

## A diary of my journey to Africa, 1905-06

By Lil Sandeman

### Introduction

Just as winter was arriving in England, a vivacious young woman, Lil Sandeman, caught the mail boat from Southampton on 21 October 1905 bound for the Cape where she was to spend the next six months. Born into a Scottish army family – her father was a recently retired colonel who had spent much of his professional life in India – Lil had been at school (St Leonards) in Scotland with Effie Anderson, Maria Molteno's daughter. Effie invited her to come and stay with her and her father, Tom Anderson, who had been widowed only two years before when his wife, Maria, had died at an early age, at their home in Kenilworth, Cape Town.

Lil was excited by the prospect of her first trip outside Europe, and travelling on her own. She was only about nineteen years old (assuming she was born in the same year as Effie, 1886), and she decided to keep a diary. She started it as she went on board the ship and kept it up, on an almost daily basis, throughout her stay until she returned to England in the middle of the following year. By this time she was engaged to be married. Her diary was looked after by her younger daughter, Jocelyn Morris (nee Molteno), and eventually at my suggestion lodged in the University of Cape Town Archives as part of their Molteno-Murray collection.

It is a delightful read. In the days before air travel, going by sea to Africa took a serious amount of time. Even with the advent of steam, a passage to the Cape took three weeks a hundred years ago. That gave time for a little community on board to form and friendships to be made. Lil gives an engaging picture of just what ocean voyages were like (something I remember from my own experience as late as the 1960s) – the deck games, dances, fancy dress parties, playing Bridge, standing on the deck at night watching the ship's wake catching the moonlight as the sea

churned astern. And dropping in at Las Palmas in the Canary Islands; and, in Lil's case, even calling at the remote island of St Helena where Napoleon spent his last years in exile, not to mention a tiny place on the Angolan coast.

It is her account of living in Cape Town during that long summer of 1905-06, however, which is particularly interesting. Because she was staying with Effie, she slipped into the carefree life of the younger generation of Moltenos, Murrays, Andersons, Lindleys, Bissets and a few other families. The motor car with its speed and noise and (soon to be) dominance of the public road had not yet arrived. The shadow of the First World War had not yet



**Lil Sandeman wearing an ostrich feather boa**

fallen across the world. And the systematic racial oppression which reached its apogee under apartheid had not yet been put in place by law and enforced by armed police. There is a relaxed prosperity about the social circles in which Lil moves. Her diary also reflects the startling (to modern eyes) invisibility of Coloured South Africans who make it all possible. The pace of life is completely different from our own in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each day brings its natural quota of exercise – walking on foot, cycling, playing tennis, going down to the sea. And for us members of the family, Lil's Diary lets us meet so many of our relatives – Sir John Molteno's sons and daughters and their offspring – as well as the small circle of other families around which their social life revolved.

But at the last, Lil's Diary becomes a love story. We see her growing awareness of being in love. And we travel with her, accompanied by Effie and Effie's cousin, May Murray, to visit Wallace Molteno's farm at Kamferskraal some 350 miles northeast of Cape Town. Lil sees the place that is to be her new home. And half intimidated, half excited, she begins to come to terms with just how different life in the vast and drought-prone Karoo is from the well watered, intimate farmlands of England she had been familiar with hitherto.

The selection I have made here amounts to a little over a third of the original Diary's total length. Since Lil was writing an account of her doings day by day, there is inevitably a lot of repetitious activity which I have omitted. I indicate where sentences or whole entries have been omitted by inserting dots. The original Diary is now located in the Archives of the University of Cape Town Library, Collection 330.

**Robert Molteno**

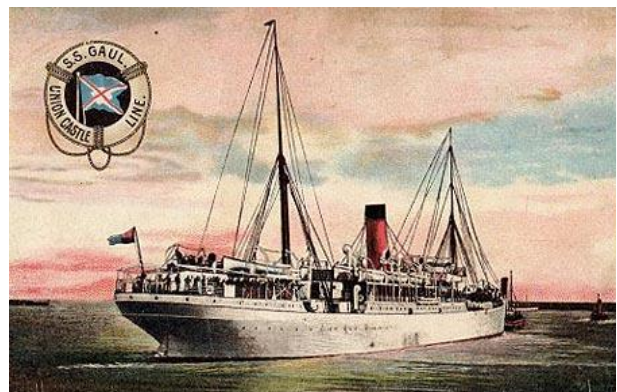
May 2012

**October 21, 1905**

**On board the *SS Gaul***

I said I'd never keep a diary but at last I have begun. Who knows how long it may continue! This is such a good opportunity as Aunt Nelly has given me this book and I'm doing something a little out of the way for me, i.e. starting all alone on a voyage to South Africa.

How forlorn I felt when I kissed my Daddy today and watched him walk onshore, leaving me all alone on this ship among such a lot of strange faces. It was almost worse than saying goodbye to Mother, that was just a hurried kiss and a "God bless you", and I was into the cab and off. But I watched my Dad's dear jolly face and waving handkerchiefs for – oh such a long time. I stood looking at the shipping and harbour getting smaller and smaller and thought of my darling little Mother's parting text she gave me to remember – "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms". I felt comforted - those arms around me alone on this ship and round my darlings safe at home and He will bring us back safe to each other I know....



**SS Gaul, a Union Castle mail ship, 1893**

The sea is smooth and there is no motion of any kind. Long may it continue!

### **October 22, Sunday                      The Bay of Biscay cuts up rough**

A lovely day. Bright sunshine. And only a somewhat choppy sea. I was up for breakfast at 8.30 and on deck. It seemed a *very* long day. I read *The Sowers* nearly all the morning and after lunch talked to the Spekes, my young married couple, and read some more. After tea the sea got unpleasantly rough. We were in the Bay [of Biscay]! I thought my berth was the best place, so dined on a cup of soup in bed. I didn't get to sleep till 5 a.m. Such a horrid long night, such banging and crashing and the horrid bells ringing out the hours. The sea poured in at my windows all night – the porthole wasn't properly screwed down.

### **October 23, Monday**

A truly dreary day spent in my berth with only *The Sowers* to cheer me. The stewardess doesn't come up to my expectations. She isn't fat and motherly and doesn't call me "my dear", but she is willing if somewhat stupid. The cabin steward is a dear. He came in and mopped up my floor and filled my hot water bottle and was very conversational. He said the *Gaul* was a good boat,<sup>1</sup> all boats beginning with a "G" were good boats, he said ...

At 4 p.m. I staggered up and dressed and got on deck, but only stayed about 10 minutes when I had to fly downstairs and only just in time! I was only actually sick that once. I would have been sick much more often, I was quite prepared to be, but they couldn't provide me with the necessary adjunct under the circumstances - they said there was just one left. So I had to give up the idea – it was a day like a horrible nightmare.

### **October 24, Tuesday**

I had a splendid night and woke up feeling much better. The ship was rolling a good deal but I hustled off to my [bath?] and got up to breakfast, a somewhat doubtful meal. I felt pretty bad all morning, lunched with Mrs Speke on deck, and afterwards played Bridge steadily till dinner time. We played 1/- a hundred and and I lost 8/- a least, but hope I shan't go on at this rate! ...

Awful discovery! Mr and Mrs Speke are a honeymoon couple! How unlucky. I must be careful not to inflict more of myself than I can help upon them. It is too bad, Mrs Speke is such a jolly girl – just about my age. Dr and Mrs Davies are very nice and her sister Mrs Connelly and their little boy Kenneth is a darling, and their little governess is a nice little thing. The Spekes chaff me about the purser. The Capt. promised to send him to [...] and reassure me, but he has never come! They told him this morning that he had lost a chance in a thousand, that now the Capt. was off duty and could do all the reassuring himself. He of course said he would try and pluck up courage to address me, but all he did was to stand at attention and gaze at my back hair (which was very untidy). The Spekes are most amusing frivolous little people.

### **October 25**

Another rather wearisome day. Huge waves. A swell I think very hard to bear. I wrote letters all the morning – which made me feel sad. I ventured bravely into lunch, only to flee precipitately before long. After lunch more Bridge – a return rubber with Mrs Hardy, and we actually won 2/6. So I am only 5/6 to the bad now. After tea I felt bad. Mrs Speke fled to bed before dinner. So Mr Speke packed me up in her chair with her rug as well as my own, and he and Mrs Dawson talked much to me after dinner. I went to bed quite late, about 10 o'clock.

### Thursday, October 26

Delightful to wake up and see sun shining in the porthole and to feel less motion. I was up punctually to breakfast and on deck. Still a nasty swell and I felt headachy and a bit sick. Morning spent in writing letters and playing wild games of quoits with Mrs Dawson and Mrs Rigg. I always come off victorious and very much elated ...

Great preparations for going onshore tomorrow. The stewardess has become attached to me I find. I am much amused. She has a huge admiration for me and says I am the prettiest lady on the ship! I *am* amused! I feel really less seasick tonight.

### Friday, October 27

#### Las Palmas

I woke up very early for me, about 6 a.m. The boat was rocking gently, outside there was (?) and in sight was *land*. Such a pretty stretch of terracotta shore, and bright sunshine and smooth sea. I dressed hastily as we steamed into the harbour and the usual crowds of boats surrounded the ship with vendors of wonderful bargains. The shrieks and yells amused me while I was dressing. Breakfast was ready at 7 a.m. and then came boats to take us ashore and a wonderful man who talked broken English offered to take us to the other end of the island and show us wonders without end for 4/- a head.

Mrs Dawson and I and Mrs Hardy (she who plays Bridge) got a remarkable old trap, a sort of wagonette with a hood, while Mr and Mrs Riggs and a girl whose name I can't spell got into another and we started off along the coast to the town. Las Palmas leaves a good deal to be desired; it is so utterly unfinished, in fact it is hardly begun. The town is more or less Italian-looking, but I was struck with the eastern appearance of everything and the people were far more picturesque than any I have ever seen and made me long to go to Spain or Portugal.

Such fine tall women with white cloths over their heads, splendid-looking men far finer than Italians, and such fascinating children! Words fail me to describe the children. A pack of delightful naughty little boys came all the way behind our chariot singing tara-la-boom-di-ay and turning cartwheels – I gave them every copper I had in the world.

There were palm trees galore, the height of my ambition, but they are so dusty after the green of old England, but the town was bright and clean and fascinating. We did the cathedral in great style led by various personages who demanded shillings at intervals. A fine cathedral with some beautiful vestments to be seen in the sacristy, but no pictures of note.



Las Palmas, 1900

Then we looked about the town and did some shopping. Some of the people made marvellous purchases. I invested only in ugly postcards. Then back we clattered to the hotel, such beauty with cool looking English people sitting about and palms and a string of beautiful sitting rooms, and had tea and felt refreshed. Then it was time to go back to the boat, such a business it was getting on to her, we were

kept jogging up and down on the waves while the coal barges were removed and we were soaked with swinging wet ropes and finally hauled up the steps by filthy coal men.

Then came a terrible two hours while they finished coaling. The heat was insufferable and the dirt – I never have seen such a mess in my life. I sat patiently in the midst of it all and did two sketches most valiantly, I think, they were somewhat grimy in colour but give you an idea of Las Palmas. At last they thought fit to start off, the passengers in a state of stupor with nowhere to lay their heads as the ports were all shut and the deck was a nightmare. About dinner time it was washed and after dinner we had a refreshing game of Bridge and soon felt better ...

### **Saturday, October 28**

... We had intended more Bridge after dinner but the second class gave a concert. Such fun. They stretched tarpaulins over the whole of the lower deck and everybody sat on forms. We took our deckchairs and sat in a superior crowd looking very bored! Such killing music, none of it very high class. All songs from operettas, and it went on for hours and hours. One enterprising man played a banjo and a variety of girls sang more or less shrilly and a really capital girl recited and was encored, and finally a small boy sang and a very very long song with no accompaniment, with a chorus repeated twice at the end of each verse. There were at least 10 verses – that was the limit. It was a killing evening.

### **Sunday, October 29**

Rather a long trying day. A very nice little service in the saloon at 10.30. The Capt read it so reverently and simply, and we sang three hymns.

After that we lay on deck and I painted for the rest of the day. Awful heat ...

### **Monday, October 30                      Playing Bridge – and winning at last**

A very hot [...] day. The sea without a ripple. All the people crowding into the deck. We are back in the tropics now, of course, everyone has got fearfully energetic. A sports committee was formed yesterday morning. I was put on it to arrange about a [dance?] ...

