrenched social and cultural rigidity in British India at the start of the twentieth-century. That was then followed by the restrictions of life in British India that, like most colonial cultures, was in a time warp. While ideas and mores were undergoing change in the mother country, British society in India still displayed the mores of an earlier period. Aimée was thus caught between two cultures.

The sources for Aimée’s life story

The substance of the biographical elements of this thesis is based on the diaries, letters, newspapers cuttings and notes prepared by Aimée Mayne. She recorded the various phases of her early married life through her diaries for 1897, 1898, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1904. There is then a long gap until 1931, when she recommenced her diaries and continued with them until 1944. These are supplemented by a typed manuscript entitled ‘Mother’s Family Story’ that Aimée had composed at the request of her younger

84 Darling survived any official opprobrium. He was promoted in the Punjab ICS service and eventually knighted. Perhaps all the more remarkable, because he was a ‘cultured humanist’, a friend of E.M. Forster, on the fringes of the Bloomsbury Group, who went to India to make friends with Indians. Dewey, Anglo-Indian Attitudes, pp.12-13.
daughter Helen, who was interested in family history. All these documents were available to me from the estate of the late Mrs E.B. Mayne (Aimée). They have to be used with caution. As literary compositions, biographies have normally been shaped by—indeed have often been determined by—the quantity and the nature of the surviving primary documentation. But primary sources, William St Clair pointed out, are just a random survey of texts that happen to have been composed and written down by people whose purpose was usually very different from helping a present-day biographer to offer an account of an earlier life.

Aimée also included references in these later diaries to her progress on writing her memoir ‘Annette’, an account of her life, thinly disguised with fictitious names. ‘Annette’ has helped fill the biographical void of those years for which no diaries exist. It is of course a vital document to consult, even if it was only written in the 1930s/early 1940s when her memory of events of fifty years earlier would have been selective. Careful examination of ‘Annette’ has been correlated with what is known from other family accounts of her life from 1905 to 1930.

One must be cautious in placing ‘Annette’ specifically in the category of autobiography, though there is enough she wrote to confirm from other sources such as the family letters and the diaries that overlap parts of the story, that it was sufficiently accurate to take seriously as an account of her life—even if it was undoubtedly composed to present a favourable picture of the author. It must also be recognised that Aimée’s recollections were coloured by subsequent events, such as her unhappy marriage, that imparted a flavour of bitterness and probable bias to her account. In summary, ‘Annette’ is a valuable accessory to the diaries, provided it is taken into the context of near-fiction in part. It should be categorised as an example of ‘life writing’.

Life writing incorporates a life-story that is ‘captured in an extensive variety of sources, including letters, memoirs…and diaries’.

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86 E.B. Mayne, Diaries, 1897-1905 (less 1899 & 1903), 1931-1944. Hereafter referred to ‘Diaries’ in the footnotes. Similarly, the Memoir ‘Annette’ is referred to without the prefix ‘Mayne’.
Unpublished. Family Archives, Box 5.

87 St Clair, The Biographer as Archaeologist, p.222.

88 ‘Annette’, unpublished manuscript, Family Archives, 1/4/135. Her other personal records are also held under this archival reference.


http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2012.65201.
War II. It is as valuable in its scope as, for example, any other first-person account of one woman’s long life, such as Mary McCarthy’s *A Nineteenth Century Childhood*.  

As noted, the memoir is well supplemented by the diaries, family letters and newspaper cuttings. As well, there is a fictionalised account of her parents’ lives, probably composed by Margaret (Henrie) after she had read ‘Annette’ during a visit to her younger brother Archie in South Africa. Her novel was published as *An Unreasonable Man* in 1976, winning London’s *Daily Telegraph*’s best first novel of the year. Again, very careful selection of data from the memoir and from *An Unreasonable Man*—allowing for recollections written years after the events, and noting some deliberate distortions of events to present Aimée in a particular light—contributes to her life-story.

Aimée, it seems, had aimed initially in her diaries just to record the minutiae of her daily life in India. The early diaries comprise, in the main, brief entries for each day, with cursory details of routines, events and places, together with copious information at the back of each diary listing some of the books she had with her, details of accounts and of shopping lists. The second collection of diaries dates from 1931 to the end of World War II and they are much fuller in their content. While compiling her daily comments (from the language used, often undoubtedly composed to release the emotions she felt at the time) they were perhaps written with an eye to posterity. The content must be considered in that light.

To reinforce the sources above, I also researched material from the archives of Royal Holloway College (RHC). RHC holds details on the development of Bedford College which Aimée attended during the 1890s, its student enrolment (their ages and social origins) and the courses available. In addition, I traced relevant material in fuller format from archives relating specifically to RHC, which kept better records on the 1890s than did Bedford College.

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92 The manuscript of ‘Annette’ was later discovered in a tin trunk there, over ten years ago.  
93 H. Mayne, *An Unreasonable Man*, London, Quartet Books, 1976. Family lore has it that when Margaret was a pre-teen in India, there was an epidemic of some sort where the Maynes were based. All wives and children were ordered out of the area. Arthur obtained special dispensation to keep his eldest ‘son’ with him. Margaret’s hair was temporarily shaved and she was called ‘Henry’, by which family name she was known until as an adult she feminised ‘Henry’ to ‘Henrie’.  
95 RHC AR/243/2, RHC AR/243/2 and RHC AR 285 et seq.
Primary information on India during the early twentieth century has been drawn from material held in the British Library relating to data on the Indian Civil Service and personalities relevant to this thesis.

**An Overview of the Thesis**

Having laid out the social context to Aimée’s life and the key sources on which this thesis is based, the chapters that follow contain a full account of Aimée’s life, including an analysis of the way late nineteenth-century disciplines, norms and conventions influenced Aimée’s behaviour and attitudes, as she lived out her life in the first half of the twentieth-century. I contend that despite the opportunities for tertiary education that became available to upper-middle-class women in the late nineteenth century, family obligations and societal expectations would have a greater impact in shaping the direction of Aimée’s life.

My approach in this thesis is biographical and in Chapter One I discuss biography as an historical genre. Biography has been described as history’s ‘unloved stepchild’ and hence it is essential to analyze the range of scholarly attitudes and approaches to biography in order to discuss the validity of the role of biography as a means of recording History. In this context, I also discuss ‘life writing’ and the relationship of biography to this genre.

In Chapter Two, I begin the account of Aimée’s life with a discussion is what is known of her forebears on both sides of her family, and the lives of her parents – Edward Barnett, a civil engineer who amassed a considerable fortune as a contractor in India, and Emily Bonnycastle, who grew up in France, daughter of a British Government official. There is also a contextual discussion of the upper-middle-class. I then examine Aimée’s early life, her school days, including two years in France, and her entry into tertiary education. Here I also introduce Aimée’s her husband-to-be, Arthur Mayne, a friend of her brother at Cambridge, and discuss his family which, despite some distinguished antecedents, had descended into the lower-middle-class following his father’s suicide. Aimée initially rebuffed Arthur’s attempts at courtship, but her father’s death had a dramatic impact on her future. I argue that although Aimée was able to take advantage of the opportunities opening up for tertiary education for women, she was constrained by her duty to her widowed mother.

In Chapter Three, I outline the much vaunted opportunities that tertiary education has been said to hold for women in the late nineteenth-century and examine in detail the possibilities that tertiary education might have held for Aimée. Focussing on the two
years of her life that she spent at Bedford College from the age of twenty, I discuss her aims, aspirations, and life-choices and question the impact of Victorian feminism on her as well as her views on romance and sexual morality. The choices that she faced following the death of her father may have led to her decision to accept Arthur’s proposal of marriage and the chapter ends with their engagement.

I then outline the months of Aimée and Arthur’s engagement and the preparations for their marriage in Chapter Four. This includes a discussion of Arthur’s background and his career in the Indian Civil Service (ICS), as well as Aimée’s response to meeting his mother and her dismayed realization of his lower-middle-class origins. Arthur had to return to India without her, and she followed him with the understanding that they would marry on her arrival in Bombay. Her initial experience of marriage and her introduction to expatriate life in India are considered.

In Chapter Five, I examine Aimée’s first years in the strange new world of India in 1897 and 1898. The ICS and the typical life and responsibilities of an ICS official, such as Arthur, are outlined. In these early years, there was a major famine in India with terrible effects on the populace, and I analyse Aimée’s response in setting up a famine-relief scheme and the repercussions for her in her role as an ICS wife.

Chapter Six covers the metamorphosis of Aimée into a ‘Burra Memsahib’ over the period 1898 to 1900. She had travelled throughout India following Arthur’s postings, but when Arthur became ill, they returned to England on furlough for nearly a year. While Arthur recovered quickly, during this period Aimée was diagnosed as suffering from ‘nervous prostration’, perhaps code for difficulties in establishing conjugal relations. She conceived their first child in Switzerland and, after some financial problems in managing on half pay which caused difficulties with her mother, they returned to India, where Arthur was now appointed Deputy Commissioner in the administrative district of Seoni. Following their daughter’s birth, Arthur’s hypochondria manifested itself for the first time.

In Chapter Seven, I cover a lengthier time-span from 1900 to 1915. These were the years of family formation. Arthur was promoted to more senior postings in India and Aimée’s activities increased as a senior hostess. It was a life of socializing, garden parties, and the supervision of servants, as well as horse-riding, and tiger shoots. But there was also the death of her mother many miles away in France, the birth of their children, and regular trips back to Europe. Their eldest son was born in France, and a second daughter was born in Europe when Arthur was on sick-leave. On their return to India, a second son was born with a cleft-palate and later their third daughter was born.
They furloughed in New Zealand with their five children, now aged from two to twelve years, for eighteen months in 1912-13 where Aimée started her public lecturing. By the end of 1915 they were planning for life after India.

The years 1916 to 1930 are discussed in Chapter Eight. Because there are no diaries for this period there is a preliminary note on the sources used for the chapter. In these years, Arthur retired from the ICS and he and Aimée decided on western Canada as an interim base, until Arthur left for England to contribute to the war effort. In his absence, Aimée began lecturing on a casual basis in Canada and California, until the whole family was reunited in England, followed by their settlement in Jersey. Aimée continued as a professional lecturer gaining independent status and intellectual satisfaction, but was further estranged from Arthur. Now in her late fifties and suffering on and off from depression, she faced her brother Archie’s suicide. With the children now dispersed, she and Arthur were alone in the house in Jersey and the decade ended as an anticlimax.

In Chapter Nine, I describe the peripatetic period of the 1930s during which Aimée’s contentment was spasmodic. She had completed her lecture tours, and motored with Arthur through Europe, South Africa and the USA. The evolving political world in Europe of Hitler and Mussolini’s rise was background to the increasing rift between husband and wife. Aimée suffered depressive episodes. She developed a fascination with the USSR and an increased interest in left-wing politics. She began her memoir ‘Annette’ as England prepared for war.

Chapter Ten is largely concerned with the war years, 1940-1944. I see these as the most admirable and fulfilling years of Aimée’s life. Analysing Aimée’s detailed diaries of the period, supplemented by her memoir ‘Annette’, I discuss her training as a paramedic and her life in wartime London. While her anti-Semitism and anti-refugee sentiments come to the fore, they are discussed in the context of the times. She completed her memoir ‘Annette’ towards the end of the war. She was then seventy-three. A brief note records Aimée’s death in 1958.

The concluding discussion in Chapter Eleven provides an overview of the key aspects of Aimée’s life drawing the evidence together to conclude that she was a casualty of gender ideology at the start of the twentieth-century.
CHAPTER ONE

Biography in Historiography: a Discussion

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the history of biography and discuss the varying academic approaches to the practice of biography-writing. It is by no means accepted by all historians that biography is a bona-fide means of presenting History.¹ While many historians have argued that biography sits comfortably with more traditional forms of history, as David Nassaw has concluded, ‘Biography remains the profession’s unloved stepchild’.²

The origins of biography are ancient. The word ‘biography’—first used in the late seventeenth-century in England—was retro-concocted from the Greek meanings of ‘life’ and ‘depiction’, according to Nigel Hamilton.³ He identified the earliest written biography as ‘The Flood Tablet’ of The Epic of Gilgamesh, King of Ur, of the seventh-century BCA. Later, educated Greeks and Romans were trained to write about significant people in their lives. With the rise of Christianity and the triumph of the four Gospels of the New Testament, over other versions of the Saints’ lives, the Bible, in Hamilton’s words ‘was free to become the best-selling biographical work of all times’.⁴ In the centuries that followed, further biographical religious writings came to be known collectively as hagiography, often treating the saintly subjects with undue reverence. The Enlightenment brought a renewal of interest in biographies and the development of autobiography that depicted secular individuals, their virtues and their flaws, often encompassing a broad sweep of history. This helped to establish a liking for this form of writing by the increasingly educated middle-class, a taste for both literary and historical biographies that is evident today.

But what constitutes biography? It is well described by Hamilton as the creative but non-fictional output devoted to recording and interpreting real lives. It is the most widely practised area of nonfiction broadcasting and publishing.⁵ The on-going debate as to the primary function of biography is summarised in a New York Times review of Ian Hamilton’s Biography – a Brief History. In Hamilton’s words: ‘Where does fact

⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
end and interpretation begin? Is biography a branch of history or an art of human portraiture?\textsuperscript{6} 

How should an actual person, living in a particular time, be identified and recorded? There has been much interpretative discussion in the last decade at universities throughout the western world, where biography is taught as a subject. It is perhaps a truism to note that first and foremost biography must provide substantive evidence of the life under scrutiny. What then constitutes legitimate comment, as opposed to the inclusion of fictionalised material that may appear to add verisimilitude to the portrait of the character under scrutiny? William St Clair observed that the life as biographized is to be identified from surviving historical sources. The latter in themselves should raise a number of questions about the nature of biographical evidence that lie at the heart of the whole biographical enterprise. How can biographers who regard their work as an historical investigation deal with the fact that the information on which they rely is liable to be an incomplete record of the patterns of the lived life—and even unrepresentative?\textsuperscript{7}

Biography, St Clair noted, seems more unstable than adjoining historical disciplines, as a kind of historical writing that is narrowed to a specific historical context. Although biography is an investigative historical enterprise, founded on evidence, it is implicitly accepted by historians that biography is also a form of storytelling, a literary form which is generically as close to the novel as it is to history. As literary compositions, biographies have normally been shaped by—indeed have often been determined by—the quantity and the nature of the surviving primary documentation. Some sources of course, such as diaries and autobiographies, were often written to try and influence posterity’s view. Moreover, such accounts were framed within the cultural assumptions and aspirations of the time in which they were written. Resulting explanations and paradigms have to be shifted as a result of the discovery of new evidence.\textsuperscript{8}

There are dangers posed by incorporating fictional representations of a life to add verisimilitude. As Rosalind Barber wrote, historical biography should be composed through constructive interpretation of the evidence available and scholarly biographers are expected to be systematic in their explanations. However, it is not easy to write biography without some speculation, where actual evidence is lacking. ‘Biography, like


\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
fiction, involves arguing a series of logical assumptions, and fiction can be seen as an inevitable by-product of narrative construction’, to assemble the various parts of the life under review. Hypotheses with regard to the subject’s reasons for certain actions have to be employed to complete the story.9

In approaching the actual task of biography-writing, Ian Donaldson was specific about a vital methodology: if the biographer wants to produce a narrative about the kind of person as s/he may have been, the biographer needs to listen carefully to every relevant story, each of which needs interpreting and weighing against the others, and against external evidence, none of which explains itself on its own. Donaldson concluded: ‘And with the questions we ask about these stories, our own story may possibly begin’.10

Academics have pronounced views on the nature of biography. In the mid-twentieth-century Jean-Paul Sartre discussed the concept of ‘Total Biography’ in which everything about a person can be known and rendered fully intelligible—that is, it can be understood. Sartre maintained that ‘understanding’ is built into our condition, our very mode of existence as an amalgam or similarity between ‘comprehension’ and ‘comprehensiveness’. As David Jopling commented, for Sartre ‘Total Biography’ was based on the premise that knowledge is an end in itself: the desire to know as much as possible about the nature of things. It drives not only scientific and philosophical endeavours, but also biographical works.11 This concept incorporates the sociological theory of verstehen.12

Jopling was critical of Sartre’s approach: he observed that ‘understanding’ is fallible, unless accompanied by a dispassionate, analysing and objective attitude. He drew on D.H. Lawrence who commented drily that all attempts to nail someone down must be unsuccessful, ‘for either the author nails his subjects dead, or the subject walks off with the nail’. Jopling also cited Emmanuel Levinas, the French philosopher, who argued that the adoption of a totalizing approach to other persons leads to ‘objectifying

12 Described as ‘a kind of participation and informed grasping which involves the imaginative projection of the self into the other, with the aid of memory, emotion, imagination and empathy, and immediate and tacit grasp of meaning that human events have for us’. Ibid.
them, to viewing them as objects to be studied, manipulated, predicted or managed’. This is very different from regarding them as human beings with whom one interacts.\(^{13}\)

After the Second World War philosophical and sociological perspectives came to prominence that resulted in the removal of the individual as the focus, with an emphasis on the social or structural context, and famously, proclamations about the ‘death of the author’.\(^{14}\) Instead, as Hamilton argued ‘the reader not the writer, became the savant; the author was relegated to the role of serrant’.\(^{15}\) Richard Wheeler wrote that this was a dismissal of the grand sweep of biography as an accepted discourse.\(^{16}\) Poststructuralists rejected the notion of grand narratives in history and, in particular, the authors of such narratives. The principal proponents of this approach were Barthes, Foucault, Derrida and de Man who, according to Hamilton, ‘deconstructed and ridiculed as a mythical fabrication of discourse’ the notion of human identity associated with an individual author’s name. Biography and autobiography were dismissed as anything more than ‘incantations by imposters’.\(^{17}\)

Also in this context, James Walter argued that post-structural theory had become an end rather than a means. He trenchantly criticized the ‘jargon-ridden obfuscat ing prose’ that was generated, maintaining that specialist ‘discourses’ had been employed to privilege particular ‘knowledges’ that were deployed by institutional intellectuals for careerist purposes rather than for public enlightenment.\(^{18}\) Wheeler was also critical of the poststructuralists for their premise that information about the lives of authors was a distraction from the essential task of close textual scrutiny. While Wheeler saw ‘theory’ and ‘practice’ as being starkly at odds here, he concluded that theorists have not diminished the powerful attraction of biography as a genre. ‘Biographers have tended to carry on with the job as though there were no theoretical case to answer’. He wrote that it can be claimed that biography has strayed too far from the expectation that it should be concerned with the interpretation of ‘facts’, employing too much of what he terms ‘artistic licence’.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{13}\) Ibid.
\(^{14}\) See Roland Barthes’ ‘Death of the Author’, *Aspen*, no.5-6, 1967 that argues against the relevance of biographical discussion of the author and their intentions in any interpretation of text.
\(^{17}\) Hamilton, Ibid., p.209.
\(^{19}\) Wheeler, Shakespeare and the Problem Comedies’, pp.iii-iv.
The suspicion with which writing about a particular life has been viewed by some academic historians, according to David Lambert and Alan Lester, reflects, in part, the lack of engagement by practitioners of biography with social history and critical theory. They concluded that biography remains a powerful way of narrating the past: it can serve as a ‘prism of history’ or a ‘shifting kaleidoscope’. This connection between biography and notions of the spatial in general, and of movement and travel in particular is strong. Life histories are also ‘life geographies’ that ‘evoke a sense of the spatial, not simply as the location of—or backdrop to—a life, but as co-constitutive with selfhood and identity’.20

What degree of credence then can be given to the reconstruction of a life? St Clair commented that few biographies exclusively founded on recorded ‘facts’ can help us to understand ‘the shapelessness of lives, the anarchy of thought, and the unpredictability of the future as they are actually experienced’. Are biographers therefore free to pick and chose, to interpret and offer judgements? He suggested that the approach must be to build a fuller critical understanding of the normal structures of the relationship, in order to appreciate the extent and likelihood of biases. Sexuality, for example, is often regarded as being especially useful both as a potential window into the internal self and as a paradigm for explaining the development of individual character.21 What therefore, St Clair asked, are the implications of the deliberately speculative approach? He concluded that the biographer needs imagination, but may only exercise it within tight, self-imposed limits which have to be honestly constructed by the biographer from a critical appreciation of the nature of the evidence.22

What is the intrinsic purpose of biography? Paul Eakin partly answered this question. He wrote that there is a need for precision as to where the emphasis of a biography should be placed: ‘When I read a biography, I’m less interested in learning “what this person did next”, than in knowing what it was really like to be this person’.23 This theme is echoed by Philip Zeigler who maintained that the all-important job of biographers is above all to understand their subjects and to convey that understanding to their readers. Biographers, argued Zeigler, must never lose their hunger for the minutiae of their subjects’ everyday existence. This is not an excuse to include a mass

21 Biographical information about sexual behaviour is rare for any period, reliable information even more so, according to St Claire though, in regard to the subject of this biography, useful revelations regarding her sexual life have been uncovered. Annette, p.23.
22 St Clair, The Biographer as Archaeologist, p.234.
of trivia about someone’s life, but the biographer must be prepared to ‘wallow’ in it, to fully understand a person.\textsuperscript{24}

Zeigler continued that facts are not an end in themselves and while the biographer has to use ‘the building blocks of reality’, reflecting the times, as well as the life, the only difference between fiction and biography lies in the fact that the novelist is free to follow a whim and ‘build castles in the air’. Accordingly ‘pieces of information’ remain the essence. However, Ziegler maintained, all data must be treated with caution. Indications about the state of human feeling demand a special measure of restraint, although this is no reason for omitting it: the challenge is how such material should be fitted into the narrative. The more skilful the biographer and the better the sources of information, the more intimate will be its incorporation into the story. In this context, Ziegler noted that the final biography can exist only as a series of snapshots, seeking to freeze at a given instance in time the internal—as well as the external—forces which are shaping the progress of events, ‘forces that are in a state of constant flux’.\textsuperscript{25}

Essentially, Ziegler saw the biographer as a judge summing up for a jury; elucidating the facts, setting them out as fairly as possible, ruling on what is evidence and what should be ignored, discussing the reliability of witnesses, but leaving to the ‘reader-juror the fundamental questions of guilt and innocence’. Anything that comes between the reader and the narrative should only be retained if it is indispensable. In essence, Ziegler concluded, that what matters to biographers is the performance and character of their subjects.\textsuperscript{26}

Richard Holmes has stated the essential aim of biography is to write a coherent narrative (so that anyone can read it).\textsuperscript{27} Holmes also considered that a holistic approach to biography is essential. He wrote that one of the greatest arguments in favour of the disciplined rigorous academic study of biography as a developing form lies in the shifts and differences—factual, formal, stylistic, ideological, and aesthetic—in which the reader can find an endless source of interest and historical information. How did reputations develop? How did fashions change? How did social and moral attitudes

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} ‘Using Lives: a postgraduate workshop in biography’, held at Research School of Humanities, Australian National University and Centre for Historical Research, National Museum of Australia, 8-12 September 2008.
move? Holmes wrote that biography is above all studied to exercise empathy, to enter imaginatively into another place, another time, another life.  

Paula Backschieder has listed what she regards as the four basic ingredients of a successful biography. The first is to recognise what she details as the ‘voice of the biographer’; then it is important to identify the nature of the relationship between the biographer and subject; it should be clear what are the ways in which the evidence is understood; finally, it must be spelt out how the personality of the subject is understood and represented, in giving the life its ‘shape’.

In the actual writing of a biography Mark Kinkead-Weekes was emphatic about the importance of a chronological methodology. The main reason for adopting a chronological method, he wrote, is to resist the urge to structure a life too early and too simply into some overall pattern and explanation. Chronological method, he considered, alerts the author to ‘connections between activities, energies and interest’ that might otherwise seem to have nothing to do with one another. Moreover, strict chronology allows the reader to experience vicariously how it was to live at that time. ‘There will be too many spaces, unknowns, opacities’, for this to be more than partial (and frustrating) but the strictly chronological method may also show up the gaps in the evidence which a thematic approach conceals. Strict chronology constantly throws the emphasis on the experience of the biographee, rather than on the commentary of the biographer. It is also a way of inviting the reader in, watching the life unfold rather than having its significance anticipated, or being enclosed in the biographer’s analytical structure, or in the subject’s own retrospective imaging. In trying to make change and development more obvious, it can also affect the treatment of relationships, aiming at greater intricacy and ‘changefulness’ in other characters too. Overall, the chronological

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28 Holmes has also produced a useful reminder to biographers of what he terms ‘The Ten Commandments for Biographers’, paraphrased as follows, 1. To honour Biography as living, experimental, and multifarious in all its forms, 2. Not to presume a biography is a novel, 3. To present Biography as a celebration of human nature with all its contradictions, 4. Biography must be more than gossip, being concerned with historical justice and human understanding, 5. Biography chronicles an outward story (the ‘Facts’) only to reveal an inward life (a comprehensive ‘Truth’), 6. This Truth can be told and re-examined again and again, 7. Biography is a life-giving form, as it is concerned with human struggle and a creative spirit, shared by all, 8. Biography should be viewed as a ‘holiday for the human imagination’, for it takes us to another place, another time, 9. The biographer should be proud of the results, 10. But the biographer should also be humble about it, for we can never know or write the last word about ‘the human heart’ Holmes, ‘The Proper Study?’., pp.15-18.

method does tend to delay judgments until there have been sufficient examination of process and development.30

At first-draft stage, Kinkead-Weekes wrote, a general sense of things begin to develop into an organised story of time-spans, small enough to allow all of the evidence to be assembled, with the unknown ahead. ‘Misconceptions show up, puzzles can be clarified; unexpected connections appear, simply through careful attention to the exact sequence and context of events’. However, he noted, the penalty that can emerge through strict chronology is disconcerting—it adds to the length and slows the pace. The repetition that results will be evident when the significance of earlier findings emerges. He concluded that ‘while chronological biography may seem to depend ideologically on “humanistic” assumptions that the “Self” is ultimately undetermined, contingent, and changeful’ open to subsequent challenges, on the other hand a strictly chronological method is superior to confident analysis that may fail to note the essence of what constitutes a human life.31

Because the subject of my thesis is a woman, and an aspiring feminist, I am also interested in the development of biography-writing of women in the Victorian period. The era witnessed an outpouring of memoirs, self-portraits and other first-person singular writing.32 Initially, in this study, I was challenged by Lytton Strachey’s irritable comment in his Eminent Victorians, that ‘the Victorian period’s outpouring of memoirs, self-portraits and other first-person singular writing, consisted of ill-digested masses of material, [a] slip-shod style…tedious panegyric, [a] lamentable lack of selection, of detachment, of design’.33 Be that as it may, it was Holmes who noted that it was only with the late recognition of the mid-Victorian heroine—Charlotte Brontë, Florence Nightingale, Mary Somerville, Caroline Herschel, to name a few—that the biography of women began to emerge, and only with modern feminism that it began to have serious impact on the form after 1970.34

Women’s biography requires an emphasis on the particular need to explore the personal and emotional conflicts in an individual female life, according to Linda Wagner-Martin.35 These must be embedded in the wider domain, and Kay Ferres, in her study of biographies about women in the public sphere, focussed on what she

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31 Ibid.
35 Cited in Caine, Biography and History, p.104.
regards as the biographer’s obligation to recognise that the subject is embedded in shared social and familial networks. She wrote that in the past the assumed separation of public and private spheres meant that scant regard was paid to the personal lives of its subjects. Women’s professional lives, as nurses, teachers and writers, were lived in a public arena that reproduced the constraints and relations of domesticity. She cited Carolyn Steedman the feminist historian in noting that one legacy of the scholarship in the field of women’s history is an altered sense of the historical meaning and importance of ‘female insignificance.’ She questioned how ‘biography’—as a cultural institution that documents public lives and reputations—has accommodated women.36 Not very well at the time: Ferres recorded that the Dictionary of National Biography in the 1970s included only about 3.5 per cent women as its subjects and only forty-five of the 653 contributors.37

There are arguments for seeing biographies as historical texts that illustrate larger cultural histories, with biographies representing part of the broader genre of ‘life writing’, referred to earlier. The term ‘life writing’, recorded in the 18th century, and gaining wide academic acceptance since the 1980s, reflects openness and inclusiveness across genre, encompassing the writing of one’s own or another’s life. It encompasses virtually all forms of narrative: autobiography, testimony, artifacts, reminiscence, personal narrative, visual arts, photography, film, oral history, blogs—all can be included under life writing.38

The Victorian period was one of the great ages for life writing, wrote Valerie Sanders. She continued that, though this was a period when traditionally the lives of great men featured as subjects of biography, there was concern whether it was only great men who should write autobiography. However, Victorian life writing by both sexes came to include autobiography, journals, letters, autobiographical novels, and extracts from correspondence and diaries. It stressed, concluded Sanders, ‘the hidden and silent as much as the mainstream and vocal’ and has a particular value for those studying ‘gender issues, postcolonialism, ethnicity, working-class culture, the history of religion, and family and childhood studies—to name but a few of the fields with which the genre has a natural connection’.39

37 Ferres, ‘Gender, Biography and the Public Sphere’, Ibid., p.308.
38 Jolly, Encyclopedia of life writing.
One interesting aspect recently discussed is whether life writing gains fresh insights ‘when biographers cross the gender divide’—whether a biographer might impart an image to the subject being biographized, because of admiration or envy of the subject. Matthew Reisz postulated that an empathetic scepticism is important for a biographer in writing about the opposite sex, to avoid bias.40

Life writing lends its name to a number of university centres, and Sussex University’s Centre for Life History and Life Writing Research provides a useful summation of what this constitutes. Life stories are a primary source for the study of history and culture that capture ‘the relation between the individual and society, the local and the national, the past and present and the public and private experience’. History, sociology, anthropology, literary philosophy, cultural studies and psychology all contribute.41

As a genre biography is in crisis, according to one of Britain’s best-known biographers, Michael Holroyd. The author of highly acclaimed works on Lytton Strachey, Augustus John and George Bernard Shaw, he lamented the current emphasis on life writing which he considered a subset of sociology. His comments at the 2011 Edinburgh Writers’ Festival were in the context of biography-writing losing the romance of the pre-computer-age. ‘Literary biography’ he considered was particularly out of fashion with the reading public. Holroyd yearned for the late twentieth-century biographers typified by Richard Holmes and Hilary Spurling. He attributed much of the decline in the public’s taste for biography to a popular taste for television dramas. ‘One takes a representative of a category of people who have historically been overlooked, rather than a single “great” figure of their age’. However, he did concede that the decline of the biography also meant that. ‘people are writing lives backwards; people are writing parts of lives. Look on the bright side: biographies are getting shorter.’42

The challenges to biography were discussed at great length in a variety of papers presented at the University of Edinburgh in a series of conferences/seminars that approached Biography and Autobiography in forums focussing on the place of ‘Self, Time and Narrative’. Two challenges were identified; firstly, that biography was being absorbed into theoretical debates about the crisis of representation concerning lives and identities. This presented a challenge to narrative biographers whose primary aim is to add to historiography by the factual presentation of a life. Secondly, as Michael

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Holroyd lamented, popular taste for the biographies typical of the twentieth-century was diminished by the ‘modern overlay of academic deconstruction’ of biographies.\textsuperscript{43}

Turning now to the subject of this thesis: the life-story of Aimée Mayne is based on life writing in that it utilises ‘virtually all forms of narrative: autobiography, testimony, artifacts, reminiscence’.\textsuperscript{44} It is a life that set against a backdrop of changing society and social values as they affected the British upper-middle-class. Thus this biography provides a case-study of a life of intrinsic importance to historians interested in the social mores of the late nineteenth-century and the first half of the twentieth-century. It contains a strong element of autobiography.

What then of autobiography and how does this field relate to the writing of biography? It is clearly noted as being an important component of life writing.\textsuperscript{45} This is of direct relevance to me in interpreting my subject’s memoir, ‘Annette’ which is best described as a semi-fictionalised autobiography. Autobiography, according to Felicity Nussbaum, was defined by Lejeune as ‘a retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person concerning his [her] own existence, focussing on his [her] individual life, in particular on the development of his [her] personality’.\textsuperscript{46} The genre parallels other historical writing in its claims to represent ‘what is’. This bears on the question of how reality operates in texts to produce the effect of truth; assumptions of an individuality distinct from collective mankind; can the existence of an essence—a personality—be shown to unfold in the narrative of the past? The answer is that in redefining the relationship of the historian to an account of alleged events, as with biography, the new historian also calls special attention to the ‘ruptures and discontinuities’ of history. Nussbaum argued that most studies of autobiography rely on a history of ideas, which is thematic and continuous. ‘However, language and ideology for the new historian bear radically on their construction of history’.\textsuperscript{47}

The sense of autobiography’s generic conventions, even its very definition, has begun to blur, according to Sidonie Smith. It is ultimately, Smith noted, as complicated, subjective and as varied as the subject it seeks to represent. ‘Truthfulness’ in autobiography is a matter of ‘biographical facticity’—something that the historical

\textsuperscript{43} http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/NABS December 2011.

\textsuperscript{44} Jolly, \textit{Encyclopedia of life writing}.


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
record could support or refute. Is autobiography specifically a story or a history? Valerie Sanders concluded that it is history because autobiography implies ‘selection, order, shaping’. 49

The ‘unreliability’ of autobiography is an inescapable condition, not a ‘rhetorical option’. Francis Hart has argued it represents the struggle of a historical rather than a fictional person to come to terms with their own past. The result is that they render in words the confrontation between the dramatic present and the narrative past, ‘between the psychological pressures of discourse and the narrative pressures of story’. Whatever ‘truthfulness’ emerges resides not so much in the correspondence between word and past, but in the overlapping of various autobiographical intentions into form—memoir, apology, confession. Sanders concluded that perhaps no author, male or female, has ever satisfactorily resolved the contradictions, paradoxes and sheer impossibility of writing a fully self-revelatory and accurate autobiography. She maintained that autobiography must do more than report: it must explore the meaning of a person’s life and interpret it, so that both writer and reader are enlightened by the study of an individual’s growth to philosophical as well as physical maturity, where the actual events matter far less than the truth and depth of her experience. 51

Other critics have seen the autobiographer as shaping an ‘identity’ out of amorphous subjectivity—and once autobiography is seen as creative or interpretative, it is seen as subject to literary criticism and interpretation by others. Smith referred to Georg Misch as writing that while autobiography has been described as a kind of flawed biography at worst, it is at best a historiographical document capable of capturing the essence of a nation, or the spirit of an age. As he writes, ‘Though essentially representations of individual personalities, autobiographies are bound always to be representative of their period, with a range that will vary with the intensity of the authors’ participation in contemporary life and with the sphere within which they moved’. 52

Autobiographies of men and women were contrasted by Estelle Jelinek. Men, she wrote, focus on their professional lives, success stories and histories of their eras, whereas women emphasize personal and domestic details and connections to other

people; they sift through their lives for explanation and understanding, employing understatement to mask their feelings and playing down public aspects of their lives. Sanders considered that Victorian women were unwilling to engage in long consistent examinations of all their achievements. The diary and letter, the travel memoir and the novel were preferred.

Focussing specifically on Victorian female autobiography, Carolyn Heilbrun stated that of the ways of writing a woman’s life, if the woman herself tells it, in what she chooses to call an autobiography, she may tell it in what she prefers to call fiction. But why did so many women prefer to transmute their lives into fiction, instead of making a direct plea for the understanding of their audiences? I asked this question of myself as I read Aimée’s memoir ‘Annette’, with her use of fictionalised names and the occasional introduction of imaginary events into her text, identified when cross-checked with her diaries. One answer is, as Sanders argued, that the vast majority of Victorian women needed to tell their own story but evade direct confrontation with their former selves. In Aimée’s case she was also anxious to avoid conflict with some of the real-life characters she describes unsympathetically, as well as disassociating herself from the more intimate descriptions of her personal life.

There is an identifiable tradition of Victorian women’s autobiography that is distinct and apart from autobiography by Victorian men. Sanders wrote that their most important contribution is probably their reclamation of their childhood experience and emotion and that one way of reading women’s autobiography is to notice what is not said, to observe the places where initiative is downplayed, success denied, emotion dismissed and ambition merely latent. Heilbrun argued that a woman may write her own life in advance of living it, unconsciously and without recognising or naming the process.

How best to apply the dicta under discussion in respect to the subject of this thesis, while identifying the relevance of the social, cultural and political effects of the late-Victorian period on my subject’s life choices? I was faced by the challenge of interpreting her life from the main sources provided by the subject herself, one of which

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is her memoir ‘Annette’ which understandably presents her in the most favourable light for posterity. Where does autobiography end and biography prevail? How valid an interpretation can be made to identify what she wrote for posterity: how much can be (cautiously) accepted at face-value? These are the questions that I have constantly had to address.

There are five reasons for employing fiction in autobiography, Sanders suggested. Firstly, even the formal biographical self remains a fictional construct, since no one can reproduce exactly what happened exactly at any one time and bridge the inevitable gap between the lived life and the written. Secondly, it provides freedom from a severe linear chronology of formal autobiography. Thirdly, fiction of this kind is more selective than its non-fictional counterpart. Fourthly, a fictional story can be ended at a contrived moment; art inevitably is tidier than life. Finally, an imaginative or poetic reconstruction of a life can broaden the dimensions of autobiography in a profound yet protected format.59

Processes of subject formation and agency occupy theorists of narrative and indeed of culture as never before. The texts and theory of women’s autobiography have been pivotal for revising concepts of women’s life issues—growing up female, coming to voice, affiliation, sexuality and textuality, the life cycle. Crucially, the writing and theorizing of women’s lives has often occurred in texts that place an emphasis on collective processes, while questioning ‘the sovereignty and universality of the solitary self’.60 Indeed, autobiography has often been employed by many women writers to write themselves into history. Literary and cultural theorists have felt the impact of women’s autobiography as a previously unacknowledged mode of making visible formerly invisible subjects.61

The autobiographical subject finds herself on multiple stages, simultaneously called to ‘heterogeneous recitations of identity’, Smith wrote. These multiples never align perfectly. Rather they create spaces or gaps, ruptures, unstable boundaries, incursions, excursions, limits and their transgressions. The process of identification and disidentification is on-going. As a result, there can be no fixed or essential preconstructive identity. But the history of an autobiographical subject is the history of recitations of the self and if the self does not exist prior to its recitations then

60 Smith and Watson (eds), Women, Autobiography, Theory, p.5.
61 Ibid. p.111.
autobiographical storytelling is a recitation of a recitation. The living of a life becomes the effect of the life as narrated.62

Diaries have also been a fundamental source for this thesis. The diary and the journal have only recently become the subject of theoretical discussion.63 Sanders has discussed the popularity of the diary as an autobiographical tool. Firstly, the diary is private and unstructured. Secondly, it registers the smallest change of feeling. Thirdly, it is written blindly without foreknowledge of the future. Fourthly, its range is entirely a matter of choice for the writer. The travel diary or letter need hardly mention the writer—and the diary and letter forms were frequently combined.64 But in spite of Donald Stauffer’s observation that ‘diaries lack formal cohesiveness, the diary makes no attempt to see life steadily and see it whole. It is the journal of an existence made up of an often monotonous series of short and similar entries. It becomes therefore not a record of a life but the journal of an existence’.65 Nussbaum added a substantive dimension to the use of the diary. She considered that the diary and journal are representations of reality rather than failed versions of something more coherent and unified—although she notes that diaries and journals have commonly been judged to be more ‘inferior’ to more ‘finished’ forms of narrative.66

Aimée Mayne’s diaries and notes together with her memoir are the basis for this biography. They present her life as she saw it and the width and scope of the material left by her requires constant analysis. First examination suggests a wealth of ‘fact’: later investigation tends to raise questions about this material that were not self-evident on first investigation. I am reminded that at least in her later diaries—and certainly in her memoir—Aimée was indeed writing for posterity, with the understandable intention of shaping a favourable view of herself.

How to marry interpretation to evidence? There is an on-going temptation to impose a structure or sequence to my narrative that, on later examination, has been found to be unwarranted because of evidence later unearthed from the diaries which provide a more accurate day-to-day account of her life. The immediate danger of my attempting to provide coherence is to adulterate the thesis by including quotations from Aimée’s account of her own life in her memoir, that give the appearance of a novel, detracting from the quest to identify and discuss the key elements of the product of a late-born-Victorian life.

62 Ibid.
63 Nussbaum, The Autobiographical Subject, p.23.
65 Ibid, p.23.
66 Ibid, p.16.
There is also a temptation to extrapolate a situation that looks self-evident but which is later found not to be fully supported by the information available. This is the danger of glibly continuing a narrative that appears to flow smoothly from one situation to another, without a thorough and continuous examination of the primary material—and related extraneous circumstances—to hand. While I am convinced a basic chronological approach is essential in defining the sequences of the life, the danger remains of my having provided an account that is just too straight-forward, particularly when tempted to rely on her memoir as the principal source.

Am I justified in claiming that her experiences and her reactions to the challenges Aimée faced in her adult life present her as an exemplar of her social class and of her times? Or were her behaviour and attitudes exceptional, because of the clash between her feminist aspirations as a young woman and her subsequent life experiences? She was described by a descendant as having a ‘toxic personality’ that affected how some of her children behaved towards their own families. It was claimed to be common knowledge within the extended family that she turned out to be an unhappy, frustrated and isolated woman. How much of her behaviour can be attributed to marrying someone she did not particularly care for, but who offered her an interesting life? I discuss these questions in some detail, in Chapter 11.

I end this discussion with a comment by Wheeler: he conceded that biographical and autobiographical theory in general does serve a purpose: it ‘gives form to the inchoate’, to conceptualize and systematize, to distinguish between what is essential and what is accidental.67

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Upper-middle-class English families can offer a wealth of antecedents that reflect a variety of origins and Aimée’s is a prime example. Her paternal and maternal forebears come with some colourful stories attached: her father’s line has been tentatively traced back to the marriage with an illegitimate daughter of John of Gaunt—probably Joan Beaufort—and her mother’s to medieval warlords from the south of France. More recently the emphasis was on pillars of the Victorian community.

Aimée’s father, Edward William Barnett was born in 1835, the fourth son of Horatio Barnett, a successful solicitor who practised in Walsall, Staffordshire, retiring to Boscott Hall in the same county. As a widower, Horatio later took the family governess as his wife—not uncommon then, according to Aimée—with whom he had a second large family, since lost sight of. Originally Walsall thrived as an important market town and had a primarily agricultural economy for many centuries. However, the Borough had good supplies of coal, ironstone and limestone, enabling metalwork industries to prosper. Light metalwork has been the traditional industry of Walsall since the sixteenth-century or earlier. Bits, stirrups, buckles and spurs had been made locally.

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1 Information from this point in this chapter is mainly taken from Aimée’s typed undated document (believed to have been composed during the 1950s) ‘Mother’s family story’, except where otherwise noted.

2 It was unusual but not unheard of…to enter governessing only to marry out of it.’ Trev Broughton and Ruth Symes, The Governess, an anthology, New York, St Martin’s Press, 1997, p.177.
for centuries, and from this trade developed the manufacture of saddlery and leather goods for which Walsall is still famous. The Industrial Revolution encouraged these small industries to grow on a huge scale. Transport systems developed to carry the coal and iron to customers nationwide; many foundries, ironworks and mines opened which exploited the development of local canal and railway networks to transport their heavy goods.3

The Barnetts were a typical middle-class family of the time, advancing into the professional upper-middle-class. Edward was educated at Appleby in Westmoreland, the oldest Grammar school in England, and afterwards was apprenticed to an engineering firm, Stileman & McClean of Westminster. His eldest brother—’fulsome and oily’ according to Aimée’s mother—became a ‘rascally’ solicitor; the next brother was an Admiral in the Royal Navy, the third a doctor who emigrated to Australia. There was a married sister and one who, as a spinster, was famous as a horsewoman, this all according to Aimée.

There are no records of when Edward Barnett first travelled to India, but he is said to have had a good knowledge of Hindustani (also, incidentally, Greek and Latin) and it is clear that he focussed his early working life on India. When qualified as a civil engineer, he joined the Indian Public Works Department in the Madras Presidency, but at some stage thereafter went into lucrative private work. Perhaps Edward’s move into private enterprise was spurred on by his impressions of the Public Works Department in Madras which ‘was a byword for villainy—the initials PWD allegedly stood for ‘Plunder Without Danger’.4 As ‘Dare-Devil Barnett’ Edward was known for his tireless energy and for his habit of galloping up to seventy miles a day on relays of horses kept for him to inspect the railway construction under way. He was engaged in building part of the Madras-Bombay Railway—a vital link between the Indian east and west coasts—and a number of bridges. In the 1840s the cross-continental journey had taken about one month, but after the railway was built, in 1914 the 1270km Madras-Bombay stretch was traversed in thirty-two hours by the Bombay-Madras Express.5

While contracted as the civil engineer to build the Madras Presidency College, the prelude to Madras University, Edward met the architect, Henry (Harry) Bonnycastle, who had been engaged on the designs. Henry Bonnycastle’s sister Emily had arrived in India to stay with her brother, after her Parisian home was broken up on the death of

her father in 1866. In 1867, Edward married Emily Bonnycastle (mother of Aimée) in Madras. Edward is said by then to have been on the way to amass ‘a large fortune’, according to Aimée. The couple enjoyed a hectic social life, living in some luxury between two residences—at Cannor, a hill station, and in Madras.

As the wife of a mere contractor, Emily resented the airs that the Indian Civil Service (ICS) and the military gave themselves. She may have had reason to, then:

> Bitter jealousy and divided authority paralysed control. British civil servants, often pig-sticking, gin swigging, public-school men impossibly removed from their subjects ‘look on India as a milch-cow’. There were so many military sinecurists, inspecting officers with nothing to inspect, and duty officers with no duties to do, that the army has become a laughing stock.

The Barnetts returned from India to England in 1870, two years before Aimée’s birth. Edward bought No. 25 Lancaster Gate in a newly developed fashionable area of London adjacent to Bayswater. At Emily’s instigation (who plainly had delusions of grandeur after her life in Madras) he also bought back Boscott Hall, but found it was no longer habitable, being surrounded by coalfields, so abandoned the erstwhile country-seat. Edward Barnett then looked elsewhere to fill his time.

He thought of politics. Edward, as a successful businessman, could afford to become a Member of Parliament (MPs were still not paid) although his motivation to do so is unknown. Edward was elected as Conservative Member of Parliament for Dover in September 1873, supporting Disraeli. According to his eldest granddaughter however, he never made a speech in the House of Commons. His venture into public life being unsuccessful, he retired from Parliament in 1874, bored with politics, again according to Aimée.

It could be that Edward also needed to generate more income. His assets by the mid-1870s had been much diminished through the fraudulent activities of his elder brother, ‘the oily solicitor’, to whom Edward had entrusted many of his investments. He focussed on engineering projects in Cadiz and Venezuela. After selling Lancaster Gate and temporarily moving to Paris where his wife and children lived for the interim,
Edward then returned to India in 1881 for an unspecified period, to recoup more income. While there, he fell through scaffolding and broke his back, with two spinal vertebrae displaced. He returned to England a semi-invalid, prematurely white-haired. Aimée does not refer to the chronic pain her father must have suffered.

Edward resettled the family in London at 11 St Petersburg Place, Bayswater, at an unspecified date. From thenceforth he seems to have divided his time between his club, working at odd jobs around the house (he was good with his hands) and bouts of chronic bronchitis, to which he was finally to succumb. According to Aimée, her father had also developed hypochondria and lived on eggs and milk, lashed with rum (except—Aimée wrote—when he forgot his self-imposed diet). He lost much of his remaining money in ‘the Panama scandal’ of 1893 and died in 1895, when Aimée was twenty-three. The late portrait of Edward Barnett reveals a kindly-looking, white-bearded gentleman, reflecting an air of melancholy, likely due to his ill-health and the reduced financial circumstances of his final years.

Aimée’s mother Emily claimed to be descended from a noble French family, ‘de Belcastel’. Although this is probable—based on strong (anecdotal) family records—it has not been proved conclusively, in spite of diligent research, via an account held by a French grandson, the Bonnycastle genealogist J. Bonnycastle Gould, and by the author (through the provincial archives of Rodez, in the Dordogne region of France). What is known is that the Huguenot ‘Seigneurs’ of Belcastel fled Catholic France after the Edict of Nantes (1598). So far, the only record located of the Belcastel name outside France is in Ireland. The origin of the name ‘Bonnycastle’ is therefore still unconfirmed, though Aimée herself insisted on the link with Belcastel: family lore maintained that ‘Belcastel’ was changed to ‘Bonnycastle’ by the Scots (or Irish?) who anglicized the foreign name.

Aimée’s maternal grandfather, John Humphrey Bonnycastle (1795-1866) had a colourful early life. While working in Whitehall as a government clerk, he was offered a position in 1826 as ‘amanuensis and travelling companion’ of George William Richard, Earl of Pomfret. In 1829 his services were dispensed with, on an annual payment of £200 for life, in return for silence on his association with the Earl.

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13 See p.v.
17 ‘Amanuensis’ in this context might suggest a homosexual relationship, in view of his being ‘paid off’, or perhaps it is a reference to the often dissipated living of late-Regency ‘bucks’ or, as the Earl of
1837, still ostensibly a bachelor, he married Jane Cottrell, then registered as a spinster, in Kent. 18 Aimée’s mother is said to have remarked that Aimée’s maternal grandfather ‘fell for a pretty face as she had not the brains to be a companion to him.’ 19

There is no reference to earlier nuptials, but there are records of three children born to Bonnycastle before his actual marriage to Jane. It is not known whether they were born to him and Jane or whether they were the fruits of an earlier liaison. Aimée was plainly unaware of her aunts’ and uncle’s antecedents but these children, Jane, Mary and Henry (Harry), were incorporated into the Bonnycastle Family Tree. John Humphrey Bonnycastle subsequently visited North America where, in 1839, he purchased land in Kalamazoo County Michigan (which was later sold in 1845) but he returned to England before 1841. John Gould, the Bonnycastle genealogist, has traced a brief reference to him on the return voyage being captured by pirates and being held to ransom in France. 20

John Humphrey Bonnycastle moved to Paris as a scholarly British Government-appointee to the French government (in what capacity is not known). 21 On retirement he was a member of a circle of learned philologists centred on Max Müller who was a German philologist and Orientalist, one of the founders of the western academic field of Indian studies and the discipline of comparative religion. 22

John Bonnycastle’s daughters Jane and Mary in their younger days were ‘gay young things’, attending balls at the court of Napoleon III. They later moved into a different social set and became fanatically religious. Jane married a stockbroker, George Pearse, whom she had met in England at a religious meeting where she was speaking. She later persuaded him to leave his business and join her to found the North African Mission to convert Moslems to Christianity, again according to Aimée. Aunt Jane’s eccentricity was a talking-point within the wider family; she and her husband retired to Bournemouth where they handed out religious tracts to people on the promenade. Aunt Jane had the reputation of being both kind and generous, as Aimée remembered her. There are two references in Aimée’s diaries to gifts of money from Aunt Jane. 23 Her sister Mary never married but kept two missions going in France, trying to convert Catholics to Protestantism.

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19 Mayne, ‘Mother’s family story’.
21 Ibid.
22 As a scholar of Sanskrit philology and mythology Müller wrote both scholarly and popular works.
23 Diaries, pp.37, 69, 133.
Their brother Harry Bonnycastle had wanted to work as an artist but his father would not hear of it, so he first trained as an architect practising in India, as earlier related. However, later in life he did become an artist, either in Montmartre or in the south of France, where he lived with his mistress. Aimée remembered him on his occasional visits to England as ‘a man with a beard who was very lively and seemed to me to be a Frenchman’.24

Aimée’s mother Emily was born in 1841 and raised in France. During the late 1840s/early 1850s in Paris, John Humphrey Bonnycastle had been content for the elder sisters to tutor Emily and she was only allowed to go to school (where, it is not recorded) in her teens, after pleading with her father who had despaired of formal education for females, after the elder daughters had wasted theirs (as he saw it). When Emily left school she lived with her parents in Paris and became engaged to a banker, ‘a very attractive man’ wrote Aimée, but her father refused her suitor because there was ‘insanity in his family’. Emily was heartbroken but accepted his decision. Then John Humphrey suddenly died, after attending a conference in England in 1866, whereupon the Bonnycastle home in Paris was broken up and it was then, as earlier recounted, that Emily was invited by her brother Harry to join him in India, her mother leaving Paris to live with her eldest daughter Jane.

Following Emily’s marriage to Edward in Madras in 1867, Edward and Emily’s only son, Edward Bonnycastle Archibald, was born in Madras in 1868. His too was a colourful and ultimately tragic story, given his undoubted intelligence and initiative. Known as ‘Archie’ to his mother and sister, he was educated for a period at a Protestant school called ‘Blackadders’ in Boulogne and later at Haileybury School in England.25 Archie hated the latter for its public-school emphasis on games. His focus was on languages and music. According to Aimée, he did not relate to his father who deplored his ‘dreamy ways’ and his penchant for playing the violin, mandolin and guitar. His poor school reports reflected his lack of enthusiasm for the school, where he was boarding during his father’s return to India in the early 1880s. In 1888, Archie ‘went up’ to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, sitting the Engineering Tripos, from which he graduated B.A. in 1891. Archie’s parents had hoped that he would become a diplomat, but this did not appeal to him.

Initially Archie considered taking Holy Orders in the Anglican Communion but being something of an adventurer, as well as a linguist and musician, he had opted for

24 Gould has traced two works of art attributed to him in France.
travel. He visited Argentina where he taught English; he then returned to England on his mother’s promise that he did not have to become a diplomat. When qualified as a railway engineer, he voyaged to South America, Japan, China, Egypt and India. While working in India he co-founded The Madras Mail newspaper, with Cyril Lawson and Henry Cornish the latter a barrister-at-law and a distinguished journalist in India.26 His marriage to a French woman, at the age of thirty-seven, was to impact on Aimée, much later in her life.27

Archie’s younger sister, Emily Bonncastle known as ‘Aimée’, later ‘Amy’ to her husband, was born on 23rd July 1872 into the family residing then at 25 Lancaster Gate. Although Aimée lived there until she was six, understandably she had few memories of that early period in a prosperous upper-middle-class household. Both she and Archie had their own nannies; their mother had little to do with child-rearing: Emily’s attentions were focussed, as in India, on running a large household, including entertaining friends and her husband’s business acquaintances. Aimée’s principal memory of those times was of a holiday in the Channel Islands where her father moored a yacht, the Juanita. Another memory is of a holiday at Pompinel in Normandy, where she fell into a cowpat and ‘came crying into the house in a filthy mess.’

Because of her early upbringing, her mother Emily was as comfortable in France as she was in England and she wanted her children to be the same. So Aimée’s next recollections were of Paris, walking across Luxembourg Gardens with her ‘bonne’ (nursemaid) each day to St. Joseph’s Convent, while Archie was schooled in a religious order run by ‘Frères’. Her parents took a house in Boulogne—then a popular ‘English colony’—at 136 Rue de la Paix, where her father spoilt her with delicious French ‘gateaux’, before he returned to India in 1881. Her other memories were of the house furnishings, with red satin chairs, a settee with gilt legs, and a porcelain-and-gilt clock—all very ‘Third Empire’. There were two tall trees in the garden which were climbed by brother Archie, while his small sister looked on admiringly.

Aimée recalled her childhood as happy. Other than her education, she remembered Easter celebrations, with the hunt for coloured eggs in the grounds, and the food: ‘elevenses’ consisted of a ‘crisp French long roll and chocolate’ and lunch, sliced meat with ‘vegetables as only the French can cook them’. Seaside holidays were

27 Ibid.
focussed on the bathing machines, cabins on wheels pulled by old horses from which she and other girls paddled and swam,

safe from prying eyes on the beach. Our bathing dresses came to the ankles and elbows and an old bathing woman was at hand to hold our hands if we were timid and bob us up and down…French ladies did this with many little screams and cries.28

It was indeed an idyllic life for a small girl; her bonne Eugénie, took her to the annual Boulogne fair where Aimée rode on the roundabouts, ate fried potatoes sprinkled with ‘gros sel’, potatoes that she looked back on nostalgically by contrast with the soggy English variety. She remembered the side-shows featuring fat women, skeleton men, two-headed calves and the like.

Aimée was sent to a small private school for English girls in Boulogne, kept by a Miss Marshall, where she made a great friend, Gerty Whitchurch. Languages were considered important accomplishments for girls then and Gerty’s family had moved to Boulogne for the children to learn good French (they later based themselves in Bonn, Germany, for the girls to learn German). Aimée spent only a short time at Miss Marshall’s: it horrified her mother when she found out that only English was spoken there—and the girls were given shepherd’s pie each day for lunch. Aimée was then enrolled at a convent, another St. Joseph’s. For two years. she was the only Protestant at the school, though she participated in the Catholic observances; she related she did not want to be left out of anything. On St. Joseph’s Day, all the girls as ‘Enfants de Marie’ crawled on their knees to kiss the foot of the saint’s statue and walked in a procession, dressed in white with blue sashes over their shoulders. Aimée enjoyed all this pageantry very much, though she had no religious leanings towards Catholicism.

Her mother was anxious that the children acknowledged their French (Belcastel) roots and Aimée before she was aged ten was bilingual in French and English; it was Emily’s concern though that her daughter was speaking English with a French accent that brought the family back to England, after the two years in Boulogne. Another reason for not staying in France was that Edward Barnett on his return from India as a semi-invalid had no wish to be based in France; he had, according to Aimée, ‘no understanding of foreigners: people had to understand his English’, (by contrast to his life in India, where he could converse in Hindi).

They returned to England in 1882, without Aimée understanding at that stage where she was to be living (they first stayed in rented rooms in Bayswater). She felt

28 ‘Mother’s Family Story’.
lonely after leaving her friends in Boulogne. One day, she accompanied her father to a
house under renovation at 11 St. Petersburg Place, Bayswater—an upper-middle-class
inner-London suburb located close to Hyde Park. As described by her, the house was in
an old-fashioned street in Bayswater. It was one of the country streets dating from
the time when Bayswater was a pleasant village surrounded by fields and
vegetable gardens, which ministered to the needs of the neighbouring city of
London. By the [eighteen-nineties] the great city had advanced and octopus-like
encircled in its mighty arms this village and the outlying hamlets of Notting Hill
and Shepherds’ Bush. The quiet street had on one side a line of detached houses
standing back from the road in gardens and on the other side a row of houses of
much later date, built in a Gate, each one an exact replica of its neighbour.29

The detached house that was her home no longer exists (probably the result of bombing
during the London ‘Blitz’ of the early 1940s) but the well-maintained white-façade
dwelling standing next door provides a likely model, still exuding quiet, Victorian neo-
Georgian prosperity. The other side of the road is still as Aimée knew it. She was
thrilled with her new home. The newly-renovated house was unusual in one regard: one
of the smaller bedrooms was being converted into a bathroom. (‘Quite unusual in that
old-fashioned type of house.’)30

The domestic staff was much reduced from Lancaster Gate days, but included at
least one maid, the bare minimum domestic workforce for the late Victorian upper-
middle-class.31 This relatively modest establishment was certainly a contrast to the
earlier plutocratic life in Madras enjoyed by her parents, but was a continuation of a
happy childhood for Aimée. Mrs Barnett maintained an affectionate if demanding
relationship with her daughter.32 It was Mr Barnett who, in spite of his infirmities,
played a large part in Aimée’s life at that stage, taking her to

all sorts of exciting things, the first phonograph in the Strand, the Crystal
Palace, Maskelyne33 and Cook’s conjuring entertainment, a Hypnotism
show where people did all sorts of funny things they were told to do…St.
Paul’s, The Tower…34

30 Mayne, ‘Mother’s family story’.
31 ‘Annette’, p.2. Renie Stavely, born in the same decade as Aimée, was brought up in an upper-middle-
class household that boasted of footman, and carriages. Nerina Shute, *Come into the Sunlight*,
32 Diaries. Note provided by Aimée included as prelude to Diaries.
33 Jasper Maskelyne, a descendant of the original conjurer, was still performing, in the 1950s as an
illusionist, when the author as a schoolboy enjoyed his ‘magic’ in Kenya.
34 Mayne, ‘Mother’s family story’.

