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Diary of Kitty Robertson
May 17th – June 8th 1868

‘Conaways’ – May 17th

Uncle Lawson walked to the College to Church this morning, Aunt Rhoda and I went to the Ewell Church, Aunt Hattie had such a bad headache, she stayed at home with Sallie. On our way home we found them sitting in the meadow, so I stayed with them until dinner time. After dinner we all strolled about the garden & across Uncle's little meadow, and the Shaws came across their little meadow & we chatted with them until nearly tea time. Uncle went over to Epsom to tea, at Mr. Furners's. In the evening Aunt Rhoda and I went to Church again and walked home with the Shaws & Harry Townend. When we had just taken our bonnets off Uncle came home & brought with him Mr. Furner & a Mr. Green who he took all over his house & then treated us to a bottle of Champayne in honour of its being Mr. Green's first visit to the new house. Aunt Hattie has been very poorly all day & has decided to go up to London in the morning to see her Dr.

May 18th

Such a lovely morning. Aunt Hattie went up to Town with Uncle by the 9 o'clock train, I then wrote to Thecla, and when I had finished, Sallie & I put on our hats & went into the Village to post it, & then into the meadow where we sat until dinner time. After dinner Mrs. Shaw sent in her love to me & would I like to go a drive with her, and a lovely drive she took me, all through Ashted Park. I did so enjoy it, the hawthornes were a perfect sight, & at times the perfume seemed almost too much, if you can imagine such a thing being possible. We called at 'Conaways' on our way home to tell Aunt Rhoda I should stay tea at Mrs. Shaw's. After tea Sallie joined us, & by that time the boys had come home, so we played croquet until ½ past 8 then had supper, & played whist until nearly eleven when we put on our hats & went home. Uncle did not get home till ½ past 2 a.m. for he had gone to some grand dinner in London.

May 19th

Another Exquisite morning. Uncle stayed at home with us all day. I forgot to say yesterday that Aunt Hattie came back again in the evening & is much better. This has been quite the hottest day we have had yet, we passed away all the morning & afternoon in the garden reading or working in any shade we could manage to get under. After tea Uncle took Sallie, Aunt Hattie & I by the ½ past 6 train to a little station at the foot of Box Hill called West Humble, from where we walked into Norbury Wood. It is no use attempting to describe its beauties, and the place seemed alive with nightingales & the banks seemed all blue and white with wild Strawberry blossom & Forget-me-nots, it was really wonderfully beautiful, we came back again by a train which left West Humble at ½ past 8 & got to Ewell a few minutes to 9, so that we got quite home by 9 o'clock, it was such a lovely evening, so warm.

May 20th

We began playing croquet the minute after breakfast & kept on without ceasing till nearly 12 o'clock when it began to rain a little which drove us in. The Misses Furners came to call, & bring us a ticket for the Athletic Sports at the Medical College which are held tomorrow, but I'm afraid we shall not go for Uncle does not seem to care about us going without him and I don't fancy he will care to go, for he has another grand dinner tonight at the London Tavern, some grocers' affair I think. After dinner we dressed & read & worked all the afternoon; after tea Alfred & Henry Shaw came in & we played croquet then we had supper & afterwards played Whist till it's time to go to bed.

May 21st

Only one month to the longest day, it makes me sigh dreadfully, summer goes with me so much quicker than winter, but it's no use grieffing [?] that Sallie & I have been playing croquet nearly the whole day, my right hand is nearly in blisters from holding the mallet. We have not been to the Athletic Sports, Uncle said he would come home & take us if possible, but he found he could not leave, for of course he will want to be down several days next week, being the Derby Week, we hope to have some fun. Mr. Shaw came in the evening to smoke a cigar with Uncle & Aunt Hattie sang us some nice songs.

May 22nd

Aunt Rhoda went up to Town this morning with Uncle to see after a cook, for her present one has got notice to leave. Sallie, Aunt Hattie & I started off about 10 o'clock to Cheam to see the Townends. It is a lovely walk, the whole way thro' beautiful fields & very little over a mile. We took our time as you will imagine when I tell you we were rather over an hour getting there, for we strolled along most lazily & sat down several times to enjoy the lovely country. When we had rested a little, & had some wine & biscuits, we went into the garden, it is so pretty & they are such kind nice people. Annie Townend would insist on driving Sallie & I home in her little Pony Carriage, for she thought we must be tired after such a long walk, we brought with us such a beautiful lot of flowers which we intend arranging nicely tomorrow for Aunt Rhoda expects Dr. & Mrs. Hogg tomorrow to stay until Monday. I found Mama's nice dear letter waiting for me when I got home. I was so glad to get it. I do indeed wish dear young Bess here, and in fact all of you, I want you to see this nice new house, & the country is so lovely about here, I don't seem as though I could make enough of it. It came on to rain in the afternoon & continued all the evening, we are very thankful to have it, although it prevented our spending the evening at croquet, for the shrubs and leaves look quite burnt up, and Mr. Charman told us the other day that all his wheat is dying off for want of rain.