After dinner we played again. I alas! was not allowed to dance as I'm not very well and on a milk diet and still. But our Bridge really made up for it. We won 4 rubbers. 704 points in all, so I have won the whole of my 7/- back again at one scoop. Hurrah!

We watched them dance for a bit afterwards, and very funny it was. The men danced in shirts and trousers, and they all looked appallingly hot. I envied them all the same; the deck looked so pretty with bunting and lights ...

### **Thursday, November 2                      Sick; not just seasick**

Oh dear, such a scene with my two doctors [it seems they were concerned about her health after she had been in much pain the day before]. It was a lovely day. Bright sunshine. And sports were to be held on deck. I was to remain below. Despair! I entreated and raged and stormed, all no use. I was cheeky and polite and rude and funny – all to no purpose. The Practical Joke [the name Lil gave to the ship's doctor because she felt he hadn't been very professional] stood looking very tall and nice looking in his white uniform, but stony, and little Dr Davies looked terribly professional and stern. But before he left me to my fate, he asked if he might come and pay me an ex-official visit later. Streams of visitors poured in. I had quite an exciting day with news of the sports and a third class concert etc. How unlucky I am to miss so much.



### Friday, November 3

Not a very exciting day. My doctors were snubbing and horrid and hoped I was in a more contented frame of mind. I never even asked to go on deck and nobody noticed! Feel hurt. Shan't be so good again.

Had streams of visitors as usual – some very nice and others undesirable! The doctor thinks I am seeing too many people and is going to put down the undesirable ones with a firm hand. Read a most exciting book *A Maker of History* by Oppenheim, and Mrs Dawson began a new one of Stanley Weyman's reading aloud to me after tea. After dinner Dr Davies came in looking so nice and unprofessional, and fed me with toffee! I asked him to tea tomorrow and he was delighted to come.

Dr McFie, the "Practical Joke", paid me a very long visit later, and was very nice and interesting. He was looking so nice and handsome! And was more Scottish and pleasant than ever. I think I quite like him ...

### Tuesday, November 7

#### St Helena – a deckchair view!

Quite an exciting day for me. The ship was astir very early. I woke at 6 a.m. and found we were opposite St Helena. The sea was pale grey and the cliffs rose, deep reddish brown. It looked most imposing. I found St Helena exactly what I had imagined it. I suppose Gerry's description and the photos had been very faithful. I lay and envied the people who were going onshore – the men in the cabins surrounding me were whistling and shouting and bustling off ...



Jamestown, St Helena - a view today

Dr Davies ... came back later to say I was to go on deck for an hour. Great news. Mrs Dawson and Miss Woffenden helped me to dress. They unpacked my trunk and every warm vest and garment they met with, they insisted on putting on me till I felt like a bundle of rugs. Then two burly and far from clean stewards arrived and carried me on a "Queen's cushion" up on deck, where a long chair was waiting for me and rugs and cushions and many kind friends. It *did* seem jolly on deck after my cabin, and it was really extraordinary the difference one week had made in the



Fun and games on board ship – Lil's future nieces, Lucy & Carol Molteno (Rudyard Kipling between pierrot & Lucy), riding an 'elephant', 1906

passengers, everybody was so friendly. The men, instead of standing about in gloomy rows, were all over the place joking, laughing, and carrying chairs. St Helena looked very proud and rugged in the sunlight, and picturesque too.. I was lent a splendid pair of glasses and examined the guns at the top of the deal, the steep ladder up to the fort, and the funny little town of Jamestown ...

### **Wednesday, November 8      The Fancy Dress dance**

... Quite a decent man has got on since Saint Helena, a Capt Ivers in the R.A.M.C. Such a refreshing sight after colonials, quiet and amenable ...

There was much uncertainty as to whether the fancy dress dance in the evening was to come off or not as a poor lady is very ill on-board, but in the end it did – I didn't consult my doctor as to whether I was to stay up for it, but just went into Mrs Dawson's cabin which is on deck and changed into my white muslin and pink rose and "did up" Mrs Dawson who went poudre and Miss Woffenden who wore my pierrette [... ?] dress ...

Such a [revel?] as it was, it began with a procession all over the ship. I never saw such a funny collection of dresses in my life. The first class was very badly represented, only two men bothered to dress at all. And very few ladies. But the second class were very gay indeed. I never saw such a collection of bad dancers in my life. Really it must *hurt* to dance so badly!

There were three real Chinese dresses which were good. Dresden China was pretty, but such an ungraceful girl. There was a fat Jap, and a menu card (Mrs Riggs), two chefs of course, Nell Gwynn, Cleopatra, poppies, a nigger (very dirty), a Spanish dancer etc. Really wonderful for board ship. I had the time of my life. I lay in state and everybody was nice to me. A weird and substantial ghost appeared suddenly and created much amusement all in sheets with a skeleton face. No one had the remotest idea who it was. Most people thought it was Mr Bose and it turned out to be Mrs Davies. Kenneth was in great form as a Neapolitan fisherman; he announced that he generally got a prize. So I offered him a kiss for a prize and he was more than disgusted! ...

### **Sunday, November 12**

Temperature normal again. So was up on deck at 10. So in time for church. The Captain read the service in his funny way, he doesn't stick to his prayer book and gets lost. Reads rather wild collects. And has a hymn when he doesn't know what to do next. It was rather disturbing to one's devotion the way the boat rolled during the hymns, everybody clutched each other wildly and slid down the deck ...

### **Monday, November 13      Arrival in Cape Town**

Here ended my first sea voyage since my childhood, and in spite of sickness and the week shut up in my cabin, and quite uneventful as it is. I shall always look back to it as one of the pleasantest little experiences in my life – the kindness of the people on board was most extraordinary. I embarked at Southampton solitary and forlorn. I get off at Cape Town rich in friends, with the memory of such kindness from Capt Whitehead, the Doctor, Stewards, Stewardesses and Passengers – as I shall be lucky if I ever meet with them again. Here ends a very very happy three weeks and my new life in Africa begins.



THE CLOTH IS SPREAD OVER TABLE MOUNTAIN. CAPETOWN LIES BELOW.

**This photo was taken in the early 1900s roundabout the time when Lil is arriving in Cape Town to stay with Effie Anderson**

**Tuesday, November 14                      Welcome by 'Dear old Mr Anderson'**

When I came up on deck, we were nearly in. How I laughed when I saw Cape Town. I couldn't help it. Table Mountain was such an absurd little thing after what I had expected. And Cape Town is squeezed in between it and the sea, and looks so small and insignificant. Mr Speke was quite hurt that I wasn't more impressed, but everything was such a funny shape, I could not help being amused. The steward gave me a note from Mr Anderson [Mr Tom Anderson, Effie's father]<sup>2</sup> saying they would be down as early as possible and welcoming me to the Cape. But as the boat approached the landing stage, the first people I saw were Effie looking the same as ever and old Mr Anderson in the same [...] hat! Effie has got awfully thin and looks so nice now.

It was ages before they would let them on board. So I went and had my breakfast and just as I had finished, they came in. Dear old Mr Anderson was so kind and pleased to see me, he is a perfect old darling. He was so sorry I had been ill and said he was going to put me under Dr Murray's charge who lives next door ...

We got into such a quaint hansom [cab] and drove to the station. I think nothing of Cape Town. It all looks unfinished and the great Adderley Street is very small and not exciting at all.

We left Mr Anderson in town "to make money", he said. Effie called after him to bring out some soles for



**Thomas J. Anderson, Effie's father**



dinner. And we were off. Oh, how pretty the suburbs of Cape Town are. I was enchanted with them. Bright red roads, brilliant green foliage, heaps of firs and stone pines which reminded one of Italy. And the quaint shaped blue mountains beyond. All the houses are more or less small and [one-storeyed?] And dumped down in the most delightful gardens full of flowers. It all looks like one big [wood?] full of houses and flowers.

The Andersons' house is small and pretty. With two stoeps, which we would call a balcony in England, and a glorious orange creeper over the door. The melange is a bit wild and a la Evangeline. The drawing room contains very little furniture, at huge pot of arums and a great many ugly pictures, one said to be a Holbein and one in the drawing room a Murillo (doubtful!!).

The dining room has a marvellous frieze of rivers and trees round the top which makes one feel like a waterlily, and the smoking room is Effie's boudoir and is singularly untidy.

My room is delightful and done up just for me, I find. White walls and a lovely blue carpet, pretty furniture and full of flowers and such a nice window looking out onto the garden.

After lunch I rested till 3.30 and then we set off to the tennis party. We got into a train. Two men called Southey jumped in and hustled us into this carriage. After a bit we got out at a station and we wandered off to tea with some people at a house which was difficult to find. I found "Bingle" there looking 10 years younger,<sup>3</sup> and May Murray – such a charming girl. After a hasty tea, we all wandered off to more Southeys, everybody that afternoon seems to have been called Southey, and there found a very juvenile party indeed - lots of very young girls and young men. Of course, I couldn't play tennis but I looked on and talked to various people ...

### **Wednesday, November 15      Still not well**

A very long day in bed. The first day anywhere is always long, but in bed it's dreadful. Dr Murray came and was very nice and I find has quite a sense of humour. I told him the whole story and he said it was a very clear account. I ought to take up his profession! I told him at once that he needn't say I

had got appendicitis as I hadn't. So he could give up the idea, and he said he quite agreed and that I could be a loyal subject of the King without having it! Also that when I went to heaven, he was sure I'd like to take my appendix with me!



**Dr C F K Murray, Caroline Molteno's husband**

So I am to stay in bed for a few days and go back to that awful old Bengers and milk pudding, and be patient.

After the doctor had gone and I had written and sent off my letters for home, Effie and Marjorie came and unpacked for me. *Such* a mess they made, but they managed to stow away everything somehow.

They were quite overcome at the magnificence of my clothes! I wish I hadn't brought so many evening dresses. There don't seem likely to be many dances.

After lunch they both tramped in again and fixed up a blind for me after dropping the hammer several times and nearly slaying themselves. Then I had a sleep and after tea Effie came and read and talked to me, and May paid us a visit. She gets nicer every day.

In the evening Effie came and poured out confidences. She asked if I noticed how badly she played tennis and then remarked that her partner had asked her to marry him in the morning, and that was the first time she had seen him ever – how horrible! Here's Effie in love! And she really mustn't marry this Mr Southey – he had a fearful scar on his face and is such a rough specimen. If her father knew she says he would call him out. Besides he is a widower and has children and is not very young – but pretty well off. Of course, she has refused him. May it last. I think she's only flattered. Surely, surely she can't be in love with him. Horrible thought!

#### **Thursday, November 16**

Another day in bed. Nothing at all exciting has happened today. Marjorie and Effie spent the morning in my room and were full of beans, and after lunch they went off to play in a girls' cricket match. It seems to have been a funny performance. None of them could play cricket in the least, and Effie only made a stand of half a minute. She was bowled second ball.

I wrote letters and then Bingle trotted in to see me and was most conversational. She is a dear old soul. .... When Effie came in, she and Miss Bingle and I talked French. Effie talks awfully well. She is a clever monkey. We are to talk and read every morning. Bingle has led her off to a prayer meeting tonight, much against her will, and under the strongest protest.

#### **Friday, November 17**

Stayed in bed all day and felt much better. Did nothing particular. Effie read to me a bit ... I had various visitors. Marjorie, of course, with armfuls of flowers, and May and Bingle, of whom I am getting very fond.

#### **Saturday, November 18                      Streams of visitors; getting better slowly**

I was allowed up today after the doctor had been, and lay on Effie's sofa out on the balcony. The air was delicious. Effie went off with May to call on the admiral and recover their dust coats which they had left there. But I wasn't lonely at all. I had a perfect stream of visitors. First came Elsie Lindley, Marjorie's sister, *such* a pretty girl



**Caroline Murray (nee Molteno), wife of Dr C F K Murray**

exactly like the heroine in one of Annie Swan's novels, *very sweet but not exciting*. Old Miss Anderson came in and another old lady, and stayed a bit, and then Bingle and Mrs Murray arrived. The latter stayed ages and talked. She swept aside the Army, Chamberlain, the English Constitution, and a few other trifles in the talk, and spoke highly of Gladstone – What a pity he hadn't lived (how I should like to invite Dad and Mrs Murray to tea!)

Then Effie came bursting back with May and the dust coats, and Marjorie and Elsie all looking very fresh and nice in their spring frocks. I went off to bed very tired. Mr Anderson is a perfect old darling. I *do* love him. He talked for ages after lunch and told me all about the Cape and the incapacity of Lord Selbourne.