49
It is apparent that Emily Barnett was determined her daughter should be properly educated, even if it was not then obvious to the mother where this might lead her daughter. Both Aimée and her cousin Mabel Barnett, the daughter of her uncle, Admiral Barnett (Uncle Jack) attended Princess Helena College as boarders (Aimée was initially still based in France) and she was there for four years, having joined the school when she was still living in Boulogne. She would have been ten years of age on enrolment and she wrote that she was the youngest boarder. She recorded she was very proud of being allowed to travel alone from school to home in France (in the charge of the guard on the English train). The Princess Helena College, at that time located in Ealing, London, had been established in 1820 as one of England’s first academic schools for girls and was founded for daughters of officers who had served in the Napoleonic Wars and daughters of Anglican clergy.

Her cousin Mabel, charmingly described by Aimée, depicts how some little girls of the upper-middle-class looked and were dressed in the 1880s:

Mabel was at the time a round tubby hobble-de-hoy [sic] with lank dark hair and lovely grey eyes with level eyebrows, a turned up nose and a mouth with large teeth that we used to call tombstones. I first saw her in a blue serge sailor suit with big sailor collar and a whistle on a cord, it was a temporary fashion for girls. I was most anxious to have a sailor suit and cried about it, but mother refused saying it was not my style.

Aimée had Mabel to stay at half-terms in France and she went to Barrow-on-Furness, Mabel’s home-town, for longer visits. The Admiral had been appointed Harbour Master for the Port of Barrow on his retirement and this position came with a free house in a residential area, Cavendish Park. Mabel used to pretend at school that that was the name of their ‘mansion’ and Aimée did not give her away. Mabel’s mother (known to Aimée’s family as ‘The Irish Adventuress’) had social pretensions:

I am afraid I learnt snobbish ideas from [Mabel] and her Irish mother. Aunt Myra was always talking big [sic] and boasting, like the Irish do. This intensely annoyed my mother who, having lived a much wider life was not snobbish.

Not so Aimée: she and Mabel had a small select circle of friends at school they called ‘The Aristocracy’. They gave themselves airs. It is fair comment that for the whole of Aimée’s life she is best described as a snob: she was an admirer and cultivator.

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35 Aimée later notes she left the College after four years, in 1886.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
of people with high social status and disdained those she considered socially inferior. This could not have been unusual: it was acknowledged then that the social milieu into which one was born governed not only the opportunities available to better oneself—the schooling, the work obtainable—but particularly how members of the Upper and Upper-Middle-Class regarded those ‘below’ them: the Lower-Middle-Class and the Working-Class were second-rate. In short:

By class we need to understand not a specific relationship to the economy, nor merely a self-designated collective identity, but a way in which the world was ordered, imaginatively, linguistically, economically, socially, culturally, and politically…it is class which gives the nineteenth-century its identity.38

These attitudes stayed with Aimée all her life and it is interesting here to reflect on the family circumstances in which she was raised. What, apart from pretensions at school, forged Aimée’s sense of being ‘better’ than those of a lower social stratum? It may have been based on the influence of her Aunt Myra, her peers and the circles in which she moved, both socially and at school and college. This is only informed surmise and it may be helpful here to broaden this discussion by referring to the history of English women’s expectations and functions in the nineteenth-century, related principally to the experience of middle-class women, as discussed by the historian Amanda Vickery.

The doctrine of ‘separate spheres’—the dominant historical paradigm for understanding gender relationships in the nineteenth-century, particularly among the middle-classes—deicts how the upper echelons of the middle-class together affirmed and legitimated their moral authority and superiority, by assuming positions of moral and political leadership in the community. It was believed to be a political, cultural and moral force that sought refuge and protection in a male-headed household, with the supreme authority of the male—even if this idealized conception of the family and companionate marriage could be seen as undermining female claims for equality. Vickery discussed the nineteenth-century separation of the spheres of public power and private domesticity—the Male domain of business and the professions and the Female domain of women at home.39

Eleanor Gordon and Gwynneth Nair argued however that the actuality of ‘separate spheres’ was only a theoretical construct. Although the Victorian home still


tended to be viewed as a space apart from the public world—the centre of sociability—it was an ancillary to the practices and processes of the outside world. Accordingly, the relationship between the two should best be regarded as a ‘symbiosis’ rather than ‘separation,’ in reflecting the relationship between the home and the outside world. Moreover, any relevance of the ‘separate spheres’ paradigm plainly did not necessarily equate with the female: domestic: women were not kept immured within their homes. Women were able to claim a role that was female and public and men’s domestic role was greater than attributed in depictions of Victorian manhood.40

Towards the end of the nineteenth-century, there was developing a widening sphere in education and employment for women. The changes related almost totally to single women such as Aimée. A pattern was being established that rendered the expansion of girls’ education as gender-specific—and dominated by the perception that the social class into which one was born would decide whether tertiary education was ‘appropriate’41 There was also a perception at tertiary level that the class nature of female education was important. Sir Thomas Holloway, founder of Royal Holloway College in 1886 was progressive in this regard: he had in fact made it clear that his new college was for

the education of Women of the Upper Middle Classes who should be able and willing to pay for such education such annual and other sums; ...to afford the best education suitable for Women of the Middle and Upper Middle Classes...to qualify themselves to take their degrees...The curriculum of the College shall not be such as to discourage students who desire a liberal education apart from the Latin and Greek languages...the education of women...should be founded on those studies and sciences which the experiences of modern times has shown to be the most valuable...the College shall neither be considered nor conducted as a mere training College for teachers and governesses.42

‘Class’ has continued to dominate historical analysis, not least because of the limited ability of alternative theoretical frameworks to comprehend nineteenth-century social structure and conflict.43 The notion of class resonates throughout writings on the

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41 Martin, *Women and the Politics of School*, p.4. A full discussion on the tertiary education of Aimée and her peers follows in Chapter Four.
Victorian age and because it provides an insight into Aimée’s household, it is pertinent at this point to attempt to note the various barriers—both stated and implied—that governed the social and cultural behaviours of and restrictions on Victorians towards the end of the nineteenth-century. These plainly reflected Aimée’s experiences as a young unmarried woman, in the relationship between her home and what she perceived of the outside world. She was relatively free to follow her academic life outside the home and yet was strongly tied to her home as a young person whose life-experience was limited. Nevertheless, it is fair to conclude that contemporary expectations of upper-middle-class women, relatively isolated from those of a different social stratum, would have exacerbated the social pretensions of those such as Aimée who developed a strong sense of ‘them and us’ from her initial English school experiences.

At school there was a heavy Sunday emphasis on two church services and Bible Class. No games on the Sabbath were allowed but in the summer there were rambles in the country. A favourite walk was over the fields to Perivale (an area that was completely absorbed into urban London by the time Aimée wrote her recollections, with no open country in sight). During the week there were plenty of outdoor activities—rounders cricket, tennis—and there were swings and see-saws, with even a pony to ride. Aimée was taught the piano and the violin; there was drawing and ‘every kind of mending, darning and patching.’ Lessons were not mentioned by her, though Aimée passed her ‘Junior Cambridge’ examinations.

There were however a few incidents to mar (what Aimée selectively remembered in the 1950s as) four happy years at Princess Helena College. She had first to be counselled against using the expression, ‘My God!’ with its different connotation in English from ‘Mon Dieu!’ in French. Then there was her retaliation against another bigger girl, who pulled her long hair, with a long bruising set-to that ended in the Principal’s office, where they were both scolded severely. The other girl left the school. Aimée and Mabel also misbehaved together. One Sunday afternoon at school they avoided Bible Class, after the usual long service: they climbed up scaffolding at the school and hid. At roll-call their names were called out, the names were repeated and then a search started. The two girls stayed where they were until after nightfall and had to face the climb down in the dark. They were too frightened to move until the handyman at the school heard their cries and helped them down. The police were notified they had been found, having scoured the nearby countryside for them. They did not dare tell the principal that they had hidden because they detested Bible Class.
were punished by being ‘put in Coventry’ for a week (no one was allowed to talk to them) and they were forbidden to be together.\textsuperscript{44}

Two years later they absconded to London for Mrs Barnett to give them ‘a good tea’: they claimed they had permission for the outing, which surprised her mother—it was not customary for a school to let girls go out by themselves. However, Emily fed them with their favourite food and took them to Paddington Station with money for a ‘fly’, as cabs were called then. It was dark when they reached the school and there was much excitement in their absence. Mr Barnett, unknown to his wife, had unexpectedly called to see Aimée; he used to hire a horse and ride to the school in Ealing. No Aimée! There had been another search of the buildings and the police were again notified. The girls were in tears when they were told that their disappearance for a second time meant ‘Expulsion’ and that this meant no other schools would take them. Their lives were ruined! Fortunately, Mr Barnett in his time had also run away from school, so was sympathetic, and the school staff took their lead from him. Other than being ‘put in Coventry’ again, there were no consequences.\textsuperscript{45}

It was not however the end of Aimée’s brushes with authority, according to her. She was a favourite with the French mistress because the two of them could converse easily in French. ‘Mlle. Glatz was a middle-aged rather sad lady, very cultivated and literary.’ Perhaps because of this, as Aimée related, the ‘large, florid German Fraülein’ whose classes Aimée also attended was prejudiced against the girl; ‘Nothing I could do was right, I was always singled out for bullying’. Even the other girls noticed this and commiserated with her. Aimée ‘took her courage in both hands’ and went to see the Principal and told her of what had been happening, ending her accusations with the words that were relayed to her parents, ‘Either Fraülein leaves the school or I do.’ She was scolded by the Principal for her impertinence and in a rage Aimée wrote to her parents, and Mabel did to hers, saying they wanted to leave.

Luckily for Aimée there were numerous new schools available. In 1874 some twenty-seven schools for girls had been established in England and a further forty-five girls’ schools had been added by 1903, parallel with the creation of proprietary schools for girls.\textsuperscript{46} So in 1886, at the age of fourteen, Aimée changed schools, albeit with some regrets at leaving her friends.\textsuperscript{47} Having first sent Aimée at the age of ten to a boarding

\textsuperscript{44} Mayne, ‘Mother’s family story’.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Mayne, ‘Mother’s family story’.
school, dating from when the family was still living in Boulogne, her parents were now delighted, she wrote, to have her living in their London home, as a day-girl attending her new school, Notting Hill High School which had been founded in 1873.48

There is no record of the school fees payable, but the new school must have been cheaper for Mr Barnett with his diminished wealth. This school was an establishment that was apparently favoured by parents of the middle-class to educate ‘young ladies’ to a level where they could consider tertiary education. It was the second of the foundations established by the Girls’ Public Day School Company.49 Aimée had to walk daily to school, a distance of 1½ miles each way. It was not an easy change for her to continue her education at Notting Hill, after the cloistered atmosphere of Princess Helena College with its strong Anglican traditions.

There was an atmosphere of intense competition in her new school, something entirely foreign to Aimée then: ‘lessons, games and a good time with friends’ had been her ideal. She realized that it was expected of her—by the school at least, her mother was more ambivalent—that she would proceed to tertiary education. She worked very hard, to the point that her mother objected, never having studied Latin or Mathematics herself. ‘She insisted on my keeping up my accomplishments [in] piano and violin, so life was very busy’.50

There were hundreds of day girls, and we were all imbued with the idea that passing exams was the end and aim of a girl’s life...Now I was caught up with the idea that higher education was absolutely necessary and I worked hard at my many subjects taking home daily mountains of home work.51

Her mother had tried to limit the hours her daughter spent on homework and frequently caught her awake late at night studying, but by then Aimée was convinced of the need to work towards tertiary study. School work was unremitting at that stage of her life; there was no physical exercise, except her daily weekday walks to and from school, although there were the holidays when the family always took six weeks off during the summer. This was not easy with her brother Archie present: he had developed a teenage contempt for girls. Even to be seen with a girl, albeit his sister, was anathema, should another boy from Haileybury be around. (This soon changed when he was at Cambridge).

50 Mayne, ‘Mother’s family story’.
51 Ibid.
It was now 1888 and Aimée was sixteen, working for her London Matriculation at Notting Hill; Archie was at Cambridge where he was able to indulge his love of music and where he became popular with his peers. He was gregarious and out-going. Living above his room in college was a young man, Arthur Mayne who, although he was not musical himself, enjoyed the company of Archie and his friends as they made music. The piano they had was poor, so at least on one occasion Arthur hired one for them. This seems bizarre, as he had no money for such luxuries but the others used to say that whenever Mayne was hard up he entered for a mathematical exhibition or a political economy prize and won it.

In Archie’s rooms, Arthur Mayne had been smitten by the coloured portrait of Aimée as a schoolgirl.52

On the pretext of visiting Archie at St. Petersburg Place, he called in one day to meet her in person:

Archie always told his friends to look him up if they lived or passed through London … and so it came about that one day as I was practising some difficult pieces of a Chopin Waltz over and over again, the maid showed a young man into the drawing room, to my intense annoyance, for my days were parcelled out in schoolwork and practising and I had no time to spare except at weekends.54

Arthur had claimed he was there to meet Archie. According to Aimée in her memoir ‘Annette’, he was invited to sit down, and placed himself carefully on a low chair as Aimée wheeled round on the piano stool, in search of something she could play really well. Arthur was entranced with her. She played two more pieces and then, tired of showing off, excused herself and disappeared to tackle her schoolwork. She found the visitor rather too dull to be a friend of her ebullient brother, who soon appeared and the two young men retired to the smoking room until supper, to which Arthur had been invited. When Aimée appeared for the meal, looking tired it transpired that she was...

52 Mayne, ‘Mother’s family story’.
53 Displayed by the author at his home in Perth, in its original gilt frame.
54 Mayne, ‘Mother’s family story’.
battling with an algebraic problem and Arthur offered to help her.\textsuperscript{55} She quite liked him after that.

For his part, the nineteen-year-old Arthur was madly in love: Aimée has recorded that period from her perspective:

The young man was shy and awkward….I was the first girl that Arthur Mayne had ever spoken to socially in all his life in all probability, for his life had been one of poverty, hard work and responsibility for his irresponsible father’s moneyless family. Though I was only a schoolgirl with my hair hanging down my back, tied at the top in a bow as was the fashion in those days, he fell in love immediately, the first love of his cheerless life, and a love so tenacious that he never swerved from it for eight long years until he persuaded me to marry him.\textsuperscript{56}

At this point in Aimée’s story it is appropriate to introduce in more depth Arthur Mayne, later Aimée’s husband for over half a century. He is worth a study in his own right. Born in 1869, he was in fact rather a remarkable young man from extraordinary beginnings. According to the later Mayne family records Arthur’s real family name may have been ‘Chesney’.\textsuperscript{57} A branch of the Norman family de Chesnaye had settled in Scotland and subsequently emigrated to Ulster in about 1661, settling in County Antrim. In 1755 Alexander Chesney, possibly Arthur’s great-great-grandfather, was born in County Antrim, Ireland. He emigrated to South Carolina with his parents and siblings in 1772 and was later enlisted as a captain in the Carolina contingent of King George III’s loyal army in the American War of Independence. After being captured

\textsuperscript{55} ‘Annette’, p.2.
\textsuperscript{56} Separate note at start of Diaries, p.4.
\textsuperscript{57} In late 2011, J.B. Gould provided me with further information on the connection between the Chesneys and ‘Henry Mayne’, Gould wrote: ‘The children I previously showed as children of Francis Rawdon Chesney, I now believe are split between Francis Rawdon Chesney and his brother Charles Cornwallis Chesney. Algernon Hutchinson Moir Chesney would seem likely to be the son of FRC, while Charles Cornwallis Chesney and George Tompkins Chesney are sons of CCC. The balance of children previously shown as children of FRC I assume are still children of FRC but perhaps repeated among the new ones I found, all of whom were born in Gibraltar.’ Gould continues: ‘I can’t find any reference in the records yet to Algernon Hutchinson Moir Chesney. In fact, it would be very easy to believe he didn’t exist—that Henry Mayne was always Henry Mayne. In fact, there is a trail for Henry Mayne that is completely separate from the Chesneys - and inconsistent with what is known about the Chesneys. There’s no record of a Chesney with any name similar to Algernon doing anything’ Email Gould/Crouch, 1 December 2011.

Be that as it may, until there is further genealogical confirmation, I shall stay with the Mayne/ family records.
four times by the Americans and surviving (he was nearly executed by his captors on two occasions) he returned to Ireland.\textsuperscript{58}

The most famous of his sons was the eldest, Arthur’s likely grandfather, General Francis Rawdon Chesney (1789-1872) who was called ‘Father of the Suez Canal’ by Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat who was responsible for the construction of the Suez Canal. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 had established the quickest route to India, largely replacing the six-months voyage round Africa. In 1831, Chesney had personally investigated whether the Euphrates River running through Mesopotamia could be navigated by steam-boat as far as its mouth that opened into the Persian Gulf—primarily as a means of moving of troops and materials to India by the quickest possible route. This initial exploration he accomplished, not without many hardships, including surviving attacks from hostile Arabs; he then prepared an exhaustive report that examined the alternative of sinking a canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and he later undertook a second expedition along the Euphrates. Chesney had travelled extensively down the Euphrates River in an abortive search for an improved route to India.\textsuperscript{59}

Most of the other Chesney sons were also distinguished militarily, becoming generals, and one a professor at Sandhurst Military Academy. However, the youngest surviving son, Major Algernon Moir Hutchinson Chesney was of a different stamp and the ‘black-sheep’ of his generation. He was apparently Arthur’s father. Algernon Chesney, born at sea, off the coast of Madras (date unknown).\textsuperscript{60} As with his distinguished elder brother General George Tomkyas Chesney (1830-1895), a member of the Viceroy’s Council in India, he was involved in putting down the Indian Mutiny. Thereafter he quarrelled with his colonel and with his wife, who was later declared insane in England and lost sight of; one of their sons (there were at least two children, but the others are unknown) was also mentally unstable, throwing himself into the Red Sea on being invalided out of the army. Algernon Chesney retired from the army and is believed to have spent time in eastern Australia, working on a sheep station, possibly owned by people called ‘Mayne’.\textsuperscript{61}

On his return to England, and having no knowledge of his wife for over seven years, he adopted the name of ‘Henry Mayne’ and in 1867 bigamously married, in Derby, Mary Ann Ardran, a young woman of the lower-middle-class. ‘Henry Mayne’,

\textsuperscript{58} S.E. Lane-Poole, \textit{The Life of General F.R. Chesney, Colonel Commandant Royal Artillery, by his Wife and Daughter}, London, W.H. Allen & Co., 1885, pp.1 et seq.
\textsuperscript{59} Gould, ‘The Bonncastle Family’.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, based on unsubstantiated Mayne family record.
\textsuperscript{61} Family anecdotes, supplemented by Gould.
who had had a family reputation of being a brilliant linguist and classicist, worked as an ‘Army and General Coach,’ preparing entrants for Sandhurst and Woolwich military academies. He appears to have fathered a second surviving family of six, of five boys and a girl (the eldest son died as an infant), which he must have known he would not live to see started in life.\(^{62}\) He had made the oldest surviving son, Arthur—then aged about fifteen—promise that he would assume responsibility for his mother and sister, if he were to die. The father committed suicide thereafter,\(^{63}\) believed to be soon after the birth of his daughter Katie, in about 1884.\(^{64}\) Henrie Mayne (Arthur’s oldest daughter Margaret) wrote in her novel *An Unreasonable Man* that he had cut his throat with a razor.\(^{65}\)

Compiled from Gould’s ‘The Bonnycastle Family’ and family sources

Obedient to his father’s fierce injunction, Arthur worked very hard at Christ’s Hospital School.\(^{66}\) He won scholarships and monetary prizes almost to demand, as earlier related. Always intent on earning money, he aspired for a glittering career overseas, in 1888 sitting the prestigious examination for entry into the Indian Civil Service (ICS)—the highest competitive examination in the western world, at that time—ranking second or third (records vary).\(^{67}\) Mathematics was a heavily weighted

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\(^{63}\) ‘Annette’. Note as prelude.

\(^{64}\) Gould, ‘The Bonnycastle Family’.


\(^{67}\) Mayne, *An Unreasonable Man*, p.12.
examination subject. As Henrie Mayne commented, ‘Mathematics was to him as music to the musician or painting to the painter: a mysterious universe where few could enter, always to hand as an escape from the burdensome realities of life’. And so it remained all his life.

His future seemed assured and he was sponsored—as a successful ICS cadet—to read Mathematics and other required subjects at Cambridge University, over the two years that ICS cadets had to complete at either Oxford or Cambridge. He was never to take a degree, since that required a third year at university and loss of a year’s seniority in India. Family lore, and Henrie Mayne, has it that Arthur was a life-long Fabian socialist, which might have been seen as inappropriate to the ‘Heaven-Born’—as the ICS was known to the cognoscenti—though doubtless he was tactful enough not to eulogise about this to his masters-to-be in the Indian Service. As a final comment on his personality at this point, Arthur’s early energetic strivings to succeed and later avoidance of social gatherings, followed by hypochondria in later life, suggest that this medical evolution resulted from his repressed hostility towards an overbearing father.

At the time of Arthur’s admittance to Emmanuel College Cambridge, his mother was shown as living at 56 Ashbourne Grove East Dulwich, a lower-middle-class outer suburb of London. No. 56 was one in a line of similar houses constructed about the period the Maynes moved in and the site is now part of the house next door.

Aimée gives her first impressions of how Arthur Mayne looked and presented in the 1890s:

[He] was of medium height, with a fresh boyish face, irregular features, ugly features would be more exact, but redeemed by a well-shaped head and forehead and by a pleasant smile. The insignificant deep-set brown eyes were concealed behind pince-nez, his whole get-up was neat, the tie and a

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69 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.10.
70 Emmanuel College Archivist.
72 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man. 30.
73 Dr Raymond James, ‘Charles Darwin’s Neurosis’, paper delivered to the Conference of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Melbourne, 2-5 November 1990, (manuscript extract only). A medical theory is based on psychoanalytical theories about the health of Charles Darwin who also avoided social life. ‘Darwin’s psychoneurosis may be regarded as an adaptation to his environment…’
74 Emmanuel College Archivist.
75 Nowadays, the streets have been ‘gentrified’ although the district retains a reputation for social violence, especially after dark.
button-hole of a single carnation, indicating the desire to make the best of his appearance. A certain downright way of expressing his opinions and a readiness in argument, caused older men to think him a bumptious person. He felt strongly, was full of the enthusiasms of youth and hence expressed himself rather more forcibly than tact demanded, in the nineties, from young people in the presence of their elders. Among men of his own age he was considered a clever chap and a good fellow. Society manners and a flow of small talk he had none, and this made him appear awkward and uninteresting in the presence of ladies.77

Arthur, 1890

Arthur was an irrelevance to Aimée then, so he found little opportunity for courtship, though he called in on the Barnetts whenever he had a pretext: as far as Aimée was concerned, and as she writes, it was only
difficult passages in Horace’s Odes, or tiresome problems that were put aside for his inspection and assistance. The burning lover passages in the Odes, which found such response in his heart, were dismissed by her as ‘awfully silly.’79

Aimée related in her memoir ‘Annette’ that, absorbed in her own pursuits, she did not apparently realize that his visits had any relation to her; she still looked on him as rather a bore. ‘That Mr Mayne again, bother,’ just when she was doing something interesting, but, as the daughter of the house, old fashioned courtesy obliged her to be amiable. Mrs Barnett however had begun to suspect there was something behind these frequent calls. They were not entirely for the pleasure of listening to her husband Edward’s stories (though Edward was an excellent raconteur) or to see Archie. However she kept her own counsel.80

77 ‘Annette’, p.2.
78 Family Archives.
79 ‘Annette’, p.4.
80 Ibid.

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Eighteen months passed and it was now 1892. Arthur Mayne was due to leave for India and he was deeply in love. His further acquaintance with Aimée’s home life had led him to find her even more loveable and desirable. She fitted so perfectly into this oasis of country, the quiet street and old fashioned house, in the midst of the life of London. How was he to tell this girl of his adoration and his future hopes? She never gave him an opportunity; she chatted on the most impersonal topics or kept up a lively argument just for the fun of opposing him. He found himself very gauche in her presence, unable to do himself justice. One thing he was determined upon, he would not leave England without telling her of his love.81

An opportunity then presented itself: the Barnetts had arranged to spend the summer holidays at Exmouth and Archie had invited him to join them for a week’s boating and sea fishing, before Arthur left for India. Now surely, Aimée would be less occupied and busy and he would have his opportunity to speak. On further consideration, as Aimée was by then only just twenty, and he had nothing but his future career in India to offer, he thought it would be safer to approach Mr Barnett first, to avoid misunderstanding with the family. Mr Barnett was not forthcoming, and so Arthur turned to Aimée’s mother. As he feared, she was friendly but not encouraging. She pointed out that Aimée was still very young and that Arthur would meet many other women in India. This was not quite how Arthur saw it; he foresaw that his first postings would be far from the social setting of the great cities such as Madras that Mrs Barnett remembered. However, she gave her permission for Arthur to speak to Aimée, but did not hold out hope for a positive response.82

It was as the mother predicted. He only found the opportunity to talk with her on the last day, with no one else around: In a note from years after, Aimée noted: ‘November 1892 Mayne left for India, refused Mayne writing proposing again. I squashed his advances’.83 Aimée recorded in her memoir ‘Annette’ that Arthur later reappeared on sick-leave from India, having been suffering from persistent malaria.84 His love for her, she wrote, remained constant. He had written often to the Barnett family. From Aimée he had received letters at rare intervals, ‘such unsatisfying, impersonal letters’, and the last year they had ceased entirely. According to her memoir

81 Diaries. Note by Aimée p.4.
82 ‘Annette’, p.5.
83 Diaries, p.4.
84 There is no reference in Arthur’s record of service, held in the British Library collection, of his having taken sick leave, or visited England, before May 1898. It appears therefore that the official records did not include his sick-leave. History of Services of Gazetted Officers in the Civil Department in the Central Provinces, to 1911 Nagpur, Albert Press, 1911.
‘Annette’, his own letters had been accounts of his doings in the new land and had made interesting reading to the older Barnetts. Many a time, she noted, as he sat in his tent on one of his solitary camping tours, he had torn up sheets of his letters to Aimée, fearing they sounded too intimate. It would never do to offend her. Mrs Barnett however had not forgotten her promise to keep in touch and many a homely chat from her had cheered him in camp.  

Not that he had spent all of his three years in solitary stations and in camp. His first year had been spent as Assistant to the Accountant-General of Bengal. Aimée recorded that he had entered with zest into the social life there. He had met and been entertained by ladies of the various services, some with daughters fresh out from England, but never for one moment, he must have assured her, had he been tempted to swerve from his love for Aimée.

In 1892 she had been accepted to undertake a B.Sc. at Bedford College, where she worked steadily. She was now twenty. On Arthur’s return to London on sick-leave, and when he had the opportunity to be alone with her, Arthur had tried to strengthen her feelings for him by presenting her with a tiger’s claw gold brooch ‘and another exquisite hand-fashioned item of jewellery’, which she attempted to refuse. According to her memoir ‘Annette’, Arthur then threw the gifts on the fire, which horrified her and she retrieved them. She then told him firmly that she was set on a scientific career and would never marry.

He had not attempted again to verbally pour out his heart to her, in case that further repulsed her from him, contenting himself with a passionate letter, that according to her memoir ‘Annette’ awoke Aimée’s feelings in response to his devotion. She wrote that she could have been receptive to a personal, passionate declaration of love, had he the good sense—and courage—to woo her face-to-face. But Arthur just could not face her for fear of another humiliating rejection. However, by now, she recorded, she really did like him, if only as someone who was an extension of her family circle. She returned to studying for her Intermediate examinations.

Devastated, Arthur kept his distance and while he kept in desultory touch, he then returned disconsolate to India later that year, determined to bury himself in his work and try to forget his love for Aimée. During this period, Aimée briefly recorded in her

86 History of Services.
88 Aimée’s application to enter Bedford College. Royal Holloway archives (RHC) AR/285.
memoir ‘Annette’ that she had also spent a year in Europe perfecting her French and German, and had then completed a second year at Bedford College.\textsuperscript{91} Letters between Arthur and the Barnett household had now dwindled. When in 1895, on furlough,\textsuperscript{92} he sought out the Barnetts and found that the family had relocated to Paddington; Mr Barnett had died in January 1895 and Archie had left for South America to seek his fortune, leaving a considerable gap in the household. Arthur could not have foreseen quite how it had changed in his absence. Mrs Barnett had suffered some kind of nervous collapse after months of nursing her dying husband.\textsuperscript{93}

Aimée had been summoned home by her mother to help run the household. She made no mention of any other factors that precipitated the change in her life, though perhaps the Barnetts’ financial situation had worsened. This was the end of the period of the Great Depression which had particularly affected the economics of the middle-class.\textsuperscript{94} Aimée’s father, as related earlier, had suffered financial setbacks.\textsuperscript{95} It could be that the costs of maintaining Aimée at Bedford College after Mr Barnett’s death were more than Mrs Barnett could contemplate. Aimée, years later, summed up this devastating period of her life with a simple note: ‘August 1895 Had to give up College & run the home, for my mother’ and it is only by comparing this entry with the immediate previous entries

‘Jan 1895 Father died.
July 1895 Took Inter Sci. & passed, also worked for part of Final B Sc.
July 1896 Mayne home again on leave.’\textsuperscript{96}

that the poignancy of her situation is apparent. In the space of eight months, her life’s prospects had completely changed and she was caught in the then familiar trap of the daughter in the household being obliged to subvert her own ambitions to the needs of her mother. Aimée herself summed it up best:

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, p.7.
\textsuperscript{92} History of Services.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, p.10.
\textsuperscript{94} Musson, ‘The Great Depression’, p. 228.
\textsuperscript{95} Unfortunately there is no will accessible. From 12 November 2008–1 April 2009 J. Gould, the Bonnycastle genealogist, was in contact with H.M. Courts Service, York Probate Sub-Registry with regard to Edward Barnett’s will. They were unable to find a record of a probated will in the years 1895-1906 inclusive. Gould believes that of course there was such a will, but that it was somehow misfiled. The records Gould has regarding Edward’s one-time fortune suggest that it was seriously depleted due to the fraudulent ministrations of his brother Horatio in the 1870s, to whom he entrusted some of his investments. His interest in engineering projects, particularly in South/Central America, caused him to invest a good portion of his remaining assets in the Panama Canal project of Ferdinand de Lesseps. Much of this would have been lost with the bankruptcy of the project after 1889, the disgrace of de Lesseps, and the scandal of the French Government, including Clemenceau, trying to cover it up/selling it too cheaply to Americans in 1892-93. Gould, email to author, 31 January 2012.
\textsuperscript{96} Diaries, handwritten note at start.
[Her] happy life had been broken up and her beloved studies hastily brought to a close by this double blow [father dying and mother collapsed]. She realised that a woman was differently placed from a man in the social structure of her day and that she could rarely live to herself and follow her own inclinations, unless she was cut off from all human relationships. Childhood and youth may be spent in a home where all is arranged for her education and happiness and self-development, then comes a time when things are changed. The parents, who have made the home for the young, in turn demand care and attention: filial affection as well as social custom require that the daughter of the house should take up the care of the home.97

This was now Arthur’s opportunity—and he took it.

How then does Aimée’s life mirror or contradict the findings of historians who have written about this period? As Porter argues, classes operated in different worlds and, as a product of the upper-middle-class, Aimée was an exemplar—snobbish and ignorant about the lower classes. While she was able to take advantage of the opening up of education to females through secondary and tertiary education—and as Branca and others have suggested this was an increasing possibility for middle-class women in the late nineteenth-century—after her father’s death she was constrained by her mother’s expectations for her as a daughter.

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Aimée’s education deserves detailed coverage, because it was a significant part of her early life. It would be presumptuous to suggest that her academic experiences actually shaped her life in the twentieth-century, but because of her initial expectations that she would embark on a self-sufficient career, based on an (unrealised) university qualification, it is important to detail her tertiary schooling. It is also relevant to postulate that withdrawing from university induced her to make an unhappy marriage, to extract her from her mother’s influence.

This next stage of Aimée’s life therefore is centred on the years that followed immediately on her withdrawal from Bedford College, truly a watershed period for her. To understand why this is so, it is necessary to scrutinize in some detail her tertiary education, to understand how obtaining a degree could have affected her life choices, had she continued her studies. At the same time it is important to place the decision, for her to withdraw against this background of the advances in tertiary education for English women in the 1890s, recalling her mother’s upper-middle-class reluctance for her daughter to work towards an independent career. Having detailed why Aimée abandoned tertiary education, I will again take up the account of her life, by examining the sequence of events that led to marriage and her life in India.

It is evident that until 1895 Aimée had been able to influence her educational path: it was because of her deliberately wilful behaviour that she had been moved to another school where Mrs Barnett wanted a good secondary education for her daughter. The unforeseen result was that the new Headmistress Miss Jones’s direct influence at Notting Hill High School kindled Aimée’s academic ambitions to be accepted at Bedford College.98

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98 Miss Jones had also personally signed Aimée’s application to be enrolled. ‘Form of Entrance to Bedford College, 1st Referee H.M. Jones, Bedford College’ – Selected Entry Applications 1890-1899. AR 204/1/1 Royal Holloway College Archives.
However, I must make the point again that Aimée was a product of a late-Victorian home environment: the young woman remained under her mother’s direct influence. It is true that the latter was acquiescent in Aimée starting tertiary education, but Mrs Barnett saw no future for her daughter outside the traditional role of the home environment—her daughter’s responsibility was to look after her mother, eventually to marry and to raise a family. The mother reflected the still-current gender ideology applicable to young women of the upper-middle-class.

It was only when Aimée was apparently destined to become one of the new élite, a tertiary-educated woman, that all she had been working for was abruptly and cruelly taken from her. As we follow the sudden emptiness of her life, marooned at home—her father dead, her distraught sick mother and her studies abandoned—Aimée’s situation must be considered against the cultural, social and educational influences of the late Victorian period. How significant and abrupt was the metamorphosis in this young woman’s life? Was she different from her upper-middle-class contemporaries? Did her behaviour differ from that of her peers?

Undoubtedly, outside her family responsibilities, the most important influence on Aimée as a young woman before she married was entry into tertiary education. She had the advantage of attending the all-female Bedford College, England’s first institution for the higher education of women. It claimed to be proud to compete with men in any academic field. But what constituted higher education for women in the latter half of the nineteenth-century and what was Aimée’s role and place as a tertiary student? The change in educational opportunities for women in the latter part of the nineteenth-century represented in effect a revolution, and by the 1890s women constituted 16% of the student body.

Its antecedents were modest. Margaret Tuke, Principal of Bedford College from 1907 to 1929, wrote that in the early part of Queen Victoria’s reign, the German ideal of the Hausfrau—that of Prince Albert—had been adopted by Queen Victoria and spread through society. It had reinforced the natural manly attitude to women as persons incapable of intellectual occupations or reasoned thought—the ‘pretty dears’ whose attempts to acquire knowledge were subject to ridicule. Consequently, girls received, whether in schools or at home, a negligible ‘training of the mind’. Girls were

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expected to play the piano and to sing. They spent time on French but could not write or speak it competently. They learnt by rote English poems; ‘they read and were questioned on Mrs Markham’s History of England. They learnt arithmetic up to vulgar fractions, but to learn Latin was held unwomanly’.

It was as a direct result of these inadequacies in female education that Bedford College was founded in 1847 in Bedford Square, in London’s Bloomsbury, later located off Regent’s Park. Initially it was to provide for ladies, at a moderate expense, a curriculum of liberal education. The instruction was given ‘on the same plan as in the public universities, of combined lectures, examinations, and exercises’. In 1891 Bedford College applied to be included in the London ‘Teaching University’ and to prepare students for London University degrees.

Bedford College was followed by more women’s colleges in London: Westfield College (1882) and Royal Holloway College (1886). These had been preceded at Oxford or Cambridge in the 1870s by an increasing number of dons’ wives, augmented by a small entry of women students. A female residence at Cambridge became Newnham College in 1871; Girton College at Cambridge started in 1873 as Emily Davies College, founded at Hitchin in 1869. In Oxford, 1879 brought the foundation of Somerville College, Lady Margaret Hall and the Society for Home Students which eventually became St Anne’s College. In 1892 St Hilda’s College was established at Oxford. Women did not become full members of the university in Oxford until 1919 and not at Cambridge until 1948. The University of London was a pioneer in women’s tertiary education: while it only acquired a teaching as well as an examining function in 1899, this followed on the University of London Act of 1898, which brought all these and other institutions together ‘in a complex and uneasy federation’.

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103 Bedford College 1888, maintained in the 1890s - Fees per term:

| Classes for 2 hours a week | £ 2 0 |
| Classes for 1 hour a week | 1 11 0 |
| Half a term of classes | 1 10 |
| Each lab | 0 10 6 |
| Composition fee for matriculation | 10 10 0 |
| Composition fee for Intermediate Arts | 14 14 0 |
| Composition fee for Intermediate Science | 16 16 0 |

Aimée’s annual tuition fees would have totaled some £50 p.a. (£5,500 in today’s sterling)

Email RHC Archivist/Author 14 June 2012.

106 Fletcher, Feminists and Bureaucrats, pp.148-149.
Margaret Tuke was one of numerous pioneers who paved the way for women such as Aimée. Education in the second half of the nineteenth century, Philip Gardner has argued, was when women’s ‘personal, social and professional ambitions could draw on the experience of an experienced and functioning sphere of genuine professional status and authority’. Gardner wrote that it took the struggles of women on their own behalf to notify men that the ‘liberating promise of education and learning’ could neither be halted nor watered down.107

Martha Vicinus observed that college-educated women pioneered in the drive towards greater female autonomy, seeking out new jobs, forming new institutions and playing an increasingly important role in the public sphere. Yet, even as they took up professional careers, most women felt a deep conflict between the old social expectations of marriage and children, and the new opportunities for independence and personal fulfillment. They were caught between old ideologies and behaviour patterns and new ambitions and public careers.108

A partial solution to these old conflicts was found in close friendships. For middle-class-women who did not seek tertiary education or a career during the nineteenth century, friends were limited to family relationships and church acquaintances; a few kept up an important correspondence with an old schoolmate. However, Vicinus noted that unlike their brothers and fathers, in the latter part of the nineteenth-century women’s lives were not divided between the public and the private spheres. Women were now able to live away from their families and make lives for themselves. During the last thirty years of the nineteenth-century, women’s friendships became more intense and all-encompassing, absorbing the burdens of pioneering work. By the late nineteenth century a substantial number of middle-class women were not marrying, but were leaving home to live with other women in such new and growing all-female institutions as schools, colleges, settlement houses, and nursing homes. In effect, single women established all-female families within their institutions continuing the supportive emotional ties of the traditional Victorian extended family, while attempting cool, professional ways of working on the job and in the world outside.109

For the woman undertaking tertiary education there was only qualified support for those who saw a degree as the most desirable outcome. In 1872 Emily Davies, the founder of Girton College, wrote:

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109 Ibid.
It is not as a means of getting on that University education is recommended…but to give her mind that freedom, that disposition, and those habits, that may enable her to obtain any part of knowledge she shall apply herself to, or stand in need of, in the future course of her life.\textsuperscript{110}

How many female tertiary graduates undertook university studies primarily to ‘widen their minds’ is not discernible from the records available, although several studies of female students were undertaken by Janet Howarth and Mark Curthoys at Oxford, Cambridge and a small number of British provincial universities, to assess the significance of tertiary education and its impact on women graduates. They identified factors common to Oxford, Cambridge and London. Women favoured English and Modern Languages, by contrast to males at Cambridge and Oxford. This reflected the influence of girls’ schools on their pupils. Vocational degree courses were shunned by women thus closing professions to them. Law, Theology and Engineering attracted very few women.\textsuperscript{111} It was concluded that most women were to undertake paid work at some stage but at least one in eight did not. Just under one-third of women married. It is clear that for those who did take paid jobs, secondary school-teaching was much the most likely occupation. For more than one in three of the women who studied at Oxford, it was their principal career.\textsuperscript{112}

Howarth and Curthoys reconstructed from college registers the different categories of female students and their post-university expectations. There was the woman who attended university expecting to earn a living and needing qualifications to do so. There was the young lady with good prospects of an independent income or marriage, or who was destined to become a ‘home-daughter’ (a ‘Home Sunbeam’).\textsuperscript{113} They concluded that girls from private schools were more apt to marry and that overall the background from which female students came had a marked effect on their life chances.\textsuperscript{114} It was believed that a college education reduced a girl’s chance of marriage. If a mother sent her daughter to one of the universities, she was seen as more likely to become a teacher than a wife.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{110} Bauer and Ritt, ‘Some Account of a Proposed New College’, p.127.
\textsuperscript{114} Howarth and Curthoys p.227.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., p.220.
Such a career choice did not challenge the gender role of women: it was linking the care of children with the expansion of state education in Britain from the 1870s that ensured the majority of female graduates were destined for teaching. Recognition of formal teaching qualifications had been underway via the College of Preceptors, formed as the Society of Teachers in 1846, by a group of private schoolmasters from Brighton who were concerned about standards in their profession, and which was incorporated by Royal Charter as the College of Preceptors in 1849.

Duncan Crow recorded that, in 1901, 24.9 per cent of women and girls out of the total female population of 19 million were employed in Great Britain (4.2 million); 4.1 per cent of these were teachers. There were a few doctors, some architects, several dentists and a few engineers (the first admitted in 1899). Accountancy was closed to women. There were no women lawyers until after World War I. The church was closed except for a few deaconesses. The armed services were closed to women, except as nurses. However, at the end of the nineteenth-century, domestic service as a career for gentlewomen was a recognised profession, for which a thorough practical and scientific training was required. Courses of hygiene and domestic service started by the London School Board, County Councils and various polytechnics for ‘traditional’ servants indicated the lines on which training schools and classes should be arranged, including the training of ladies in domestic duties as part of their preparation for emigration.

Although by 1914 only one per cent of women were entering university, the advance of the middle-classes was contributing to the lessening dominance of the landed gentry and clergy. The first female doctors were becoming qualified, but there were only a few of them. After 1876 there were no legal disqualifications to a medical career for women: women were admitted to universities and forced their way into the medical profession—following the trail blazed by Elizabeth Garrett Anderson in 1865, the first woman British medical practitioner. However, they faced severe difficulties in having facilities for their clinical training. Moreover, the British Medical Association was still refusing to admit women doctors, partly based on the wish not to

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116 Ibid.
117 Many influential educationalists have been associated with the College which continues to provide in-service qualifications for teachers and is now called the College of Teachers (since 1998). Richard Aldrich, ‘College of Preceptors’, Institute of Education (UK), 1999, http://www.collegeofteachers.ac.uk, February 2008.
119 Ibid., p.157.
offend ‘female propriety’.\textsuperscript{121} It was also because of the wide-spread belief that tertiary study by women inhibited their reproductive capacity.\textsuperscript{122}

The possible impact of tertiary education on those such as Aimée, and on their life choices, has been investigated. Although there are Bedford College records of who withdrew from studies, there is no detail on why, and the effects on those who abandoned their studies. Not all women who entered tertiary education completed their degrees. A detailed study of the records of the first female entrants in the 1890s who enrolled at Bedford College does not provide information about why students withdrew. One may surmise that some would have become bored with their studies, or could not cope with academic rigours; others probably abandoned their studies because of family pressures—perhaps the girl was required at home to assist her mother. The latter is certainly true in at least one case: as we have seen, Aimée withdrew after two years of study when her father died, having been enrolled as follows:

‘Barnett, Emily Bonnycastle was recorded as sitting for Maths, Physics, Botany, Biology, Chemistry. [1892-1893]\textsuperscript{123}

Although the Bedford attendance and academic enrolment details were limited, prior to 1900, they have provided the following information. Aimée was not the only student to withdraw. The Bedford College archives reveal that in the Easter term of 1894 forty-four students, more than one-third of the total number enrolled, had given notice to leave. By Michaelmas Term 1894 there were 185 students (ten had given notice to leave). The variations in enrolments and attendance were a concern. The Council had no explanation for the decreased attendance, and by August 1897 attendances had improved.\textsuperscript{124} It is likely that one factor was the reduction of many middle-class incomes, during the Great Depression and the improved economic conditions from 1896.\textsuperscript{125}

How typical was Aimée of the Bedford College students? An analysis of a number of Bedford College applications 1890-1899, revealed the following: seventeen years of age was a common age for enrolling, followed by sixteen years. Other entry ages varied from two thirteen-year-olds to one aged forty-four. Taking into account the

\textsuperscript{121} Millicent Garrett Fawcett was admitted as to the medical register as a licensed apothecary. Ruth First and Anne Scott, \textit{Olive Schreiner: a Biography}, New York, Rutgers University Press, 1990, p.157.

\textsuperscript{122} Hollis, \textit{Women in Public}, pp.24-26.

\textsuperscript{123} Student Reports (Academic) (1890s) AR 204/1/1 Royal Holloway Archives, February 2008. The Bedford College records merged with Royal Holloway College archives over the period 1982-85. Bingham, \textit{The History of Royal Holloway College 1886-1986}, p.269.

\textsuperscript{124} 100 in Science and Arts classes, six in Art School only, 119 Day students, eleven in Evening classes. Bedford College Records, ‘Report of the Council Michaelmas Term 1889, January 1890’ p.12, GB/113/1. Royal Holloway Archives.

\textsuperscript{125} Musson, ‘The Great Depression’, p.228.
latter, the mean enrolment age was 25.3 years. Excluding the forty-four-year-old, the mean was nineteen years of age. Aimée at twenty therefore was slightly older than the average entrant.¹²⁶

From the lists of 72 student addresses provided, sixteen per cent could be identified as upper-middle-class, fifty-seven as middle-class, with eighteen from rural locations, three from Scotland and one from Canada.¹²⁷ Twenty per cent of students had matriculated in London, eighteen were matriculated by Oxford or Cambridge, nine at the College of Preceptors, and forty-eight per cent came to Bedford College from a variety of other educational backgrounds, including one ‘Home Tuition’ and one from Toorak in Melbourne, Australia. Seventeen per cent of entries showed no previous education, though this could be due to inadequate record keeping by Bedford College.¹²⁸

Eighteen of the fathers’ occupations were not entered on the application forms, but one was noted as ‘Gentleman’. There were eleven solicitors, twelve merchants and three teachers, a member of parliament, a doctor, five barristers and a judge, two bank managers, three ministers, two engineers, a ship owner, a retired military man and, at the other end of the social scale an ‘iron master,’¹²⁹ a ‘carver and grinder’ and a ‘porter’. Only one parent could be identified as female, a ‘lady supervisor’. The remainder comprised a wholesaler, railway manager, commercial traveller, a publisher, and two academics.¹³⁰

Aimée was therefore typical of the majority of students: she came from an upper-middle-class London home and she matriculated. She embraced tertiary education and her stated aim was to be a doctor. The latter intention may be regarded with some scepticism: there is no independent record of this aspiration which is only casually referred to in her memoir ‘Annette’.¹³¹ Margaret (Henrie) Mayne, her eldest daughter who knew her mother well, surmised that ‘her enthusiasm for her studies

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¹²⁶ Student Reports (Academic) AR 204/1/1.
¹²⁷ Upper-middle-class (approximate percentages)
   London (West) Belgravia & Hampstead: 16 (upper-middle-class)
   Other London suburban addresses: 57 (middle-class or aspirant middle-class)
   Country locations: 18
   Scotland (Edinburgh and Glasgow): 3
   Overseas (Canada): 1

¹²⁸ Ibid.
¹²⁹ The ironmaster was the manager—and usually owner—of a forge or blast furnace for the processing of iron. It is a term mainly associated with the period of the Industrial Revolution, especially in Great Britain. https://mail.google.com/mail/?shva=1#inbox/137d91851b8d617a. June 2012
¹³⁰ Student Reports (Academic) AR 204/1/1.
¹³¹ ‘Aimée was now preparing for the Intermediate of the B.Sc. examination of the London University, which she was taking ‘on her way to a medical degree’, ‘Annette’, p.9.
waned…secretly she found science rather dreary and the application was lacking’. Had she completed her B.Sc. degree, one can only surmise that she would have proceeded to a medical degree. Intelligent she was, but was she dedicated sufficiently to undertake years of further study, like her contemporary, Dr Sarah Fraser M.D., who attended Bedford College 1894-1895? What of alternative careers? Whether Aimée from the privileged world of the upper-middle-class would have developed the necessary dedication to work as a school-teacher—or be employed by the public health authorities as one of the new bureaucrats of the period—from what is known of her seems highly unlikely. For a start, her mother was unlikely to have approved of such career choices.

Could formal religion, as another marker of the Victorian middle-class, have been an influence on Aimée? Certainly, by the 1850s, attendance at church or chapel was a practice strongly associated with the middle-class. Religious belief had become ‘a character and function of class’ and adherence to evangelical Protestantism formed part of respectability, even gentility, offering individuals an identity and a community in a society that was changing rapidly. Aimée’s time at St. Joseph’s Convent and Princess Helen College seemed to have left her with no inclination towards religion, unlike her Aunts Jane and Mary. Nor apparently were the Barnett parents predisposed towards religion.

Aimée herself, in a cryptic handwritten note that gives the significant dates of her early years, recorded: ‘1892-3 Religious difficulties’. That is the extent of any insight into that aspect of her early life. She was then in her early twenties and preparing for the first two years towards her B.Sc., with its focus on the natural sciences. This may well have presented a challenge to any religious beliefs. In later life, according to her eldest daughter, she attempted briefly to embrace Theosophy. As an old lady, she attended a ‘Huguenot Church’ in London. But there is no evidence that religion ever played any real part in her life.

132 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.28.
135 Mayne, Note at start of Diaries. p.3.
136 It is apparent from an entry in her memoir ‘Annette’ that in her middle-age, Aimée was stridently anti-religion: ‘There is no personal God who listens to our prayers, he is but a man-made myth. There must be some great power at the back of the Universe that we cannot contact and there may be a divine spark within each one of us that we may tend and fan into flame by concentration and idealism, but a personal God who can be approached by each little paltry individual creeping about this planet, of course not. The idea is rubbish’. ‘Annette’, p.263.
137 ‘In Canada Aimée had been persuaded to join the local theosophical society’. Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.170.
138 This is a memory of her eldest granddaughter Hilary.
What then of the other Victorian belief systems? Outside her tertiary studies, the young Aimée inclined towards her piano, violin and singing practice, and there is no indication that she displayed any intellectual interests, or followed contemporary intellectual debates, although when first settling into life in India in 1897, she did record that she intended to continue her study of Herbert Spencer’s philosophy, to which she had been introduced at Bedford College. \(^{139}\) There is no entry in her diaries that she actually did this, but she recorded Spencer’s ‘Sociology Part III’ in a reading list of the books she took with her to India. \(^{140}\)

Was Aimée actually influenced by the emergence of feminism in the middle to late Victorian period? Rosemary Tong postulated that there seem to have been three principal ‘groupings’ in the first wave of feminism. The first have been identified as ‘Liberal Feminists’ whose priorities were centred on the proposition that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal restraints. Then there were the Marxist (and to some extent, Socialist) feminists who thought it impossible for women to obtain equal opportunity in a class-dominated society. Thirdly, the Radical Feminists argued that the patriarchal system oppressed women: legal, political, social and cultural power dominated, especially within the family. In other words, gender and sexuality subordinated women to men. \(^{141}\) How can Aimée be fitted into one or more of these categories? Perhaps Tong’s categorisation is too narrow in the context of where Aimée can be placed. It is useful here to consider some other feminist exemplars.

Jane Martin discussed the lives of a number of English middle-class women in these years. She argued that a strong feminist agenda was often underpinned by a commitment to doing good. \(^{142}\) Outside Tong’s categories of feminists were those who belonged to the Victoria League, founded in 1901. These were the Edwardian women imperialists—several of whom had visited South Africa during or shortly before the Boer War, a pivotal experience in stimulating these women to active imperialism. They aimed to promote imperial unity and a British South Africa in a variety of suitably ‘womanly’ ways. The League faced questions of authority (how far and in what ways a woman could pronounce on imperial subjects) and of ideology (as expressed through the anti-suffrage campaign). Riedl argued that the Victoria League, ‘by transferring

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\(^{139}\) ‘Annette’, p.93.
\(^{140}\) Diaries, p.15.
August 2007.
areas of activity long acknowledged as ‘feminine’ to the imperial stage, redefined areas of female competence and enlarged woman’s ‘separate sphere’ to include the active propagation of imperialism’.143

The desired goal of feminism in capitalist societies, Rosemary Marangoly wrote, was met in India and in the colonies. She argued that nineteenth and early-twentieth century Englishwomen were seen as being fulfilled through the organisation of housework and home management—valuable national contributions and celebrated as such by Englishwomen (if not universally perhaps by the memsahibs themselves).144 Here perhaps Aimée can be seen to have a place, though there is no evidence of any views she may have had on imperialism, other than her active acceptance of her role as a memsahib.

There is also no evidence at any stage of Aimée’s earlier life as a young, single woman that she expressed her thoughts on feminism, other than her description in her memoir “Annette”, written many years later, that she had announced among her friends her determination to be an independent woman. As it would have been assumed she would have some means of her own, when both her parents had died, she felt she could announce that she was under no obligation to marry, to obtain maintenance and a home.145 The fact that Aimée evidently dropped her opposition to marriage, when confronted by the reality of no career path and no father—and answering to a demanding mother—suggests at that stage of her life that, at most, remaining single as a career woman was nothing more than a nominal feminist, showing off to her friends.

It appears she never investigated the question of women’s suffrage, even if she might have discussed such matters with her peers, while at Bedford College. Certainly, in her middle and later life, she expressed on-going feminist-inclined interest in contemporary events, but she certainly did not fit ‘the feminist pattern’, as a young woman—even if she might have seen herself as one. Indeed, there is no reference to feminism in her memoir ‘Annette’ and in this regard only one note in her much later diaries that she attended a lecture on Feminism.146

143 E.L. Riedi, Imperialist Women in Edwardian Britain: The Victoria League 1899-1914, Ph.D., St. Andrews University, 1998.
146 Diaries, 10 November 1942, p.388.
suggested via a reported visit to Archie in Cambridge that the young Aimée considered herself a feminist.\textsuperscript{147}

What then of the influence of ‘Romance’ and its implications? She later wrote that ‘love and romance were lovely to read about in poems and stories’,\textsuperscript{148} but the demonstrations of affection to be seen between lovers on a Sunday afternoon, in Kensington Gardens, or other public resorts, ‘filled her with the liveliest horror’, as being the extreme of bad taste.\textsuperscript{149} With other unmarried middle-class young women she was ignorant of the ramifications of love and romance. She anticipated fear of the outcome of sexual activity—childbirth.

With her contemporaries, she had no expectations that lovemaking would be enjoyable.\textsuperscript{150} Serious lovemaking and marriage certainly had no attraction for her, especially with Arthur Mayne: ‘he was very matter-of-fact, very argumentative and logical, even gauche’. She later wrote in her memoir:

He seemed quite incapable of those delicate little innuendoes that could have paved the way to a more serious attraction. In his presence she records, she felt very much as she would do in contact with a friendly, interested relative. Arthur gave the impression of being ‘all head and no heart’, the head could express itself very capably but the heart veiled itself behind a shy and awkward manner. She had never been really ‘in love’.\textsuperscript{151}

Here Aimée is referring to several flirtations she had reportedly enjoyed from which ‘she had emerged heart whole, having found some unsatisfactory trait in the would-be lover, before she had gone very far down the path of romance’.\textsuperscript{152} Moreover, it is even possible, though probably unlikely, that Aimée could have absorbed criticisms of marriage and women’s position in it, from reading the feminist novelist Mona Caird who, in 1888, published in the \textit{Westminster Review} one of several essays on why and how contemporary marriage was a failure.\textsuperscript{153}

So much for these firm intentions not to marry: events progressed rapidly. In 1896 she found that her mind was fully occupied with how to handle Arthur: she had to resolve this developing relationship. For his part, Arthur was in dogged pursuit of the woman he loved. Having landed in England in mid-1896 and made contact with the

\textsuperscript{147} Mayne, \textit{An Unreasonable Man}, p.11.
\textsuperscript{148} ‘Annette’, p.9.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid, p.4.
\textsuperscript{151} ‘Annette’, p.9.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid, p.7.
\textsuperscript{153} Hall, \textit{Sex, Gender and Social Change}, p.35.
Barnetts, he had been invited to join Aimée and her mother at Marlow, an historic town situated on the River Thames about thirty miles west of the centre of London, surrounded by countryside. There they escaped the summer heat of the city; they boated and the young people rode bicycles. It is interesting to note in passing that the adoption of the bicycle by upper-middle-class women enabled them to escape any suggestion of chaperonage. New and improved bicycles had appeared in the late 1880s and bicycles gradually became the chief vehicle for ladies paying calls. 154 ‘They would even tuck up their trains and ride out to dinner on them’. 155

Mother and daughter were joined by other friends from London and, according to Aimée’s memoir ‘Annette’, it was two days before Arthur could arrange to be alone with Aimée. In a hard-to-decipher handwritten note entitled ‘The Engagement’ found in her diary for 1897 she described what ensued. They had walked to Quarry Woods on the Sunday, 12 July 1896:

He asked if I shd [sic] ever care for anyone else.
Monday Music and shopping – in morning.
Drive to Beaconsfield & (?) Brou?ham. kissed hard. In evening very cold & to bed early.
A suffered - evening ride to Wycombe & Bourne.
Thursday moonlight stroll down lanes
Friday Day’s excursion to Windsor & Virginia Water. Business talk. 156
Howe in carriage from Maidenhead.
Saturday Days [sic] river excursion to Maidenhead. Lunched big hotel – on river to Bray. M[other]
returned steamer. A & self on talk in road on hate of carriage. Long confab on balcony - tears. 157
July 20th – proposal. Walk to loch with M[other]
Tuesday morning - Singing – accepted [my emphasis]
afternoon – Drive to Maidenhead & Bray – came back arm in arm down hill
evening – Sat on balcony & discussed the strangeness of being engaged…kiss left him happy. 158

In her memoir ‘Annette’, Aimée describes in more detail the actual proposal, the description of which coincides with the note above for Tuesday morning. They cycled to a nearby wood: Aimée wrote that she knew instinctively what was coming, and she now had to make up her mind about Arthur. She claimed that at that stage of the courtship she was still determined not to marry, and that she still preferred a life of

155 Raverat, *Period Piece*, p.86.
156 This presumably refers to Arthur’s financial prospects, prior to his having to explain them to Mrs Barnett.
157 There is no clue as to what upset her.
158 Diaries, p.4.
independence and hard work to sharing her life with anyone and living at his expense. ‘Love and marriage might suit some women, but not her’. However when, on the Monday, Arthur had summoned up the courage to woo her in a manner that struck a romantic chord in her—he actually kissed her and held her close—by the Tuesday, when she found herself listening to his proposal of marriage, rather to her surprise and in spite of her previous thoughts of independence—here was the answer to her lost dreams, ‘to be no longer blown hither and thither by unrealised, thwarted ambitions’.

Perhaps there was a further motivation. Part of Aimée’s agreement to marry Arthur could well have been based on an upper-middle-class notion that the lower classes were polluting the purity of the best British stock by their ‘reckless multiplication’. Moreover, societal expectations were that she had a duty to marry and to bear children. Or maybe she was an example of suffering from ‘the weight of too much liberty’ (she was feeling that a life on her own was a frightening prospect) and she feared that the inevitable outcome of that could be to end up as an ‘Old Maid’—a possible outcome, though Aimée was only twenty-four in 1896. However, Jane Lewis wrote that in 1892 unmarried women aged thirty-five to forty-five ‘in the richer suburbs’ outnumbered unmarried men by over three to one, and only one-third of these were domestic servants. Summing up Aimée’s dilemma, Lewis noted that for all women marriage was seen as preferable to spinsterhood—single women denoted failure, even referred to as ‘failure in business’ in middle-class households. Certainly a majority of spinsters faced an often lonely and marginalised existence in their parents’ homes or in the households of male relatives. Unmarried middle-class women were most affected. If they were unmarried by their late twenties they were unlikely ever to marry. ‘Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries middle-class women faced a choice between marriage and motherhood, and a career’.

