

SAMUEL SANDARS

1837-1894.

And now what can I tell you about my Father? Not very much I am afraid; he was essentially a shy book-loving man preferring them much to his fellow-creatures. He did not have much to do with his daughters' upbringing, leaving that entirely to his wife, except when sometimes he thought summer holidays were extending too far into October and prompted my Mother to write to the governess, and ask her to come, or when he made a very unexpected visit to our London schoolroom and found two of us playing games while the governess was teaching the 3rd downstairs how to play the piano. When he ascertained that she spent the whole morning every day downstairs teaching one or other of us the piano, while the others were left to their own devices, the fiat went forth, and that governess departed. He was, naturally, far more interested in the education of his sons, but of that I can tell you nothing. Once when they were attending a preparatory school as daily pupils, the Doctor was called in for some ailment, and gave his opinion as to how much meat was good for little boys. To my Mother's consternation my Father declared that the doctor had said a cutlet was sufficient, while my Mother knew he had meant a good, big chop! You may be sure that as soon as she could manage it, my Mother's growing boys were fed more plentifully.

I like to think of Edward, who started school life at the age of 5, because he was so unhappy when his elder brother Frank went to the daily school and he was left behind spending a good part of one morning in his Father's dressing room hidden behind a dressing gown which was hanging on a hook on the door so as to avoid the hated governess. One would have thought the dullest lessons pleasanter than standing behind a door wrapped in the folds of an old dressing gown.

My Father was a good-looking man with fair complexion, light brown hair inclined to curl particularly when he had not lately been to the barber and it had got a little long. He had good dark blue eyes, deep-set and kind, a good nose and firm square chin. He was inclined to embonpoint

but quite lost his tendency to start a bow window the last year of his life when he was suffering so terribly from his heart and the doctors seemed able to do nothing to help him. When in London he spent most of the time when indoors in his comfortable, though uncheerful, study lined with bookcases, and furnished with a big writing table and armchairs. The outlook on to the backs of other houses probably he never noticed and never worried about.

His greatest trouble would be when my Mother planned a dinner or broke to him that we were going to have a dance, and then he knew that for two days the house would be uninhabitable and that he must bestir himself and order in some champagne. My Mother generally arranged dinners of 20 people because my Father hated them, so that he tried to compromise by having as few as possible, and usually two in the week Tuesday and Thursday with the idea of breaking him in to dinner giving I suppose. I can see him in the drawing room when guests were arriving, a little card partially hidden in his hand, conning over his lesson who was to take in which lady to dinner and then hastily effecting an introduction. After dinner when he returned with the other men to the drawing room he left all the introductions and care of the guests to my Mother and merely talked to the person who came handiest!

His walks out in London were chiefly Eastwards to his Club (the Oxford and Cambridge) to a picture gallery, or a sale at Christie or Sotheby, or a visit to Quaritch to have a book-gossip and make a bargain, if that were possible with the wily old man.

In 1881 he bought Chalfont Grove in the parish of Chalfont St. Giles in the County of Bucks. It was a big rambling house with no architectural features, but large enough for a large family and household. It is set in a small park and with 2 or 3 small farms attached. The garden had the makings of a very pretty one and my Mother was very interested in it. The trees and shrubs were what attracted my Father and he became the butt of friendly laughter from our neighbour, Colonel Phipps, whose daughter Gertrude later married Edward and who made great fun of the way our trees were given change of air and scene. We had Baron, the big man for moving trees, down once to the Grove and had a thrilling time watching him with his horse-pulled tractors heaving up a large Douglas pine and depositing it somewhere else.

Trees had always been a great delight to my Father and from his boyhood, almost, he had visited and measured every big tree he heard of in any part of England where he happened to be - I believe a huge collection of measurements and notes on giants he had seen went to Cambridge with the beautiful collection, the Sandars' Bequest, that he left to his beloved University when he died.

From time to time he would show us some exquisitely illuminated manuscript that he had just acquired, and we were allowed to look at the gems of painting it contained, but he had a nervous fear of anything happening to his prize, and though we were too well brought up to think of treating it with anything but the greatest care, his re-iterated "take care" took away much of the pleasure we should otherwise have felt. He was always very interested in my painting and lent me some of his previous books, one a chained one, and all with fine old bindings, to make a picture to illustrate "Old Friends". I promised the sketch to him, but first it was to join other representations of "Old Friends" in a portfolio Club, and by the time it had finished its round he was, alas, no longer there to receive it. He was never a strong man, as a youth he had been very fussy about his health, but after marriage he had other things to think of, and though he always remained delicate, did not suffer from real bad health till a couple of years before his death.