### **Sunday, November 19**

... Effie made me very comfy on the stoep in my deck chair and lots of cushions. The two Mr Southneys came to lunch. "Perry" was very amorous and gazed at Effie a good deal, but not in an offensive way, and "Oscar" was dull, I thought. I liked Effie's one best in spite of his disfigurement. Effie trailed them off for a walk. I read the *Newcomers*. Back they came for tea armed with the most lovely wildflowers of all colours. "Uncle Wallace" came in to tea, young and good looking,<sup>4</sup> and they all talked farming. I feel I know quite a lot about it now. They *did* chaff me at first. How can I know anything about farming? Went to bed when they had gone, pretty tired.

### **Monday, November 20**

... After tea we trimmed hats and I made myself weak with laughter and got a pain. Such wild hats as Effie trimmed! One all yellow with the silk that was over from a lampshade. Miss Bingle came shivering in and we showed them to her and she imagined that Effie really intended wearing them! Such a scene ...

### **Wednesday, November 22      Lady Juta's Bazaar**

... Effie went off to help arrange her stall at a bazaar with Lady Juta and her daughters who are very grand and have quite bought the Cape. She came back in a violent temper. She can't stand the Juta girls who call all men by their Christian names and patronised the whole of creation ...

After lunch May came round bursting with the fete. She wasn't going to sell but was going to send Miss Bingle and the children there. I suggested that I should go and she rushed off to ask leave and came back to say that I was actually to go! I could hardly believe it – I saw Effie dressed in her pink muslin and Paris hat, looking very nice, then I hurried into my blue muslin hat with strings, feather boa, white coat and all. At three the carriage came round very full. Bingle, May, George with Jack on the box. I was stuffed in and off we went.

Such a pretty scene, in the Newlands cricket ground. The usual booths and the stalls, and lots of lovely [...] fluttering about. Different canapes with strawberries and ices and tea respectively, and on the cricket ground itself a procession of decorated vehicles, [...] mail carts, prams, boats, pony and donkey carts. We were just too late for the actual procession. But we walked round viewing the different vehicles. Some were lovely, especially a big boat with its sails all shaded with huge daisies ...

My precious hour was nearly past but there was time for tea. So by degrees May and Kathleen, Effie and I were collected by the gasping, fluttering Bingle and led off.... After a sketchy tea, alas! My precious hour was over, but I quite enjoyed driving home in state in the Murray's carriage with two ripping horses. I went to bed and was none the worse, in fact better I think.

### **Thursday, November 25                      No chaperone at the Hippodrome!**

A quiet day after my dissipation. I lay in the drawing-room most of the afternoon and read. Effie went off to a tennis party.

A killing thing happened in the morning. Mr A., hearing the house quiet about 6.45, suspected the servants of not having got up. So as he was dressed he came downstairs. Going into the drawing-room he discovered the black wench Ettie in her night shirt, as he called it, dusting [Dahlia's] Black bare feet, tousled fuzzy black hair and a far from clean night garment. He stood and scolded her within an inch of her life, then burst upstairs and lectured Effie who became helpless with laughter. After breakfast he came into my room and ramped up and down saying how disgraceful it was and how disgusting etc. I was too sick with laughter to say much, but I apologised for also being in my night shirt – which made him worse! He said there was *nothing* to laugh at, precisely nothing.

Effie was very naughty in the evening. She went off to the Hippodrome in Cape Town with May, and when Mr Anderson asked who was going, she reeled off a lot of imaginary chaperones. When they arrived, they found only Mr Southey was there; the others had had no intention of going evidently and they sat one on each side of him and enjoyed it immensely. When he took them back to the station, who did they see in the train but Mr Rudolph Cloete, a fast young man who flirts with them both and to whom their respective parents have a strong objection. They looked out of the train at Kenilworth and couldn't see Mr Anderson anywhere, only what looked like Mr Molteno, "Uncle Wallace", in the distance. So they gaily went on to Wynberg with Mr Cloete who brought them back from there in a cab. Of course, it *was* Uncle Wallace and he waited patiently till the last train got in and then came back to rouse the house and say that May and Effie hadn't returned, but they stepped down and intercepted him only just in time. Effie confessed it all to Papa the next day and was let off pretty easily but May has "let sleeping dogs lie" as she puts it and not told the formidable "Aunt Caroline". Uncle James has heard the whole story and is quite delighted; he is such a dear old soul, an ideal chaperone.

### **Friday, November 24**

The three Lindleys arrived in the morning with a bath chair and trundled me round to their house where we lay under the trees in their lovely garden and gazed at Table Mt. I'd never seen a garden so crammed with lovely flowers and it was so cool and nice under the trees. I stayed to lunch and they had prepared my diet for me, which was nice of them ...

After lunch I sat on the stoep and did a sketch. Such a lovely view. I took till tea time to draw it and I hope to finish it and send it to Dad for a Christmas present.

### **Saturday, November 25**

I took it easy this morning as Dr Murray has said I might go to the Hippodrome after lunch if I stayed in bed till 11.30. We lunched early and hurried off. Effie had promised to take the Murray children and we picked up Kathleen, Jack and George and nurse in the train. Of course, lost it but caught another in a few minutes.

I hadn't seen Cape Town before except my drive from the docks on arrival. It is really quite a fine town but the houses are all dwarfed by that great Table Mountain at the back. The streets seem narrow and it all looks very foreign and funny, with so many niggers about.



### Sunday, November 26

Went to church at 9.30 to the High Celebration. A very beautiful service very nicely sung. After lunch I lay down on the sofa and Effie read Tennyson to me and I fell asleep. We went to tea with Mrs Hanbury who lives with old Miss Anderson at Rondebosch. Rather dull, a lot of old ladies there. Miss Anderson did the honours and I walked round the garden with a widow of sorts. Effie shocked them all by insisting on playing her one [...] on the piano – on Sunday too.

After we got home, the brothers Molteno came in and were very amusing. Uncle Wallace is very nice. After dinner we went round to the Murrays. "The old [beau?]" was there, a Mr Cloete, making eyes at Effie and May. I talked to the two uncles and discussed pictures.

### Monday, November 27

Sketched in the Lindleys' garden in the morning, and Evelyn Southey came to tea. A Mrs and Miss Beard called and asked us to tennis on Thursday. After tea we walked up to the courts with Miss Southey but there was no tennis for Effie to play as we had to hurry home to give Mr A. his dinner. We dined at 6.30 and he was in a great fuss bustling off to catch his train when in burst the Molteno brothers wanting him to buy a farm. He had 5 minutes to catch his train –

really *no* time to buy a farm and was much enraged with Uncle James. We all frivoleed down to the station and Effie would *not* be serious, and they parted with a row. After dinner the uncles led in our chaperone, Mr Bisset, a most disagreeable man. I thought he was a boy of 20 and treated him as such, but found he is 27 and very sceptical and cynical about our sex! The uncles were very fascinating and we had a fearful argument about Bridge. "Short suite v. heart lead" - they said all Johannesburg men played "short suite", and it was most unsafe. So I suppose that's why Dr Davies played that way....

### Saturday, December 2

#### Going to the Races

A lovely day and we went to the Races and I enjoyed it immensely. Effie and I stepped down to the racecourse in our best frocks and were met by Uncle James in high feather as he had just won £16 on the last race, and he showed us the paddock and did the honours generally. When we adjourned to the grand stand for the next race, there sat Mr Eivergh [...] looking very clean and sure, he of the *Gaul*. He seemed to know no one and hung himself on to us and invited Effie and me and Uncle James to tea with



Wallace Molteno, early 1900s

him. The races were most exciting. We walked in the paddock between each one and gazed at the horses and Mr Eivergh pointed out all the good points to me ....

Effie and I had exactly one sovereign to stake between us, and Uncle James refused to give us any tips. So we backed a horse called Glengarry for a place. It lay between him and a horse called Ginger and as we watched them canter past Mr Eivergh said Ginger had a bad temper and would never start. So we backed Glengarry and of course the other horse won – our horse ambled in last. *Too bad*. After the races we all packed into a Cape Cart – Uncle James who is far from thin, Effie and myself all squashed together like sardines, and Mr E, who is very slight indeed, in great state beside the driver.

### **Sunday, December 3**

Went to church at 11 and intended going down to Kalk Bay in the afternoon, but missed the train – after all the fag of changing our clothes too. So we went to tea with some people called Currey. Such a hot name too for a warm afternoon, and I found Mr Currey is a very good water colour painter. He is going to take me out sketching. So I'm in clover ...

### **Monday, December 4**

... In the afternoon we got ourselves up regardless and went to the cricket match. Uncle James met us at the gate and wanted us to sit in the grand stand, but we refused [with scorn?]. Effie and I and Gordon Murray walked around and sat on some benches in the shade ...

### **Tuesday, December 8**

... We met Uncle James in town and he trolled us all over the Houses of Parliament and the new City Hall and the [...] Law Courts where we listened for a minute to a very solemn case being tried. All we needed was a Baedeker! ...

### **Wednesday, December 6      Sketching on the Cape Flats**

Went out sketching with Mr Currey this morning. After keeping me waiting nearly an hour, we got started and rode for miles on bicycles. I had an ancient thing of Mags' [Marjorie's]. Then we tramped for miles over the sandy flats dragging the bicycles and all our sketching paraphernalia. At last we reached the spot and sketched. Mr Currey was most kind and just like a sketching master. He gave me many hints and told me what to do next all the time. Coming home I found both my tyres were punctured and had to ride home on flat ones. It was appallingly hot. I changed to the skin and dried myself with a towel. We had tea at the Lindleys' again and played tennis ...

### **Thursday, December 7**

A horrid windy rainy day. Marjorie came round and I did a pencil sketch of her, not much good. Effie read a German book aloud to me. After lunch we sallied forth very cross to pay calls. Everyone else seemed to have seized the opportunity of a horrid day to do the same. No one was in though we trudged for miles till at last we began to fear we should get no tea. So we turned in to Mrs Victor Molteno's at Wynberg. Dr Molteno married a family called Jones and a large detachment were there, very plain, fat and badly dressed. Mrs Molteno is the only respectable one. Three quite fascinating children played about among the company and filled the drawing room with toys. I shared my tea with a quite fascinating baby aged two who sat on a chair and gurgled delightfully while I filled her mouth with scones and cake.

Then we proceeded to Mrs van der Merwe's where we got another tea and found the old lady most affable, and then more calls still out and so home with Effie's conscience at rest. We found Mr Evereigh had called *at last* ...

We had a rowdy evening. Gordon Murray dined with us and Uncles James and Wallace dropped in afterwards. We played Bridge – Uncle Wallace and I against Uncle James and Gordon, and we won two rubbers. I was thankful I wasn't playing with Uncle James. He lost his temper disgracefully and abused poor Gordon dreadfully. I chaffed him and called him "Ponte Vecchio" and he went away smiling and affable.

### **Friday, December 8**

Another rather wet and windy day. Sat indoors and copied my sketch on the flats and did a pencil sketch of Effie, not bad. Marjorie came to lunch and Effie read a German book aloud. Went round to the Lindleys to tea and played tennis.

### **Saturday, December 9                      Apricot Jam**

A most amusing day. 400 apricots arrived to be made into jam, and when the jam was nearly made, it was discovered there were no jam pots. So Effie and I sallied forth to Kalk Bay where she remembered she had many jam pots in their house which was let to the Bissets. We staggered down the road with a huge washing basket between us to bring home the jam pots.

Uncle Wallace met us at the Murrays and we made him carry the basket. As we passed May shouted out "What are you going to do?" Effie shouted back: "Fetch jam pots". May didn't hear and shrieked back: "Damn whats?" Uncle Wallace was so shocked he isn't going to associate with us any more! All Kenilworth was left wondering what we were going to fetch!

We called on Mrs Bissett and Mrs Bisset was ill in bed. So Effie interviewed her, and Ian and Ursula, two quite fascinating children, came and entertained me in the drawing room. Then we called on Mrs Willie Anderson, a new wife, aged 22 of Effie's Uncle aged 60! A nice but rather uninteresting girl. We struggled back by the 1.15 with the basket full this time of jam pots, a large fish called a snoek done up in a parcel and a camelia to plant in the garden. The snoek dripped all over the seat so we put it underneath, and as we got near Kenilworth smart people dressed for cricket got in and sat down where the snoek had been.