Aimée then claimed to recognise that her place was to be at Arthur’s side, his helpful companion in his work. She records herself as saying: ‘I will marry you if you wish’. Arthur was of course overjoyed, quoting poetry to her. It all read very

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160 Ibid. p.13.
164 Ibid.
romantically, but perhaps—as Henrie Mayne concluded—Aimée ‘was not so much in love with Arthur as in love with love’.167

The young couple broke the news to Mrs Barnett of their engagement and asked her for her blessing. It appears that Mrs Barnett had plainly anticipated this event. She was reconciled to Arthur becoming her son-in-law. From a lower-middle-class family he might have been, but he was such ‘a good fellow’, if without charm or romantic appeal. However, his prospects were good and, besides, there were no other immediate suitors for Aimée.168 The mother gave her consent to an engagement. It was significant that Mrs Barnett had been shocked to learn earlier from the lawyer that her deceased husband, Edward Barnett, had not been as well off as she had expected.169 Mrs Barnett had been facing the prospect of having to provide financially, on a limited income, for a disgruntled daughter living at home. Losing her to Arthur outweighed the benefits of Aimée staying to help her mother.

For her part, Aimée later related that she did not feel she could discuss with her mother how she really felt about marrying Arthur, or what her feelings were about marriage in general. Arthur’s devotion was flattering and touching and she was fond of him, but there was a deep concern within her. As discussed earlier, she was fearful of marriage, of what the physical side might entail, and so she voiced a proviso, when she and Arthur were alone: ‘Arthur, you must promise me, that, if I come out to you, we shall live together as brother and sister, after we are married, until I am ready to be your wife.’170

Girls and young women of the middle-class in the Victorian era were kept in ignorance about their sexuality.171 Aimée was no different: indeed, her lack of knowledge of sexual matters was considered correct in girls of her class.172 The reproduction of the animal species was known to her: she had studied biology and was acquainted with the sex organs and reproductive processes of the earthworm, dogfish and frog, as she wrote. However, she had resolutely turned her mind away from any application of this process to sexual love-making between man and woman—whatever that might entail. To connect her love for Arthur, or his for her, with physical sex (or with the reproductive processes of frogs, for that matter) would have seemed

167 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.28.
168 ‘Annette’, p.15.
169 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.28.
171 Dyhouse, Girls Growing up, p. 20.
outrageous to her. Love she understood—a spiritual passion. One fell in love and life was transfigured. 173

Dante had loved Beatrice and yet he never spoke to her all his life, only worshipped from afar when he saw her walk by in the streets of Florence. The poet, Herrick sang of a maiden ‘I only saw her passing by, yet shall I love her till I die’. Romeo and Juliet had died for love, rather than live the one without the other. 174

Aimée’s reading and observation had led her to connect the exhibitions of love to be seen, on the benches and under the trees in Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park, with the possible arrival of unwanted babies, but how this happened she could not imagine. Did babies come from being kissed? Arthur had kissed her and her mother never seemed to fear that she would have a baby…yet kissing in the parks she knew in some vague way could lead to babies. There was their charwoman, who came once a week to the Bayswater house. Aimée had heard her mother commiserate with ‘the poor woman’ on the frequent arrival of babies. She always seemed to be just going to have one, or just had one, and her distorted, ungainly figure and ‘a nasty smell hanging around her’ had given Aimée a peculiar horror of the function of motherhood. Yet motherhood was extolled in poetry and novels, and even though Aimée was no Catholic, she knew from her early school days in France its glorification formed so large a part of the Roman Catholic religion. How could one reconcile the Virgin Mary and the charwoman as types of motherhood? 175

Among her own friends motherhood was hailed with congratulations and much fussing over the new baby. She herself, she wrote, felt no enthusiasm for babies and much preferred kittens or puppies—’but had not Queen Victoria had a large family and been much honoured in consequence?’ Hence motherhood must be correct, for the Queen had been a pattern of correctness. But Aimée was convinced motherhood was not for her: surely this could not be what Arthur was going to do to her, make her a mother? She wrote later that her mind whirled round in confusion and misery. 176

Aimée’s personal experiences were all shaped by the social class into which she had been born—her home environment and the equally limited life-experience of her friends—and this imperfect understanding of what marriage meant was her misfortune and that of countless other young women of the time. Plainly, with the image of her

175 Ibid.
parents’ apparently contented union, and by avoiding the ‘nasty’ physical connotations of sex, Aimée hoped that a companionate marriage awaited her. Even if the nineteenth, rather than the eighteenth or twentieth, century could most accurately be described as the great era of companionate marriages, that was as far as the daughters might speculate about their parents sleeping in double beds—and what took place there would have been unimaginable to them, especially as—rather surprisingly—Theodore Hoppen argued that ‘the majority of [middle-class] married women enjoyed frank and enthusiastic sex lives with their husbands in which present enjoyment mattered more that thoughts of future reproduction’.177

There was nothing in this regard that could be gleaned from her mother, who had attempted to discuss the physical side of marriage with her daughter, but had been cut short by Aimée who later wrote that she had misleadingly reminded her mother that she had been a science student and ‘knew everything’.178 Rash Aimée: she remained possessed by fear—fear of marriage, of sex and of the future. It was not as if her daily experience of life from her two years studying at Bedford College was of any help in this regard. Academia was all Aimée would have associated with Bedford College, as seems clear from the records and history of Bedford College:179 there was no advice—formal or informal—available for students who needed to know about sexual matters. Nor of course was there any expectation that Bedford College would groom Aimée for married life. The college catered for the new status of the would-be professional woman. Young women were being trained for careers in an all-female establishment; the college was possessed of a constitution and trust fund, the conditions of which had been carefully drawn up to ensure female governance and female student rooms deliberately displayed feminine décor, but that was as far as young women’s personal lives were physically enhanced.


178 ‘Annette’, p.25.


180 Dyhouse, No Distinction of Sex?, p.38.

Even in an informal record that exists from the period just prior to when Aimée attended, the emphasis was on ‘the new woman’, with nary a hint of sexual advice. Far from it: it was

a wish to break through from the old-fashioned restrictions with which young ladyhood had been hedged round. Surely the more highly their minds are cultivated, the more just will women’s appreciation of the relative value of things become. Women are becoming truer to themselves, and to others.182

In Herbert Spencer’s misogynistic The Principle of Ethics (1892-1893) he supported the idea of marriage as women’s true vocation, without referring to the sexual expectations of a wife. If Aimée had been looking for ‘marriage guidance’ at Bedford College, it is possible that in her studies of Mental and Moral Science (as Psychology and Ethics were called at that time) for her final B.Sc. exam, at Bedford College she was influenced by reading Spencer’s diatribe against the emerging woman.183

So much for her educational aspirations and lost dreams: at this point we must return to that summer day in Marlow, on Tuesday 14 July 1896, when she set the course for her future life and allowed herself to be wooed: Arthur Mayne had persuaded her that she was best married to him, and so she would not be condemned to stay out her life as that most unenviable of creatures, a stay-at-home unwaged carer for a demanding parent.184

To date therefore Aimée’s expectations and behaviours followed those of her peers: she was just another young middle-class woman of the times, as identified by the historians whose findings have been discussed in this chapter. Howard and Curthoys have provided the most detailed analysis of these women’s expectations, against the background analyses of Vicinus, Gardner and Rubinstein whose detailed commentaries set the scene for the roles and positioning of those such as Aimée Mayne at that period of late nineteenth-century history.

She could have anticipated nothing accurately of the life that awaited her, as she prepared to leave England for India, to marry a man she had only previously recognised as a family friend, to a country of which she knew only from her parents’ reminiscences-laden accounts of life in the prosperous commercial surrounds of just one small area of India, Madras. Of Arthur’s life in the wilds of the Central Provinces

183 Previously quoted as cited in Twells, British Women, p.16.
she would have visualized very little which, at that stage of her young, protected life, was just as well.
The year 1896 had marked a real change in Aimée’s life and expectations. Because of the momentous decision she had made to marry Arthur, she had to reconcile the excitement of being an engaged woman (to a man she knew only from his occasional visits to her home) with the dreads she harboured about marriage—and with the prospect of living in a strange country. Because her life in the twentieth-century was greatly affected by the decisions she made in 1896, her preparations for marriage and the long voyage to India deserve a detailed coverage of the events that were to transport her both physically and mentally into a new existence. First though, her experiences as an affianced young woman preparing for India would have been typical of the period: the announcement of the engagement, the congratulations of her friends, packing for the voyage. What Aimée could not have anticipated was the pressure to conform to ‘the imperial pageant’ that awaited her.185 What now follows is taken principally from Aimée’s memoir ‘Annette’, written years after this period and Aimée’s reminiscences have to be taken for what they are: memories only, and selective at that.

Now that her daughter was successfully affianced, Mrs Barnett turned her attention to her prospective son-in-law. She was anxious to question Arthur as to his financial situation and he tried to reassure her as to his economic position. He confirmed that he had a mother and sister to support, but that his financial prospects in the Indian Civil Service (ICS) were excellent. Moreover, he had taken out insurance on his life so that his dependants would remain provided for. His salary in 1896 was £800 a year, equivalent to just over £80,000 today.186 Mrs Barnett could check this from the Government of India’s ‘Civil List’—detailing all members of the ICS with their emoluments—and he expected an increase in salary each time he was promoted; he confidently looked forward to his salary to be soon increased by £1,000, then £1,500 and then £2,000. He considered that Aimée’s future was well assured; he had ample to support a wife in comfort and, should he die, she would receive £350 a year pension for life. Mrs Barnett was somewhat reassured: for her part she would make Aimée a dress

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allowance; moreover, on her death, her daughter would receive a one-third share of her estate.\footnote{Arthur’s annual salary in the ICS, included an allowance for acting as Commissioner of Excise, as well as his substantive role as Assistant Commissioner and Settlement Officer, \textit{History of Services}. ‘Annette’, p.17.}

Aimée later recalled that Mrs Barnett made her requirement known: when Arthur married Aimée he must be totally debt-free. Arthur’s obligations to his bride must be in the form of a fixed sum, so Aimée knew just where she stood; she had to know that money saved was towards maintaining her. Arthur did his best to reassure her accordingly. Mrs Barnett still had some qualms about Arthur’s financial situation. She had heard from her son Archie how impecunious Arthur had been at Cambridge and how impulsively generous he had also been—he had held breakfast parties and he had bought a piano. Surely there were debts? Arthur assured her that he was solvent. Mrs Barnett was still to be convinced: she had a horror of debt. The Victorian middle class was accustomed to regarding poverty as the fault of the individual and as a result of the failure to adhere faithfully to the thrift ethic. Its emphasis on individualism, on privacy in the home and self-help, precluded any appeal to public assistance, even if the government had been willing to help.\footnote{Cynthia Curran, ‘Private Women, Public Needs: Middle-Class Widows in Victorian England’, \textit{Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies}, vol.25, no.2 Summer, 1993, pp.217-236.}

This was the period when marriage was gradually transformed from being partly a property contract to a concentration on consumption and companionship. It was becoming more important for married women, as primary consumers, to be able to contract debt—and to be aware of their husbands’ liabilities in this regard. The Married Women’s Property Acts of the 1870s and 1880s allowed women to keep control of their income, so satisfying creditors, although most measures of reform retained the basic family form of male control and protection.\footnote{Leonore Davidoff, ‘The Family in Britain’, \textit{The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950}, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.99.}

Notwithstanding Arthur’s assurances, according to Aimée, Mrs Barnett felt that if the engagement lasted a year while she travelled with Aimée, Arthur would have time to pay off any debts he owed. This was not at all to his liking. He proposed that Aimée and her mother should journey to India and the wedding could take place in November the same year. Initially however Mrs Barnett would not hear of an early wedding—nor would she travel with Aimée to India; she felt that the young couple should be on their own when they married. Mrs Barnett’s adamant refusal to accompany her daughter suggests she did not want to be associated with the young couple’s lonely wedding in
Bombay, or maybe she was unwilling to face the rigours of travelling in India until her daughter and Arthur were settled.

Arthur was aghast at Mrs Barnett’s intransigence; it would be eighteen months before they married, as Aimée could not arrive in India during—and become accustomed to—the hot weather. She might even change her mind about marrying him over such an extended period. He pleaded with the older woman, even suggesting a special licence to marry before he returned to India, but Mrs Barnett was insistent on a church wedding. Eventually she grudgingly agreed that Aimée would travel to India later that year—1896—and that they could marry on Aimée’s arrival in Bombay.190

Mrs Barnett had remembered with fondness her own life in India: she had reminisced of her life in Madras, of her bungalow at Canoor, away from the heat of Madras; she recalled the munificent entertainment offered by the Rajahs—she also recalled the busy entertainment schedule she undertook and the problems she faced with who sat next to whom at dinner and the snobbery engendered by the system. Where one was placed at a formal dinner party was ultimately decided by ‘The Warrant of Precedence’ which epitomised an intensely hierarchical society. David Cannadine recorded that in 1881 protocol decreed that within the seventy-seven ranks of Indian Government service it was essential, for example, that the government astronomer in Madras be listed as being of higher standing than the superintendent of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Calcutta.191

Mrs Barnett had memories of how some of the senior expatriate Indian Civil Service (ICS) wives in Madras had behaved towards her and others in the Public Works Department and in ‘Trade’ (even though her husband became a prosperous contractor after leaving the PWD, to become one of what was pejoratively known as the ‘Boxwallahs’192). Arthur by contrast belonged to a Service whose members were known as ‘the Heaven-born’.193 Aimée related that her father for his part could not be bothered with ‘all this damned rubbish though he enjoyed the pig-sticking and the shooting of tiger and panther’.194 Aimée wrote that Arthur had sat silent. He would have known that the existence to which he was taking her, as the bride of a lowly

190 ‘Annette’, p.18.
191 David Cannadine, Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, ‘its whole diverse social hierarchy unified, ranked, ordered, layered, and arranged’, p.120.
194 ‘Annette’, p.15.
Settlement Officer coping with the privations of famine in the Central Provinces’ remote district of Balaghat (almost in the geographical centre of India) was very different from the life in a headquarters centre like Madras, but he was afraid to disillusion her. Aimée, sensing his constraint, recorded that she asked him what she would find to do in India. Arthur did his best to speak positively about her future life; she would learn Hindustani and entertain their colleagues as the senior wife on-station. Both women seemed reassured.

Arthur was due to return to India within two months. Now there was the all-important business of their choosing an engagement ring together and then for Aimée to be introduced to Arthur’s family. The ring was to be selected at Spinks’, at that time a jeweller in Cheapside. At Paddington Station they were met by a friend of Arthur’s who was knowledgeable about jewellery and Aimée, displaying her class-consciousness, noted he had a pronounced Cockney accent. It was a shock to her that any friend of Arthur’s should speak so, but she liked the friend’s enthusiasm and evident admiration of her. Aimée settled on a magnificent three-stone diamond ring. ‘Her heart swelled with pride as she wore the exquisite thing’. None of her girl friends, who had become engaged, had been given so lovely a ring. It was really more than Arthur could afford. Mrs Barnett was impressed.

Shortly after, Arthur arranged for his fiancée’s introduction to his mother. This meeting was to be a shock to Aimée, not helped by the rail journeys from Marlow to the centre of London, then to 56 Ashbourn Grove, East Dulwich, many miles from the centre of London, and ‘a terrible place to get transport to travel anywhere’. Aimée was taken to what she remembered as being a house in a very ordinary row, where the neighbours were evidently ‘clerks or business people in a small way’. East Dulwich was a new outer-suburb of London, with many of the local facilities, such as the public baths, a library and a fire station only established in the 1890s. Ashbourn Grove (now ‘Ashbourne’) has since somewhat come up in the world, but today’s row of interlocked dwellings still does not compare in style and grandeur with St. Petersburg Place in Bayswater.

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195 History of Services.
196 Aimée was to read up on India: she recorded including Dupleye & Cine’s History of India among the books she took to India with her. Diaries, p.5.
197 ‘Annette’, p.16.
198 History of Services.
199 ‘Annette’, p.9. Spinks is now renowned for coins and for other similar collections.
200 Being worn today by Aimée’s oldest great-granddaughter-in-law.
201 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.29.
202 Beasley, East Dulwich, p.118.
Mrs Mayne opened the door herself and gave them a warm welcome. Aimée has provided a vivid description of what ensued and how the over-familiarity of her mother-in-law-to-be repelled her, as did the invitation to kiss Arthur’s young sister Katie. Aimée recorded that she tried to appear friendly and affectionate, but in her mind she had rejoiced that marriage would take her far away from this family. Arthur however seemed quite unaware of the impression his mother and sister were likely to make on his fiancée, although, Aimée wrote, ‘he looked uncomfortable when his mother enlarged on what a good son he had been and that she did not know what she would have done without him’. Arthur’s discomfort was understandable at this reference to the generous financial support of his mother and sister (his brothers were by then earning for themselves).203

Aimée related that Mrs Mayne held forth interminably on the poor state of her digestion. The elaborate afternoon tea came as a relief to the visitors—it broke the monologue. Arthur seized the opportunity to praise his mother’s cooking and Aimée ate far more than she wanted, ‘to do justice to the trouble taken on her behalf’. Then Mrs Mayne caught sight of the engagement ring. She had to examine it and she embarrassed the young couple by asking what it had cost. Arthur hastily changed the subject and suggested that Katie might like a necklace from Bombay: would she prefer yellow topazes or purple amethysts? Her mother brushed this aside and lamented that as Arthur was going to be married this would put paid to Mrs Mayne’s plans for Katie to join her brother in India, to keep house for him. That made Aimée feel even more ill-at-ease; it was a relief for both Arthur and his fiancée to leave, to catch the 6.15 p.m. train back to London and on to Marlow.204

Aimée wrote that Arthur’s pleasant speaking voice and educated diction had given no hint of Mrs Mayne’s ‘common whining nasal accent’ that, together with the over-friendly familiarity of her future mother-in-law, upset Aimée. It was now clear to her why Arthur was shy and withdrawn in company. She rationalised that he had probably never met a ‘lady’ until he had met Aimée—not even at Cambridge where his social life had been mainly confined to the company of fellow male undergraduates. It was to his credit that he had been a scholarship-winner since school, always making his way with little money other than what he had gained from these. His family had been too poor and the widowed mother too hard-driven, with constantly bearing children and running a household for five growing children, to have any time for social life, or for

203 ‘Annette’, p.22.
204 Ibid.
the tenderness and affection that were the lot of children in more refined and leisured homes.\textsuperscript{205}

It was quite impossible for Aimée to tell Arthur what a shock his mother had been to her. Now she felt she began to understand that curious lack of ability to express emotion that had puzzled her in Arthur. She would like to have talked the matter out freely, but an invisible barrier arose when she thought to broach the subject of class distinctions. Arthur seemed unaware of any himself, so she said nothing.\textsuperscript{206} All of Aimée’s strong sense of superiority came welling up...memories of the Admiral’s lady—Aimée’s aunt, the overpowering Aunt Myra from her schooldays—would probably have dominated her thoughts.

On their return to the hotel in Marlow, Aimée related that she ran to her mother’s room where she burst into tears. Her mother was perturbed: had she had words with Arthur? It was not that. Aimée composed herself. She confessed that she was appalled by Arthur’s mother:

‘Mrs Mayne is not a lady, she is what is known as lower-middle-class. I am sure she is good and has worked hard in difficult circumstances to make a home and bring up her children, but she is a common woman. We could not possibly ask her to meet our relations. I should feel so ashamed. Arthur is not a bit like her in speech, in style, or in mentality. I could introduce him anywhere. I have no illusions about his being handsome or distinguished, but he is a gentleman’.\textsuperscript{207}

Aimée was exposed for what she was: a product of her upper-middle-class background. She relates that her mother sat silent for a time and then took her daughter’s hand:

‘What you have told me reconciles me to your going out to Bombay to marry him. A wedding from your own home would mean inviting his family and now that can be avoided without hurting anyone’s feelings’.\textsuperscript{208}

Mrs Barnett was a practical and class-conscious creature of her times.

Thankfully for all concerned, the return visit to the Barnetts by Mrs Mayne and her daughter seems to have proceeded without incident. Mrs Barnett would have been well prepared for the encounter and enough of a gracious hostess to make Mrs Mayne feel welcome. ‘It had all been very friendly,’ commented Aimée and thereafter the three remaining weeks of Arthur’s leave passed quickly. On her engagement being known,

\textsuperscript{205} Ibid, p.20.  
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid, p.21.  
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid, p.22.  
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid.
letters of congratulations were coming in, with invitations to bring her fiancé to meet her family and friends. Archie from Spain was delighted with the news. He wrote that Arthur was one of his oldest friends. ‘A real straight chap and the best brain of his year at Emmanuel College.’

Following on the meeting between the two mothers, it was decided that the breezy east coast of England was the best location to weather a hot August. Mrs Barnett took rooms at Felixstowe in Suffolk and Arthur spent as long as he could with them, passing the time bathing, sailing, walking on the cliffs and on excursions. It should have been an ideal period for the two young people to come to know each other. Arthur was at all times kind and attentive, but Aimée wrote she was puzzled that he seemed to be ‘two Arthurs’—the one outwardly loving and subject to her every whim, and the other a controlled impersonal being, uneasy in public, who seemed to function in his own world. It was hard for Aimée to relate one to the other. She recalled that she felt she loved the former personality and was indifferent to the other.

Arthur’s time with her in England was now up and he had to return to India, having arrived in early July on his three months’ leave. There were only about two months left before Aimée herself was to sail. It was now his last day at Felixstowe. Mrs Barnett had retired to her bedroom to leave the sitting room free for the young people to say goodbye. He was catching an early train to London next day. Aimée recounted that she sat on the sofa, tired after a long day in the fresh air; Arthur sat beside her, his arm around her. She recorded later:

He was now the lover not the cold, awkward, nervous person, and his ardour showed as he strained her to him. She was frightened. ‘Don’t, don’t! What are you doing to me? - Arthur, you must promise me, that, if I come out to you, we shall live together as brother and sister, after we are married, until I am ready to be your wife.’

Arthur promised. He caught the train to London and sailed from London the next day for India by the P&O line, the standard means of travelling to and from India, the Far East and Australia.

By the time that Arthur and later Aimée travelled, P&O and its predecessor, the Peninsular Steam Navigation Company, had been operating for some sixty years. The initial contract had been to convey mails between Vigo and Gibraltar in 1837;

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209 Ibid.
212 Ibid, p.23.
commissions to carry mails to Egypt and India followed and by 1851 there were contracts to ship mails to/from Singapore, China and Australia. All these early ships were fully rigged and were of wooden or iron construction, with steam engines, as they became available. P&O had expanded markedly in the twenty years before Aimée was due to sail. In 1878 the 4,000 ton *Kaisar-al-Hind* went into service, nick-named ‘the bridge to India’. Later smaller ships for the Bombay run, known as ‘the Pretty Sisters’— the *Peninsular* and the *Oriental*—were luxuriously fitted out with a standard of accommodation seldom enjoyed by the passengers ashore; this was the height of the era of opulence afloat. They carried 180 First-Class passengers, 32 Second-Class. Their accommodation is described as ‘light and airy after the ideas of Ruskin as interpreted by Calcutt’ and a full description is warranted, to provide an impression of the luxury. The music room was paneled in oak with Tynecastle tapestry wall hangings relieved by stained-glass windows, their curtains of claret and gold silk hanging from silver mounts; the sofas and settees were upholstered in broche silk velvet and the floor covered with an Axminster carpet ‘of the finest texture and subdued colouring’. The saloon below was decorated with a paneled oak dado some four and a half feet high above which hung another Tynecastle tapestry with a grey ground embossed in gold. The dining chairs were upholstered in frieze velvet, as were sofas and lounges at the entrance. The smoking room was right aft, again panelled in oak surmounted by mural decorations between large windows; the tops of the table were in marble. The cabins were furnished with folding spring beds, the patent folding washbasin stands, a whatnot, a chest of drawers, mirror, and hat and boot racks.

By the 1890s the ships were capable of 18 knots, so the voyage time was cut by half. As compared with twenty years earlier all the way by sea to Bombay now took just over three weeks, fourteen days if part of the journey by passengers was overland to board the vessel in Marseilles. The mail steamers left the Royal Albert Docks, London every Thursday at noon, one week for Bombay, the next for Sydney, throughout the year.

216 Ibid, p.57.
Aimée was booked to depart on the SS *Peninsular*, sailing on the 29th October 1896 out of Tilbury, London. Miss Barnett appeared third from the bottom of the list of fifty-four First-Class passengers—all described as ‘Ladies & Gentlemen’—so it is apparent that her booking was a late one, perhaps even suggesting that she hesitated to the last about her decision. However, the more likely reason is that most of the other passengers were probably returning from furlough and would have booked their return passages many months before.

‘Broke up home at St Petersburg Place’, wrote Aimée in a note. Mrs Barnett had decided to sell their house, now that her daughter was leaving; she looked forward to staying with Archie in Spain, where he was on his engineering contract, and to keeping house for her son. She was later to relocate to a smaller residence at 89 Hereford Road, Paddington. Archie was to join her there for a period. Aimée’s trousseau and possessions, including her wedding presents had been packed and sent to the P&O Office to be put on board the *Peninsular*; only her hand luggage remained with her. Aunt Mary arrived from Cheltenham to speed her niece on her way and to keep her sister company, for the few days before Mrs Barnett left to join Archie in Spain for the winter.

The next stage in Aimée’s life was a mixture of great anxiety and excitement for her, with an initial strong element of farce, if her account in ‘Annette’ is to be believed, but it is written with such a tone of verisimilitude that it is difficult to imagine that she invented the scenario. She missed the boat train: not the disaster as it appeared to her at the time. She could have travelled though France and caught the *Peninsular* from Marseilles. As it happened however, her departure from England was apparently a dramatic one.

Aimée wrote that her apprehension about what awaited her was not alleviated by Aunt Mary hoping her niece would meet many nice missionaries in India. It was also Aunt Mary who had suggested an hour was sufficient from Bayswater to Liverpool Street Station, deep in the East End of London (with the City of London to navigate) in an ancient four-wheeler cab drawn by an elderly horse that trotted sedately down Westbourne Grove, Edgware Road and Oxford Street. Aimée recorded that their passage was more like a funeral than a marriage, ‘rumbling through the deserted

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218 Diaries, p.4.
London streets in the early morning. Then the driver found the road was under repair and by the time he chose an alternative route, they arrived at Liverpool Street to see the boat-train pulling out. Aimée burst into tears. Aunt Mary was fluttering round, wringing her hands and praying, ‘Help us Good Lord, of thy mercy help us!’

It was however the Station Master, rather than direct Divine Intervention, who came to the rescue. He advised Aimée to go to the nearby Fenchurch Street Station, take the 9.15 a.m. fast train to Tilbury and try to board the Peninsular in mid-stream, as she steamed down the Thames: he would telegraph the Peninsular to expect her and there would be a boatman to row out to the moving ship. Mrs Barnett accompanied her daughter, leaving Aunt Mary sobbing prayers behind them. The Station Master at Tilbury met them. Because of mist on the river, they could not initially recognise the black-and-yellow colours of the Peninsular among the various ships throbbing past. A boatman immediately took her bag and they sat in the boat whilst the man pulled out into the current. A huge shape loomed up out of the mist—it was the Peninsular.

There is a photograph of Aimée taken some three years before the time she was affianced, stiffly corseted and bustled, and it was the height of daring to attempt to board a large ship on the move—but she managed it. She wrote that the dark mass bore down on them. For one terrifying moment it seemed as if their boat must be swamped. The boatman shipped his oars, and caught at a rope that hung over the side. He made it fast and they were pulled along to the steps let down at the side of the steamer. Aimée sprang on to the little platform at the bottom of the steps; her bag was thrown after her and caught by a sailor who was waiting to receive her. The boat with Mrs Barnett and the boatman disappeared into the river mist. For the rest of the voyage she was teased as ‘the Bride who tried to stop the Mail.’

It was fortunate for her that as the ship was less than one-third full in First-Class. Aimée had a large cabin to herself. She wrote that she suffered the agonies of seasickness in the Bay of Biscay, but she revived in the calm Mediterranean to enjoy the delights of life aboard an ocean liner. Once she had gained her ‘sea-legs’ she found she was placed at the Captain’s table, along with another young woman—one of the six single women listed on the Passenger Manifest—and two elderly couples. The other

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221 Ibid.
222 Ibid.
223 See p.v.
224 ‘Annette’, p.27.
225 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.32.
226 Passenger List SS Peninsular.
young woman was also en route to India for her wedding, having been engaged for six years to a businessman in Madras who could now afford to marry.227

At Gibraltar there was a letter from Arthur. According to Aimée, he wrote subsequently to every port of call and it enhanced her growing feelings of affection for her fiancé. This was a loving first letter to chase away any misgivings that still lingered, about coming out to him, and he jokingly warned her against the blandishments of the ship’s officers. At Marseilles there was news from her mother, telling of her return to London after the excitements and fears at Tilbury, and of her mother’s preparations for the departure for Spain. Aimée’s relations and friends, Mrs Barnett wrote, had been thrilled to hear how she caught the boat and all wished her luck. By now it all seemed very distant and she became immersed in the pleasures that life at sea had to offer.228

Travel by sea had become a grand series of events—deck games, chess, cards, dances, concerts, theatricacls. There is no comprehensive description of how Aimée was involved; her first diary was not started until the end of 1896. However, there are P&O records of typical entertainments afloat: one of them actually dating from 1896 in which the ship’s newspaper, The Himalaya Observer, reported in some details on the concerts, presaging the reports with a comment, ‘…perhaps the most interesting of all, fair maidens speeding at the call of love, braving even the blastful [sic] Bay of Biscay, to be led as blushing brides to the altar under the burning sun of India.’229 Aimée and her fellow bride were perhaps unusual: many were unaccompanied young women who came to India looking for husbands. The ‘fishing fleet’, as it was known unkindly but accurately, by the nineteenth-century, [usually] arrived in India in the autumn at the start of the cold weather.230

The following extract presents an interesting insight into the contemporary songs and ballads of the 1890s. The middle-class then was expected to be able to sing, recite and dance:

The night was warm so the piano was taken on deck and awnings were arranged to make the best of the singing. Mr Rooney opened with a violin selection…then Mr Poutney rendered ‘My Sweetheart when a Boy’ and Miss Vivian ‘The Daily Question’. Mr Whittaker followed with a recitation capitally rendered ‘In the Engine Shed.’ That fine song ‘The Mighty Deep’ was rendered by Mr Hosking; Miss Davis played ‘Danse les Bois’ as a piano

228 Ibid.
selection, and Dr Smith’s burly voice rolled out ‘Father O’Flynn’. Four little maids then concluded the first part by ‘I don’t want to play in your yard’. After a brief interval Mr Hosking sang ‘Simon the Cellarer’ and encored the last verse. A recitation, ‘The Elf Child’ by little Miss May Longmore was followed by ‘The Death of Nelson’ by Mr Whittaker who had to respond to an imperative encore, and rendered, “Tis but a little faded flower”…’

There was also a reminder of contemporary reactionary attitudes:

On Monday evening passengers were treated to a debate on ‘Should the Franchise be extended to Women’…After a fairly good and interesting debate a show of hands resulted in favour of the negative.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to ascertain when the Peninsular tied up, off Bombay. Moreover, the account in ‘Annette’ has truncated the period Aimée spent there. Assuming that the P&O schedule of three weeks from London to Bombay held true—and it would only be extremes of weather that would prevent their ships from keeping to schedule—the Peninsular would have dropped her anchor on or about the 21st November 1896. Her actual arrival in Bombay—based on the sailing time between London and Bombay—makes it clear, by contrast with her account in ‘Annette’, that between the Peninsular’s arrival and their wedding, Aimée and Arthur spent over a month in Bombay before they married.

A fellow-traveller to Bombay on the India in 1896, Fred Reynolds, has left a good account of his first impressions of the city and its environs:

There is little in the first view of Bombay to suggest it claims to be the second city in the British Empire but its population of over 800,000 fairly establishes that position. Originally it was one of a cluster of islands which have now been artificially connected…the bay thus created makes one of the finest harbours in the world. Our vessel steamed by the lighthouse and a little later the white buildings of the city can be seen dazzling in the reflected sunlight. The India anchored about a mile out, surrounded by a fleet of craft of every description. The mails had to be landed first…chaos on the dock. It was weeks before I got my belongings…Life in an Indian

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232 Ibid, p.64.
233 The records of the Times of India, the publication with its predecessor that recorded ships’ arrivals and sailing into/out of Bombay, no longer exist in Australia and are unavailable on-line. March 2012. The Classified Advertising section of The Times, London, 29 October 1896, actually gives the anticipated arrival of the Peninsular off Bombay as 23 November 1896. The Times, p.2, Issue 35034.
city is as complete a change as it is possible to conceive. The fogs and cold rains of an English November are substituted by never-failing sunshine during the day and gloriously clear nights. True, with a shade temperature between 90 and 100 and a humid, sticky atmosphere, the advantage is not all on one side, especially taking into account the smells, the mosquitoes and the ghari-wallahs. Still, punkahs, ice fans, sun awnings, sola toppees, thin clothing, with unlimited and untiring servants, combined to make life livable, although in many cases also liverable. [sic]

Arthur was there, on the jetty, to greet her from the tender. Aimée has recorded how she was dressed as she stepped on Indian soil for the first time. ‘[A] white tailored coat and skirt, her best hat, a white felt with a long ostrich plume drooping over her hair, white shoes, stockings and gloves. Not only was she overdressed for the climate— Mumbai’s (Bombay) heat and humidity lingers until much later in the year—but, as she wrote, Arthur’s welcome consisting of a limp handshake was an inauspicious start to her life in India.

They were based at Watson’s Hotel, the establishment where most people in the Indian Civil Service stayed on arrival in or departure from Bombay. Built in 1871, the hotel was once a majestic building, of a construction ahead of its time, which served as the grandest hotel in Bombay. Noted for its external cast-iron frame, fabricated in England then shipped to India, the 98 x 30ft. atrium served as a home-from-home for European guests. Designed by Rowland Mason Ordish, who is known for his detailed work on the single-span roof of St Pancras Station, the hotel was named for its original owner, John Watson. It was the height of colonial opulence. At its peak, the hotel had a strict ‘whites-only’ policy, employing English waitresses in its lavish bars and restaurant.

The exclusive hotel’s ‘Europeans only’ policy eventually led to its demise. In 1871, Jamsetji Tata, a pioneering industrialist from Gujarat, had allegedly been refused entry to Watson’s one evening. Humiliated by the racist snub, Tata built the Taj Mahal Hotel down the road that remains an icon of modern India and one of the best hotels in the world. The same cannot be said for Watson’s. The hotel fell into decline and is now rented out as office space; its rabbit-warren of improvised offices, trailing

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236 Ibid, p.31.
electrical wiring and collapsed ceilings gives no hint of its grandeur when Aimée and Arthur stayed in 1896.

Aimée has recorded though that they were shown to what Arthur called their suite, which seemed to her very bare.

There was an ante-room with a table and four chairs and a piano, beyond which was an exceedingly large bare lofty room containing a double bed swathed in mosquito netting, more chairs and tables a dressing table and a cupboard. There were no curtains on the windows, only blinds made of strips of wood that kept out the glare. The windows gave out on to a wide verandah with more tables, and chairs with peculiarly long arms. The floor was covered with matting, two dressing rooms and two bathrooms led out of the bedroom.238

As earlier related, Aimée had plainly foreshortened the time she and Arthur spent in Bombay—presumably to emphasise the drama of what she might coyly have referred to as her ‘deflowerment’ after their wedding on 28 December 1896. An entry at the start of her 1897 diary does indicate a gap between the wedding and their departure for Nagpur on 31 December 1896.239 A number of questions arise therefore as to their domestic and social arrangements in Bombay during their stay: did they share the suite before they were married? Did they share a bed? Did they stay with friends? Both the latter courses of action, particularly the second, seem unlikely: Arthur could have had a separate bed in his dressing room. While there is reference to a ‘Mr and Mrs Farmer’ (an assumed name, presumably, as with most names in ‘Annette’) putting her up if the Peninsular arrived late,240 there is no suggestion that friends accommodated them both as an affianced couple. Most likely Arthur had a separate hotel room until the marriage.

There was some social contact and an excursion or two: Aimée recorded that Arthur took her ‘for drinks at the Yacht Club’ and for a drive ‘round Back Bay, up the Malabar Hill, the Towers of Silence where the Parsees expose their dead and the vultures circle.’241 In addition, at the front of her first diary, 1897, Aimée noted on the wedding day and thereafter:

238 ‘Annette’, p.32.
239 Diaries, p.6.
240 ‘Annette’, p.30
241 Ibid, p.33. They still do: the depleted numbers of vultures circle in the evening air. Their numbers have been much reduced through industrial poisoning.
December 1996 – shopping – sight-seeing – rested
28 Chapmans, Chuckber Vutty & Mr Barham clergyman to tea – met Mrs Sinclair (Miss Harvey) tea at Yacht Club
3 Shopping - dined at Mrs Barhams

Aimée and Arthur were married on the 28th December 1896: ‘MAYNE-BARNETT – Dec 28, at the Cathedral Bombay, Arthur Mayne I.C.S., to Emily Bonnycastle (Aimée) only daughter of the late E. W. Barnett, C.E., F.R.G.S’. Her account of the ceremony itself is depressing—apparently with very few guests, and of course no family: Arthur presented her with a bouquet of flowers…She felt like someone in a dream, she had difficulty in answering the responses. He too was nervous and ill at ease. He had wanted a secular marriage, as he had long since lost his faith in organised religion. But Mrs Barnett, though not a devout member of the Church, had asked for a marriage in a church. She had some superstitious feeling that without the Church’s blessing a marriage would not be complete. As they turned to walk up the aisle, the organ pealed out the wedding march from Lohengrin. This was a pleasant thought of Arthur’s, arranged with the church organist. The march was a favourite with Aimée and immediately the gloom of the service in the empty church was dispelled.

Back at Watson’s Hotel that evening, Aimée had to confront the physical expectations of her as a bride. Understandably, given her fear of the act itself and of conception, she was very apprehensive. According to her later memoir ‘Annette’, Arthur had tried to reassure her, about avoiding conception, by presenting her with a ‘most expensive vaginal douche, for his wife’s use after sex union’. Aimée wrote of her feelings of revulsion and how she hid the wooden box under her underclothes, so that the maid Arthur had hired did not come across it. Then, he lay down beside [her] and taking her in his arms, pressed his body close to hers. She was unresisting and in spite of the terror and pain, caused by the

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242 Diaries.p.1. Miss’ is generally written at this stage of her life in the old-fashioned style as ‘Mfs’.
244 Ibid. Note pasted into front of her Diary for 1897. The newspaper extract does not record from which English newspaper. A later note in her handwriting states the date as being 27 December 1896 but this is plainly an error.
245 Confusingly, there are now two Anglican cathedrals in Mumbai (Bombay)—St John’s and St Thomas’s. The former’s records are legible but there is no reference to the marriage. The records of St Thomas’s are in complete disarray, so unsearchable. It must be therefore concluded that the marriage took place at St. Thomas’s which is a much older church dating from East India Company days, with wall plaques commemorating earlier administrators.
246 ‘Annette’, p.33.
act, yielded her body to the union of sex. When it was over she lay very quiet, the tears streaming from her eyes. 247

It is clear from Aimée’s memoir that this was the first sexual encounter for Arthur too and she recorded that he then promised he would not approach her again until she asked him to. 248 According to Aimée he kept to his word for over two years. 249 Not that Aimée’s first experience differed so much from that of other young brides in India. Margaret MacMillan recorded the wedding-night experiences of two women: Margaret Smith was appalled at her first encounter with sex: ‘Is it for this that girls are given wedding presents and congratulations, actually congratulations!’ Flora Annie Steel was ‘transported by sheer curiosity…I simply stared.’ 250

Arthur was now obliged to return to his district, Balaghat immediately, via the headquarters of the Central Provinces, Nagpur, foregoing a honeymoon. It is clear, both from Aimée’s account in ‘Annette’ and from official records that famine was raging in the Balaghat area. This was the terrible aftermath of the major countrywide catastrophe of 1896–7, ‘three consecutive years of devastating rains, plant rust, caterpillar plagues and black blight that preceded the drought’. 251 In Balaghat, in 1896, against a ‘normal’ death-rate of 21 to 33 persons per mile, there were over 50 people per mile dying; in 1897 it was to be over 95 persons. 252 Arthur had qualified for his role as Settlement Officer in Balaghat, to help deal with the famine, by passing a qualifying course on 26th February 1895. 253

Aimée now had to face up to an unknown future as, on the evening of the 31st December 1896, she sat in her roomy railway carriage that conveyed the couple from Bombay to Nagpur on a lengthy train journey. The British privately-built railway had been operating since 1867 and had been converted to broad gauge in 1881. Aimée and Arthur embarked from the (still) magnificent Victoria terminus in Bombay, built in 1888 and modeled on St Pancras Station, London and reminiscent of a cathedral. Their first-class compartment was luxurious by present-day standards, with dressing-room attached and (probably) electrically-powered lamps. 254

247 Ibid, p.35.
253 History of Services.
254 In the late 1890s lighting in passenger coaches had been introduced. (In third class, where the maid and Arthur’s factotum travelled, there were gas or oil lamps). Institute for Historical Research,
Still to experience the famine area, Aimée later wrote that she
watched the landscape slip by. Field after field of vivid young green corn,
varied with occasional olive green patches of gram [chick pea] growing
close to the earth and graceful as a maidenhair fern, now and then a patch of
blue linseed or yellow mustard. They passed villages, of poor little one-
storied houses built of wattle and daub with thatched roofs. Most of them
had a small white temple shining in the sunshine. Some had a grove of trees
on the outskirts, and occasionally a group of date palms reared their feathery
crowns into the air. Small naked brown imps brandishing big sticks were
driving forth the village cattle and fierce looking buffaloes, to pasture in the
wastelands.255

The view has not much changed, except that nearer Nagpur industrialisation has
advanced over the countryside and cotton is extensively grown. The thatched roofs,
usually of rice straw, have generally been replaced by red clay tiles.

Aimée was about to commence her new life in earnest. Her experiences again
mirror those of other young women of her class in this period, especially in the realm
of sex.256 Other than the dramatic nature of her departure from London, the voyage to
Bombay matches De Courcy’s descriptions of other young middle-class women
departing for a new life in India. Likewise her arrival in Bombay was typical of the
experiences of other young women of the period.257

§

2009.

255 Annette, p.37.

256 ‘With pre-marital chastity demanded absolutely of middle-class women the Victorian wedding night,
a supercharged transition from innocence to experience, could hardly have been easy, may well
have been a barbaric trial for at least one, ad sometimes for both, of the newly married pair.’

257 Although the conditions on-board depended very much on the class of accommodation. See de
Courcy The Fishing Fleet, pp.22-26, and for a description of the arrival in Bombay, pp.72-73.
Aimée’s bridegroom Arthur was a member of a prestigious administrative structure, the Indian Civil Service, the ICS, which he had joined in 1890. Radhika Mohanran noted that ‘India became a laboratory for the creation of the liberal administrative state’. The ICS was its mentor. In 1901, when Queen Victoria died, the ICS numbered just over a thousand, of whom a fifth were at any time either sick or on leave. They administered a population of nearly 300 million people throughout the sub-continent. Arthur Mayne had been recruited into an élite organization of men with a history that dated back to the days of the East India Company, whose preoccupations as the first British rulers were to be content with controlling the population, exploiting their resources and trade, and thereby reinforcing the British sense of ownership. E.M. Collingham pointed out that these early British representatives drew on Indians’ own foundation story to do it. India was revealed to have had an ancient past as rich as Rome: the British looked to Orientalist scholarship to provide a moral justification and a high-minded purpose for takeover and rule. The British argued that their role was to rediscover India’s ancient laws and traditions, which had fallen into decay under Mogul rule, and to reimpose them on India. They would do it, not as alien outsiders but by adopting the guise of Indian nobility and using Indian forms and means of communication, albeit reinforced with reminders of British rituals.

This imperial rationale was gradually replaced during the nineteenth-century by an attempt to impose modern British values and institutions onto an Indian society increasingly regarded as barbaric. British control was gradually extended and legitimised by surveyors following the soldiers, mapping both the human and physical landscapes. As David Day concluded, this facilitated the creation of the entity of India (making it possible for Indian nationalists to achieve independence in 1947).

Following on the East India Company days, India became significant, both in British finance and business, and in ideas and imagination. It was an era of military exploits, coupled with the glamour of the tiny ICS. All the main administrative posts (and most of the judicial ones) were occupied by the ICS except for the Viceroy and the governorships of Madras and Bombay. There was employment in the other Indian services for very many British families; the occasional secondment to India of distinguished British political and intellectual figures; and the enormous if often unacknowledged importance of India to British prestige, wealth and influence.262

Overwhelmingly, the reputation and behaviour of the ICS was of impartiality—high-minded, conscientious, incorruptible—and it was praised for its rectitude, its sense of justice, its tolerance, its sense of public duty and its high administrative ability. This was not just the British view: the Baron Hübner in 1886 ascribed the miracles [sic] of British administration to ‘the devotion, intelligence, the courage, the perseverance and the skills combined with an integrity proof against all temptation, of a handful of officials and magistrates who govern and administer the Indian Empire.’263

In 1917 an indigenous commentator on the ICS, Dadabhai Naoroji, wrote that the Service had, for the previous hundred years, ‘provided [the] most highly praised administration over India, then the poorest country in the world’.264 Another perspective on the ICS was provided by Rudyard Kipling whose admiration was plain. He wrote that each year the ICS received new recruits who often died through overwork or illness, in the expectation that the Indian population would no longer die from ‘sickness, famine and war’, and would eventually be able to look after themselves.265

ICS officers were well-paid.266 They had strong security of tenure.267 The ICS was a service often resented by others for clannishness as well as for wealth and social position. Until the mid-nineteenth-century, it had been suggested that ICS prestige had suffered from patronage and nepotism and so in 1853 the method of selection of candidates to the Service changed to a competitive system. Entrants after 1853 were known as ‘Competition Wallahs,’ chosen for their intellectual abilities.268 The need for the latter was recognised by at least one senior official serving then in India: Colonel

264 Dadabhai Naoroji, from a speech he delivered (to whom and where it is not recorded). No page number. The Indian Civil Service, Madras, Besant Press, 1917. British Library 8023.a.56.
266 Gilmour, The Ruling Caste, p.38.
267 Dewey, Anglo Indian Attitudes, pp.5, 8.
268 Gilmour, The Ruling Caste, p.43.
(later General Sir) George Tomkya Chesney, a member of the Viceroy’s Council, was strongly in favour of candidates sitting competitive exams.\(^\text{269}\) The ICS was to be regarded as an extension of the Victorian intelligentsia since, according to Victorian thought, only educated English gentlemen were qualified to take up the ‘white man’s burden’.\(^\text{270}\) It followed that only the university élite were seen as capable of assuming such responsibilities. With competitive entry, it was claimed, highly talented candidates were attracted from a wide range of backgrounds with the objective of luring the top university men from Oxford and Cambridge into the Service.\(^\text{271}\)

Those successful were also expected to become fully informed on the localities to which they were appointed. This was generally admired. An anonymous Indian referred to a member of the ICS as ‘a gentleman because he spoke the language and knew the local manners and customs better than anyone else’.\(^\text{272}\) Incidentally, this view was at odds with that of another anonymous British contemporary:

‘the gentleman’ was damned as a drunken, dissipated, half-caste Inspector of Police – a man with the appearance of a returned convict, the manners of a rat catcher and the morals of an Algerian chasseur – later dismissed from the force.\(^\text{273}\)

Plainly, the officer’s reputation was a matter of perspective.

Others were not enamoured of the ICS reputation. The American revisionist historian Bradford Spangenburg has produced a trenchant criticism of the Service, which appears to be based in part on certain attitudes of senior aristocratic appointees towards their underlings. I would argue that this was a misleading premise in itself: these attitudes were an anachronistic irrelevance by the latter part of the nineteenth-century. Seventy-six per cent of ICS officers were being recruited from the professional middle classes; ten per cent only came from the aristocracy and landed gentry; eleven per cent from the lower middle class.\(^\text{274}\) Spangenburg wrote that the ‘unpretentious

\(^{269}\) A Cameron Taylor, General Sir Alex Taylor, GCB RE, His Times, His Friends, and his Work, Vol. II, London, William and Norgate, 1913 p.244. As it happened, Chesney was allegedly another of Arthur Mayne’s distinguished military uncles. He was responsible for many papers on improving aspects of Indian administration and also wrote ‘The Battle of Dorking’, a remarkable novella that first appeared in the April 1871 issue of Blackwoods Magazine and described an imaginary invasion of England by the Germans. (He was later MP for Oxford. Gould, ‘The Bonnycastle Family’). See also Alfred Cotterell Tupp, The Indian Civil Servant and the Competitive System, London, Brydges, 1876. 9. British Library 8023.aaa.1.T 4895.

\(^{270}\) Dewey, Anglo Indian Attitudes, p.7.


\(^{272}\) Ibid, p 25.

\(^{273}\) Ibid.

\(^{274}\) Porter, The Absent-Minded Imperialists, p.40.
intellectual and social backgrounds’ of many late nineteenth-century recruits had seriously damaged the image of the officials in the eyes of their well-born superiors, whose judgements of the ICS were continuously permeated by negativity, probably through the whole of the Victorian era.

Any close connection with India appears to have carried a definite stigma in the thinking of the upper-class. Here again, I would take issue with the significance of Spangenburg’s conclusions, given that only the Viceroy’s and two Governors’ positions were upper-class appointments.²⁷⁵ It was understandable that the reactionary aristocracy regarded the competitive system as a challenge to entrenched privilege, and often accused the successful candidates of being intellectually and socially inferior.²⁷⁶ The comments quoted in the footnote probably say more about the well-born autocrats who penned them than they do about the rank-and-file of the ICS, given the many actual recorded achievements of men on the ground.²⁷⁷

Spangenburg plausibly concluded that young men had gone to India, because of the limited opportunities at home. The restricted possibilities of a career in England tended to influence candidacy for the ICS and it required ‘extraordinary incentive’ to lure candidates to the examination tables. Indian salaries therefore must have been the most powerful appeal for ICS applicants, though it was not a career that suited all appointees. Self-reliance was essential, particularly in postings to out-stations. Anyone of irregular behaviour or outspoken opinion could rarely hope to be considered for higher appointment.²⁷⁸ In this context, ICS uniforms—absent until near the end of the

²⁷⁶ ‘There seems to me to be a dearth of talent throughout India...when I consider the heavy responsibilities attaching to my officers and the enormous areas over which they extend, I often stand aghast at the spectacle.’ (Dufferin to Lytton, 26 April 1886).
²⁷⁷ This attitude was probably a remnant from the archaic practice of military officers purchasing their commissions into aristocratically-led regiments and who scorned career officers—many of whom had served in India and were despised accordingly by well-born officers. Cecil Woodham-Smith, The Reason Why, London, Constable, The Book Society, 1953, pp.21-25.
²⁷⁸ Spangenburg, British Bureaucracy in India, p.162.
nineteenth-century when levee dress was adopted for very formal occasions—can be recognised as an inhibitor to those ICS members who abhorred ‘pomp and circumstance’. There were a few of them, including Arthur Mayne whose own career (as will be shown) was damaged by his reluctance to conform to this ICS requirement.

However, the recruitment of top university graduates initially was not as successful as had been hoped and, by the 1870s, the number of those entering the open competition had declined significantly. This brought a barrage of criticism against the system of selection and training. As a result, the scheme was reviewed by Lord Salisbury, the new Conservative Secretary of State for India. The general consensus, with some reservations, was that there was nothing wrong with the quality of recruits. The demand for reform was based on what was perceived to be weakness, rather than any hard evidence of any weakness. Accordingly, by the turn of the nineteenth-century, civilians were being recruited from a broad variety of social backgrounds in Britain and from a somewhat narrower selection in India. As noted, men joined for financial reasons—certainly salaries were attractive and so was the pension, £1,000 a year irrespective of position—but also through a sense of altruism and for adventure.

To join the ICS, it was recorded that one to two years preparatory work was required. Candidates for the ICS took the entrance examinations at school-leaving age—and it definitely helped to perform outstandingly in one subject, such as Mathematics. The latter was heavily weighted against other subjects: ‘Mathematics is worth 1,000 marks, other subjects 300-800’. Undoubtedly this favoured Arthur Mayne in his candidacy; he was an accomplished mathematician. The examinations were followed by two years of hard academic work at Oxford or Cambridge, with half-yearly exams, studying a curriculum that included the language of the province to which the probationer was bound. Following on posting, probationers took one to three years to qualify for the examinations in India, the climate and professional duties notwithstanding. (The minimum daily work-schedule in India was eight hours a day for eleven months a year, often seven days a week).

279 Gilmour, The Ruling Caste, p.69.
280 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.79.
282 Gilmour, The Ruling Caste, p.38
283 S. Sattianadhan, Four Years at a British University, Madras, Lawrence Asylum Press, 1890, p.44.
284 Tupp, The Indian Civil Servant, p.5.
As noted earlier, the ‘competition-wallahs’ did not consist entirely of middle-and upper-middle-class men from the public schools. About a seventh of the new entrants were sons of farmers, traders, clerks and accountants. Competition also gave an opportunity for boys from even poorer backgrounds who worked their way up through scholarship to grammar schools and universities. This of course was Arthur Mayne’s entrée.\(^{285}\) He won scholarships and passed the examinations, driven by the need to earn a good salary to support his mother and sister.

According to family hearsay as related earlier, Arthur had always claimed to be a Fabian Socialist. He held no ideological brief for the British ruling India or for the trappings of Empire, unlike his alleged blood relatives, the succession of military Chesneys. It was perhaps because Arthur had no recognised family position to bring him to the attention of his well-born superiors that he was selected to serve most of his early career in the remoter parts of the Central Provinces/Province (the CP), rather than be posted to the south (Madras) or to Calcutta or Bombay. However, as earlier related, an early appointment of Arthur in 1893 was as Assistant Accountant-General Bengal, based in Calcutta. Undoubtedly because of his recognised intellect and abilities Arthur was subsequently transferred on a temporary basis to fill other vacancies outside the CP.\(^{286}\)

The Central Provinces were established in 1861. The direct administrative hierarchy consisted of the Chief Commissioner, based in Nagpur. He headed up Commissioners of Divisions, to whom were responsible Deputy Commissioners. They in turn controlled Assistant Commissioners.\(^{287}\) One of these was Arthur in his lowly rank as Settlement Officer, in 1897.\(^{288}\) In other parts of India, senior administrators were known as ‘Collectors’, a nomenclature applied throughout the Indian provincial and rural administrations today.\(^{289}\) The term ‘Collector’ dated from East India Company times, when British officials with magisterial powers liaised with the local rulers to collect revenue.\(^{290}\) The latter were generally the locals Rajahs or the prominent local landowners, the ‘Zamindars’, reminiscent of ‘Lords of the Manor’ in archaic English parlance. It was essential for the ICS administrators to maintain an appropriate working relationship with these notables, in the interest of good local governance. The

\(^{285}\) He had attended Christ’s Hospital School London, one of the ‘Blue Coats Schools’ (charity schools, giving children from poorer backgrounds the chance to have a better education). Emmanuel College Archives – 01223 334200.

\(^{286}\) History of Services.

\(^{287}\) Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste*, p.xxv.

\(^{288}\) History of Services.

\(^{289}\) Ascertained by the author when in India in 2009.

provincial rulers were not always acquiescent: Aimée wrote that Arthur Mayne at times found himself having to pressure local rajahs to look to their responsibilities towards their starving subjects, during the famine raging through parts of the Central Provinces.291

The CP covered an area of some 240,000 sq.kms, (now comprising parts of the modern Indian states of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh).292 The terrain ranged from the flat agricultural lands of the Deccan to thick jungle, rivers and hills. The principal highlands are the Satpura Range in which was (and still is) located the Province’s only hill station, Pachmarhi. Distances between districts are hundreds of kilometres. Away from the railways that connected population centres, transport then was on foot, by horseback, bicycle, or by bullock, horse or mule-drawn ‘tongas’ (light usually two-wheeled vehicles) with the assistance of elephants, or camels, as the terrain and location demanded.

Officers frequently camped, while touring their districts. ‘In camp’ required ICS officers to live comfortably, under canvas, because they were sometimes weeks away from their bases and had to run their offices wherever they camped. H.M. Kisch in a letter home vividly described not only the life of an ICS man ‘in camp’ but the variety of the transport used:

I am off for a six-days round in camp. I have borrowed six elephants for the purpose, on one of them my tent has already gone and my camp-furniture will go on the other two…I give 4 annas a day to the two men in charge of each elephant; the owner is expected to provide the elephants’ food, which is of course rather a large amount… My new government horse is a very good one, and both jumps and gallops safely.

Camp life is quite as comfortable as living in a house. When I go out into camp, I take with me a bullock-cart to carry my boxes, chairs, tables, kitchen utensils, etc., and one or two coolies to carry a filter and other things that are liable to break. I take all my horses and stable servants to camp with me, besides a cook, ‘massalchi’, ‘kitmutgar’ and water carrier. Two ‘chuprassis’ go with the tent and do all the work connected with pitching and striking the camp.293

291 ‘Annette’, p.75.
All this lay ahead for Aimée. On 1\textsuperscript{st} January 1897, she and Arthur alighted at Nagpur’s Sitabuldi railway station,\textsuperscript{294} an imposing British-built edifice in the classical style. Nagpur city had been historically important to the British, located in the geographical centre of India, both as a vital base for British control of the CP and as the second city after Bombay in the Maharashtra region. Various striking public buildings complement the railway station as symbols of imperial power. It was a sprawling metropolitan and industrial centre, surrounded by rice paddies and citrus orchards. Today, it presents as the same, though the much larger city sprawl dominates the area, with a modern vehicular fly-over.

\begin{center}
Maps showing the approximate location of Nagpur and the Central Provinces and the railway from Bombay\textsuperscript{295}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{294} Diaries, 1 January 1897, p.6.
There the young married couple descended, as Aimée recalled, amid the teeming multitudes of an Indian railway station, then as now:

the seething masses of humanity jostling on the platform...the Maharatta, with the tightly bound flat ‘puggaree’, the big Pathan with loose baggy trousers and gaily embroidered waistcoat over his dirty white shirt. The gaily dressed Marwari women, loaded with jewellery, their voluminous skirts swinging round them at every movement, the fat oily Bengalis with well-greased, uncovered hair, arrayed in a toga-like garment of white draperies, and the many other races that go to make up the Indian travelling public.296

Away from the station, Aimée gave her first impressions of Nagpur as something of a garden city; situated outside the teeming commerce and industry of the old metropolis the British had laid out...’fine public buildings and an inviting looking public garden, with beautifully kept lawns and spreading trees, roomy bungalows each standing in its own grounds’.297 From a later drive Aimée wrote of

broad, dusty, white roads with bungalows set in their own compounds on either side, some of them were very large and dilapidated, some of a modern style, many with well-kept gardens where variegated crotons and scarlet hibiscus made vivid splashes of colour. They passed a dusty golf course where each set of players formed a little group, with their white and scarlet clad attendants carrying their golf clubs. A palatial building on a hill was pointed out as Government House. They drove along a ridge on the outskirts of the cantonment and saw the distant haze of smoke over the big native city pierced now and then by a tall factory chimney. They drove through another beautiful public garden, all lawns and flowers, which had once been the pleasure garden of an old-time rajah.298

Except for the golf-course scene, this is very much Nagpur today.299

Aimée recalled that they were met by Mr Carey, the Chief Commissioner, who was less than gracious in his initial greeting: ‘A tall, stout man came forward to meet them, he looked cross and unamiable [sic], and seemed annoyed about something.’300

298 Ibid, p.42.
299 Golf courses now appear to be the exclusive province of the military. Certainly the Pachmarhi course was out-of-bounds to civilians in 2009.
300 ‘Annette’, p.38.
Mrs Carey was more congenial; as the ‘First Lady’ of the ICS administration in Nagpur,

she was a rather delicate woman who had lived many years in India. She was tall and slim and looked rather worn and tired, but she was all kindness and hospitality. She was said to be bullied by her husband, whose many years in the tropics had given him a liver [sic] and made him subject to grumpy fits, though at times he could be cordial and even jolly in an elephantine way.  