In 1891 he was picked as High Sheriff of Bucks, and from that date it loomed ominously before him. A shy man, at the best of times, the thought of undertaking any public duty was dreadful to him, and his discomfort became real fear when he began to get ill and have bad attacks of pain. His own doctor, whose name it is kinder not to mention, was more than stupid over his diagnosis, and told his family that there was much imagination in the illness. He complained of increasing and awful pain, he grew thin, and the sickly smell of anil accompanied, and let us hope alleviated, the attacks. At last he went to Dr. Sharkie who promised him a Certificate of Exemption

and it was finally given him the day before he died. I dined alone with him his last evening. So little was his death expected that my Mother and May had gone out to dinner and all the others chanced to be away except Dorothy, who was kept to the drawing room with a cold. I am glad I started playing dance music to him that evening as he usually enjoyed it, but that night he asked me to stop as he did not feel well enough; and the last remembrance of him alive that I have he was kneeling at the safe on the landing, getting out or putting away some papers. Early next morning we were called to his bedroom, artificial respiration was being tried, but he passed away about 8 a.m. on June 15th, 1894, after a night of great pain when injections of morphia failed to relieve him. He was buried in the little churchyard at Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks, where in 1923 we buried beside him my Mother, Elizabeth Maria, to whom he had always been devotedly attached. A couple of years later an oak South Porch from the designs of Mr. John Oldrid Scott was put up at St. Giles Church where Samuel had frequently said there should be one, and had been one, from traces on the south wall.

My Father was J.P. for the County of Bucks and a Ruling Councillor of the local branch of the Primrose League. The local paper said: "he was thoroughly liberal-minded and benevolent, and the aged and poor of Chalfont St. Giles have lost a true friend. He was highly esteemed by his employees and last winter provided work on his estate for a number of the unemployed."

I should like to enumerate some of the gifts through which his name will always be remembered at Cambridge. "It was his constant complaint that in England buildings were begun and never properly completed, that niches for instance were made and the figures that they were meant to contain never put into position, and so he set himself to work to remedy some of these defects in the University towns." The statues in front of the Divinity Schools were given by him, he had the Clerestory windows of Great St. Mary filled with painted glass and inserted a series of coats of arms in the lower windows to commemorate the names of subscribers of the time of Henry VII. His last gift consisted of a pair of windows in the Clerestory in memory of his Father and Mother. The University Library, Trinity College, Christ's College, the Divinity Schools and the Senate House all bear evidence to his desire to complete what others had left unfinished.

I will finish by quoting from the short Memoir of him written by his friend Mr. Jenkinson, the University Librarian, and published in the Cambridge Review, Nov. 8th 1894.

