

CHAPTER VII

JUSTINIAN AND THE EMPEROR OF MEXICO

John Sandars who was born in 1729 had a large family from whose sons all the modern branches of this family descend. He was also the first of the family to use the present spelling of the name Sandars. His handwritten notebook, which is still in the family's possession, contains notes of many of his cash transactions between 1748 and 1750 and as an afterthought he also added into it the names and birthdates of all his children. From his eldest son, John, born on July 9th 1751, descended two branches - both living in Derbyshire until recently - one of which came to an end with the death of John Satterfield Sandars, Mr. Balfour's Private Secretary, who died without children. From his second son, Joseph, descend two further branches of the family which have also died out completely. The first consisted on Joseph Sandars of Liverpool, the railway pioneer, and died out on his son's death (another Joseph) in 1893; the other branch descended from Joseph of Liverpool's brother, through Thomas Collett Sandars, the editor of Justinian's Institutes and down to his nine children. Of "Justinian" Sandars's children none except Horace Sandars had issue, and Horace only had two daughters; his last child was Edmund Sandars the naturalist, whose widow died in 1969 in Massachusetts without issue.

Rather more successful at perpetuating the name were the descendants of John Sandars's sixth and youngest son, Samuel. Samuel was the first member of the family to go to Gainsborough and from him descend the existing Lincolnshire and Surrey branches of the family.

It is strange to note that the Sandars

family was more numerous in the mid-nineteenth century than it is now. Three dominant figures stood out at that time in two different branches of the family : Joseph Sandars of Liverpool, to whom a separate chapter has been devoted, Thomas Collett Sandars, Joseph's nephew, and George Sandars, son of Samuel of Gainsborough. George and Tom Sandars and their families thus form the subject of the next two short chapters. Both were remarkable men, the one as a businessman and politician the other as an intellectual, writer and tutor of the Governor General of India.

Thomas Collett Sandars was born in 1825, the son of Samuel Sandars and Mary Collett, whose father was a Member of Parliament and businessman. Through his wife, who was sole heir to her father, Samuel inherited his family house, Lockers, at Hemel Hempstead. It is not a large house, and still stands today, used as a domestic science college, but was sufficiently convenient and comfortable to induce this branch of the family to leave Derbyshire for the south and convenient closeness to London.

Samuel Sandars was born in 1787, and led an agreeable gentleman's life, taking an interest in sports and in theoretical finance, but never needing to soil his hands with the practice of it. An athletic man, he was a keen shot and an experienced fly fisherman as well as showing marked skill at ice-skating; he remained fit and active to old age and enjoyed a relaxed and luxurious country life in nineteenth century England. Before his marriage, Samuel had been engaged in business connected with agricultural produce in Lincolnshire, but his connection with the Colletts removed the necessity for continuing it. Ebenezer Collett, his father-in-law was a successful merchant, even though a man of

eccentric opinions: his tomb was in the shrubberies at Lockers as he did not recognise the value of consecrated ground.

Samuel and Mary had four sons and five daughters. Each of their sons went to Rugby and from the school's records a little is known of their careers. Edmund, their second son, born in 1834, was for some time a Civil Servant, later a tutor at Bournemouth: he published a volume of verse, entitled "By The Sea", in 1860. Upon inspection in the British Museum in 1970 it was discovered that the pages of this volume still remained uncut. The next son, Richard, also at Rugby, was a businessman in New York for some years; later in life he became ordained to the ministry in Toronto diocese and was thereafter curate at St. Saviours Church, Hoxton. The youngest son, William Collett Sandars was invalided out of the army, took an exhibition in Modern Languages and dedicated his days to the translation of several works, including Rosengarten's Handbook of Architectural Styles, from German. He also wrote a German primer and books on syntax before dying at the early age of 39. Although nothing more is known of these three sons, there does exist however a very full and detailed biography of their eldest son, Tom, written by a lifelong friend of his, John Sherer. The work was never published, but its pages evoke the atmosphere and spirit of Tom's life right through from his days at Rugby to his time at the Bar and later as chairman of the Mexican Railway. Mr. Sherer first met Tom at Rugby, where he described him as a strong boy with intelligent eyes, rather a long face and usually wearing a serious look. Gradually the two boys became close friends and the description of Matthew Arnold's Rugby strikes the reader now as surprisingly civilised and sophisticated - not at all like Tom Brown's Schooldays. Sherer's delightful account

of Rugby relates how one of their contemporaries at their house "was a boy named Stanley, afterwards Lord Stanley and finally fifth Earl of Derby. It was no great compliment to Rugby having him as it was understood he had been removed from Eton for stealing. Indeed the boy's kleptomania was a disease and it is related there when the Duchess of Kent, in her old age, was at Knowsley on a visit, she lost a favourite set of amethysts.

"Lord Derby sent at once for a detective sergeant from London who began enquiries. He waited on Lord Derby in his study. "Well, Sergeant, have you discovered any clues?" "Only one thing is certain, my Lord. It was someone in the house." "That is enough, Sergeant, you can leave me". Lord Stanley was sent for. "Edward, for God's sake and to prevent a scandal, say where are the amethysts?" They were behind the skirting in Edward's room."

Tom Sandars excelled at Rugby, became Head of School and obtained a scholarship to Balliol. There he took a bachelor's degree with first class honours and was soon elected a fellow of Oriel. After Oxford Tom was called to Lincoln's Inn in 1851 and afterwards held the Professorship of constitutional law and legal history. As his obituary in The Times (August 1894) states, however, he is best remembered for his work as editor of The Institutes of Justinian which has passed through over twenty editions and is still the leading authority at the present day.