Arthur left with his superior to discuss the famine, while tea for the two women was served impressively by an attendant in a gleaming white uniform. Mrs Carey commiserated rather disconcertingly with Aimée about being posted to the wilds of Balaghat, making it clear she seldom travelled with her husband away from her comfortable house in Nagpur. She explained that she had arranged for Aimée to meet a number of the expatriates before she left for Balaghat. Aimée’s diary says it all: January 1897 - 1 Fri: Met 6 people at dinner – Harris’ Craddocks Mrs Graves. This was her first exposure to formal entertaining in India and from what she wrote in her memoir, it was a disconcerting experience, the men ‘talking shop’ and the women discussing ‘who-wore-what’ at the Club. But what awaited her was rather more overwhelming. ‘2 Sat: Travelling to Gondia – by bullock Tonga to Riyeyama – spent night in Dâk Bungalow. 3 Sunday: Drove from Dâk bungalow to Balaghat’.  

Nagpur, Balaghat, Gondia, Hatta and Seoni | 100kms approx.

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Diaries, 1 January 1897, p.6.

Because there was a railway then as now only between Nagpur and Gondia, Aimée travelled by bullock on the sector ‘Gondia to Riyeyama’ (the latter location was untraceable in 2009). She refers to the train in ‘Annette’ (p.47), later.

Diaries, 2 January 1897, p.7.

Balaghat is some 180kms from Nagpur and Gondia (a railway junction), about thirty kilometres from Balaghat. By modern vehicle the journey from Nagpur to Balaghat takes some five hours. In 1896 it took two days with an overnight stop. The details are vague as to how Aimée endured the many hours of travel necessary, dressed as she was in the long dress and layers of underclothes of the time—she was to ride a horse, to endure a ‘dogcart’ (a small horse-pulled cart, in India known as a ‘tumtum’) and later a bicycle. The discomfort and fatigue can only be imagined. What is clear is that by the evening of the second day, having been pulled by ‘Lady Betty’ in a dogcart, and also riding ‘Satin’ for part of the way, she was exhausted. The last twenty kilometres would have seemed interminable and although the road is now bitumised, Aimée’s description is as appropriate today as it was then:

The road led through flat country bordered on each side by small Cassia trees which gave a thin shade; the [rice] fields were parched and bare. Presently they overtook the creaking bullock cart with the ‘chapprassie’ asleep on the top of the swaying luggage. They passed many other country carts, small two wheeled affairs drawn by patient bullocks at a slow walk; many of the animals were miserably thin. The carts meandered along following no rule of the road, and it required much shouting to get them to make way for the dogcart to pass them.306

The bullocks are still ‘miserably thin’—apparently a chronic Indian condition. The ‘rules of the road’ are still as arbitrary on that road today. The approaches to Balaghat are also as described by Aimée, and instantly recognisable over one hundred years later. The roadside avenue gave way to a handsome bamboo avenue and white buildings loomed out of the trees. There follows a grim building enclosed by high walls, the jail, after that a long white-washed building with outhouses scattered about, the hospital, and past two thatched bungalows standing back from the road.307

This was part of the headquarters of the Balaghat district, and the expatriate community was small. According to Aimée later in her memoir, there was only one other European woman, the wife of the Superintendent of Police, described as ‘ultra-religious’. ‘The Deputy Commissioner is said to be a Brahmin, and the doctor a Bengali

307 Ibid, p.50.
with his wife in purdah; the Forestry Officer had a Burmese mistress’.  

In Aimée’s diary entries for April 1897, some two months after their arrival in Balaghat, she detailed a number of expatriate females’ names, one of whom at least appeared to be resident in Balaghat and not just passing through with her husband. There was also someone whom Aimée later describes as, ‘Mrs Lawport a good [sic] missionary’.  

There was plainly a shortage of congenial female company in Balaghat, undoubtedly influencing Aimée’s views on being based in such a remote station. Now she would have appreciated why Mrs Carey had commiserated with her having to live in Balaghat.

Balaghat Township, then as now, consisted of a teeming bazaar interspersed with numerous Hindu shrines and dusty thoroughfares, local housing, a cantonment, a church or two, and small Christian cemetery, mosques, the Circuit House for visitors, a Club for government officials and the accommodation for the few resident expatriates. Its official description was

3,132 square miles, the fourth smallest [district] of the Central Province Districts…jungly, [sic] with large number of wild animals which have completely devastated the country on both sides of the river—lonely, inhospitable and tiger-haunted…Deaths by tigers and panthers were endemic. It had a population of 325,371 in 1901. There was malaria and plague (brought by the railway opening in 1903-4). The only important industry was timber.

Aimée never forgot the approach to her first home in India, which today is much as she described it, ‘the strangest little two-roomed bungalow, thatched in rice-straw’

At the side of the road a frail bamboo arch had been erected over a narrow drive leading to a small bungalow with a thatched roof coming so low that it looked like a beehive. The arch was decorated with leaves and strips of bright red cloth, a piece of bunting was strung across it and the word “MELCOWE” cut out in gold paper letters was pasted across it. The intention however was better than the execution, for the ‘W’ had changed places with the “M” of “WELCOME” and the result was distinctly odd. A row of bamboo stakes lined each side of the short drive, on each was

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308 Ibid, p.54.
309 Diaries, 4 April 1897, p.9.
310 Low, Balaghat, pp.1, 5, 17, 34, 71, 77, 218.
gummed a three cornered piece of coloured paper which did duty for a flag.  

Arthur’s staff was waiting to greet her. The house was so completely unlike what Aimée had expected from her mother’s description of the latter’s luxurious mansion outside Madras that she was initially overwhelmed. Sensibly, Arthur gave her little time to mope. That evening they were guests for dinner with the (visiting) Commissioner, Mr Frazer, and the next day they were off ‘into Camp’ on Arthur’s famine duties, to be joined by Mr Carey from Nagpur. Arthur and Aimée rode horses for the first thirty kms, Aimée uncomfortably warm in the thick cloth English riding habit she had brought with her from England (soon to be replaced by a light-weight version, run up for her by a ‘dhirzee’ [tailor].

Camping in the jungle she found luxurious after the ‘beehive’; the large staff had set up roomy tents before the party had arrived and prepared generous meals. From her diary:

January 1897
4 Mon Preparations for camp – left in evening for Hutta (sic)
5 Tue On elephant to Keruapur camp – 1st day in camp shooting
6 Wed Camp at Keruapur – expected Settlement CoMr not turned up. Visit to Zemmindari
7 Th Camp at Keruapur, uneventful, shooting in evening.
8 Fri Camp at Rayegava – Mr Carey to tea & dinner – shooting Brahine duck.
9 Sat Camp near to Keruapur - alone all day, writing. Mr Carey dines with us.
Sunday Camp moves to Deri. A. at work all day – self very hot
11 Mon Camp at Deri – A. down with fever – Mr Carey indefatigable. Dinner with Mr C.

Aimée had much to write about and to study, as had been her earnest intention: Arthur had bought her a Hindustani grammar in Bombay and she occupied her endless spare time with desultory reading and writing, faced by the daily prospect of being left on her own, while Arthur established feeding stations for the local peasantry. Famine was raging. Aimée had been determined to help with the relief efforts—but initially Arthur would not hear of it. He knew he would be

311 ‘Annette’, p.50. Welcoming arches are still a feature at the entrance of towns, or to houses within which a marriage is being celebrated. The bungalow roof is now red-tiled.
312 Ibid, p.61.
313 At Hatta there is still a Zamindar whose great-grandfather would have worked with Arthur in this regard. (The modern-day incumbent is also chairman of a local bank, so a man of substance).
314 Diaries, 4-11 January 1897, p.7.
travelling as fast and far as he could manage. However, Aimée eventually convinced him that her place was at his side and her persistence prevailed.315

Fourteen famines have been recorded in India between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries. In the latter half of the nineteenth-century, there were approximately twenty-five major famines across India which killed between thirty and forty million people, according to the Indian economist B. M. Bhatia, renowned for his works on Indian famines. What is still remembered as the great famine of 1896 was countrywide, affecting sixty-two million people over 360,000 sq. kms, excluding the native states. Bhatia considered earlier famines were localised. It was only after 1860, during British rule, that famine came to signify general shortage of food-grains in the country, even though the Famine Commission of 1880 observed each province in British India, including Burma, had a surplus of food-grains, with an annual surplus of 5.16 million tons. At that time, annual export of rice and other grains from India was approximately one million tons. However, Bhatia argued the famines were the result of the almost total collapse of India’s native industries, as its skilled artisans were driven out of work with British imports flooding the Indian markets. Moreover, he contended, the Imperial Famine Codes were never seriously directed towards reducing the suffering of famine victims: rather, economising the strength and resources of the state were the primary concern and explicitly excluded the possibility of interventions directed towards assisting the suffering populations. Food was priced in ways that made it too expensive for the poor.316 Sheela Raj also argued it was British policies that caused food needed locally to be sold and exported.317

Contrary to these views, it was maintained by the government that far from exploitation, Strachey’s Famine Commission was by any standards an administrative and intellectual masterpiece, containing effective measures to prevent famine which did much to control the disaster.318 However, it is conceivable that humanity was sacrificed to economy: Lord Curzon, Viceroy at the turn of the nineteenth-century had acknowledged that an Indian famine excited no more attention in Britain than ‘a squall on the Serpentine’319

319 Brendon, The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, p.231.
On the ground however it was a different story: contemporary accounts contain heartrending stories of how British officials attempted to save lives, having to combine efficient logistics with the official policy of requiring famine victims to earn relief by labouring, while combating the need to counter local caste prejudices. H.M. Kirsch left a significant comment in this regard about his experiences during an earlier famine:

March 1874: Famine – I could not have believed that anyone could live with so thin a covering to the bones. The very colour of the bones was visible through the thin black film that surrounded it. One of the instructions upon which I have to act is that work is to be provided at low but sufficient wages for all who wish it, and the most lamentable feature in the famine is to me this—that those for whom work is provided as a means of relief shirk their work to the utmost extent…you go into a village where most of the villagers are Brahmins, so powerfully does the doctrine of caste operate that they would die sooner than work on a road with common coolies.320

It was also recorded that the problems of caste inhibited distribution of life-saving supplies, as in the contemporary report on the Balaghat area of the Central Provinces where famine operations were directed by seven charge officers (of whom Arthur would have been one).321

That doughty feminist of the day, Isabel Savory, wrote movingly of her first-hand experience of famine victims:

The wailing, walking skeletons crawled up to us. They clamoured for rice—with their shrunken little ones in their arms—but it was terribly little we could do for the starving, hollow-eyed, weary supplicants…322

By the spring of 1900, five million people across India were receiving relief at the cost of £8,500,000, which had resulted in a significant decline in the mortality rate.323

There was also plague, as Aimée recorded in her diary entry for 10 March 1897.324 But she persisted in staying with Arthur: she insisted on accompanying him to a feeding-station later that month and demonstrated her resilience to tough travel conditions. Her January 1897 diary entries provide an overview of the vicissitudes of her journeys:

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321 Low, *Balaghat*, p.239.
322 Savory, *A Sportswoman in India*, p.263.
324 Diaries. 10 March 1897, p.8. Interestingly, this entry predates the report by C.E. Low that plague had been brought to the Balaghat area in 1903-4. Low, *Balaghat*, p.77.
23 Sat - Start camp 12 miles on bike, 8 miles on horseback. Tired but enjoyed it much.
24 Sun - In camp. 7 mile ride – rain & thunder at night.
25 Mon - Tramped the fields during Settlement work in morning. Saw several cases of famine. 3 villages & 6 mile ride. She was horrified by what she saw:

When they reached the camp there was a row of some forty men, women and children squatting on the ground, some of the women, clad in the ragged remains of the usual coloured cloth worn by village women, had infants in their arms, the men were in scanty loin cloths. All were very thin and the older people emaciated, some of the naked children had enormously distended stomachs though their limbs were like sticks. A few held out their hands whining pitifully others merely stared in front of them indifferently.

Aimée was determined to help—surely they had some personal rations that could be distributed? Arthur, though sympathetic, pointed out that villagers of the Brahmin caste would sooner die of hunger than be defiled by accepting food direct from Christian hands. She must realise, he told her, that Hindus, even the poorest were born into a rigid caste system, within which they lived and died and the actions of their daily life were ruled by it. Those people, to whom Aimée wanted to offer bread, would be turned out of their caste by their fellows if they ate any European food offered by her hand. They considered it would demean them and destroy their social status in this life and hope of happiness in the next. To take food from a European was something that only the very lowest caste, the sweepers, would do, and even then not the village sweepers, but only those in service of the sahibs to do the dirty work of a household. Nevertheless, she did try to hand out biscuits. Only the children accepted them and even they just held them, making no attempt to eat them.

Later, Aimée saw a food kitchen in action. Not far off a long, low shed of bamboo and branches had been constructed and here lying about or squatting were women with babies, small children and old people in ragged garments.

Near the shed in a bamboo enclosure a plump, almost naked man with a couple of boy assistants, was cooking a mass of rice, and another of lentils, in great metal cooking pots over fires made in the hollowed out ground edged with stones. A savoury smell of onions and other ingredients rose.

327 Ibid, pp.69, 68.
from the pot of lentils. A great pile of unleavened bread made into flat cakes (chapatties) stood handy and the boys were kneading and cooking more on some glowing embers.328

The Famine Relief Work and Kitchen served a number of villages around. It was Arthur’s responsibility to see how many more kitchens were required to keep the people from starving. He was importing rice from Burma, with bales of fodder, lentils and wheat from other parts of India where there was no famine. The destitute were fed by the Government; they had their food served out to them twice a day. Being the food they were accustomed to, and cooked by Brahmins from whose hand any Hindu could eat, they accepted it. The meals were for those who were too old or feeble to work, or were the mothers of young children.329

Arthur was sympathetic to, and of course supported, the government policy that just to provide the population with charity would demoralize those strong enough to work for their living. Those working were constructing a ‘tank’ (as such reservoirs are known in India) for their village that would fill in the rains and irrigate many acres. The men received 4 annas a day, the women 3 annas and the children 2 annas. They bought their food at cost-price from a Government Depot which had been set up in the village. Outside the village Arthur and Aimée came to a large earthen embankment or ‘bund’ on which a hundred men and women and children were working, filling their rough bamboo baskets with earth and depositing the contents on the embankment, under the direction of an Indian Public Works official.330

Aimée decided there was one thing she could do: she could raise funds in England by writing articles to improve awareness of the famine. She spoke to Arthur about it. She would solicit money from among her College friends and relations. He, rather surprisingly, was now supportive of her desire to help, perhaps feeling it would give her something to do:331

January 1897
27 Wed - Stayed in same camp. Rain in morning. Shooting. A. interviewing tenants. Self writing articles.332

She developed and worked on her ideas during February.

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328 Ibid, pp.72-73.
329 Ibid, p.73.
330 Ibid. The village of Hatta today boasts a fine cistern, presumably constructed by villagers at that time. They claim it was built during the British period and the architecture is in the government style of the early twentieth-century.
331 Ibid, p.77.
332 Diaries, 27 January 1897, p.7.
Her personal interaction with Arthur was not good however—‘unsatisfactory unsympathetic relations’. It did not help their rapport when Arthur, at her request, read through an article she had drafted towards her famine appeal. It was of course intended to elicit the sympathy of her friends and others in England, to encourage fund-raising towards famine relief. Arthur hurt her feelings, even enraged her, by condemning the way she wrote—both for her writing style and because he saw the content as possibly casting the government’s famine relief efforts in a bad light. (His concerns were to be justified, as will be related). Later Arthur and Aimée reconciled and Aimée understood that she would have to be careful with both her wording and her tendency to exaggerate. She recorded however that they were both determined to maintain an equable bond. The writing accompanied by photography kept her occupied and more content for the next few weeks, on her return to Balaghat, before she again accompanied him into camp.

By March 1897 she wrote, she was receiving contributions from England towards her famine appeal. Cash provided the wherewithal for material that was being woven on the handlooms of weavers in Balaghat and she was commissioning clothing to be distributed to the famine victims. Aimée was also allowed to help in the distribution of the Lord Mayor of London’s Mansion House Fund. A large sum had been allocated to the Balaghat District. It was expended in lump sums, given to owners of small holdings to feed themselves and their families, and their plough bullocks, to work their fields until the coming of the monsoon, and thus discourage them from swelling the numbers of those who had left their land and who were reduced to day labour.

Day after day, she wrote, Aimée sat at a table under the trees of the camp, with a list of villagers’ names before her, drawn up from the records of Arthur’s department. Beside each name was the sum allotted, calculated to keep the family provided for, until the anticipated monsoon in June would produce the crops in September. Bags of hundreds of rupees were beside her. An English-speaking clerk served as assistant and

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333 Ibid, 8 March 1897, p.8.
334 Something that was borne in mind when reading her memoir ‘Annette’.
335 ‘Annette’, p.78.
336 Unfortunately none of the photographs have survived.
337 The Lord Mayor of London had started what was known as the Mansion House Fund, and had appealed to the public to assist him in raising money by public subscription for the relief of the distress in India. The Fund was similar to a similarly-named fund in 1880 for alleviating distress in Ireland. In 1897 some £411,000 had been raised. It was estimated that between £800,000 and £900,000 would suffice, if the monsoon did not fail. British Parliamentary Papers, House of Lords, Deb 11 March 1897, series 4, vol.47, cc430-2. http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1897/mar/11/indian-famine-mansion-house-fund. January 2010.
338 ‘Annette’, p.81.
interpreter. Villagers, summoned from an area round the day’s camp, came up in turn as the name of their village was called. It was explained to each group that this money, they were about to receive, had been sent to them as a gift by the people of Britain. She counted out the allotted sum, which varied from fifty to one hundred rupees or more, according to the number of dependants a villager had and the amount of land to cultivate.339

The universal custom in the East was that one must bribe one’s way into the presence of someone in authority, a custom persistently resisted by British officials. Aimée as advised by Arthur kept a sharp look-out that each group leaving the camp should be unmolested by anyone claiming a commission on the sum received. The villagers were warned on no account to give any of their money as a bribe or ‘dasturi’ (customary gift) to any one.340 It is evident from her memoir and diaries that at last Aimée felt she was really making a contribution to her husband’s work.

Meanwhile those still starving were all being fed via the kitchens that Arthur had established throughout his district. This meant that he was able to stay for longer with Aimée in Balaghat. When he went into camp to tour the relief centres it was now sometimes without Aimée who was finding enough to occupy her time at home. Apart from her writing, photography to illustrate her famine articles, dining with the few expatriates living in Balaghat, riding her horse, walking to the Waingunga river (the location for Kipling’s Jungle Book) bicycling around the township—always with an attendant in tow—she played golf and tennis. She also wrote copious letters to family and friends in England. At one stage she had recorded, ‘How maddeningly dull this life is.’ But a few days later: ‘Self happier & more content’.341 Aimée was achieving some sort of equilibrium after the first three months in India and, as one of the few expatriate women in Balaghat, she was learning to create her own activities.

She had still not unpacked the cases of household effects, nor the piano ordered for her by Arthur from Bombay and she was desperate to turn ‘the beehive’ into a home. Arthur was less enthusiastic, for by now the weather was heating up—‘Thursday April 15 [1897] – Intensely hot days’342—and, in spite of her earlier insistence on staying with Arthur throughout the summer, he was finally able to persuade Aimée that she should relocate to Pachmarhi, the Central Province hill station, for the next three months. Initially, she remained unconvinced; her place was at Arthur’s side. But she

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339 Ibid.
340 Ibid.
341 Diaries, 8 March, 19 March 1897, pp.6-7.
342 Ibid, 15 April 1897, p.9.
was won over, after an excruciatingly dull dinner with Mrs Moyes – the ‘ever-only lady’ on station. 343 After all, her fund-raising was going well; she recorded on 14 April ‘Writing for News’, and letters to ‘Lord R. & Aunt Mary’. 344 So, over Easter 1897 (19-20 April), she packed for the journey to Pachmarhi, leaving Balaghat with Arthur by tonga and then travelling by train to Nagpur from Gondia on 23 April 1897. After a day in the Nagpur Hotel, Arthur returned to Balaghat and Aimée caught another train to Blasawal where she spent a day with new friends, before the last train, to Piperia, where she alighted to prepare for the six-hour pony tonga sector to Pachmarhi. 345

Aimée was about to start the next chapter of her life that would change her perspective on India and Indians. Her initial experiences of the British Raj emphasized how she was moving into that rigid hierarchy, so well described by MacMillan, Dewey and Gilmour, 346 that had already delimited her ability to exercise agency in her role as an ICS wife. She was coming to recognise the expectations of her, to be subservient to her husband’s position in the field—akin to Barr’s and Fowler’s perspective of her wifely role that emphasized their perspective of the Anglo-Indian wife as just having to ‘get on with it’ constantly preparing to have to make a new home and to cope with loneliness and illnesses. 347

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343 Ibid. Presumably this was the police superintendent’s wife.
344 Ibid, 14 April 1897, p.9.
345 Ibid, 24-26 April 1897.
Pachmarhi in the modern Indian state of Madhya Pradesh was the only hill station serving the British community of the Central Provinces in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (and now the affluent middle-classes of Mumbai and Nagpur). The area was introduced to the western world by Captain James Forsyth of the British Army in 1857. Pachmarhi then became a sanatorium for British troops and later the summer capital for the Central Provinces. In 1901 the population was 3020, rising to double that number in the hot summer months. The town is still not very large. Most of the area is still under military or forestry control.348 Today, Pachmarhi is widely known as ‘Satpura ki Rani’ (‘Queen of Satpura’) situated at a height of 1000 metres in a valley of the Satpura Range, where tiger and panther sightings have always been a feature along the edge of the Pachmarhi Cantonment.

Hill stations in India have played an interesting role in British India. Today modern-day remnants of the British presence reflect the desire of expatriates to replicate what they had left behind in the Mother Country. The churches, which would not be out-of-place in the English countryside, are the most obvious expression of this; the golf courses, and the old British residences, provide further reminders of ‘Home’. However, built some two hundred years after the British arrived in India, hill stations were not simply a transplanted British landscape. They were expressive rather of broader nineteenth-century beliefs that set the colonial world apart from Europe. As Judith Kenny argued, the hill stations reflected and reinforced assumptions of social and racial difference and, in so doing, ‘naturalized the separation of rulers and ruled’.349 After the Indian Mutiny of 1857-59, which generated an ‘aloofness’ from Indians, the British withdrew to the ‘civil lines’ in the towns. They also took up residence in the hill

348 Madhya Pradesh Tourism: http://www.mptourism.com/dest/pachmarhi.html. February 2010. In 2009 there was also a threat from the Naxalite insurgency in that area.
stations during the summer months, away from the plains, with their extreme heat and soaking monsoon deluges.350

This settlement form and landscape model was embedded in a larger system of colonial control and a general discourse of imperialism. By ‘imperial discourse’ is meant ‘the framework that shaped the imperialists’ interpretation and representation of the non-western world via a system of meaning, a process that sustained relations of domination by representing them as legitimate’. Intertwined with imperialism, Kenny continued, is a ‘second discourse rooted in European classical theories of climate and race’ which defined difference by the ‘temperate’ and the ‘torrid’ zones. Race, and its association with environment, became key to the late-nineteenth definition of differential power relations between the imperial rulers and those they ruled’.351

Superimposed on this theme of separation, so it is claimed, colonial occupation of the Indian sub-continent established one of the primary arenas in which the expatriate British woman first achieved the kind of authoritative ‘self’, associated with the modern female. India always meant a great deal of heartbreak for them: without their husbands’ sense of service to sustain them, women suffered acutely, as Joanna Trollope has observed. It was not simply the loneliness, or the heat, or the boredom, or the dirt, or the sense of always taking second place, but the fact that nothing in India could belong to expatriate women for long (not even their children who were usually sent ‘Home’ for education).352

As a matter of course, most expatriate mothers left their husbands for at least six months a year, spending the summer with their young children in the cool hills.353 On the plains, nineteenth-century cemeteries surviving from the Raj and visitable today contain graves of British women and children who had stayed with their menfolk during the baking, soaking summers and who had died of malaria or dysentery.354 All the advice then regarding children’s health in India stressed the need for a temperate climate as being desirable to prevent children from growing up ‘delicate, pale and flabby, comparatively feeble in mind and body’.355 Hill stations provided a local escape for wives and their children, as well as an essential forum for the wives to pass time

351 Kenny, ‘Climate, Race, and Imperial Authority’, p.695.
353 Chaudhuri, ‘Memsahibs and Their Servants in Nineteenth-Century India’.
354 Two such cemeteries visited in 2009 at Balaghat and Jabalpur contain headstones some detailing deceased wives or children.
355 Elizabeth Buettner, Empire Families – Britons and Late Imperial India, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004, p.36.
together, away from their husbands—to gossip, to air grievances and to escape the miseries of isolation—having perhaps been marooned in remote administrative centres, cut off from the network of other women relatives and friends. Of course, memsahibs were generally discouraged through the racial and historical prejudices of the time, from making social contacts with Indian women.356

What wives of expatriates shared, as Charlotte Canning had observed presciently in 1856, was having nothing of consequence to do.357 Not that that their lives offered meaningful expression in this regard at hill stations but, in addition to parties and dances, hill station life did provide games and other social pastimes. Ladies were active participants—golf, archery, croquet, tennis, lawn tennis, amateur theatricals…and there was the spice of the legends of bad behaviour, with wives on their own, husband-hunters, bachelor soldiers and civil servants on leave. Everyone was on holiday, in climates that brought nostalgia for England and Scotland, with mountain days to fill with nothing but pleasure.358

Pachmarhi remains an isolated settlement, off the principal rail and road connections. Nowadays, the journey between Piperia, the rail junction, and Pachmarhi takes just an hour or so by motor vehicle on a sealed road. Aimée by contrast suffered a six-hour gallop round steep bends in a tonga first towed by ponies and then by fearsome mules that lashed out at her. She recalled that it was late at night when she was deposited outside the one hotel in Pachmarhi, where it was deemed proper for her to stay on her own.359 Once again, she was initially struck by the initial contrast between what she had probably been led to expect and the actuality:

[A] fair sized white washed room with a door and window giving on to the verandah, another door on the opposite side communicated with a small dressing room containing a table with a small mirror, a chest of drawers, a couple of chairs, from this a small door led to a tiny concrete floored bathroom, with enamelled iron basin on a tripod, zinc tub, water-pot and tin dipper. The dressing room and bathroom were evidently pieces cut off the back verandah. The front room contained a wooden bed consisting of a

356 Even if they tried to make contact, it was hard going, as Aimée was to discover when she called at the ‘zenana’ [women’s quarters] of a local ruler. Language and a clash of culture make it a barren experience for all concerned. ‘Annette’, p.117.
357 Fowler, Below the Peacock Fan, p.111.
358 Trollope, Britannia’s Daughters, pp.126-127.
358 Trollope, Britannia’s Daughters, pp.126-127.
framework on four legs over which was stretched webbing to support the thick cotton mattress; there was a hard flock pillow. In one corner stood a large old fashioned press for hanging clothes, a fair-sized table occupied the centre of the room, a three tiered ‘whatnot’ of the kind found in seaside lodgings at home, filled up another corner, a small table near the bed and several cane chairs completed the furnishings.360

She wrote that it did not seem as if she would have much opportunity to wear the dresses selected from her trousseau and she was resigned to yet again spending much time on her own. She described how she arranged several volumes of Herbert Spencer’s publications on the centre table, meaning to continue her study of that philosopher’s works. In the long years of courtship, that had preceded any engagement between her and Arthur, he had presented her with a complete set of Spencer. Aimée resolved to devote herself several hours a day to studying Herbert Spencer.361

So much for her good intentions: her diary details how she actually spent her first week in Pachmarhi:

April 1897
28 Wed Breakfast at Carup – did 6 calls – Laurie, Lyall, Mouro, Doyle.
Met Maud le Measurier
29 Th Paid calls in afternoon
30 Fri Gymkhana in afternoon.

May 1897
1 Sat Called [on] 4 people with Mrs Ainsbury, Tennis at Residency.
Sun Picnic to Clematis pt & dinner at Carey’s. Mrs Fox-Strangeways.
3 Mon Polo Tournament riding in evening.362

From her memoir it is clear that Aimée’s whole perspective on life in India had changed: it was now gaiety and socialising she took for granted, particularly illustrated by the laconic entry in her diary ‘Tennis at Residency’ which gives no hint of the luxurious establishment, the plethora of servants, with the green lawns and the magnificent buildings surrounding the courts that still survive from that period. Life was a continuous round of social pleasures—which only increased.

360 Ibid, p.92.
361 Ibid, p.93.
362 Diaries, 28 April-3 May 1897, p.10.
361 Ibid, p.93.
362 Diaries, 28 April-3 May 1897, p.10.
362 Diaries, 28 April-3 May 1897, p.10.

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May 1897  
12 Wed Dinner & dance at Lauries,  
13 Th Moonlight picnic (St Clairs) to Handy Kho  
14 Fri Lyalls dance – enjoyed it – Talk with Mr Mouro & Carey  
15 Sat Musketry Mess dinner – asked practise tilting at ring  
Sun Race course practise [sic], Music with Mrs Fox-Strangeways.  

But all was not quite right. She wrote in her memoir that she was feeling guilty whenever she thought of Arthur sweating away on the plains. Moreover, she found she suddenly needed him at her side: she recorded in her diaries that she had continued writing the occasional article towards her famine relief appeal and had even received a cheque from Lord Radstock (a philanthropist) which she forwarded to Arthur. Then she wrote: ‘Notice in Pioneer of my Famine Appeal, awful mistake’. In her memoir she explained: her Aunt Mary—the proselytizing evangelical who together with her mother had seen her off from London as an affianced girl to India—had extracted the more colourful parts of Aimée’s letters about the famine and passed them to a local newspaper in England which had run an article soliciting funds. A retired ICS officer in England, reading the piece, sent it to someone in India, fulminating against the perceived aspersions cast on the ICS famine relief—and by an ICS wife, no less.

Aimée recollected that in some distress she sought out Mr Carey (Arthur’s superior) who was with his family in Pachmarhi at his official summer residence. She explained. He was solicitous and told her to cable to Arthur what had happened. Arthur could write a rebuttal to the local newspaper (which duly appeared). Arthur was remarkably understanding as this could have affected his career. However, he was a socialist who cared for the Indians and he loved his wife, so no more was said.

Although the matter was closed, it left Aimée with an uneasy feeling that she had transgressed. She had already been disturbed, she wrote, by the attitudes of some of the British women in Pachmarhi towards Indians. Even allowing for Aimée’s possible ‘gilding of the lily’ in this regard to demonstrate how her progressive attitudes towards Indians contrasted with those of other British women, she made enough of it in her memoir to suggest it was an issue for her, then. Mrs Carey, her hostess at Nagpur is alleged to have told her: ‘having to do with natives is a man’s business’. Mrs Carey

365 Ibid, 22 May 1897, p.10.  
366 ‘Annette’, p.100.
never talked to a native except to the servants, when she had to give them orders. She had never troubled to learn ‘their nigger language’ any more than was necessary to speak to the servants. 367

Aimée was further advised not to talk about the famine to the other British women in Pachmarhi; it would only isolate her from them. Aimée also related how she met an old school-friend who was married to a senior army officer, and how the friend had changed, being totally caught up in Pachmarhi life, to the exclusion of the world outside. The friend also made disparaging remarks about Indians. ‘I don’t want to hear about them. There are far too many of them, now that our beneficent Government tries to stop plague, cholera and famine from clearing them off.’ 368 There are no mentions of these disturbing comments in the diaries. Once again, it is important to remind oneself that these interchanges, recorded in Aimée’s memoirs, could well be imaginary and written for posterity, to show Aimée in a good light.

By contrast, her diary contains a stream of social entries which are well summarised in her memoir: 369

She rode every morning and had no difficulty in finding an attendant cavalier, as the ladies who rode were few and Pachmarhi abounded in civil and military riding men. She took part in gymkhanas, watched polo, attended the races. There were garden parties and invitations to dinners practically every night, frequently followed by dances and occasional concerts. 370

But this first visit to Pachmarhi had to end. On 25 June 1897 Aimée left Pachmarhi for the long return journey to Balaghat, to meet up with Arthur again. 371 ‘Very hot and steamy’ she noted more than once—the heavy rain was ruining the rice crops—and her diary at this stage makes for depressing reading. 372 Arthur was ‘On Circuit’ (working as a magistrate touring his district) and Aimée was left at home, in the ‘beehive’ . 373 She occasionally visited rice fields with Arthur, but both of them were suffering from the heat, the heavy rain and from sickness, probably malaria. 374 She had resumed her Hindustani lessons—mainly, one suspects, to communicate effectively

367 Ibid, p.98.
371 Diaries, p.11.
372 Ibid, 28 June 1897, 5 July 1897 pp.11, 12.
373 ‘Annette’, p.129.
374 Diaries, 19, 27 July 1897, p.12.
with the Indian servants—but it appears her Hindustani was not progressing. Balaghat was no fun after Pachmarhi. She did some desultory work on her famine scheme, ‘12 July 1897 Balaghat. Busy with reports to Lord Radstock [&] Lugard of our charity’ and the next day she noted, ‘R.6,000 [collected]’. But her heart was no longer in it. Her diary entries henceforth included minimal focus on her volunteer work.

It would have been a relief for them both to prepare for Nagpur on 2 August 1897, even having to face the ‘long bullock journey’ from Balaghat to Gondia to catch the Nagpur train. This was just a break, however. They were back in Balaghat for more, long, dreary days, before leaving again for Nagpur on 6 September en route for Pachmarhi. Arthur had been instructed to stand in for Mr Carey, while the latter took short leave. There is no mention of this appointment in Arthur’s record of ICS service, so it was ‘acting and unpaid’ at that stage. This was unlike his earlier appointments, before Aimée had joined him, as an acting Deputy Commissioner 3rd Class and acting Commissioner of Excise (both in 1895). In 1897 he remained a substantive Assistant Commissioner. Irrespective of Arthur’s temporary status however, Aimée’s Pachmarhi social round could not have continued quite as before: as an accompanied married woman, she would have been expected to undertake formal entertaining while filling Mrs Carey’s position. From 13 September to 7 October her diary merely noted ‘Pachmarhi with Arthur’ which in itself suggests a curb on the social lifestyle she had enjoyed on her first stay, as an unaccompanied wife. There was now a preoccupation with dutifully running her household.

From 25 to 30 October 1897 she and Arthur were in Jabalpur, a major industrial and British military centre, north of Balaghat. Arthur had served there from May to October 1894, ‘in charge of the current duties of the office of Inspr. [sic] of Schools’ and later ‘in executive charge of Cen. [sic] Jail and Reformatory School’. On this latest occasion with Aimée, Arthur had been required to inspect the rice stocks. They also toured a few schools together. Principally however, Aimée enjoyed herself being entertained by the military, and singing at a concert, attending dances, a gymkhana and cycling to and from Marble Rocks. ‘A delightful week in Jub. [sic]’ she noted

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376 Diaries. 12-14 July 1897, p.12.
377 Ibid, 3 August 1897.
378 History of Services.
380 Ibid.
381 History of Services.
enthusiastically.\textsuperscript{382} She stayed on in Jabalpur with Mr and Mrs Fuller at the Residency until 7 November, when she returned to Pachmarhi (to join Arthur who was working there for a week) which she found cold and miserable, and without the sparkling social company to which she had become accustomed. ‘Very dull & lonely – kept [to] bedroom.\textsuperscript{383} It was late in the Pachmarhi calendar for British wives to be residing there.

However, all this was just a prelude to the ‘Christmas Season’ which started with the arrival of Aimée’s brother Archie (referred to affectionately in her diaries as ‘Pud’) in Nagpur from Spain and England on 12 December 1897, to take up an engineering position at Betul, a district adjacent to Balaghat, that was to figure prominently in Arthur’s future postings.\textsuperscript{384} They returned to Balaghat with Archie on 14 December and on 24 December went ‘into Camp’.\textsuperscript{385}

[I]t had been arranged they were to join a camp that the Careys were giving in the Balaghat District. Mrs Carey in spite of her dislike of camp made an exception of camping at Christmas, as she only had to get to the camp and stay there a few days and return to Nagpur. The camp was to be in a hilly part of the district, covered with jungle, where there was expectation of finding tiger, panther, bear and a variety of deer. As the small scattered jungle villages had no shops to supply food for the native servants or fodder for the animals, special arrangements had been made for a grain-dealer to transfer a shop to the camp, to supply them with the necessaries. The jungle villagers brought wood in plenty for everyone from the forests around…Christmas dinner was a very gay affair with the traditional turkey and plum pudding, crackers and champagne. It was marvellous how the cooks could produce such fare with their primitive arrangements for cooking … they played games and sang songs and all retired to bed, feeling they had had a thoroughly enjoyable day.\textsuperscript{386}

They returned to Balaghat on 1 January 1898. It was there Aimée had written ‘self distributing clothes every evening’, the last mention of her famine-relief activities.\textsuperscript{387} Her mind was now set elsewhere, with a visit to Bombay on 1 March where they stayed.

\textsuperscript{382} Diaries, 26 October 1897, p.14. Today Marbles Rocks is a tourist attraction for Indians, where the deep river is overhung by marble cliffs.
\textsuperscript{383} Ibid, 8 November 1897.
\textsuperscript{384} Ibid, 12 December 1897, p.14, 15 March 1897, p.19.
\textsuperscript{385} Ibid, p.15.
\textsuperscript{386} ‘Annette’, pp.118, 124.
\textsuperscript{387} Diaries, 18 February 1898, p.19.
for ten days for her to visit the dentist (her teeth gave her problems all her life).\(^{388}\) She noted prosaically ‘9 March – Riots in Bombay’.\(^{389}\)

Arthur was now appointed acting Deputy Commissioner 3rd Class at Betul.\(^{390}\) He and Aimée left Bombay for Betul on 10 March 1898, travelling by train and a sixteen-mile bicycle ride, for an initial ten-day sojourn only, staying in the Circuit House. Arthur and Aimée then returned to Pachmarhi where they were based until 18 May. (Archie had broken his ankle and remained in Betul).\(^{391}\) Arthur was still acting for Mr Carey.\(^{392}\) On 12 May Arthur had been gazetted as substantive ‘Assistant Commissioner 1st Class’ which demonstrated his abilities were recognised and he was on ‘the way up.’\(^{393}\)

Aimée prosaically recorded in her diary ‘Moved into New Bungalow Fern Vale’.\(^{394}\) This was a momentous occasion. Fern Vale was one of the most important residential bungalows in Pachmarhi with its laid-out garden, marking Aimée’s position in local society as a ‘burra memsahib’, a senior lady—supporting her role as a prominent hostess-to-be, entertaining on Arthur’s behalf. However this visit to Pachmarhi was not to be for any length of time. Aimée was a hostess at Fern Vale during this short stay on only two occasions, from one of which Arthur had to retire to bed during a ‘Musical Soirée At Home’.\(^{395}\) Arthur was seriously ill with dysentery and his condition worsened.\(^{396}\)

After a week Arthur complained one day of fever, he would spend the day in bed, next day other symptoms appeared, internal pain and diarrhoea. The Civil Surgeon came and prescribed and assured Aimée her husband would be all right. He must have eaten something that had upset him. Arthur got worse, the doctor began to look serious and called in other advice. They

\(^{388}\) Ibid, 3 March 1898, p.18.
\(^{389}\) Ibid. One of a number of civil disturbances around this time, exacerbated by the fear of plague sweeping the city, with British soldiers used to search for victims, actual or potential. Women, it was alleged, were forced to stand in the street, the butt of soldiers’ coarse jokes. Europeans were accordingly threatened in Bombay. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Imperial power and popular politics: class resistance and the state in India, c.1850-1950*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp.248-9.
\(^{390}\) *History of Services*. This is a strange appointment, bearing little relevance to his actual postings, since Arthur did not take up his appointment there until October 1905. It would appear that ‘exigencies of the service’—that traditional Civil Service phrase—took precedence. Diaries, 7 April 1898, p.19.
\(^{392}\) Diaries, 2 April 1898, p.19.
\(^{393}\) *History of Services*.
\(^{394}\) Diaries, 7 April 1898, p.19. Now known as ‘Valley Views’, an attractive boutique hotel run by the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Authority.
\(^{395}\) Diaries, 20, 23 April 1898, p.19.
\(^{396}\) ‘dysentery diarrhoea’ Ibid, 28 April 1898, p.20.
tried various remedies but nothing did any good. At last, Arthur was advised to apply for leave and get to England as soon as possible. He had obstinate dysentery which did not yield to treatment; a change of climate was the only cure.\textsuperscript{397}

On 6 May, she wrote, ‘It is decided that Arthur must go home on furlough’.\textsuperscript{398} Officially, Arthur was granted ‘Subsidiary leave from 16\textsuperscript{th} to 20\textsuperscript{th} May’ and ‘Furlough from 21\textsuperscript{st} May 1898 to 19\textsuperscript{th} October 1899’, with further ‘Subsidiary leave to 31\textsuperscript{st} October 1899’.\textsuperscript{399} They left Pachmarhi separately on 18 May. Arthur departed for Bombay at 2 am, presumably having to travel slowly as an invalid. Aimée followed him an hour later after closing up the house. They arrived together in Bombay at 6 pm on 19 May. After spending the next day in Watson’s Hotel annex, Arthur and Aimée boarded the SS \textit{Arabia}, ‘Arthur very seedy & weak’. They were seen off to England on 30 May by Mr Carey and a doctor.\textsuperscript{400}

This was an inauspicious start to their first voyage home together and there is no indication that Aimée was looking forward to being in England again, with a sick husband. However, the sea voyage did Arthur good and Aimée pronounced Arthur as ‘nearly recovered’ on 10 June 1898, on their arrival in London.\textsuperscript{401} They moved into lodgings at Bayswater and met up with Mrs Barnett, and with Arthur’s mother, Mrs Mayne, and one or two friends of Aimée’s. Initially, they enjoyed the theatre and opera: they went to \textit{Julius Caesar}, \textit{Faust} and \textit{Lohengrin}.\textsuperscript{402}

Arthur consulted a doctor, Dr Sherman Bigg. Aimée also had an appointment with him on 13 June 1898. Why she sought medical advice is unclear from her diary entries. However, she later recorded that after she had been examined by him, he pronounced her ‘ill with nervous prostration’, and recommended a ‘happy life & plenty of change.’\textsuperscript{403} It was probably not for a physical ailment that she solicited help, although Dr George Kilworth Sherman Bigg had been an Indian Army staff surgeon at Allahabad in the late 1880s/early 1890s. Significantly, he was the author of several booklets on medical conditions and tropical hygiene, including \textit{Baby’s Health}, \textit{The

\textsuperscript{397} ‘Annette’. p.129.
\textsuperscript{398} Diaries. 6 May 1898, p.20.
\textsuperscript{399} \textit{History of Services}, Mayne, ‘Important Dates’.
\textsuperscript{400} Diaries, 21 May 1898, p.20.
\textsuperscript{401} Ibid, 10 June 1898.
\textsuperscript{402} Ibid, 14, 16 June 1898, p.20.
\textsuperscript{403} Ibid, 13 June 1898.

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It may be presumed that because of Dr Bigg’s Indian service he had been recommended to Arthur, after Bigg had commenced his London practice. Interestingly, Bigg’s publications include a section on ‘Green Sickness’ which may have been more applicable to Aimée’s condition in the context of maladies identified at the time. The symptoms included:

- The impoverishment of the blood – the result of disappointment in love, ungratified passion, mental worry, homesickness.
- Symptoms: sallow green shade of countenance, sunken eyes, sickness, dyspepsia, depraved appetite, with a craving for unreasonable objects, flatulence, headache, giddiness, languid hysteria, general feebleness and despondency.

Could ‘Green Sickness’ be applicable to Aimée’s perceived condition, rather than Dr Bigg’s diagnosis of ‘Nervous Prostration’? According to the latter she should have been suffering from:

- profound exhaustion, insomnia, pressure and heaviness in the head, palpitation of the heart, trembling of the muscles, as well as multiple fears, including fears of open places or closed places, fear of society, fear of being alone.

The diagnosis of Emily Dickinson’s complaint of ‘Nervous Prostration’ was contemporaneous with that of Aimée’s, but Aimée must have been physically fit. She rode horses, she bicycled, she walked. Aimée’s physical condition matched Hoppen’s description of some women [who] were quite devastatingly energetic: walking, hiking, climbing, riding, swimming, exploring, playing tennis and cricket, regularly

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travelling on the new and improved bicycles which [had] appeared in the late 1880s. 407

Dr Bigg’s diagnosis of Aimée’s ‘Nervous Prostration’ does not match that of Emily Dickinson’s. Many middle-class women undoubtedly suffered ill-health, but many also suffered from ‘malade imaginaire’ and other neuroses. 408 The energetic Aimée presented as the opposite of these women. In fact, Dr Bigg’s advice did not take account of three very important pointers as to where Aimée was, at this period of her life. The first was that their abrupt voyage to Europe brought to an end that first period of her marriage when, with her tertiary education and ‘trained mind’ she had seen herself as Arthur’s helper in the field, ministering to famine victims, becoming informed on some aspects of Indian life and culture. In general, she had made some use of her education as a young lady of the upper-middle-class, 409 although she now had a different perspective on India. Earlier in her memoir, she had written that she had became sensitive to intruding where she was not wanted; native life was the job of government officials, she must keep her place… India had a way of closing all avenues of activity to women whether European or native. What was there but social or family interests to fill in ‘the long, long hours of the Indian day’ of which Kipling had written…She had lost her interest in India. 410

The second factor was the physical relationship, or lack of, between her and Arthur. True to his word, after that unfortunate wedding night, according to Aimée’s memoir, he had made no sexual advances. Living as ‘brother & sister’ could not have been easy for either of them. In her memoir Aimée had recorded her earlier fears in Balaghat of a sexual relationship: ‘The probable result of real marriage, she recognised, was a baby, and she was still terrified of what a husband did and its results’. 411 The outcome had been that they just co-existed. Now that Aimée was no longer involved with famine relief in India and Arthur had had minimal interest in her social life, there was little to bind them together emotionally. In a London that was no longer her home, her immediate future with an enervated husband must have seemed infinitely depressing.

Thirdly, the more pressing concern was that, to her distress, Arthur made it clear that lack of money was an issue, living on half-pay on furlough. ‘May 1898 – a shock

408 Helena M Swanwick, I have been Young, London, Gollancz, 1935, p.136.
410 Ibid, pp. 113, 116, 118.
to me,’ she wrote.\(^{412}\) Aimée having left all money matters to her husband had no idea that they were under financial pressure. A social life in London after renting a house—entertaining, going to the theatre—would soon have exhausted their financial resources. Moreover, Arthur was still supporting his mother and sister. They decided to cope with the shortage of funds by moving out of London.

They relocated to the Channel Isles where accommodation was less expensive. They travelled all night to Gorey in Jersey on 23 June 1898, where Aimée noted more happily, ‘We can live cheaply here’. Money was still short, Aimée carefully recording the cost of individual meals.\(^{413}\) Mrs Barnett joined them on 2 July followed by Aimée’s life-long friend from Bedford College days, Isabel Singer, and her husband. The inclusion of Aimée’s friends in the party caused friction with Mrs Barnett, who was probably jealous of the limited time she had with her daughter in Jersey. The Singers departed.\(^{414}\) On 1 August 1898 Arthur and Aimée travelled to Germany, Mrs Barnett accompanying them.\(^{415}\) Mrs Barnett then left for Switzerland. Arthur and Aimée embarked on what still appears as an amazing bicycle tour of Germany and Switzerland, given the voluminous clothing of the day and the heavy bicycles. Arthur seemed fully recovered and Aimée was healthy, physically at least. However, by the end of the month, Arthur was ‘tired & unwell’, later succumbing to a heavy cold before they travelled to Switzerland, walking, cycling and by train, eventually moving into a hotel at St Moritz on 19 September for the winter season.\(^{416}\)

The period spent in Switzerland at the end of 1898 marked a significant change in the personal relations between the two. On 3 September 1898, Aimée had noted: ‘Received answer from Sherman Bigge [sic] re. myself’.\(^{417}\) Sexual tension had probably been discussed by him. It was a topical subject, as evidenced by Edward Carpenter, who had written in 1896 on the importance of sexual release for women, while commenting on the miseries of their lack of sexual knowledge:

\[\text{[I]gnorance was most acute in women, who were led to the altar often in utter ignorance and misunderstanding as to the nature of the sacrificial rites}\]

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\(^{412}\) Diaries, p.4 – note at start of diaries.

\(^{413}\) Ibid, 23, 24 June 1898, p.21.

\(^{414}\) Ibid, p.21. The Singers were also a Jewish family and subject to the upper-middle-class distaste for Jews. However, Isobel Singer had been at Bedford College with Aimée and remained a life-long friend of hers. Hilary Peters in conversation with the author.

\(^{415}\) Ibid, 1 August 1898, p.21.

\(^{416}\) Ibid, 7-31 August 1898, p.22.

\(^{417}\) Ibid, 3 September 1898, p.21.
about to be consummated…many Women found the thought of Sex brings but little sense of pleasure.418

It seems likely from what eventuated that the doctor had advised her that she needed to establish a sexual relationship with her husband, to counter her ‘nervous prostration’. For herself, Aimée recalled that while she was with Arthur in St Moritz that she felt a patriotic urge to start a family and put the following to Arthur as her inspiration for encouraging full cohabitation:

We both have good health, and good blood, both are tough and wiry, you have unusually fine brains and I am no fool. Children are wanted in our class. We ought to give children to the state if we are patriotic, and I certainly love England after this long time spent abroad, even in these beautiful surroundings.419

A number of researchers has concluded that upper-middle-class motherhood was ‘a physical service to the nation, empire, and race’ based on the ideals that such motherhood was essential to maintain the superiority of modern British civilized culture for success.420 At the same time it was asserted that the health of the British ‘race’ was deteriorating. Scientists and medical men had warned the ‘right type’ was not breeding in sufficient numbers. Feminists were seen as menacing family relations and middle-class women were being discouraged from becoming mothers.421 Herbert Spencer of course had added his voice, publishing in The Principle of Ethics (1892-93), his support of ‘the idea of marriage [being] woman’s true vocation.’422

Irrespective of the above, Aimée’s alleged motivation for starting a family must be accepted with caution, remembering that Aimée’s memoir ‘Annette’ was written decades later. Moreover, there is a hint that Aimée could have been planning pregnancy rather earlier. At the end of her 1897 diary she had noted what appear to be her monthly menstrual cycles.423 A more direct hint of conjugal relations being commenced is the diary entry for 5 November 1898: ‘A & self began on a new footing, feel much happier & more cheerful’424

419 ‘Annette’, p.139.
420 Anne Kristina Huebel, More than an individual? The paradoxes of motherhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, PhD, University of Minnesota, 2004.
421 Harris, Private lives, public spirit, p.91.
422 Herbert Spencer in Twells, British Women’s History, p.16.
423 Diaries, p.15.
424 Ibid, p.23.
In February 1899 still in St Moritz, Aimée was pregnant. She recorded her astonishment on receiving the news from a Swiss doctor from whom she had sought advice for what she thought was a ‘bilious attack’. He was apparently incredulous at her ignorance of her condition. Even if it is spoken advice invented years after the event, it is worth reproducing to illustrate Aimée’s undoubted lack of knowledge at the time:

‘What is the matter with Madame? You young people are really too ignorant. Madame’s trouble is that she is six weeks pregnant, she tells me she wishes for a child and yet she has been trying to get rid of it by dosing herself. You English, with all your reserve, are really too funny. Ha, ha. You conquer the world and know nothing of the symptoms of bringing a new life into the world to inherit your conquests. Has Madame no mère or belle-mère to give her advice on what to expect? No, alas, Madame had no one. Well here is a little brochure that you can study. You both know French? Good, and I give you a prescription to alleviate Madame’s sickness, it will pass in a few weeks. Goodbye and may you have a fine healthy boy or girl in good time. No more dosing with castor oil, hein!’\(^{425}\)

The tone of Aimée’s diary entries until the end of 1898 had continued positively: Aimée took singing lessons; Arthur enjoyed his skating, though he met with a painful accident that lacerated his arm and kept him strapped up for a week. On a toboggan Aimée wrote that she (courageously or foolhardily) had attempted ‘Church Leap’ on the Cresta Run, on 10 December 1898, and had a bad fall that laid her up for two days, though she did attend two singing lessons.\(^{426}\) The Run was first built in 1885 by convalescent Englishmen whose physicians had sent them to this pristine corner of Switzerland as a rest cure. When the Cresta Run was first opened, it was the fastest a human being could travel, at that time. Family legend has it that Aimée was one of the first women to attempt the Run.

Financing this pleasant lifestyle in St Moritz had become difficult. Mrs Barnett had joined them before Christmas 1898 and, early in 1899, Arthur, desperate for funds, decided to approach his mother-in-law for a loan. In Aimée’s words, ‘1899 Jan & Feb - Troubles about money. Arthur asked Mother for £1000 down instead of £50 dress allowance for me. A terrible row. We left.’\(^{427}\) According to the still painful account in Aimée’s memoir, Mrs Barnett accused Arthur of marrying her daughter under false pretences—misrepresenting his financial position—and she complained bitterly of

\(^{425}\) ‘Annette’, p.140.
\(^{426}\) Ibid, p.24.
\(^{427}\) Note included at start of Mayne Diaries p.5.
having being left a lonely widow, bereft of her daughter’s company. Eventually, the older woman agreed to the loan, provided Aimée returned to her mother until Arthur was clear of debt and of supporting his mother and sister. Arthur abruptly refused. He never spoke to his mother-in-law again and there was also a permanent estrangement between mother and daughter, a sadness that remained with Aimée all her life, as she frequently noted in her memoir.

Aimée kept no diary for 1899, presumably preoccupied with her pregnancy, but the Maynes left for more cheap travel in Germany in early 1899 and later in Denmark. There are no detailed records of how they passed most of 1899, but in her memoir she noted that they were back in England for some weeks, before leaving for India in September 1899. In London, Aimée had them moved from a dingy apartment in Earls Court to somewhere more pleasant in Bayswater—and closer to her mother. She was desperate, according to her memoir, to make amends with her mother, to say goodbye before the return to India. Her mother was ‘not cordial’ but agreed to see her; she offered to provide a layette for the baby. For his part, Aimée wrote, Arthur was adamant that they would not accept anything towards the baby. He insisted on Aimée ordering the layette at his expense:

‘I have an account at the Army and Navy Stores, you can buy them there and we will pay later. I advise you to go and get all you need. They’ll pack it and send direct to the P & O Office. You can tell your mother you have everything necessary.’

Aimée met her mother, for what was to be the last time. She recorded that her last sight of Mrs Barnett was of her ‘standing grey and bent in the middle of the room’. It was a painful farewell.

Arthur and Aimée sailed for Bombay in ‘September/October 1899’. Aimée noted that they were ‘thankful to be back on full pay after 18 months on half pay running up debts.’ Their posting was not confirmed until they arrived in Bombay. Arthur was appointed Deputy Commissioner in Seoni, their base from October 1899 to March 1901. Seoni was an infinitely more pleasant location than low-lying Balaghat to the south-east.

428 Mayne, ‘Important Dates’.
430 Ibid, p.142.
431 Ibid.
432 Mayne, ‘Important Dates’.
The administrative district of Seoni was founded in 1774. It contains large public gardens, a fine market place and a handsome reservoir that is still fished after the monsoon rains. In 1901 its population was recorded as 11,864. The district population outside the township of Seoni in 1901 was stated as 327,709, showing a decrease of 12 per cent in that decade, due to the effects of the famine. The town is 600 metres above sea-level, situated half-way on the road between Nagpur and Jabalpur. The surrounding country forms part of the Satpura tableland (in which, as earlier noted, Pachmarhi is located) and contains the headwaters of the Wainganga, that river to which Aimée used to walk and cycle in Balaghat. It was largely covered with forest, and forty per cent of the inhabitants belonged to the aboriginal tribes of the area. In 1907 the district was ‘remarkable for the beauty of its scenery and the fertility of its valleys’ with a generous annual rainfall. The principal crops were and are wheat, mullets, rice, pulse, oil-seeds and cotton. Three lines of the Bengal-Nagpur railway system traversed the district.434

Aimée related how she was transported from the nearest railhead to Seoni in a comfortable carriage, because of her pregnancy, with relays of ‘fine carriage horses’ every few miles. It was apparently the local Rajah who, made aware of her condition, insisted on providing the transport. She described their home as ‘palatial in comparison to the bee-hive’.435

There was a pleasant Club House in the well-kept Public Garden with tennis court, a billiard table and a bar. Here the Europeans in the station met of an evening for tennis, followed by a game of billiards or cards. All the officials were Europeans, they were only six in number, two of them married besides Arthur, but what a difference from the depressing solitude of Balaghat!

The Deputy Commissioner’s house was a spacious, almost palatial residence, surrounded by an old garden laid out with a green lawn and shady trees. It was one of those houses built in the days of the East India Company, when the Company’s servants settled down in India for many years at a time, with no thought of going home every few years for leave.436

The diary entries at the start of 1900 are sparse. Aimée wrote that on 1 January Arthur was ‘in camp’ for two days and she was left in Seoni, accompanied by a nurse (from where it is not noted). Arthur was away again on 10 January for twenty-four hours. She was visited by ‘Mr Chapman PC of Chuidwar to Tea & tennis also padre Mr


435 Unfortunately it was inaccessible in 2009, being behind police-lines, but the Circuit House, dating from that time, gives an idea of Seoni’s excellent facilities for the ICS

Price of the Hausous’. She led a ‘quiet life with a little exercise morning & evening’.\textsuperscript{437} It was here, on 16 January 1900 that their first child, Margaret was born after a painful labour.\textsuperscript{438} Aimée later related how, after the birth, Arthur also took to his bed complaining of being ill; how the doctor could find no symptoms of illness and diagnosed hypochondria.\textsuperscript{439} This was the condition from which Arthur was to continue to suffer for the rest of his life. Arthur’s natural tendency to find excuses to opt out of social situations by pleading ill-health was exacerbated by his belief that he later described as suffering from ‘the worm’.\textsuperscript{440}

Gone were all thoughts of Aimée helping Arthur in his work. He now went into camp without her. In Seoni Aimée was soon up and about. This coincided with Arthur’s old ‘munshi’ (butler) retiring. He had saved money during his forty years of service with various masters and had told Arthur that he wished to retire to his native village in Madras, as soon as the memsahib was strong enough to supervise the household herself. Aimée wrote that she was very sorry to say goodbye to ‘the gentle old man’, but she was glad to take over the responsibility of running her own household, engaging the servants and looking after the general expenditure. It gave her something to fill her days, that and the care of the baby for whom she also had the services of an ‘ayah’ (nursemaid and general female factotum).