After lunch we changed rapidly and went off to the match. The Western province made a poor show, only running up 82. "The old beau" met us again at tea and we were taken for his daughters much to his delight.

In the evening we all trooped off to moonlight fete. Effie and I, Gordon, May, Miss Hollings and the old beau. We were too late for the concert so we hung about in the gardens. Mr Tehers turned up, very distraught. He was really on duty and had come away. He had to hasten back about 10. There was a Military Tattoo and [torch] and a bonfire. "The old beau" and I had a serious conversation in the moonlight, about why we are here and what good we are doing with our lives!! I was dead beat – a hard day ...

### **Monday, December 11                      Cricket at Newlands**

A jolly day. Went sketching with Bingo in the morning to Groote Schuur.<sup>5</sup> Effie and co went for a long ride and came home exhausted, too beat to go to the cricket. Uncle James took me and later we were

joined by Uncle Wallace and we all three sat in a row on the grass. Leaning against a bench and were very happy. Uncle James suggested I should marry Uncle Wallace and live out here always. Cheek! Neither of us rose to it and he felt quite crushed by our apathy ...

We all drove off after dinner packed into an open cab. May, Miss Hollings, Evelyn Southey, Effie and I and Uncle James the chaperone. Gordon Murray and three sailor men who were dining there walked. It was a ripping little dance – about 56 people and such nice *real* men, not boys, and all such good dancers, and lots of time between the dances in the garden, so I did not get hot. The naval men danced beautifully and I discovered one Mr Boden Smith whose aunt is my second cousin once removed. So we are very near relations and I am to go to tea on his ship very soon. I had a quite lovely time and am none the worse.

#### **Tuesday, December 12                      Gerry Sandeman arrives**

I got a wire from Gerry [Lil's brother]<sup>6</sup> yesterday to meet him at the railway station at 7.45 – which left one in pleasing uncertainty as to whether he meant at Kenilworth or Cape Town. So I met 4 trains at Kenilworth and then went into Cape Town and met 7 trains there, and then came out to Kenilworth and we crossed each other. Mr A. then went into town to look for us both. What a scandal – an elopement at least! First a young man hangs about for three hours demanding a young lady, then a young lady appears searching wildly for a young gentleman – then an older gentleman, evidently father of the bride, bursts on the scene demanding a young lady [and gentleman?].

We finally met at 10.45 in the house and were so pleased that we forgot our labours and sorrows. Gerry is looking blooming in a grey flannel suit and huge topee. We talked incessantly till 4 and then went round to the Lindleys' and played tennis. Gerry plays a very good game, better than Gordon I think ...

#### **Wednesday, December 19**

A great day. Gerry lay on the grass most of the morning trying to work and talking hard. We walked into Claremont and did some funny shopping. After lunch we trooped off to Cape Town in the train – Effie, Evelyn [...?] Gordon, Gerry and I and picked up Bingle, May and Miss Hollings in town. Also the old beau who was in great form. We went out by train to Camps Bay where there is sea, a hotel and woods and lay about in the woods at first, and then had tea. After tea we paddled, at least Effie and Evelyn, Gerry and Gordon did. And I watched enviously. The old beau was rather shocked and sat on the rocks with the others who read books, and were very grown up and grand. Then we had sand fights and got full of sand, and buried everything in the lovely white sand – altogether were very childish and happy.

We got home at 8.50, very hungry, and Evelyn came in to dinner. Mr A was in a very good temper.

#### **Thursday, December 14**

.... Effie saw a mouse and screamed, which upset Mr A who is doing Italian and we had a most disturbing evening. I have begun on Gerry's socks which haven't been mended for two years!

#### **Friday, December 15**

Went out to Groote Schuur in the morning and finished my 2 sketches. Gerry came too and brought his work to do – it was a beautiful day. After lunch Gerry and Effie grubbed in the garden and cleared the rockery of weeds and then poor old Effie helped a seamstress who is in the house at present making her some new frocks, while Gerry and I went up to the tennis club ...



**Sunday, December 17**

Went to church as usual and Gerry and I had a very [slow?] afternoon. Effie and Mr A went to visit aunts and we stayed at home and wrote letters. Uncle James dropped in to tea and presently May staggered in with a giddy young Middy she was struggling to entertain for the week end. He and Gerry did wonderful tricks with string and tried to mend a broken banjo and were happy.

**Monday, December 18**

Gerry and I went off to the flats to sketch this morning. An hour's walk and my sketch is so bad it gives me a pain to look at it! Gerry lay on the grass and wrote an essay on musketry. We went up to the courts to play tennis in the afternoon ...

**Tuesday, December 19**

... We routed out Uncle James and made him regale us with strawberries and cream at half-time.

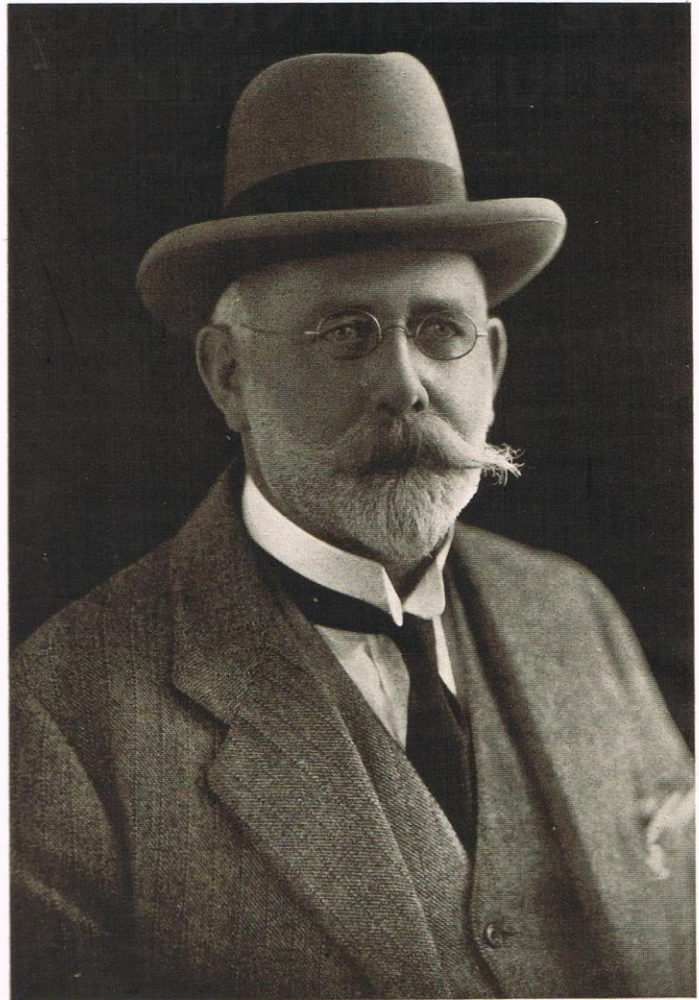
In the afternoon we went to the prize-giving at the boys' college and on the way home I was hauled into the Murrays' garden to play croquet with Uncle Wallace. A quarrelsome game against Jack and Kathleen.

**Wednesday, December 20      James Molteno out for a duck**

We went to a most entertaining cricket match – Navy v. Bar. We arrived just too late to see Uncle James make a duck in great form. The bar won 104 to the Navy's 88. So they had a second innings. They gave us lots of tea and strawberries. The cheery midly, Mr Romilly, was most attentive. He and Gerry, Uncle Wallace, Uncle Charlie, Effie and I, and Mrs Uncle Charlie all had tea under the trees ...

**Saturday, December 23 Christmas Day – but no plum pudding for Lil**

We lounged about after lunch and Gerry practiced lying down and sitting up with a glass of water balanced on his forehead – an awful trick which Effie taught him. Then after tea Gerry and I strolled into Claremont and bought a [...?]. After dinner Uncle Wallace came and stayed till 11.16 and was rather amusing, telling us the habits and customs of the up country Dutch girls. I'm quite sorry he is going away on Wednesday as he is very nice to me and amusing ...



*J. J. Molteno*

**Monday, December 25**

Christmas day. How different from England or from any Christmas day I have ever experienced before. Lovely bright sunshine and warm weather, quantities of strawberries and apricots, and everybody living on the stoep. Gerry and I got up and went to church at eight. Such a lovely summer morning. As I was feeling pretty seedy, I went around to Dr Murray after breakfast and learnt my fate – that I was not to go to the Cape Point picnic. What a blow – to be left here all alone for a week, the place stripped of all its young people. I passed a pretty dismal morning while the others were at church. Then came the loveliest Christmas dinner and I ate Allenbury's food [a light food for infants] and custard – and tried to pretend I wasn't longing for Turkey and plum pudding, to say nothing of [almondine?] and strawberries. I got the button out of the pudding though I couldn't eat any. There is no end to my bad luck. Effie got two rings out of hers. Both of which she manouevred into her pudding herself!! We had a most cheery meal, not the dreary forced gaiety of most Christmas repasts. Effie was so ridiculous and we drank to "absent friends" with ribald laughter!

After lunch which ended at 3.15, came a cricket match in the garden with Jack and George Murray. I sat on the ground and umpired. Then about 5p.m. we went in to tea at the Murray's. Such swarms of relations I'd never seen before or since. I *did* think I had grasped the seven Mr Moltenos but I shook one warmly by the hand whom Effie said I had never met before, and enquired after his baby (he hasn't one!). It wasn't for an hour afterwards that I found I *had* met him at the diocesan school prize-giving.

We all helped to pack the Cape cart. Very dreary work for me, but everybody was so sorry I couldn't go I felt quite touched. The nice boy Mr Fulda was quite pathetic and Mr Jarvis Murray asked me to play tennis with him very often when they come back and May said I should go to a picnic every day ...

**Tuesday, December 26                      Off to Cape Point – Lil stays behind**

I was awakened at 5 a.m. by violent knocking on the door of Effie's room. Till 6.15 there was much rushing about and low whispering and finally a rush to catch the train. I looked out of the window and watched them go laughing down the road. Gerry with a gigantic bag on his back. Effie and Marjorie struggling with another bag between them, all running for dear life till Gerry's jolly laugh died away in the distance. I felt very sad and passed a dreary day. Dr Murray came and was more than kind, and tried to console me for not going ...

**Wednesday, December 27**

Went for a jolly drive with Dr Murray in the afternoon on his rounds. Saw some lovely scenery and Dr Murray was most interesting and told me stories of all the houses we passed.

**Thursday, December 28**

Rather a dreary day. My only visitor [... and Bo?] and in the afternoon Mr Charlie Molteno came in and was quite affectionate. He is a surly old thing generally. Dined as usual a deux with Mr Anderson, dear old man.

**Friday, December 29:**

Had a lovely drive with Elsie Lindley up the Hout Bay neck. Such a view ...

**Saturday, December 30                      Wallace says goodbye**

Elsie Lindley came round before I was up and asked me to go around there to lunch – which I did. It was a perfectly lovely day. Table Mountain was looking superb.... I got home in time to meet the 7.30 train

which brought back the picnic party. I found Uncle Wallace had called there to say goodbye. I'm so sorry I missed him, but I saw him for a minute at the station and wished him good luck on his farm.

Mr A came down to the station too and *such* a crew as arrived! Never have I seen such filthy sunburnt people. Marjorie was like a nigger. Effie's nose was like a beacon and Gerry was about the most respectable as he was so burnt before he went that he couldn't get much worse. We had a very rowdy supper. They were all full of the picnic. It seems on the whole to have been a rather disgusting entertainment as far as food and sleeping accommodation went. The men confessed to have slept in their clothes all the time, but they all enjoyed it much, and everybody was full of Gerry's behaviour. They said he was never sure to eat or to sit down, he was always busy waiting on everybody ...

### **Monday, January 1, 1906**

We all went to the Races. Such a merry party crammed into a cab - Effie and Marjorie and I and Gerry, Mr Fulda and Jarvis Murray. We were looking very sporting with the glasses slung round our necks. Gerry backed two horses, won one and lost one, coming out to the bad at the end.

