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A Young Victorian Lady of Fashion Abroad

At the end of the 1960s a gentleman by the name of Major Francis Jones C.V.O. T.D. F.S.A. Wales Herald of Arms Extraordinary, learnt that a Miss Agnes Hermione Jennings, of Gelli Deg Kidwelly, had written diaries about her teenage life, which unfortunately were thought to have been lost. A little while later the Grand-Daughter of Agnes, a Mrs Jewson of Guppy Bush, near St Florence Pembs. told the Major that two journals had survived and she kindly lent them to him, to enter in the volumes XI and XII of The Carmarthenshire Historian. Historians and Archivists can gain an insight into the times and ways of these lost years. It also gives us a verbal picture of places, views, and buildings which have now been lost.

Miss Agnes Hermione Jennings was born on the 7th May 1848 to a loving and forward thinking family which allowed her to develop a strong personality, which made her very interesting. She also attained strong views and was not afraid to air those in her journals. It is quite refreshing to read what she thought of people and places during her early life. The first journal starts on the 30th April 1865 covering her coming out year of 1866. The next volume is lost but the third volume was saved, and this is our talk tonight.

Map 2

30th April 1868

A week before her 20th birthday, Papa, Mamma, Susie Watson, and Agnes started out from their London home **3** for Charing Cross Station where they caught the 9.40 am train **4** for Folkestone, arriving at 12 pm. They were met by Lady Jodrell, Agnes's mother's sister, who saw them to the ship. "The day was beautifully bright and fine, but very windy. The sea was tremendously rough. Everyone was ill except one or two gentlemen and myself. Mamma was not at all ill, but suffered from the effects of another person being so all over her dress. 'We landed in Boulogne, but as I was proceeding with my 'traps' in my hand, traps being luggage, I was suddenly stopped by a gendarme who looked at me very suspiciously and seized hold of my rug which was filled with my night things and done up with a strap. Everybody standing around looked at me as a guilty smuggler'. After searching all her luggage, she was allowed with her family, to proceed to their chosen hotel.

1st May - Boulogne

We went sightseeing in the town in the morning. We saw the Cathedral **5** and the Museum. We saw lots of medals, a lock of Napoleon 1st hair and a beautiful specimen of a mummy, supposedly the best in the world. We left Boulogne by the 1.30pm train and arrived in Paris at 6pm.

2nd – 4th May - Paris

We visited the Louvre **6** to see the pictures. I saw a Mr & Mrs Lewis Lloyd but did not speak to them, as I thought they might not know me. In the evening, we went to the Champs Elysees **7** which was like a large fair.

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We went to an English Church which was crowded, the Notre Dame 8, and the Bois de Boulogne. 9 We also saw the Emperor 10 reviewing his troupes. He was in Uniform and was seated on horseback. The Empress 11 was also there, in a blue riding habit.

As the Hotel was very noisy we moved to another.

5th May

We went to see the Column of Napoleon 1st 12 in the Place Vendome. It was also the anniversary of his death and the railings were hung with wreaths of immortelles, these are made with dried everlasting flowers and black, white and yellow ribbons.

There were several of his old soldiers in uniform, who were to walk in procession around the column and then back to the Invalides. 13 Although our rooms in the Hotel Breteuil were comfortable, they were rather mysterious, with sprigs of box sewn onto our beds to charm away the devil, so the chamber maid told us. Later, Agnes writes, "Passed an awful night bitten to death by bed bugs, also odd noises and creakings in the room, also flashing lights crossing the room. "I got into Sissie's bed but could not sleep until 2 am."

6th May

We went for lunch at the Restaurant du Progres, where Sissie and Pappa found, to their horror, they were eating horse flesh. Mamma and I had veal. At night we were tormented by bugs again.

7th May

In the afternoon, Mamma's cousin Comtess De Notallier and her daughters, aged 14 & 17, who did not speak a word of English, called on us.

8th – 11th

We visited The Louvre, Notre Dame, various churches and markets.

12th May

We moved hotel, due to the amount of bugs. The landlady was furious and as she left our room she attacked mamma and pulled the fussy bed drapes down all over our clothes.