Lettice has come home again, she came in after tea to see us. Uncle Lawson & Aunt Rhoda came home by the ½ past 7 train. Mr. Shaw came in with them & stayed to supper, after which Aunt Hattie sang & I played a little & so ended the evening.

May 23rd

Not at all a nice morning so windy & looking very much like rain, we had intended taking the train over to Epsom to call on the Furners, but the weather is not fit, & I'm afraid it won't be even fine enough for me to go to the post with my letter, I must send the Gardener. I will enclose you a letter of Thekla's you will see Mina has lost

her baby, it is the one that was staying with her at the Highway, such a dear little mite, just eight months old.

My dearest Mama,

You see I have written a kind of Diary for you this week, I thought it would be quite the best way of letting you know how we spend our time, by writing a bit every day. I enclose you a bit of Tatting, I thought you might find it useful as you are always altering Bessie's summer clothes, you must please excuse its being rather dirty, for I did it principally out of doors, & you know how hot and grubby your fingers will get.

My very kindest love to you all, Your loving Kitty

Saturday Morning

Conaways May 23rd

Sent my letter off to post by the gardener, for it was still so wet. Dr. Hogg arrived at 6 o'clock. He came alone, Mrs. Hogg was prevented accompanying him from some cause or other, the weather was beautifully fine by that time, for it had ceased raining soon after dinner, so we had some croquet, the Dr. and I against Sallie and Aunt Hattie, & we beat them two games, by that time Uncle Lawson had come home & brought with him Mr. Shaw & Mr. Furner. After Supper they played whist till just on the stroke of twelve, then they asked me to play a tune & I said if I did it should be a hymn tune for it was Sunday morning, so then they thought it time to leave off, and we went to bed.

May 24th

Mr. Ringer, a cousin of Sallie's came to spend today with us, he arrived soon after breakfast. Aunt Rhoda & I went to Ewell Church, & Uncle Lawson, Dr. Hogg, Mr. Ringer & Aunt Hattie went up to the College. We had a beautiful dinner & all seemed to enjoy it very much, at least I can speak for myself, we drank two bottles of Champayne, to wish the Queen many happy returns of her birthday. In the afternoon there came a letter down by the train from Uncle Jim himself saying that he and all his family had dined at the Highway, just fancy the state of surprise & excitement it threw us all into, for they were not expected for at least a week. Uncle ran in to tell Mr. Shaw and brought him back with him, Uncle Lawson went up to London at ¼ to 8 leaving Mr. Shaw in his place as host. We had supper at nine, & Mr. Ringer went by the 10 minutes past 10 train, then Mr. Shaw departed leaving us alone with Dr.

Uncle got home at half past eleven, we all sat up, because we felt anxious to hear what he had to say about the travellers, we did not go up to bed till just upon one o'clock, for he had so much to tell us. He found them all in bed, except Uncle Jim, but of course he had a look at them all, the wife included, & seemed very favourably impressed, he says they are very beautiful children & he said one little girl as she laid in bed fast asleep, was so strangely like our Polly, he said it was quite wonderful. She

is the only one that is dark, the other four have all quite flaxen hair, I feel quite anxious to see them.

May 25th

Old Doctor went up to Town this morning by the first train, I did not get down in time to see him. Uncle went by the 9 o'clock & Aunt Rhoda & Aunt Hattie with him, so Sallie and I have it all to ourselves, Aunt Hattie is not coming back here again, she is going to Marian's where I expect I shall go next week. I wrote just a note to Papa to tell him Uncle Jim had arrived, then we got ready & went down into the village to post, then to call on Mrs. Charman. She lives at such a pretty old Farm house, we went round the nice old garden & she gave us each such a lovely rose. When we got home I found Papa's letter waiting for me, I am very sorry my letter miscarried, I was so particular about it & cannot think where the mistake is for the gardener assures me he posted it in time. What with that & Papa's bad account of himself I could hardly get thro' my dinner, I felt quite upset for a little while. After dinner we rested a little then dressed & went into Mrs. Shaw's where we stayed about an hour & brought Lettice back with us to tea, then we played croquet till eight o'clock then had supper & played whist, Alfred Shaw came in to make a fourth. Aunt Rhoda & Uncle got home at ½ past 9.

