

**The Last Thirty Years  
of  
The Life of Sabine Baring-Gould  
as revealed by  
Correspondence with Others**

**by  
Ron Wawman**

**Part I  
Sabine Baring-Gould's Correspondence  
With his Eldest Daughter  
Mary Dickinson  
17 January 1893 to 10 September 1923**

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**Transcribed, researched and annotated  
by  
Ronald Wawman © February 2011**

## Preface

Sabine Baring-Gould always intended to publish three volumes of *Reminiscences*, each to cover roughly 30 years of his life. Sadly the final volume never saw the light of day having probably been destroyed by his son and heir, Edward, for reasons about which we can only speculate. Because of Sabine's reluctance to write about himself even in his published *Reminiscences* it is likely that, even if the final volume had survived, it would, like the first two volumes, have contained much about the people he met and the places he visited and only the barest minimum about himself. To achieve a clearer vision of Sabine's last thirty years it is necessary to have recourse to primary source material in the shape of diaries and letters. I count myself fortunate to have been given the opportunity to read, transcribe and research a collection of letters written by Sabine to his eldest daughter Mary. This covers his last thirty one years – almost precisely the very period that might have been covered by the missing final volume of *Reminiscences*. There is indeed much to be learnt from these letters, not only about Sabine's activities and feelings during this time, but especially about his relationships with members of his family. There inevitably remain gaps in the narrative, but I have been able to fill some of these by recourse to other primary source material including a twenty year diary and letters to friends. I have no doubt that there is even more to learn about Sabine from such sources. He was a prolific correspondent and I have no doubt that he wrote frequently to all of the thirteen children who survived him. It is my hope and expectation that in the coming years other collections of letters to members of his family will come to light and that these will fill more of the many gaps in our knowledge and understanding of this remarkable man.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Mrs Elizabeth Dickinson, for her willingness to make this correspondence available for transcription, for her encouragement during the subsequent research and for sharing her knowledge of the Dickinson family.

My thanks also to Dr Merriol Almond for introducing me to Elizabeth Dickinson and for making available a small batch of letters written by Sabine to Mary that had subsequently been given by Bickford Dickinson to her father, Sabine Linton Baring-Gould. I am also grateful for Merriol's encouragement and ongoing support as well as her permission to publish the contents of the letters.

Thanks are also due to Moira Harris for sharing with me her detailed knowledge of the 1898 production of Sabine's opera, *Red Spider* and for her editing comments on my work. As always in my researches I have found Roger Bristow's bibliography of Sabine's work invaluable in linking activities described in Sabine's letters to published work. Finally I am indebted to Penny Yeo for her meticulous and thoughtful editing and correcting.

Ron Wawman January 2011



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## Introduction

The majority of the letters in this collection were written by Sabine Baring-Gould to his daughter, Mary Dickinson between January 1893 and December 1922.

The collection also includes:

- One letter from Sabine to his son-in-law, Harvey Dickinson.
- Two letters from Sabine's wife, Grace to Mary Dickinson.

When passed to the transcriber by Mrs. Elizabeth Dickinson, the collection of 106 letters was contained in an A5 envelope inscribed, as follows, by the Rev. Bickford H C Dickinson who was Sabine's grandson and Mary's youngest son:

*Letters from the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould mostly written to his eldest daughter Mary Dickinson*

*These letters should on no account become public without careful re-reading by a member of the family.*

*I have given away a number to relatives<sup>1</sup> and have destroyed a few very personal ones.*

*Bickford<sup>2</sup>*

One of the relatives to whom Bickford Dickinson had *given away a number* of letters was his cousin, Sabine Linton Baring-Gould, son of Edward Sabine and father of Merriol Almond. As a result five letters to Mary are now in the possession of Merriol Almond who has deposited them at the Devon Record Office where they join the other 106 letters which have been deposited there by their owner, Mrs Elizabeth Dickinson. For the sake of completeness the contents of these five letters are also included in this transcription. The transcription therefore includes a total of 111 letters.

### Description of the letters and Transcription

On the whole the letters are in excellent condition apart from the occasional removal of Sabine's signature, sometimes along with a date. Many of his earlier communications have the character of hastily written notes. Not infrequently no date was entered by Sabine in these letters. Sometimes he gave only a partial date. In many instances the exact date can nevertheless be inferred from the contents, although occasionally a partial date is all that can be deduced. Only four letters remain completely undateable. In the transcription of partially dated or undated letters the footnotes invariably include a description of approaches used in an effort to achieve a more accurate date.

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<sup>1</sup> One small collection of five letters, probably given to Merriol Almond's father Sabine, is now, after transcription by rjw, housed at the Devon record office. For completeness the transcriber has included the transcriptions of these letters in this compilation.

<sup>2</sup> Bickford. Apart from the 'B' the rest of the name is barely discernable on the frayed edges of the envelope.

In the transcription the majority of letters from Sabine to Mary are identified simply by the date on which they were written. Thus a letter written on 17 January 1893 is identified as letter **930117**.

Where only the year of a letter has been confirmed with any accuracy, that letter is identified in the transcription by the insertion after the year of the letter U, (U for unknown) followed by 01, 02 etc depending on the number of letters of unknown date in that year, e.g. letter **93U01**.

Sometimes both the year and the month can be deduced. In these cases the U appears after the month, e.g. **9501U01**. This identifies one of a number of letters written on unknown dates in January 1995.

In only four letters has the transcriber been unable to allocate any date with certainty. These appear in a separate section following the main transcription as letters **U01**, **U02** etc. All the other letters are entered in the transcription in chronological order.

The collection includes two letters written by Sabine's wife, Grace, to Mary. These are identified in the transcription by the insertion of the words 'Grace to Mary' in front of the date. E.g. **Grace to Mary 111013**. Similarly the single letter written by Sabine to Mary's husband Harvey is identified as **Sabine to Harvey 070313**.

The five letters held in Merriol Almond's collection at the Devon Record Office are identified by the insertion in brackets of 'Almond Mary' and the number in that collection, immediately after the date. E.g. **980630 (Almond Mary02)**.

The identification number of each letter has also been written lightly in pencil on the original manuscript letter. Where, as was occasionally the case, a letter was written on two sheets of paper, this is denoted by the addition of the letters 'a' and 'b' after the identification date on each page of the manuscript letter to safeguard against the possibility of separation.

At some point in recent years, eleven of the letters had been pasted onto 3 sheets of white A4 paper. Presumably this was done by Bickford Dickinson for display purposes. The transcriber has found no obvious rationale for the selection of letters for this treatment, as, for example, by date, content or importance. No attempt has been made to disturb this arrangement which means that the manuscript letters cannot be arranged chronologically with the rest of the collection. These letters are however assigned to the correct chronological place in the transcription where they are identified by the insertion of the word 'display' in brackets immediately after the identification number. E.g. **93U02 (display)**.

The transcription is arranged in four sections each roughly covering a decade:

1. 1893 to 1902	51 surviving letters	5.1 letters per annum
2. 1903 to 1912	26 surviving letters	2.6 letters per annum
3. 1913 to 1923	30 surviving letters	2.7 letters per annum
4. Undated letters	4 surviving letters	

This arrangement is partly for convenience but also because it more or less coincides with variations in Sabine's activities, pre-occupations and mood. It is of interest that the number of surviving letters varies from decade to decade. The high frequency of letter writing in the 1890s allows an ongoing appreciation of Sabine's life in this decade. Letters from later years, when writing was less frequent, are more inclined to give snapshots of activities and situations at particular instants in time.

The transcriber has chosen to introduce each section separately, drawing attention to the particular issues that arise in that decade.

Sabine made frequent use of the ampersand. In the transcription this has invariably been interpreted as 'and.'

The transcription of each letter begins on a fresh page. Each letter is fully annotated and cross referenced. The index includes topics as well as the names of people and places and also picks out such recurring themes as ill health, visits to the continent, the restoration of Lew House and problems with domestic staff.

### **Contents: An Overview**

The first letter was written on 17 January 1893, just 6 days after Mary's wedding to A W Harvey Dickinson. It is a very affectionate letter suggesting that Sabine had a close emotional relationship with his eldest child. There is every reason to believe that Sabine had close relationships with his other children and regularly wrote to them also. Sadly, apart from one letter to his son, Edward, no other letters from Sabine to his children are currently available for research.

In general the letters were usually written with a purpose in mind. Often, and this is particularly true of the letters written in the 1890s, Sabine often wrote asking Mary to carry out an errand on his behalf.

It is known from an entry in the Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould<sup>3</sup> that in accordance with Mary's marriage settlement Sabine paid her an annuity of £50. Many of the letters accompanied a cheque in payment of Sabine's quarterly allowance to Mary. At other times Sabine wrote either to thank Mary for her gifts or for her good wishes on her birthdays or at Christmas. On other occasions he sent his birthday or seasonal greetings to Mary.

In some letters Sabine informed Mary of illness often in himself but also in other family members. Not uncommonly Sabine was either declining an invitation to visit or regretting that he could not accept a visit from Mary, or more often her children, at Lew – the reason usually given was because of insufficient accommodation being available as a result of work on the house. Occasionally the reason given was pressure of his literary work.

Alongside all this information, the 111 letters gave vivid snapshots of the lives of other members of family at the time of writing, of visits to the continent, of bad

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<sup>3</sup> Wawman R: *Never Completely Submerged. The Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*, 2009, Grosvenor House Publishing, p 192.

weather, of low moods, or even of the numbers of communicants at a particular church service. In particular, and contrary to received wisdom on the relationship between Sabine and his wife, Grace, the letters confirm that in the 1900s and 1910s Grace accompanied Sabine on most of his journeys to the continent. Some of the letters hint at the gradual decline in Grace's health and there were poignant brief glimpses of her last days. After the death of Grace the letters included fearful enquiries concerning two grandsons then serving in the Great War, together with two of his sons and a son-in-law.

The penultimate surviving letter was written on 28 December 1922, more than a year before his death while the last letter was written on 10 September 1923. This included a request to three of his daughters to comment on a draft chapter he had been reluctantly persuaded to write for his second volume of *Reminiscences*.

Why is there no other surviving correspondence from the last year of Sabine's life? It cannot be that Sabine had cut down his letter writing in general because it is known that during the year 1923 he wrote a total of 30 letters to another correspondent, Miss Evelyn Healey<sup>4</sup> – a rate higher than in the previous years of his correspondence with that lady. These and letters to other correspondents suggest the development of a difficult relationship with Sabine's son Edward and daughter-in-law, Marian, who in 1919 had moved in to Lew House and taken on the management of the house.