13th-18th May

We went sight-seeing, Count Broe invited us to dinner, but Papa declined.

19th May

Saw Miss Jones of Pantglas passing our door, before we went out, but did not speak to her.

20th May

I bought a live tortoise for 1 franc 50 centimes and took it home. Mamma was horrified and persuaded me to give it to a waiter.

22nd -28th May

We went to St Denis to see the Emperor's stables at the 14 Tulleries, The Blind Asylem near the Invalides, and St Cloud, where we saw marble busts of Napoleon 1st 15 and the King of Rome, by Canoga

29th May

Mamma, Papa and I called on Mr and Mrs Lloyd Price at the James Hotel. We talked to them in the public sitting and reading room.

31st May

The Emperor and Empress went down our road in a state coach on their way to the railway station, as they were to pass a day at Rouen. The coachman who drove their carriage was the same old coachman who had shown us over the Emperor's stables.

2nd June

We called on M. and Madame de Broe whom we found at home. We went to an anatomical museum where some of the things quite shocked Sissie.

4th June

Went to Sevres and saw over the porcelain manufactory. **16** I bought a biscuit profile of Napoleon 1st for 2 ½ francs in a frame. Upstairs we saw specimens of different countries. We saw some items from Carmarthen, and some Swansea ware, sent by Mr W. Chambers. **17 & 18 (Perhaps Llanelli)?**

5th June

We went to see the pictures and treasures of the Palais de Luxembourg. **19** Here we gloated for a long time over the horrible, pictures of people being dragged out to their execution at the time of the revolution. The painter was Muller. They also gave us a view of our own cruelties by showing pictures of Charles 1st taking leave of his children and the Princes in the tower, before being murdered. They also had a picture of Joan of Arc.

10th-12th June

We went to Palace de Versailles 20 and to St Germain where the Palace was very disappointing, being all a museum and the rooms small and dark. The Baroness Adelsward called for us in an open carriage and took us for a ride in the Bois de Boulogne

17th June

Went to Gobelin and saw the tapestry 21 being made. It was very interesting. It was worked at the back by men 22 threading small bobbins of coloured silk through vertical threads. In another place carpets were being worked, this time from the front with very much like worsted balls and were clipped with large shears. Later we heard the Zouave band playing.

18th June

Sat on a bench in Les Jardin des Plantes, 23 & 24 I had a discussion on cruelty to animals with a woman sitting on the bench who killed a caterpillar. I left her suddenly on discovering her child had the whooping cough.

24th June

We visited the Blind museum 25 it was painful as they all seemed sickly and unhappy. We heard them play the piano and flute, also setting type and printing. There was carpentry and turning on a lathe, also a punched paper (braille) which allowed them to read. They did not use letters but a series of dots. We saw a girl reading The History of France and she read it to us. We then saw their concert room, chapel and play ground, we also looked at the girls knitted work which was beautifully done.

30th June

We left Paris for Andelys. We went to see the Chateau **26** Galliard which is atop a very high hill. It is a fine old ruin built by Richard Coeur de Lion and called, his saucy castle, as it looks down from on high over the town beneath.

1st July

We left Andelys by train for Rouen. We visited the Cathedral **27** where the heart of Richard Coeur de Lion was buried, but later taken to the museum. We then visited Tour de la **28** Grosse Horloge, to see a curious old clock above a handsome Gothic Archway. We also went to see a statue of Joan of Arc in the Place de la Pucelle with sword in hand over a drinking fountain.

2-3rd July

Went by ship to Harve put up at the Premier Hotel where Aunt Fay was staying. Aggie, Sissie and I bathed in the sea before breakfast.

7th July

Left Harve by steamer for Honfleur. Went by train to Lisieux and looked at the town. **29 and 30** We were much pleased by Lisieux and thought it delicious. Left by train for Caen and stayed at the Hotel Angleterre.

8th July

Visited the Church of St Etienne, built by William the Conqueror and where he was buried. His bones were later taken away and destroyed by Huguenots. Also **31** we visited where he lived which is now used as a training College. Also saw Abbaye-aux-Dames, built by Matilda of Flanders, The Conqueror's wife.