May 26th

The first day of the Races. Uncle advises us not to go out walking for the whole neighbourhood is inundated with (you may truly say) the scum of the earth, so we kept about the house all the morning in the garden and meadow, & Lettice came in to see us. After dinner Mr. Townend's waggonette drove up to the door, it was sent to take us all up there to tea, so away we went & spent such a pleasant afternoon & evening. I have told you before what a beautiful old place it is, on the lawn there are three immense elm trees & between these trees they string hammocks, regular bonafide hammocks such as are used in ships, made of tarpaulin, & nice little mattresses & pillows in them, and there they lie and read or work for hours together. I felt a little afraid to get in at first, but they said I was so nice that I got in, & then I didn't have a second thought as whether I liked it or not, it was downright splendid, the sensation was just like being on the sea, for the wind was rather high which made the hammock swing gently to & fro & there I lay looking up into the trees for more than an hour, it was most delightful, I said I should like to live in a hammock. They persuaded Sallie to get into other one, but it soon turned her sick, just like sea-sickness.

After tea we played several games of croquet, then went into the house & had some music & after supper Mr. Townend drove us home again in the waggonette. Uncle Lawson went down to Horndon today to take Uncle Jim & his two boys to see Charles' old Uncle.

May 27th

The Derby Day, such a lovely morning. Directly after breakfast Sallie & I put on our hats & went out into the garden & thro' into the meadow with Uncle, we were soon joined by three or four of the Shaws & soon a train came in which brought Aunt Judy, Dr. Botting, Mr. Spitty, Mr. Catt, Mr. Ferrier & two or three other gentlemen, so we

made up a game of croquet. Mr. Spitty, Dr. Botting & I against Sallie, Henry Shaw & Mr. Catt & they beat us, my two partners were such 'duffers' I couldn't do anything with them, then we went in to lunch after which the gentlemen went up onto the course & we ladies down the village to see the people go to the Derby. We went to Mr. Stone's for he kindly allowed us the use of his upstairs windows so we had a capital view & I never saw such a sight before in all my life, where all the people came from puzzled me. Conveyances of every description from donkey carts to splendid coaches, four-in-hand, and all so closely packed that the horses never went off the walk & continually streaming by, till it made me stare in amazement, it was next to impossible for a pedestrian to cross the road. There were mounted policemen at equal distances to try and regulate the traffic. When the Prince of Wales came along two of the mounted police rode along to try & make way for him, but he had to go very slowly, which was very nice for us, for we had such a good view of him. Some gentlemen at Mr. Stone's Hurrahed and we waved our handkerchiefs so the Prince very politely took off his hat. He was in an open Barouche with four horses and two postillion in blue, the Crown Prince of Denmark sat by his side. I shall never forget seeing the people go to the Derby, Sallie said that had we paid 10 shillings each for our seats it would have been quite worth it. When the people had pretty well cleared off we returned to Conaways, & had dinner, just as we were sitting down to tea, in came Mr. Charman with a message from Mr. Stone that he would be pleased to see us down again to see the people go home, so away we went & rare fun we had, the people seemed to me to try what guys they could make of themselves, such noses, and with little dolls stuck all round their hats, but unfortunately we could not stay very long for Sallie was taken very poorly & wanted to get home, for the continual going by of the carriages made her feel very sick so Mr. Charman took her under his wing and Frank Stone, me, and somebody else, Aunt Judy, & by watching our opportunity we managed to get across the road & home in safety. After we had a little refreshment Aunt Judy and I went into the Shaw's & had a game of croquet till Uncle Botting came & fetched us home, then we laughed & chatted & had supper till they all went home by the last train and we went to bed. We did not see the Prince return from the races but we saw the Australian cricketers both go & return.