### **Wednesday, January 3                    'Braaivleis' at Camps Bay**

Had a lovely afternoon at Camps Bay. Marjorie, Effie, May, Mr Fulda, Gerry and I went round the kloof. We three started about four on the train. We picked up Mr Clifford Molteno, one of the clan, young and eccentric. The men bathed and then we all had tea in the restaurant. Later we were joined by Jarvis Murray, and later still by Uncle James. We all lay on the grass and talked, and Marjorie and Gerry ran races. About 7.30, the preparations for cooking our supper began. We went through the woods and climbed up a site where there was a lovely view of the bay. We had expected to get a gridiron kettle from the inn, but the manager was very angry and refused to give us anything! We lit a fire and Jarvis began cooking the chops on the end of the stick while Gerry boiled the kettle. There was nothing for me to eat and I was feeling rather gloomy and hungry till Mr Clifford disappeared and returned with 8 eggs which he boiled in the kettle and devoured. The moon was very feeble and we did our cooking chiefly in the dark. The chops got done somehow but we were too exhausted to make tea so we drank milk and ate hard-boiled eggs, smoked and greasy chops (with one's fingers), bread and butter and cake – and very delicious everything tasted. Then we had a scramble for the train and came round the kloof in the moonlight and caught the 10.55 back to Kenilworth ...



**Clifford Molteno as a young man, recently down from Cambridge**

**Tuesday, January 9****Meeting Their Royal Highnesses**

Great excitement in the morning. We all sallied into town to meet the Connaughts.<sup>7</sup> We had seats in the Town Hall – Effie and Mr Anderson in the front row, Gerry and mine luckily at the back, as Gerry was in mufti and didn't want to be seen. A huge assembly of people. The full dress of the soldiers then made it a gay scene. The Town Council in their purple robes sitting in a pompous row and the mayor hugely fat, a Jew of the deepest dye. We waited nearly an hour while the organ played. Then their RHS [Royal Highnesses] arrived and were sat in a row and given bouquets by the children. Princess Patricia is very pretty and sweet. Then the Mayor read his address and the Duke read a short speech. They played "God save the King" and off they went. We spent a cheery morning shopping ...

**Wednesday, January 10**

Government house garden party. We started fairly in a cab. Gerry very smart in uniform. Effie in her pink and I in my blue muslin. The grounds are lovely and their R.H.s [Royal Highness's] were planted under a group of oaks and all the people formed into a gigantic queue and swarmed past. After half an hour of pushing, we got opposite, handed our cards to an A.D.C. [Aide de Camp]. Our names were called and we shook hands and made feeble curtsies. Gerry nearly hit me in the eye with his elbow when he saluted. Then we escaped and enjoyed ourselves. Mr Hilton dashed up in great form and we four went off and secured a table and had weak cold tea and meringues. It was a pretty sight – some very pretty frocks and very nice uniforms, the naval men didn't look half so smart as the Army of course ...

**Friday, January 12**

Played tennis at the Lindleys' and I watched. And in the evening Uncle James took us to the play. It was The Yeoman of the Guard and very good. I *did* enjoy it and afterwards we made him give us coffee at his club under protest. It's really a lovely club.

**Saturday, January 13****Trip to the Boland**

We had a beautiful day in the country. Starting at 7.30, such a rush. Gerry didn't wake up till 7.5 but we caught the train alright and got to Stellenbosch at 10. Such a dear quaint old Dutch town and lovely trees. We drove out to Jonkers Hoek where some people called Watermeyers have a huge fruit farm. Such a road it was, a delightful drive as there was a pleasing uncertainty as to whether we would ever arrive. The Watermeyers showed us all round the trout ponds where all the trout in Africa are bred, and over the peach orchards and vineyards. Mr A, Effie, Gerry and I all picnicked under the trees and they provided peaches, plates, roses and tea, and we took our own sandwiches. I sketched. Effie and Gerry ragged each other. And at five we started on our perilous drive back. We got home at seven, a happily sunburnt crew....



**Lucy Molteno and her 4 eldest children, early 1900s**



### **Saturday, January 22**

A quiet day. Sketched at Groote Schuur in the morning. After lunch we drove with Marjorie to Rondebosch to see the Charlie Moltenos. They were out but we stayed and played with the children – two perfectly fascinating little girls and a jolly fat baby of five months. After dinner we wandered over to the Murrays' and found Capt Jellicoe dining there. So Effie played the pianola and May, Jarvis and Capt Jellicoe and I all danced. Great fun ...

### **Wednesday, January 24      'A great tea' at Mrs Bertram's, Groot Constantia**

... We met Mrs Charlie Molteno in the Cape cart with Lucy and Tiny, and she asked me if I wouldn't like to drive over to Constantia with her. So in I climbed. The children, overcome with the dignity of their best frocks, had to be suppressed when they [...?] their new white shoes and socks.

Constantia is a perfectly lovely place. We found the drawing room full of people – a lot of old ladies. The hostess, Mrs Bertrain, looked rather surprised to see me. I added to her confusion by saying that Mrs Molteno had picked me up on the road! She had no idea who I was. I managed to snatch some tea and then we all swept off to the garden. A lot of old husbands turned up and we played a great game of golf croquet. I had never played before and I won! Then I devoured a great tea. We collected the children and drove home ...

### **Thursday, January 25      More cricket – Girls vs Midshipmen**

A most amusing cricket match, girls versus middies of the Crescent on the small ground at Newlands. The girls went in first and made 59. Then the boys, playing left-handed with broomsticks made 70 odd. We had a big tea under the trees and the middies were most attentive and devoured quantities of plums and [...?]. The second innings: the girls made 70 and declared their innings to give the boys some more batting. But to the great amusement of everybody, they only made 30. So the girls won – fearful excitement at the end as they was only 5 minutes to time and 3 men to get out. But it was done with great éclat. Mr Boden Smith was very nice and asked us to tea on the ship next week. Some of the middies were quite annoyed at their defeat.

### **Friday January 26      A Dance at the Murrays**

... At 8.50 we went over to the Murrays' for a small dance. There was fearful competition over playing the pianola, but towards the end of the evening the dancing flagged and people drifted into the garden and remained and refused to come back. I sat out a dance with Mr Cloete and exchanged confidences and sat out 4 with Mr Hilton and had a great religious discussion. He is an agnostic, the first I have ever met. It was most interesting. We stopped about 12.30 ...



**Miller's Point, 1907 -- Violinist Miss Couper; (Left descending) Inanda Lindley, Miss Harbord, Kathleen Murray; (Right descending) Elsie Lindley, self, Marion Powell, Effie Anderson, Manie Buchanan**

**Sunday, January 27**

The same as all Sundays. Went to church and to see the aunts at Rondebosch and to see May. Sat on Uncle James's knee and persuaded him to give a theatre party on Wed.

**Monday, January 28****Playing tennis****again at last**

Sketched in the Lindleys' garden and played tennis at the courts till very late. Went back to supper with the Murrays and played the pianola ...



**Miller's Point, the Molteno family holiday house**

**Thursday, January 31**

Had to be up to catch the 7.30 train to Stellenbosch to the fruit show. Very severe after such a late night.... Such a lovely day and *such* fruit – literally a mile of peaches – grapes, figs, melons, galore – wonderful vegetables whose names I didn't know. And poultry, horses, cows, sheep and oxen. We all ragged about and watched the people. *Such* a crew, all the farmers from miles around and their families, chiefly Dutch, mixed with any amount of [... ?]. All got up regardless of expense. Had lunch in the woods and after a wild drive to the station, driven by a small boy of 7 who nearly ran over two kaffirs and a dog, we caught the 9.30 home ...

**Saturday, February 2****Miller's Point**

A lovely day at Miller's Point with the Lindley's. They all bathed and I did a sketch and fished for a bit. I had a mackerel for bait, and we had to tear it in pieces with my fingers. Had tea and lunch on the beach. Such a glorious day and lovely place.

**Sunday, February 3**

Went to church at 9.30. Mr Anderson went to Kalk Bay. Effie and I lounged on the stoep. Mr Hilton and Mr Villiers called. Then we went round to see the dear old Miss Jarvis and her sister. After dinner Uncle James came in and Mr Bisset. The former was rather snubbing ...

**Wednesday, February 6**

A very busy day as May gave a dance. Mrs Murray forgot it was to be and went out for the day. May strolled off to town and left us to get it ready. I did the flowers and Effie cut sandwiches after hurling a box of sardines all over her which made her very unpleasant to approach! When May returned it was found there was no music to be had. So Capt Jellicoe was phoned to bring music and subalterns. It all went off well in the end. Enough men and music and food, and we all had a very cheery evening. Brilliant moonlight and lovely in the garden ...

**Friday, February 8****On horseback along the slopes of Table Mountain**

Went for my first ride. Perfectly delightful along the foot of the Table Mt on Blackboy. Effie riding Maida and Marjorie Postbag. Had a most lovely time. Blackboy has a canter like a rocking chair.

**Thursday, February 14**

Went down to Fish Hoek, Marjorie, Effie and I, and had a glorious bathe. Took a lot of food and came back to lunch. Played tennis after tea at the Lindleys' ...

**Saturday, February 16**

A sad day for poor Effie as it was the anniversary of her mother's death. She and her father spent the day together. I went to the races with Mrs Brooks and had a great time. ...

**Monday, February 18**

... Mr Hilton turned up to fetch his riding whip and a book I had borrowed. Had the cheek to ask me to make him a waistcoat. I told him I didn't love him nearly enough ...

**Wednesday, February 20**

Another very hot day. Went down to Fish Hoek with Marjorie and had a lovely bathe. Then walked along the beach to Kalk Bay with no shoes and stockings and our hair down ...

**Friday, February 22**

Went to a tennis party at the camp. Had a splendid set of tennis with Mr Bright against a Mr Bell and little Miss Brook. We won after a hard fought fight ...

**Sunday, February 24**

Went to church as usual and spent a lovely lazy afternoon in the hammock. Effie and I lay in it and Uncle James and Uncle Wallace sat each side of it with their feet up. And Uncle James read *Geraint and Enid* [an Arthurian legend reworked into a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson] beautifully to us till teatime ...

**Monday, February 25**

... Effie arose at 5 a.m. to go into town to meet her brother and his friends. Missed them. They got here about 6.30. Effie got back about 7.30 and finally when we all met for breakfast at eight, it seemed like the afternoon. Charles Barker is a nice honest cheery man. Mrs B is impossible, no class, and a fearful accent. Effie and I feel like royalty beside her! Harold is *such* a nice boy, tall and very brown with such charming manners. They all went to Camps Bay for the day. Effie and I went and helped [jiggle?] the Charlie Molteno baby. Such a collection of relations. Uncle Wallace was a godfather and Miss Jarvis a godmother. We all went back to tea with Mrs Charlie. In the evening May had a musical party. Uncle Wallace and I sat in the garden, didn't bother much about the music but had a nice time.

**Tuesday, February 26****Picnic at Fish Hoek**

Had a perfectly lovely picnic down at Fish Hoek. May and the [...] girls, Effie and I, Harold, Mr Cloete, Uncle Wallace, Mrs Murray ... were all there for tea which we had in the woods. After tea we fished and I caught a 20 lb skate and Harold got a huge Cape Salmon. We had supper and Jarvis and Lennox Murray came down for it and all the chaperones went home! I went for a walk with Uncle Wallace afterwards. It was too chilly to sit about.

**Wednesday, February 29**

Went to the show. Effie, Mr B... and I and also Miss Bingle and Mrs Nash [...?]. No sooner did we arrive then Effie dropped a petticoat and went about with it under her arm all the time. We watched the ladies driving, then jumping, and then came across Uncle James. He took me off to spend the afternoon with him. We had fun.

**Thursday, February 28**

Drove out to Constantia in the morning with the Barkers and Harold Anderson. Such a lovely day. In the evening May had another dance. It was great fun. We went in a body and it was terrible introducing people to Mrs Barker! Sat out *some* dances with Mr Hilton and had great fun. The nicest of all May's dances.

**Friday March 1**

All went down to Fish Hoek and had a lovely bathe. The others fished but Effie and I had to rush home to go to dinner with the Gores. Rather a dull dinner party. Just ourselves and the Gores, Mr Pears - an idiot, and Mag and H [...?] Walsh.

**Saturday, March 2**

Went down to Muizenberg. [...?] with the Barkers. Then went to a tennis party. After dinner we all went into town to see off the [H...?]. Such a crowd at the station. Heaps of fathers. A very amusing sight. I was sorry to say goodbye to Uncle Wallace.

**Sunday, March 3**

Went to Church and after lunch went down to Kalk Bay to see the Aunts. Got back at 5.30 and Uncle James and I went for a walk, then lay in my hammock, a very tight squeeze.

**Monday, March 4**

Went for a lovely ride starting at 4, Marjorie, Effie, Mr Hilton and I. We told Mr H he looked like the riding master. We went all along the mountain and out to Constantia to see the grapes pressed. A very interesting sight. Effie and Marjorie had to leave early and we came back across the flats and had a glorious gallop. Got back about 8 ...