For a detailed analyse of the problems that beset Sabine's last years the reader is referred to part three in this series of documents which draws together threads from different primary sources.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Part II of this series of papers, *Sabine Baring-Gould's Correspondence with Evelyn Healey 1917 to 1923*.

<sup>5</sup> Part III of this series of papers, *Sabine's Last Thirty Years: An Overview*.

**Sabine's Correspondence with his daughter,  
Mary Dickinson**

**Section I  
Letters: January 1893 to February 1902.**

## January 1893 to February 1902

The first seven years of Sabine's correspondence with Mary is notable for a profusion of lively and enthusiastic letters. These include frequent references not only to his own activities but also those of his friends, the staff of Lew House, parishioners and, in particular, the members of his immediate family with whom he was undoubtedly closely involved.

The correspondence begins with an emotional, vividly descriptive and very affectionate letter to Mary written a few days after her marriage to Harvey Dickinson.

This first letter also includes an intriguing reference to a visitor's book. Sadly no visitor's books from Lew House have survived to the present day.

On the whole the buoyancy of Sabine's letters written in the 1890s reflects his position as a popular writer at the height of his powers.

Sabine's letters from abroad are amusing, inclined to be detailed and remarkable for the way they reveal the energy and determination with which he pursued his researches. Of particular interest was his comment on 5 November 1893 that

*when I take a resolve to do a thing I do it.*

There are several references to illness either in himself, in members of his family, parishioners or the staff of Lew House. One troubled series of letters, written in early 1894, chronicled the devastating effect of a severe influenza outbreak on the household in general and on the morale of Sabine and Grace in particular.

Three letters referred to Sabine's efforts to place his sons, Julian and Willy, with suitable engineering firms so that they could gain experience that would assist them in their future employment plans.<sup>6</sup>

One letter proudly commented on the way in which his daughter, Felicitas, had settled to nurse training in London and included an extract from a letter from Felicitas. This is of interest in its own right as a graphic account of what nursing was like in 1902.

Three letters referred warmly to Sabine's son, Edward, and Edward's wife, Marian. In one letter Sabine went out of his way to enlist Mary's assistance to ensure that Marian's arrival at Lew House as Edward's bride would be made as welcoming and comfortable as possible. In another he told Mary that Edward and Marian were longing to be back at Lew. The third described a visit paid by Edward and Marian to the family when they were living in Dinan.<sup>7</sup>

An enthusiastic series of letters penned in 1898 followed the fortunes of the brief provincial run of *Red Spider*, the operetta, based on Sabine's novel of the same name. These letters were full of an optimism that was never quite fulfilled.

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<sup>6</sup> Letters 941109, 950419 and 960611.

<sup>7</sup> Letters 970117, 9804U01 and 010125.

Many letters described the problems Sabine and Grace experienced with domestic servants and included several requests for Mary to visit agencies in Plymouth on his behalf in search of domestic staff.

Numerous letters thanked Mary for birthday and seasonal greetings and for gifts, usually of game, laver or knitwear. Other letters conveyed his seasonal and birthday greetings to Mary. He was effusive in his congratulations on the birth of his first grandson in December 1893 and invariably when he signed a letter off he wished to be remembered to Mary's husband, Harvey and to his grandchildren.

Several letters commented on the on-going restoration of Lew House. The disruption caused by work on the ballroom was mentioned in letters written in 1896 and 1897. In 1894 and 1895 Sabine commented on the work then in progress on the new kitchens and cloister. Letter 950510 included what was probably the only known reference to Sabine's long term intention that the entrance to the house should eventually be from behind. This explains why Sabine took such great care to make attractive those parts of the house that opened onto what would otherwise have been a utilitarian courtyard. His efforts to finally implement these intentions through the building of an impressive gatehouse<sup>8</sup> were interrupted by the outbreak of World War I in 1914. His failure to complete this project after the war was probably due in part to his advancing years and, in part, to the loss of energy and determination that followed the death of Grace in 1916.

The final correspondence in this decade was notable for a reduction in frequency of letter writing with only one letter surviving from 1899. This change also coincided with the abrupt cessation of entries in his 20 year diary.<sup>9</sup> The other significant event chronicled in these last letters was the family move in October 1900 to Dinan, Brittany where Sabine, Grace and the younger children took up residence for just over a year.

Both Bickford Dickinson<sup>10</sup> and Joan Priestley<sup>11</sup> claimed that Sabine closed up Lew House and moved to France to reduce expenditure at a time of acute financial embarrassment. Joan claimed that Sabine was bankrupt at this time but Joan's narrative was not always accurate and there is nothing to suggest such an extreme situation. Dickinson used the phrase *close to bankruptcy* which was probably a more accurate assessment of the position. It is evident from letters to Mary<sup>12</sup> that Sabine had intended to remain in France longer than he did, but his plans were thwarted by the failure of his efforts to lease out Lew House and thus bolster his income. Unfortunately Sabine made no direct reference to his financial embarrassment in his correspondence with Mary or elsewhere, nor is there any firm knowledge of the cause and extent of it.

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<sup>8</sup> Wawman R. *The House that Sabine Built*, 2008, SBGAS Newsletter 58, p 5. Plans for a gatehouse were drawn up for Sabine in 1914 by Owen C Little, a London architect. These plans are now held in the Baring-Gould Archive 5203 at the Devon Record Office. By comparing these plans with certain features of the west side of the house and a heap of unused stonework in the grounds nearby, it is evident that Sabine had made a start on building his gatehouse.

<sup>9</sup> Wawman R: *Never Completely Submerged. The Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*.

<sup>10</sup> Dickinson B H C, Sabine Baring-Gould, 1970, Newton Abbot, David and Charles, p 155.

<sup>11</sup> Priestley, Joan, manuscript memoirs. To be published.

<sup>12</sup> Letter 010125.

The two activities in the years prior to the move to Dinan that could have placed a strain on Sabine's finances were the creation of the ballroom at Lew House in 1896/7 and, perhaps more importantly, the production of the opera *Red Spider* in 1898.<sup>13</sup> Having been unable to secure financial backing for *Red Spider*, Sabine and Learmont Drysdale, the composer with whom he collaborated on the opera, drew up a contract and each provided £250 to capitalise the company. The production ran from July to November 1898 and achieved in excess of 100 performances. At first all went well, the opera was well received and, as is reflected in his correspondence, Sabine thought success was assured. However problems arose within the company, audiences dwindled, losses accumulated and, as a result, the production came to a premature end having never quite fulfilled its undoubted potential.

*Red Spider* was an ambitious production with a very large cast, many dancers and a sizeable orchestra. When theatre, travel and subsistence expenses are also taken into account it will be evident that once takings fell, substantial losses may well have accumulated quite rapidly. These losses would have been borne by Sabine and Learmont Drysdale.<sup>14</sup> It has as yet not been possible to establish the scale of the losses from available records.

It is evident from Sabine's diary that throughout the 1880s and 1890s he led a hand to mouth existence and, from time to time, borrowed money either from a relative or from a bank. It is possible that in 1898 he found himself needing substantial bank loans to cover his losses, just as he did in 1889 when he was forced to halt work on the gallery at Lew House for two years.<sup>15</sup> The move to Dinan may well have been precipitated by difficulties experienced in repaying loans accruing from both creating a ballroom and also financing an ambitious operatic production, at the same time as he was required to meet the not inconsiderable day to day costs of running Lew House.

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<sup>13</sup> Harris Moira, *The Comic Opera 'Red Spider,'* Oct. 2006, Newsletter SBGAS No.25, pp 8-16.

<sup>14</sup> The details concerning the scale of the production and the problems encountered by Sabine and Learmont Drysdale are provided in a personal communication from Moira Harris.

<sup>15</sup> Wawman Ron, *Never Completely Submerged, The Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould,* p. 176.

930117

17 January 1893

Lew Trenchard  
North Devon  
Jan 17/93<sup>16</sup>

My own darling Mary

Our hearts have been aching for you my dearest, and we can not make up our mind to the thoughts that you have left us, stepped out of our circle into another. All however has gone very well. The farmers and their wives were very happy on Thursday. Mr. Horn<sup>17</sup> said to Julian "If – if – if – one sup – muss – more grogs we'd ha – a – ave been puffedly 'appy." But they had quite enough. They sat from 1 to 4.30 over their dishes and grogs. Mr Ward<sup>18</sup> proposed your health and his eyes filled with tears as he spoke of you – and I believe most of the company – and this was before the grog came on, were moved, afterwards one could not have wondered. As for the wives, their tongues were like millwheels. Friday the tea and supper and dance all went well; thanks to dear Mamma's really marvellous arranging powers.

I went into Plymouth yesterday to see dear Aunt Emily.<sup>19</sup> She is fairly done but recovery is impossible, it is a matter of either days or weeks, the doctors cannot say which. She can only take in slops. There is I believe internal tumour but she suffers no pain. When it bursts all will be over, but how long it will be before that happens the doctors cannot say.

Mamma is very well, so far from being done up, she is like a refreshed giantess and has fastened on Handcock<sup>20</sup> [*sic*] who is wriggling like a worm in her beak. No - I am mixing my metaphors, giants and giantesses have not beaks.

Your portrait in "The Lady" is a ghastly blotch, but that in "Life" is very good. I think the same one will be in "The Queen" and in "The Lady's Pictorial" so you will be well published in the world.

There have been two oversights.

John and Mrs Pengelly were not asked to the tea or supper. I have made peace with John but Mrs P. harbours resentment. Write to her a pretty line of apology for forgetting her. The other was the Canns. I have written to them and Mrs Cann is very nice and sweet about it. I said that the old visitors book<sup>21</sup> was not posted up since they came into the neighbourhood.

I hope you have not been receiving<sup>22</sup> ..... it was really..... him immediately after marriage. Give my love to him, dear fellow, he has taken half our life away by carrying you off.

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<sup>16</sup> Mary was married to Harvey Dickinson on 11 January 1893.

<sup>17</sup> John Horn of Galford Farm, Lew Trenchard.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Ward, agent to the Lew Trenchard Estate.

<sup>19</sup> Probably Aunt Emily Sabine Baring-Gould, daughter of William, who would have been 81 in 1893.