May 28th

Another lovely day & such an unexpected treat I have had this day. I had no idea of going to the races, till about eleven o'clock when Mr. Ginner drove up with his beautiful pair of horses & waggonette and offered to take Sallie & I, Mrs. Shaw & Lettice, if Mr. Shaw would drive Uncle Lawson & the Refreshments in his waggonette, which was a very nice arrangement & which we all agreed to, so after we had made ourselves smart & had some lunch away we started, Mr. Ginner & his coachman on the box & we ladies inside, and Mr. Shaw, his groom and Uncle following us, we drove right up to the edge of the course in a splendid position exactly opposite the Grand Stand. The horses were taken out & Uncle helped Lettice and I to get onto the box, for we could see so much better there, it was so nice, the Townends were there & drew their carriage up close to ours so we were quite a nice party & had such fun. I never saw a race before so it was quite a novel scene to me & so exciting and so very pretty. I enjoyed it wonderfully, we had plenty of refreshments as much Champayne as we could drink, Sam Newcome was there he came up to the Carriage & chatted with me, for some time, and had some Champayne, I was so pleased to see him. I did not win or lose anything, simply because I did not bet; when the races were over the horses were put to & away we went to Mr. Shaw's

where Aunt Rhoda joined us & we had a sort of tea-dinner, then went into the garden & had a game of croquet, after we had singing and music until we came home at ½ past 10.

May 29th

We have had a most terrific thunderstorm today, I never felt so thoroughly frightened at thunder before in my life. Mrs. Shaw & Lettice called about eleven o'clock & asked Sallie and I to go down into the village with them to see the Prince of Wales go to the 'Oaks', so we went with them to a room over the baker's shop, Mrs. Shaw's nurses and children were there too, & there we all were thro' that dreadful storm, the rain was so tremendously heavy, the people as they drove by looked like drowned rats, but we had good reason to be very thankful, for there was a very bad accident not more than a hundred yards from the very house we were in; two men who were going to the races in a pony chaise, drew up against a wall to shelter under some trees & the lightening ripped the wall right up and killed one man instantly and injured the other one so dreadfully that altho' he still lingers, we have been told there is not the slightest hope of his recovery, & the poor horse was struck blind, is it not sad?

We could not at first think what was the matter, there was such a commotion in the street, the policemen galloping about to restore order, for by carriages stopping to see what was the matter there soon became a block, and the Prince was expected every minute. However the storm had quite abated before he came, I should fancy he stayed to shelter somewhere; we were able to stand at the window again by that time, I saw him beautifully, I think better than he went to the Derby. When we got home we found Aunt Rhoda looking quite ill, she had been frightened at the storm. We made her have a little brandy but she did not get over it all day. After dinner we all had a sleep. It was a lovely evening, Sallie and I played croquet till Uncle came home.

May 30th

A lovely morning. Sallie & I are going to Epsom by the ten o'clock train to get my order cashed & to call on Mrs. Furner. I shall finish this and take it with me to post so make sure it is in time.

Uncle Jim is coming down with Uncle tonight; we have just heard that the poor man who was struck yesterday by the lightening is still alive.

Conaways, May 30th, continued

When I had finished my letter Sallie & I went to Epsom by the 10 o'clock train. First we went to the Post Office and got my order cashed, then we walked all up the town to find something pretty to buy but we did not see anything worth having, the muslins were all such common things, Sallie wanted to buy some white alpaca to make a dress & we could not even get that, so it's no use to think of shopping at Epsom. We then called on Mrs. Furner, where we stayed about an hour, & had some lunch, then home by the 1 o'clock train bringing with us as many lovely flowers as we could well carry. It was very hot and we were so tired that after dinner both Sallie and I laid down on our bed & went fast asleep, I only woke up just in time to dress for tea. After tea Sallie & I went down into the village to see if they sold white alpaca there, but no such luck, then we just walked round to see the wall where the two poor men were

struck with lightening. When we got home I walked round the meadow, for it seemed such a shame to go in, the evening was so lovely & Sallie was too tired to stay out any longer. Uncle Lawson & Uncle Jim did not get home till ½ past 9, I was all excitement to see my new Uncle, I was quite prepared not to like him, for his likeness is anything but prepossessing, so I was agreeable surprised, for he is very nice indeed & I like him very much. I think him very unlike a Robinson on appearance, so very foreign looking, such a moustache and beard, but his manner is very nice and I felt at home with him directly. Sallie & I did not go up to bed till nearly twelve. It seems so strange that I have seen Uncle Jim, for it is a thing I never looked upon as at all probably, but 'such is life'.