9-10th July

Went to Mans, then on to Tours and then Blois where we put up at the Hotel d' Angleterre.

13th July

Went to Chateau Chenonceaux **32** which is a most curious and unique place, it is almost entirely built on a bridge over the river Cher, so that the inhabitants can fish from their windows. It formerly belonged to Diane de Poitiers being given to her by Henri 2nd. It was originally built by Francois 1st. It now belongs to a private gentleman M. Polouze, but strangers are allowed to see it.

15th July

Went by train to Saumur where we saw one of the finest Druidical Monuments in France, viz the "Dolman Bayncaux" which is a room composed of 14 stones of enormous size and built like a house of cards. We then went on to Angers.

16th July

Saw Angers Castle **33** a large straggling place with a number of dice box towers all around. It is now used as a barracks and arsenal. We went to the Cathedral and Museum where we saw a "stone vase, one of which was supposedly used at the marriage feast at Cana, when water was turned to wine".

17th July

Went by steamer to Nantes. "A very spoony couple on board who went on in a most absurd way, also a spoiled child with an evil eye. I decided that both she and the spooney couple should be thrown overboard. A moustached and bearded

female who was at the table d'hote yesterday was on board with an old priest, both of which I sketched. Papa talked to the priest and Mamma to the female who was bearded like a Pard. (like a leopard or spotted animal.)

18th-21st July

At Clisson [34](#) we saw the castle which was very like Kidwelly, an old ruin. At Dol we walked about the town, [35a](#) very quaint old place and visited the Cathedral, [36](#) which Mamma thought much like St Davids. Falling to pieces. (Perhaps it was then)

22-29th July

Visited Mont St.Michael, [37](#) then on to St. Malo. [38](#) Then over to St Helier [39](#) Jersey were we saw a fine granite [40](#) quarry, some of which was being sent to London for the Thames embankment walls. In the evening I played billiards, which I often did.

26th August

Embarked for Guernsey. I saw some druidical stones and on the shore [41](#) seaweed, called Vrale which they spread out to dry then cart home where they either burnt as fuel or make bonfires and burn it, then spread the ash on the land for fertilizer.

29th August

Went to Victor Hugo's House but was told that Mrs V. Hugo had died and they were not going to show anybody around. But they did. The most eccentric house I had ever seen. [42](#) Old oak furniture and old china mostly Chinese. [43](#) The house had a stuffy, unwholesome feeling with all the ceilings, wall, staircase and balustrades, muffled up in some

kind of woollen material. The room in which he wrote was on the [44](#) leads and surrounded by glass like a photographer's room and as hot as an oven. His bedroom was a most ghostly [45](#) haunted looking place. [46](#) In the drawing room was a table with the names of four of France's principle writers in each [47](#) corner. Victor, Alexandre Dumas, George Sand and Lamartine. In front of each name was let into the table some writing implement which belonged to each writer, and in a drawer in each corner underneath was a specimen of the hand writing of each. The lady told us the table was got up for a fancy fair by Madame Victor Hugo.

(48 A picture of the Hugo Family)

1st Sept

Went by steamer to Cherbourg, and in the harbour we saw the Empress's yacht [49](#) the "La Reine Hortense" and also the [50](#) equestrian statue of Napoleon the 1st. Then back to Paris.

23rd September.

We went to Versailles and went through the rooms on the south of the palace. They saw the "Salon Des Glaces" a splendid room 239 feet long so called for having 17 windows on each side, went through the Cabinet des Perruques, where the king used to change his wig, into the bedroom of Louis XIV where from the central window Marie Antoinette showed herself to the mob. Then to the Ooeil de Boeuf so called from the oval window in it. Then into several others and onto Galerie des Balailles which is 392 feet long containing pictures of all the French principal Victories. Then onto a room with scenes in the life of Louis Phillippe, and then out into the gardens and luncheon. Afterward we went through rooms about Napoleon 1st campaigns and

victories. There was a sculpture representing him in his last moments which was at the exhibition last year and bought by the empress. There were statues of the emperor and empress and him as a little boy standing by his mother. We went through some other rooms and then left.