<sup>20</sup> Edward Hancock, butler at Lew House. He lived in Down House cottage. 1891 census.

<sup>21</sup> The reference to a Visitors Book is intriguing. If only it were in existence now. How much greater would be our knowledge of the comings and goings at Lew House.

<sup>22</sup> Part of this letter has been neatly excised making it impossible to gain the sense of the nearby words and phrases.

It was most kind of Mrs. Sperling.<sup>23</sup> On Sunday afternoon she made Vera go with her a walk after church. Dear Vera is very well, we shall have to make a great deal of her. Maryanne is clamouring to have her in the kitchen.<sup>24</sup> She says it was so “comfable” when you were there with her, and she’d like to be “comfable” with Vera. All the frost has gone and now we have some mild open weather and some rain. Julian has gone today to Mount Tavy.<sup>25</sup>

We have had a packer out to pack all your things and they are ready to be sent off to The Towers<sup>26</sup> after you return. By degrees the house is returning to its old condition – but there is a void in it my darling and ever will be.

***Transcriber’s Note:***

*Here a section of the letter is missing, the reverse side of the piece excised as described in footnote 14. This would seem to be a neat rectangle cut round where Sabine signed the letter. It could be that Sabine was uncharacteristically effusive signing off and that Mary cut this out to save as a memento. On the other hand it may have been excised at a later date by someone who simply wanted a sample of Sabine’s signature. Either way it has probably not survived.*

*What follows is in effect a postscript although not described as such*

I sent by Daisy a quiet little inn in Paris. Hotel du Prince Albert<sup>27</sup>  
Rue S. Haycinthe  
Rue S. Honore

Harvey did not sign the green register paper that accompanied some article that came by post. The post office is kicking and squawking

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<sup>23</sup> Mrs Mary Louisa Sperling. The Coombe Trenchard Rectory had been leased to Henry Sperling and his wife from 1885.

<sup>24</sup> Presumably Marianne Morgan, described as cook at Lew House in the 1891 census.

<sup>25</sup> Mount Tavy: Residence of Sabine’s close friend, Daniel Radford. Julian was probably visiting Tom Radford, see letter 93U02.

<sup>26</sup> The Tower, Compton Gifford, Plymouth, was owned by Harvey Dickinson who inherited it from his great aunt, Christiana Kingdon. Christiana Kingdon was the daughter of Mary Bickford who in 1870 married the Rev. William Coham. Christiana married George Boughton Kingdon of the Tower, and Launcels Manor, Cornwall.

<sup>27</sup> There is still, in 2010, a Prince Albert Louvre Hotel on Rue St Hyacinthe, Paris. See also letter 951117 describing Sabine’s intention of staying there with Robert Burnard.

93U01

*Probably the Spring of 1893*<sup>28</sup>

Marvejols  
Dep. de la Lozère  
Wednesday

My dearest Mary

It really has been naughty of me not to write to you before, but positively I have had no time, but have been whistling from place to place. Georis<sup>29</sup> makes a very agreeable companion, and I was sorry to part with him on Saturday. He was up to no more mad pranks than going down one of the robber caves, but as he had seven men with him, five to hold the ropes one to act as manager, and M. Pons to make a noise, he was not in great danger. Still these were nasty times. In the great well 140 ft. he had to sit half way down on a ledge unfasten the rope bound to him and let it be drawn up so that Pons might be let down to the same ledge, then one had to tie himself again, and be again lowered. There was always moreover the danger of a stone whizzing down, dislodged by the feet of the men holding the rope, which if hitting the person on the head would probably kill him. With Pons that was a matter of less importance, the world could stagger on its course Pons-less, but Georis was another matter, and until Georis re-emerged to the light of day, I confess I was anxious.

We have had glorious weather, only one day of rain, and have used it most energetically tearing along our course like wild hares, as indeed Georis is impatient of stopping anywhere, so that really through his guiding I have got over ground much faster than I might have done had I been alone. My face is now turned homewards and expect to be at Lew next week early. I shall try to reach town on Friday so as to spend Sunday with the venerable Gatrill.<sup>30</sup>

The fields and meadows are white with narcissus. "That" said a lad to me yesterday "is what makes our valleys smell so sweet!"

Alas, not all the narcissus flowers in the world would neutralise the stench of a French village. As Georis said when we came to S Enemie on the Tarn,<sup>31</sup> and I said some thing about the pure water of the river – "good gracious this one village would infect the flood of the Amazon." But happily it does not occur to the people to carry their drains into the river. They have no other drains than the streets, and these are as narrow as drains and stench as abominably.

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<sup>28</sup> The date for this letter has been difficult to pin down with any certainty. The time of year, from the description of narcissi and from mention of June being not far away, is presumably the spring. The mention of Harvey but not of children indicates the letter was written sometime after Mary's marriage in January 1893 but before the birth of her first child the following December.

<sup>29</sup> The mention of 'Georis' is at first puzzling but reference to entries in the 1862 family bible suggests the year could be 1893 when he wrote "*Went with Geo. Young, (Sabine's cousin, Sir George Young, Bart) to Brive and Courses of Vezère (R Vezère) in Spring.*" It seems probable that Georis was a nickname for George Young and that this journey was further preparation for "*The Deserts of Southern France*" published in 1894.

<sup>30</sup> The Rev. J M Gatrill, Sabine's longstanding friend and travelling companion.

<sup>31</sup> St. Enemie, Gorges du Tarn.

I had bad luck with photographic apparatus lent me by Mr. Anderson<sup>32</sup>, it came to grief at Châlus<sup>33</sup> whilst photographing the scene where Richard Coeur de Lion met his death. I sent it to Paris to be repaired. It came back as bad as ever and went scat at the next plate we exposed. So we have had to lug this cumbrous contrivance about for no good at all. One must not look a gift horse in the mouth, and I believe the thing was out of order when lent me. One of the rollers does not move on which the film winds, and consequently when turning the handle up tears the film.

Remember me to Harvey, I hope he is getting ready to set to work in June which is now near at hand.

yours try  
S. Baring Gou

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<sup>32</sup> Probably Sabine's friend, the Rev. I K Anderson of Mary Tavy who had collaborated with Sabine on studies of Dartmoor antiquities.

<sup>33</sup> Chalus in the Limousin.

93U02<sup>34</sup> (display)<sup>35</sup>

*Between February and December 1893*

5 Hillsborough  
Plymouth

My dear Mary

Mr. And Mrs. Burnard<sup>36</sup> are very anxious to see over The Tower,<sup>37</sup> and I told them I thought there was a chance of it being let. Would you kindly let them go over it? If so please write to Mrs. B. at the above address.

I am on Dartmoor with them enjoying the fine weather and engaged in digging at Grimspound. Mamma returns to Lew tomorrow unless the attractions of London are so great as to allure her to stay on.<sup>38</sup>

The little ones at Lew are very well and very happy. Dear baby<sup>39</sup> talks a great deal now. Edward has had a bad fall from a horse he was picked up insensible, he had to be in bed some days. He writes that he is better now – indeed all well save for stiffness and some jarring [?] of his back. This last I do not like.

Julian is at Beare Walls with Tom Radford, fishing; we have not seen much of him.

Poor Granny<sup>40</sup> has been impatient for plans of Ardoch and estimates.<sup>41</sup> The estimates were £715 and we have had to cut my plans down but she cannot expect a palace for £400. I do not think she has the faintest idea of the cost of building.

Your try  
S. Baring Gould

Friday

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<sup>34</sup> Mention of the plans for Ardoch lodge, completed in 1895, but no mention of grandchildren suggests this letter was written at some point between Mary's marriage in January 1893 and December that year when her eldest son was born.

<sup>35</sup> This letter was pasted onto sheet 2 of A4 with 3 other letters. Presumably this was done by Bickford Dickinson for display purposes.

<sup>36</sup> Mr and Mrs Robert Burnard. Robert Burnard was a close friend of Sabine and collaborator in the study of antiquities on Dartmoor.

<sup>37</sup> The Tower. A house at Compton Gifford, Plymouth owned by Harvey Dickinson and inherited by him from his great aunt Christina Kingdon. Mary and Harvey lived here for a while when first married before moving to Bude. It seems likely that Sabine thought that Mary and Harvey were about to move to Bude and the Tower would be available to rent. It is evident from later correspondence, suggesting they were still resident in Plymouth, that the move did not take place then.

<sup>38</sup> It is difficult to conjecture with whom Grace might have been staying in London. There is no clue in the letter.

<sup>39</sup> 'Dear Baby' is Sabine's youngest child, Grace, born in 1891.

<sup>40</sup> Granny: Sabine's stepmother, Lavinia Baring-Gould.

<sup>41</sup> Ardoch Lodge. The house to be built on the estate by Lavinia: Sabine wrote the following in his diary on 1 January 1895: *The house building at Ardoch [lodge] for my stepmother is not my design. It ought not to have been so hideous. I had made a design but she was not prepared to give so much as it was estimated to cost. So Mr. Ward [Sabine's agent, Frank Ward] taking my design as basis vulgarised the whole – and the result will cost her as much as if she had had my design carried out.*

931105<sup>42</sup>

5 November 1893

Hotel de la Gare  
 Les Eyzies  
 Dep. De Dordogne  
 France  
 Sunday 5 Nov.

My dear Mary

“I hope this finds you as it leaves me” – very well. I have had a bad cold and cough, but no fever and it did not keep me in – a bad thing to be kept indoors when there are no fires. However the sun is as hot as in summer, but mornings and evenings cool. Two cold days we had with an East wind blowing and a grey sky but otherwise all is sunshine.

Where I now am, it is an amphitheatre of precipitous limestone cliffs that focus the sun and shelter from the wind. There is heaps [*sic*] to occupy me, grubbing for flints and bones. I climbed a rock yesterday by means of a pole, about 20 ft. and got into a stable cut in the face of the precipice, with the mangers for cows and horses hewn out of the living rock, even the holes to which the halters were attached. In the floor a well, in the vault above an opening by which another series of chambers are to be reached by means of a ladder only. Today I am going to get a ladder and climb into them.