May 31st

A lovely morning. I got down about 9 o'clock & found Uncle Jim in the garden, he had been up since 6 o'clock exploring the village & our favourite meadows, he seems quite in love with the place & even condescends to say it is as pretty as Horndon, a fact which he thought impossible a week ago. We all went to Ewell Church except Aunt Rhoda, she stayed at home as a sort of guard to the house for there are so many suspicious looking people about just after the races. In the evening Uncle Lawson, Uncle Jim, Mr. Shaw & three of his boys took the train to Leatherhead & walked through Norbury Park to West Humble just to show Uncle Jim a few of the beauties of the neighbourhood. Aunt Rhoda & I went to Church again in the evening.

June 1st

The two Uncles went up to London by the 8 o'clock train. We walked up the road with them just as far as Mr. Shaw's, it was such a lovely morning, not a cloud to be seen, Uncle Jim said just like an Australian sky. I then wrote to Thecla & a bit of my diary, after which it being Whit Monday and we being such good people we went to Church & I posted my letter on the way there. When we got home I found my letter from Papa, which I took into the garden to read, I cannot understand about his being so ill, but it seems to me quite wrong to attempt to do without his Opium. I had hardly finished reading it, when the Townend waggonette drove up with Mrs. Townend, Annie & Lettice Shaw (who had been staying with them since Saturday), they stayed nearly an hour & by that time it was dinnertime. After dinner we dressed, had tea at 4 o'clock & went by the 10 minutes to five train to Sutton (which is the next station but one to Ewell nearer London) & where there is a very nice shop where the Shaws & Townends always deal; Aunt Rhoda & Sallie each bought a white alpaca dress & I a white muslin one, & a sunshade which I wanted very badly, for I have had to borrow Aunt Rhoda's several times. We returned to Ewell by the ½ past 7 train & found that a box had arrived from London during our absence containing the most lovely vase I ever saw; it is Bohemian glass, presented to Uncle Lawson & Aunt Rhoda by the gentlemen at the Highway, for the centre of their drawing room mantelpiece, it is exceedingly handsome. The 'presentation' is so prettily got up & so beautifully illuminated and so much in the style of Papa's Allegory [*A note is added here by a later family member: "Papa" wrote verses for all occasions. I have a volume, in beautiful copperplate handwriting*] that I rather suspect Aunt Kate must have asked Mr. Tompson to do it for them & if so you know all about it. Sallie & I were in the secret, & it was most amusing to us to watch Aunt Rhoda's excitement & then again when Uncle came home, we had the pleasure of seeing his surprise, he seems to me to be better pleased with the presentation than the vase, he is quite proud of it, & will have it put by the side of the vase on the mantelpiece, so that everybody may see it.

June 2nd

We have been haymaking today, for Mr. Shaw's hay was cut yesterday & we have all promised to help make it. After breakfast Aunt Rhoda & I started off in search of a dressmaker, but in vain, we went to no less than four, they are so busy they cannot do our dresses. When we got home, Mrs. Shaw was here with her pony carriage, so she drove Aunt Rhoda over to Epsom to a dressmaker she knew, but she was like the rest very busy, so I expect they will go unmade unless we make them ourselves. After dinner Sallie & I went into the hayfield and then in to see Mrs. Shaw. After tea we all went again into the hayfield, where we found Mr. & Mrs. Shaw, Willie, Alfred, & Henry all regularly haymaking, turning the rows of hay over; they soon supplied us with forks, and set us to work, but I found haymaking a little harder work than it looks. I turned one row, & then I had had quite enough, & Sallie didn't do more than three yards, so we two sat down & watched the others. After they had finished we had a good romp, smothering one another with hay, Mr. & Mrs. Townend & Lettice came in the midst of it. Lettice is still staying at Cheam. Uncle did not get home till ½ past 9, and he has lumbago so badly he can hardly walk.

June 3rd

A lovely morning, really what beautiful weather we have. Uncle has been at home all day with his lumbago, he did not get up till dinner time, & then was quite a cripple, hobbling about with a stick. I was sitting in the dining room quietly writing my Diary about ½ past — when I heard a ring at the front door bell & knowing that no one but visitors come to that door, I jumped up to see who it was, and who should it be but Uncle Botting, Uncle Jim & Mr. Robert Botting; it was so lovely they had come down to have a day in the country, they started off again almost directly for a long walk & Sallie, Aunt Rhoda & I went into the village marketing & to call on two more dressmakers we had heard of, but with no success. When we came home I took my book and went into Mr. Shaw's hayfield & sat down amongst the hay under the shade of a sycamore tree. I was soon joined by Uncle Jim, Uncle Botting & his brother for they found it too hot to walk very far, so there we all sat enjoying the beautiful sweet hay till time to go in and dress for dinner. After dinner we had a game of croquet after which I went with Uncle Botting to call on Mrs. Shaw. We had an early tea at ¼ past 4, for they had to return to London by the 5 o'clock train because Mr. Robert Botting had to go back to Horsham & he had left his wife and baby at Aunt Judy's so he had to go there to fetch them.