Her time was also taken up with a station dinner, to which everyone was invited. This, rather surprisingly given his aversion to entertainment, had been suggested by Arthur. Guests included two engineers, rather rough diamonds, who were engaged in building the railway from Seoni to railhead and had come into headquarters for a couple of days. The dinner went off well, everyone was in evening dress and Aimée entertained them with music. It was pleasant to be entertaining in her own home and as one of her duties as chief lady of the place.\textsuperscript{441}

\textsuperscript{437} Diaries, 1-5 January 1900, p.28.
\textsuperscript{438} Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
\textsuperscript{439} ‘Annette’, pp.144-125.
\textsuperscript{440} Mayne, \textit{An Unreasonable Man}, p.73. Whether this was really hypochondria, primarily a disorder of ‘abnormal cognition’ (in which symptom meaning is of greatest concern) or what is known medically as ‘somatization’ (primarily a disorder of abnormal sensation, in which the symptoms themselves are the overwhelming focus of attention) is probably an irrelevance. The important point is that it was the arrival of the child that triggered the first recorded reaction of Arthur claiming he was physically ill. Another modern diagnosis could have been that Arthur was suffering from ‘couvade syndrome’ — a condition in which a father-to-be experiences some of the physical symptoms of pregnancy prior to or concurrent with the baby’s birth. Arthur however was to complain of frequent bouts of ill-health at times when he did not wish to participate in formal social activities, so perhaps a diagnosis of ‘couvade syndrome’ would be out-of-place. (Arthur’s hypochondria is further discussed by a medical expert in Chapter Twelve).
\textsuperscript{441} ‘Annette’, p.147.
In passing, it is interesting to note that because much of the chapter is concerned with physical ailments, the Dr Bigg, whose diagnoses and treatments were plainly so significant at the time to many Anglo-Indians, has not featured in the relevant works by historians of the time, given the plethora of illnesses that afflicted the expatriate population then.

Aimée Mayne had started the next phase of her life in India—as a mother and as an important hostess within the confines of British-India society. Given her earlier pretentions as an educated woman with ideals to help the local population, it says much for her that she could now morph into being a mother and behave as society expected of her as a hostess. Gone were her misplaced thoughts of Christian charity towards the unfortunate Indians. She was there to support her husband and bring up her little daughter.442

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442 Here displaying both the characteristics of the typical Anglo-Indian wife, aka Fowler, *Below the Peacock Fan* and perhaps projecting the role discussed by Procida, ‘Feeding the Imperial Appetite’, pp.123-149.
In February 1900, as wife of the Deputy Commissioner Seoni, Aimée could at last feel a sense of some satisfaction with her position in life, married to someone whose talents were recognised and her status as his wife acknowledged. There was however also her increasing burden of living with a man whose intellectual talents were at times obscured by his misanthropy and eccentricity. However, she was now a mother with the initial focus on her little daughter Margaret Lucy, born on 16 January 1900.

Aimée was building up her physical strength.\(^1\) On 9 March 1900 she recorded that she played tennis for the first time, some eight weeks after the birth.\(^2\) By late April a regular feeding routine for the baby had been established—5.45, 8.30, 11.30, 2.00, 4.45, 7.15, 10.\(^3\)

The doctor agreed that babies did not feel the heat, as long as their food was carefully guarded against infection, and that was a matter Aimée kept entirely in her own hands and attended to with scientific care and accuracy. She had been unable to nurse her baby after the first three weeks, try as she would...She was not a natural baby lover who could spend hours in her child’s company, adoring it and fussing over it. She left that to the devoted ayah who would not let the baby out of her sight a moment more than she could help.\(^4\)

Away from the nursery, Aimée had by now adopted the usual memsahib’s routine. ‘She was glad to take over the responsibility of running her own household, engaging the servants and looking after the general expenditure’.\(^5\) She was becoming a competent household manager: her diary entries for 1900 are filled with daily household preoccupations, such as ensuring a reliable ‘punkah-walli/malee’ [sic] was at work (employed to rhythmically swing the large rattan screens, hanging from the ceilings that circulated the still-heated summer air through the house at night). There

\(^1\) ‘Annette’, p.144.  
\(^2\) Diaries, 9 March 1900, p.29.  
\(^3\) Ibid, 30 April 1900, p.30.  
\(^4\) ‘Annette’, pp.148, 149.  
\(^5\) Ibid, p.145.
was also ongoing concern with the regular local purchase of kerosene, wood and charcoal, together with stores that came from Bombay, intermixed with handling the comings and goings of Indian staff.  

She was not however over-taxed with the minutiae of the menial household chores. The large house-staff, numbering up to sixteen, worked with minimal supervision. They had rejoined the Mayne household after taking other temporary positions over the furlough period, or were hired in Seoni. Aimée satisfied herself periodically that the bazaar bills were settled. She paid occasional unexpected visits to the kitchen, the stables and the cow-houses, to ensure an acceptable standard of cleanliness. She kept up her habit of early morning exercise, a walk or a ride. (It was necessary to maintain the horses’ condition). She rode alone with a ‘syce’ (the servant in charge of the stables) behind her, or she met up with one of the other people of the station (as such British administrative centres or cantonments were known) exercising their horses. Arthur was generally too busy to join her.

Aimée had also adopted the habit of a long midday siesta and in the cool of the afternoon went to the Club to play tennis and chat with others in the station. Looking back, Aimée saw herself as having ‘adapted herself to the life of inactivity; she had learned to be busy doing nothing in particular and fussing about things of no importance’. Seoni was on the main road between other cantonments; officials on tour passed through. They either stayed with the Maynes, or put up at the Circuit House. Expatriate visitors often dined with the Deputy Commissioner and his wife, which helped to enlarge Aimée’s circle of acquaintances. She related that she found the gossip of the Province of absorbing interest. ‘Who was promoted? Who was on leave? Who had been passed over? Who was getting married? The latest scandal? Stories going the round about ‘so-and-so’?

In August 1900 Aimée with the baby was touring with Arthur. Their relations were equable. At some period around that time he had asked Aimée to resume conjugal relations, which she was happy to do, although she worried about starting another baby. Gone was her horror of the act but she still feared the consequences. They neither of them wanted another baby and when she timidly expressed her fears, he assured her he would see to it that she did not have one. In her own

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6 Diaries, pp. 30-31.  
7 Photograph of staff. Family Archives photography collection.  
8 ‘Annette’, p.143.  
9 A cholera outbreak is noted. Diaries, 20 June 1900, p.31.  
10 ‘Annette’, p.149.  
11 Ibid.
mind she asked herself, was it right to come together in union when one did not desire the result of that union? Her conscience said no, it was wrong. 12

Aimée’s scruples were not unusual for the time. Alison Mackinnon recorded that birth control was seen by many as a form of moral pollution which enhanced the concept of the immoral, selfish woman. 13 Aimée wrote that she tried to speak to her husband on the subject, but he could not understand her scruples and laughed at her.

He told her when she was lying in his arms that passion was the highest joy in life, when it was the outcome of such perfect love as theirs. It had taken him eight years of courtship and over two years of living side by side to convince her...She longed to ask him how he could prevent her having a baby but she could never bring herself to frame the words. She noticed that on the nights of passionate love just as their union was reaching its climax, when all barriers seemed to have melted away between them, and she was yielding herself to his tenderly violent love, he would push her from him somewhat roughly and their embraces were over for that night. He would leave her bed and go to his own and in a few minutes she would hear his deep breathing as he slept peacefully. 14

Aimée recorded that she did not fall asleep readily, she had a vague idea of having been within reach of something mighty and glorious and at the last moment a door had been slammed in her face, she was shut out and a feeling of resentment rose in her heart.

What was Arthur doing, why did he push her away? Once she summoned up courage to ask him as they lay in each other’s arms. ‘It is for your sake, my own sweet wife, not to give you another baby. You must trust me, dear.’ 15

Aimée had rejected Arthur’s attempt on their wedding night to provide her with a birth control device. (From her description of the tubing, it was one of the ‘whirling-spray’ contraptions available then). 16 He was now practising birth control in the only other way he apparently knew how: ‘coitus interruptus’. ‘Demographers agreed that coitus interruptus and abstinence were the most likely methods of birth control before

12 Ibid, p.147.
15 Ibid.
16 There was a wide range of contraceptive devices available to the sophisticated middle-class woman: Grecian caps and the more popular pessaries, Rendell’s Quinine pessaries, Bichloride of Mercury, sulphate of zinc and betanaphol. Women also made up safety sponges soaked in quinine, the Higginson’s syringe or the Marvel whirling spray. Condoms were available to some men, but middle-class women associated the use of these with brothels. Mackinnon, Love and Freedom, pp.29-30, 103.
the 1920s’. Both Arthur and Aimée appear ignorant for their time, but they were probably typical of their class and social background, and they were living in India, relatively isolated. It might have been presumed that the ladies’ conversations in Pachmarhi could have included talk about limiting the size of families. Apparently not, or perhaps Aimée was too shy to make mention of this in her memoir or diaries. This of course all took place about twenty years before the pioneer in sexual health, Dr Marie Stopes, published her best-selling *Married Love: A New Contribution to the Solution of Sex Difficulties*, early in 1918. A key component of the book was to be advice on birth control.18

This relatively idyllic period of their married life was interrupted by the baby’s sudden frightening illness: on 2 September 1900 ‘Bunt’ [Margaret] suffered violent diarrhoea, with increasing haemorrhage. This continued spasmodically until mid-October when she put on a little weight after a ‘nitrate of silver enema’.19 In the meantime Aimée was ill from the strain and Arthur succumbed to fever as the rains started.20

The next three months provided an exemplar of the typical routine of an ICS official on tour with his wife and child. They were occupied with a visit to Jabalpur, where Aimée enjoyed a social break, which was followed by two months ‘in camp’. Arthur’s daily work was interspersed with trying to shoot a tiger. Apart from the thrill of hunting, as Arthur had explained to Aimée, if tigers were not kept down they would become a threat to the villagers. Government offered fifty rupees reward for each tiger killed.21 For her part, Aimée shot her first duck and later a ‘sambhur’.22 They were back in Seoni on 2 February 1901 where, in an incident-filled month, she noted laconically and eclectically:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February 1901</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 Sun</td>
<td>To Rucker. A tiger kill – he was in the beat &amp; roared but he got out thro’ 1st &amp; 2nd beaters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Mon</td>
<td>A days shikar at Puidreye – it was a second day but there was no buck.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 Ibid, p.103.
18 It went through five editions, selling 17,000 copies in the first year alone, outselling best selling fiction of the era. By 1925 sales had passed the half million mark. Porter and Hall, *The Facts of Life*, pp.208-209.
20 Diaries. 17 September 1900, 30 September 1900, pp.33, 34.
21 Annette’, p.122.
22 The largest representative of the deer family in Asia.
Arthur an offer of Accountant genl of Punjab [sic] – we are much concerned about it.

22 Tues Spent day at Puidreye – stroll in evening. News of Queen’s illness.

23 Wed Moved to Pathesar a day after Bear – no luck. Saw 1 pig & missed him.

Heard of the Queen’s death which occurred at 7 p.m. on 22nd.23

Earlier, on 10 February 1901, she had recorded: ‘A & self made one important decision.’24 Perhaps this referred to a full resumption of their physical love-life and starting another child (although their eldest son Edward was not born until 3 September 1902). In the meantime—as further acknowledgement of Arthur’s mathematical and organisational skills, following an earlier appointment as acting Assistant Accountant-General of Bengal in 1893—he had accepted the offer of a temporary appointment of Accountant-General of the Punjab (referred to under the diary extract, 21 February 1901, above). He undertook this from 13 March 1901 until October that year, working at Lahore.25

Aimée with the baby, the ayah accompanying as usual, relocated to India’s snow-covered pre- eminent hill station of Simla—the holiday retreat for Lahore—which necessitated a horrendous five-day journey via Jabalpur and Allahabad. It was mainly by rail, a journey made longer before the little railway into Simla that was only completed in 1903. Her last stage was by tonga, as with Pachmarhi.26 Her diary summarises the rigours of the journey with a small child.

March 1901
10 Sun Busy packing. Sucherem full day. Brownie shod 2 feet.
11 Mon Packing.
12 T Mr Dewar arrived – a very tiring day.
13 Wed Started from Seoni – travelled to Dhorna after breakfasting with the Whites at Chappara. Baby well.
14 Thur From Dhorna to Jubelpore [sic]. Baby a little Diaarhoea [sic].
15 Fri At Jub. [Jabalpur]. Started in afternoon for Allahabad.
16 Sat Reached Allahabad at 1 p.m. – left again at 3 p.m. – put up at Laurie’s Hotel - Baby a little diarrhoea.
17 Sun Travelling all day - Kalka at 10 a.m. - by landau to Solou.
18 Mon From Solou to Simla to Grand Hotel – Baby a splendid little traveller. Bitterly cold & snow on the ground.27

Simla in physical appearance was very different from the much smaller centre of Pachmarhi and has been described as a Victorian seaside holiday town ‘that had somehow acquired an Indian bazaar and a temple or a mosque or two…trying to be

25 History of Services.
27 Diaries, 18 March 1901, p.41.
thoroughly British but somehow not succeeding’.28 It was perched on a series of jagged hills, with the Himalayas in the background. Aimée was accommodated in the best hotel in Simla, the Grand Hotel.29 Arthur should really have taken a house there, given his senior status, but because his temporary appointment to Lahore was only for six months he felt it was not worth it.30

It was the usual hill station mixture of socialising, horse-riding and walks. Baby Margaret suffered on and off with stomach ailments; Aimée initially went down with influenza and Arthur paid frequent visits from Lahore. He disappointed her immensely when he refused to accompany her to dances, pleading either ill-health or extreme fatigue, thus setting the pattern for his future opting-out of social occasions. However, when they were alone together, Aimée recorded Arthur made physical love to her nightly. He became adept at this:

Each time he prolonged his period of wooing and caresses and gradually and slowly aroused her to the full enjoyment of their union, she passed into a period of ecstasy, completely satisfied in body and mind, utterly united to her husband. She wanted a son, he was giving him to her. For the first time in their married life, he had given his wife a complete orgasm.31

From what she wrote, Aimée was desperate to conceive a boy.32 On 2 September 1901, during a visit to a nearby centre, Baghi, Aimée noted, ‘Tree with strips of red cloth’ which referred to the local custom of tying strips of cloth to a tree to ask for the birth of a boy (in 2009 a custom still observed at Marble Rocks near Jabalpur).33 She too fastened a cloth, torn from the end of their servant’s ‘puggaree’ (headdress) and asked for a son, though she was embarrassed by Arthur’s gentle amusement.34

While Arthur was in Lahore, her social life continued unabated. A typical extract:

August 1901
5 Mon Dance at Lady Youngs. Ride with Mr Burton.
6 Tues Ride with Genl Wace Snowdon entertainment.
7 Wed Mr Fuller dine Mr Darui tennis.
8 Thur Viceregal Lodge dinner and dance.
9 Fri Lady Rivers At Home.35

This gaiety was abruptly halted. On 10 October 1901 Aimée recorded ‘Mother wrote me her last letter’ and over the next few days Aimée noted in her diary—presumably

29 Diaries, 18 March 1900, p.41.
30 ‘Annette’, p.156.
31 Ibid, p.159.
32 Ibid.
33 Diaries, 22 September 1901, p.46.
35 Diaries, 5-9 August 1901, p.45.
based on daily letters and cables from her brother Archie—Mrs Barnett’s sudden decline. Her mother travelling with Archie in France had been stricken with pain…

The hope against hope that the internal pains would pass, the confession that for sometime past Mrs Barnett had suffered pain and said nothing about it, the sudden flare up of trouble, the removal to a nursing home run by ‘bonnes soeurs’, the summoning of a famous surgeon from Paris, the operation that revealed a growth on a vital part, the sinking into unconsciousness and death.

Mrs Barnett’s death on 25 October—without a message to Aimée—came via cable from Archie. Her sense of loss is unrecorded, though evident indirectly from the anxious diary notes as she awaited news.

By now Aimée had had enough of Simla and the endless partying. On 8 November 1901 she and Margaret left Simla via Agra and Delhi for Seoni, which she reached on 25 November, the child being unwell en-route. Margaret recovered sufficiently for the family to go ‘into camp’ on 4 December; that day Aimée noted quite casually, ‘shot tigress.’ The actual occasion is well recorded in her memoir ‘Annette’:

There he was, his great yellow and black shape stalking swiftly out of the beat right under her tree. It was a difficult shot pointing straight downward. The tiger gave a growl and passed quickly out of sight. ‘I can’t have missed him, he gave a “wuff” and I had my bead straight on him’, she explained to Arthur when they stood under her tree surrounded by the beaters. There was her bullet in the ground and no sign of blood. The bullet had not flattened out as the bullet should have done, if it had hit the hard bone of an animal. She felt terribly ashamed. All this trouble of kills tied out days beforehand, one hundred and fifty men collected from far away villages, and failure on her part. Suddenly a beater came running up. He had wandered off into the jungle behind the beat, for the purposes of nature, where the beaters had been expressly ordered not to go as it was the direction the tiger had taken. He held in his hand a few leaves covered with blood. ‘Laggia, laggia!’ (‘It was hit!’) he cried. Great excitement followed and they retreated out of the

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36 Ibid, 8-24 October 1901, p.45.
37 ‘Annette’, p.162.
38 Diaries, 25 October 1901 p.46.
40 Diaries, 8 November 1901, p.47.
41 Ibid, 4 December 1901, p.47.
jungle as fast as possible in the opposite direction to that taken by the tiger.42

They arrived at the tree from which Aimee had taken her shot. The ‘shikarry’ had brought several buffalo from the nearest village to help in the tracking, as there were no dogs available. The buffaloes would give warning of the presence of the tiger by lowering their heads to receive his charge on their formidable wide spread horns, and by stamping their hooves. All these preparations were quite unnecessary, for as soon as the buffaloes were driven forward they almost trampled on the dead tiger. It lay in a piece of thick undergrowth, shot through the heart. It had not gone more than fifty yards, carried by its own impetus. ‘The bullet had not struck a bone but had gone clean through the soft heart tissue making but a small hole at entrance and exit’.43 The skin was cured and mounted by G W Cole of 161 Osuaburgh Street, Portland Road in London.44 It was displayed for many years on her wall.45

In December 1901, Aimée was pregnant with her second child and in May 1902 the family left on furlough for France, the ayah accompanying. Aimée wrote on departure from Bombay that they took ‘Bunt’ to the zoo there before embarking on the SS Ocianier bound for Marseilles on 11 May 1902, where she was ‘disgusted to find Mrs Saunders on board’ (why, it is not revealed, presumably someone she disliked from a hill station).46

The family was based at St. Servan in France until September, 1902, with constant visits from family and friends from England. The diary recorded much ‘coming-and-going’ and the baby suffering from whooping cough, changes in the weather and gastric upsets.47 One aspect of their accommodation deserves a mention:

It was a charming house in the French chateau style and the owner was extremely proud that it possessed a bathroom in the basement, which, with preparation an hour beforehand of a wood burning stove, could produce a hot bath on the great occasions when one was required. [The owner] himself

43 Ibid, pp.155-156.
44 Diaries, note at end of 1902 diary, p.59.
45 Photograph in Family Archive, taken in the 1920s in Jersey. Later inherited by her eldest grandson who took it to southern Arabia where it was featured with the Sultan of Lahej reclining thereon, at an out-doors function in 1961. H.H. was most impressed to learn that the tiger had been shot by a woman.
46 Diaries, 10-11 April 1902, p.54.
had never taken one as he was afraid of catching cold, but he knew the
English liked baths, a queer taste that he did not understand.48 Edward was born in this house on 3 September 1902.49 According to ‘Annette’, Aimée suffered what could have been a fatal haemorrhage, but was nursed back to health.50

They returned to India by the S.S. Touhin, arriving in Bombay on 10 November 1902.51 Arthur was to take up his new posting to the large ‘jungly’ district of Narsingpur, on 14 November 1902.52 Aimée described their first days at Narsingpur:

It was off any main line of communications, hence few visiting officials came through. Unfortunately the Deputy Commissioner’s bungalow had been burnt down a few weeks before their arrival and there was no house available for them. The whole family had to crowd into the Government Rest House and make the best of cramped, bare surroundings. The place was a home for snakes and scorpions and the discomfort was overwhelming when a swarm of hornets settled in the beams of the house, between the roof and the cloth that served as a ceiling to the rooms, and both the children were badly stung. It proved impossible to dislodge the hornets, they returned again and again, so the Maynes decided to go into camp and arranged a long tour until the new bungalow, now being built to replace the old one, should be ready for habitation.53

Narsingpur was a dull station, she wrote, and exceedingly hot, very different from Seoni: it reminded Aimée of Balaghat. There was no club, no tennis court—and no company. The Forest Officer and Police Officer were ‘in camp’ and Arthur had no Assistant. The Doctor’s family comprised the only other Europeans in the Station. He was European, but born and bred in India and he had never left the country. He had a large family of eleven daughters and one son. They were ‘wrapped up in themselves and exceedingly shy of strangers’.54

The household was reorganised with the help of Aimée’s staff from Seoni (who had been retained on half-pay while the Maynes were in France). She was quick to ensure she and the children accompanied Arthur into camp, which she much preferred to living in Narsingpur—even if Arthur was displaying increasing reluctance to take

48 ‘Annette’, p.163.
49 Edward as an old man described to the author how he had to be very careful visiting France when he was a young man, being liable for French national service (having been born in France).
50 ‘Annette’, p.165.
51 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
52 Diaries, 14 November 1902, p.57.
53 ‘Annette’, p.166. The house still stands and is now a primary school.
54 Ibid, p.166.
part in hunting, or indeed in any activity away from his work. However, by April 1903, the hot weather was upon them and the camping season was ending.\textsuperscript{55} They decided that Aimée, now pregnant again, and the children should relocate to higher ground.

It was to be the hill station of Mussourie that became their temporary home until July 1903.\textsuperscript{56} In the 1820s the area had been ‘discovered’ by a Captain Young. By the mid-nineteenth century, Mussourie was easily accessible from Delhi, and one of the prime hill resorts of the country. It had become a flourishing resort, with its famous Mall, a long promenade, that was the hub of the town’s activity. The town offered fine views of the snow-clad Himalayan peaks of western Garhwal, as well as of the Dehradun valley below. Again, they stayed in a hotel and Aimée was determined to maintain a low profile, feeling no obligation to leave her card with the other ladies. But she was persuaded to participate in a cricket match ‘for some charity, between ladies with bats and men with broomsticks’. She enjoyed herself in what she described as ‘violent exercise’ and that evening she suffered a miscarriage. Arthur was summoned from Narsingpur to be at her side while she recovered.\textsuperscript{57}

Although it was mid-summer, a trying time for women and children to be travelling through the plains, they were then posted to Pachmarhi until November 1903, with Arthur on ‘special duty’. They then returned to Narsingpur, into their spacious new residence for which Aimée insisted on buying a bedroom suite, against Arthur’s objections. Understandably he saw it as a waste of money with their constantly changing postings, but she was determined by this stage of their married life to have an occasional say in how they spent their income.\textsuperscript{58}

Narsingpur was their base until March 1904, when Aimée’s brother Archie joined them.\textsuperscript{59} During this time Aimée managed to escape Narsingpur by visiting Calcutta, an all-day train journey, on what appeared to be primarily a dress-making and dental excursion.\textsuperscript{60} Another excuse for leaving Arthur was to meet the philanthropist Lord Radstock, who had been important to her when first she had raised funds for famine relief. Since she had by then abandoned all efforts to raise famine funds her meeting with Lord Radstock must have been of social significance only.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, p.167.
\textsuperscript{56} Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
\textsuperscript{57} ‘Annette’, p.168.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
\textsuperscript{60} Diaries, 19-24 February 1904, p.62.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid, 20 February 1904.
1904 was particularly significant as the prelude to Aimée’s grand entry as a senior hostess onto the Pachmarhi social scene, where they lived from March until November 1904.\textsuperscript{62} Prior to this she had decided rather reluctantly—she was not fond of the girl—that Arthur’s young sister Katie should be invited to spend some months with them, perhaps to acquire a husband. Katie had duly arrived in Narsingpur on 9 March 1904 (where Aimée recorded she was dutifully teaching her to ride, as a prelude to life in Pachmarhi).\textsuperscript{63}

When they subsequently moved to Pachmarhi Aimée had persuaded Arthur to rent ‘Lansdowne House’ one of the grandest residences available.\textsuperscript{64} Aimée herself was recognised in the paper as one of the most popular hostesses, apparently a competent organiser of social functions.

Her fortnightly garden parties were seen as a great success, as they gave the ladies, who did not play strenuous games, a chance of showing off their pretty dresses.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{62} Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
\textsuperscript{63} Diaries, 10 March 1904, p63.
\textsuperscript{64} ‘Landsdowne House, now ‘Champak’ is a boutique hotel for wealthy middle-class Indians, which gives an idea of its grandeur and spaciousness. It had ‘one of the best gardens in the place…There was a tennis court and badminton court and a lawn surrounded with flower beds, well kept up by the owners, so that she could give garden parties as well as dinner parties and so enable Katie to meet everyone. Annette, p.169.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid, p.170.
\textsuperscript{66} Family photographic archive.
This photograph taken at the time shows Aimée and Arthur in the carriage and her entourage of family (including brother Archie on horseback and (right foreground) a stout Katie (see following text) with the children, ayah and numerous servants.

An account in *The Pioneer* provides a fulsome description of a social occasion she hosted at Lansdowne House:

> On the evening of Monday 21st [May 1904] Mrs Arthur Mayne was ‘At Home’ at her residence on the outskirts of Pachmarhi where the grounds had been artistically laid out for an *al fresco* concert. The Lansdowne House gardens are the envy of all house-holders in Pachmarhi and on a warm summer evening nothing could more nearly approach the ideal of a night in paradise than to lie on the beautiful green sward surrounded by masses of sweet scented flowers listening to angelic music. Mrs Mayne is a particular favourite in Pachmarhi, and her singing would always attract a large and deservedly enthusiastic audience.\(^67\)

Aimée had changed very much from the serious-minded young bride who had first come to Pachmarhi. She had unconsciously adopted the superior airs of an Anglo-Indian memsahib. She stood on her dignity and patronised younger members of her own service and the military who came and went so frequently to the Musketry school at Pachmarhi.\(^68\) She gave regular dinner parties and was much in demand for concerts and theatricals.\(^69\)

She and Katie went to all the dances, but strangely Katie herself had no enthusiasm for the social rounds into which she was now plunged. She began to make excuses not to accept invitations—she said she felt the heat, her dresses felt tight because the heat made her swell. On 25 July 1904 Aimée learnt the actual circumstances of her sister-in-law’s withdrawal from society. Katie was pregnant, the result of her young man making love to her the evening before she had left England. Aimée’s diary entry: ‘K at last told me the truth. Horrified!’\(^70\) Aimée had in fact been alerted by the ayah that Katie had not sent her sanitary napkins to be washed, but Aimée had just assumed the girl had some menstrual condition. She recorded that she felt very sorry for her sister-in-law, but now she knew the truth: an excuse was hastily

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\(^{67}\) *The Pioneer* is still a well-known English-language newspaper in India, established in 1865 ‘at the behest of the British’ and originally published out of Lucknow. Aimée preserved a cutting describing the event. Family Archives.

\(^{68}\) ‘Annette’, p.170. This is the only example in ‘Annette’ where Aimée actually criticised herself for her snobbishness.

\(^{69}\) Ibid.

\(^{70}\) Diaries, 25July 1904, p.66.
invented to explain Katie’s sudden departure. 71 ‘Katie left [Pachmarhi] by tonga’ for England (and marriage to her young man). 72

In the meantime Arthur, who had been working at Narsingpur, had written to say that

he was suffering from a threatened abscess on the liver. A doctor from Nagpur had seen him, and had ordered him to leave India at once and do a three month’s cure at Carlsbad. Arthur had not telegraphed for fear of alarming her. The servants had done all the packing and another Deputy Commissioner was already in Narsingpur. Aimée should stay in Lansdowne House during the rains; it was a good place for the children. It was no good bringing the children to Carlsbad, which was a very expensive cure place. They would all meet at Marseilles in three months’ time. 73

Given this medical emergency, Aimée is very laconic in both ‘Annette’ and her diary about what must have been a worrying time for them both, but Arthur had left hastily for Europe in June 1904. 74

Aimée, initially suffering from a heavy cold and fever, packed up Lansdowne House over the next four months and departed with the children and ayah for Bombay on 10 November 1904 to catch the SS Maredia on 14 November, arriving in Marseilles where Arthur was there to meet them. 75

He had been obliged to take a year’s sick leave and, though they would much have preferred to have spent the winter in India and enjoyed the cold weather camping, they had to face a winter in Europe. They decided that Switzerland would be a more suitable place and more sunny than England with its damp cold and East winds and eventually settled in a hotel at Vevey on the Lake of Geneva where there was a considerable English Colony and winter sports available on the surrounding hills. 76

The last diary entry was on 1 January 1905: ‘Margaret better – Eddie better’. 77 It is now only from ‘Annette’, her notes, her letters and newspaper cuttings that Aimée’s life is recorded, until 1931.

71 ‘Annette’, p.171.
72 Diaries. 28 July 1904, p.66 and Annette, p.175.
74 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
75 Diaries, 2 December 1904, p.68.
76 ‘Annette’, p.175.
77 Diaries, 1 January 1905, p.169.
In her memoir Aimée wrote of their reunion, of how Aimée and Arthur enjoyed a close relationship which resulted in her becoming pregnant again. In just a paragraph, she recorded that after a stay in Brussels, and not wishing to risk another confinement on the Continent, they relocated to Bournemouth on the south coast of England to prepare for the new baby. There, in March 1905, to their consternation Arthur became seriously ill with appendicitis. Appendicitis was a potential death-sentence in those days (the first successful operation for the removal of the appendix had only been undertaken in 1887) when the condition so often resulted in peritonitis, which was hard to treat with no modern antibiotics. Arthur was also suffering from malaria. He was operated on to remove his appendix. It appears that the appendix may have burst, as a second operation was necessary to counter an abscess. According to Aimée his recovery was protracted, with fears held for his survival, but Arthur held his own.

Their second daughter Helen was born on 13 September 1905. Aimée had been suffering from a persistent low fever and, even with the ayah’s help, she needed support with three children, aged five, three and the latest baby. It was here that her much-reviled mother-in-law, Mrs Mayne, came to the rescue, travelling from her native Lancashire to help out.

She unexpectedly proved to have a wonderful way with the baby and was of great use in helping when the monthly nurse had left and Amma [the ayah] and Aimée had taken over charge of the baby. Aimée was still feeble and it was a great effort to undertake the outfitting and packing for the return to India.

They returned to India in October 1905. They were posted to the district of Betul, ‘a high lying comparatively healthy small station.’ There they were based, off and on, until March 1909. Their bungalow was comfortable if sparsely furnished—they had been obliged to sell the furniture Aimée had insisted on buying in Seoni—but the climate was generally healthy and there was ‘a nice garden for the children to play in’.

However, there were the usual health scares: Helen had contracted malaria during one of their jungle camps and there were fears for the child’s survival—as earlier noted,
the Christian cemeteries throughout India are witness to this and other common causes of children’s mortality such as dysentery. Aimée moved temporarily to the healthier climate of Darjeeling to enhance Helen’s recovery. The child’s condition worsened while they were there and Aimée ‘left hurriedly for Calcutta – ‘Helen very sick’. Helen survived but lost weight: she was thereafter known according to family lore as ‘the Stick Insect’.

It was during this period that Aimée persuaded Arthur not to practise coitus interruptus when they made love:

She had never been able to adapt her nervous system to Arthur’s method of birth control. Her intuition warned her that there was something quite wrong for both of them in this sudden withdrawal in the midst of sex union. She tried to speak to Arthur about it, but he always shut up like a clam with the hasty explanation that it was for her sake. She had not associated the habit of lying awake long after he had fallen into a deep sleep with this practice, but she did notice that he came to her at rarer intervals and he no longer made love to her before the act. One night she told him that she desired another child and within a year and nine months after Helen’s arrival, a baby boy was born.

Archie arrived on 13 July 1908 with a cleft palate and nearly died because of his inability to feed. Once his condition had been stabilised, leaving the other children in India, Aimée took him to England during that winter. He was operated on successfully. On her return to Betul after some three months away Aimée colourfully described her welcome back:

Arthur met her at Railhead with an elephant borrowed from a local Rajah, and with the under ayah to hold the baby in her arms and they swung along through the jungle to join the camp. There were great rejoicings at the reunion, the three elder children were overjoyed to see their mother again and investigate the presents she had brought them when her luggage arrived next day carried into the camp by coolies.

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85 Ibid.
86 ‘Annette’, p.177.
87 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
88 In 1910, Archie’s harelip was further operated on by a Colonel Roberts at Indore. Ibid. Margaret wrote four letters to her mother who was with the recuperating Archie during this worrying time. Henceforth, Archie was to speak clearly but nasally. As an adult he grew a moustache to cover the operation scar.
There was an immediate return to physical intimacy between the parents. Arthur was anxious to resume full conjugal relations, and Aimée wrote that she was happy to oblige, provided there was no physical withdrawal during the act.\(^90\) This inevitably resulted in the birth of their last child, Isa, on 3 January 1910, in Nagpur.\(^91\)

Arthur had been given two Headquarters jobs there. In 1909 he had been appointed Commissioner of Excise and shortly after Settlement Commissioner. These new positions came with Departments of his own.\(^92\) ‘Settlement Commissioner’ was the same position that Mrs Carey’s husband had held, when Aimée was received as a bride at Nagpur in 1897. His new roles entailed having a house in Nagpur and one in Pachmarhi for the hot weather, when the Government relocated to the hills.\(^93\) The family spent the summers of 1911 and 1912 in Pachmarhi.\(^94\) Aimée entertained lavishly, because of her husband’s senior status that necessitated a minimum of fortnightly dinners at their residences. Again, according to her memoir ‘Annette’, she proved very competent; she had to be:

[Arthur] left all arrangements to Aimée, which guests were to be asked to meet which others, and their order of precedence, She studied the Civil List and Military Gazette to arrange them in the order that was their due and not cause offence. She begged him to help her in her arrangements, for she knew other husbands and wives got a lot of fun out of entertaining together, but he showed polite but complete indifference in the matter.\(^95\)

Arthur studiously avoided any social contact other than on those occasions where he was the host and this was eventually to result in the incident described below, that was undoubtedly one reason for his not rising to the very top of his Service.

It was an important requirement for all senior officers to attend the Memorial Service on the death of King Edward VII on 6 May 1910 (which, being during the hot weather, would have been held in Pachmarhi, in the church still maintained there). All officials were expected to be present in official uniform. Arthur had long put off outlaying the £20 cost of a full-dress uniform of dark blue, embroidered with gold, with a cocked hat and a regulation sword.\(^96\) He was unlucky in being expected to invest in a

\(^{90}\) Ibid.
\(^{91}\) Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
\(^{92}\) History of Services.
\(^{93}\) ‘Annette’, p.178.
\(^{94}\) Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
\(^{96}\) Waley Cohen, A Young Victorian in India, p.171. Formal uniform also existed in the Aden service (originally under the imperial India administration) until the early 1960s. The author was similarly
uniform, because there had been an absence of formal dress in the Service until near the end of the nineteenth-century, when levee dress was adopted for very formal occasions (as noted in Chapter Six). Arthur argued that he could always pretend to be ill on the occasions when uniforms were worn. He just did not care about ‘Courts and Kings’; he was not a snob, Aimée related, but he was as much against formally dressing up as he was at attending Church. What follows from ‘Annette’ perfectly illustrates Arthur’s attitude to formality.

Aimée had pleaded with him to conform. Arthur was obstinate and did not attend. After the service the Lt. Governor approached Aimée. ‘Your husband is not with us today. I hope he is not ill?’ ‘I am sorry to say he has a go of malaria,’ she lied. She was instantly seized with the fear that Arthur might have decided to go for a walk and be seen thus belying her words. He would hardly be playing a round of golf with the elder children, which he liked to do, on a day of mourning like this.

As she drove back to the bungalow she passed the links and there was Arthur with the two children playing golf. Aimée wrote she was furious. Had he no sense of the fitness of things? It was that awful home he had been brought up in. He had not the traditions and conventions of his class and in India they count[ed] for so much. When Arthur returned she took him aside where the children would not hear and was really angry. ‘I had to lie about you not going to church and then you are seen on the golf course.’ ‘My dear, I never asked you to lie for me.’ ‘What else could I do to save your “face”? You were the only official absent.’ ‘If they are all such fools as to follow like sheep, don’t blame me.’ ‘Oh, you are always right and everyone else is wrong. I can’t argue with you,’ and Aimée burst into tears. ‘Nerves, nerves, my dear, you need a tonic.’

Some time later came an official command that Mr Mayne should attend the Coronation reception, uniform obligatory. A private note was attached ordering Mr Mayne to acquire a uniform. Aimée wrote that she was too generous to say, ‘I told you so’ when Arthur with a look of annoyance handed her the missive, but she guessed that

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uncomfortably attired in mid-summer on sultanic birthdays and the like, with a heavy white-drill uniform buttoned to the neck, with sword and enormous Wolsey helmet.

97 Gilmour, The Ruling Caste, p.69.
100 Ibid, pp.181-182
this sort of thing did no good to his prospects of promotion.\footnote{Ibid, p.182.} She was eventually to be proved right.

By 1910 the parents had decided that the two elder children, Margaret and Edward, were ready for formal schooling; indeed, by the social and educational standards of the time, they were overdue for being sent ‘Home’.\footnote{Trollope, \textit{Britannia’s Daughters}, pp.126-127. See also Fowler, \textit{Below the Peacock Fan}, p.186.} Their education to date however had not suffered: Aimée had started teaching the older two children French, from when they were in Bournemouth in 1905, and they were expected in due course only to speak French at mealtimes. A French-Indian girl from the old French colony of Pondicherry was engaged to talk French to them and to form part of the household. Aimée kept to a regular timetable for lessons. Arthur taught them simple mathematics.\footnote{‘Annette’, p.183.}

Margaret (Henrie) Mayne recalled that her father Arthur had suddenly developed a talent for ‘stuffing the young, enquiring mind with miscellaneous information’. His anti-religion bias also came to the fore:

‘I’m inculcating an important moral principle. I want my children’s minds to be free of fear and basic superstition. I can remember when I was [Margaret]’s age being badly frightened of God…These children are going to learn from the start that there’s no such thing.’\footnote{Mayne, \textit{An Unreasonable Man}, p.94.} Aimée had made a point of recording that both she and Arthur had agreed not to introduce the children to any form of organised Christianity, or urge on them any ‘fanciful beliefs’.\footnote{‘Annette’, p.179. In a later letter from Aimée to Margaret, Aimée referred to herself and Arthur as ‘atheists’. This is the only reference to atheism being accepted by them both. Arthur had always spurned religion. Aimée to ‘Bunt’ (Margaret), letter [26], 26 February 1916, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.} One result of this was amusingly recounted by Henrie Mayne. The Chief Commissioner was enjoying a meal with the Maynes and the two older children were present. He used the phrase, ‘God knows…’ in a sentence: ‘There ith [sic] no God,’ said Edward automatically. ‘And all Gods are man-made,’ Margaret rejoined.\footnote{Mayne, \textit{An Unreasonable Man}, p.102.} Atheism would not have been well-received by Arthur’s contemporaries, adding to his reputation for being unorthodox and unusual—and certainly not to be considered for the very highest offices in the Service.
Aimée and Arthur both had socialist leanings by that stage of their lives. They had decided to visit New Zealand on their furlough from March 1912 to October 1913, to investigate whether it was a country in which to bring up the family after India. They were attracted by what they had read of an egalitarian life-style—what Aimée described as ‘the social experiments being tried there.’ They also liked the reports of the country’s beauty. They certainly enjoyed the scenery but, as for their settling there, the visit was a disappointment. The two older children spent their first few months at New Zealand schools. Aimée noted with distaste that they were acquiring local accents, so they were sent with their father to schools in England, in March 1913. Aimée had also been somewhat shocked at the absence of domestic staff and how indeed any suggestion of ‘class’ was disparaged. Luckily the faithful ayah was there to do much of the cooking and housekeeping.

New Zealand however provided Aimée with the opportunity to use that ‘trained mind’ to which she referred in her memoir: she was asked to give a lecture on India to the Overseas League. At first she demurred, never having spoken in public before, but when the secretary begged her to try, she was able to put together in popular form some of the accumulated knowledge she had acquired in India. The evening, she wrote, was a great success. She decided to write a series of articles on New Zealand for an Indian paper. Those were accepted and handsomely paid for. ‘What a glorious feeling to spread her intellectual wings and use her mental faculties. How different from the atmosphere of an Indian station!’

It was with real regret that Aimée left New Zealand, she recorded, with a newly-found self confidence. In September 1913 they said goodbye to their New Zealand friends and travelled to Bombay—it was a rough passage, with the children and ayah sea-sick. There they were to meet Arthur who had returned from England. Aimée landed in Bombay with the younger children on a Messageries Maritimes vessel from New Zealand in October, where she awaited Arthur’s arrival from England a fortnight

108 New Zealanders, by and large, believed that a child needs a good start in life to have a fair go (good housing, food, health care and education). The principle of a distributive system of social services in the form of access to public wealth, if yet imperfectly, was long established.’ Maria Humphries, ‘The Political Economy of Organisational Discourse and Control in New Zealand’s Liberalised Economy,’ in Jane Kelsey, The New Zealand Experiment - A World Model for Structural Adjustment, http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ezrot/Vol2_1/humphries.pdf. May 2010.
109 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
110 Edward’s enrolment at Nelson College was traced in 1966 by the author during a visit there.
111 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
112 ‘Annette’, p.185.
113 Ibid, p.188.
114 Aimée to Margaret, Letter [13], 20 September 1913, Family Archive 4/137/NO
It should have been a joyful reunion; the children were excited at the thought of seeing their father again, but it was an anti-climax. After a long time

he came down the gangway and came hurrying to them in his absent-minded way. He shook hands with Aimée, looking away from her in a way he had when embarrassed. Helen put up her face to be kissed and received a peck on the forehead. She was about to throw her arms round his neck, but his preoccupied air damped her enthusiasm. Archie held out his hand shyly and Isa hid behind Amma’s skirts.

At Watson’s Hotel, Aimée had booked the same rooms as on their wedding night, She has recounted that she tried to kindle some marital warmth in her husband; she reminded him that eighteen years previously they had come together there as bride and groom. Arthur brushed aside any suggestion that they might resume the old intimacy. Arthur made it clear that he had withdrawn from the physical side of marriage; ‘He had…become sexually and emotionally cold and indifferent, whilst remaining honourable and just in his dealings with her and kind and considerate in small superficial matters’. He was never to approach her sexually again. Aimée fulminated about this endlessly in her later diaries. He was ‘old and tired’ (he was only forty-four). He made it clear that he felt too worn-out for the physical side of marriage. Henrie Mayne suggests that Aimée then became hysterical and there was a considerable ‘scene’.

According to Henrie Mayne, it was evident that Arthur would not be able to live without illness, which was to provide a miraculous escape from the unhappy Aimée. ‘When he turned his face to the wall and closed his eyes he could shut her out. You could not argue with the sick.’ Here there is a description of the malady, of which Arthur complained for the remainder of his life, particularly when under pressure from Aimée. The symptoms were known to Arthur as ‘fatigue poisons’. In the absence of Aimée there was no indication then that Arthur was anything but a very fit man, not

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115 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
116 Arthur was obsessed with hygiene and would only kiss his family on their foreheads: he had a horror of flies and exhorted his children not to let any dog lick them. ‘He’s just been licking his fundament!’ Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.172.
118 Ibid, p.192.
121 Ibid.

‘Fatigue Poisons’ was thought to be a real condition over the period 1900-1930s. At one time it was believed to be linked to muscular activities during the day generating poisons that reacted on the cerebral centre like an anaesthetic. The poisons draining away, the patient awoke. It was apparently also associated with a build-up of lactic acid in muscles after physical exertion. Dudley Fulton, ‘Sleep’ in J.H. Kellogg (ed.) Good Health, February 1900, p.77.

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prone to manifestations of the hypochondria that assailed him when Aimée was present. The alleged condition, initially eliciting sympathy from the children later became an exasperating joke to Arthur’s elder two offspring.\(^{122}\) It remained a burden to Aimée who saw it for what it probably was, an escape mechanism from her. In contrast, as will be recounted, Arthur’s health and fitness after India were noticeable, particularly during his arduous service during the war and immediately post-war. Effectively at this point, both Arthur and Aimée must have recognised that their marriage, except in name, was at an end. Margaret certainly saw it as such.\(^{123}\)

In her memoir Aimée wrote of the reunion in Bombay understandably being an anticlimax for her. Although neither parent probably knew it then, the previous twenty years represented the high-point of their lives together: Arthur, in spite of his personal vagaries, had risen high in the ICS. Aimée was an important hostess and between them they had produced and were raising five children. While his anti-social tendencies were evident, Arthur’s hypochondria had not fully emerged then and Aimée was more immediately occupied with a busy home and social life. She had not yet given way to the misery that was to dog the later years.

As earlier related, Arthur had escorted Margaret and Edward from New Zealand in 1913 to identify suitable schools in England. Margaret was then thirteen and Edward eleven.\(^{124}\) Margaret was eventually enrolled at Wycombe Abbey School and Edward at Clifton College. During their first summer in England in 1913, the two elder children cycled in France with their father and then in England, from Southampton as far as Oxford. Arthur was to embark on a love of motoring, purchasing a new Ford, in which he was to indulge until the end of the 1930s.

\[[\text{He had}]\] decided to invest in a motor-car for his tours of inspection of distilleries, custom houses …and so forth. It was one of the first to come to the province…with a single-cylinder engine…The driver sat in front, exposed to the dust, wearing goggles and a bee-keeper’s veil. On a good day it would achieve a speed of twenty miles an hour.\(^{125}\) He was to drive this vehicle throughout the Central Provinces in India as Commissioner of Excise. When on tour, Aimée was perched behind with Helen who was sometimes permitted to accompany them. The touring in India was not to be much pleasure for

\(^{122}\) Mayne, *An Unreasonable Man*, p.165.
\(^{123}\) Ibid, p.110.
\(^{124}\) Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
\(^{125}\) Ibid, pp. 99-100.
Aimée, who found herself confined to the backrooms of the various Circuit Houses, tutoring Helen, while her husband conducted his work at the front of the buildings.  

They returned to Nagpur and Pachmarhi in November 1913. By then, it appears that Arthur was already looking forward to retiring from the Indian Civil Service: he was bored with headquarters life; there was no more jungle touring, Arthur was now too senior. He was entering the last decade of his ICS service, approaching the time when he could retire on a full pension.

It was also the time when big prizes were awarded to the best officers. When, after six months an official junior to Arthur...was designated as the future Chief Commissioner it was clear that [Arthur] would not be considered for high promotion. He was now a disappointed man...It was...agreed that they would leave India as soon as full pension was due

In 1914 the Great War was declared. Other than effectively depriving the parents of their elder daughter and, to a lesser degree Edward the second-born, marooned at schools in England, there was little direct impact on family life in India. The two older children had spent the summer of 1914 with their Uncle Archie and family in France. Margaret wrote of the French preparations for war and of England’s declaration of war on the side of France. She then quickly settled down to school life at Wycombe Abbey.

However it was feared that Edward had developed a knee infected by tuberculosis after a soccer game at school. Hoping that the warmth of the Indian climate would aid recovery, the parents quickly arranged for Edward to travel to them, where fortunately his knee improved. He arrived in Nagpur on 22 October 1914 and by November he and Helen were ‘in camp’ with Aimée where, at the age of twelve and armed with a .303 rifle, Edward killed a tiger. This ‘caused quite a stir in the Province’, given Edward’s age. His education, Aimée recounted, now passed back to his parents who were

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127 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
129 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, pp.110-111.
130 An interesting contact between the families, given that Aimée was later to express bitter personal animosity towards her French Catholic sister-in-law, ‘her deceit and bigotry’ Annette, p. 232.
131 Ibid, p.192.
132 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
already teaching the younger three children. Arthur later wrote to Margaret that the latter were being taught by him alone.

Aimée had always wanted to holiday in Kashmir and had urged Arthur to join her—he had refused—so she decided to take Edward to Kashmir on their own. During October 1915 mother and son toured parts of Kashmir, including some strenuous climbs. It was a courageous venture, a lone woman and young son with porters. She wrote frequently to Arthur and the tone of the letters is amicable; Arthur passed on to her the latest news of the war. On her return to Arthur, Aimée involved herself in collecting donations towards the ‘Prince of Wales Fund’ for the families of war victims. It was back to ‘good works’: she was tiring of the constant social life and of singing at concerts.

It was an unsettling period for the Maynes. By the end of 1915 Arthur and Aimée were actively looking forward to life after India. Arthur had written to Margaret that his ‘minimum time [for a full pension] was up’ and they were considering going to New Zealand again; on 26 March 1915. For an unexplained reason they abandoned this intention. It was while they were considering where to relocate, towards the end of the war, that it was apparent securing passages to Britain would be well-nigh impossible. The German sea-offensives in the Mediterranean had created hazards for shipping. Arthur noted gloomily that an Ellerman liner had been shelled by a submarine. Historian Richard Houg concluded

[although by] 1917 the war against the U-boat was gradually being won. But it was an unsensational campaign and the shipping loss figures were still much higher than they had been before unrestricted U-boat warfare was introduced.140

It was not until a year later that the family finally left Pachmarhi permanently for Nagpur ‘camping with friends’, preparing to leave India some three months later. On 13 February 1916, Arthur wrote to Margaret quite casually that ‘We have decided to have a look at British Columbia and I dare say that Mother & the children will stay

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134 Ibid.
135 Isa was being taught to read at the age of six. ‘We think the sixth birthday is early enough. There is a risk of the sight becoming short at 12 or 15 if one read much in early childhood.’ Arthur to Margaret, Letter [unnumbered, 3 October 1915. Family Archives.
136 Aimée to Arthur, commenting on the war news he passed to her. Letters, Family Archive, 4/139/R
139 Arthur to Margaret, 12/December 1915, Letter #2, Family Archive, 4/137/NO
141 Arthur to Margaret, Letter [3], 13 February 1916, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
there until the war is over. Why they decided on Canada is unclear, other than that it
was well away from the war, and they could eventually travel to England from there,
although Aimée complained to Margaret about the problems of securing berths to the
Far East. Only P&O offered an irregular service to Hong Kong.

They were fortunate to be well away from the war. Arthur gave details of the
appalling military casualties resulting from the bloody struggle in Mesopotamia, where
the British, at that stage of the war, were fighting a losing campaign against the Turks:

Our local regiment [stationed at Nagpur] the East Kents (the Buffs) were
fearfully cut up. Only one officer and 90 men were left unwounded. We
shall need huge reinforcements before we conquer Mesopotamia. The
failure of the Gallipoli operation has set free stray Turkish forces.

In the meantime, Aimée was

very busy with wounded soldiers…giving them tea and a motor drive. They
are more of the working classes but decent & respectable & very glad of a
treat out…

We heard from Pachmarhi that a panther had killed a child (native)…in the
middle of Pachmarhi…the few sahibs [there] turned out to beat for it but
failed to get a shot in the long grass. A tiger was shot…

Meanwhile in Nagpur Arthur had received an official invitation from Government
House to attend a valedictory dinner, for men only, to mark his retirement. On the
morning of the dinner he announced he was feverish; by tea-time he was safely in bed
with ‘fatigue poisons’ and dispatched a note excusing himself. A newspaper cutting
of the time (date excised) reported the Chief Commissioner’s formal address:

I had hoped that…Mr Mayne, the Commissioner of Excise, who is…about
to retire, would have been here this evening, but he has been prevented by
ill-health from accepting my invitation. Mr Mayne joined the Central
Provinces in 1890, and but for a short period in the Finance Department of
the Government of India has throughout his services worked in these
Provinces. As Commissioner of Excise for the past seven years he has held a
post of great importance. He has transformed the Department which he
administrates and brought it into line with the latest ideas and developments.

143 Aimée to Margaret, 26 February 1916, Letter # 52, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
144 Arthur to Margaret, 16 February 1916, Letter # 54 Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
145 Aimée’s sense of upper-middle-class status is clearly evident here.
146 Aimée to Margaret, 26 February 1916, Letter # 52, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
147 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.112.
The Provinces will be the poorer for the loss of an officer of high ability and administrative talent…

Looking back, it was a great shame that Arthur did not rise higher in the Service. This was an anticlimactic end to what had been a worthy career. Arthur had left his mark wherever he had served. His earlier work in finance, his efforts with famine relief and his subsequent distinguished service in the senior posts he had held, providing financial support for his family to travel, suggests he deserved more accolades than he received: a mere valedictory address.

However, Arthur’s behaviour did nothing to endear himself to his colleagues, his superiors, or to his wife. He was fortunate on the one hand that his talents allowed him to continue in his ICS role and even to be promoted, as was Malcolm Darling, earlier referred to in the Introduction. Like Darling he demonstrated there was still a place for those who differed in their outlook and behaviour from what was regarded as acceptable.

As for Aimée, she was forced to fit in, meeting the demands on a senior hostess and bringing up her family, just as Barr and Fowler saw her role. Both husband and wife adopted education regimes for their children that were outside what was usual, to send all the children ‘Home’. Instead, the younger children were educated by their parents who also used their furlough to travel away from England. They were atypical of their contemporaries, leaving only the oldest daughter in England until the family reunited after World War I.

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148 Cutting: ‘Dinner at Government House’ newspaper unknown, date obscured. 4/137/NO.
149 As was the norm. de Courcy, The Fishing Fleet, p.35.
The quarter-century discussed in this chapter covers Aimée Mayne’s life after leaving India. She was first based in North America during which period Arthur left to contribute to the war effort in Europe; subsequently Aimée and Arthur attempted to adjust to post-World War I in Britain. This was the prelude to Aimée making a home for herself and the family in Jersey, from where she developed a career as a lecturer on the mainland. It was also the time from when she and Arthur led essentially separate lives. Even though they shared a house, their personal differences were to be revealed as irreconcilable.

These twenty-five years of Aimée’s life regrettably lack diaries. As related earlier, it was from 1905 that she ceased the daily entries: the old, worn container in which she had stored her nineteen diaries fits them exactly, so it is unlikely that any other diaries have been lost. Seemingly, they were just not compiled and Aimée’s increasingly busy family and social life was reason enough for her to abandon her daily entries. At the end of this stage of her life, however, when her children were grown-up and mainly living their own lives, that she resumed her diaries in 1931. Fortunately her memoir ‘Annette’ gives a full account of the years covered in this chapter, augmented by her eldest daughter Margaret (Henrie)’s account.¹ There are also valuable primary sources that include informative family correspondence between Arthur and Margaret in England at school. Later in Canada there was a telling exchange between Aimée and her husband, then in Europe, and occasional letters to/from her children. Margaret’s letters and writings in particular provided valuable firsthand accounts of the family history. Newspaper cuttings preserved by Aimée afford further details of her life as a public speaker during the 1920s.

In using ‘Annette’ and An Unreasonable Man, it has been important to remember again that each is essentially biased in favour of the writers—Aimée, in presenting what

she would regard as a favourable view of her by posterity, and Margaret (who it was known within the wider family) was much fonder of her father than she was of her mother. Margaret was not averse to subtly belittling her mother’s achievements. That aside, this was the period when the family were to leave India for good: accordingly the focus here is on the end of an era for Aimée during which she was to draw on all her mental resources, to ensure the family made a smooth transition to a new life after India.

On 30 March 1916 Aimée and the children left Nagpur by ‘midday mail train’ for Bombay. Aimée described their departure: it was a very sad parting. Aimée was devastated at abandoning the beloved ayah, who had been given a pension and found a suitable appointment with another expatriate family.2 Amma clung to my feet & sobbed & Helen & Isa howled, even Eddie shed a tear. Archie was the only dry-eyed person….At the station there were some 30 English people to give us a send-off. Among them the wife of the English Bishop & the head of the American Presbyterian Church. Not bad for Atheists, eh! There must have been some 50 natives too. Father’s office brought garlands & flowers, & ‘pan supari’ (perhaps you have forgotten the pan leaves with spices inside a gold leaf outside). Other native gentry garlanded us & we were weighed down with heavy garlands, even…Isa. It was sad to say good-bye to many good friends, many of them of 19 years standing, but I am not sorry to leave Nagpur, ugly dusty place with a climate like hell & no suitable occupations or companions for the children.3

They were delayed en route for seven hours—’a terrific hot day in the train’—because of a goods train breakdown. In Bombay they were greeted with more garlands, before they moved to a small hotel out of Bombay, to await their vessel on 8 April. Suddenly the children were all struck down by acute stomach trouble. Aimée in desperation located a young Parsee doctor who reassured her it was not cholera. The children gradually recovered, though Aimée then succumbed. ‘When father joined us he found us all in bed’. (Arthur had stayed initially in Bombay to complete some business). He was ebullient. Aimée had mixed feelings about her husband:

When I think of the number of times your father seemed to be on the verge of a hopeless collapse, but he has always popped up like an India rubber ball, Father is so cheerful & happy like a school-boy with a holiday. To feel

2 Aimée commented that Amma was probably the best friend in her whole life, which tells one something about the often toxic relationships she had with others. ‘Annette’, p.194.
3 Aimée to ‘Bunt’ (Margaret) 26 February 1916. Letter #26, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
he has finished his service in India, earned his full pension & is now free whilst quite a young man to start life elsewhere.4

After a week in one of Arthur’s contractors’ bungalows on the coast, they departed India forever in April 1916, heading for the Far East and to Canada where the parents had decided to relocate, to see out the war, prior to their return to England.5 If their first favourable impressions of Canada lasted, they might stay. Otherwise, they would seek to return to the UK.6 Initially their voyage was to Colombo, where they had to wait three weeks for a passage eastwards. During their enforced sojourn, Arthur described to Margaret how the war situation still preoccupied them:7

we tear up cloth & roll bandages for the wounded in Mesopotamia.8 We heard of the fall of Kut yesterday & surrender of 9000 troops. A nasty blow. Three of our friends have been among the prisoners (if still alive).9

Generally though, war news was limited. ‘This was ‘before the days of wireless’, commented Aimée.10

They had a few hours notice to catch a Messageries Maritimes vessel via Singapore, Saigon, Hong Kong, Shanghai and then to Yokohama. The parents cooperated amicably in looking after the children, while occupying separate cabins, Arthur with the boys, Aimée with the girls.

Arthur proved a most admirable assistant. He was devoted to his duties and quite happy teaching them, walking with them up and down the deck, setting them to play deck games and taking them ashore at the various ports of call. There was no need for him to exert himself making acquaintance with the other passengers.11

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4 Ibid. Further evidence that Arthur’s so-called illnesses were often psychosomatic.
5 Mayne, ‘Chronology’. The first modern British passport was the product of the British Nationality and Status Aliens Act 1914, so it is assumed the Mayne family had been issued with these. http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2006/nov/17/travelnews. July 2012.
6 ‘Annette’, p.201.
7 The force fighting in Mesopotamia was principally by the Indian Army, with some British units. Although this campaign began simply to secure oil supplies for the Royal Navy, victory over the Turks became believed to be a less costly way towards Germany’s defeat than the painful battering at the Western Front. Levels of sickness and death through disease were very high. and the unexpectedly determined Turkish resistance, contributed to high casualty rates. 11012 British and allied forces were killed, 3985 died of wounds, 12678 died of sickness, 13492 were missing and 9000 were prisoners of the Turks’. http://www.1914-1918.net/mespot.htm.July 2010.
8 War news continued a preoccupation. Presumably making bandages was to pass the time in Colombo. Other letters of the period refer to the French troops they met on board who also had suffered heavy casualties from the war. The ‘walking wounded’ were on their way to join garrisons in French Indo-China.
9 Arthur to Margaret, 2 May 1916. Letter #12, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
11 Ibid.
They stayed in Yokohama for a month, until Arthur was able to obtain passages for the party on a Canadian-Pacific vessel for Vancouver. They departed Japan on the Empress of Japan of the Canadian Pacific Ocean Services Ltd. http://genealogy.kolthammer.org/Bonnycastle-o/p13408.htm. May 2012. They docked at Victoria, capital of British Columbia, on 23 June 1916. Soon after landing they found a comfortable house, placed the children in schools. A Chinaman [sic] cook and general factotum took the whole family under his extraordinarily capable wing and resented Aimee’s desire to help with the housework for this large party. No, the lady must give orders, and do the catering, the rest was his, John’s work. He managed the work that it would have taken five Indian servants to do. Arthur insisted on his own bedroom.