I have been engaged for 10 days planning and measuring the old 6<sup>th</sup> cent. basilica or church at Perigueux which the wiseacres [?] are pulling down. In the 10<sup>th</sup> cent. Greek architects from Constantinople added in at the East end a church with 5 great cupolas and 8 minarets, so that the appearance of the church is just like one in Constantinople. It has been restored and scraped and is now white as sugar, and gleams out in the sun against the deep blue sky – a thoroughly oriental vision. I had some difficulty about the planning as the clerk of the works was nasty when I showed how wrong it was to destroy a unique building in France. But I got one of the canons [?] to help me and got into the works on Sunday and All SS<sup>43</sup> day and All Souls when no workmen were there, and in the mornings, when the clerk – having a cold lay in bed. I would not leave till I had got the whole plan completed.

When I take a resolve to do a thing I do it.

Meals here are rather trying owing to the fleas, two meowing cats, one begging dog, four twittering canaries and two cackling old women. I shall make this my headquarters for 10 days I think, it is so sheltered and warm, and I can get about by train and see many things of interest in the neighbourhood.

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<sup>42</sup> No year given for this letter but 5 November fell on a Sunday in 1893. Sabine was certainly working with Mrs Beringer on an abortive script for Red Spider the opera in that year and this letter tallies with letter 931207 when Sabine was residing in Whittakers hotel, London probably on his way back from France, and working on sketches, presumably from his time in the Dordogne, for ‘*Deserts of Southern France*’ which was published in 1894. The date for the letter must therefore be 5 November 1893.

<sup>43</sup> All SS: All Saints Day.

How is Julian getting on. I do not recall his having given me a bill to pay for him for boiler. I must have left it on my desk or in my clerical pocket. I have sent Mamma money so she will be able to let him have what he wants.

I believe I shall be away only 45 days I have taken a return ticket for that time, as Mrs O Beringer<sup>44</sup>, thinks I must be in London for a few weeks to work at the script for Red Spider along with Mr Talbot Havard<sup>45</sup> the musical composer.

Have you seen Tom Bruce? I am in hopes that Mr Burnard will be here this week or next. He is more than half disposed to come for a fortnight.

Remember me very affectionately to Harvey. I hope he is grinding hard at his Law. Love to dear old Julian. Is he getting on well with Dan Ward and his wife.<sup>46</sup> I hope so.

Yours vy try  
S Baring Gould

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<sup>44</sup> Aimeé Beringer, author, dramatist and wife of Oscar Beringer, musician.

<sup>45</sup> The identity of 'Talbot Havard' has been unravelled with some difficulty with assistance from Moira Harris. The composer was in fact Howard Talbot, (1865-1928) an American composer who spent most of his life in England where, after studying medicine at King's College, London, he studied music under Parry, Bridge and F E Gladstone. Attracted to the popular theatre, he wrote the music for *Wapping Old Stairs* and *Monte Carlo* before success came in 1899 with the musical comedy *A Chinese Honeymoon* which toured extensively from 1899 and then ran for over 1000 performances in London from 1901.

<sup>46</sup> The identities of Tom Bruce and Dan Ward are not known.

**931207**

7 December 1893

*Address pencilled by an unknown hand: 42, Great Bussell Street  
Bloomsbury  
London W6*

Whittakers Hotel

My dearest Mary

I really must congratulate you on having a real live squeaking dolly of your own.<sup>47</sup> I suppose you are very proud of it. How does Harvey take to his new responsibilities? It is a shock to think that Mamma and I are grandparents. I have not yet seen Leila<sup>48</sup> to tease her about being a great aunt.

I am very busy in town. My artist is off this week to go over the ground where I have been and do the drawings wanted – my sketches are insufficient. I hear that Vera has not quite lost her heart to the curate, as Mrs. Chitty<sup>49</sup> predicted.

I have seen Daisy looking very bonny. I dine at the Galsworthy's tonight and meet her there. I have had no time as yet to see the Youngs<sup>50</sup> I will try what I can do when the stress of work is off. I find the air very heavy and damp here and it makes my bronchitis come back.

Love to dear "Granny"<sup>51</sup>

Your very affect.

S. Baring Gould

Whittaker's Hotel

WC

7 Dec./93

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<sup>47</sup> Mary's first child, Arscott Sabine Harvey.

<sup>48</sup> Leila: Sabine's half sister, who was only one year older than Mary.

<sup>49</sup> The Rev. Charles Chitty, who was referred to in letter 981003, was Sabine's curate at this time. It is not known whether Mrs. Chitty was his wife or his mother. The comment would make more sense if the latter.

<sup>50</sup> The identity of the Galsworthys is not known. The Youngs were Sabine's cousin Sir George and Lady Young. Sabine's daughter, Daisy, was studying Art in London.

<sup>51</sup> Sabine was referring to his stepmother, Lavinia (Granny Ardoch) Baring-Gould.

940127<sup>52</sup>

27 January 1894

My dearest Mary

Poor Hancock<sup>53</sup> died this morning. He was better the day before yesterday, but yesterday the inflammation of the lungs spread, and I saw last night he was dying. Miss Biggs is still in bed, so also Emily. Our housemaid leaves next week so we are in a sad condition. Will you see at Mrs. Drew, 30 Tavistock Road, Plymouth<sup>54</sup> about a butler and cook or housemaid she is advertising. And stir up Mrs. Penwarden. Vera has a bad cold but not influenza so far. Hancock's wife has been sobbing like a baby – perfectly helpless, and I have had the utmost difficulty in finding him a nurse.

Yours very affect  
S. Baring-Gould

Saturday<sup>55</sup>

I am 60 tomorrow

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<sup>52</sup> No address or date given to this letter but it can be dated 27 January 1894 from the comment that it was Sabine's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday the next day. The address was presumably Lew House.

<sup>53</sup> According to the 1891 census Edward Hancock was the butler and lived at Down House cottage. This would seem to have been a very severe influenza epidemic.

<sup>54</sup> After her marriage Mary and her husband lived for a time at the Tower, Compton Gifford, Plymouth where she was handy to run errands such as this for Sabine.

<sup>55</sup> It has been confirmed by almanack that 27 January 1894 was indeed a Saturday.

**940129***29 January 1894*

My dearest Mary

Please see if you can find for us a housemaid. Ours leaves on Friday, and what we shall do if we cannot find one I do not know. We have got a hospital nurse now for Emily<sup>56</sup> and Miss Biggs.<sup>57</sup> Poor Hancock is to be buried tomorrow. That fool of a wife of his is quite helpless. I have written to see if we can get two of the children into the Kilburn orphanage<sup>58</sup>

Yours truly  
S Baring Gould

Lew Trenchard

N. Devon

Jan 29/9

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<sup>56</sup> Emily was probably Sabine's familiar name for his daughter Diana Amelia who, in 1894 was 13 years old. It is known from a diary entry on 20 July 1880 that Emily was the familiar name of Sabine's grandmother who was also Diana Amelia.

<sup>57</sup> Miss Biggs had been governess to Sabine's children since the family were resident at East Mersea.

<sup>58</sup> Kilburn Orphanage: Possibly St Mary's Orphanage, Kilburn. Presumably Sabine's impatience with Mrs Hancock and her children reflected the desperation he felt trying to cope with very ill members of his own family. It was also aggravated by his belief that her husband's death was compounded by her attitude towards him when he was dying. See letter 9402U01.

**940213**

*13 February 1894*

Dearest Mary

Harry<sup>59</sup> is still very, very ill, and we are most anxious about him poor little man. Dr Swale<sup>60</sup> was here in the middle of the night when he got a little better, but he is worse again today. Emily is better, that is all.

We will be glad to hear of a nice nurse, will you see Mrs. Penwarden, I will repay you the fee.

Yours very ty  
S Baring Gould

I send Harvey the Arscott pedigree he wanted.

Feb. 13/94

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<sup>59</sup> Harry: Sabine's son, Henry, then aged 9.

<sup>60</sup> Dr Swale of Tavistock.

9402U01<sup>61</sup> (display)<sup>62</sup>

*Latter half of February 1894*

My dear Mary

Harry seems no better today, and we have now in addition Cicely, Joan and John down, so it is, indeed, a sick house. I am troubled also for Mamma who is beginning to feel that pain in the side from which she was so ill 3 years ago. All this makes me very low and sad.<sup>63</sup>

I do wish we had got a nurse coming and a cook.

Poor Hancock! His life was thrown away by his wife. On the Wednesday he thought I was coming to see him, and he was ashamed of the untidiness of his room, so he asked her to tidy it about. She refused to do so, and he got out of bed and did his room himself, and caught a fresh cold that carried him off. I saw such a change on Thursday that I said to the woman “what is the explanation of this. Has he been allowed out of bed,” and she said “no” wretched creature, and she would not even go to see him when he was dying.

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

The little nurse girl seems very nice.

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<sup>61</sup> The references to the terminal illness of Hancock link this undated letter to letters 940127 and 940129. Harry’s illness and a request for a nurse link it to 940213. The probable date is therefore the latter half of February 94.

<sup>62</sup> Pasted for display purposes onto sheet 2 of A4 along with 4 other letters.

<sup>63</sup> It seems probable from the difficult family circumstances that Grace’s symptoms at the time of this letter were stress related. Similarly Grace’s symptoms three years previously may have been related to anxiety over the 1900 scarlet fever epidemic. Sabine was evidently very concerned by the return of her symptoms. However in the family bible for 1894 Sabine simply wrote *Influenza epidemic. 14 ill in the house, Rather a trial* – a typical retrospective understatement by Sabine. It was to be expected that with a total of 14 people ill, some seriously, and with one death in a large establishment experiencing serious and ongoing shortages of staff this would have been an extremely stressful time for both Sabine and Grace. The letter gives a better indication of their mental state than does the bible entry that, at the earliest, was written 10 months after the events recorded.

**941109**

9 November 1894

*[Address cut off but presumed to be Lew House]*

My dearest Mary

Do send us a cook. Miss Biggs says you know of a possible one. £20 per ann. and kitchenmaid. We have a lady cook. German but she will not stay, every thing is wrong – she must have a sitting room to herself, the kitchen range is bad, the coal bad, the kitchen inconvenient, the weather bad, the station too distant. A hopeless person. I suppose she will stay out her month.<sup>64</sup>

We are in excitement, Edward writes that he will be here tomorrow or the 11<sup>th</sup> Nov.<sup>65</sup> We can hardly realise it, and hope he means Dec. instead of Nov. as the house is half unroofed and we are in a sad mess with masons and carpenters. The bathroom is pulled down wholly, so we are not only one bed room short, but cannot well use the best bedroom, as the old staircase is exposed to the wind and rain. The weather for three weeks has stood in the way of the building sadly.<sup>66</sup>

Julian is here very happy, merry and industrious. He goes into Tavistock twice a week for lessons in bookkeeping and at home he is working at shorthand.<sup>67</sup> After Xmas he goes to Messrs Bawden to learn elementary mineralogy and mining which will be useful to him in Borneo. He has taken to ringing with the young team on the Church bells and has got his hands almost quite raw.