**Tuesday, March 6**

Had a very busy day in town shopping for Harold's farm. Bought glass and crockery and ordered furniture. Took it easy after lunch as I am feeling the effects of that long ride – and wrote letters ...

**Thursday, March 8**

Effie and Marjorie spent a very busy morning upholstering chairs for Harold ....

**Friday, March 9**

Went to Tanda's prayer meeting at 11.15 and then worked hard making canvas collars for Gerry till 3.30 ...

**Saturday, March 10****Miller's Point again**

A lovely day at Millers Point. All the Lindleys including Bob's grandma and old Mrs Bisset, Miss Powell, Effie and I went and had a frightful struggle out from Simonstown against a tearing South Easter. Arrived exhausted and had a perfect bathe. Then a large lunch. Fished with no success and had tea. A killing ride



back to Simonstown. Tanda had driven out and wanted to come back with us on the late train. So Effie took her on her handlebars. A hurricane blew us through the town which was full of Saturday drunks, and we seemed to meet everyone we knew; they were all delighted with the disgraceful cavalcade.

...

[Effie and Lil went off to stay at George for a couple of weeks between March 10 and 30]

### **Friday, March 30**

First day of the last test match. A piping hot day. Spent it at Newlands. A tremendous crowd and good cricket. Saw hardly anyone to speak to. Uncle James was in a great state of joy at having us back ...

### **Monday, April 2                      Hout Bay by bike!**

Went to the finish of the cricket but it was all over at 11.45. The Africans<sup>8</sup> winning by an innings. After lunch went off on bicycles to Hout Bay. Arrived at 4.30 and found the Lindleys, Miss Powell, and Miss Couper in various stages of undress on the stoep. Such a jolly house surrounded by blue mountains. Right in the bush. Marjorie and Effie bathed in the river. A killing supper and sat out on the stoep in the moonlight. Miss Couper played to us.



**The old road to Hout Bay over Constantia Nek**

### **Tuesday, April 3**

A lovely day. Did housework in the morning and after lunch went off to the beach. Mr and Mrs Charlie Molteno, Mrs Washington and the children came down for the day. Had a glorious bathe in the sea. Very cold and lovely. Were caught in the soaking rain and the only clothes simply drenched.

### **Wednesday, April 4**

A pouring wet day. Our clothes were still wet. So we dressed in rugs and played ping-pong to keep warm. It cleared up after tea and we went up to the village to lay in provisions and brought home a loaf, three bottles of milk, and five fishes on our bicycles. Had an amusing altercation with a drunk man, trying to buy ducks. He said he was always a "gennelman in his dealings with ladish".

### **Thursday, April 5**

Left Hout Bay in a post cart at 11.45 to come up for a picnic of May's. Arrived at two behind simply fainting horses and had to rush to lunch and change. Walked on to Bishops Court with Bassett Bisset. Found a large gathering, rather uninteresting lot and had a huge tea. Then played games of rounders and twos and threes.

### **Friday, April 6**

Started off again at 10 to bicycle to Hout Bay. Rode straight down to the beach on arrival and found them all there and had a huge lunch. Then came a glorious bathe and leapfrog and various sports went on as they all wore ... shorts [...?]. I did a sketch and after tea we trudged home. Such a large party of us as Mrs Washington and her sister and Elsie were all there as well. Great fun when we went to bed!

**Saturday, April 7**

Dr and Mrs Kenah [Murray] and Lorna arrived to lunch. Had a perfect bathe in the river with [...] and leapfrog. Lorna admired Hout Bay immensely. She is a most intelligent baby for 4 months. After lunch we lay about on the stoep and ate chocolates. After tea Dr Kenah drove us home in the Cape cart. A glorious drive.



**Dr Kenah Murray with Lorna in a two-wheeler, pre 1914**

**Tuesday, April 10**

Great excitement in the morning. Arrival of Mrs James and family, all looking very sleepy and bored. Uncle James was radiant and the baby is simply fascinating. Clarissa looks terribly ill and little Monica is a pretty bright child. The governess, Miss Boucher [...] Is a pretty dark girl and is [stranded?] on us and we are bored with her. She thinks in Italian and dreams in French. Suppose she [speaks?] In German!

**Wednesday, April 11**

Had a splendid day. I rode down to Hout Bay with Kenah in the morning [...]. The Gores on [...] had found the Lindleys in great form and rushed off for a bathe in the river. Then lunched and coasted down the [...] hills on bicycles, a new sport invented by Marjorie. After tea, Miss Couper, Effie and I bicycled down the Victoria Road to Camps Bay, such a glorious road, and on to Sea Point where we got the train. A long day.

**Friday, April 13**

Good Friday. Went to the three hour service with Mr Anderson. After tea Effie, I and Miss Boucher went and cut down palms to do decorations in the church.

**Saturday, April 14**

Spent a very busy morning in the church decorating. We did 17 pillars ourselves and felt absolutely worn out. Played tennis with the Lindleys all afternoon.

**Easter day April 15**

Easter Sunday, a lovely day. Went to church three times, in the evening we heard the Archbishop preach and there was a procession with banners and trumpets!

**Monday, April 16****The Races, Tennis, the Races ...**

Went to the Races and had great fun. Everybody was there – Mr Bill Bisset chaperoned us and took us to tea with the Garks [...]. They had a tent there ...

**Wednesday, April 18**

Had some really good tennis at the courts ...

**Thursday, April 19**

Went to another and jolly tennis party at the Blackburns ...

**Saturday, April 21**

Went to the Races and tacked on to Mr and Mrs Gore [...] who were very nice and gave us tea .... Uncle James was there very much "en famille". Mrs James made loud and rude remarks upon everyone for miles around which got us very much disliked. Mr Cloete came and sat down with us and he remarked "who is that person?" ...

**Tuesday, May 1**

... All went into town to a concert in the evening. Mrs Murray, Kathleen, Clarissa, Miss Boucher, Mrs Kenah, Miss Jarvis and ourselves. Miss J [...?], Effie and I appropriated the Governor's box as we knew he was up at the [...?]. A very long but very good concert. Dr Murray sang "the Green Isle of Erin" so delightfully ...

**Friday May 4****Fending off Mr Holgate**

Mr Holgate called and ... presented me with the "Love Poems of Tennyson". I didn't realize it was a gift and never said "thank you" – This is frightful! What is going to happen? I'm afraid he is really struck. What am I to do? Effie lay on the floor and shrieked with joy after he had gone and I wrote off to Gerry the most ludicrous description of the whole interview.

**Saturday May 5**

Fresh developments. A wire from Mr Holgate saying he was coming at 3 p.m. to call for us in a motor. We hastily arranged to go down to Fish Hoek and wired back that we had a previous engagement. He will be furious and very hurt, poor little thing, but what is one to do? It can't go on after the "Love Poems of Tennyson" which are marked at the poem "Were I but loved by thee"!!! and a little quotation at the beginning which he can't [...] as he has no dictionary. After lunch, with a frightful scramble we got off to Fish Hoek, May, Mrs Kenah, Effie, Marjorie and I and Kathleen and Clarissa, armed with bathing things and tea, each person grasping something. The milk was forgotten and then the cakes and Kathleen rushed frantically back to the house several times. Just as the train came in May saw a man she knew on the opposite platform and gave a graceful bow, the bottle of milk slipped and its contents were spread over the platform, the porter angrily swept up the mess! All went well otherwise and we had a splendid bathe.

**Monday, May 7**

Fresh developments. A letter from "Oddy". To *me* this time entreating a moonlight walk or a row on Table Bay! Effie and I received it with shrieks of joy and hurried off to show it to May. Mr A was made to write and say he didn't approve of these expeditions and now he is well choked off. Played tennis with the Lindleys and they told me "Uncle Wallace" was coming down. I am very much excited and very happy. I think he is coming to see me. Went to the Lindleys after dinner to a farewell party of Marjorie's. Miss Couper and Miss Powell and Mr Couper played lovely trios. And we ended up with wild games.

**Tuesday, May 8****Wallace proposes**

Spent the day with Mrs Bisset. Had a bathe and played tennis. And got back at six p.m. After dinner May and Uncle Wallace came to fetch us and we went over there. Wallace and I sat on the stoep and he was very very nice and sweet to me. I guessed what was coming but I wouldn't prevent him because I truly love him. We went over to the garden across the road and there he asked me to be his wife. I asked him

to wait a little while for an answer, but in my heart I know what it will be. The most eventful day of my life! All the world is changed now. Wallace loves me. I am the happiest girl in the world.

### **Wednesday, May 9**

Went to see Marjorie off on the mail and afterwards May, Effie, Mrs Kenah, Wallace and I all went to Camps Bay. Wallace and I had a long long talk in the woods and he depressed me rather as he made the very worst of the life I would have to lead and told me all his "sins", and made the very worst of everything. I told Effie all about it in the evening. She was so sweet and nice and sympathetic.

### **Thursday, May 10**

Went round with Wallace to see Mrs Murray. She was very very kind to me and we decided that we would all go up country as soon as possible to see the farm so that I should know what my future home was going to be like. It is very good of the Murrays to let May come again so soon as it's very expensive. Wallace lunched with us and we had a most lovely day together. In the evening we broke it to Mr A but he was very sweet and nice and said he had a great admiration for Wallace and hoped I would be very happy.

### **Friday, May 11**

Had such a lovely morning in town with Wallace. We went and had his photo taken which took all the morning. I'm afraid we behaved very badly as all the shop girls smiled at each other and everybody seemed to know. I lunched with Mrs Dawson and told her the news. She was wildly excited and pleased, and escorted me back to the station on purpose to see Wallace who she said was a dear.

### **Saturday, May 12**

Went to town again with Wallace and had my photo taken in my white evening bodice. I felt so foolish with such a short serge skirt. We did some shopping and came out together. Lunched at home and had a long lovely afternoon. A Mr Bullock came to dinner so Wallace came in later to say good night.

### **Sunday, May 13**

Went to Church at 9.30 but only thought of Wallace. When I got back I found him sitting looking very solemn and good, and he said I might bring my writing things and he would write to Father. **PUT IN PHOTO OF COL. SANDEMAN** Had a great business over the letter. Wallace sat looking like a naughty defiant schoolboy. Couldn't think of anything to say. At last a really beautiful letter was concocted between us. Dr Victor Molteno came in with May and I was introduced to him as his future sister! He was very much surprised and seemed pleased. Said he was sorry he couldn't congratulate me as he considered I was throwing myself away. I asked him to congratulate Wallace then and May and I left them to have a talk together. Mrs Murray came in to tea and promised to write to Mother this mail. We go up country tomorrow. I shall see my future home.

### **Monday, May 14**

#### **Off to the Karoo to see Wallace's farm**

Had a truly lovely journey up country. We had two whole empty carriages to ourselves. May, Effie and I slept in one, and Wallace in the other. But except to sleep, Wallace and I occupied his carriage. We talked everything over, but most of the time our conversation wasn't of much importance. We had an excellent breakfast and lunch on the train and ragged the waiter who was dreadfully embarrassed as he had several times walked in when Wallace and I were alone and my hair was decidedly dishevelled. It made him so nervous that at lunch he dropped the spoons and hurled the salt over everything. We got to Nelspoort about 2.45. Such wonderful country the Karoo – vast tracts of veldt and blue mountains, the ground Stoney and the same wonderful African colouring everywhere. Gordon and a neighbouring

farmer, Mr George Jackson, met us at the station, both looking very dirty just like farm labourers – no collars (is this necessary? Not at all).

They had the wagon with them and eight mules, piled with sheep skins. All our baggage was put on and off we drove. Such a dust [...?], Sitting on our boxes, with Gordon balancing himself on the skins. He fell off from time to time. Wallace drove and I sat beside him and a native with a huge gigantic whip sat just behind and wielded it lustily. Shouting at the mules all the time – "Corfie", "Donker", "Poppy", and "Foute" were some of their names.

We stopped in about half an hour at the George Jacksons for tea.. Such a pretty house, the stoep covered with vines and Mrs Jackson is a dear little woman aged about 40, who will be my guide, philosopher and friend, I can see. After tea we drove on again in the sunset – the mountains lit up with a red glow like they do in Switzerland. Peaceful and beautiful, the sheep bleating in the distance. We stopped at Mimosa Grove, a small house at the end of Wallace's farm, while he and Gordon interviewed some men. Then on again further and further it seems from civilisation,



**Harold Anderson, Wallace Molteno & George Jackson in the Karoo**

through rivers and the most impossible looking drifts and over roads which are only apologies with huge ruts. At last in the distance we saw a white farmhouse among some trees standing on the great veldt and we were there.