23rd September 1868

(We went to the Palais of Versailles going through many rooms and very long galleries, retiring to the gardens at lunchtime, then back to rooms dedicated to Napoleon 1st, with statues of him, the Empress and one of his mother and him as a small boy. Then through further rooms before leaving for home.)

This is the final entry in this volume.

1A

THIS IS THE OTHER SURVIVING VOLUME, AFTER A GAP OF SIX MONTHS

Now on to Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, France and finally home.

1st April 1869

Showery and windy, Papa, Mamma and I went to the Pope's Reception at the Vatican at 11 am. **40** (The Pope then was Pius 9th who was and still is the longest reigning pope at 34 years) Mamma and I were dressed in Black and wore veils instead of bonnets, Papa wore evening dress as he did not have a uniform with him. We went through a whole suite of rooms until we came to a long gallery where the reception was to take place. **41** There were benches along all walls so that there was seating for all. The Pope's throne was in the centre of the room against the wall. We had about an hr to wait as we came a half hour early before the appointed time and the Pope was 1/2hr late. There were between 3 and 400 people there, of all nations we all sat down in two long lines.

It was quite absurd to see the immense amount of rosaries and other things people had brought to be blessed by the pope. They carried the in large bunches on their wrists or at their waists. A French lady next to me had several boxes full of them and looked as if she was going to set up a shop. I took 5 rosaries, 4 photo's of the Pope and a palm branch like the ones he blessed on palm Sunday. A lot of the gentle men were in uniform I saw several white Austrian, some green Russian also several Diplomatic, and 1 English. As the Pope

entered the room from the same door as us everybody stood up. He was attended by 3 men two in violet and 1 in black

2A

There were no soldiers to keep order, only the Pope's footmen in crimson livery. The Pope was dressed in white cashmere robe and water silk sash and cap. He started down one side of the room stopping before each person and offering his hand for them to kiss. He appeared to be rather deaf as he kept putting his hand up to his ear. We were on the right side just above the throne and we watched him approach us with some nervousness and anxiety. It took nearly half an hour before he approached us, as it was a lengthy business and I was very much afraid lest he might get tired before he got to us and not go all round the room.

On the last Sunday before Easter Sunday he was so tired because of all the ceremonies of the week that he did not walk around the room but just addressed and blessed them.

At last he came to us his chamberlain came first and took our tickets and read our names aloud and we went down on our knees. The chamberlain asked what we were and Papa quickly replied 'Angli non Angeli' English not Angels. This so tickled the Pope's fancy that he burst into a loud laugh and gave Papa a hearty slap on the shoulder. He next came to me and gave me a very fat white hand with a very large ring on it I took it in both my hands, and squeezing it affectionately I kissed it. I held my things out for him to bless but he told me that he would bless them all at the end but he still put his hand on them. There followed an address to us all and after his final blessing in Latin the room resounded with cheers and cries of Viva Pio Nono, Viva la St Pere, The English hurrah'd and the German's yelled. in the midst of this the Pope disappeared. We all then left when we

could. We reached home at about 1 pm. After luncheon Papa and I went to Neri's studio [42](#) and gave him an hour's sitting

3A

for my cameo. He worked the clay and got it very like me in one sitting'.

2nd April

Went to Neri's for another sitting then on to Benzoni the sculptor. He said he had orders from Lord Lytton and when Papa told him he was his cousin he became very civil and showed us around his studio and afterwards told us he would send us pictures of those we most admired. We most admired a piece of Benzoni as a boy. This he promised to send to us as a present to the family. Later I went to do some shopping in the Corso I got a diary and a pair of garters.

3rd-8th April

Papa gave Neri a sitting for a cameo of him. Went to the Quirinal Palace [43](#) summer home of past Pope's, saw the church of Santa Maria near the Pantheon built on the site of the former temple of Minerva. They also went to the protestant cemetery to see the tombs of Keat's and Shelley, and visited Tivoli. [44](#) [45](#)

10th April

They went to the catacombs Mama soon got fed up and went outside where she busied herself looking for skull and crossbones which she pocketed and smuggled away. Later we went to see some excavation nearby. We bought some things here. Mrs Ind found a cameo.