I am now pretty right, I can not quite get rid of the choking of the bronchial tubes, but otherwise flourish and am working desperately hard at a 3 vol story of the neighbourhood of Guildford for the 'Graphic' next year I have to go there on the 26<sup>th</sup> to get a little more posted up in dialect and local peculiarities.<sup>68</sup> We have a little dinner party on Saturday and rather tremble to think what the Fräulein will turn out for it. A bad workman complains of his tools.

I remain yrs try  
S. Baring Gould

Nov 9/94

**941208**

<sup>64</sup> It is evident that at the end of 1894 Sabine continued to have the problems with servants that began the previous January. He still looked towards Mary in Plymouth to find servants to fill the gap.

<sup>65</sup> Edward had been living and working in America since 1889. He had previously returned home briefly in 1891.

<sup>66</sup> The building work at this time was to the rear of the east wing, involving the east staircase and construction of the new kitchen. It is unclear why this affected bathrooms and more than the best bedroom.

<sup>67</sup> Sabine evidently approved of Julian's industry and enquiring mind.

<sup>68</sup> *The Broomshire*, Graphic, Vol.52, July-Dec.

8 December 1894

Dearest Mary

Will you and Harvey come to us for Xmas? I am sorry to say that I cannot accommodate Arscott and his nurse, as Edward will be with us and he sleeps out, so also must kitchenmaid. We have only the best bedroom vacant.<sup>69</sup>

Unhappily the cook Miss Biggs wrote about has fallen through she has taken a place nearer home. Mamma has got one who “breaks out” occasionally with spirits – but was forced to get whom she could – anyhow for a while<sup>70</sup>

Yrs try  
S Baring Gould

Dec 8/94

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<sup>69</sup> Sabine often seemed to put shortage of available rooms during restoration as a reason for suggesting that Mary visits without her small children. It is clear from letter 941213 that Mary’s reaction was to agree to visit on 26 December. It seems unlikely she would choose to spend Christmas without her young baby.

<sup>70</sup> An unsatisfactory resolution of staffing problems.

9412U02<sup>71</sup> (display)<sup>72</sup>

*Mid to late December 1894*

My dearest Mary

We have had a trouble about the servants. The little butler and his wife have departed, he was groggy all Saturday, and I fear he is given to drink, so it was as well to clear him off. The cook arrived tipsy at the station came on here and went back by next train without ever having seen Mamma. Mrs. Wilson<sup>73</sup> at once attacked her and set her against the place – happily as it happened as the carriage that fetched her conveyed also Dr. Swale and he said she was tipsy as well as Willy and the Lees at the station.

Now I see in W. M. N. that Mrs. Drew advertises a footman and his wife as house maid. Will you see them tomorrow morning. I have answered some advertisements so do not like to conclude with them, but I must have good testimonials.

After the Wilsons were here Mrs Laurence wrote to Mamma to say that they had been with her, but had to go owing to the little man's drinking.

O what a bother these servants are!

So now we are without butler and housemaid.

Yours try  
S. Baring-Gould

Monday

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<sup>71</sup> The reference to the *Western Morning News* and Mrs Drew indicate this letter must have been written when Mary was still living in Plymouth. Presumably the letter was written some time after the death of Hancock as the household remains without a butler. This all points to more of the ongoing saga over servants of late December 1894.

<sup>72</sup> Pasted onto A4 sheet 3 Miscellaneous with 2 other letters.

<sup>73</sup> Mrs Wilson: Presumably the new housemaid, wife of the tipsy butler.

**941213**<sup>74</sup>*13 December 1894*

Dearest Mary

By all means St Stephens day.<sup>75</sup> Wish we could take in Arscott. His grandmother  
 pines to see him; but the boathouse alone is available as nursery.<sup>76</sup>

Bring some laver<sup>77</sup> if you can.

Yours try  
 S. Baring Gould

13 Dec

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<sup>74</sup> The letter is clearly a follow up to letter 941208 and the year therefore 1894.

<sup>75</sup> St Stephen's Day: 26 December.

<sup>76</sup> The suggestion of the boathouse as a nursery would seem to have been intended as a weak joke used to suggest that, because of the major rebuild of the east wing, the house was full to capacity and unable to take an infant. However it is hard to believe that no room could have been found for Arscott, a one year old infant just beginning to walk!

<sup>77</sup> Laver: an edible seaweed usually associated with South Wales. Presumably this was one of Sabine's favourite foods and Mary had found a source in Plymouth.

**9501U01**<sup>78</sup>*January or February 1895*

Dearest Mary

Thank you so much for the jersey, I am sure it will be a comfort knitted by your dear hands. Thanks Mary also for your invitation. I cannot accept now as I have a lot of literary work on hand, besides one ¼ of the house unroofed.

But in the early spring – say March, I shall be very glad to go to you.

Yrs try  
S. Baring Gould

Granny<sup>79</sup> has tumbled in and is staying at this most inconvenient time, when we are short of rooms. Back stairs, bathroom, part of Best bedroom, part of Miss Biggs room, all uncovered.

Yrs try  
S. Baring Gould

Lew Tr

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<sup>78</sup> The description of building work being carried out at Lew House on the 'back wing' is very similar to that in letter 941109, this and the reference to the coming spring suggest this is the winter of 1894/5 and, presuming the Jersey was a birthday present, dates the letter to January/February 1895.

<sup>79</sup> Granny Ardoch: The familiar name given by family to Lavinia Baring-Gould, Sabine's stepmother.

95U02<sup>80</sup>

*Middle of 1895*

Dearest Mary

Thanks so much for giving Willy a whiff of Bude air. The boy looks really completely changed. He was haggard and hollow eyed and returns brisk and solid. Mamma is much better, but not quite well.<sup>81</sup> What lovely weather we are having. The building progresses but slowly. We are slated in but the granite cloister is not complete yet. Kind regards to Harvey. Did I tell you I have bought the picture of Margaret Gould of Mrs Reed. I thought it would not do to let it slip. I had however to pay £8 for it more than I intended which was £6<sup>82</sup>

Saturday.

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<sup>80</sup> The signing off and signature have been neatly cut out of the letter. If there was ever a date other than Saturday it has also been removed. However, taking into account the fine weather and holidays at Bude, the date must be mid-1895 when the cloisters were being built.

<sup>81</sup> It is not known from what illnesses Grace and Willy were recovering but it is evident that Mary and Harvey were now living at Bude. Their address at Bude was 4 Hartland Terrace.

<sup>82</sup> The reference to the portrait of Margaret Gould purchased from Mrs Reed for £14 is intriguing. It is not known which Margaret Gould is the subject or if this is one of the portraits now held at Lew House.

**95U03 (Almond Mary01):**<sup>83</sup>

*March or April 1895*

Dearest Mary

When you go to town mind and call on Lady Young.<sup>84</sup> She knows you are going and will be hurt if you do not go and see her.

Go and hear "Hansel and Grethel"<sup>85</sup> [*sic*] at the Princess's;<sup>86</sup> I believe Humperdinck the composer is to be engaged to do my "Red Spider."

Mrs Beringer<sup>87</sup> is in treaty with Sir A Harris<sup>88</sup> to employ him for it.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> No address or date given but Moira Harris's research suggests March or April 1895. In his diary for March 1895 Sabine describes an unusually severe winter at Lew that had curtailed his work on the East Wing of Lew House. This had re-commenced by the time this letter was written. Sabine did not go abroad that year until November. The address for the letter is therefore probably Lew Trenchard.

<sup>84</sup> Wife of Sabine's cousin, Sir George Young.

<sup>85</sup> *Hansel and Gretel* was first staged at Daly's Theatre in London from 26 December 1894 for one month. It then moved to the Gaiety Theatre before moving on to the Princess Theatre from 2 March to 15 April 1895. This letter was therefore written around March/April 1895. *Red Spider*, the opera, was eventually staged in 1898.

<sup>86</sup> Part of this letter is reproduced in *Sabine Baring-Gould* by Bickford H. C. Dickinson. There he gives the theatre as *Prince's* but the transcriber's reading is *Princess's* and this is confirmed by Moira Harris's research. In any case *The Prince's Theatre* did not exist before 1911!

<sup>87</sup> Aimé Beringer, the novelist and dramatist, worked with Sabine on the dramatisation of *Mehalah* in 1890. They and Fleetwood Shepherd then collaborated on the operetta *Red Spider* but by 1892 Shepherd's working relationship with Mrs Beringer had run into problems. In 1895, encouraged by the success of *Hansel and Gretel*, Sabine and Aimé Beringer decided to try to engage Engelbert Humperdinck to write the music. At some stage the musician, William Wallace, also became involved and a letter from Sabine to Wallace, 2 February 1893, (William Wallace Collection, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh) suggests that Hubert Parry had been approached with the libretto. Learmont Drysdale, rather than Humperdinck or Parry, was eventually engaged to provide the music. Drysdale, an Edinburgh composer, now largely forgotten, has been described as 'a Scottish Grieg.' It is of interest to note that William Wallace, Learmont Drysdale and Oscar Beringer, the well-known pianist husband of Aimé Beringer, were all on the staff of the Royal Academy of Music.

<sup>88</sup> Augustus Harris. Manager, Drury Lane Theatre. There is nothing to suggest that Augustus Harris was ever 'in treaty' to stage *Red Spider* or that he approached Humperdinck concerning *Red Spider*. Indeed on 7 March 1896 Harris wrote a cool letter to Learmont Drysdale suggesting no knowledge of, and little interest in the operetta. (Drysdale Collection, Glasgow University Library) Augustus Harris died in June 1896.

<sup>89</sup> For the full story of the operetta see Moira Harris SBGAS Newsletter No 34: *Red Spider - The Operetta* for the definitive account of the staging of the operetta.