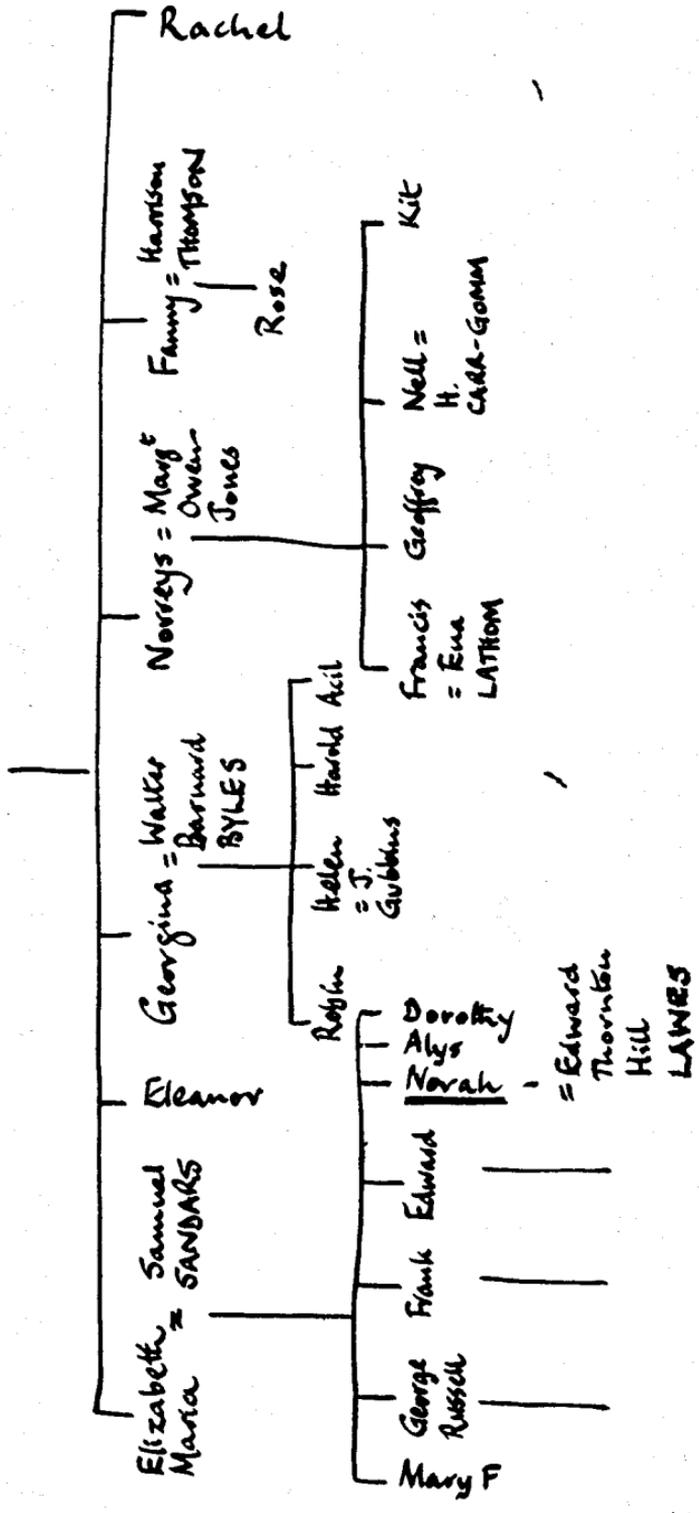
"That choice library that comes to us from De Vere Gardens and Chalfont Grove numbers some 1500 volumes; but it represents a small share of all that he gave to us since he went down in 1863. It is not perhaps generally known that when the great catalogue was being prepared of the English Printed Books down to 1601, in the Library of Trinity College, he gave his old college a very considerable sum of money with which to fill up gaps in the series. With the same clear instinct he unostentatiously put at the disposal of the University Librarian a definite sum every year in order that they might acquire treasures which were otherwise beyond their reach. On notable occasions too he came forward with no faltering hand and prizes --- were secured to us only through him. But the most signal instance of his generosity was perhaps shown in the case of "the Red Book of Thorney" Thorney Cartulary of the early 14th century, which was used by Dugdale and is still unedited. This had been acquired by Mr. Quaritch from Lord Westmoreland's Library in July 1887, and its new possessor demanded a high price for it. Mr. Sandars saw that no more fitting home for such a treasure could be found than in Senate House Square. All his sympathies for the Eastern Counties, all his love for Cambridge, were evoked. At his instance and by his help it reached its final resting place about three years ago. The Catalogue of the Fifteenth Century printed books in Trinity shows Mr. Sandars again as no mean benefactor. He ranks there with Elwis and Sir Henry Puckering and Van Sittart.

His affection for vellum books is somewhat peculiar. The taste he may have gathered from Hartshorne; but as early as 1862 Bradshaw had contributed a paper to the Bibliophile Illustre on the same subject: and enthusiasm through such a channel was perhaps contagious. Vellum books, and of these (and indeed in any shape, paper or vellum, printed or M.S.) service books, particularly those that were of the English uses: for these he was

insatiable, and yet with a certain seemliness of restraint. One of his letters shows him passing with a firm step a bookshop in which he knew an unique Horae of the Sarum use, printed at Rouen, to be reposing. There was none of the bookworm farouche about him. He loved his trees and his vistas too much for that.

Of all the mass of his bequests this is not the place to speak in detail; but two or three more characteristic facts in connection with his books we may not forbear to mention. The only Grolier binding which we possess - it is true that it is only the covers - came from him. The only two Caxtons which have been added since the death of Bishop Moore in 1715 "The life of Our Lady" (1484), and the second edition of the "Chronicles of England" (1482), are his gift. His Lysons' Cambridgeshire crammed full of manuscript notes and additional matter, and strapped together, is the size of a small portmanteau --- By his Will Mr. Sandars bequeathed to the University, in addition to all his own early books, £500 for the purchase exclusively of early English books, and a similar sum to Trinity, for the purchase of books. He left a sum of £2,000 to found a Readership in Bibliography, palaeography, typography, book-binding, book-illustrating, the science of books and manuscripts, and the arts relating thereto, and several pictures, including one by Rubens of Faith, Hope and Charity, are given to the FitzWilliams Museum. We have heard much of late of the 'Pious Founder' appeal; but the pious benefactor was here, English in all his instincts, Cambridge to the core; and, in mediaeval fashion, though with a modern sentiment, he has devised his own monument."

Descendants of George Russell, MP.



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