10th-13th April

Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Pope's first celebration of mass. 46 Saw the ruins of Cicero's Villa.

4A

14th April

Went by train to Albano, Frascati, Naples. Got to Albano in 1hr, great scramble for the omnibus it would not hold all. The American Consul's wife was very rude and spreads a false report that there was room on the box, which made Papa get out and then she stuffed her maid in the space. Papa had to stand up behind.

19th April

At Naples Hermione becomes ill. 'Stayed in bed all day took a dose of castor oil the first thing making a sandwich of it between water and brandy so as not to taste it.' She was ill for a long time being confined to the house for three weeks.

5th May

Her 21st birthday and went for a drive for the first time since she became ill. The carts in the streets were mostly drawn by three abreast, horses, cows, oxen, mules and donkeys being variously used, the horse trappings and decorations were very grand, but the poor beasts themselves seemed dreadfully flogged and ill-used. The women wore coloured handkerchiefs tied around their heads. Beggars uncommonly numerous.

8th-12th May

Visited Capo del Monte 47 and returned to Naples along the Strada Nuova, passed the Prince & Princess Humbert 48 driving. At Sorrento sketched Vesuvius from the window of

the Tasso Hotel on a cliff above the sea, and saw the room where Tasso was born.

5A

14th May

We went to Pompeii **49** today we went by 'Chaise apportenses' In which Mamma and I were carried about by two men. Mamma asked if she were too heavy, and immediately he came back 'Yes you must have eaten too much macaroni.' We spent two and a half hrs there we saw the Diomed's house. **50** We saw many other houses and tombs, most of the fresco's **51** were very fresh and the names still visible over the shop doors. They have found many pots and pans etc., and many black loaves. In one place we saw some poor people in most painful attitudes, one women covering her mouth with her hands as if she was being suffocated by the sulphur fumes. They nearly all had rings on. The houses of Pompeii were all of one storey except for Diomed's which had 3. The streets were narrow but there was a foot path on each side. **52**

15th May

Returned to Rome. Two days later went to see Tadolini's studio who did Fay's bust, saw plaster cast of it. Not many pretty things there. Then went to Neri's for a final sitting for our cameo's which he then finished.

18th-21st May

Went to the Palazzo Barberini **53** to see the opera Beatrix Cenci then travelled onto Terni and Ancona and on May 21st arrived at Ravenna a queer old fashioned looking town. In

the time of the Goths it was the capital of Italy. Dante died and was buried there which was a seaport but now the sea has now receded 3 miles. And went to see the rotunda of [54](#) Theodoric the Great the roof of which is one slab of stone.

6A

22nd May

Went to Bologna, [55](#) Saw the Asses Tower of immense height and close to it was a leaning one, leaning nearly as much as that at Pisa. Bologna is the pleasantest town we have been in since Florence clean, no bad smells as in Naples and good roads and pavements for walkers, which we did not have in Rome.

24th May

In Bologna went to the Accademia delle belle Arte which holds a fine collection of old Masters. Also saw the Church of St Stefano, remarkable for being built on top of seven churches. In one there is a pillar with an inscription over it saying it was the exact height of our Saviour, having come from Jerusalem. I stood by it and found myself about a half an inch taller.

27th-31st May

On 27th left Bologna by train for Venice. Staying at the Royal Hotel near the Palace of the Doges and St Marks. Saw the Bridge of Sighs, picture galleries, churches. On the 31st went to the [56](#) Palace belonging to the Duchess of Berry and her son the Conte de Chambord the Pal Vendramin Calergi which was very interesting containing many pictures of the French royal family Louie XVI etc.,

1st June

Left Venice for Verona we saw the Cathedral, amphitheatre and tombs of the Scaliger Family, who ruled Verona in the 13th-14th century

7A

2nd June

Left Verona for Brescia then on to Milan. Saw a refectory of a former monastery housing the celebrated fresco of the Last supper by Leonardo da Vinci it is in a bad state of repair. She took several photographs of historic places.