In the evening Sallie and I went to help the Shaws turn their hay over again, when we got in we found Uncle had gone to bed, his lumbago was so bad. I have had some strawberries today for the first time this year and we had the first green peas on Sunday.

June 4th

It looked very much like rain this morning but it did not actually begin raining till nearly 12 o'clock & then it kept on without ceasing all thro' the day, no doubt it will do good to the gardens but I am so sorry for the hay. Uncle Lawson has been in bed all day the lumbago is still so bad. After supper I helped Sallie to mend a pretty flower vase of Aunt Rhoda's which she had broken, then I wrote a note to Papa & took it down to post. I only just got home just in time to escape the rain. After dinner

Sallie & I took our work up into Uncle's bedroom & sat with him till we were called to tea.

After tea Mrs. Shaw came in & brought with her Mrs. Welch (Mrs. Shaw's sister) & her daughter, they wanted of course to see over the house, so she had to take them all into Uncle's bedroom, he held quite a levée for Mr. Shaw happened to come in while they were upstairs, so away he went after them, and stayed some time chatting with Uncle. It was a nice little change for him, he finds it so dull to lie in bed, it is not like being really ill, as he only feels the pain when he attempts to move. Aunt Rhoda brought in such a beautiful basket of strawberries this morning for Sallie & I to eat with our lunch & we had peas for dinner out of our own garden, fancy that.

June 5th

Such a lovely morning after the rain everything looking so fresh & bright. We got a letter from Aunt Kate this morning saying she had started Uncle Jim, his wife & children to Horndon to stay with Uncle Charlie & that she is quite ready to have Sallie & I whenever we like to go, so we have decided to go on Monday, I shall be very sorry to leave this lovely spot, I have been so very happy & well, & enjoyed everything so much. Uncle has been rather better today, after breakfast Sallie & I went up and had a little chat with him, then we went down in the village for a walk; as we were passing Mr. Stone's he was coming out so he asked us to go & look at his flowers, which we did, for they are so lovely it is quite a treat. He gathered such a lovely little bouquet of roses which he gave to me & a beautiful cucumber, we then went round to call on Mrs. Charman, & she gave us a little basket of asparagus to take to Uncle & so many flowers that by the time we got home we were quite laden with goodies, we went straight up to Uncle to show him what we had got, he was so amused & said we certainly didn't go down in the village for nothing; he got up to dinner & seemed much better. In the afternoon Sallie & I arranged the flowers & they looked so pretty especially in the flower vase we mended yesterday, but to our great horror just when we had finished, we saw it begin to move & over it went, flowers and all, the water had caused the cement to melt again so all our afternoon was spent in messing with the stupid vase, I am glad to say we managed to make it stick again & I think now it is safe.

After tea Uncle and I were having a little game of Croquet all to ourselves when who should come but Mr. Furner & Mr. Spitty. Uncle went in with Mr. Spitty to do some business, & Mr. Furner & I had a game of Croquet, then Mrs. Charman & her son Willie called to enquire after the invalid, they had no sooner gone than Mrs. & Miss Martin came & then Henry Shaw, so you see we have plenty of visitors. Mr. Spitty brought me a letter from Thekla who was at the Highway yesterday.

June 6th

Uncle is better again this morning but he is not up yet – but it is still early, not 9 o'clock yet, Mrs. Charman has been to enquire after him & brought another nice lot of asparagus, really I think it would puzzle you to find anyone with a nicer circle of friends & neighbours than Aunt Rhoda has, there are the Shaws, Furners, Townends, Charmans & Martins, five as nice families as I should think it possible to meet with, I think she is very lucky.