Agnes, the Irish cook, received us with a great empressement. It is a nice house, quite palatial for the Karoo, I believe, with 14 rooms and everything is really very nice and comfortable for a bachelor establishment. We had supper consisting of chops and bread and butter and coffee. I went fairly early to bed, though it took Wallace some time to say good night.



**Tuesday, May 15**

**Getting used to Kamferskraal**



The Old Homestead on Kamferskraal

A damp windy cold depressing day. I woke up feeling rather down on my luck. It was such a change. So unlike anything I had ever known. Gave me a feeling of isolation and hopelessness at first. I went around the house in the morning inspecting everything and broke to Agnes that I hope to be her mistress someday. She gave me a most hearty welcome and was most enthusiastic and showed me all round her domains. Wallace came in in the middle and carried me off and was most insulting! He said I looked so important and wise, and really I knew nothing about anything.

After lunch Effie and May went off in the wagon with Gordon to ride [...] wood. They drove straight across the veldt picking up wood and loading the wagon as they went. Effie drove and they enjoyed themselves immensely. Wallace and I went for a walk. We marched along a furrow which Wallace is very proud of, but which I ignorantly called a drain - to his great indignation. I still felt depressed and miserable and confided all my troubles in him. He was very gentle and sweet and said I was tired and had only just come. I must wait till I got a little used to my surroundings, and then tell him what I thought.

Well that evening I went into the office and helped Wallace write some letters; but we didn't get much writing done somehow. My depression had gone. I was very happy.

**Wednesday, May 16**

A pouring, pelting wet day. Gordon and Mr Jackson went off after dinner to a sale at Aberdeen in the cart with some mules. Just before dinner Gordon came in to say that an old Jew<sup>9</sup> had turned up who rents Wallace's farm at Molteno, and was staying to dinner. So Eff, mad as usual, suggested that I should talk with a Scotch accent and she with a Yankee twang. Mr Wolf, the Jew, was brought in and formally introduced, and all lunch Effie solemnly talked the broadest American. I was so convulsed that my

accent broke down at once. Wallace and Gordon kept wonderfully solemn over it all. To our horror it was broken to us afterwards that Mr Wolf had come 500 miles to see Wallace and was staying the night. There we were all that wet afternoon shut up alone with him. He made himself most comfortable and told long yarns and we discovered he was a Pole and talked German to him which relieved the strain of Effie's Yankee a little. He asked her all sorts of embarrassing questions as to how long she had been over from America etc. and she told the most astonishing lies. Wallace was *so* naughty. He knew Mr Wolf had come to talk business and wanted the rent reduced, but he said he was no match for a Jew and refused to talk to him at all. After dinner he carried me off to his office, having told the Jew that none of us were any relations and that I was his secretary. Mr Wolf must have thought we were his harem. Especially as we all called each other by our Christian names. Finally, at bedtime Wallace just *had* to go and talk business and he and Mr Wolf had a fearful discussion. He can't make the farm pay and wants the rent reduced from £400 to £150. Wallace stuck out for £200. The Jew won't come to terms, so they'll have to go to law about it. It all worries Wallace very much.

#### **Thursday, May 17**

#### **The Soutrivier comes down in spuit**

Another pouring wet day and another long morning spent boxed up with Mr Wolf! Wallace was frantically busy as the river had come down and all the sluices had to be opened and all stock brought in. He rode through a sea of mud and water for two or three hours after some shorn goats he was anxious about without seeing a sign of them. When he came in to dinner we got hold of him in the hall and told him that he just *must* get rid of the Jew. Effie's Yankee wouldn't hold out a minute longer and we were all bored to tears with him. So he got the buggy spanned in and told Mr Wolf that he must drive to Renosterkop as he wouldn't have to cross the river to get the train from there. Old Wolf was so comfy by the fire with three lovely ladies to entertain him that he didn't want to go at all but Wallace almost kicked him out and he went off very sulky. We afterwards found that the drift was impassable and he spanned out for the night in the pouring rain on the veldt. Which won't make him more merciful to Wallace in the lawsuit.

#### **Friday, May 18**

Still wet weather. Wallace was very busy. Mr Harry Jackson drove up in the morning but didn't stay to dinner. Food began to get scarce. The cows were all across the river, so there was no milk or butter. The tea had run out, and the meat was tough.

In the evening Wallace and I were walking by the river when we heard a shout, and looking across, saw Gordon and Mr Jackson! They had never got to Aberdeen and were in a fearful plight. The river was a raging torrent and looked quite impassable. Wallace shouted that he would bring a horse across to them. I tried to persuade him not to go, but he told me to be good and go indoors as he was going to take off some of his clothes. So I had to go in feeling rather nervous. Effie and May came in from their walk. Hearing what was going on, they rushed out at once. They saw Wallace crossing on a horse, the horse disappeared and he was nearly swept away. The others came to the conclusion that it was safer to swim. So they all left their clothes on the other side and swam across that raging torrent. We looked out but they shrieked and yelled at us to go back. So we went in and shut the door and piled the fire up nice and high, and made hot toast for their supper. They did look blue, poor things, when they finally appeared in clean clothes, and were very glad of their supper. We had a very good game of Bridge afterwards, Mr Jackson, Wallace, Gordon and I.

#### **Saturday, May 19**

A glorious day after the rain. Bright sunshine and everything looking so clean and washed. Wallace and I started off in the morning in the buggy and drove to the Jacksons. A buggy is a lovely thing for two

people and we made the most of it. We stopped at Mimosa Grove to see some sheep being shorn and to enquire after the missing goats. Then we drove on to lunch at the Jacksons. Wallace broke the news to them and after dinner which was very well cooked and beautifully served, Mrs Jackson took me all round her house and showed me everything. It is quite a model house, so well furnished and everything so spotlessly clean and well cared for, and only incompetent Hottentots, two, to run it.

We had great consultations. She persuaded Wallace to re-paper and paint Kamfers Kraal, so that is a great victory to have won. He pretended he wouldn't do it but on the way home he asked me if I really imagined he wouldn't do a little thing like that for me!

### **Sunday, May 20**

Wallace and I spent a very lazy time in the garden with rugs and conditions. After tea went for a truly lovely ride. Wallace rode a little pulling white mare called Snowdrop. I rode Masher, a big white horse which I'm to have for my own. We went over the Rand and across a huge plain stretching for about 150 [sic] miles I believe. We visited Pluiche [...?], an old Shepherd and his flock, and saw his wife and offspring in their little hut. Wallace told them they must trek to a warmer part of the farm as he thought there was going to be more rain. We saw a glorious sunset. On the way home I [...?] a gallop. I whipped up Masher and shouted "Whoop". Both horses simply bolted. Snowdrop went off like a streak and disappeared over the Rand. Wallace couldn't pull her in for two or three miles. He was badly shaken and his hands all cut with the reins. I pulled Masher in after about a mile. I was a bit frightened at first. Wallace came back for me and gave me rather a wiggling. But after the old cows I've always written, these veldt horses are rather a surprise to me. After supper I went into the office to help Wallace with some letters. He sat looking very worried and then said suddenly "What about this ring?" I said "What ring?" And he said: "Your engagement ring, of course. Who is to get it? Can't you buy it?" I said it really was rather un-romantic to buy your own engagement ring. So he said he supposed his brother Percy had better buy it. Then he asked me how much it would cost. I said I really didn't know. So May was sent for and consulted. She said she thought you could get a very nice one for £25 and he said he didn't want it to be a knuckle duster that I could box his years with! May said it would be quite a small one for that and then he asked how he was to pay for it. I gently but firmly refused to have an engagement ring on tick! So he wrote to Mr Charlie and told him to transfer the money to Mr Percy's account. So I know the ring is paid for anyhow.

### **Monday May 21**

We all rode [...?] in the morning. It was such fun – sitting on the wool sacks piled so high. Specially crossing the river. Wallace had to go in to the station after dinner. Gordon had to go to another sale with Mr Jackson. So May, Effie and I stayed and played tennis, a rather doubtful joy as there is no net round – the balls rolled away for miles on the veldt and you had to fag after them.

We got home very late, very comfy among the sacks on the wagon, all singing.

### **Tuesday May 22**

Spent the day pretty gently and largely just walking about with Wallace. Eff and May went for a wonderful ride. Effie got up in Gordon's breeches and jacket and Wallace's hat, and rode astride much to the joy of "John Martin", the boy who saddled the horses. Wallace and I went for a long walk all round by the ostrich camps and visited some [...?].

### **Wednesday, May 23**

Mrs Jackson and Miss Muriel Jackson, her niece, came over and spent the day. The latter is a nice rather placid, red haired girl, who has always lived on a farm and is a little like a vegetable, but who is quite a good sort. Agnes provided a large dinner and we sat outside in the yard and sunned ourselves. Then Mrs Jackson, Wallace and I made the tour of the house and garden, Mrs Jackson suggesting improvements at every turn, and Wallace groaning loudly! The garden ought really to be lovely. There is any amount of fruit and vegetables in it. With care there ought to be lots of flowers. We also had tea in the garden beside the house. May took some snapshots. They went away early and Wallace and I went for a walk by the river and after dinner played Bridge as usual.

#### **Thursday, May 24                      Exploring the veld on horseback**

Wallace and I went for a splendid ride. We started at 11, he riding a brown mare and I riding Masher as usual. We rode over the Rand onto the plain. Then up a kloof on Bush Bok Mountain till we came to the Bush Bok River. It was so pretty and wild and the horses scrambled up the most impossible looking places. Masher stumbled badly and my stirrup broke. So poor Wallace had to give me his and ride with his leg dangling till he felt as if it would soon fall off. We tied up our horses and scrambled up a sort of waterfall in the sand and sat under some trees, a lovely place for a picnic. We had quite an exciting ride back through the ostrich camps, as we were afraid the dogs would chase the ostriches. We got back at three and Wallace sent me to face the justly enraged Agnes while he unsaddled the horses. However that lady was only rather chilly and gave us a good dinner. Then as I was rather hot, I had a swim in the tank while Wallace went down to the Lucerne lands. Then we ... and slept in the garden till Effie and May came in. They had been at the Jacksons.

#### **Friday, May 25**

Our last day at Kamfers Kraal. Wallace and I took sandwiches and went for the grand ride along the river and right across the veldt towards some mountains which I wanted to reach but Wallace told me they were 50 miles away! We unsaddled our horses and had lunch under some trees. Stayed there quite a long time. We rode back another way past a lot of ostrich chicks belonging to Harold. We had a great business keeping the dogs in and again my stirrup broke and Wallace had to give me his. We had a long talk in the evening and made all the final arrangements.

#### **Saturday, May 26**

A very sad day with the parting hanging over us. May and Effie drove in the Cape cart with the baggage. Wallace and I drove in the buggy, a very sad little drive. We had dinner at the Jacksons. Rather a hurried meal, then went on to the station. We said goodbye to Gordon there. Wallace came on with us to Beaufort. Effie and May went and sat in the dining saloon and let us have the carriage to say goodbye. Wallace got out at Beaufort and we travelled alone, quite comfortably, as he had given the conductor a large tip to look after us, and we had the carriage quite to ourselves, a good dinner and a fairly comfortable night.

#### **Sunday, May 27                      The Family takes Lil to their hearts**

We arrived in Cape Town at 6 a.m. and had to wait an hour for a train out to the suburbs. So we had some tea and discussed bridesmaids' dresses! Mr Anderson faithfully met us at Kenilworth and after some breakfast we went to Church and then packed desperately till lunch.

Directly after lunch we rushed off to see Miss Anderson at Rondebosch but unluckily found her out and got back at 4 as Mrs Murray had warned me that I must hold a levee. Swarms of Moltenos poured in. It was really very good of them. Dr and Mrs Victor, Mr and Mrs James, Mr and Mrs Frank, Dr and Mrs Kenah, Dr and Mrs Murray, Miss Bingle and finally Uncle Bisset. All full of very kind congratulations. They

all really seem pleased. All my future sisters-in-law kissed me very kindly and Mr Frank whispered "Shall I kiss her?" And Mrs Frank, who is very proper, said "no, you are not to do anything of the sort"! Poor Mr Frank was crushed. Uncle James gave me a huge hug and lots and lots of good advice, and was very charming and nice. They all stayed a long time and were as nice as possible. I felt they were really giving me a very warm welcome into the family. When the last one had gone, we hurried off and saw "the aunts" who were as sweet and good as only they can be. Then in to see old Mrs Bisset ...