7th-12th June

Left Milan and came to Como where she saw the Cathedral and churches and sailed on the lake. **57** Then on to Novara.

11th June

Came to Turin, where, in the Armory of the Kings Palace she saw the Armour of P Eugene. with 3 bullet marks on it.

14th June

Left Turin for Susa a small village **58** in a beautiful situation surrounded by mountains the on to Mt Cenis in Savoy. Sans le Bourg and St Michel in France.

!7th June

They came to Aix le Bain France where she tasted the waters 'they were very nasty' and went on to Geneva Switzerland 'A very nice town indeed. Very good shops and the swiss are very civil, obliging people.

22nd June

Near Geneva they saw the house of Robert Peel 'Which the swiss people pronounced 'Mr Rhubarb Pill'.

8A

23rd June

Went to see **59** Castle Chillon a very picturesque castle where the waters of the lake lap its walls. It has turrets like extinguishers. Lord Byron wrote a 392 line narrative poem about a prisoner in there. Afterwards walked to Lausanne.

24th June

Went to Bern where there are many representations of bears. Later they went to Thun and Interlaken.

25th-27 June

Went to Grundewald called at the Hotel Eiger then on to the grand Glacier three miles away then back to Interlaken. On the following day they went to Lucern where they saw the **60** lion which is carved into the mountain in memory of Swiss Guards killed in the French Revolution their names engraved underneath it is very handsome and in a very picturesque spot.

28th June

Went on the lake in a steamer. Then returned to Lucerne to dine and had a very fine Table d'hote. A band played during dinner winding up with Yankee doddle dandy as there were a great number present.

29th-30th June

Went to Berne and on to Freiburg (Germany). Where 'the Germans all smoked which was not pleasant. Mama bought some wormy cherries each with a maggot inside. Motta gave them to a man for his children as he said the maggots would fatten them. Then on to Strasbourg a large busy town but looked dirty and uninteresting.

9A

1st July

At Baden Baden saw the **61** Kursaal where the gambling takes place. It is a fine building. It has 'Conversation Haus written on the side. A very innocent name.

2nd July

At Heidelberg, went to see the castle a magnificent old ruin. We saw the cellar with the **62** largest vin ton. in the world. After the harvest the workers held a dance on top of it.

3rd July

We sailed on the Rhine, passing Coblenz very strongly fortified.

4th July

Sunday at Cologne went to the Church of St Ursula. In the church were the bones of Queen Ursula who was sad to have floated up the Rhine with 12000 virgin attendants for the purpose of converting the people of Cologne, but they were all barbarously slaughtered. There are arranged around the inner porch in glass cases. Mamma's flannel petticoat came down and she had to retreat into a shop.

5th July

Went to Aix la Chapelle. 'Tasted the waters which were like bad eggs'. Then on to Brussels. 'Very glad to leave Germany and find ourselves in a civilized country once more'.

10A

7th July

Went to the manufactory of Brussels Lace and a large shop, where we were allowed to watch the women at work. It seemed to injure their eyes very much, as all appeared to have something the matter with their eyes. They made it on cushions [63](#) with bobbins and very fine thread. One woman was making it with a needle. [64,65,66](#).

8th July

Went to the Hotel de Ville, Brussels, where one room seemed to alter its position in a wonderful way as you walked around it

9th July

Went to Calais, boarded a steamer which took one and three quarter hrs crossing to Dover and thence by train to London. Saw Canterbury Cathedral from the train 'very large and handsome, beats anything seen abroad'. At Victoria station 'they examined Mamma's box and were very irat at discovering several volumes of Tauchnitz editions which are prohibited from being brought into the England. We received a severs reprimand, but only one volume was seized....

Found Louy and Willy in Portland Place. Willy is up for a cricket match. Richie arrived later in the evening.

And so the tour ended as it started with a brush with Customs Officials. Normality returns and I feel she was pleased to be home again