My dearest Mama,

So end my doings for this week. I have been looking all the week for a letter from you to tell me how Papa was, for after his letter last Monday I have felt very anxious but as I got no letter I made myself happy by thinking 'no news is good news' I think Papa had better direct my letter tomorrow to the Highway for I expect we shall leave here rather early on Monday morning, as least before the letters get in at 12 o'clock. Ask him to tell me something about Sibbie, it is so long since I heard anything about her. I have not been able to get my dress made, it is very tiresome, for now is the time to wear thin dresses, I am afraid to undertake it myself, for I like to get out of doors as much as possible and not sit sewing, I am afraid I should be so long about it. I wish I was near dear old Miss Catley, but I must see what I can do when I get up to London. I hope you can go to see Polly Johnson married & then you can tell me all about it. I hope the two chicks are quite well & yourself too dear Mama, & that Papa is very much better than last week, give my fond love to them all & believe me dearest Mama,

Your loving Kittie.

'Conaways' June 6th

When I had finished my letter I went down to the village to post it & also to do a little shopping for Aunt Rhoda. When I got home I collected my things a bit together & Sallie did a little of our packing. After dinner we took our work into the hayfield & Mrs. Shaw joined us there, we sat until tea time, so we invited Mrs. Shaw to go in with us which she did & stayed to tea. After tea we played croquet, our 'Fairwell' game on Uncle Lawson's lawn, then Mr. Shaw came in & they stayed to supper, Lettice has come home from Cheam today.

June 7th

It looked very stormy this morning, I was afraid we were going to have more thunder but it passed off very nicely. Uncle has been much better today. Sallie, Aunt Rhoda & I all went to church in the morning & walked home with the Shaws. We don't dine till Two o'clock on Sundays, so we went in, had a bit of lunch & out again into the hayfield until dinner was ready, you see we don't lose much time. As soon as we had finished our dinner & dessert (such beauty strawberries) we again went into the hayfield where we found all the Shaws & there we spent the afternoon sitting under the haycocks, it was so lovely I was quite sorry when teatime came. Willie, Alfred, Henry & Lettice just walked round into the garden with us, we found Mr. Furner strolling about with Uncle & just as we were going into the dining room who should we see come up to the front door but Uncle Botting. I had made an engagement with Lettice to go to church with her but when I saw him I ran back to beg to be excused for it is not often we get Uncle Botting.

It was a most lovely evening; after tea we all put on our hats & went into the meadow, Mr. & Mrs. Shaw & Willie were in their field so they joined us, then a Mr. Strother, a friend of Uncle, came & we all strolled about. When Lettice came from church, she had with her SEVEN of the Townends, & they ALL came in to Uncle Lawson's, just fancy what a lot of us there was, however they all departed before supper time except Uncle Botting & he went home by the 10 past 10 train.

June 8th

I got a letter from Beckie this morning by the first post. After breakfast as Sallie & I were just finishing our packing thinking we should return to London at 10 o'clock, in came Uncle Lawson & he said 'I don't like the idea of you girls going away without having been to Box Hill', so I said, with such an inducement as Box Hill I thought we could exist just one day longer without going to London, so it ended with Uncle writing a note to Aunt Kate to tell her we should not be home till tomorrow morning, & another to Mr. Rutley at Epsom to tell him to send a nice open carriage & pair of horses at three o'clock. So away we went, such a lovely drive, we did not go straight to Box Hill, but went round Walton-on-the-Hill & right over Borough Heath. When we did get to Box Hill we stayed there for more than an hour looking at the view, it is very beautiful. There happened to be a volunteer review in a park which looked just at the foot of the hill, but Uncle said it was quite two miles from it, however we could hear the band very distinctly & once or twice Aunt Rhoda thought the firing a little too loud to be pleasant. She had her trowel & dug up some beautiful ferns which she took home to her garden. About seven o'clock we had our 'TEA' which consisted of Sherry, Lemonade & Cake, & then we started back again. Uncle would have me get up onto the Box, by the side of the coachman; he thought I could see the country so much better from there. I felt a little nervous at first for they were such prancing horses, & I seemed perched up so high, but I soon got to like it & when we stopped at Headley to give the horses some water, Uncle wanted me to get down again but I declined, it was so nice I liked to finish my drive there for it is certainly the place of all others to see the country. We drove into the gate at Conaways just about nine o'clock, after a most delightful six hours, & as I said, a beautiful finale to a very happy visit. We found the Shaws just finishing carting their hay, but it was getting rather damp, so I would not go over to them. Uncle has been much better today.

[The end of this section of the Diary: on June 9th Kitty left Ewell for London]