**950419***19 April 1895*

My dearest Mary

Many, many happy returns of the day to you.<sup>90</sup> It seems a long time since we have seen you, but our accommodation just now is very limited. The masons are getting on slowly with the new wing.<sup>91</sup>

We had a dinner party last night the Morsheads, Philip and Miss Rowe, Harold and Constance Blackburn, Chas. Grylls, M. Buzin (a French gentleman) Julian and Miss Amy Bawden.<sup>92</sup> All went off very smoothly till Julian started when the horse reared and threw him and Miss B. out, happily without injury. I hope they got home as safely.

Julian delights in his mine work and is very fond of old Bawden<sup>93</sup> and as Miss B. says her father is much attached to Julian, who has taught him much.

I go today to marry Olive Burnard and her 'Dick'<sup>94</sup> so write a day before this post. I sleep at the Burnards and go out on Dartmoor digging on Friday. Mamma will add her best wishes in a letter which will cost her time and sighs and efforts incredible, and a brow beaded with perspiration.<sup>95</sup>

Baby<sup>96</sup> got a button up her nose the day before yesterday. Mamma whipped her into Tavistock and Dr. Swale<sup>97</sup> removed it at once

Yours very truly  
S Baring Gould

19 Apl. /95

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<sup>90</sup> Mary was born 20 April 1869.

<sup>91</sup> Presumably the 'new wing' is the North wing or Cloisters.

<sup>92</sup> Guests: The Morsheads were a local family. Reginald Morshead leased Lew House between 1880 and 1885. Sabine would have got to know them well between 1881 and 1885 when he was resident at the Rectory. Philip Rowe was the future husband of Sabine's daughter, Daisy. Presumably Miss Rowe was his sister. Charles Grylls is not known but may have been a fellow clergyman and possibly related to Henry Borlase Grylls who was, at this time, the Vicar of Marystowe. Harold Blackburn was the squire of Hayne, Stowford.

<sup>93</sup> See letter 941109. Julian went to work for Messrs Bawden to learn elementary mineralogy and mining to prepare him for his forthcoming move to Borneo.

<sup>94</sup> Olive Burnard, daughter of Robert Burnard married Surgeon Captain Richard Munday R. N.

Richard Munday was the father of Lady Sylvia Sayer, a founder of the Dartmoor Preservation Society.

<sup>95</sup> A delightful reference to Grace and the effort it took her to write letters.

<sup>96</sup> Grace Adele, aged 3.

<sup>97</sup> Dr Swale: Dr Swale is mentioned in several letters written in the early 1890s. This letter confirms that he was based in Tavistock. It seems likely from Sabine's article *Our Scarlet Fever Attack* and the 1891 census that in 1890 Sabine used the Lewdown based Dr Christopher Benson. It is not known why he now used Dr Swale or how he communicated with the doctor apart from travelling into Tavistock but see letter 9604U01 for a possible explanation.

**950510***10 May 1895*

Dearest Mary

Can you find reasonable lodgings<sup>98</sup> for 3 weeks for the children. We shall send Miss Biggs and Emily and Titus<sup>99</sup> and Joan also Miss Berrill and the 3 little ones.<sup>100</sup>

We are getting on slowly with the cloister and wing of the house. I propose to make the entrance behind now. The court will be exceedingly pretty and picturesque.<sup>101</sup>

I go out to Dartmoor next week to resume diggings.

Yrs try  
S Baring Gould

10 May/95

Mamma thinks Miss Parsons,<sup>102</sup> lodgings nice

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<sup>98</sup> Lodgings at Bude. See letter 950512. It is evident from this request to Mary that by the time of this letter Mary and Harvey had moved to Bude.

<sup>99</sup> Titus is the familiar name for Felicitas, then aged 12.

<sup>100</sup> Joan was aged 8. Emily (Diana) was 14. *The little ones* were Cicely 6, John 5 and Grace 4. The identity of Miss Berrill is not known.

<sup>101</sup> The reference to the entrance being 'behind now' is the first known indication that Sabine intended to make the main entrance to the house through the courtyard. In 1914 he started work on a gatehouse that was never completed, presumably because of the onset of World War I.

<sup>102</sup> The identity and address of Miss Parsons is not known.

**950512**

*12 May 1895*

My dear Mary

Mamma thinks that as whooping cough is about and the little ones have not had it – it will after all be safest not to go to Bude with them. I also have advised not, as with the building I am behind hand at the back and want to keep down expenses.<sup>103</sup>

Yrs try  
S Baring Gould

May 12/95

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<sup>103</sup> This is a good example of the hand to mouth way in which Sabine financed the restoration of Lew House. It is difficult not to conclude that he was only too willing to fall in line with Grace's suggestion that the family should not go on holiday to Bude at this time. On the other hand it is understandable that, after the experience of the family at Bude with scarlet fever, Sabine and Grace would be wary of inviting another epidemic into the house.

**950914 (display)**<sup>104</sup>  
 14 September 1895

[No address given, presumably Lew House]

My dearest Mary

There seems a fatality [?]:- The children have bad strangling coughs that have lasted now over a month and I strongly suspect it to be whooping cough. It rests with you whether to come with your little two and risk it. I do not know whether a doctor could decide whether it is this or not – ~~but~~ unless he heard them with a coughing fit on; but I cannot otherwise explain the persistence and strangulating nature of the cough.

I have resolved to send Vera on Wednesday with Felicitas, Emily, Barbara and Joan to Post Bridge,<sup>105</sup> but John, Cicely and baby have it as well.<sup>106</sup>

Have you seen your likeness in last “Sunday Magazine” with interview of me by Mr. Gatrill?<sup>107</sup>

Yours try  
 S. Baring Gould

Sept 14/95

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<sup>104</sup> Pasted onto Miscellaneous A4 sheet 1.

<sup>105</sup> Post Bridge. It is well known that Sabine believed in the curative effects of Dartmoor and often went there to recover from his bouts of bronchitis. But where exactly did he and other sick members of the family stay? It does not seem likely that he would risk importing illhealth to his friends the Burnards who lived at Huccaby House, Hexworthy, Devon.

<sup>106</sup> Vera was aged 20, Felicitas 12, Barbara 15, Emily (Diana) 14, Joan 8, John 5, Cicely 6, and baby (Grace) 4. See letter 950929 for confirmation of the diagnosis of whooping cough by Dr Swale.

<sup>107</sup> Sunday Magazine, 1895 September 8. pp. 597- 606, *The Rev. S. Baring-Gould at Home*. An interview and description of Lew House and estate. The article included photos of interior and exterior also of daughters Veronica and Mary. A cutting of this article is held loosely in Sabine’s Common Place Book, now held in the Baring-Gould Archive at the DRO, deposit 2503.

**950929**

29 September 1895

Dearest Mary

I enclose ¼ allowance.<sup>108</sup> I am off on Monday to Shropshire<sup>109</sup> to work it up for novelistic purposes. I shall I hope see our cousins the Hunts of Boreaton.<sup>110</sup> I may be away 10 days or more or may be back in a week. I have been too busy to visit to Dunsland as I have had to do a Geography of Devon<sup>111</sup> as well as my Life of Nap. Bonaparte.<sup>112</sup> The children are better but I suppose with every chill and cough the whoops will return. Dr Swale says it is undoubtedly whooping cough. We will be lucky if they get rid of it before May.<sup>113</sup>

Yours Ever<sup>114</sup>  
S Baring Gould

Lew Trenchard

N. Devon

Sept. 29/95

St Michael and all Angels<sup>115</sup>


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<sup>108</sup> From this time, the need to send Mary her quarterly allowance was a frequent reason for writing to Mary. It is likely that as they matured and left home all the children would have been in receipt of an allowance. There is therefore potentially an extensive correspondence to be garnered for future research.

<sup>109</sup> Shropshire: Presumably Sabine was researching for *Bladys of the Stewponey* published in 1897.

<sup>110</sup> The Hunts of Boreaton: Boreaton Shropshire. Sabine's great grandmother, Sarah, was the daughter of Rowland Hunt of Boreaton. She married Colonel Joseph Sabine, father of Sabine's maternal grandmother, Diana Amelia. Rowland Hunt was a direct descendant of Edward III.

<sup>111</sup> There is no publication in the bibliography relating to the Geography of Devon in the following 3 years.

<sup>112</sup> The life of Napoleon Bonaparte, 1897, London, Methuen.

<sup>113</sup> Whooping cough: see letter 950914. It seems the children did not go to Postbridge. Did Grace's common sense prevail?

<sup>114</sup> The signing off of this letter was, as is often the case, difficult to decipher with any accuracy. The most likely transcription is 'ever' but if this is correct, this is an unusual, if not unique signing off for Sabine.

<sup>115</sup> Michaelmas, 29 September is the Feast of St Michael and All Angels.

**951117***17 November 1895*Civray  
Sunday 17 Nov<sup>116</sup>

My dearest Mary

Mr Burnard and I have been abroad together for a fortnight planning dolmens and wandering over the W. of France. I am very well thank God. The weather last week was not propitious, we had three days of rain, and in one of these we went to the battlefield of Poitiers and saw the disposition of the English forces under the Black Prince and where the French had come to such utter grief.

Yesterday we were stranded for two hours at a little junction, so went into a little tavern of about the level of the Dartmoor Inn at Lydford and asked for dejeuner. In under a quarter of an hour they brought us sardines – rabbit in black sauce, ham, beef, omelette, potted meat, nuts almonds, apples, pears, sponge cake, plenty of wine, cognac, and we had to pay for all this 2 shillings each.

It is rather odd to me going over the ground and replanning prehistoric monuments I had planned in 1851, forty four year old plans were very accurate and nothing is much altered since then, but I did not take the points of the compass as a boy.

We saw two very curious dolmens near Saumur<sup>117</sup> turned into bake houses with ovens inside, and between the huge covering stones little chimneys had been constructed to carry away the smoke. It was baking for the living among the ashes of the dead. We wanted to see a dolmen in a coppice so got a nice looking young woman to show us the way. As we got into the wood we found it swarming with old and young women picking up acorns, and it was like getting into a swarm of magpies such a chattering did they set up, and of course our guide came in for some considerable chaff. Then the whole swarm accompanied us to the monument and were only dispersed by levelling the camera at them, when they scattered in all directions afraid to be photographed without clean caps and aprons and in their work-a-day gowns. At one place when Mr. Burnard was photographing two women came running to ask to be included and to be allowed to rig themselves up in clean aprons. This we waited for but they came back attended by five dogs that gambolled about and of course spoiled the photograph.