We called in to see the Willy Bissets on our way back and they gave me such a welcome. Mr Willy kissed me most kindly and was so pleased and Mrs Willy was full of interest - she is too fond of Wallace to be very pleased, I can see, and doesn't think me good enough! I was simply worn out but still after supper had to run in and have a last talk with Mrs Murray, write to Wallace and then at last to bed.

### **Monday, May 28**

### **Leaving the Cape after six months**

At last the day of parting came and it didn't seem to be so bad after all. How dreadful it would have been if I hadn't been coming back! I was frantically busy. There was no time for thought or regrets. We finished packing in a fearful hurry, hurling everything into the boxes and got them locked up. Mrs Jim Bisset, Mrs Lindley, Tanda and Elsie all came to say goodbye. May, Effie and I caught the 11.15 to town. Then I had to go to the photographer and have my photo taken again – the last ones were such failures. I had some shopping to do and I had to rush off to Mr A's office and say goodbye. Finally we went to lunch at Rollie's balcony. In the middle of lunch Mr Blunt saw us from below and coming up was most conversational. He congratulated me from Mrs Blunt, ... Smith and himself and said the latter had commissioned him to see me off, as he was at Stellenbosch. He said they would all come to the wedding if they were here, and was full of news and gossip ...

We got on board about 2.30 – Mrs Murray, Dr and Mrs Kenah, Mr Frank and Mrs James came to see me off as well as May, Effie and Mr Anderson, who got away from the House just in time. Poor Uncle James couldn't get away after all. It was very sad saying goodbye to everyone. But not so bad as it might have been. I had a long talk with Mrs Charlie in my cabin about Wallace. She is very sweet and sympathetic.

### **Tuesday, May 29**

I feel very flat and dull today after all the excitement. The boat is very empty, only 29 passengers, and they look nice but dull. Read and slept all day and played with Lucy and Tiny and dear John Charles.

### **Wednesday, May 30**

This is evidently going to be a very dull voyage. I long for my old fellow passengers – the cheery little Spekes and Dr Davies and Mrs Davies. I miss Wallace horribly and can't get up any interest in anything or anybody. I feel as if I don't want to speak to a soul. Did my [work ?] And read French with Miss Bingle all the morning – a very improper book I think, but suppose she knows best! ...

### **Friday, June 1**

Heard we could post at Lobito for the Cape. So we all spent the afternoon writing long letters. I wrote to Eff and Mr A, Gerry and Wallace. Mr Charlie teases me frightfully. He is always saying that he is thinking of his "poor brother Wallace". He tells me I must show him everything I'd written to him and that by Dutch law Wallace can't marry without his consent. So I had better be civil to him! More Bridge after dinner but good this time ...

### **Saturday, June 2**

### **Putting in at Lobito Bay, Angola**



Spent a most amusing day at Lobito Bay. Such a quaint place, a simply wonderful harbour, almost landlocked, and a long line of pale grey and yellow coast. Lobito itself seemed composed of a few corrugated iron houses and sheds beside the sea, and the station. They ran a special train inland to Catamabella for passengers. We all crowded into two carriages and went about 5 miles. At last I saw my idea of Africa taken from missionary magic lanterns – palm trees, sand and niggers. We travelled through marshes chiefly which looked very feverish but the scenery was decidedly pretty. Catamabella was a good-sized town, the suburbs consisted of native huts. There were streets and shops and a slave market. Though slavery there is carried on surreptitiously under the name of "contract labour".

The Moltenos went off alone. I trailed along with Bingle who was more than trying as she would insist on looking for shops of picture post cards – the most unheard of thing in the desert. Mr Palmer and Mrs Horsburgh helped me "to Bingle" at times and were most kind and helpful. We spent about an hour wandering about. We tried to buy curios but they were all made in Germany! There was a river running past Catamabella with palm trees, and mountains behind – quite a beautiful place I thought.

Back to the ship for lunch. I spent the afternoon sketching the coast line ...

### **Tuesday, June 3**

Continued [Bridge] tournament. Miss Bingle still reads the improper French book to me every morning. Lucy and Tiny become more delightful everyday. Had a long discussion with a fat man, Mr Watson, after dinner on Italian art ...

### **Sunday, June 10**

Quite a rest after all the violent deck games of the day before. Church in the morning. Then Bingle read "The Life of Sir John Molteno" to me which I found very interesting ...

### **Thursday, June 14**

Arrived at Las Palmas about 5 p.m. Feel very bored as I have been here before. Crowds of shrieking people selling things in boats. Bought coral necklaces for Lucy and Tiny. They were enchanted. Bingle nearly [died ?] of excitement. Lovely letters from home ...

### **Friday, June 15**

Spent a very nice day at Las Palmas. Mr and Mrs Molteno went off with a Mr Miller, the company's agent, to spend the day. Miss Bingle and I, Mr Palmer, Mrs Horsburgh ... all drove up to ... a village perched on a hill with a splendid view, where we stopped at a hotel and had a very inferior lunch. However the view made up for it and the pretty garden. We were all presented with bouquets of flowers. ... Bingle was really so nice that it wasn't very hard work. She hardly fussed at all, only on the drive down she got a terrible fright as a horse fell down and she was so palpitating, we had to make her change her carriage. We all wandered about the town, visited the Cathedral and made wonderful purchases. We got back to the ship at five. We all chaffed Bingle unmercifully because she bought some chemises from a woman on the street and borrowed the money from Mr Cussel to pay for them. We told her it was lucky he was a married man as we all heard he was terribly shocked. She implored us to tell him that she had lived so long in Greece that she had lost all her principles!!! We said we would, but we greatly feared he was much horrified. She made me give a solemn promise not to tell Mr Molteno. Poor Lucy and Tiny were not allowed on shore after all, but I bought them little baskets and they were perfectly enchanted, dear little chicks ...

### **Tuesday, June 19**

... Only one more day on board. And then this diary will be finished. It is very uninteresting to anyone but myself. But I am so glad I kept it. It has after all turned out to be the most eventful six months of my life, and in years to come I shall enjoy looking back and reading it. It will recall my delightful visit to the Cape.

**Wednesday, June 20**

**England again, but a new life in Africa beckons**

... It is quite sadly I bring this little record to a close. But with what bright hopes for the future. A new life full of new interests, new work, new play is opening up before me under the sunny African skies I have learnt to love so well. I don't think I shall ever keep another diary. What the future will bring forth no one knows. But only six months ago I placed my trust on mother's parting text she gave me to remember – so whatever the future may be in the country where this diary has been kept and these months spent, I will always remember: "underneath are the everlasting arms".

**Finished June 20, 1906.**

## **SS Gaslore**

**August 25, 1907**

[At the end of Lil's diary, a little over a year later, her mother, Mrs Sandeman, travelled out to the Cape and decided to write a very short diary of her own, as follows]

Just been writing in your diary, my little daughter. It has struck me I might write a small one of my own for your edification and amusement. ...

**August 31**

... What strange animals Colonials are, to be sure. Their language is quaint in the extreme. A cut between Chi-Chi and Cockney. They seem very friendly and pleasant people, but they are foreigners to us. One good lady assures me the shops in Adderley Street are as good as those in Regent Street, but this lady is Dutch. So perhaps things English are inferior in her estimation ...

Am reading an awful lot. "The Life of Sir John Molteno" – some of it quite beyond me. But well written.

**September 5**

... The passengers are the usual types. There is Dr Sleek, clean shaven, *stupid* who flirts with all the girls in turn. The chief officer fat, smiling, *funny*. Looks happiest when seated on a bench with a lady on each side! He reads. And has lent me Stephens' plays. I like very much. Then there is the naughty girl – who flirts with one man and sits in dark corners at night with him and who is strongly disapproved of by the chaperones. The English, *very* English girls – rosy, fresh, untidy hair, loud voices, just out of school, quite confident they know *everything* worth knowing with the hard judgements of "extreme" youth, who "adore" and "love", and find things "too sweet" etc etc. The gushing spinster of a certain age, who works for a living, a toiler, on a holiday, used up, worked out ... The old bachelor who sits alone with his pipe. The young man who flirts and wears well-cut clothes. The old young man who gets up sports with untiring energy. The married man who looks after his wife and runs after the children. The married woman whose life is a burden because of their unruly small boys who get into impossible places ... And

last not least, the Captain – quiet, pleasant, all that a woman means when she says "nice". A man who has travelled much over many waters, into many lands, a student of men and manners, and who like the proverbial parrot thinks more than he speaks. So we live from day to day in a little world on a wide sea....

#### September 14

... Also we have had some heated arguments on the War which have been most instructive. We have been able to see things from the other side of the question and how bitter the feeling still is between Boer and Britain. It's all a curious study – intensely interesting.

#### September 17

Up at some unearthly hour to gaze through the porthole at Africa. Lovely sunrise over a long low line of land. Then later on Table Bay and Table Mountain all very fine in the clear morning light. We got a hasty breakfast as we could not tear ourselves away from the view. Just after that a boat appeared and in it dear old Gerry looking just the same jolly boy of 3 1/2 years ago. It was a lovely surprise. We got in about ten and landed after much delay. Dear old Mr Anderson was there to meet us. Effie, Marjorie and ... came rushing up as we were struggling over the Custom House. They took us off to the station and after much dividing of luggage, we got off. It was lovely seeing trees again after so much sea all in the fresh spring green. It all looked so pretty. We got to Kenilworth, a little country station, and were escorted up the road till we came to a pretty creeper covered house out of which stepped a lady. Effie told us "the relations were upon us". There was Mrs Murray who took us into her drawing room, and here her great aunts and nephew and nieces, and then Effie swept us into her house next door and gave us lunch. We spent a breathless afternoon. A tea picnic, a fresh change, dinner ... and off once more. It seemed all a jumble of people and scenery and meals! Took quite a long time to disentangle.

... After that the excitement was so high I felt absolutely speechless. We were all hanging out of the train when the last corner was turned and we saw the little tin house which is the Nelspoort station. Lil looking exactly the same on the platform waiting to receive us. We had arrived.

"When the shore is won at last  
"Who will count the billows past?"

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<sup>1</sup> Built in 1893 for the Union Steamship Co., it was transferred to the Union-Castle Co. in 1900. It was a relatively small boat, with a displacement of 4,745 gt.

<sup>2</sup> For more details about individual members of the family, go to the *People & Places* section of this Website.

<sup>3</sup> Eliza Bingle was a niece of Nancy Molteno's husband, Mr Bingle. Nancy was Sir John Charles Molteno's sister, and the only one of his siblings to stay on in London after their father's death. Eliza became a devoted honorary member of the Molteno family.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace Molteno, one of Sir John Charles Molteno's younger sons, and a farmer in the Karoo.

<sup>5</sup> The former home of Cecil John Rhodes, who had made his fortune out of South African diamonds and gold. With a magnificent view looking up to Table Mountain, this beautiful Cape Dutch house eventually became the home of South Africa's Prime Ministers throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald Sandeman had followed his father into the British Army. He seems to be spending an extended leave (from India?) at the Cape.

<sup>7</sup> Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, was one of Queen Victoria's sons. He later became Governor General of Canada.

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<sup>8</sup> Lil presumably means the team representing the Cape Colony in this test match. It is highly unlikely that it included any Black South Africans at this date.

<sup>9</sup> Lil exhibits the unthinking prejudice and, every now and then, the overt racist attitudes typical of Britons, and many middle and upper class Europeans generally, a century ago. Her less well off passengers on the mailship are 'little' people! She refers in disparaging terms to 'colonials' – meaning white British people who have emigrated and live in the colonies. In a handful of instances, she uses, without reflection, terms like kaffir which these self-same colonials in South Africa used when speaking of their fellow black South Africans. And she repeats their prejudices about Coloured (or 'Hottentot') domestic servants. There is a sustained account, which she feels is excruciatingly funny, of the extreme rudeness which she and her schoolfriend, Effie Anderson, evinced towards Mr Wolf, a Jewish farmer who was renting a farm off Wallace Molteno in the Eastern Cape. All these examples of mindless stereotyping, and class or racial prejudice, make for uncomfortable reading for us in an age when colonialism is long gone and class dominance no longer just accepted. But the attitudes Lil, a very young woman, expresses, without thinking about it, are a reflection of the age she lived in. I have retained them for that reason.