They were determined at that stage to have Margaret join them, hoping she could catch a boat from Britain to Montreal on 28 July 1916, since they had heard that the Germans were sparing civilian shipping from U-Boat attack, to avoid further antagonising the Americans. This never eventuated: the Canadian government decreed that no women and children were to cross the Atlantic at that time.

After the euphoria of a new country, trouble brewed between the parents. Initially all had been well: Aimée had been flattered to be invited to a garden party at Government House, to meet the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. Arthur had busied himself with helping to settle the children into their schools. He had also plunged enthusiastically into the Election, supporting the Socialist Party of British Columbia’s candidate. Aimée related that she was delighted to see him so interested and occupied. He had ‘forgotten his health’ and was out at all hours helping the candidate at meetings and at the Party Headquarters. When the election was over, the candidate was soundly defeated and Arthur’s temporary enthusiasm collapsed. The £5 put aside for Margaret’s passage had been spent on the political campaign. Meanwhile, she was knitting socks for the troops and getting to know the neighbours.

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13 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
15 Arthur to Margaret, 9 June 1916, ‘Letter #21, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
16 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.115.
17 Aimée to ‘Bunt’ (Margaret), 2 August 1916. Letter #19, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
18 Arthur would have seen himself as a progressive socialist and the campaign was plainly an opportunity to demonstrate this. The Progressive Party, part of which gave rise to the CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in the 1930’s—now called the New Democratic Party), which was at the time essentially an agrarian farm-based party, primarily on the Prairies. ‘Supporting it in British Columbia then ‘would have been the height of political naiveté’. John Gould, Chicago, email to author, 14 July 2010.
19 Aimée to ‘Bunt’ (Margaret) 2 October 1916.
Arthur had now taken to spending time in bed. He had nothing to do which depressed him, so Aimée put him to work. To pass the dreary hours, she taught him to knit socks for the troops. After he had made some elementary miscalculation and produced a bag rather than a sock, he increased the tally of socks she was able to hand into the Red Cross knitting section weekly.

But this was no work for a man with a first-class brain, with nothing physically wrong with him. A life and death struggle was being waged on the other side of the world and here was Arthur lying in bed imagining himself ill!20

Having to explain that all her husband contributed towards the war effort was knitting socks was too much for her. He was only forty-seven and capable of so much more than that. Aimée upbraided both Arthur and ‘the worm’, eventually persuading him that his place was in England, to volunteer his services. Her bitter railings prevailed: he left for Vancouver on 6 January 1917.21 He caught a train across Canada and sailed to England. His spirits had revived at the prospect of travel across the Atlantic, as he wrote to Margaret on 30 December 1916:

I’m looking forward keenly to the excitement of a possible submarine attack. Now there are no tigers to track, I feel I need a thrill of some kind to keep me going – the effect of giving up my work and doing nothing for months on end has not been altogether good for my nerves, especially as my illness has predisposed me to depression. Perhaps closer proximity to the war zone will liven me up and act as a tonic which I badly need.22

There was no submarine attack.

Shortly after his arrival in England, Arthur—recognising that the one practical service in demand was driving—was accepted as an ambulance driver by the Red Cross and posted to the Italian front (Italy was on the side of the Allies in the 1914-18 War) where he acquitted himself with distinction in his Red Cross ambulance, rescuing wounded Italian soldiers in the Alps. A series of letters from the Front are encapsulated in the account of his hazardous service, well covered by Henrie Mayne.23 Then, presumably as a result of his administrative talents being noticed from his work in India (particularly when distributing rations during the 1890s famine), he received a

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21 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
22 Arthur to Margaret, 30 December 1916. Letter #17, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
remarkable promotion. There is no information on how this came about, but he received a telegram:

YOU ARE APPOINTED DIRECTOR BUREAU DE SECOURS AUX PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE AND COMMISSIONER BRITISH RED CROSS IN SWITZERLAND STOP. HEADQUARTERS FIVE HELVETIAASTRASSE BERNE STOP PROCEED BERNE IMMEDIATELY.

The Bureau de Secours had been started by ladies of the British legation with sewing parties. It had enlarged as the number of Allied prisoners of war grew, with consignments of food and clothing being despatched to sick prisoners held in Switzerland and to those in German camps via German freight trains. Supplies were packaged and despatched daily by one hundred paid packers. Another fifty staff were responsible for tracing missing prisoners of war. Arthur’s expenses were paid but he refused a salary.

From October 1917 to June 1918 he was responsible for ordering, packaging and sending weekly bread ‘rusks’ to 100,000 Prisoners of War, in German hands. His ‘ill health’ was forgotten and he tired out his staff working fourteen hours a day. He was joined in Berne by Margaret, whom Arthur had removed from her last year at Wycombe Abbey School, to be his assistant. He was later responsible for arranging the evacuation of all allied prisoners of war from Switzerland and Germany.

Aimée—unlike Margaret—makes no mention that Arthur’s work was reputedly outstanding. It appears that ‘out-of-sight’ was ‘out-of-mind’ in her case and the mere fact that her husband was occupied and away from her suited her well. Arthur was decorated by the French, Italian and Romanian governments for his work—but not by

25 ‘The disabled, the very sick, those needing much medical attention and those likely to die on their hands had been transferred from German camps to Switzerland’. Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.139.
26 Ibid, p.137.
27 Rusks were dried bread that, with the addition of a little water and briefly baked, became a ‘very passable imitation of fresh bread’. ‘Summary of the Work of the Central Prisoners of War Committee’, in Reports of the Joint War Committee and the Joint War Finance Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England on voluntary aid rendered to the sick and wounded at home and abroad and to British prisoners of war 1914-1919, R.C. Ref: 28, British Red Cross Museum & Archives, p. 563.
29 H.M. Chargé d’Affaires to A. Mayne Esq, letter, 16 November 1918, Documents relating to Mr Arthur Mayne, Red Cross Commissioner in Switzerland during the First World War, 1914-1918, British Red Cross Museum & Archives R.C.Ref: ACX322. See also Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.140. Margaret’s account of her father’s exceptional service was first-hand, serving as she was with him in Switzerland.
the British government. Unfortunately for Arthur’s public reputation, there were anonymous (false) allegations put about that ‘Mr Mayne had been heard exhorting returning soldiers to vote Labour at the forthcoming General Election’, and he was reported as having proclaimed himself to be a Fabian Socialist, at a large meeting of returning British prisoners-of-war, in Germany.

Back in Canada, although Aimée had felt a sense of relief that Arthur was no longer there lying in bed, she was depressed that the enforced separation of husband and wife indicated that their marriage was one in name only. She wrote later in her memoir that she felt broken-hearted and fearful of what the future might hold. Money was not a problem; Arthur had ensured she had sufficient funds to draw on for living expenses.

But her mood lifted as to boost her morale she began to look round for subjects in which to interest herself. One was the Theosophy movement that, as noted earlier, attracted mainly the professional upper classes, with its conviction on reincarnation. Although Aimée did not refer to Theosophy then in her letters, it is clear from later references by Henrie Mayne that she became intensely interested in Theosophy from her time in Canada, to the point of trying later to attract Arthur, who ridiculed her. A friend also asked her to join a patriotic association, the IODE (Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire). Still an active organization, it was for keeping in touch with, and helping where necessary, the families of soldiers at the front. Another friend wanted her for the Alliance Française, which meant pleasant fortnightly gatherings to talk French. She was then asked to deliver lectures on various subjects—travel, political and literary.

The lectures were well received. The Daily Colonist of November 7 1917 referred in glowing terms to

Mrs Arthur Mayne’s address to the Women’s Canadian Club yesterday proved so fascinating that she has been asked to continue the subject from a new standpoint…Her topic was ‘India,’ a theme she made enormously

31 Ibid.
33 ‘Annette’, p.207.
34 Arthur to Aimée, 30 September 1917. Letter #23, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.

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interesting by a combination of sound and customs; and original powers of observation. In addition to these she brought a number of excellent lantern slides which served admirably to illustrate some of her statements as to scenery, art and people…the changing history of the ancient country…the position of women in India.\textsuperscript{39}

Aimée was asked to speak again – and again. Other adulatory newspaper cuttings echoed the theme.\textsuperscript{40}

On 30 September 1917 Arthur wrote a long, sad letter to Aimée on the state of their relationship, referring to a letter from her of the 28\textsuperscript{th} ult. regarding the prospect of our getting on well together…Once again you blame yourself for what was inevitable. \textit{Please} [sic] don’t distress yourself for our differences. You tried hard enough to keep down the antipathy towards myself which became a great barrier between us. As that antipathy, you believe, has now died down, I can see no reason why we should not be the best of friends when we meet again. Believe me, I think mostly of the many years of happiness we had together and how much I owe you & of your devotion to our children & I try to forget those last miserable years…\textsuperscript{41}

Aimée had added a bitter handwritten note on Arthur’s letter:

\begin{quote}
The self righteousness of the man. No blame attaches to him, his constant ill health (75\% exaggeration) his loss of sex power, his life of a recluse cutting me off from knowing people, his lack of judgement in dealing with the future of M[argaret] & Hel[en] & in making them a social circle. No, nature is to blame for my antipathy to him, not his own conduct to me.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

As a return to the UK was still impossible, after less than two years in British Columbia, Aimée decided to relocate from Canada to the USA, to investigate whether the US might appeal as a country in which to bring up the younger children.\textsuperscript{43} As the house in Victoria was far too big for the family with the father and son gone, she decided to move to Southern California for the six winter months. She wanted to form an opinion of the ‘vaunted civilisation’ of the United States. One of her old Aunts

\textsuperscript{39} Cutting, 7 November 1917, \textit{The Daily Colonist}, \#25, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
\textsuperscript{40} Cuttings, \textit{The Daily Colonist}, 9 January 1918, \textit{Victoria Daily Times}, 7 and 15 February 1918, Archive, 4/137/NO.
\textsuperscript{41} Arthur to Aimée, 30 September 1917. Letter \#23, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} No visas were required to enter the United States from Canada until 1939. Matthew J. Gibney and Randall Hansen (eds), \textit{Immigration and Asylum from 1900 to the present, Volume I}, Santa Barbara California, ABC/CIO Inc, 2005 and \url{http://www.ppt.gc.ca/pptc/hist.aspx}. Accessed August 2010.
[Aunt Jane] had just died and left her a legacy of £350 so she had no hesitation about unjustifiable expense. ‘It was with great regret that they said goodbye to their circle of friends in Victoria, but they looked forward to coming back when the winter was over’.44

She had been determined however that Edward return to Clifton College. By enlisting the support of a Canadian senator, who lived near them, she organised for Edward to sail by troopship to England, in 1917. Having packed up the house in Victoria, Aimée and the three younger children sailed for San Diego, California during the winter of 1917/18.45 They settled into a seaside bungalow (recommended by Canadian friends who used to winter there). This period of Aimée’s life, she wrote, gave her great satisfaction. She was coping on her own and not just as someone’s wife. She even felt she had enough confidence in herself to prepare Arthur for a new start to their married life, when they met again.46

She wrote to him that she had read Dr Marie Stopes’s book *Married Love: A New Contribution to the Solution of Sex Difficulties*—previously referred to in Chapter Seven on the subject of the physical aspects of marriage. This was something about which both she and Arthur were ignorant at the time of their wedding and which, she decided, had been the cause of unhappiness and misunderstanding between them, as documented at length earlier in this thesis.47 Hitherto, she felt her sexual life was a failure. Since those few early occasions of sexual climax in Simla and subsequent lack of satisfactory physical union, she now identified ‘incomplete orgasms’ as the cause of her nervous reactions and of the gradual coldness and estrangement from her husband. Surely Arthur would recognise this. Full of hope she sent him *Married Love*, urging him to read it, and they would find they could live happily together again when they met. (Arthur eventually responded that he did not think the author had quite proved her point.)48

In the meantime, she noted in her memoir that she focussed on life in San Diego. Public speaking again became her forte. She noted in her memoir ‘Her fame as a lecturer had followed her, many doors were opened to her, she spoke to many societies’.49 Two newspaper reports of that period survive: the *San Diego Union* of

46 Ibid.
47 It was technically helpful in explaining how to obtain pleasure in the sexual act. Hall & Porter, *The Facts of Life*, pp.208-209.
March 29 1919 carried an adulatory report of Aimée’s lectures on India and on New Zealand, the latter illustrated by slides provided by the New Zealand government. A second similar cutting is undated.\(^{50}\)

Aimée wrote that the children had made friends with everyone in that ‘free and easy atmosphere’, but the boys were ‘a noisy, rough crowd as was only to be expected’, and she was horrified to find girls of twelve and thirteen with painted and powdered faces, with evident intent to attract the opposite sex at these early ages. No, she decided, ‘her little Helen and Isa were not going to be put in a milieu where the sex side of their character would be forced unduly early’. They should go to English schools and not grow up too soon. Archie too, would become a regular tough among such boys; he was inclined that way already.\(^{51}\)

In spite of Arthur’s urgings that they consider a future in the USA, after less than eighteen months in San Diego, Aimée’s mind was made up: they would return to England. They arrived in England in May 1919.\(^{52}\) They were met by Arthur and their nineteen-year-old daughter Margaret. Aimée was shocked by the appearance of the beautiful young woman at Arthur’s side, whose boyfriends and lifestyle were to further scandalize Aimée’s sense of propriety. ‘She wore a rather low-cut summer frock, very high heels, a lavish amount of lipstick and…a floppy transparent hat, better suited for Ascot or Henley’.\(^{53}\) Arthur however was his old self: he insisted on his own bedroom and as much as possible absented himself from being alone with Aimée.

Accommodation was at a premium post-war and after an initial stay in a grim suburban house in Wealdstone, a largely working-class area in the London borough of Harrow, the family based themselves outside St Malo in France, from the summer of 1919 until September 1920.\(^{54}\) The younger children attended local schools, where they were forced to learn and speak good French. Aimée, with no help from Arthur (who insisted that all he wanted was one small room for himself) house-hunted. Money was short. Arthur had unwisely invested £4,000 in German marks and lost it all.\(^{55}\)

Aimée decided on renting a small flat in London for herself (where, it is not recorded) to keep an eye on Margaret, and provide a home for her, while her eldest daughter attended the London School of Economics (LSE). She found plenty to do in

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\(^{50}\) Cutting: *The San Diego Union*, 29 March 1919, #44. Family Archive, 4/137/NO.

\(^{51}\) ‘Annette’, p.211.

\(^{52}\) Mayne, ‘Chronology’.


\(^{54}\) Mayne, ‘Chronology’.

London, besides keeping the flat in order and doing the cooking. She attended some lectures at the LSE; she joined various societies; she looked up relations and old friends; she enrolled in a speakers’ class at the Fabian Society, to gain self-confidence in public speaking, and how to prepare her subjects.

She continued to worry about a permanent home for the family; she felt they could not stay on in St Malo indefinitely. Once a centre of British settlers it was ‘a sad repository of mainly elderly women whose men folk had been killed in the War and no place for young people to grow up’.  

In early July 1920 she had visited her brother Archie in Guernsey and been repelled by his French wife and ‘appallingly behaved children, over whom hung the heavy hand of a fundamentalist Catholic dogma. Archie himself was very deaf, suspicious and eccentric, worn down by a marriage that was even worse than that of the Maynes’. 

Aimée determined to put space between them and her own children, but she was attracted by the idea of living in the Channel Islands and crossed to Jersey, to look for a suitable house they could purchase. Jersey then as now had no Income Tax., one of the first of today’s ‘tax-havens’. The climate is benign and the island is beautiful, a rural atmosphere with small villages outside St. Helier, the capital. It has fine beaches and is close to France. Initially, it seemed wasted effort, after she had inspected a series of dwellings that cost less than £1,500—‘too small, too dark, too dreary’. But there was one that appealed, located at 45 Rosevale Street, St Helier. She summoned Arthur. He too toured the unsuitable places and then she showed him the one she liked, even if it had ‘no architectural merit’. Originally two houses, it had a connecting link, it was amply supplied with bedrooms but with only one shabby bathroom to serve all. Arthur approved and made a successful offer of £2,500 to the previous owner Samuel Hayes on 31 July 1920. It was nearly double what he had said they could afford.

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56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man p.159.
59 Ibid, p.221.
60 Listes du R80 Haut de Ville. #945, Rates record, 1928. 49. Jersey Archives. (The year 1928 was selected at random, to confirm the location). The site has been completely redeveloped, first as a hotel and currently accommodation for staff of a large finance house in Jersey. May 2011.
61 Public Registry, Jersey Archives, D/Y/K3/379. The Deed of Purchase is a long document written in the archaic Norman-French, with occasional English phrases, common to public documents in the Channel Islands. May 2011.
62 It was purchased for £2,500 Mayne ‘Annette’, p.223, which was equivalent to over £91,000 in 2011. Bank of England ‘Inflation calculator’. January 2012.
This, the only home they bought together, was to be their base for eleven years from September 1920 until 1931. Aimée was ecstatic when she sat down to write to Edward at Clifton College, in the neat hand that was to stay with her all her life—except in later angry diary entries. The letter gives a good idea of Aimée’s optimism at that time, so is worth reproducing almost in full:

Greenwood, Roseville Street, Jersey, Channel Isles, 11.7.20

My darling Bachha [Edward’s baby-name from India]

Eureka. Father and I bought a house 3 days ago at above address. It is far too expensive and far too big for us. It has a beautiful garden, but too much cut up into flower beds to suit my taste. I intend to alter it later, do away with some beds & make a lawn big enough for badminton. Father wanted me to take Anglo-Indian children to make some money out of boarding & looking after them, but I prefer to sublet part of the house & so justify taking so large a house. It cost £2,700 of money raised on Insurances but we hope to get some or more when we sell it at some future date, when the family is out in the world. I enclose plans of house and garden. Send on to M[argaret] when you write. It is a pleasant feeling to have a pied-à-terre somewhere in this overcrowded part of the world. I have sent for King & Co’s boxes and will start unpacking as soon as they come.

I came to Jersey, looked round for houses and father joined me to make a decision. We all have rather grand ideas and mean houses in a terrace don’t suit us. Old places without a bath don’t suit, Jersey is full of them. A garden was essential, so we took this. If I sublet, it makes me only 5 bedrooms & 2 attics, one quite a decent attic...

I am alone in a house containing 13 rooms & 2 attics. Cant [sic] complain of want of space. It is a bit eerie at night. Have seen no spooks so far. The house agent & gardener were surprised I would stay there alone at night!

Looking forward to the holidays & seeing my dear Bachha again. Your loving Mother.

After five weeks alone in the house, furnishing it with the meagre funds Arthur had placed at her disposal, she related that she crossed to St Malo to dispose of the rented villa. She was then joined in Jersey by the whole family, at the start of a relatively happy decade for them all. The five offspring for much of this time had their

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63 Mayne, ‘Chronology’.
64 Aimée to Edward, 11 July 1920, Letter, Family Archives 4/3/1/A.
friends to stay during the holidays. Helen was sent to board at Wycombe Abbey School on the mainland and the two younger children to local schools in Jersey. Edward went up to St John’s College Cambridge and Margaret returned to the LSE.

The parents reverted to their isolated existences in winter, and when the house was empty. Arthur retired to bed in his solitary room, coping with his ‘fatigue poisons’ where he played patience and wrestled with quadratic equations. He categorically refused to join in any social activities, attend meetings or meet others at clubs. However, for a time, he found a winter occupation translating foreign novels. For someone who had no ear for sound he was a gifted linguist and worked enthusiastically on one of Pirandello’s works, with Margaret. ‘Einstein published his theory of relativity and Arthur was exhilarated for a week’.  

For her part, Aimée joined enthusiastically in whatever Jersey had to offer; she attended Government House sociabilities[sic] always by herself, so that quite a number of people were unaware of the existence of a Mr Mayne. She sat on many social and political committees, and was Secretary of the League of Nations Union and the League of Social Service. In fact it was a joke with the family that each time Mother went out she came back on some new committee. Later, she started a Discussion Circle in the winter months, which grew from a small affair in private drawing rooms to a big affair for which a large tea room had to be hired and tea provided by a caterer.  

Aimée was making a name for herself in Jersey social circles, with some useful connections such as the Dean of Jersey. This period of Aimée’s life was the start of her career as a competent speaker but regrettably there are no primary sources other than Aimée’s letters to substantiate her memoir ‘Annette’. There is no reason to doubt the veracity of her account, although Henrie Mayne in An Unreasonable Man provides some personal detail about Aimée’s behaviour in the family circle (which could have extended to her speaking to audiences) with an underlying cynicism that understandably never emerged in Aimée’s memoir:

[Her mother’s] chronic insomnia was the household scourge... The worse [she] felt the more she assumed a tone of desperate brightness. Talkative at all times, her volubility increased under nervous strain. (She always tended to dismiss a silent person, who might be speechless from shyness, or

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68 ‘A friend she had worked with on committees’. Ibid, p.232.
immersed in deep thought, as a fool)…she would launch forth on a dissertation…no one dared interrupt the flow of that keen, hard, terrible talkativeness, that painful brightness.69

Aimée continued with her public lectures, adding to her repertoire of ‘The Position of Women in India’, ‘Samuel Pepys,’ ‘City Churches’ and ‘Wartime Canada’.70 The Women’s Institute arranged a series of tours throughout Britain (that thankfully for her took her away from Arthur) while including in her other interests such esoteric items as ‘Holidays for Welsh miners.’ She was paid, too. There are two records of her lecturing fees on-tour in 1928. The first: ‘I returned to London, gave three lectures for which I got 12 guineas’.71

Then there was the Empire Marketing Board (EMB), appointed in 1926 to further the sales of Empire produce in Great Britain. It became heavily involved in promoting Empire produce, producing a series of advertising posters, as well as arranging speakers. Aimée applied for a lecturing position, was auditioned and accepted. She was finally in paid employment. Lectures were arranged for her that involved her in long journeys in the winter across Scotland and England for months at a time. She also broadcast for the EMB over the BBC.72 2613 lectures and addresses were given in 1926: the total audiences exceeded half-a-million. The popular lectures were on some Empire subject, generally illustrated by slides. The demand for this type of lecture was considerable, 1551 popular Empire lectures were delivered in the season 1927-28, to audiences aggregating approximately 300,000. By arrangement with the British Broadcasting Corporation topical talks were broadcast.73

In a letter to Margaret, in which Aimée thanked her and the family for a fur coat, she referred to her lecturing schedules and to the misery of being alone with Arthur in Jersey:

I know it will save me many hours of feeling shivery on my travels in steamers and mail cars on the Scotch Tour & for many winters. For a Labour woman I feel a bit too much like a Duchess in it but that will pass. It is a coat I will have to live up to; it will give me some of that size & dignity I have missed in life….I have had a most interesting 3 weeks & my nerves are much better. As you say, heaven & hell are within, no one knows it theoretically better than I do, but sleeplessness you so aptly describe shatters

69 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.168.
70 Ibid, p.166.
71 Aimée to Margaret, 19 October 1928, Letter #4, Family Archive, 4/137/NO.
the conscious control of my mind. I must work, work, work at something physical or mental to forget what a rotten world this is – and I must arrange not to spend too long alone with father…I broadcasted for ¼ hour on the Channel Islands from Bournemouth. The papers here gave favourable comment on my effort. They paid me 2½ guineas but I had to find my own expenses.74

Aged fifty-six, Aimée was at last fulfilling herself intellectually. She also maintained a close interest in Russia after the Bolshevik revolution. It was her oldest son Edward, with his first earnings after Cambridge, who stood his mother a round-trip to the USSR, organised by the Society of Cultural Relations.75 It was not a success and it disillusioned her. At Sebastopol she naively took a photograph of the harbour (including distant fortifications) and found herself temporarily imprisoned. Thereafter her enthusiasm for all things Russian waned.76

Rather surprisingly, given her Labour leanings, she obtained six weeks of political campaigning for the Liberal Party, which, she wrote, was very well paid. It was tiring work, and often under trying conditions of long journeys in cold weather. Apparently lecturers were only commissioned for winter sessions and lecture halls were sometimes bitterly cold and sometimes over-heated. However, she stood up well to it, ‘had many interesting experiences’ and was very proud of being able to earn sufficient money to keep herself, and put something by—and above all to keep away from Arthur’s depressing company in the winter.77

There had been one overwhelming sadness for her during this decade, caused by her brother Archie’s suicide on 4 August 1924, having invited himself to stay with the Maynes in Jersey.78 Archie had left the Maynes’ house and took prussic acid, on a deserted beach, the Grève d’Azette.79 A report in the Jersey Evening Post sheds some

74 Aimée to Margaret, 19 October 1928, Letter #4, Family Archive, 4/137/NO. Who paid Aimée for the Channel Island lecture is unrecorded.
75 The Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the USSR was founded in 1924 by a ‘small but distinguished group of people’ which organised an initial exhibition of Soviet art, books and magazines. A Science Section was then formed and a Press Committee of British and Russian journalists met, ‘with the one purpose of fostering cultural relations. By the 1930s it could count among its luminaries Virginia Woolf, Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, H.G. Wells and John Maynard Keynes. Nature, 154, 29 July 1944. www.nature.com/nature journal v154n3900/abs/154141b0.html. August 2010.
76 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.177.
77 ‘Annette’, p.234.
79 Aimée’s social contacts at the time included the Dean of Jersey who arranged for the body to be buried in consecrated ground. ‘Annette’, p.232.
light on the event. Archie’s lengthy suicide letter was read out at the Inquest. An extract:

He had suffered financial losses…[he] had been unable to secure employment…his suicide [would] enable his sons to finish their education…He wished his remains disposed of without religious rites…the poison he was taking was cyanide, electrolytically prepared by himself’.  

He was nearly stone-deaf; his marriage was unhappy; he detested Roman Catholicism and he had a large, demanding Catholic family. His family was apparently well insured against his death and his wife stood to receive an annuity of £250 on his death. Relations with Archie’s family were now completely severed, after the widow from Guernsey had joined Aimée and Arthur for the funeral service. (Aimée had sent them a brief impersonal cable, to state Archie had killed himself, which caused irreconcilable anger and grief on their part).

The decade ended on a low note with most of the offspring dispersed and the big house empty. Alone with Arthur, Aimée both mentally and physically had deteriorated: she now looked the middle-aged woman she had become; her hair was nearly white’. She suffered badly from insomnia and from depression that only a vigorous lecturing routine had kept at bay, but at times she felt suicidal, fighting the temptation to do away with herself by drowning in one of the rocky bays along the shore. It was perhaps only the realisation that her youngest daughter Isa still would rely on her that kept her from self-destruction.

The 1920s were however significant in Aimée’s life in that she had made a real effort to establish an intellectual life for herself, alongside her role of running the Jersey...
household, most of which had been left to her, with minimal help from Arthur. It was all the more surprising then that the next decade was to witness the parents actually enjoying a life together that—even if it lacked any real intimacy between them—nevertheless provided a mutual solidarity. As for Arthur, living in his solitary room in Jersey, his mental condition deteriorated towards the end of the Jersey period. Henrie Mayne described how she and her brother Edward were summoned to Jersey, having heard their father was convinced he was dying from TB—Aimée had temporarily decamped to London. Arthur was persuaded from his bed and made a miraculous recovery.85

The 1930s were to restore some equanimity to them both, in a remarkable accommodation between Arthur and Aimée, all due to the advent of the motor car. As Sidonie Smith commented,

The automobile transformed everyday life, making individuals instantly and comfortably mobile. No planning and no tickets were needed. Eventually no excessive wealth was needed either...Yet even as the mass-produced automobile functioned as the engine driving the routines of middle-class life and norms, it simultaneously functioned as a vehicle of escape. In their automobiles people sped away from the domestic constraints of home and the deadening routines of a rampant consumerism, and headed out across the land in search of new experiences.86

So it was to be with the Maynes.

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Arthur and Aimée did some real exploring in the wilds of Jugoslavia, through Herzegovina and Bosnia, where cars rarely ventured on the execrable roads, and where wolves still roamed in the forests. ‘Annette’ p.249

The 1930s were to provide a period of necessary adjustment to Aimée Mayne’s lifestyle and expectations. She was fifty-eight years of age at the start of the decade. Her lecturing was coming to a close and the family was dispersed. Now she had to focus on what her instinct told her was ‘self preservation’, to keep herself occupied and interested, while living alongside Arthur. She did not want to live alone. Consequently her diaries for the decade, (which she resumed in 1931) increasingly demonstrated somewhat less of an emphasis on daily minutiae other than touristy entries on her travels. There was more an interest in the contemporary events around her—the evolving political world.

Margaret saw her mother as having come to a decision:

[Aimée] remained locked in her hatred towards her husband, though with her fierce hatred there were still times when she found him companionable. She would die rather than reveal to outsiders that their marriage was not a happy one….[She] had talked at times of leaving Arthur, but now that the need for maintaining a family home had passed, the question of separation did not arise. The thought that an unsatisfactory husband was better than none, the need for a scapegoat on which to vent her spleen, the force of habit and the realisation now that it was too late to strike out on her own, all made for a continuance of their life together.

The decade was also to prepare her mentally for the grim years of World War II that lay ahead. She had come to recognise that the periodic bouts of melancholy that assailed her coincided with physical inactivity and with living with Arthur, without the opportunity of creating opportunities to exercise that ‘trained mind’ of hers, to which she referred in her memoir ‘Annette’.

In short, Aimée recognised the need to face the future constructively. Now that the children were grown up and leading their own lives, there was little need to keep the

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1 ‘Annette’, p.234.
Jersey house going and Aimée disliked the prospect of staying on there with Arthur, even more than she had during the 1920s. However, she was still Jersey-based in 1930 when their eldest son, Edward, provided a brief escape through travel, in early 1931.

He stood Arthur and Aimée a tour of southern Italy. This journey was the first of many in the 1930s undertaken by Aimée, who might have seen herself in the vanguard of female travellers of the period. As Frances Osborne observed, ‘The pre-World War One era had been the age of the gentleman explorer. The new vogue for travel…was the female response to this.’\(^3\) In an American context, Judy Wajcman recognised that the ‘culture of automobility’ in the 1920s and 1930s represents a desire for speed, mobility and escape from routine with its reliance on the motor vehicle.\(^4\)

Mussolini’s work in Italy to consolidate Fascist control during the 1920s, according to Edwin Holt, had brought social peace and the cessation of class warfare.\(^5\) By the summer of 1922, ‘Fascist squads did their violent work’ to establish Fascism over leftists and non-Italians.\(^6\) Fascism was intended to offer to Italy the promise of a new democracy, a ‘revolutionary conservatism’.\(^7\) The country benefited from the placid political climate that had been established from that violence during the 1920s and by the 1930s Italy was a holiday site for tourists. However Aimée noted that

- she was also shocked by the extreme poverty laid bare in the country towns, especially of Southern Italy contrasting oddly with the flamboyant stencilled messages put on the walls by the Fascist regime….Most people seemed to shrug their shoulders and take no notice of these declamations.\(^8\)

On this initial journey to Italy funded by Edward, most of her touring appeared to be away from Arthur who for part of the time was in bed with a cold.\(^9\) She left him in Naples for a month while she travelled by sea to Marseilles, returning to Jersey on 19 January 1931.\(^10\)

She was in London five days later, to commence one of the last of her lecture engagements that took in locations that varied from south-east England to Worcester. The topics were seldom noted—two however being ‘Pepys’ on 16 March 1931 and

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\(^8\) ‘Annette’, p.269.

\(^9\) Diaries, 12 January 1931, p.71.

\(^10\) Ibid, 19 January 1931.
‘Towns of India’ on 21 March 1931—and, in between her appearances, she herself was attending lectures delivered by other speakers on matters in which she had developed an interest over the years—at the Ethical Society, the Fabians, the Asian Society, the Quakers—on subjects as varied as Iraq and the formation of a new European army. The esoteric range of topics again demonstrates what reads as an almost desperate urge to keep her mind occupied. She continued this London-based existence until February 1932.11

Aimée had revisited Jersey only once during this period and apparently quite suddenly she and Arthur decided to sell ‘Greenwood’, the Jersey home they had owned for twelve years.12 Although since the Italian odyssey Arthur had continued to live in Jersey, Aimée persuaded him to put the house on the market and she returned to Jersey to pack up. The house was auctioned on 19 February 1932, for £3,000.13 The sale of the Jersey house eliminated the bank overdrafts. Added to incomes derived from Arthur’s ICS pension, were the fees (not detailed) he may have earned from translating books. He translated at least three books during the early 1930s, but did not persevere with what could have been a useful way of filling his time: Konstantin Maglic’s The Dandy Hun (London, John Lane, 1932) from the German; Jean Damase’s Pilate’s Wife (London, Duckworth, 1932) from the French; Luigi Pirandello’s Better Think Twice About It, (New York, E.P. Dutton & Co Ltd, 1934) from the Italian (this in association with Margaret).14 This income added to Aimée’s lectures and proceeds from the house sale ensured they were to have sufficient funds to indulge their peripatetic lifestyle of the 1930s—and this during the Great Depression. The financial burdens that apparently had dogged Arthur for so long had ceased to exist. His mother, to whom he had continued to provide an annuity, had recently died and the children, other than Isa, needed no further financial help. There was money to spare.15 They were very fortunate.

13 Ibid, 19 February 1932, p.80. In present-day values, this represented some £172,000. Even allowing for some 5% inflation per annum the sale ensured they recovered their original equity of £91,000 (in modern currency).
14 Books held in Family Collection. ‘[Arthur] was a gifted linguist. With no ear for sound he could nevertheless master a foreign language with ease. He had a real appreciation for rendering a foreigner’s shades of thought into the equivalent English’. Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.172.
15 Ibid, p.182. Aimée’s diaries from this period contain careful notes of her cash expenses. She occasionally borrowed sums from Arthur to supplement her living allowances and her fees from lectures. Diaries pp.89-90. (Notes). She noted at the end of her 1933 diary ‘27th Sep - Advanced for Tour – Expenses – £43-9-4½’ but she does not itemize the costs of each night’s accommodation at any point. Diaries, p.89.
This second Great Depression, which had begun in 1929, severely disrupted European economic life, affecting all European nations. In countries that were still democratic, the parliamentary system of government came under pressure. Great Britain and France managed to survive by accepting ‘innovative multi-party political coalitions and economic ideas’, although there was considerable economic wretchedness in Britain—George Orwell calculated there were some six million unemployed in Britain in 1936. In Germany, Italy, and Russia with totalitarian control of their societies there was also much economic misery, particularly in Russia. In Germany, most affected by the Depression, Hitler and his National Socialist (Nazi) party exterminated any opposition and undertook rearmament that helped to overcome the effects of economic disaster. In Italy, the picture was less clear because the impact of economic reorganization under state control was obscured by also rearming. This was the background to Aimee’s and Arthur’s travels through Europe.

Relations between the pair had been equable until the sale of the Jersey home—essentially by still living separate lives—until Arthur suddenly announced that he was leaving Jersey the next day and that he had arranged for the vet to put down the beloved family dog after he had departed, leaving Aimee to supervise. This was duly accomplished but, according to her memoir ‘Annette’, it was followed by a major altercation between Aimee and Arthur—‘Broke down at A’s callousness’. On the following day they returned to London, to live separately in the same hotel, Arthur as usual certain that he was ill, doubtless in reaction to the altercation with Aimee. On 1 March 1932 she noted grimly: ‘A. recovered & shows consideration.’

Arthur for his part was also planning to fill the time meaningfully. He proposed a tour of Spain, citing the need to recover his health. The travels started on 3 March 1932. While Aimee visited the Spanish sights, Arthur was occupied with translating a book. Their holiday was ruined by the cable they received that Helen’s husband John Beavan had died in the Sudan from blackwater fever and pneumonia and that their widowed twenty-seven-year-old middle-daughter was on her way back to Europe. Even

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19 Diaries, 26 February 1932, p.79.
20 Ibid, 1 March 1932, p.80.
22 Diaries, 3 March 1932, p.80.
23 Ibid, 21 March 1932, p.80.
the phlegmatic Arthur, Aimée noted, expressed emotion at the news. On 3 May 1932 Helen joined her parents in San Sebastian and on 11 May 1932 the three of them returned to London where the parents settled into the Windsor Hotel at Lancaster Gate, close to Kensington Gardens, Aimée’s London base, on and off, for the next decade. She was laid low with pneumonia over that winter.

Once recovered, she focussed again on outside interests, embarking on a string of engagements. A diary entry for Friday 24 February 1933 read: ‘Debate Oswald Moseley-James Maxton – Lloyd George – Friends House – 8 p.m.’ and on 2 March, ‘Fabian - Living in Hell - Germany – Dr Gooch – 8 p.m. - Blavatsky Lodge’. She was doing her best to keep up her interests but she noted, it was all wearing her down. She still had some lecture engagements to finish, for dates had to be fixed six to nine months ahead. She had decided to give up lecturing thereafter and to make no further commitments, although her diary for 1933 contains notes on her proposed lectures for 1934. She had enjoyed five winter seasons in that activity but, since the attack of pneumonia, she wrote that she no longer felt so confident of her health.

Family relationships were under strain. She recorded her shock in the diary to learn that Margaret, now aged thirty-three, had secretly married A. D. Peters on 19 February 1933. He was the wealthy and famous literary agent who had founded his agency in 1924. Aimée was furious that she had not been informed or involved, but relations between mother and daughter were often fraught and perhaps Margaret feared an emotional outburst from her mother at the ceremony. Aimée felt alone and abandoned—very upset, not only with her eldest child, but also with Edward who had witnessed the secret marriage, a telling indication of the rupture within the family.

25 The cost of her living in a hotel is never noted in her diary which suggests it may have been a standing financial commitment by Arthur on behalf of his wife, paid directly by him.
26 ‘Annette’, p.244.
27 An interesting venue (the Quakers) for presumably a debate on Fascism.
29 ‘12 March Clacton, 14th Tonbridge, 20th G[?] Park, 21st Pepys.’ Diaries, p.89. A later reference also includes topics: Russia to S.C.R., India & Religions of India, Channel Isles, London Centre of Empire, Spain, Capri Sicily Magic Isles.’ Diaries, (notes) p.105.
30 ‘Annette’, p.244.
31 ‘Self terribly upset.’ Diaries, 18 February 1933. p.93. Margaret makes no mention in An Unreasonable Man of her marriage, advance news of which had been kept from Aimée, for reasons that are unclear. Hilary Peters, Margaret’s daughter commented that Aimée disliked Margaret’s husband. Email Peters to author, 11 February 2012.
33 ‘Annette’, p.249.
Nevertheless, by the end of 1933 decisions had been made that altered her life for the better.

After some poor weather in England that Arthur had decided they could afford to motor abroad again. He was really enthusiastic about the prospect of motor travel with himself at the wheel, an opportunity that had not emerged since his motoring days in India. In a very short time he had ‘invested precipitously’ in a small Austin. The ‘Austin Seven’ had transformed motoring for residents of the UK as Henry Ford’s ‘Model T’ did for the Americans. The Seven was built for 17 years between 1922 and 1939 and with its spoked wheels and small body it is astonishing how this vehicle conveyed Arthur and Aimée over poor, remote roads. Aimée named the Austin ‘Aldous’. ‘Aldous’ was not a common name in Britain and one could speculate that Aimée named the Austin for Aldous Huxley and his recent book, *Brave New World* (1932). Arthur was to turn into an inveterate traveller. ‘He was no culture-vulture but a bird of passage, here today and gone tomorrow, travelling for travelling’s sake’.

This was the start of a period of sheer escapism that, strangely enough, brought Arthur and Aimée together: a decade of motor travel that incidentally also enabled him to avoid paying UK income tax, by residing for a minimal time in England. This period was to draw them closer than they had been for many years. Aimee was then 61 and Arthur 64 years of age. ‘Intimate they never were, just formally polite and considerate as they might have been to anyone travelling with them’, but Aimée did feel it was now possible to remain with Arthur and not insist on living alone. The pace he set exhausted her: this otherwise mild-mannered man was a ‘fiend on the road, refusing to let anyone overtake him and at time she was frankly scared’. She felt she had to keep up with him, if only to keep him from his bed.

On 27 September 1933 they left Folkestone on the first of what were to be their ambitious motor tours that crisscrossed parts of three continents. Aimée’s diaries during

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34 Margaret (Henrie Mayne) refers to it as being a ‘capacious high-powered Ford tourer.’ Mayne, *An Unreasonable Man*, p.182. Arthur in a later letter to Helen (Family Records 4/1/E) writes ‘I managed to get 33 miles to the gallon with the Austin’ [my emphasis] so an Austin it is. The Fords came later, for their South African and USA tours.

35 Diaries, 3 November 1933, p.100.

36 No one else in the *Oxford National Dictionary of Biography*, or indeed the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, is named Aldous.


38 They continued to occupy separate bedrooms in Continental hotels where on one occasion, much to Aimée’s rage, the proprietor ‘deceived by Arthur’s springy step and lively eye, his total absence of grey hair’ mistook him for Aimée’s son. Ibid, p.185.

the 1930s are crammed with where they visited including an early enigmatic entry, written in Germany: ‘A lovely drive…Saw a concentration camp’.\textsuperscript{40}

By early November they had traversed Austria and Hungary, heading for the Balkans, a part of the world that was struggling to present normality to the world, after Austria-Hungary was defeated in World War I. In a long letter of 14 November 1933, Aimée gave a vivid and at times bizarre account of the drive overland from Budapest to near Dubrovnik, their destination for Christmas 1933.\textsuperscript{41} This was a journey that revealed Arthur’s enthusiasm for undertaking perilous excursions into remote areas—a motoring epic against which they had been advised, because of the appalling roads and the remoteness.\textsuperscript{42} A later letter of Aimée’s included one from Arthur to Helen, written from Split on 15 November 1933, contained a laconic account of this marathon journey, on which they met no other motor vehicles outside population centres: ‘Our little car has behaved nobly. On most of the road progress was mostly a series of skids, the surface being a mixture of clay and melted snow’.\textsuperscript{43} Aimée ended her long letter with an account of entering the town of Fiume on the Yugoslav/Italian border that contained a mixed disputatious population of Yugoslavs and Italians.\textsuperscript{44}

Our letters were at Poste Restante Fiume so we wanted to pass over but passports were not sufficient, we had to go to the municipal offices at Sushak and pay for a police permit and go across for one day. The Italians and Croats hate [sic] each other, no one will speak Italian even if he knows it, nor change money into ‘lire’. A cheerful state of things likely to lead to peace! As in Italy the sentries and officials give the Fascist salutes which we have not seen since leaving Nazi Germany.

She had added presciently: ‘There is plenty of material in these parts for future wars’.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{40} Diaries, 11 October 1933, p.99. The term ‘concentration camp’ had commonly been in use since the British forced Afrikaner women and children into camps during the Boer War. This particular camp was near Feldberg. The first concentration camps in Germany were established soon after Hitler’s appointment as chancellor in January 1933. In the weeks after the Nazis came to power, The SA (\textit{Sturmabteilungen}, commonly known as Storm Troopers), the SS (\textit{Schutzstaffel}, Protection Squadrons - the elite guard of the Nazi party), the police, and local civilian authorities organized numerous detention camps to incarcerate real and perceived political opponents of Nazi policy. Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Museum, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005263. August 2011.

\textsuperscript{41} ‘The great pillar of dust seen from far across the Hungarian plain that resolved itself into a herd of long-haired swine…’, Mayne, \textit{An Unreasonable Man}, p.185.

\textsuperscript{42} Aimée to Helen, 15 November 1933, Balkan Letters, Family Archives 4/1/D.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} Ignoring the suburb of Susak, which had 11,000 Yugoslavs and 1,500 Italians, the rest of Fiume had 22,488 Italians against 13,351 Yugoslavs and certain others. Leften Stavros Stavrianos and Traian Stoianovich, \textit{The Balkans since 1453}, London, C. Holt & Co. (Publishers) 2002, p.576.

\textsuperscript{45} Aimée to Helen, 15 November 1933, Balkan Letters.
Aimée then wrote of plans to visit Scandinavia the following July and August. She was also concerned that Helen in Khartoum (she had remarried) would ‘become that awful thing, a “burra mem” such as India and I fear the Sudan produces’—a revealing insight into her feelings, some twenty years later, about the life she had led in India.

She and Arthur had apparently maintained equable relations until then. However, once in Dubrovnik—where they had arrived on 22 November 1933, after a rain-soaked journey the whole way—it was not long before the rigours of travel culminated in the by-now familiar mutual stand-off. ‘Arthur in bed, the usual lying depressed – self pity – self very upset – Walked on Tupad in a turmoil; [The next day] A. still in bed as usual – eating well – seeing me upset made an effort & came to dinner’. However, writing on Christmas Eve 1933 from Dubrovnik to Helen (who passed on her mother’s letters to her siblings as hers were similarly circulated) Aimée was more positive:

The colours of sea and sky and mountains are so lovely—I have never seen anywhere such blues and greens as the Adriatic—deep turquoise blue shading to pale emerald greens on the edge of the coast. As Edward says, “it makes one gasp,” it just touches something primitive inside me, like a tiger appearing in a tiger beat (only that always gave me a tummy ache as well!).

Her diary for 1934 indicates she was trying to learn Serbo-Croat, in between the sight-seeing and the grumbles about Arthur’s social intransigence. Margaret who had been holidaying in Austria had joined them. Relations between Aimée and Margaret were now temporarily restored, as evidenced by the absence of pejorative comment in the diary. On 26 March 1934 they left ‘our beloved Dubrovnik’ for Mostar, ‘a Turkish town – old bridge – bare mts. [sic] & a large winter lake’. This last entry included a casual reference to the assassination of the Austrian heir apparent (Archduke Francis Ferdinand) and his wife, Aimée sending postcards to family showing the location.

For the remainder of March 1934 and into April they were constantly on the move, Aimée recording endless places with unpronounceable names that they traversed. It still rained incessantly. On Wednesday 25 April, now in Czechoslovakia,
she noted: ‘Swastika on roads.’ They were motoring through those sections of northern and western Bohemia and northern Moravia, in the vicinity of the Sudeten mountain ranges. On 8 May 1934 they were in Prague and, quite suddenly, she noted they had decided to go to Norway. After frequent brief inconsequential notations of their tour through Germany via Nuremberg and Berlin, they crossed the Elbe into Poland on 31 May, bound for Scandinavia. Perhaps it is strange Aimée made no reference at that stage to the European political situation, though Henrie Mayne light-heartedly refers to Arthur’s reactions to Hitler, when she wrote up their time in Nazi Germany. By 10 June 1934 they were in Stockholm the capital and largest city of Sweden.

The remainder of their epic journey to north of the Arctic Circle demonstrates the couple’s determination and courage, as fully described by Aimée’s diary entries for that section, best pictured with Arthur clinging determinedly to the wheel of their small vehicle lurching and grinding over the poor roads, and Aimée’s frequent admonitions to Arthur to drive carefully—particularly after turning the car over on the return trip. Arthur reported the incident twice, first in a letter from Haparanda, Finland, on 2 July 1934. He continued in like vein in a second letter from Trondheim on 10 July.

I only overturned Aldous once. When I heard the sound of smashing glass just after Mother dived out through the Sunshine Roof I knew our windows had gone but they hadn’t. It was that she had alighted on the broken window of the Fiat car that had somersaulted at the identical spot the previous day. The Fiat had burnt up and its hulk dragged a few yards further on, but its window glass had been left for Mother to break her fall on. And she wasn’t even cut by it! What luck!

Aimée at this stage was unusually nice about Arthur. In a letter she wrote to Helen from Trondheim, the old capital of Norway, on 10 July 1934 she was still enthusing about Arthur’s new-found vigour. She described Father as a new man when in a car,

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52 Ibid, 25 April 1934, p.110. The Sudetenland had a predominately German population that had been incorporated into Czechoslovakia when that new nation’s frontiers were drawn in 1918. It is interesting that Hitler did not annex that part of Czechoslovakia until 1939.

53 Ibid, 10 May 1934, p.110.

54 Ibid, 31 May 1934, p.111.

55 ‘You have to say, “Heil Hitler!” every time you speak to that upstart’. Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.188.

56 Numerous rather dull descriptions of sight-seeing were enlivened by ‘Left Stockholm…on to Stadts hotel – Hudiksual – melancholy midsummer day – celebration with Pilsner in a cold garden – saw 3 drunks! They had taken their allowance at one go!’ Diaries, 23 June 1934, p.112.

57 Arthur to Helen, 2 July 1934, Letters, Family Archives 4/1/D.
more like an enthusiastic youngster of 20 than an antique of 64. He stood that long 10 days drive to the Arctic and back and it was I who wanted a day’s rest in bed. Aldous is being attended to also, the dent at the top of his frame where he overturned being hammered out & painted & his wing straightened & painted. He won’t look quite so dissipated, poor darling. His internals were entirely undamaged. 58

After describing their arrival in Norway, she commented on the current political situation (which would have emanated from news of Hitler’s ‘Night of the Long Knives’).

What horrors are happening in Germany! I simply cannot imagine a friendly, orderly people being party to wholesale murder. I hope all the leaders at the top will get the violent deaths they deserve. Hitler must have a strain of madness. 59

After July in a very hot Norway they took a vessel to Newcastle in northern England from where they motored sedately to Boarstall near Oxford, where Margaret and husband Pete lived. 60 Diary entries make it clear that relations were then equable between mother and her eldest daughter.

So ended the first of their epic motor odysseys—and they wasted no time in England. They had met all the offspring except Helen (who was in the Sudan) and there had been ‘words’ with Isa. Aimée communicated poorly with her youngest. ‘Outburst from Isa. Talked of suicide…It is the Comte, her 3rd big love affair – Well, they have all (except Ed) gone thro’ it’. 61

The 1930s were to continue as a decade ‘on-the-move’ for Aimée, a period for her not only to fill the time, but to re-establish her sense of well-being. Why they should then decide to tour South Africa in particular is not recorded, but the parents bought another car, a Ford. (‘Aldous’ was unserviceable after Scandinavia). On Friday 31 August 1934 they took the new vehicle to France via Bordeaux, intending to catch a ship from Portugal to South Africa, for their next motorized expedition. Having been joined by Margaret and Edward, their first day abroad again was unpropitious: ‘Drove

58 Ibid, 10 July 1934, Letter, Family Archives. 4/1/D.
59 Ibid.
60 A medieval ‘keep’ in Buckinghamshire, leased by the wealthy A. D. Peters as his country retreat, the year before, according to Hilary Peters (in conversation, 2009).
61 Diaries. 25 August 1934, p.115.
tho’ Industrial towns, knocked down a man at St. Etienne’.62 This terse statement in Aimée’s diary provides no further information.

En route Aimée undertook some family research. By 18 September they were in the Dordogne inspecting the alleged family chateau, ‘de bel Castel’. Aimée of course was convinced that her French antecedents were the origin of her mother’s family name ‘Bonnycastle’. ‘A wonderful site but uninteresting modern simple chateau’ was Aimée’s comment.63 The party then journeyed leisurely to San Sebastian from where Edward and Margaret returned to England on 22 September, leaving Aimée ‘feeling dull and flat’ On 9 October 1934 she noted that ‘poor King Alexander’ of Yugoslavia had been murdered and that all mail has been held up since 4th general strike in Spain’.64 Politics in both countries were heating up. They were well out of Europe for the interim.

On 13 October 1934 Aimée and Arthur were aboard the Talleyrand bound for South Africa.65 The insular South Africa of the mid-1930s was one of an uneasy cooperation between those of British extraction (mainly along the eastern seaboard at the Cape and in Natal) and settlements or ‘dorps’ of tough Afrikaans-speaking Boers who had little time for the ‘rooineks’, (literally, the ‘red-necks’) — their compatriots of British origin. On 30 October 1934 they disembarked at Cape Town, had a dent removed from a mudguard and settled into a hotel. South Africa was not then prepared for international tourists and Aimée’s first impressions were indifferent.66

They drove leisurely along the Garden Route up the east coast of the country, Aimée entering mundane comments about their daily walks and meals. On 15 November she expressed her discontent both with the rudeness she encountered at a stop and the ‘wilderness,’ probably in the context of the run-down hotels and stores they came across. Arthur would barely have noticed and when she became too strident, ‘he took to his bed’. They had motored down the Montique Pass when she made the unpleasant entry ‘small towns full of Jews’.67 They were making their way past Grahamstown to the small tourist centre of Katberg, ‘the only pleasure resort worth the

62 They had met Edward and Margaret at Lyons airport and it was presumably because of excited chatter in the car that Arthur had knocked down a pedestrian. Diaries, 15 September 1934, p.116.
64 Diaries, 9 October 1934, p.117.
65 ‘Car hoisted from lighter – Carpenters made a [?] job to get her into the hold – Settled in - mixed passengers – 2 Turks, 2 S. African, 1 Austrian, 5 Norwegians – crew all young Nordics “sons of the morning.”’ Ibid, 12, 13 October 1934, p.117.
66 ‘Food in hotel very poor – beer bad – wine dear – Think we are in India – Princes hotel fine house but shabby’. Ibid, 1 November 1934, p.117.
67 Ibid, 12 November 1934, p.118. Aimée, like many of her upper-middle-class contemporaries was anti-Semitic at the time and this will be discussed further in the next chapter.
name’, situated among the wooded hills of the Winterberg range in the Eastern Cape, where her mood temporarily lifted.

On 17 November 1934 she noted ‘a charming spot – a welcome, unusual in Africa’. By 9 December they had driven to Durban and from there over poor roads into Natal, the standard of the hotels continuing to elicit many grumbles. The summer heat troubled her and they settled temporarily at a small resort, over Christmas. It was not a successful sojourn and the last five days of her diary for 1934 tell it all.

Arthur actually remembered first time for many years [their anniversary] & ordered a bottle of wine – he did not come near me for a few words of remembrance – the memories or heart...A bad day – It nothing keeps. – harsh the bitterness of disillusion & memories – Lost my head – very nearly out of control – The cursed day I ever married one so inhuman...A long walk to soothe the nerves – by myself to banks of a river – all eroded banks. Quite unable to sleep – feeling really suicidal...Arthur took to his bed upset by me – no golf – Came in & apologised saying I was all he had & he would change – got me bromide...Arthur really affected – Kind he always is, bringing me fruit & wine – Can he change his nature – impossible – self better. 68

They returned to Katberg for the next three months, a period of constant litany of melancholy, alleviated by walks, golf and a limited social life. Even in the delightful setting of Katburg Aimée was tortured by black thoughts.

I have lived the same stages, struggled after the same ideals & in my poor way tried to influence people’s minds...A black bad day – Arthur oozed depression yesterday & did the usual worship of his body – morning in bed – walk in afternoon alone – saw monkeys – in evening fancy dress got first prize. ...Feeling very bad – all the old raging thoughts – They will be the death of me one day. 69

However, they seriously considered staying on there, but decided after the summer heat was over that they would commence a mammoth drive to the Victoria Falls. In April they were off again. Arriving in Johannesburg Aimée recorded her ‘Walk by mine dumps in evening – a bustling city full of “come down” natives’. 70 The remainder of that visit is best summarised by an extract from her memoir ‘Annette’:

68 Ibid, 27-31 December 1934, p.120.
70 Ibid, 16 March 1934, p.127.
they had started out through the Orange Free State and Transvaal to Southern Rhodesia and the Victoria Falls. It was all very interesting, though the heat was still trying and the up-country hotels poor and full of mosquitoes. It was curious to find a ‘de luxe’, palatial Grand Hotel in the heart of Africa at the Victoria Falls, but it was owned by the Railway Company, whose communications extended only a short distance beyond, and the Company estimated there was money to be made in tempting visitors to see one of the wonders of the world. The falls exceeded in grandeur and impressiveness any idea that the description had given of them.71

On their return, making a detour to see the mysterious Zimbabwe Ruins of Rhodesia, they spent one day in the National Game Reserve. There was no one else about and they felt that in case of any mishap, such as tyre trouble, they would have an exciting and dangerous time with lions coming out of the bush at any moment. They progressed without trouble however and Aimée was greatly relieved that the excursion was over, though she wrote she would not have missed it for anything. Arthur’s imperturbability, perhaps due to lack of imagination, she wrote, was a great stand-by on such occasions and he completely forgot his ailments.72

Motoring in Africa was interesting in many respects, Henrie Mayne commented, but less agreeable than motoring on the Continent. The immense distances, the lonely roads—dirt tracks for the most part, coated with red dust and corrugated by the passing of long-distance lorries—the oppressive heat that preceded alarming summer electrical storms, ‘all made for fatigue rather than for stimulus. It could not be counted a very successful tour’.73 They continued their travels through Portuguese Mozambique, Swaziland, and Zululand to Durban, where they boarded the Guilio Cesare for England.74

By 14 June 1935 they were in Marseilles where the car’s battery was flat after the voyage. After being towed to a garage where the battery was charged or replaced, they motored unhurriedly to Ostend, suffering a burnt-out dynamo and a broken front spring en route. They arrived back in England by ferry on 25 June.75 Aimée then flew to Ostend to join Helen and the baby Michael (whose father had returned to the Sudan on his own). The flight across the Channel was memorable for there being a leak in the

72 Ibid, p.254.
73 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.189.
74 Diaries, 26 May 1935, p.129.
aircraft’s ceiling, so Aimée sat with her umbrella open over her, to avoid the drips.\textsuperscript{76}

On 1 August 1935 she was back in England tending to the pregnant Margaret at Boarstall, near Oxford.\textsuperscript{77} It was not an enjoyable time: relations became icy between her and her eldest daughter who suffered a miscarriage shortly after Aimée’s arrival.

Boarstall – to Oxford making purchases – the stove is completely maddening – can’t do a small dish – Poldure [the French cook] seems to know nothing or we dont [sic] understand one another – my head goes round with muddle of language – dogs destructive & dirty – what early Victorian managements! - & essentials lacking.\textsuperscript{78}

The poisonous atmosphere could have been due to Aimée’s dominant presence in the household, a constant source of friction when Aimée stayed with Margaret, as was to be demonstrated in the years ahead. By the middle of the month Aimée had retreated to her base, the Windsor hotel, where she retired to bed in a heat-wave.\textsuperscript{79}

She did have their next motoring adventure to look forward to, however: Arthur and Aimée had decided to drive across the United States (USA) to rendezvous with Edward, who had been posted to San Francisco with the Shell Company. They left for New York from Southampton on 17 September 1935.\textsuperscript{80} It was not without criticism of their vessel, the \textit{Normandie}, and its passengers: ‘vibration very bad – fine cabin – passengers mostly Jews & common foreign Southern Europeans – an immense ship – 1st Class very gorgeous, too much so for good taste’.\textsuperscript{81} After disembarking in New York it was a whirl of activities, as they prepared for their epic drive across the US to San Francisco. They bought a new Ford V8 and were tested for US driving licences and, with a guide to navigate them out of Manhattan, they started on their way south to Washington DC.\textsuperscript{82}

Aimée’s detailed account of their journey makes interesting reading but is too long to be reproduced and is well summarised in ‘Annette’.\textsuperscript{83} She found time to note various historical references, as well as to comment critically on those aspects of American life of which she disapproved.\textsuperscript{84} By 1 November 1935 they were in North Carolina: Charleston ‘mostly negroes – pines & evergreen trees’. In Florida she

\textsuperscript{76} Family reminiscence.
\textsuperscript{77} Diaries, 1 August 1935, p.135.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, 3 August 1935, p.135.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, 15 August 1935, p.136.
\textsuperscript{80} http://genealogy.kolthammer.org/Bonycastle-o/p13408.htm. May 2012.
\textsuperscript{81} Diaries, 17 October 1935, p.140.
\textsuperscript{82} There is no record of Aimée ever taking the wheel.
\textsuperscript{83} ‘Annette’, pp.256-257.
\textsuperscript{84} Diaries, 25-28 October 1935, p.140.