We shall not be abroad much longer, we shall be back in Devon on Saturday week 30 Nov, so that I shall have been from home only 3 Sundays.

Mr. Burnard is rather down in the mouth as Charlie B.<sup>118</sup> has burst a blood vessel in his thigh and strained his back at football at Cambridge and has been sent home. This makes the third accident he has had previous to an examination.

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<sup>116</sup> The year of this visit can be verified by the mention of planning the same antiquities 44 years ago in 1851. The visit is also briefly summarised in the family bible entry for 1895. Further confirmation of the year is provided by the knowledge that 17 November fell on a Sunday in 1895.

<sup>117</sup> It is of interest that Sabine was planning prehistoric sites near Saumur that he had previously planned in 1851. There is a sketch, but no plan, of the Allée couverte de Bagneux, near Saumur in a notebook Sabine was using in 1851. [www.nevercompletelysubmerged.co.uk](http://www.nevercompletelysubmerged.co.uk) Sabine Baring-Gould's Adolescent Notebook 1849-51, p 47.

<sup>118</sup> Charlie B: Robert Burnard's son.

The weather is so mild and warm there is no need for fires, but then it is uncertain whether we shall have rain or not, today looks very doubtful.

We shall be at the little inn the Prince Albert in Paris<sup>119</sup> to which you went, and think to spend a day or two in Paris, on our way home. The great difficulty we had in getting carriages. We are here at Civray and want to get across country to Confolens 28 miles but there is not a conveyance to be had for love nor money so we go on to a place called l'isle Jourdain and try there for one.<sup>120</sup> If we cannot meet with success there we shall have to give Confolens up and return to Poitiers.

Remember me kindly to Harvey. I hear a poor account of Vera,<sup>121</sup> I wish she could or would go to you for a fortnight I believe Bude would set her up, but she has a horror of Bude since she was laid up there with scarlet fever.<sup>122</sup>

I remain  
Your affect  
S Baring Gould

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<sup>119</sup> See letter 930117. Sabine recommended this hotel to Mary on her honeymoon. The hotel is still in existence in 2011.

<sup>120</sup> Confolens and l'isle Jourdain both lie between Poitiers and Limoges and are some 15 miles apart. Civray is a little under 20 miles from Confolens.

<sup>121</sup> Presumably Vera, then aged 20, was still suffering from the whooping cough that is mentioned in letters 950914 and 050929 .

<sup>122</sup> *Our Scarlet Fever Outbreak* as recorded in the Church Monthly Jan to April 1898 and in *the Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*. Vera was the first member of the family to fall ill with Scarlet fever at Bude in 1890. She was forced to remain isolated there with Miss Biggs from 11 August to 20 September. The rest of the family returned to Lew on 12 August. It is unsurprising that she had developed an aversion to Bude.

**951229**

29 December 1895

Dearest Mary

I wish you a happy New Year – to you and all yours.

Many thanks for the laver which I enjoy greatly. Mamma has had a gorgeous Xmas present from M. Buzin,<sup>123</sup> a centre piece for the dining table, and from Mr. Drysdale<sup>124</sup> a box of shortbread and another of Edinburgh sweets. The girls think it quite shocking her having presents from young men.

Poor old Hutchings is dying and Betsy Baker is failing fast.<sup>125</sup>

Mamma is very well and chirpy. We have our choir supper this week on Friday. The only available day as the rest are monopolised by balls. We shall be relieved when it is over. We are gradually fitting into the new rooms, three are already occupied and a further will be tomorrow. Daisy's is not quite dry enough yet to be inhabited, and the kitchen, pantry etc need painting before we can transfer cook etc to that wing.<sup>126</sup>

Kind remembrances to Harvey

Yours try  
S Baring Gould

29 Dec. 1895

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<sup>123</sup> In letter 950419 M. Buzin, who was then a dinner guest, was simply described as 'a French gentleman.'

<sup>124</sup> Mr. Drysdale: Learmont Drysdale, composer of the opera '*Red Spider*.'

<sup>125</sup> The identities of Hutchings and Betsy Baker are not known. Presumably they were Lew Trenchard parishioners.

<sup>126</sup> It is evident from this letter that the rebuild of the east wing was at last complete and with the relocation of the kitchen, Sabine would now be able to turn his attention to the ballroom. Perhaps Grace was 'chirpy' because a large part of the house was at last being returned to family use and there could be no good excuse for denying accommodation to Mary and her children.

**960412**

*12 April 1896*

My Dearest Mary

Can you get Mrs. Wood's lodging charges for the two Polly Pengelly's\* for 10 days or a fortnight. They are both so white and thin and anaemic that they want complete change and bracing. I will pay for them but I want it as moderate as possible.

Julian went to a dance at the Kennaways<sup>127</sup> in Exeter on Thursday night and enjoyed himself vastly. He met with a lot of Barbara's acquaintances there.

Our new cook has come, she gives herself out as 30 but is probably 74. Very strict and respectable. Hope she will stay.

Kind remembrances to Harvey and love to my dear little Arscott.

Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

Lew Tr.

Apl 12/1896

\* Sawmill Polly and Y (Keepers) Polly<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> The identity of the Kennaways is not known.

<sup>128</sup> The asterisk was inserted by Sabine. 'Sawmill Cottage' and 'The Wye' were both dwellings on the Lew Trenchard estate. The Wye Polly may have been the daughter of Dick Pengelly who was gamekeeper to the Coombe Trenchard estate.

**9604U01**<sup>129</sup>

*Between 15 and 20 April 1896*

Dearest Mary

Polly Pengelly at the Y<sup>130</sup> is too unwell to go yet. She is to be sent into hospital. But Polly Pengelly at the Sawmill I will send next Monday for a fortnight if you will settle for her when she is to go. I will pay the lodgings and she will find the food. I had Dr. Swale out today to see Polly at the Y as I was not satisfied little Benny<sup>131</sup> understood her.

Yours ever  
S.B.G

*The following is written down the left hand side of the note:*

The babes on the moor (Julian and Daisy)<sup>132</sup> have a lovely day today, they are there for a week at Postbridge.

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<sup>129</sup> The subject of this letter suggests it was written from Lew a few days after Mary 960412, i.e. probably between 15 and 20 April 1896.

<sup>130</sup> Y: The Wye. Two estate houses built by Sabine in 1891.

<sup>131</sup> The identity of 'little Benny' is not certain but Sabine was probably referring to the Lewdown village doctor, Christopher Benson. If so it would suggest he had a low opinion of the doctor. This would explain his recourse to Dr Swale of Tavistock, who was frequently referred to in this correspondence, despite the inconvenient journey involved.

<sup>132</sup> Hardly babes. In 1896 Daisy was 26 and Julian 19 years old!

**9604U02**<sup>133</sup>

*Late April or May 1896*

Dearest Mary

I enclose cheque for what is owing for Polly Pengelly. I think the fortnight has done her much good. If there is anything more dear please tell me and I will send the money.

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>133</sup> Letter Mary 960412 asks Mary to find lodgings in Bude for the 'Sawmill Polly Pengelly' and 'The Wye Polly Pengelly' who were both pale, thin and in need of a rest. This letter refers to that episode and can therefore be roughly dated to April/May 1896.

**960611***11 June 1896*

Whittakers Hotel  
Gt. Bussell Street  
WC  
11 June/96

My dearest Mary

Willy is accepted and he goes to his diggings on the 19<sup>th</sup>. I have asked Messrs Bawden to allow Julian to come up with him and be with him the first week.<sup>134</sup> That will be a double advantage. The boy will not feel his loneliness, and Julian will be able to report what manner of people he is with, and whether the lodgings be clean, and the food sufficient.

I think the boy is more likely to learn more at the Repairing Works of the S.E.R.<sup>135</sup> than he would in ordinary engineering works, as all manner of breakages from the smash up of a train to a cracked window pane came under the hands of those in the works. His hours are 6 a.m. – 4 p.m. and he will be black as a sweep, and hands and nails so ingrained as to be impossible of whitening. But it is a necessary training for one who fancies engineering, and he knows that he will have to work. I trust that after two years Edward<sup>136</sup> will find him a place in his Rolling Mills. By that time Willy will have learned enough to be very useful. He sets his face to the matter with fine plans.[?]

In the works I believe gentlemen are preferred. They show more intelligence, more endurance and resolution than the common boy.

Kindly give the enclosed to cousin Frank<sup>137</sup>

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

Willy and I go hence tomorrow

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<sup>134</sup> Evidently while in London, Sabine had arranged an engineering placement for his son William, then aged 18, with a railway company. This letter provides good evidence of Sabine's concerns for the welfare of his sons in their employment.

<sup>135</sup> S.E.R: The South Eastern Railway, the largest of the many small railway companies between London and the South Coast. In 1923 it became part of the Southern Railway.

<sup>136</sup> The identity of 'Edward' is not known. Possibly cousin Edward, son of Uncle Charles Baring-Gould. It could not be Sabine's son Edward who had no involvement with engineering and was at that time resident in the United States.

<sup>137</sup> The identity of 'cousin Frank' is not known for certain although it might be Frank Bond who was mentioned in the Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould, 23 February 1881. However it is more likely to be Francis Baring-Gould of Merrow Grange, Guildford, son of the Rev. Charles Baring-Gould, who dined with Sabine in 1897. See letter 97U01. Sabine frequently broke his journey at Guildford when travelling up to London or abroad.

**961231**

*31 December 1896*

Dearest Mary

A happy New Year to you and Harvey and the little men.

We are getting on terribly slowly with the new wing. Holidays and rain interfere with the slating in and till the roof is finished we cannot glaze or plaster or lay floors.<sup>138</sup>

Yours very truly  
S. Baring Gould

Lew Trenchard

N. Devon

Dec.31/96

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<sup>138</sup> This letter refers to work on the West wing with its ballroom.

**970117***17 January 1897*

Jan 17/97

My Dear Mary

Will Harvey spare you to be here on Feb. 1 to meet Edward and his wife.<sup>139</sup> Say you come on the Saturday. They arrive on Monday. There is to be a dance but day not settled. We will ask Harvey to come for part of the time. Ed<sup>140</sup> is with us but I thought it would be nice if you were here to welcome the girl.

Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

Julian returns I believe today, it has been a nasty operation – he looks like a prize fighter with his beplastered nose<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> The celebrations to which Mary and Harvey are being invited are to welcome home Edward with his new bride, Marian. See the *Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*, 1 February et seq. Sabine's concern to ensure that Marian will be met by someone of her own age was laudable.