Apart from his work as a legal editor and tutor, Tom Sandars devoted a great deal of his time to his connection with the Saturday Review. Once again, Mr. Sherer's excellent account puts this part of Tom's life in perspective. "Things had changed since I visited Tom as an undergraduate. He

was now an old Balliol man of distinction; fellow, too, of Oriel, and pointed to as one of the best writers in Saturday Review, then in all its glory and power. He was very busy with his pen in ephemereral writings and in the preparation of his Justinian and studying railway law.

"The Saturday Review was then very brilliant and influential. There were two or three columns of articles on the topics of the day, but treated with more freedom than prevailed at The Times's office, whose leading articles belonged rather to the age of Addison than to the days of conflict and competition, which had been upon us since the middle of the century. It contained what were known as the "Middle Articles" which were originally intended to represent the lighter aspects of the old essayists. But Tom, from the first, had a finger in the pie and gradually worked this part round to kindly but pungent satires on society and whimsical representations of current fads.

"At this time we very much enjoyed going together to the weekly receptions of Admiral Henry Murray at the Albany. There was no invitation; any friend might come. The soiree did not begin until 10; the only refreshments were brandy and mineral waters and smoking was of course universal. But all sorts of notorieties looked in, and the Admiral himself was a most amusing man. At these evenings were met Millais, Burton, the great traveller, Sir David Baird, Sir Philip Egerton, the fossil fisherman, and General Kineby, and many others."

Tom Sandars was characteristically modest about his contributions to the Saturday Review. His articles appeared anonymously, or under pseudonyms, and as he himself used to say, "my friends know I write them. Why should I give the public

my name, to be kicked around like a football?"

"This reticence was certainly not due to dislike of work or want of energy. During his father's lifetime and when he was first married, he was hard-working and industrious. He deliberately decided to produce a work which should stamp him as a student of acumen and having fixed upon the Institutes of Justinian, never ceased to work steadily at his subject till the work was completed. That at once became a standard authority.

"But when his father's death altered Tom's circumstances, he was not beguiled into lassitude by an easy competence, but thought out carefully what would suit him best; and so (with the exception of business emergencies) relaxed into a very observant and enlightened bystander, only occasionally using his pen in advocacy of any cause he thought deserving of his support.

"Others, who were not more than his equals, pushed on to rank and notoriety but he chose what he considered the better part ...the esteem of those he himself esteemed."

Tom Sandars had always been an able brain. His father, who was of more of an open-air disposition, looked up to his son's intellect and academic prowess from an early age. Just as Tom's ability was great, so were his interests wide ranging; he made several extensive tours in Europe, widening his friendships and enjoying strange places; his law lectureships and tutorships kept him fully occupied, but even so his reputation brought him in contact with the City and various business ventures. He went to Mexico in the 1880's to try and effect a convention for the Mexican Railway with Emperor Maximilian and

to obtain authority for a railway between Vera Cruz and Mexico City. The Emperor convinced Mr. Sandars that the country was stable and that there were fine opportunities for English capitalists. Unfortunately Maximilian was shot and Mexico developed very erratically, much to the distress of the English capitalists. Sandars, however, despite this setback later became chairman of the Mexican Railway.

During his busy life, Tom Sandars undertook several other public posts, including the commission examining the Khedival estates in Egypt. He was offered, but declined for personal reasons, the opportunity of going to Calcutta as Chief Justice of the High Court. For some time he was private tutor of Lord Lytton, who was later Governor General of India and British Ambassador in Paris. Furthermore, he was a man of widely varied interests. His biographer points out that now and then he took up some science or interest to occupy his leisure - he was much interested in later life in Botany and Mr. Sherer recollects a weekend when he and Tom arranged to "go botanizing" in the country. They set off by train from London Bridge and a while later arrived at West Humbles. From the station it was only a short journey to the foot of Box Hill, where they put up at the pleasant inn for their days' studying natural history.

By this time Tom was married to his second wife, Marian Murray. Their only son by this marriage was Edmund, who later became a well-known writer on natural history. Perhaps it was due to his father's interest in "botanizing" that brought out Edmund's great talent as a writer and illustrator on birds beasts and butterflies.

By his first wife, Margaret Hanmer, Tom

had a large family, four sons and three daughters. Each of his sons lived abroad for most of his life, variously in Spain, Egypt, Venezuela and Roumania. Horace Sandars owned a lead mine in Jaen, Spain, and his business interests also took him frequently to Roumania. He became an expert on Iberian archaeology, and published several learned papers on the subject through the Society of Antiquaries of which he was a Fellow. Charles Lionel Sandars, Tom's second son, was a barrister, became a judge of the Mixed Courts in 1888 and President of the Court of Appeal in Egypt in 1914. He died in 1916 in Alexandria. Still more puzzling was the career of his third son Frederick Eustace, who was called to the Bar after leaving Rugby and died at Caracas, Venezuela, in 1891, aged only 29. Tom's only daughter, who lived to majority, Mary Christina, married a clergyman, and so did her daughter and grand-daughter.

Tom Sandars himself only lived to the age of 70, when he died at his flat at Queen Anne's Mansions, Westminster. He had long before sold Lockers, and he preferred most of his life to reside in the capital. His family, apart from their preference for life abroad (his wife died in Paris), excelled in literary works. Tom and two of his brothers were writers, as well as two of his sons, Horace and Edmund. In his will, proved by Horace in 1894, Thomas Collett Sandars appointed as his executor a solicitor named William Worship Paine, whose firm was later to become well known as Linklaters & Paines.

An adequate note of his life appears in the Dictionary of National Biography, and the following inscription appears on his brass in Balliol Chapel:

"Thomas Collett Sandars Huiusce collegii
scholaris deinde Coll. Oriel Socius
mortem obiit Anno Salutis MDCCCXCIV
aetatis suae LXX"

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