Having collected mail from all the offspring it was on into Texas. Aimée ‘found Dallas a huge raw town’. They pressed on into Arizona by 24 November, Colorado and into San Diego in California on 5 December 1935. Aimée felt very much at home and was keen to stay a few days, but Arthur determined to drive on to Pasadena where there were two main interests. The first was a gathering addressed by the ‘Hot Gospeller’ Aimee Semple McPherson, the Pentecostal evangelist who had filled the Albert Hall in London, during the 1920s. Aimée Mayne was unimpressed: ‘Terrible! – saw herself as J.C.’

The other attraction of Pasadena was that it was the home of a writer they admired, Upton Sinclair, whose focus at one stage had been on the grim social circumstances of American heavy industry. Which of his books had been read by the Maynes is unknown but Arthur had written to him over a number of years and had arranged to call on him. They were unsuccessful, Aimée noting on 11 December ‘Called on Upton Sinclair’s Bulldog secy. – very unfriendly at first. Upton Sinclair away – much disappointed’. They had better luck later.

After a deviation to Las Vegas, on 21 December 1935, they motored north to meet up at Monterey with Edward and with Margaret who was wintering out of England. All family squabbles were forgotten for the moment and there was initially a joyful reunion. However, the presence of Margaret upset Aimée, because of the atmosphere engendered between them in England after the miscarriage. Aimée was reasonably charitable about Margaret in her diaries, noting sympathetically that her eldest daughter’s teeth were causing pain. However, in her memoir ‘Annette’, written of course years after, Aimée showed her probable true feelings: ‘How happy they would have been but for Margaret’s presence. [H]er mental misery and depression…tried [them] a good deal.’

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87 Diaries, 10 December 1935 p.144.
88 Upton Sinclair had also written The Book of Life, published in 1922, in two volumes which included a discussion on ‘fatigue poisons’. This may be one reason why Arthur wanted to meet him.
89 Diaries, 11 December 1935, p.144.
90 ‘Annette’, p.256. There continued lingering antipathy between mother and daughter: from the moment they met up again in England after Aimée’s return from the USA. Relations at any time had been
San Francisco should have been an opportunity to relax after the long drive across the US that had apparently left Aimée ‘in a state of nervous fretfulness…She remained a poor sleeper, taking Choloral to sleep.’\footnote{Written by Margaret with doubtless bitter memories of the ‘reunion’. Mayne, \textit{An Unreasonable Man}, p.190. It is only Margaret who mentions this drug as taken by Aimée, so this may be inaccurate. Chloral Hydrate or Choloral is a barbiturate whose sale is restricted in the USA. An overdose can be fatal. http://www.mylot.com/w/discussions/917786.aspx.} Even Edward’s soothing influence was little help. It was Christmas when, inevitably, the well-known spectres of the past came crowding in on her. She tried to occupy her mind by copious reading: the list of books at the end of the 1935 diary is an eclectic mixture, some thirty titles that ranged from John O’Hara to Olive Schreiner, to a manual on birth control.\footnote{Diaries, p.146.}

The atmosphere between mother and daughter eventually became so strained in Edward’s apartment that on 6 January 1936 the parents left for Pasadena and were thankful to book into the comfortable hotel they had enjoyed on the way up. On 8 January they gave lunch to Upton Sinclair.

\begin{quote}
He is a very pleasing person – Slim, well dressed, gray haired, very alert & easy to talk to. His voice is American but intonation pleasing. The talk ranged over his work & experiences – his travels – His wife not there – busy & worn out – I gather she is a nervous type – loves his Alsatian dog – Asked re ourselves – He initialled a book – \textit{Depression Island} – Father got sleepy & did not talk Economics.\footnote{Ibid, 8 January 1936, p.148.}
\end{quote}

The following day they settled into a hotel at La Jolla where they were based for the next few weeks. Aimée did some walking, but complained frequently in her diary of feeling exhausted. For his part, Arthur had quite suddenly developed a passion for doing his own cooking—presumably the hotel had self-service apartments—which, until it became an obsession, suited his tired wife. Edward was due to join them on a week’s leave and Isa, on her own in a ‘bed-sit’ in London, was also invited to join them in California.

Then Aimée’s gradual mental deterioration came to a climax. Edward had returned to San Francisco on 3 February, Arthur was absorbed in his cooking.\footnote{Father cooks at times disheartened – he is too meticulous & fusses over details – His head works with 1 idea at a time – in cooking must hold several at a time. Ibid, 16 February 1936 p.151.} It became a time of unrelieved misery for Aimée, she wrote, although she played some golf and attended talks at the local Women’s Club.

\begin{quote}
\textit{at best cool. Aimée disapproved of Margaret’s lifestyle and of course of her husband. If either woman spent too long in the other’s company there was friction.}
\end{quote}
She was corroded from within by a sense of intolerable grievance—grievance against the man who had destroyed her life by neglect and his own by hypochondria. She increased her vexations by ceaselessly dwelling on them. She took long solitary walks in a daily endeavour to reach a state of fatigue that would ensure sleep at night. Her feet began to trouble her seriously.95

The strain came to a head on 12 February 1936 when she allegedly decided to kill herself (Arthur next door, oblivious to the drama, playing patience). She took twelve tablets of ‘Dozal’96 and was rushed unconscious to hospital, where she recovered on 24 February, her distraught husband and son beside her.97 A visiting priest tried to interest Aimée in ‘the Hereafter’. She rebuffed him.98

Aimée recovered completely. On 1 March 1936, discharged from hospital and calmer in her mind, she travelled to San Francisco by air, ‘an exciting journey down the Californian coast over range after range of mountains’. Now the centre of the family’s concerns, she was put into the best bedroom in Edward’s flat, which had a verandah overlooking a wonderful view over San Francisco Bay and town. Arthur rented a room close by and came in for meals. During the rest of that month she took part in her son’s social life, was driven round San Francisco and restored her equilibrium. Arthur flew to Los Angeles to meet Isa, who had arrived by cargo vessel from England, and drove her to San Francisco.99

Aimée’s diaries reflect an acceptance of her lot at this time, although it was not long before Arthur’s withdrawn behaviour made her lash out in her entries. ‘Just cant [sic] stand his lying in bed & imagining himself ill – I must go away – no one else in the world is like him’.100 They had moved to Carmel, to see out the winter before attempting the long drive back to New York, which they commenced on 20 April 1936, apparently putting the alleged suicide episode behind them. As Henrie Mayne commented, ‘it was scarcely believable that two persons who had come into head-on

96 This so-called suicide attempt reads more like a cry for help, to elicit sympathy towards her. Why did she not use ‘Choral’? Perhaps ‘Dozal’ was her only medication for insomnia then. It is only a relatively mild aid to sleep (which apparently has been prescribed to a two-year-old to establish a sleeping pattern).
97 Diaries. 27 February 1936, p.152.
98 ‘Annette’, p.263.
99 Ibid, p.266.
100 Diaries, 31 March 1936 p.155.
collision in such a grievous way could resume their lives together under the same conditions and take up where they had left off; yet they did precisely that.¹⁰¹

Aimée’s copious diary entries record the interest of each day, which again she summarised in her memoir ‘Annette’.¹⁰² They sailed with their car to England on 22 May by the *Volendam*.¹⁰³ They disembarked on 31 May 1936 at Southampton, where they were met by Helen with her husband on leave from the Sudan. Everyone was pleased to meet up. Aimée was unsure of where next they could base themselves; they had had enough of Belgium, and France on the gold standard made the cost of living for foreigners too expensive. They decided to try the USA again, with an interesting comment on the spreading political troubles: ‘Strikes in France & Belgium make Europe difficult – Palestine with Jews & Arabs fighting is no good for the winter – In N Africa trouble with Arabs also – Communism is spreading’.¹⁰⁴

However, their next journey was to Eire that pitched them into squalor, albeit tempered by glimpses of beauty—an interesting insight into a country stricken by poverty. The visit was not a success, as this indignant diary extract demonstrates.

*Clifden – Preserve us from a “Private Hotel”!* Talk, talk, boast & not the slightest sense of any shortcoming – Food rough & coarse – no hot water for bath in room – A is in a dog kennel – no furniture in it – 2 beds & cupboard – no table – Drove to Roundstones – all bogs & stones & a howling gale – One feels sorry for this Irish family of gentlefolk, the man is nearly blind & his wife overworked. They themselves put up with a room over stables & look neat in dress. Charges absurd.¹⁰⁵

They then decided on the Isle of Man for the remainder of the summer where Helen and her first grandchild Michael joined them, Edward and Margaret also paying them a visit. It was a less than happy gathering, with much squabbling, though Edward still got on well enough with his mother—he was en route to South Africa on a new posting with Shell. Arthur was unwell; the baby disrupted the household (as babies do) and a nurse was engaged. She too was not a success.

*Father still in bed but beginning to revive – Such a fuss about a cold – it reduces me to such depression, bringing to mind the years of hopeless

¹⁰⁴ Diaries, 15 June 1936, p.164.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 9-10 July 1936, p.166.
misery when he used his health to deny my sex life – Nurse in gales of laughter at meals – damn her.\textsuperscript{106}

Although relations with Helen improved, Aimée’s mental state did not. ‘2 September 1936. Feel very, very depressed – Memories, memories of the mental agony I have suffered crowd in’.\textsuperscript{107} A month later it was no better and she apparently contemplated suicide again, with an hysterical outburst.

It must be true, I am unfit to live with anyone, my nerves are too easily upset, I am too sensitive to hurts to my dignity – My personality does not inspire respect – So be it – I will live alone & take my life more successfully next time, when the situation becomes unbearable.\textsuperscript{108}

By the middle of October however Arthur and Aimée were peacefully—if separately as usual—ensconced in the Windsor Hotel, London, and cheerful diary entries abound: ‘Feeling very cheerful & well – F[Arthur] loves London for a short time – My room is so comfortable – A[thur] so well & cheerful.’\textsuperscript{109}

Aimée attended an interesting lecture, particularly prescient in view of the gathering international storm clouds.

London – To Conway Hall – A lovely Oct day – Heard John Strachey – very interesting, quiet, well argued address – He is a very big, young man, well dressed, prominent nose & slightly receding chin, too fat, lovely artist’s hands – Collective action makes for peace, Soviet, France, Britain will keep war away for a time – Socialism only real solution – world socialism - Fascism advancing by leaps & bounds & our govt [sic] secretly helps it by inaction.\textsuperscript{110}

She was perhaps more attuned to this period of the looming threat posed by Germany to Europe, than were many of her contemporaries.

They had decided to winter again in Dubrovnik, taking a love-sick Isa along with them.\textsuperscript{111} They prepared to motor through Germany. On their journey to Dubrovnik, Aimée increasingly observed how she found Europe at that time, noting the obvious absence of Jews—and without commenting on her dislike of them. ‘Absence of Jews in Holland & of course Germany’. Her remarks on Germany are worthy of note:

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, 21 August 1936, p.170.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, 2 September 1936, p.172.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid, 2 October 1936, p.175.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid, 13 October 1936, p.176.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid,’ 18 October 1936, p.177.
\textsuperscript{111} Isa was between boyfriends.
Uniforms frequent in Germany – Walked in Münster, lovely old houses, fine hotel, very cheap, excellent food. We have seen Jewish notices several times but not often – Good road on whole. Arrived early at Nüremberg – Walked with Isa – Both of us charmed with the old houses – Dinner in noisy, crowded Restaurant – quite interesting & animated talk with 2 Germans – Colonies-Jews.

Wednesday 28: Munich – Walked to AA & got route over passes – To picture gallery – rucks of 8 ‘putsch’ soldiers, one group on other side guarded by soldiers – A neglected to take off hat!…In afternoon shopped & walked about – things very cheap – Stayed at R.C. hospetz – very clean & comfortable, good food.112

Her eye-witness account of the Nüremberg Rally is revealing: ‘At Restaurant heard Göring thundering out his 4 year plan – What a style of oratory – yelling & shouting - The speech was unintelligible to us’.113

In early November they motored into Italy, Aimée recording that at Merano in the Austrian Tyrol she had a ‘long talk with Italian Fascist, formerly an Austrian fighting Italy!! [sic] His point of view is interesting, utterly opposed to ours – fought in war.’114 She had been reading John Gunther’s Inside Europe. Gunther was a New York City journalist and author who became famous for his series of socio-political books describing and interpreting for American readers various regions of the world, beginning with Inside Europe published that year, 1936. ‘Fascinated with Inside Europe but more & more fearful,’ she wrote on 7 November.115 It was an intriguing time to be touring Europe and Aimée was an intelligent observer:

By 21 November they were in Salermo: ‘an awful smelly & noisy hotel – soldiers going to Abyssinia’.116 Italy had invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in October 1935, after 10 months of preparations, rumours, threats, and hesitations. However, the constant driving was beginning to tell on Aimée. ‘Both Isa & I are frightened, it is awful to have no confidence in the driver – He has a good record – almost unique – but he cannot realise his reactions are too slow now & his sight not good enough’.117 They were in Rome by December where Aimée rested and relaxed over Galsworthy. ‘Read To Let –

113 Ibid.
114 Ibid, 7 November 1936, p.179.
115 Ibid.
117 Feel very upset about further driving.’ Ibid, 23 November 1936, p.181.
Galsworthy’s that I hadn’t read – Poor lonely Soames – no love in his life. The delicate feelings so well described as against [my] hard, practical view of life.\textsuperscript{118}

On 8 December after a visit to Rome’s zoo: ‘I don’t like Zoos – the caged beasts make me sad – a picture of lost opportunities & an environment that atrophies the soul’.\textsuperscript{119} There was almost regret in her later remark: ‘King Edward VIII abdicates – cant [sic] live in England, poor beggar – he’s put his foot in it this time!’\textsuperscript{120} The year ended on a high note for her. ‘Father remembered this is the anniversary of our wedding day – very kind & attentive.’\textsuperscript{121} This almost euphoric mood lasted well into the New Year: on 22 January 1937 she was able to write ‘Thank God my mind is calm & not so full of resentment for wasted years of unhappy sex life’.\textsuperscript{122}

They spent the remainder of the winter at Dubrovnik which, apart from an opportunity to take a cycle ride that made her feel young again, was memorable for an unexpected encounter: ‘22 February 1937. Dined at Café with Lord Howard de Walden, simple & unassuming – Am told he is as wealthy as the Duke of Westminster – lucky he is an Englishman – pays 15/- in £ taxes’.\textsuperscript{123} Presumably Aimée is being sarcastic here, or maybe Lord Howard was a ‘tax exile’.

At the end of March 1937 they moved to Merano where they stayed until early May, then motoring leisurely to London; Aimée’s feet were giving her constant trouble (unspecified) a condition that plagued her for the rest of her life, given that she was an active walker. The attention sought from a local Merano ‘specialist’ exacerbated the condition that was only alleviated by expert medical help later in London.

\textit{Orthopedist an elderly unintelligible man in a filthy old shop. He did not look at my foot, just hammered my supports. - Walked on it & by evening was in exquisite pain again – damn the man – shall throw it away.\textsuperscript{124}}

Other than the problem with her feet, her teeth (she had suffered on and off since her time in India) and the effects of her insomnia, however, Aimée appeared to be in good physical condition for a woman in her mid-sixties.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid, 3 December 1936 p.182. An interesting comment from her as an alleged feminist, given that the character of Soames Forsyte considered his wife Irene as a mere form of property.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid, 8 December 1936, p.183.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid, 11 December 1936, p.183.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, 27 December 1936, p.185.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 22 January 1937, p.190.

\textsuperscript{123} Lord Howard de Walden (1880-1946) was a wealthy British landowner and patron of the arts. \textit{Ibid}, 22 February 1937, p.193.

\textsuperscript{124} Diaries, 30 March 1937, p.197.
She stayed with Helen and Charles on-leave in London and took turns supervising her grandchild, prior to sailing to Cape Town with Arthur on 21 August 1937, to visit Edward. They had to share a cabin, which was a mistake.

*City of Paris* – spent time in bed feeling very upset & mentally depressed – All day with A doing dead or dying man in bed is ghastly – Refuses to know anyone – A apologetic & left cabin for some time to leave me alone.  

A dull voyage was alleviated by indulging in her idealistic leanings towards socialism and feminism.

[A]becoming more & more absorbed in ‘ideology’ of the Russian revolution – The spate of injustice… cruel treatment of those who cant [sic] help their birth or rooted ideas – the end in view is grand – How it would have appealed to me in my youth – Sacrifice, working for a cause – Instead India & its rotten ideology for women!  

Aimée had always been inclined to take up causes, at least by intent, and this passage is best viewed as wishful thinking that related back to her time at university and as a young wife, helping with famine relief. As for her remark about ‘the rotten ideology for (Indian) women’, this surely did not reflect her earlier behaviour as a ‘memsahib’.

South Africa on this occasion involved being part of Edward’s social scene as an up-and-coming young executive of Shell. Aimée summarised it well in ‘Annette’, with an emphasis on the social niceties of Cape Town society, reminiscent of social precedence from her time in India. At table the place of honour on the host’s right hand, Aimée noted, was given to a lady relative of a man in the company who was junior to Edward! Aimée was placed at the host’s left. It was not a successful visit. Her memoir and diaries are full of her fulminations against many of the people whom she met. Aimée disapproved of Edward’s girlfriends, quarrelled with Isa (who came to look for and eventually found a husband in South Africa) and made derogatory entries about the staff and Edward’s social set.

She also made clear her determination to be shed of Arthur’s daily presence. ‘I spoke to A. re [sic] our relations – I cannot stand his lying [about] it – Did a depression –Told him of my determination to live alone.’  

She must have spent considerable time on her own, as the books read in her diary constitutes a small library, with the emphasis

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128 Diaries, 13 October 1937, p.220.
on Vera Brittain among many others for relaxation and Lytton Strachey’s *Theory & Practice of Socialism* to tax her intellect.129

She finally departed on her own for Khartoum on 8 February 1938, after another bitter diary entry about her relationship with Arthur.

Another year gone and my relations with Arthur worse than ever. He lives entirely in his own mental vacuum, never an emotion stirs him - no memory of the past ever obtrudes [sic] - it is like having a dead soul as a companion - He thinks that a feeble unmeaning kiss morning and evening fulfils all his marital obligations to me. Economic & objective [sic] he is perfect at.130

She joined the Imperial Airways flying boat at Durban on the old route via Dar es Salaam, Lake Victoria, and down the Nile to Khartoum, a service that remained until well after World War II, depositing passengers on a lake or by a river-side hotel each afternoon for a comfortable night’s rest, before taking off to fly at 6-7,000 feet, descending low for passengers to view game en route.131 The Khartoum visit was for just a few days—the heat intense—so with daughter Helen and small grandson they sailed from Port Sudan on the *Chitral*, an elderly P&O steamer, to Marseilles where the Blue Train took them to Paris. They arrived in London on 5 March 1938.132

For the next few months Aimée busied herself unhappily with her daughters, Helen and Margaret, both heavily pregnant, while attending various social and literary functions. Arthur was still in South Africa but returned on 11 April. ‘Returned to find Arthur had arrived – Greeted me as usual inhumanely – repressed & dull – Must have schizophrenia Atrophy [sic] of the emotion.’133 She had even tried a church service: it did nothing for her mental turmoil. Her distaste for organised religion had not left her. ‘London – To All Saints Mar[lebone] St. to see an Anglo Catholic Service – very ornate & medieval saints – quite out of touch with our life – incense, robes, crossing oneself & heaps of flapdoodle.’134 It was her increasing interests in current affairs that mainly stimulated her.

‘London – All day at Queen’s Hall – Conference to “Save Spain” - Heard many good speeches – Duchess of Atholl – Pritt, Stafford Cripps, Gilbert Murray, Sir C Trevelyan, Sir Chalmers Mitchell, commander of British Battalion in Spain, Ellen Wilkinson & many Trade Union representatives…

130 Ibid, 31 December 1937, p.228.
131 Part of the same service was enjoyed by the author in 1949.
132 Diaries, 5 March 1938, p.238.
London – Looked in at Wallace Collection – Drove to Kew with a Mr & Mrs Mason who have ‘left’ Austria after the ‘Anschluss’ – They feared having to declare their property outside the country – also violence from Nazis. The Austrians told horrid tales of Nazi ill treatment & indignities.135

Her on-going sorrow at her failed marriage constantly intervened, while she kept her mind busy, attending various meetings.

Have had bad nights – ‘The ‘Fiddler’ A was reading to me – upset me – ‘To pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow’ – I sobbed the failure of the inner side of marriage…In evening to meeting of Writers against Fascism – Heard Walpole, Mrs Millin, Rose Macaulay, Rosamond Lehman, Guedalla, Compton MacKenzie etc. – interesting.136

This was also the period when she developed an interest in writing her life story and she commenced her memoir ‘Annette’—she did not tell Arthur—mainly as a means of setting down her side of her painful marriage, albeit embellished with colourful and sometimes imaginative stories from India.137 She herself kept in touch with Indian affairs.

Self to meeting – Lord Samuel, Miss Rathbone – 4 other speakers – dull & after 1½ hours Jarawhal [sic] Nehru spoke – small – good features – accused British of causing Communal trouble!!! 138

The first mention of war preparations became evident. ‘Air Manouevres [sic] over England’.139 Suddenly the whole focus was on the looming war until, quite suddenly, on ‘Friday 30 August: London – Peace declared at 1.45 a.m. – heard the news in the morning’.

Long queues fitting gas masks at various centres Went in rain to A.R.P. first aid - all the way to announced address & found it changed without notice to Porchester Hall - Dr gave a good lecture on body structure...To get my gas mask at St. James’ Church – sent to St. James’ School – given mask without any preliminaries when my turn came in the queue– in such hurry are the authorities – bought candles & a torch & various necessities – Sewing &

135 Ibid, 23 April, 11 May 1938, pp.243, 244.
136 Ibid, 8 June 1938, p.247.
137 Aimée’s first reference to her memoir ‘Annette’ must have been made at some stage after she had started the manuscript. ‘The hard practical view of Annette’. Ibid, 3 December 1936. Thereafter there are a number of references to her correcting and rewriting the story.
139 To Ethical Socy. – Heard Mr Longden Davies on ‘Mental Aspects of Air Raid Precautions’ – A powerful & persuasive & reasoned speech on our duty to join up & be ready – It made a great impression on me.’ Ibid, 24 July 1938 p.250.
sorting my things - guns in Hyde Park - Trenches also. Wednesday 28: London - In evening to A.R.P. Red + class - too theoretical not practical...Self shopped for First Aid things - Searchlights & Aeroplanes at night & balloon over Park.\textsuperscript{140}

This was the start of the period known as the ‘Phony Peace.’ At Munich in September 1938 the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, and his French counterpart Édouard Daladier bought time with ‘appeasement’—betraying Czechoslovakia and handing the Sudetenland to Hitler. Millions cheered the empty pledge they brought back with them: ‘Peace for our time’. There was considerable euphoria as the British Prime Minister Chamberlain, returning from his meeting with Hitler, flourishing the latter’s promise that he would not invade Czechoslovakia. Margaret wrote of her own ecstasy at the news.\textsuperscript{141} Aimée for one was not convinced.

A speech by Prof Terry on ‘J’accuse’ The Govt, our drift, the Labour Party & where it has landed us – Last week’s nightmare at the will of one man – Hitler – Am reading ‘Mein Kampf’ – It shows how he arrived at his ideas & prejudices.\textsuperscript{142}

At the age of sixty-six, she had started her training in First Aid, attending lectures at the Red Cross in the evening, how to deal with a gas attack, how to tie on bandages. She was reading up on Germany: ‘finished Fokker & his aeroplane factories – Seems an unpopular hard man’.\textsuperscript{143} Then came the great day, the first exams she had sat since her student days.

London – Red + Exam 7.30 at Pad. Town Hall – Feeling very nervous re Exam – Final revision & I have really worked hard & should do well – Slept in afternoon – Self to exam – Only 4 questions – very tricky ones – oral & practical all right. Friday 4: London - Reading for exam 8 p.m. all the morning – Took a walk in Park – The A[ir] R[aid] P[recautions] exam at Pad. Town Hall was gas mask drill & Viva Voce – quite easy.\textsuperscript{144}

She passed. While suffering bad lumbago she also walked, ‘in afternoon to Pad. Town Hall to enlist in A.R.P. Reserve’.\textsuperscript{145} In this war Aimée was determined to do her bit.

\textsuperscript{140} War news very bad’. Ibid, 26-29 August 1938, pp.256-257.
\textsuperscript{141} Mayne, \textit{An Unreasonable Man}, p.201.
\textsuperscript{142} ‘London - to Ethical –’ Diaries, 2 October 1938, p.257.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid , 22 October 1938, p.259.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid, 1 November 1938, p.258.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, 14 November 1938, p.261.
News from the Continent was threatening, ‘Awful news of Jewish pogrom in Germany’.  

The year’s end was marked by a visit to the theatre, thanks to Arthur, which obviously moved her although it did nothing to calm her state of mind. Lyndall is Olive Schreiner herself, myself – Gladys B[?], & those of the highest type terrified of passion, mistrusting sex, no strong maternal instincts & intense longing for freedom & dread of tie of marriage – The same soul sickness goes on year after year – Only death & getting away from Arthur can put an end to it – The disillusion was so complete – I find great relief in writing my life story – but never confide what I am doing to A – he would sneer in his mind if not openly – he spends his time on Maths.  

In January 1939 Aimée concentrated on writing the story of her memoir ‘Annette’ which involved looking through old correspondence. 

Reading A’s letters before we were engaged – His patience over 4 years 1892-1896 astounding – He lived a very solitary life then, but spoke of friends here & there & I was taken in by it – At times full of ambition, held out grand posts as bribe to me – My intentions were correct – We were unsuited in character – After reading his old letters before our engagement I realise how wise my long hesitation was.  

She busied herself with evening lectures. ‘London – Self to Ethical to hear Laurence Housman – spare, cultured, bearded -long grey hair – spoke of Morality applied to nature – foolish to expect it – A human invention only – Our God is our own aspirations for good or bad & prayer is always answered if we think long enough on wealth or courage etc.’ 

The end of January brought a mixture of contentment with her writing and of her bruised feelings of the past. ‘I feel more & more how extraordinarily lucky A was to get me – looks, mind, money and he never appreciated it – Just wanted sex life & I was to sit & be happy as a wife!!’ By mid-March her focus had returned to the approaching

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146 Ibid, 12 November 1938, p.261. This is an example of Aimée being selective with her anti-Semitism, to her minor credit. 

147 A got me tickets for ‘The Story of an African Farm’ – I pottered all morning as he was about – theatre bitterly cold, feared for my chest – The atmosphere of the play is very good – Boer farmer simplicity, ignorant & hypocritical of ‘Tant Sannie’ - Ibid, 31 December 1938, p.265. 


She was suffering constant back pain at the time which did not improve her outlook on life. Nor did the deepening crisis with Germany:

> Great anxiety – listening to Wireless several times a day. Terribly depressed re political situation – Hitler marched into Czech country yesterday – Hitler marched into Prague. Friday 17 London – Listened to Chamberlain’s speech in the evening – Silly old man – at last sees thro’ Hitler’s promises. Saturday 18 London – The poor folk in Prague, it is the same tale of suicides as in Vienna after the Anschluss.152

The crisis did not obviate a lingering prurient attitude from those early days as a young girl, ‘couples on the grass are shocking – What can foreigners think’.153

After a drive to Scotland during that summer, Aimée with Arthur, accompanied by Helen and her husband Charles—home on leave from the Sudan—with the two Crouch infants, rented ‘The Rectory’ at Charlwood in Surrey (now adjacent to Gatwick airport). Relations were strained between her and her favourite daughter: ‘I am made to feel I do the wrong thing so constantly. It is very unpleasant – Old & young cant [sic] be together.’154 A severe bout of food poisoning depressed her further and she found her son-in-law Charles ‘overpowering.’155 But she acquired a bicycle and this temporarily restored her equanimity. She then took herself off to Boarstall, to stay with Margaret. It was no better there. She returned to Charlwood where everything irritated her and she was sleeping badly. As a diversion from family life she focussed on writing short stories (‘studying short stories’156) that she sent off to the Regent Institute, a commercial organisation that encouraged amateur writers.157 By now she had a typewriter, a present from Arthur, for which she was properly appreciative.158

Abruptly, by the end of August, everything changed and suddenly the irritations of Charlwood were behind her.

> Friday Charlwood to London – Suddenly made up my mind to come away – Wild packing after receiving urgent call from London to First Aid Post – Bade tearful goodbye to Helen & children – Easy drive in – Welcomed at Windsor [Hotel] – Went to St. Mary’s Hospital. Saturday 2 London – A very tiring day of doing nothing – learnt about giving injections of

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151 Ibid, 16 March 1939, p.280.
152 Ibid.
156 Ibid, 16 March 1939, p.280.
157 ‘Studying old papers re short story writing’ – Ibid.
Morphine & Tetanus – otherwise hung about – Hel travelling all day to Bude with father – Margaret wrote she was busy carting & settling in refugees at Boarstall. Sunday 3 London – All day at St. Mary’s First Aid – put on to gas to my anxiety once – 2 Air Raid Warnings – War declared at 11 a.m. [sic – her emphases] followed by Air Raid Warning. All went to tunnel.159

The Germans had attacked Poland on 1 September 1939. The British Prime Minister Chamberlain then countered with a British declaration of war. He remained prime minister during the ‘phony war’ period of sporadic military action, taking into his War Cabinet his foremost critic Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty. Aimée described the local situation: it was to be seven months before any bombs actually did fall though many were the siren alarms that sent everyone scuttling to shelter.

Gradually the First Aid Post (FAP) was established and equipment provided. It was surely typical of the British Army, she wrote, to have nothing ready but the name of the Post and the names of the personnel allotted to it. If there had been a rush of wounded coming in, as was expected, and the nurses had been theoretically trained to deal with them, they would have made a poor showing, for the equipment was lacking.160

Her settling into a paramedical existence was not without its problems. Aimée was already having disagreements with some of her fellow staff and she disapproved of the medical arrangements at the hospital. She wrote a letter to the superintendent of St Mary’s Hospital complaining of long delays for patients and ‘attitude towards poverty.’ There were, she recorded, two women and a two-year-old child waiting from 3.30 p.m. to nearly 6 p.m., who received no attention. She added that she was pleased to note an improvement. The weary months of waiting for the bombs to drop were filled by her attending the FAP. There was little work there and her attendance at the Casualty station was later cut to three days a week.161

By November she was restless: she was developing her dislike for the Jewish people she came across in London, although there is no question she was appalled at Hitler’s treatment of Jews in the occupied countries and she was fond of the Singer family (with whom Margaret had stayed, when she attended school in England while

159 Ibid, 1 September 1939, p.294.
161 Diaries, 25 & 31 October 1939, pp.297, 301
her parents were in India). Her relations with Arthur had improved slightly; again, he had remembered their wedding anniversary on 27 December. ‘Father had not forgotten but his cold, fishy manner upset me for a time – brought me flowers & cigarettes.’

Nevertheless, the late 1930s provided a lull between five years of frenetic travel and the start of World War II proper. The years of travel were, for the most part, a period of comparative calm in Aimée and Arthur’s marital relations, partly because of the outward focus and sense of purpose that travel provided for them both. But Aimée does not appear to have taken the lead in their travels, rather she was the diarist, recording both her reactions to the places they passed through and the people they met, as well as the everyday aspects of travel—the frustrations, the weariness, and the minor disasters. Most women travellers of the period are remembered for their writings on exploration, mountain climbing and the like: other than their sheer scope. Aimée’s journeys to eastern Europe, the Arctic Circle, across the USA and to Africa, appear more mundane—particularly because no travel books eventuated. However, as Jane Robinson reminds us, there was no pressure on her to record more than daily events, if with ‘close and lively detail’. Such is her contribution to travel writing of the period. Perhaps most significant is the continuing commentary that breaks through her descriptions of place and the minutiae of travel, providing an insight into her frequently fraught relations with her husband and adult children as well as her need for attention, recognition and a broader sense of purpose. After the unhappy years of feeling unappreciated and unfulfilled, Aimée was ready for what lay ahead and to prove her real worth.

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162 Ibid, 22 November 1939, p.299.
After seven o’clock the real war began. Some time previously Aimée had heard for the first time the sound of distant gun fire when she was walking for exercise in Kensington Gardens…

‘Annette’ p. 274.

Surviving and working through the dramatic period of the ‘Blitz’, were the finest years of Aimée Mayne’s life. As a sixty-eight-year-old, she had become involved as a paramedic in preparation for the bombing of London. By the age of seventy-two Aimée could look back with personal satisfaction on four years of courageous survival. The previous decade of international travel had been a ‘time-filler’. It had been a period of battling to maintain her equilibrium, as she saw it, in a generally aimless if interesting existence, alongside a husband with whom she had long since ceased to empathise.

In contrast to the previous periods of her life, when references to her memoir ‘Annette’ were necessary to flesh out her story—and to be treated with some caution as perhaps embellishing the ‘truth’—the detailed story of her work and survival during the ‘Blitz’ is an unique account of an often dangerous life. This is because the record of her war years is taken almost wholly from her diaries: the entries are always to the point—topical, informative, descriptive—with minimal verbosity. At times though there is a certain rhapsodical introspection. A typical entry combined the pleasures of being alive, with a glimpse of terrible beauty: ‘Sat in Gardens 2 hours in the sunshine & wind…Planes over London at 3 a.m. caught by searchlights - a lovely sight’.¹

The account is dominated by six topics: her work at the First Aid Post; her striving for a ‘normal’ existence between the bombing raids—walking, shopping, socialising, visiting the cinema; attendance at lectures, both on medical topics and on subjects of contemporary interest; her health; finally, her strong anti-Semitic (and anti-refugee) feelings, common to many at the time.

It is very clear that during the prelude to the German bombing campaign of London, in the first half of 1940 and based in her hotel room, Aimée felt isolated in her self-imposed exile:

I feel so terribly lonely & out of life and companionship’ and feeling very down – It is often very lonely work living in London – None of my family

¹ Diaries, 10 August 1940, p.325.
realise they are lucky not to have me ill on their hands & no trouble to anyone.²

This is not a frequent entry. It can be concluded that the forthcoming danger was to contribute positively to her sense of positive well-being. She had, in effect, a ‘good war’.

Aimée’s life during the aerial bombing of London was part of what should be recognised as an inspiring epic, of a common quiet heroism in the face of danger to all. As Geoffrey Field put it: ‘London was a human story, a landscape peopled with ordinary, anonymous citizens’ who did what was needed of them without unnecessary heroics: ‘firefighters, heavy rescue workers, good neighbours—and women featured prominently in active roles’.³ Helen Jones suggested that people’s attitudes were determined by reactions that developed as a result of the war. The populace was conscious of routine day-to-day activities, rather than ‘abstract concepts of bravery or patriotism’. A sense of humour affected their behaviour in raids, which also helped them to cope after raids, (responding to what known as ‘situational demand’).⁴ Aimée was of their ilk.

She had the opportunity to demonstrate purpose and dedication. Aimée was living on her own in the centre of embattled London. She was a trained paramedic, a member of the Air Raid Protection (ARP) Reserve.⁵ She was not of course in any way unique in her voluntary role. Of the 1.5 million civilians who made up the ‘fourth arm’ of wardens, firemen, rescue men, ambulance drivers, medical staff, telephonists and messengers, four-fifths were part-time volunteers.⁶ Aimée was delighted to learn she was paid, too. ‘To my surprise I am getting £2 a week for this job! We have to get uniforms & canteen meals, so it will help.’⁷ This was a useful contribution to the cost of her hotel room then, for which she paid 4½ guineas a week.⁸ She was living frugally and kept a detailed record in each diary of the funds settled on her by Arthur—they had agreed to split their income 50:50.⁹ This was supplemented by the occasional extra

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⁵ Her ARP badge is still preserved in the Family Archives.
⁶ Robert Macka, Half the Battle: Civilian Morale in Britain During the Second World War, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2003, p.70.
⁷ Aimée to Helen, 6 September 1939, Wartime letters, Family Archive, 4/1/R.
⁸ Diaries, 3 October 1940, p.329.
‘hand-out’ from him. Arthur was based with their daughter Margaret at Boarstall Towers, Margaret’s home near Oxford, for almost the duration of the war.

The background to the relatively leisurely air activity over England through August 1940 reflected German strategy. The deceptive lull in enemy activity over Britain during early 1940 was echoed by Aimée as she focussed in her diary on news from the Continent of German advances and of her impatience at lack of work at the First Aid Post:

Holland & Belgium invaded…feeling so excited at the terrible world events… Terrible news of Holland’s surrender & flight of Government & Royal Family…Hanging about all day waiting for call to help with refugees at Paddington Station

She was preparing for her war-work: she was issued with ‘pails & scoop for incendiary bombs’; she was ‘[p]acking suitcase for emergency’ and attending lectures at the FAP. She was cellophane-ing her windows against blast and, at work, she learnt how to administer rectal injections ‘of Saline & [how to administer] Oxygen’. Perhaps this training brought back memories of her ambition as a young woman to train as a doctor. Certainly at this late stage of her life, it could be seen to have turned full-circle.

Although it had been a while before the war proper involved her, in less than a month there was a dramatic change. The appearance of German bombers in the skies over London during the afternoon of 7 September 1940 heralded a tactical shift in Hitler’s attempts to subdue Great Britain. During the previous two months, the Luftwaffe had targeted RAF airfields and radar stations for destruction, in preparation for a German invasion of the island. With invasion plans then put on hold, and eventually scrapped, Hitler turned his attention to destroying London, in an attempt to demoralise the population and force the British to negotiate with Germany. At around

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10 Ibid, p.335.
13 Ibid, 26, 28 June 1940.
4.00 pm on that September day, 348 bombers escorted by 617 fighters blasted London until 6.00 pm.\textsuperscript{14}

Aimée vividly described the results: ‘some two miles away, in a south-easterly direction, the whole sky was filled with grey and white clouds of smoke rising thousands of feet’. This first attack on the London Docks, ‘with tongues of flame shooting up periodically, filled her’, she wrote, ‘with a sense of awe’.\textsuperscript{15} From then on, almost daily attacks on London began. Her diary entries are filled with the grim minutiae of enemy action, commencing with her personal record of the first official day of the Blitz…


Although the bombing raids were very frightening, people were already beginning to become blasé to the wail of the sirens; work was dislocated too much to take shelter each time they sounded and the populace continued with what it was doing, until planes were directly overhead.\textsuperscript{17} Aimée recorded that when ‘the tick-tack of machine guns and pieces of falling shrapnel’ warned them of the danger of being hit, everyone then made for the nearest shelter open to the public, generally under some big building.\textsuperscript{18}

It was her inherent snobbery that had her writing that she found it a ‘curious experience’ to sit or stand with a crowd of strange people ‘of all classes’, under a church, or in a cellar, or under a block of flats and wait until the danger was past. While she battled bad tooth-ache she took shelter in many strange places with her knitting always handy, so as to keep occupied, whilst chatting to her neighbours.\textsuperscript{19} It was almost with a sense of relish that she wrote to her daughter Helen in Khartoum: ‘I am having an extraordinarily entertaining if terrifying old age. It is great to have a place in an organisation & to be useful & wanted. I only hope my strength holds out.’\textsuperscript{20}

As with the populace in general, daily routine was very important to her and Aimée’s attitude at the time appears typical of so many other Londoners who maintained everyday habits between the bombing raids. She walked in the park, she went to the cinema, she wrote letters to family, and took tea with the few friends she

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} ‘Annette’, p.275.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Diaries, 7 September 1940, p.327.
\item \textsuperscript{17} There was a ‘mental opposition’ to any dislocation of normal habits, routine or whatever one is engaged upon, Jones, British Civilians in the front line, p.155.
\item \textsuperscript{18} ‘Annette’, p.275.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Aimée to Helen, 23 October 1940, Wartime Letters, Family Archives, 4/1/R.
\end{itemize}
cultivated, and with colleagues.\textsuperscript{21} Often Aimée must have been obstreperous, both as a colleague and as a friend. Her diary entries contain many pejorative comments about the people she met: there was superciliousness; there were the social standards she expected of everyone. Given the dire circumstances, of the times, her expectations were sometimes unreasonable: ‘Fall of Paris – heart rending – Mrs Weiss wept quietly, it is true, but she enjoyed her little scene & the sympathy of Miss Barrow & Miss Earle.’\textsuperscript{22}

She was however courageous in herself—remarkably laconic about the early terrifying air raids she recorded over the next few weeks—while attending lectures at her FAP. She took turns on roster duty in the Praed Street Tube Station.\textsuperscript{23} Thousands of poor people had turned the tube stations into ‘vast dormitories’.\textsuperscript{24} By far the most important communal shelters were in the Underground, even though the government had rejected their use in 1939, arguing that commuters must not be impeded and occupants could develop a ‘deep shelter’ mentality and refuse to leave. Notwithstanding the official disapproval of their use, by mid-September about 150,000 slept there.\textsuperscript{25}

The pace of enemy attacks quickened during September, while Aimée’s duties included travelling in convoys of ambulances, escorting the civilian wounded out of London to safer havens. In ‘Annette’, Aimée described the condition of some of the civilian wounded. One in particular moved her.

One poor woman kept bemoaning the loss of her spectacles. Both eyes were bandaged and sticky mucous oozed from the empty eye sockets. She was still too confused to know that she would never need spectacles again.\textsuperscript{26}

When not on duty, she slept on a hotel sofa, fully dressed in case of a direct emergency.\textsuperscript{27} The first week of October 1940 was however relatively peaceful. She had used this quiet period to move out of the Windsor hotel, where her relationship with the management had deteriorated. ‘Food poor, everything grudging & intense rudeness from Mrs Goldsmith’… the mental atmosphere has become impossible. 2 of those in command of soldiers are insolent upstarts – nice burp in drawing room.’\textsuperscript{28} She moved into another residential establishment, the ‘Dominion’, in the same area of Lancaster.

\textsuperscript{21} Diaries, 3-5 September 1940, pp.326-327.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 14 June 1940 p.320.
\textsuperscript{23} The Praed Street Tube, to which Aimée was assigned, was packed with humanity from darkness onward. Men and women old and young and a few children, though these had been ordered to be evacuated, some parents insisted on keeping them in London. ‘Annette’, p.276.
\textsuperscript{25} Field, ‘Nights Underground’, p.15.
\textsuperscript{26} ‘Annette’, p.281.
\textsuperscript{27} Diaries, 18 September 1940, p.328.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, 1-2 October 1940, p.329.
Gate, which offered central heating. Then, on 8 October: ‘Very violent Air Raid – Incendiary bombs drop around.’

For the next six months Aimée tried valiantly to keep up her peacetime routine of attending lectures, but this understandably was difficult and she was often to join those sheltering in a tube station. She was sometimes unwell and on occasion in physical distress.

Feeling very worn out with a heavy cold & no sleep all night - No hot water – such discomfort – slept in afternoon – Early to bed in drawing room which was fortunately empty – had a drugged sleep – Veganin for neuralgia in face – Fetched my bucket for water from upset jug – Lay up all day – Slept in afternoon – A bomb fell at lunch time & shook the building – Some poor devil got it – Feeling very down.

For the first time however she actually slept in her bedroom at the hotel, after fifty-four nights elsewhere, while maintaining her shifts at the FAP sometimes for a whole night. She took another First-Aid exam and passed. Her spirits reasonably high after her examination success, she accepted an invitation to stay for a few days at Boarstall with Margaret. Arthur came by train to escort her and she entered a few approving notes on how she found him. ‘He looks young & youthful – He did me credit – looked tidy & decently dressed’.

However, after a few days at Boarstall in pouring rain, her disillusionment with her husband returned:

Father same – Gets into bed after dinner – What a habit – formed originally to prevent going to bed with me!!! So little sympathy & understanding between us – A keen on grandchildren – Makes a show of patriotic reasons – Some other instinct I think.

She seldom referred to Arthur without a bitter comment of this sort.

Back in London, she struggled into a routine that was at that stage mercifully free from the bombs, until on 2 December she noted that a raider had dropped two bombs some way off. Then on 8 December she wrote laconically: ‘Blitzkreig restarted by 8 o’c – Many bombs fell near – bad night. Curious old fatalistic feeling – slept thro’ much of noise!’ She was much heartened by the bulletins from North Africa: ‘Wonderful news from Western Desert of Italian troops giving way before our advance.’

29 Ibid, 8 October 1940.
31 Ibid, 3 November 1940, p.332.
32 Ibid, 11 November 1940, p.333.
33 Ibid, 14-15 November 1940.
34 Ibid, 9, 11 December 1940, p.335.
was typical of the public’s morale which remained strong, as recorded by Tom Harrison who compiled a survey of selected members of the public. He found that ‘basic decency, loyalty, morality and optimism’ supported the vast majority of Londoners who relied principally on good news of the war from other fronts to boost their spirits.\(^{35}\)

Christmas 1940 brought a lull in the bombing near Aimée’s hotel but further afield, in between enjoying seasonal festivities, she sorrowed over an icon of her childhood:

> Many craters by Serpentine – An enormous dump of rubble, wood & metal where the big Exhibition was held 1852 – What would Prince Albert say to that? Even his Memorial damaged – To F.A.P. – A big party. Kept it up until midnight – Very well done.\(^ {36}\)

There was another quiet period until early January: ‘In evening a rain of incendiaries – One house in Lancaster Gate on fire...Counted 13 incendiaries on the way to Praed Street.’\(^ {37}\) On 28 January she wrote, ‘Many sirens & big guns alarmingly near – Hope Wendell Wilkie heard them.’\(^ {38}\)

Relative peace prevailed over London until 8 March 1941, when bombing began again: ‘5 fell in Kensington Gardens – terrifying’.\(^ {39}\) This was very close to Aimée’s hotel. Her foot was troubling her, she was tired and there was a week of bombs in March, during which Buckingham Palace was damaged. She felt superfluous at the FAP, so concentrated on knitting a sweater for a submariner and read in her warm room. In mid-April the raids started again:

> Terrifying raid at night – Worst London has known – Paddington hit – many casualties – 50 at St. Mary’s & 53 at F.A.P....Tried to go to ‘Major Barbara’ at the Odeon-West End – very badly blitzed – No film – Selfridges burnt top – 500 planes attacked London last night.’\(^ {40}\)

It was after duty in Lancaster Gate Tube station in April 1941 that Aimée gave vent to her dislike of one of the Jewish refugees: ‘Dr Zeitline kept us up until 12.30 – little Polish Russian Jew! – Stands on his dignity – to rise on his entry – I don’t!!!’


\(^{36}\) Diaries, 25 December 1940, p.336.


\(^{38}\) Ibid, 28 January 1941, p.340. The reference to Wendell Wilkie on 28 January was because Wilkie, the US Republican presidential candidate (who had tried unsuccessfully to unseat President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940) supported aid to the Allies as World War II engulfed Europe. Willkie was visiting England in 1941, as part of a campaign to turn Republicans away from isolationism.

\(^{39}\) Ibid, p.343.

\(^{40}\) Ibid, 17 April 1941, p.347.
[sic]. Later, she had also had a falling-out in her hotel with a fellow Jewish guest, when she was suffering from a heavy cold and her tolerance of fellow human beings was at a particularly low ebb.

Feel rotten & very depressed – Temperature of 100º – could not sleep – Alert at midnight – My Jewish neighbour a huge cross eyed man asked me rudely to clear my half of the cupboard – These Jews – If Hitler gets us they will suffer – The one redeeming feature!!

This was an extreme comment, even for Aimée. These references are just two instances of her many negative comments on Jews and other refugees which, to be fair, did reflect a common attitude at the time. As noted in the previous chapter, mild anti-Semitism had been present at all levels in pre-war society, (along with a prejudice against foreigners). Aimée’s diary entries frequently reflected ‘the apparent increase in anti-Semitism, particularly during and immediately after air raids’. Field recorded that there were nasty accusations that Jews ‘grabbed the best places in public shelters, they were the first to panic and flee, that they controlled the black market’. To add to negative public sentiment, there were also reports that refugees displayed a strong reluctance to participate in the duties expected by all members of the public during and after air raids.

Aimée’s attention then switched to international news: ‘News of Hess landing in Scotland!!’ He was the Nazi who was Adolf Hitler’s deputy as party leader. He created an international sensation when on 10 May he had secretly flown to Great Britain on an abortive self-styled mission, to negotiate a peace between Britain and Germany.

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41 Ibid, 13 April 1941, p.348.  
42 Ibid, 8 May 1941, p.349.  
43 Macka, *Half the Battle*, p.83.  
45 ‘Aliens shirk Fire Watch: ‘eighty per cent of the tenants are aliens – Germans, Austrians and Polish Jews – and we have been unable to get any response to our appeals from them. They appear to take no interest in the matter’…only 80 volunteers out of 1,200 residents have been obtained…While aliens cannot, under the regulations, be compelled to act as fire-watchers, they can volunteer for the service.’ *Daily Telegraph* cutting, undated. Family Records.  
46 Diaries, 13 May 1941, p.349.  
47 He had landed by parachute in Scotland with peace proposals, demanding a free hand for Germany in Europe and the return of former German colonies as compensation for Germany’s promise to respect the integrity of the British Empire. Hess’s proposals met with no response from the British government, which treated him as a prisoner of war and held him throughout World War II.
Aimée was completing writing her memoir ‘Annette’, which took her mind off daily worries.\textsuperscript{48} In June 1941 she was invited to stay at Boarstall again, but was obsessed by bitterness. She was also sleeping badly.

Old memories are still too painful & always will be until I die – A tries to be affectionate at rare intervals. He is not human and so like ‘Alice’ in Rebecca West’s story – Perfectly self righteous. Those damned, damned memories – have asked A to stop those pathetic attempts at a kiss; when he remembers – I should have realised 20 years ago that the man is not human – Cannot respond to any ordinary emotion & put up an opposition to me – a real mental case – It would have saved much agony of mind to me & the children in Jersey.\textsuperscript{49}

The remainder of the year passed without personal incident; Aimée suffered from the bursts of summer heat and there was less demand for her at the FAP. The war news from overseas was generally depressing towards the end of 1941, though she wrote exultantly, ‘America enters the War - Congress & Senate unanimous.’\textsuperscript{50} She attended a Council Meeting of Bedford College when she was ‘aghast to find all the front & one side of quad gutted – 3 science labs gone – Big Hall destroyed’ on ‘the last day of the Blitz by Explosive bomb and incendiaries on 10\textsuperscript{th} May’.\textsuperscript{51} She ended the year on a philosophical note.

Last day of Old Year – Very dull – No companionship but much physical comfort which is a great thing – Live in my own memories, a pity Arthur has managed to poison so many of them – I am happy in my children’s outlook & social position & all their marriages are a success – Considering how lonely old age is I am lucky to be as I am, so well & active – Only the fading away of my voluntary employment is disappointing.\textsuperscript{52}

In early February Aimée formally resigned from her work at the First Aid Post, feeling that there were enough younger women to take her place.\textsuperscript{53} However, over the next few months, she did continue with escorting stretcher cases by ambulance out of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{48} ‘Reading the continuation of ‘Annette’ – I find it fascinating – it clears my mind – A was really impossible to have human relations with – Well it is nearly over.’ Diaries, 20 May 1941, p.350.
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 11 June 1941, p.352.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Ibid, 9 December 1941, p.350.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ibid, 21 November 1941, p.364. At some stage, undocumented but according to family legend Aimée had become a member of the Bedford College Council.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 31 December 1941, p.367.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid, 3 February 1942, p.373.
\end{itemize}
London.\(^{54}\) She returned to the FAP occasionally, mainly to attend medical lectures that she enjoyed. She saw a number of films and thought *How Green was my Valley* presented an excellent case for nationalising the mines.\(^{55}\) She had been actively involved in working for the Women’s Voluntary Services (WVS) from January 1942, which appeared to consist of sewing and knitting. (She only resigned from the WVS in January 1944).\(^{56}\)

At the end of July 1942 the Germans resumed their aerial attacks on London. ‘Air Alert in the night & guns going hard. An alert & much noise from new guns at Hyde Park?’\(^{57}\) At the WVS she was critical, not for the first time, of the quality of clothing delivered from the USA. She felt the quality was not worth the lives of British seamen on the Atlantic convoys. She reverted to being the ‘Burra Mem’ of her days in India, at a lecture one evening at the Contemporary Club: ‘a Swami Bengali gave a special pleading of India situation – I discomfited him – He got emotional.’\(^{58}\)

Aimée displayed a rare gratitude to Arthur the next month when, on a visit to London from Boarstall, he gave her £100 towards the increased cost of her hotel room (raised to six guineas a week, much to her indignation). ‘He was very kind & solicitous for my comfort’.\(^{59}\) This relatively tranquil life continued until May 1943 when she recorded in a mixture of the mundane and the alarming:

> Weather clearing – 3 Alerts at night – A big explosion… To W.V.S. – lovely walk across Park – Wireless attended to – 2 Alerts at night…Reading A’s pre-marriage letters sitting in Park.\(^{60}\)

> 3 Alerts at night…To W.V.S. – In evening Contemp. Club – Commonwealth – Alert – very loud guns – 4\(^{th}\) night in succession…Sat in Gardens – another night of Alerts.\(^{61}\)

In July Aimée made the mistake of again visiting Boarstall—cordial relations with Margaret never lasted long—to find Arthur still happily ensconced, helping Margaret with her small child and enjoying the chores he had taken on:

> Very bad night owing to A’s complete inhuman ways – No interest in my future – talks of going to Kenya alone – I am ‘a free agent’ – at 72 feels no

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\(^{54}\) She strongly objected to one such ambulance trip: ‘A fearful waste of petrol for one patient – shall refuse another time, but doctor & Almoner don’t state case plainly for fear of objections – Waste of petrol & seamen’s lives.’ Ibid, 28 April 1942, p.378.

\(^{55}\) Ibid, 11 May 1942, p.379.


\(^{58}\) Ibid, 19 August 1942, p.386.

\(^{59}\) Ibid, 25 September 1942, p.388.

\(^{60}\) All of which she subsequently destroyed, unfortunately.

\(^{61}\) Diaries, 16-20 May 1943, p.402.
responsibility for me – forgets my love, the children he got out of me, my trust in giving my income & legacies to extricate him from his monetary impasse.62

Poor Arthur: Aimée was never to forgive him for his asking her mother for a loan in the early years of their marriage, while drawing on her income, which had resulted in the permanent breach between them and Mrs Barnett, and his physical isolation from her. However, war news from the Mediterranean cheered her: ‘Attack on Sicily begun – Wonderful news from Sicily’.63 At Boarstall, Aimée felt she had outstayed her welcome: she moved to a cottage by herself for some weeks, outside northern London, taking long, solitary walks. Then she returned to her London hotel.64

She continued throughout the Blitz to attend other lectures at the Contemporary Club and Royal Central Asian Society, about which she made critical comment.65 She took up her usual comfortable routine of walking in the parks, when it was warm enough, with little comment on the early phases of the final struggle taking place across the Channel. On 11 November 1943 she noted placidly: ‘Awaiting news of trouble in Germany! – only rumours’.66 By now she was knitting woollen garments for Royal Air Force personnel, and devouring book after book from the local library.67 Her diary entries at this point are a pleasant mixture of the banal and of the effects of the war still being waged: ‘To Selfridges – No wool mixture – no knitting cotton! – got face cream of sorts – Everything getting short – Churchill ill with pneumonia – very anxious – He has been so sensible on Russia.’68

Routine continued to be important and Christmas Day 1943 was celebrated quietly, as was her wont since before the war. There was the usual acerbic comment on those she found wanting:

A quiet day, short walk in Gardens, dull & damp – no sun – Hotel gave us a good dinner – Mr de Jong had sherry & drink with me – Drank health to our families & felt mine was being drunk in many parts of the world…Asked King Hamiltons in to coffee – He amusing, she as usual a horrid looking bore.69

64 Ibid, 27 September 1943, p.408.
68 Ibid, 15 December 1943, p.413.
69 Ibid, 25-26 December 1943.
Her seventy-second year ended on a not unusual lonely note, if remarkable for its stoicism: ‘Glad old Year is finished – Would-be celebrations when one is alone are depressing’.70

1944 was to be a year she was lucky to survive. It had started quietly with Aimée in good spirits. January was very cold, but she wrote ‘Feel very fit’.71 Although later she was to be plagued by an aching foot, her attitude remained indomitable—typical of most other Londoners, as the news from abroad indicated that the Allies were gradually gaining the upper hand over the Axis powers. The Allies’ strategic air offensive against Germany had begun to attain its maximum effectiveness in the opening months of 1944.

Lectures remained a mainstay: on Sunday 24 January 1944 Aimée attended a meeting of the Friday Club, which was apparently an informal gathering of kindred spirits who liked to be lectured on contemporary topics: ‘A long winded German on underground movement in Germany – Seemed to me to prove there is none!’72 On the next day she gave in her resignation to the WVS, bored with the endless routine of elderly women making woollen garments, although she continued to knit privately for distribution to the needy. She attended a meeting at the Guildhall, to hear ‘Stanley Bruce – High Comsr. Of Australia – The hall is badly scarred & discoloured – He is a good speaker…Very little applause – too idealistic for fat business man’s audience!’73

In the first half of February 1944, Aimée did her best to maintain her normal routine. She was busy rewriting ‘Annette’, to compose a new beginning. She also attended a talk at the Contemporary Club, another of her regular gatherings of like-minded souls; ‘Talk on Polish Russian relations – very one sided – Dr de Seveet, cocky & full of grievances like all Poles I have met’.74 Then the aerial horrors started again, although the first bangs were some way away: ‘A noisy raid – bombs somewhere’. Five days later it was her turn.

A very noisy night raid… Counted 13 incendiaries on Porchester Terrace – one house burnt out – Many fell on Whiteleys – Two H[igh] E[xplosive]s fairly near… Incendiaries showered – many fires – One on hotel… A very sharp raid in night.75

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70 Ibid, 31 December 1943.
73 Ibid, 27 January 1944. Stanley Bruce was the ex-Prime Minister of Australia before becoming his country’s leading emissary to Great Britain.
74 Ibid, 6 February 1944.
75 Ibid, 19 February 1944, p.419.
Equably, Aimée continued with her life and working on ‘Annette’: ‘Typing – went out to see container unexploded – fell in Kentn. [sic] Gardens – It popped for a long time – To see Mrs Langton – bad raid for ¾ hour.’ This raid on 23 February broke many of the hotel’s windows and another raid for an hour the next night had her writing ‘Not so bad’ while she waited for yet another ‘Alert’ siren.76 Aimée had survived much: it brought out the best of her courageous tenacity.

There was relative peace for some days, and on 5 March she noted ‘Walk in Park in evening – no raid tho’ still go to bed dressed.’77 But the tide of war was turning: ‘Day bombing of Germany by American bombers – night bombing by R.A.F. for 5 days & nights’.78 RAF Bomber Command launched nearly 10,000 sorties in March 1944 and dropped some 27,500 tons of bombs, about 70 per cent of this effort being concentrated on Germany.79

There was still some physical family contact (and Aimée wrote constantly to her children abroad). Arthur paid her a visit for a few days from 17 March, mainly to have his teeth seen to by the family’s dental surgeon, Aubrey Walker, who was still treating the grandchildren’s teeth in the 1950s. Relations were equable: Aimée and Arthur inspected bomb damage together and went to a film or two: ‘Arthur & self to “Lifeboat” by Steinbeck – very good – Saw him off at Pad’ton. – he very active, enjoyed his stay’.80

Four days later the bombing started again; if not over her location, it was close enough: Paddington Station was the target for two nights, and the nightly alerts kept her anxious. About a month later she noted almost casually: ‘Went to “Song of Russia” at Empire – A Raid – much noise - bombs fell’.81 Another month passed and then on 13 May 1944 it was ‘Usual routine – Italian offensive by both armies started – What slaughter’.82 There was exciting news in early June: ‘At 8 o’c a.m. heard Invasion [sic] had started near Havre & Cherbourg Peninsular’.83 She noted progress in subsequent diary entries.

After recording that there had been questions about General de Gaulle in the British Parliament on 14 June, her diary filled with non-stop horror, of noise and

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destruction, over the following weeks. These were caused by the first of the ‘V’ missiles, the V1 flying bombs, the new weapons on which Hitler had vainly been counting to reduce Great Britain to readiness for peace. The subsonic V1 missile, once launched, flew without a pilot until it ran out of fuel and came crashing down, blowing up. (The V2 rocket was a long distance weapon—see later in this chapter—that could travel at the speed of sound). ‘A bad night with an unknown noise & much firing …The weapon is a pilotless bomb which booms like a bee & falls anywhere’. 84 The missiles rained down on London for the remainder of the month: ‘day & night - most nerve racking’. 85

Margaret and Arthur were worried about her. She might have been invited to Boarstall earlier, had relations between her and Margaret not been so poor. When the invitation came eventually, she accepted with alacrity: ‘M phoned me to come to Boarstall urgently – frantic packing & dismantling – arrived in calm & quiet of countryside. Bombs in London continue’. 86 She arrived in Boarstall on 1 July. Relations between the two women deteriorated in the following week and so eventually Aimée sought accommodation in a nearby farmhouse where there was an almost-instant falling out between her and the landlady over the butter rations and the quality of the food supplied: ‘Food awful – damn carrots & potato – breakfast only good meal’. 87 She stayed on in the country however, fearful of a premature return to London, but by mid-August she had had enough of country life and fare.

In the meantime she wrote one of her long descriptive letters to her anxious daughter Helen, now safe in East Africa having left the Sudan, with not a hint of the mutual animosity that simmered under the surface between Aimée and her eldest daughter. The letter is worth reproducing, since it provides a vivid description of typical conditions in London at that time.

Boarstall Towers
Aylesbury Bucks 23 July 1944

My dearest Helen

I have sent you two aerographs recently to let you know I am safe from the flying bomb so far. Göebbels threatens us with something more far-reaching – is he trying to blow England out of the sea? [The German propagandist plainly had the German V2 rocket bomb in mind here.]

84 Ibid, 15-16 June 1944.
85 Ibid, 25 June 1944.
87 Ibid, 3 August 1944, p.426.
Aimée continued:

So far the bombs have reached London metropolitan area and some miles North but none have fallen in the Southern side of London. It is all so hush-hush in the papers. Anyway, women with children have been evacuated to the North of England & old people who have no work are asked to go.

I hunted round on arrival at Boarstall for other accommodation to leave room for long weekends for other friends of Pete… [Margaret’s husband] who work[s] in London. All country hotels & pubs are crowded out with evacuees, but I found a farm willing to take me for a fortnight & after that I go to another farm, probably for the rest of the summer. Father bicycles daily to see me 1½ miles88 & M when she can afford time from household chores.

After descriptions of country food and life she wrote:

Of course it is dull, nothing to do but walk on country roads, but I am so thankful for peace & not being constantly on the alert for the flying bomb. It comes any time at day or night & we were all warned to get away from glass. The blast breaks the glass into minute splinters which are very dangerous to the eyes & difficult to get out of the skin.

As in the days of the Blitz some people are unlucky & seem pursued by bombs & others escape any damage. A young friend of mine Mrs O’Brien was in the next block of service flats to the Tyburn Convent Marble Arch, completely destroyed. It was a quarter to 6 a.m. on a Sunday. She heard it coming & buried her head under the pillow – her window & door were blown out & the ceiling came down. The ARP got her out undamaged, her clothes were tossed everywhere. They rescued what they could & she went to her parents at Cheam, near Epsom. Bombs were passing overhead for London much of the time! At 10 p.m. on Tuesday just as she was going to have a bath, one fell at the back of the house & all the back collapsed & she was hurled downstairs. Her parents were in the Morrison Shelter under the dining table & were unhurt, but their home is gone.

On Wednesday & Thursday Mrs O’Brien came to the Dominions [hotel] because I was there. On Friday she was in her office in Golden Square [Soho, central London], her husband a young woollen merchant had made

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88 He was seventy-two at the time, which demonstrates the care he still felt for her.
her a director, he is a 1st Lieutenant in Somaliland of all places, when the bomb fell at the back of the Regent Palace Hotel & shattered every window in Golden Square. That was too much for her, 3 times in one week, & she rang us to say she couldn’t spend another night in London & was going straight to Paddington [station] to get away for the weekend to the country & trust to get some kind of accommodation near the school where her boys are. She is back in London now, for someone has to carry on the family business.

24 July: what wonderful news of trouble in Germany between Nazis & the Army. The Russian front looks like a debacle, Germans fleeing pell-mell. Surely all this abominable slaughter must soon be over.89

The remainder of the letter was concerned with plans to stay with Helen, who was in Kenya, after the war, and the need to establish a priority with the authorities to allow her—and Arthur, later—to travel, as soon as it was possible, after hostilities had ceased. Her London base still attracted her and she returned there on 19 August, weathering the discomfort of wartime travel:

Tedious journey with luggage & change – 1 hour late – 1 hour in queue for taxi – No more travel for me! – Bombing from 11 to 7 – Warmly welcomed at hotel – Given No. 2 room – luxury.90

It was just a day later that a V1 pilotless bomb nearly killed her. ‘Sunday 20 August 1944: At mid-day a doodle-bug shattered my 2 windows – a narrow escape – just ran into passage in time.’91 She wrote to Helen on 25 August in a nice mixture of the horror and of the basics of ordinary London life then:

I heard the horror coming, zoom-zoom-ZOOM and had just had time to rush into the passage & turn my face to the wall in a corner – No harm to me – fortunately I had not unpacked, as everything was covered in glass splinters…London life goes on just the same, buses run, shops open, a few theatres & cinemas are open…The Gibraltar people who for 3 years had turned Lancaster Gate into a slum with screaming children, scolding women, washing at the windows had been sent to Ireland awaiting transfer to Gibraltar…’92

89 Aimée to Helen. 23 July 1944, Wartime Letters, Family Archive, 4/1/R.
90 Diaries, 19 August 1944, p.427.
91 Ibid, 20 August 1944.
92 Aimée to Helen. 20 August 1944, Watertime Letters, Family Archive, 4/1/R.
Aimée was reflecting the on-going common aversion to the many refugees who crowded London.

The next few days she lived in the discomfort of shattered glass and cold, with V1 bombs still exploding. Aimée kept her belongings packed because of the debris around. However, some news cheered, of Paris being liberated and the level of V1 attacks tapering off, although they were to continue spasmodically until March 1945 and there were diary entries of bomb alerts during the remainder of the year. Her diary exultantly records news of the Allies overrunning the Netherlands and later stories of miseries from flooding there. But a new threat was looming: Giant V2 rocket missiles were launched on 8 September, from sites in the Netherlands (after the Allies’ occupation of the Pas-de-Calais on their way to Belgium). Aimée noted explosions being heard from her hotel, but nothing nearby. She wrote again to Helen from 88 Lancaster Gate London W2, her hotel:

The bombs only come at intervals and the bomb bases are captured & it is presumed from planes which sneak in under cover of clouds over the North Sea & launch them in London direction. There is often no siren reminder – they just come in quietly and explode. There is no question of being plucky about the things, you just cower behind something if you hear one coming & for the rest don’t think of them. It is the kind of excitement I can well do without in Kenya.

Aimée was determined to escape from England as soon as it was possible. On Sunday 10 September 1944 she had recorded in a nice mix of the banal and the significant:

Cold but fine at last for our R.A.F. & American bombers – Hair wash & cardigan wash – Slept – sewing & walk. Damage to No. 56 & flying bombs finished.

The V2 rockets continued to menace Britain until early in 1945. On 2 November she actually inspected a V1 or a V2 that had landed intact: ‘To see Robot bomb – very interesting’.

The remainder of 1944 had Aimée looking forward to leaving England for Kenya with the entries for 30 and 31 December—her very last diary records of her daily life.

Arthur had temporarily joined her:

93 Diaries, 23 August 1944, p.427.
94 Aimée to Helen. 21 September 1944. Wartime Letters, Family Archive, 4/1/R.
95 Diaries, 10 September 1944, p.428.
96 Ibid, 2 November 1944, p.431.
To tobacconist-shoes & Needlewoman for M’s wool – cold at first, then thaw – our thoughts with the frightened men [she was referring to the Allied troops fighting their way into Germany] these last better days. Sunday Not so cold, fine sunny day – A went out for short walk – No talk of former years – no resolutions – Dull, dull as always.97

Her war was nearly over and Aimée, irrespective of her occasional intemperate and xenophobic remarks about her neighbours and about refugees, had behaved magnificently. At last her courageous achievements as an elderly woman, contributing to the civilian war effort, brought to fruition those yearnings as a young woman to make her mark as an individual. Frustrated in her desire during the early 1890s from accomplishing something in her own right—forced from her academic studies by late-Victorian norms to become her mother’s companion—at last she could regard herself, if only one among many, as an achiever, a saver-of-life.

Aimée was typical of the war-weary Londoners of the time, as described by Harrison: ‘loyalty, morality and optimism’ supported the vast majority of Londoners who relied principally on good news of the war from other fronts to boost their spirits.98 Where she ‘shone’ however as a chronicler was in her incisive if at times destructive commentary on those around her. She was perhaps lacking in Harrison’s other virtue imparted to Londoners: her ‘basic decency’ was at times lacking, as always inhibited by the social snobbery that was her characteristic throughout her life.

VALEDICTORY
That is where the diaries and other records of Aimée’s life conclude: the twelve years that elapsed between the end of WWII and her final retirement as an old lady are summarised below, as recalled by the author.

With the end of the war, both Aimee and Arthur spent time with their children and their families in Africa. Arthur died suddenly in Port Elizabeth, South Africa on 29 November 1948 aged seventy-nine. After a stay with her daughter Helen in Kenya, Aimée eventually moved into Woodcote Grove House, Croydon, London, an old people’s home, where she was in receipt of the Widows and Orphans’ portion of Arthur’s ICS pension. She died on 6 June 1958, after earlier suffering a fall, breaking a hip and not being discovered in her room for four hours. Her remains were interred in

97 Ibid, 30-31 December 1944, p.62.
98 Harrison, Living through the Blitz, pp.280,283.
the space reserved for her, in the Barnett family crypt at Kensal Green Cemetery, London, on 18 June 1958.99

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99 Grave #20608, Square 85, Row 4. The crypt, containing the remains of Edward and Emily Barnett and Jane Bonnycastle, was indistinguishable from those around, the area being overgrown and neglected in late 2009. Arthur Mayne’s death on 29 November 1948 was recorded in The Times, 1 December 1948, as was Emily (Aimeé) Bonnycastle Mayne’s death on 12 June 1958.
CHAPTER ELEVEN
A DISCUSSION

Educated for the twentieth-century?

As noted earlier in this thesis, this historical biography of Aimée Mayne’s life has been developed from the written records left by her and held by the author, as the family archivist: notably, they are Aimée’s diaries, which date from 1897, extending to 1904 (less 1899 and 1903) and then recommencing from 1931 continuing to 1944. These are augmented by her handwritten notes on her early life, prepared for her second daughter Helen, who was interested in her mother’s life. The other two principal sources are the personal account of her life in her semi-fictionalised memoir ‘Annette’ and her eldest daughter Margaret’s novel *An Unreasonable Man*, the content of which is mostly drawn from her own memories of her mother, or as extrapolated, from the diaries and from ‘Annette’. In addition there are numerous letters and some newspaper cuttings.

I was also able to call on my personal relationship with ‘Granny’, to relate to her face-to-face, after first meeting her in 1945 in Kenya. Between 1954 and 1958 I enjoyed brief periods in her company. As an old lady she was living out her last years at her retirement home. She presented as a stereotypical upper-middle-class older citizen, with surprisingly conservative views of the post-World War II era, given her earlier socialist leanings. As the oldest grandchild (and a male) I was made to feel valued by her, so I come to this account of her life with a declared personal bias: I liked her wit, her keen mind and her critical appraisal of the post-war period. I also appreciated the interest she displayed in my activities as a young man, my university studies and my travels abroad.

However, it is only through a detailed biography that an accurate picture could be presented of Aimée: of her life shaped by the gender ideology of the late-Victorian period, then by the events, and her experiences during the first half of the twentieth-century. Now that Aimée’s behaviour, her relationships, her perceptions and her achievements have been recorded and assessed, it is appropriate to complete the study by relating her life to the questions posed in the title of this thesis: was she prepared for the twentieth century? Why could she not take up the opportunities open to the privileged upper-middle-class? This will be discussed later in this chapter.

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100 The novel is essentially an ironic attack on Aimée who depicted Arthur as ‘an unreasonable man’, but whose behaviour was often shaped by his wife’s attitude towards her husband.
Aimée’s life can be divided here into seven phases: first, her education, the late 1880s to 1896 and her perceived feminist aspirations; second, her marriage, and its deterioration, 1896-1944; her life in India, 1897-1917; her responsibility as a mother, 1918-1939; her role as a lecturer 1918-1931; her travels during the 1930s; finally, her position as a paramedic in wartime London, 1939-1942.

Her early life has been analysed as being both underpinned by the privileges of class, and disadvantaged by gender constraints. Her father had died in 1895, leaving Mrs Barnett with diminished financial means (and this was during the period of the first Great Depression). Mothers clearly played an important part in influencing the choices of their daughters throughout this period. Aimée had attended university after a good secondary education, but she was subject to the dictates of a mother who saw no future for her daughter undertaking a career. Mrs Barnett regarded Aimée’s proper position to be that of a companion to her mother and then of marrying well. The mother’s attitude while typical of upper-middle-class women of the time was at variance with the expectations of Aimée herself. Mrs Barnett had recognised the value of schooling at least to secondary level for her daughter, having pleaded with her own father, John Bonnycastle, to be allowed to attend school, as discussed in Chapter Two. Aimée’s education started well: it included not only a period at the Princess Helena’s College, an all-girls boarding school, but later at Notting Hill High School, an establishment that was apparently favoured by parents of the middle-class, to educate ‘young ladies’ to a level where they could consider tertiary education. It was tertiary education for Aimée that disturbed Mrs Barnett.

Aimée’s attitude towards tertiary education was undoubtedly influenced by contemporary role models and by the so-called ‘social sisterhood’ engendered by her fellow pupils. It was Nancy Cott who argued that a sense of gender-group solidarity, ultimately expressed in mid-Victorian feminism, was based on ‘social sisterhood’. One such later role-model in this regard was to be Olive Schreiner. Aimée’s diaries contain later references to Schreiner, in whom she maintained an on-going interest: ‘Olive Schreiner herself, myself – & those of the highest type terrified of passion, mistrusting sex, no strong maternal instincts & intense longing for freedom & dread of tie of marriage’.

Before marriage and India, Aimée’s stated ambition was ostensibly to become medically qualified. She may possibly have been attracted by the ‘feminist flavour’ of

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102 Diaries, 31 December 1938, p.265.
being one of the first female doctors. Kaarin Michaelsen has observed that female physicians were often ardent feminists, and they consciously strove to bring the central concerns of both the women’s movement and the medical profession into Britain’s public discourse.\(^{103}\) As earlier recorded, Aimée’s later recalled that her ambition in the 1890s before the death of her father was to make her own way in the world.

She announced among her friends her determination to be an independent woman. As it was known she would have means of her own after her parents had gone the way of all flesh, she was under no obligation to marry to obtain maintenance and a home.\(^{104}\)

So she was apparently peripherally attracted by the lure of the new feminism that was an important factor in nineteenth-century discussions depicting both marriage and family life as inimical to the role and wellbeing of women.\(^{105}\) As one of a sizeable minority of upper-middle-class women, Aimée, at that stage of her young life, appeared to have shared the belief, as Dyhouse put it, that marriage was incompatible ‘with any life of social purpose and self-respect’.\(^{106}\) However her eventual acceptance of marriage was, through circumstances not of her making, the obvious option at the time given her mother’s opposition to Aimée pursuing a career.

Aimée’s course of action was not unusual in the late Victorian era. Philippa Levine has written that England’s class structure was intricate and rigid in its demarcation. She described the family in Victorian England as being the focus of ‘confined domestication’ with its firm hold on female family members. Social obligations decreed that family expectations and opinion ruled, thus defining the roles of both men and women.\(^{107}\) Cott pointed out that there was still the perspective of the ‘glorification of domestic womanhood’.\(^{108}\) Joyce Pedersen also wrote of ‘the tenacious hold which the self-sacrificing ideal of femininity exercised upon the Victorian imagination.\(^{109}\)

Why then did Mrs Barnett approve of a school that encouraged its students to progress to further education? As noted in Chapter Two, after Aimée’s waywardness at

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\(^{104}\) Annette, p.7. This of course was written some thirty-five years later.

\(^{105}\) Caine, *Bombay to Bloomsbury*, p.264.


her boarding school, it was the proximity of the Notting Hill High School to the family home that enabled Aimée to attend as a daygirl. However, Notting Hill High School had one disadvantage as far as Mrs Barnett was concerned. The school apparently enjoyed a fearsome reputation for working its students hard, as a prelude to entering tertiary education. This was evidenced by Aimée herself, as also recorded in Chapter Two. ‘The homework doled out by the school grew to formidable proportions’. In Aimée’s memoir ‘Annette’, Mrs Barnett is recorded as objecting:

My dear, you are overdoing it …I cannot think why you young girls work so hard just to pass exams, which can be no possible use in after life unless you take up a profession. You know, I do not want you to do that.110

This was to be an apparent source of conflict between mother and daughter. However, as Levine wrote, the specifics of mother-daughter relationships were not the only family connections of significance.111 Olive Banks has noted that women who came from families where they had rather cool or difficult relationships with their mothers, enjoyed affectionate ties with fathers, who might be more encouraging of their daughters’ ambitions to achieve professional success.112 It is clear from the notes Aimée prepared on her early life—if taken at face-value—that from the age of nine she did enjoy a close relationship with her father, who spent considerable time with his daughter after returned from India as a semi-invalid in 1881.113 Perhaps therefore it was her father who was the guiding force in approving Notting Hill High School with its emphasis on preparation for tertiary education for his daughter. Mr Barnett, with his independence of thought evidenced by his early entrepreneurial career in India, could have recognised that his daughter was one of the ‘new breed of young women’.114 There may have been also an economic factor: school fees could have been an issue. Princess Helena College was a boarding school with consequent expense. Noting Hill High School as a day-school would have been cheaper and Mr Barnett’s wealth had significantly diminished after his return from India.

It is unlikely that even Mr Barnett could have foreseen what Aimée might do with academic qualifications, and there is no evidence that she discussed her medical aspirations with her father. Gordon and Nair noted that towards the end of the nineteenth-century change came at different times for different women. Only a tiny

110 ‘Annette’, p.3.
113, Mother’s Family Story’.
minority of eligible women took advantage of tertiary training: even by 1914 only one per-cent of young women were entering university.\textsuperscript{115} It can also be argued that the time was not yet ripe for most upper-middle-class women in Aimée’s situation to make independent lives for themselves.

It is apparent from the way Aimée wrote of her dominating mother that the daughter would not have had the strength of will to make a stand, when Mrs Barnett withdrew Aimée from university—although Henrie Mayne has suggested that Aimée was beginning to tire of tertiary studies, given the long period of necessary education to become a doctor.\textsuperscript{116} There is no actual evidence of this, however. Again, economic factors could have been an issue. University fees might have been too expensive for the widowed Mrs Barnett on her husband’s death. Aimée’s terse note at the start of her 1897 diary just reads: ‘July 1895: Had to give up College & run the home, for my mother’.\textsuperscript{117} Plainly, ‘family duty’ prevailed.

Even if Aimée had persevered at Bedford College and if she had not qualified in medicine, then what were her prospects? Of the women who did acquire tertiary qualifications, the largest group of women in paid employment during the late nineteenth-century was as headmistresses, teachers, governesses, and health inspectors, together with positions as clerk or secretary. These attracted many female graduates.\textsuperscript{118} Howarth and Curthoys did an exhaustive analysis of female entrants to university at that time. Among the many conclusions they drew—most relevant to Aimée—were that the vocational choices as a student from a wealthy home background were less than those for the needy career student who aimed to qualify for professional employment. A sizeable proportion of graduates became home-based daughters.\textsuperscript{119} Here again the gender ideology of the time prevailed: young women of the upper-middle-class were expected to stay within the family.

True, as Joan Burstyn wrote, ‘a corps of women educators and advocates’ had centred the value of liberal learning as the basis for middle-class women to develop ‘ideology and curricula’ at both secondary and tertiary levels, to enhance ‘female intellect, family relationships and community life’.\textsuperscript{120} However, there is nothing to

\textsuperscript{115} Fletcher, Feminists and Bureaucrats, p.149.
\textsuperscript{116} Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.28.
\textsuperscript{117} Diaries, p.4.
suggest in the family records that the young Aimée was drawn towards ‘liberal learning’ for the sake of it. Rather, Aimée’s ostensible goals at Bedford College were to progress towards her B.Sc. with the intention of then working towards qualifying as a doctor.

In my discussion of Feminism in Chapter Three I attempted to place Aimée in one of the categories identified by Tong—the First Wave ‘Liberal Feminists’ whose priorities were centred on the proposition that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal restraints in a patriarchal system that oppressed women. This was a false premise on my part. I concluded initially that Aimée could only be placed in the context of the mainstream behaviour of young women of the upper-middle-class who took advantage of the new education on offer. Later I noted that her feminist ideals, such as they were, could only to be seen as emerging in India, when she began to assert herself. It was—albeit unconsciously—as a ‘memsahib’ that Aimée assumed a feminist role, relevant to Riedl’s reference to the Victoria League’s ideals of transferring areas of activity ‘long acknowledged as feminine to the imperial stage’.

Caine wrote that the very nature of nineteenth-century feminism made the question of imperialism a central one: to demand the recognition of women’s place in the nation, mid-Victorian feminists embraced existing ideas of that nation and, by extension, of the empire. The idea that ‘British womanhood’ was superior to any other, and was indeed a primary illustration of British superiority, was frequently stated. There, albeit unconsciously, Aimée achieved the ‘desired goal of feminism in capitalist societies’, as Marangoly described it. Expatriate housewives could recognise their own and their staffs’ ability to create British domesticity out of limited local resources, even though there was no acknowledgment of the work done by English women as being ‘valuable labor’. For much of Aimée’s time in India her husband Arthur was away on tour, leaving Aimée with full responsibility for running the household. It was first in India with her home management and ultimately as a senior hostess at her husband’s side, that she can be recognised in retrospect as making a ‘valuable national contribution’, albeit within the constraints of Anglo-Indian society.

On the other hand, it is hard to reconcile Aimée in India with being a feminist, when placed alongside the formidable personages of Flora Annie Steel married to a

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121 Tong, Feminist Thought, pp.1-2.
125 I use this term in its traditional sense, as opposed to its modern usage to describe a person of mixed European-Asian parentage.
member of the ICS and with a life-long interest in India, and Annie Besant, a prominent British Theosophist, women’s rights activist, writer and orator and supporter of Irish and Indian self rule. Their authoritative writings, after years in India, reflected many of the tensions characterizing feminism from 1870 to 1920, especially in their positions on authoritarianism, class solidarity, female sexuality, and suffrage. Nevertheless, Aimée’s role in India must be recognised for what it was—a foundation for her life after India, when she increasingly dominated family decision-making, eventually determining what she personally would do with her life. Over twenty years later, after her child-rearing and nurturing years were over, Aimée’s self-will, courage and perseverance saw her through the 1940s bombing of London.

This last period was when her marriage was one in name only. In examining Aimée’s marriage, it is clear that if her personal love-life had been based on a genuine devotion towards her fiancé, she would have been less embittered in her later attitudes towards her husband, her children and the world in general. It was her husband Arthur Mayne, as a young man, who was the romantic in their relationship, reportedly falling in love with the portrait of her as a schoolgirl, which hung in his friend Archie Barnett’s rooms at Cambridge. According to Aimée, for years Arthur had courted her unsuccessfully either in person at her Bayswater family home, or by letter from India, to where, as a mathematically-gifted young entrant to the Indian Civil Service, he had departed in 1890. Finally, of course, he was accepted by Aimée. It was no love match as far as Aimée was concerned—just the means of escaping her mother—and from a later entry in her diary it is clear what doubts she had entertained at the time: ‘Intuition said no, no, no, don’t marry him – Circumstances & his unfailing constancy said yes’.

Initially the marriage was not altogether unpromising. Arthur and she were both idealistic, intelligent and well-meaning. He was certainly very much in love with the talented, if naïve, Aimée—and what was to become apparent was how their early lives in India were focussed on their marriage, even if in the first few years there was no sexual intimacy after the wedding night. As a young married couple they relied on each other. As Lindsey O’Connor put it: ‘Despite prolonged separations from spouses, mutuality became a prominent characteristic in the marriages of the memsahibs’. Interdependence flourished in the absence of the social web of family and friends that

128 Diaries, 7 January 1939, p.273.
existed in England. Marriage became the lens through which they viewed their experiences in India and the foundation upon which they built their lives. Towards the end of their time in India and thereafter it was a different story. Aimée and Arthur lived in effect detached lives, having separate rooms in the family home and abroad when they toured the world.

Unlike those marriages which were either arranged, or that can strengthen from mutual affection into love, the Maynes’ union was made on a false premise—that they would grow together as they lived together. This was not to be and it was never a ‘true’ marriage in the full sense of the word here. John Bowlby has written that between couples, ‘interactional pattern is established as a result of mutual adaptation’, with a mutual obligation to maintain the relationship. The looked-for stability depends on the desired outcome suiting both parties. Where this is not the case it creates major problems, depending on the success of the relationship. ‘If the latter is unstable, both or either of the couple need to adapt’. 

From the start, physical intimacy was something feared by Aimée, as recorded in her memoir ‘Annette’. C.A. Burdett would have recognised her as the product of upper-middle-class Victorian concepts of sexuality, love and marriage. It was the sexual aspect of her marriage to which Aimée eventually attributed the breakdown of her relationship with Arthur. Perhaps this points to Aimée seeing herself as a feminist, though Mackinnon would not have recognised Aimée as a true feminist in this regard. Aimée would not have empathised with those who sought reform within marriage itself. Rather, her perspective of conjugal rights was only an attack on the patriarchal model of sexuality insofar as she felt deprived of a sexual life after the five children were born. Importantly, she failed to recognise that sexuality was a compound factor in which emotion and spirituality played as strong a part as physical passion. It is fair comment that Aimée might well have been much happier with Arthur, without depending on sexual intercourse as the key to their mutual interdependence.

Arthur’s hypochondriacal tendencies in their marriage were of course another important factor in the deteriorating marital relationship. He had sought refuge from the social and personal challenges of his life with Aimée by opting out through imagined illness. Why he behaved as he did will be further discussed later.

129 Lindsey Christine O’Connor, From London to Lahore: Memsahibs and the Victorian Ideal, Ph.D., Cornell University, 1996.
133 A typical entry, one of many such. Diaries, 21 August 1936, p.170.
As an affianced woman, Aimée was brought up in ignorance of sex and, in the romantic tradition of her age, she was supremely unrealistic. As she recalled when recalling her youth, ‘falling in love was the greatest event in a lifetime and lasting love the greatest boon.’ 134 Aimée was of course more cynical as a middle-aged woman. Her diaries from the 1930s contain frequent references to how she considered an unfulfilled sex life was the basis of her poor relations with her husband, best summarised (in the surprisingly frank note she left for her second daughter) and included subsequently at the start of her 1897 diary: ‘Living with him and his lack of emotional expression, once his sex life had exhausted itself, and his maddening hypochondriacal tendencies has been a terrible strain’. 135

As noted earlier, Trudgill observed that historians are never likely to know much about the sexual lives of Victorian couples, because they alluded to it so little themselves. 136 Even if one reads ‘Annette’ with necessary scepticism, ostensibly Aimée was an exception to Trudgill’s assertion. She provided candid accounts of her initial unhappy sexual life with Arthur, starting with the wedding night in Bombay. Once she had agreed to resume conjugal relations with him, she described in rhapsodical terms the few occasions of her sexual climaxes. 137

Of more than peripheral interest in this, the final discussion on Aimée’s life, is an examination of the social attitudes and the political views she espoused; the many books she read and the lectures and societies she attended—as referred to later in this chapter. In this context, it is unfortunate for posterity that she kept no diaries over a lengthy period and there are only limited references in ‘Annette’ to the books she would have devoured then, given the detailed lists she compiled in subsequent diaries and of the lectures and societies she patronised.

Throughout her life Aimée maintained a sense of somewhat dispassionate compassion towards the less fortunate, together with a love of animals. When she was in early middle-age in the 1920s, with her family still around her, it was Henrie Mayne (Margaret) who commented on her mother’s attitude to life. Aimée had obsessions. 138

135 Diaries, p.4.
136 Trudgill, Madonnas and Magdalens, Cited in Tosh, A Man’s Place, p.59.
137 ‘Annette’, p.147
138 She flattered herself on her sense of justice. It was justice for the poor, the underprivileged, the suffering carthorse, the chained dog that she felt with a burning zeal. She was a born fighter with the ceaseless nervous energy of a child. Had she been in a position to devote herself to a crusade—votes for women, the abolition of capital punishment, or cruelty to animals—she would have been in the vanguard, the first to be chained to the railing, forcibly fed or thrown in the cells. As it was, she had nothing on which to grind her teeth. So she took it out on her family. Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, pp.169-170.
There is no evidence that Aimée’s views resulted in her actually devoting herself to causes in later life. She was more of an interested commentator, except in her very early married life when she demonstrated a desire to contribute to famine relief, after arriving in Balaghat in 1897. Against Arthur’s initial protestations at his bride joining him in the field, she had insisted on helping him with distribution of aid to starving villagers. She had founded her own Famine Appeal, raising funds from friends and others in England—attracting the disapproval of Arthur’s superiors, although to her relief she was not actually admonished: her initiative might have affected Arthur’s career prospects. Aimée had ignored the stricture on wives’ fund-raising: MacMillan has concluded that ‘the strict rules of hierarchy in British India meant that younger women dared not initiate any charitable projects’. 139

Then there had been her feelings towards, and occasional intervention on behalf of, maltreated animals: an early diary entry read ‘Saw Poor Horse – interviewed Hospital Asst’140 and she records a conversation she had with Arthur about how their ponies were thrashed to keep them moving, and about the condition of the scrawny bullocks they had seen on the roads.141 In Rome in 1936 she stated: ‘I don’t like Zoo’s [sic] – the caged beasts make me sad’.142 Earlier in Ireland she had noted the condition of the animals she had seen in the fields, although this was as much a disparaging comment on the abject poverty of the local people.143 Her somewhat detached concern expressed for the poor had commenced in India and was later extended to an academic worry about the situation of Russian peasants in the 1930s, following on the Revolution. There was a nostalgic look back to her days as a young woman when she felt the fate of the deprived would have appealed to her then as a ‘cause’.144 But all this in her middle-age was just idealism and not something she could or would attempt to follow through.

Aimée had political ideals as an older woman. It is clear from her diary comments and from the meetings she attended in London that she was inclined towards socialism, even Fabianism. Development of the Fabian movement had coincided with Aimée growing up in her conservative upper-middle-class household, and she was apparently far removed from the growth of middle-class concerns with the political, religious and social status-quo of the late Victorian period. The early Fabians were unstructured in

139 MacMillan, Women of the Raj, p.139.
140 Diaries. 2 February 1897, p.7.
141 ‘Annette’, p.49.
142 Diaries, 8 December 1936, p.183
their ideals, with no programmes mapped out to meet these. They were to be seen as politically naïve, as ‘genteel idealists’, rather than agitators, who viewed socialism more in terms of ‘justice for the poor than envy of the rich’. 145 There is absolutely no evidence that Aimée was even aware of the Fabians in her early life and it is likely that it was Arthur who steered his wife towards Fabianism. For her part, Aimée had written that on the family’s return to London in 1919, she had ‘attended some lectures at the School of Economics, joined various societies in which she was interested [and] joined a speaker’s class at the Fabian Society to improve herself in the art of speaking’. 146

With the resumption of her diary-writing in the early 1930s, there are eleven entries on her attendance at the Fabian Society, to listen to lectures on a wide range of contemporary topics (not always listed), that included ‘working in U.S.S.R’, 147, The present Economic Situation’, 148, ‘Sydney Webb’, 149, to ‘Living in Hell-Germany’. 150 As it happened, six months later in September 1933, Arthur and Aimée were motoring through Germany, so the last lecture did not put her off visiting the country. The diary entries she made during her visits to central Europe, as recorded in Chapter Nine, demonstrate her interest in the rise of Nazism and Fascism, but did not impact noticeably on her at that stage and were more the observations of an informed tourist.

Theosophy was a major interest of Aimée in her middle years, dated from the family’s period in Canada and later in California, from 1916 to 1918. It was an interest that was still with her in the early 1930s. Women were attracted by Theosophy as were many in the professional upper-middle-class. 151 Aimée appears to have taken reincarnation and Theosophy seriously at the time—Henrie Mayne (Margaret) made much of it 152—although there are only six specific mentions of her attending a Theosophical Society meeting in London, at the Blavatsky Lodge, in 1933. 153 For his part, Arthur viewed Theosophy as nonsense. He gently ridiculed his wife’s beliefs, much to her annoyance. 154 Arthur saw Theosophy much as did Rudyard Kipling who also mocked it. 155

146 Annette, p.217.
147 Diaries, 9 November 1932, p.86.
148 Ibid, 2 February 1933, p.92.
149 Ibid, 16 February 1933, p.93.
150 Ibid, 2 March 1933, p.93.
153 Diaries, 22 January 1933, p.92.
155 ‘a mixture of cabalistic, Egyptian, occult and spiritual gobbledygook…approved of and stolen from freemasonry, looted the Latter-day Rosicrucians of half their pet words, any fragments of
Aimée’s interests were eclectic. In the 1920s she had lectured widely for the Women’s Institutes and the Empire Marketing Board on her experiences in India, New Zealand, Canada, and the U.S.A. By the 1930s, in between the extensive motor journeys undertaken by Aimée and Arthur, extensive diary entries record the many lectures and cultural gatherings she attended, over the period 1930 to 1944. Daily she recorded the meetings she attended: there was the London Society with an interest in the Past, the Present and the Future of London; the Ethical Society that was established in 1929, at the Conway Hall, regarded as a landmark of London’s intellectual, political and cultural life. During World War II the emphasis shifted to include the Women’s Voluntary Service; the Contempory Club (founded in 1896 for the purpose of discussing current problems involving the public welfare); the (later Royal) Central Asian Society; the French Institute; Essex Hall, the headquarters of the British Unitarian Movement where, on one occasion, she listened to Professor G.D.H. Cole lecture on ‘Post War reconstruction’. She was ‘disappointed in subject – being one of a series – Unemployment after demobilisation – Pure intellect man, no personal appeal – too clever’.156 Her political interests then were plainly to the Left: ‘To London Labour Party talk by editor of Daily Herald on U.S.S.R. U.S. & ourselves – good but boring delivery’.157 Such were the typical gatherings during the 1930s and 1940s—a mix of current affairs and left-leaning politics.

Aimée has left a record of the books she read—or intended to read—at the time. Trawling through her diaries, one can only be impressed by the breadth and depth of the content. Her earliest diaries focus on the scholarly and educational: in 1897 within the seventeen titles, there is Spencer’s Sociology part III; Dupleye & Cine’s History of India, adjacent to a History of Thucycides; an Olive Schreiner book; a couple of biographies and Mrs Temple Wright’s Flowers & Gardens.158 (The diaries’ addenda for 1901, 1902, 1903 and 1904 are filled only with housekeeping minutiae and lists of clothing for herself and her children). In 1932 she recorded just two books: ‘Books recommnd. Sidney & Beatrice Webb and The New Pleasure by John Gloag’.159 Interestingly, the latter was listed in 1933 as being one of ‘Algebraic Fantasies and

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156 Diaries, 10 January 1942, p.370.
158 Ibid, p.15.
159 Ibid, p.90.
Realistic Romances’, which reflected the disillusionment felt after World War I, the ‘quality of contemporary civilisation and culture’ and the rise of Hitler.\(^{160}\)

In 1933 there is only brief reference to books and these were concerned with the Balkans and its languages, but in 1934 there were ten titles listed, mostly concerned with Slav culture and with travel, with, for some reason, ‘London under Henry II (Publ. G Bell & Sons for the Hist Assn) 2/-’.\(^{161}\) In 1935 there were eleven titles listed, with an emphasis on American authors such as Pearl S. Buck and John O’Hara (she was in the U.S.A. at the time).\(^{162}\) During 1936, as earlier noted, she was much taken with John Gunther’s Inside Europe\(^{163}\) and she included in her diary quotations that impressed her, along with various other sayings that struck her as memorable or witty.\(^{164}\) One was from Pearl S. Buck:

> I may not have fought or won the good fight but I’ve kept the faith. She must suffer in life as her mother had done thro [sic] too sensitive a nature too much emotion…a woman mortally wounded in spirit.\(^{165}\)

She may have included this as representing how she herself felt.

Her 1937 diary contains no less than thirty-eight titles. She was then in South Africa where, as previously recorded, relations with Arthur and her eldest son and youngest daughter there had made her unhappy. She often isolated herself and would have filled her time reading. Again, it is an eclectic collection. Her motivation for a wide selection points to Aimée’s voracious capacity for being aware of the latest publications—to remain abreast of current books and to keep her mind occupied, while struggling to maintain, as she saw it, her sense of well-being.

Thereafter, back in England, there were no less than some sixty titles listed at the back of her 1938 diary that indicate her tastes then included historical topics and sociological works that dealt with the condition of the poor or working class in various countries: one such focus was on Russia—’The Larger View – Benjamin Kaverin ‘good account of human relationships in modern Russia’ and The Windsor Tapestry by Compton Mackenzie, ‘about the House of Hanover.’ She was still reading Pearl S. Buck and Vera Brittain and was enjoying the popular works by Siegfried Sassoon (his most famous being Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man and Memoirs of an Infantry Officer

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\(^{161}\) Ibid, p.120.

\(^{162}\) Ibid, p.146.

\(^{163}\) Ibid, p.186.

\(^{164}\) Ibid, 5 November 1936, p.179.

\(^{165}\) Ibid, p.186.
that were contemporary with Aimée’s life in India). There was plainly some nostalgia for Indian days: ‘British Social Life in India (from early days) by Dennis Kincaid an I.C.S. man ‘who died young’. She also found time for H.G. Wells and André Malraux.\textsuperscript{166}

The 1939 and 1940 diaries contain no lists of books read—no wonder: she was busy preparing herself for her paramedical training and taking up her duties, as the ‘Blitz’ was looming. In 1941, when she was more established in her daily routines and using local libraries (she had always frequented libraries, in the U.K. and when she travelled overseas) she recorded just four titles, one of which was G.M. Trevelyan’s \textit{The English Revolution}. By now the emphasis was on films she particularly wanted to see: \textit{Winterset} (Escape from Nazis), \textit{The Mortal Storm} (Nazis); \textit{So Ends the Night} (Refugee film), \textit{40,000 Horsemen}, \textit{Day in Soviet Russia}, \textit{Parachute descent}, \textit{Alexander Nevsky} and \textit{Storm over Mexico} and ‘Shorts’—\textit{Sunday Morning Sister}, \textit{Fitting a Flat}, and \textit{Waiting for Baby}.\textsuperscript{167} The last two might have related to Aimée’s wish to advise her youngest daughter in South Africa who was setting up house in the absence of her husband who was in the South African army. There was no reading list in 1942—she was completing her memoir ‘Annette’, which she revised extensively right through to 1944—though she noted she had been reading ‘\textit{Last Train from Berlin} – encouraging as to condition of Germany.’\textsuperscript{168} In December 1943 she listed fourteen titles as having been recommended to her, ranging from C.S. Forester to Stuart Cloete, and including a children’s book, \textit{Charles the Cat}. Rather strangely for that time of her life, she also lists five pamphlets issued by The Central Council for Health Education, Tavistock House, Tavistock Square W.C.1: \textit{The Approach to Womanhood}, \textit{From Boyhood to Manhood}, \textit{Facts on Sex for Men}, \textit{Manhood}— ‘an expln. of Sex for young men’ and \textit{Yourself & your body}.\textsuperscript{169} These were the final diary entries on books.

There are however no romances or thrillers, no ‘Jane Austens’, which points to Aimée’s lack of interest in lighter reading. She may of course have borrowed these from libraries, but the conclusion to be drawn is that generally she did not enjoy escapism. The historical novels of C.S. Forester are the main exception. Looking at her reading tastes in conjunction with the many lectures and talks she attended, one can only note that her choices moved with the times and reflected her diverse interests. Aimée Mayne was a serious person whose sense of humour then was limited. Her

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid, p.266.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid, p.365.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid, 1 December 1942, p.389.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid, p.412. Perhaps Aimée was re-examining her own sexuality in light of what she had written in her memoir ‘Annette’.

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curiosity about the outside world, allied with her many social and political interests over the years, stamped her as something of a literary ‘jackdaw’, constantly engaging her mind with contemporary miscellany, even if her interests apparently excluded much of British politics and personalities of the time.

As the oldest grandson and custodian of the Mayne family records, I was fortunate in being able to discuss Aimée Mayne with two female grandchildren who were old enough at the time to remember her. I had passed some earlier comments on Aimée’s life to them. Anne Mayne, Archie’s eldest daughter, responded on the two ‘protagonists’ (not too harsh a word in lights of Aimée’s and Arthur’s lives together). Another of Aimée’s granddaughters, Hilary Peters, Margaret’s daughter, also made useful observations on Aimée.

First, they focussed on Arthur. As a young girl who understood and loved her grandfather, Anne Mayne pointed to Arthur’s dysfunctional family background as being at the root of his antisocial and introverted behaviour. She maintained that what his father did to Arthur by coercing him, as a youngster, to swear to look after his mother and siblings, and then committing suicide, was a ‘violent, hostile and irresponsible act’. Instead of the father acting as a support for his son and giving him whatever emotional security and parental encouragement he could, even if he could not provide much financial support, he burdened the boy with all the father’s responsibilities. This was when Arthur was just starting out in life. It is appropriate here to extrapolate from Bowlby’s writing on the important bonding between mother and child in the latter’s early years. To paraphrase Bowlby in the context of Arthur and the violent separation from his father: ‘Individuals are still disturbed by separations that they suffered in early life’. [Arthur’s] defensive processes were the result of trauma, relating to impressions of an aggressive nature.170

True, someone had to provide for Arthur’s mother and siblings, Anne Mayne continued, but it is clear that Arthur’s loyalty to his mother placed an enormous burden on him. It was plainly very damaging to him—not only as an on-going preoccupation on an emotional level, but also as a constant intrusion into Aimée’s and Arthur’s early married relationship. The former came to resent Arthur’s drawing on the income provided to Aimée by her mother. Mrs Barnett also never forgave Arthur for, as she

170Bowlby, Attachment, pp xiii-xiv, 11.

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saw it, marrying her daughter—while still providing for his mother and siblings—having assured Aimée’s mother that he was practically debt-free.\footnote{\textit{Annette}, p.17.}

Anne Mayne wrote that from the very start of his adult life Arthur, as a survivor of his father’s imposed burden, was ‘on his own’. Consequently, he suffered from a feeling he could not turn to anyone for support. His resultant behaviour was that of someone who had been traumatised and deprived of emotional support, in such a way that his development into balanced adulthood was inhibited. His positive escape from his feelings of inadequacy was through his professional career and his enjoyment of advanced mathematics and translation. The other negative flight from the stress caused by emotional crises between him and Aimée was hypochondria. This first manifested itself with the birth of Margaret in 1900, when he displayed no physical manifestation of illness, though he claimed he was sick. In the twenty-first century, Arthur would have received reassurance that he was not organically ill and he would have been counselled on how to deal with stress. Instead, Arthur received neither support nor even sympathy from those around him.

Anne Mayne’s informed if non-professional comment is supported by a practising Australian consultant psychiatrist, Dr Leo Ryan, who has read through the material I provided on Arthur and Aimée. His of course is just one informed opinion, made at a distance, and based only on selective material, taken from Aimée’s memoir ‘Annette’. He has concluded that Arthur indeed suffered from hypochondria.\footnote{Known medically as hypochondriasis or a somatoform disorder, a mental illness in which a person has symptoms of a medical illness, but the symptoms cannot be fully explained by an actual physical disorder. People with hypochondriasis are very worried about acquiring a disease, or are certain they have a disease, even after medical tests show they do not. Further, these people often misinterpret minor health problems or normal body functions as symptoms of a serious disease. Email, leojryan@yahoo.com, 11 November 2010. See end of Bibliography for Dr Ryan’s professional status and contact details.} This describes exactly Arthur’s behaviour.

Over the many years of his marriage he convinced himself not only that he was dying, but that his body was invaded by what he described as ‘fatigue poisons’ or ‘the worm’.\footnote{\textit{An Unreasonable Man}, p.109.} ‘Fatigue poisons’ was an alleged condition popular in the first half of the twentieth-century (as earlier noted) so was readily available to Arthur as an escape mechanism from confrontations with Aimée, or from social gatherings. Arthur shut himself off from his wife and he shunned his peers. His hypochondria was to be his
ultimate undoing: when he was actually dying of prostate cancer, his collapse was initially not taken seriously. His death was unexpected.¹⁷⁴

Both his two older granddaughters and I can record that Arthur interacted well with his children and grandchildren. When Aimée was absent he did not feel threatened. My own memories of Arthur, when he was visiting my family in Kenya in 1947, suggest that this physically healthy man only malingered when it suited him. I found him to be a strong, gentle, kindly man, interested in his oldest grandson, who enjoyed tutoring me in mathematics.

Turning now to Aimée, the two female grandchildren who had met Aimée as an old lady described her in less than complimentary terms. Plainly, neither granddaughter saw Aimée as a warm, outgoing person. Aimée left an unhappy epitaph with them as a cold and pretentious old lady, a forbidding old snob. Moreover, Hilary Peters saw Aimée as a habitual ‘blamer’ of others for everything that had gone wrong in her life and even in her daily routine. She needed an ‘enemy’. Having to abandon her alleged ambition to pursue a medical career in order to marry gave rise to her feelings over the years of being trapped into what she regarded as a loveless marriage. According to Hilary,

she blamed Arthur in particular for everything she disliked in herself, her family and society. Occasionally Arthur shifted it onto economic forces or other outside factors, but usually he just took the blame and retired into illness. The more he accepted the blame, the more she blamed him, and the more all-enveloping his hypochondria became. She blamed him for that too.¹⁷⁵

Anne Mayne commented that in Aimée’s memoir ‘Annette’, Aimée does not mention one intimate woman or man friend, either in her youth or as a mature woman. Even her time in India with its social attractions and circle of memsahibs there are no close friends, except one: Aimée herself recognised the faithful Amma—the ayah—as perhaps her best friend. Amma had travelled with the family to New Zealand and to Europe. She was regarded as a member of the family and it upset Aimée that she had to leave Amma in India.¹⁷⁶ The only other person who can be recognised as a distant lifelong friend was a Jewish woman—perhaps surprising in view of Aimée’s pronounced anti-Semitism. Isobel Singer had been a contemporary of Aimée’s at Bedford College.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p.272 et seq. and family recollections.
¹⁷⁶ ‘There goes the best and truest friend I have ever had in my life’. Annette. p.196.
Mrs Singer was described as being ‘cold and forbidding’ (not unlike the
granddaughters’ view of Aimée herself) albeit very kind to Aimée’s elder two children
when they were at school in England during World War I, isolated from their parents in
India.\textsuperscript{177}

Here, I thought it appropriate to investigate whether Aimée might have suffered
from some overwhelming mental condition that governed her behaviour. Apparently
not: a tentative forensic psychological diagnosis has been provided on Aimée by Dr
Ryan:

\begin{quote}
it might be extreme to claim that Aimée had a full personality disorder but
while that cannot be excluded, she appears to have suffered from chronic
dysphoria/dysthymia—chronic mild depression. She is apparently best
described as having ‘personality vulnerabilities or traits of a certain type’.
She probably had at her core an uncertain sense of ‘self’, but she would not
often have been conscious of that.\textsuperscript{178}
\end{quote}

Dr Ryan commented on her alleged suicide attempt that Aimée described as follows:
\begin{quote}
All day – more & more unhappy – A’s calm & depressing philosophy –
Ed’s ‘…coldness & indifference to us – M’s contempt – Hel’s treatment of
poor old souls with no interests – It all hurts so much – I made up my mind
to get out of it all – in a burst of misery told Arthur – He wanted to call a
doctor – That meant a Lunatic Asylum when I made that plain to him he did
no more – he played patience whilst I committed suicide next door – A few
human kind words would have saved me – he has lost all powers of
sympathy.\textsuperscript{179}
\end{quote}

Dr Ryan saw Aimée’s behaviour, particularly with Arthur but also with other
family members, as frequently manipulative, which he recognised as a ‘regressed’ form
of expressing her anguish, especially given her lack of more mature psychological
coping strategies.\textsuperscript{180} Her diaries, he continued, contain numerous examples of
attempting to force Arthur to face up to what she saw—often quite understandably—as
his social responsibilities. It did not always work: he simply went to bed, to avoid her.
The best example of her having her way with him was in Canada. She forced him from
his bed, where he was knitting socks for the troops, to travel to England and offer his
services towards the war effort. This was at a time when he had retired from the Indian

\textsuperscript{177} Hilary Peters Letter to author, Letter undated, 2010. Family Archives.
\textsuperscript{178} Dr Ryan to author, email 2010.
\textsuperscript{179} Diaries, 21-23 February 1936, p.152.
\textsuperscript{180} Ryan.
Civil Service and was looking forward to interacting with the younger members of his family, as they grew up in Canada.

It seems Aimée’s actions were principally the result of her outrage and shame at having to explain to enquiries from Canadians as to what her husband was contributing towards winning the war. She also wanted him out of the way, even though the separation was further evidence of their marital deterioration. As for Arthur’s work at the end of World War I at the end of the war, there is no evidence from her memoir or from letters of the period that she recognised Arthur’s subsequent distinguished efforts with the Red Cross, driving his ambulance on the Italian front and later evacuating British prisoners-of-war from Germany. His departure from Canada was to suit Aimée, even while she recognised her marriage was by then one in name only.

Dr Ryan continued that the other descriptor identifying Aimée in a psychological context is as a ‘histrionic’. She certainly craved more attention from Arthur, with a melodramatic tone to her writing, in her later diaries (from 1931), where she frequently railed against his lack of sensitivity and perception. She luxuriated in describing her perceived sufferings at length, particularly when enduring her chronic insomnia. According to her eldest daughter Margaret, Aimée could be a real ‘drama queen’ (Dr Ryan’s expression) if any occasion arose that presented an opportunity. Of course, the diaries reveal that Aimée had her ‘good days’, when Arthur did give her some attention, or she was diverted by external interesting events but, as Dr Ryan continued, the mix of borderline and histrionic personality traits dominated her behaviour. She needed attention, admiration and applause to feel ‘real’, because she had no intimacy in marriage and only a remote friendship with her husband.

There had been some of the recognition she craved, first as a pretty young bride at Pachmarhi, the Indian hill station, when she sang, played the piano and was the ‘Nightingale of the Province’. Then she became a successful society hostess, managing two official residences at Nagpur and at Pachmarhi. Later, in Canada, California and the United Kingdom, Aimée became sought after as a public speaker, thus providing the appreciation and respect she sought at that stage of her life. All this only partly compensated for her emotional isolation from her husband and other family members.

183 Ryan.
Aimée never referred in her memoir ‘Annette’ or in her diaries to her five children with pride, or affection, except fleetingly to the eldest son Edward. However, the boys were both achievers, educationally and athletically. The three girls were intelligent. In Margaret’s case, academically—she graduated from the London School of Economics—and was both attractive and athletic. But Aimée was not fond of her eldest daughter. She was probably jealous of Margaret’s strong bond with her father, especially after the two worked together in Switzerland at the end of World War I.185

Her favourite child was Edward (who rose to be a full colonel in World War II and was one of the most senior of the Shell Oil Company’s international executives post-war). Understandably however her care and anxiety was palpable, according to Aimée’s memoir, when her younger son Archie was born in India with a hair-lip and cleft palate.186 Later though she later appeared to reject Archie, though he too was an achiever, a champion Channel Islands swimmer and later a successful businessman.

The favourite of the girls was Helen, the middle daughter who, once she had married, lived in the Sudan and Kenya until after World War II, and so was not in frequent physical contact with her mother, until Aimée was an old lady.187 There was little affection displayed towards the youngest daughter Isa in the diaries, during the 1930s (when Isa as the only unmarried child spent much time with her parents in Europe and England). Aimée’s main concern was that she saw Isa as feckless and unmarried, until she met and married the South African with whom she had two children. Of her ten grandchildren, it was Helen’s son, Michael (myself), to whom she best related. Being the eldest, in 1957 I was completing my degree at Cambridge University with a fourth year at Oxford University and I could visit her regularly in London over that period.

Why Aimée Mayne was so distant from her children can only be explained by her chronic unhappiness at the status of her marriage and her personal relationship with Arthur. She was a deeply unhappy, frustrated and isolated woman, for most of her life, also because of her innate personality and her own family’s background. Even if Aimée recorded her early family life as being warm, there may have been a wish to present her early days in the best possible light to her children.188 In summary, Aimée’s family circumstances were barren. Her marriage did not work, principally because of a lack of respect and love for Arthur, and this rebounded on her relationship with her children.

185 Mayne, An Unreasonable Man, p.140.
188 Mayne, ‘Mother’s Family Story’.
It is now appropriate to turn to the question of whether Aimée Mayne was prepared for the twentieth-century by her education. She would have recognised the significance of her privileged social status, and she would likely have agreed with Barbara Leigh Smith: ‘No human being, whether male or female, had the right to be idle. Women wanted to work’.

Education was the key. Philip Gardner viewed the period optimistically: he saw education in the second half of the nineteenth century as when women’s ‘personal, social and professional ambitions could draw on the experience of an experienced and functioning sphere of genuine professional status and authority’. Gardner continued that it took the women themselves in their personal endeavours to show men that women’s education and learning was inevitable.

Aimée almost certainly would have been unaware of the debate among pioneers of female education. It was the feminist historian Martha Vicinus much later who observed ‘the admission of women to universities was regarded by nineteenth-century feminists as the keystone of the arch without which the rest of fabric could have neither stability nor permanence.’

Vicinus wrote that college-educated women were pioneers in achieving greater female autonomy, as they filled new jobs, set up new institutions and ‘played an increasingly important role in the public sphere’, not forgetting the gulf between Society’s traditional expectations of a family life for them, and the women’s hopes for an independent life and for personal fulfillment.

Vicinus presented the late nineteenth-century in England as the golden age for would-be tertiary-educated women.

Such advances were hailed by some at the time: an anonymous piece entitled ‘The Higher Education of Women’, (The Ladies Cabinet, vol. 34, 1869, a ‘drawing-room journal, generally sympathetic to the development of opportunities for women’) on their being allowed to sit the Cambridge examinations is similarly exultant:

Cordially do we now rejoice at the prospect now spread before the educated women of this country. It is something to bring the heads of our girls to apply themselves to what is more valuable and enduring than chignons… It is something for our big girls to practically learn by patient study and settled plans, and a rigid economy of time, those moral and social virtues of

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189 Hall, White, Male and Middle Class, p.191.
190 Gardner, Literacy, Learning and Education, p.366.
191 Vicinus, Independent Women, p.10.
patience, self-denial, self-restraint, regularity and order...as well as those intellectual excellencies...Such we conceive are some of the social advantages which may be derived from these University examinations. Of the literary advantages we say nothing, as these speak for themselves.... 194

'Social advantages' in the context of the times can also be seen as widening the opportunities for young women to broaden their knowledge of the world outside the home. It was an emphasis on 'independence and self reliance'. 195

This would seem to have been more an aspiration than a reality for many young upper-middle-class women, such as the young Aimée, who were still dominated by Victorian gender ideology defining the role of young upper-middle-class women. As earlier noted, Howarth and Curthoys concluded that there were plainly two groups of female tertiary students—those who had to work after university for a living, in the main enabling women to fulfill their gender roles—educating and caring for children—and those who were there for 'self-cultivation...or to enjoy the pleasures of college life...Higher learning had some fashionable cachet.'196 This second category of female college students was the focus of Emily Davies, the founder of Girton College who, in 1872, wrote:

It is not as a means of getting on that University education is recommended ...but to give her mind that freedom, that disposition, and those habits, that may enable her to obtain any part of knowledge she shall apply herself to, or stand in need of, in the future course of her life. 197

Miss Beale, Principal of St Hilda's College at Oxford did not even approve of women taking examinations (and in this context it is significant that St Hilda's had a higher proportion of girls from the upper-middle-class than other women's colleges). As with Miss Beale, many parents of her students considered that attending university did not have to lead to employment. 198 Howarth and Curthoys concluded that the college-educated student from a wealthier home background benefited little in relation to her life chances—'intending doctors and academics apart.'199 Aimée was one of

194 Ibid, p.29.
196 Ibid, p.221.
199 Ibid.
those of whom Levine noted were from ‘wealthy backgrounds who attended for a period of uninterrupted study’. 200

Aimée’s academic options were limited. Had she been allowed to remain at university without aspiring to a medical degree she was still destined to become a stay-at-home daughter awaiting a marriage proposal. This was what Aimée’s widowed mother wanted for her. It was not enough that this young woman showed signs of being a budding intellectual—assertive, musical, cultured and well-read. Aimée had been allowed to enter university, probably by an indulgent father already in decline towards his death in 1895, and by a controlling mother—who later plainly reproached herself for encouraging Aimée to pursue a tertiary education. As related, the father’s death resulted in the mother’s arbitrary action of withdrawing her daughter from Bedford College, to be a companion and run the home. The arrival of Aimée’s husband-to-be, Arthur provided an escape for her from her mother. He drew his fiancée into a marriage that left her ultimately dissatisfied with him and her life. Gone were any aspirations she may have had to make her own way in the world.

It took only a few years of early married life in India for Aimée to recognise that she was a mere appendage to a hard-working husband. There was little outside agency available to her and she had to create her own. With the abandonment of any dreams she may have had to succeed in her own right in India—after initial attempts to help with famine relief and set up her own famine relief fund—she took on the memsahib’s role, of parties and concerts. Later, she was forced to look for personal satisfaction in running large households with a plethora of servants and—as her children arrived—to being a competent mother. Her unhappiness, compounded as she saw it by an inadequate sexual relationship, resulted in her eventual metamorphosis into an introspective self-pitying, blaming individual.

How much better might she have managed, and how much happier she may have been, if she had been allowed to pursue the opportunities extended to her, via the tertiary education offered to young women in the 1890s? We can never answer this question, but it is clear that essentially Aimée Mayne was a casualty of a changing world that did not alter fast enough for her as a young upper-middle-class women.

I have aimed to present a comprehensive life story of Aimée Mayne. The value of this account is that it presents to the modern reader the struggles in one woman’s life, from the late Victorian age through the first half of the turbulent twentieth-century, a period

of constant flux. Aimée’s life, while of course unique to her, can be seen as an exemplar of her time. I am confident that my study of this one woman fits within Hamilton’s definition of biography as ‘the creative but non-fictional output devoted to recording and interpreting real lives.’ I am also constantly reminded of Zeigler’s observations that biography can only be a sweeping overview, existing as a series of snapshots. Accordingly, the story seeks to freeze at given instances in time the internal, as well as the external, forces shaping the progress of events.

§

There are two things, to aim at in life: first, to get what you want: and, after that, to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind achieve the second.

201 Hamilton, Biography – a brief history, p.5.
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