<sup>140</sup> Sabine was probably referring to his son Edward.

<sup>141</sup> The reason for and nature of Julian's surgical procedure is not known.

**970228**

28 February 1897

My dear Mary

Please thank Harvey for me for the negative of Dunsland, I have sent it on to the publisher.<sup>142</sup>

I do not think Mamma will be able to accept your kind invitation, nor can I as I am just now engaged to do five tales for Ill. Lond. News and must work hard.<sup>143</sup>

Mamma rather shrinks from the cold winds at Bude and w !(ould?) rather postpone a visit till warmer weather.

She has not yet heard from Mary at the Rectory relative to her sister.<sup>144</sup>

No letter yet from Julian<sup>145</sup>

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

28 Feb. 1897

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<sup>142</sup> Presumably the negative is of the drawing room at Dunsland. This appeared on page 87 of *An Old English Home* which Sabine was writing at the time and which was published in 1898.

<sup>143</sup> In all Sabine wrote 7 tales for the *Illustrated London News*. He was probably referring here to the five published in 1897:

1897: Vol 110:	<i>The Weathercock; Jephunnah.</i>
Vol 111:	<i>Ruth Treggodeck; The Brother's Grave; The Waters of Light.</i>
1898 Vol 112:	<i>Caroline; While the Cat's Away.</i>

<sup>144</sup> The Rectory was at Coombe Trenchard. It was leased by Sabine to the Sperlings. Mrs Sperling's Christian names were Mary Louisa.

<sup>145</sup> Julian sailed for Sarawak 20 February 1897.

**970309**

*9 March 1897*

My dear Mary

I am so sorry – we must put off having the dear little boys here. The aunts are out of house and home and threw out a broad hint that they had to leave Cleve this week and could not get into Colleton Crescent<sup>146</sup> and would have to look out for lodgings, so I could not help myself I had to invite them here, and they will take up the red room and the milk and water room.<sup>147</sup> I fear we must postpone having the babies. I am so sorry but under the circumstances I could not help myself.

Yours Truly  
S. Bring Gould

Mch 9/97

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<sup>146</sup> Aunts Fanny and Kate Bond, 4 Colleton Crescent, Exeter. It is likely they had been residing with Sabine's friends, the Northmores, at Cleve House, Exwick while their own house was uninhabitable for some reason. Sabine would not find it easy to refuse these aunts who had given him so much help over the years.

<sup>147</sup> The locations of 'the red room' and 'the milk and water room' in Lew House are not known.

**97U01**<sup>148</sup>

*Probably early June 1897*

My dear Mary

I am so sorry I cannot accept your kind invitation to Bude but Bligh Bond<sup>149</sup> has been summoned back to Bristol about his business and returns Monday next. We are due on Wednesday to Dunslan to see that and on Thursday to Cotehele where he has to draw the wall.<sup>150</sup>

Thank you so much for the lava, [*sic*] you know how fond I am of it.

Tell Mamma we had the Sperlings<sup>151</sup> and Northmores to dinner to meet the Frank B.G's<sup>152</sup> last night. She had carried off the silver tray so I had to send for W. Roberts<sup>153</sup> to pick the lock.

Frank, Flora and Jenny have left, old Flavel of the S.P.G<sup>154</sup> arrives on Saturday

yours very truly  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>148</sup> The date of the letter is probably early June 1897.

<sup>149</sup> Bligh Bond, 1864-1945: Sabine's cousin. An architect and acknowledged authority on church architecture. Bligh assisted Sabine with his restoration of St. Peter's Church, Lewtrenchard. In 1889 he unsuccessfully sought the hand of Sabine's daughter Daisy in marriage. See *The Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*, 17 July 1889.

<sup>150</sup> The reference to 'going to Dunslan' suggests this letter was probably written shortly before 970628 when Sabine wrote how delighted he was with the dado and mouldings at Dunslan and would copy them in his ballroom. Presumably Mary and Harvey were resident in Bude at this time, Grace was staying with them and Sabine had been intending to join her there. The visit to Dunslan and Cotehele was probably part of Sabine's researches for his book *An Old English Home* published in 1898. Several of the illustrations in this book are inscribed with the monogram BB, indicating the nature of Bligh's involvement.

<sup>151</sup> The Sperlings were the family who leased the rectory when Sabine moved into Lew House in 1885. In 1906 they purchased the Rectory, demolished it and in its place built the Arts and Crafts House now known as Coombe Trenchard.

<sup>152</sup> Frank BGs: Francis Baring-Gould, then aged 58 and his wife Flora. Francis was a son of Sabine's uncle, the Rev. Charles Baring-Gould. He lived at Merrow Grange, Guildford. The identity of Jenny is not known. She was not one of Francis Baring-Gould's three children.

<sup>153</sup> William Roberts, Lewdown blacksmith.

<sup>154</sup> S P G: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

**970628 (display)**<sup>155</sup>  
*28 June 1897*

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
June 28/97

Dearest Mary

So glad to hear you are coming to us.

Tell Harvey I was so delighted with the mouldings of the panels and dado in the Hall at Dunsland I copied them and am reproducing them for the Ball room here.<sup>156</sup>

Yrs try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>155</sup> Pasted onto miscellaneous A4 sheet 2 with 4 other letters.

<sup>156</sup> According to the entry in the family bible for 1897 the ballroom was completed for the return of Edward with his new bride in February 1897 but it is evident from this letter that his masons were still working on the mouldings 4 months later.

**971006***6 October 1897*

Oct 6/97

My dear Mary

I enclose cheque.<sup>157</sup>

There came a telegram without name to it yesterday sent from 4 Hartland Terrace<sup>158</sup> asking to stay with us till Thursday, you do not say by what train or how you arrive. We shall be delighted to see you and Harvey either before or after your visit to the Coades<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> The cheque would have been for Mary's quarterly allowance.

<sup>158</sup> 4, Hartland Terrace was the home of Mary and Harvey in Bude.

<sup>159</sup> Coades: The name cannot be transcribed with any certainty. The identity of the Coades is not known.

**9804U01**<sup>160</sup>

*Probably between 10 and 20 April 1898*

My dearest Mary

Many happy returns of your birthday. We have had such a nice Easter here. The church more lovely than I have ever seen before, for we have had the screen up and decorated with rose-coloured rhododendrons. We had 23 communicants at the early celebration and 10 at the late matins 33 in all, as things go not disheartening out of our little parish of 200. All the children here are as happy together as can be, one incessant laugh and chatter. But we sat down 13 to table – which is ominous.

I go to the moor for a few days with Mr. Burnard, to Post Bridge, trusting the weather may improve.

Have heard from Edward, he says Marian is feeling a longing to be back at Lew, and he too.<sup>161</sup> They have had a bad passage, and the patent medicine was no good against mal-de-mer.

Tell Harvey he should subscribe to the *West of England Armoury [sic]* that Cummins is about to issue, by Mr. Twigge and me – it will be really an important book. All the entries of Devon and Cornish families in every armoury in the B. Mus. – and that all known previous to 1600, so giving many otherwise not procurable arms and the variations in known coats.

Mamma is not very well, she looks white and worried and is complaining of her back again.<sup>162</sup>

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

Love to Harvey and my dear little Arscott and Edward.

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<sup>160</sup> The reference to Mary's sons Arscott and Edward suggest the letter was written between 1895 when Edward was born and 1900 when her third son, Bickford was born. The reference to Edward and Marian longing to get back to Lew means the letter was probably written after 1897. This suggests a date soon after Easter Sunday in 1898 or 1899.

The reference to the screen in the church does not help to date this letter. Restoration of the screen began in 1889 but was not completed until 1913.

An *Armory of the Western Counties*, co-authored by Sabine with R. W. Twigge was first published between 1889 and 1893 in the *Western Antiquary*. Published in book form by J G Commins, Exeter in 1898. Taken in conjunction with the comments on Edward and Marian above, this letter can therefore be dated to 1898, between Easter Sunday, 10 April and Mary's birthday 20 April.

<sup>161</sup> The description of Marian longing to be back at Lew suggests that the difficult relationships with Marian that marred Sabine's last years were not present in 1898.

<sup>162</sup> There are no other references in this correspondence to Grace looking white and worried or complaining about her back. However letter 9402U01 refers to a return of the pain in her side, first experienced 3 years previously ie 1890 or 1891. Clearly in 1894 this was associated with the stress of dealing with the influenza epidemic. In 1890 the problem was scarlet fever. There is no indication of any particular stress in 1898. On the contrary this letter suggests all was very well at Lewtrenchard in 1898.

**980630 (Almond Mary02)**

30 June 1898

My dear Mary

I am in bed with Influenza but hope to get out tomorrow.

Would you kindly give the female performers in 'Red Spider' an idea of Devonshire pronunciation and intonation.<sup>163</sup> I have written to Mr. Badger<sup>164</sup> about it his address is 212 Cornwall Road W.<sup>165</sup>

Not very far from Orme Squ. I think. They would quickly pick it up from you.

Lew Tr.

June 30<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Bickford Dickinson reports in his biography that Mary did give advice to the cast but with little success. Dickinson's assertion that there was a London run of 'Red Spider' is erroneous. (See Moira Harris) It could be that because rehearsals were held in London he assumed that the opening performances were there too.

<sup>164</sup> According to Moira Harris Sabine, had worked previously with Mr E Badger on some *Songs of the West* presentations in an administrative capacity. It seems likely that he was similarly engaged for the production of the opera *Red Spider*. A letter from him to Sabine on 13 Dec 1897 concerning the Lord Chancellor's Licence for the first performance of the operetta at the Town Hall, Wells, confirms this. There is, however, no firm evidence that a public performance ever took place at Wells.

<sup>165</sup> It is to be hoped that Mary did not rely too heavily on Sabine's advice on finding Cornwall Road. There are several Cornwall Roads in London, mostly at some distance from the city centre, but only one Orme Square and that is off the Bayswater Road just to the north of Kensington Gardens. Just under a mile to the south is Cornwall Gardens. This is a substantial development and could well have 212 residences. The nearest Cornwall Road is close to Waterloo Station. This is south of the river and is not in W. London.

<sup>166</sup> No year given but from other related letters the date must be 30 June 1898.

9807U01<sup>167</sup>

Probably 1 or 2 July 1898

My dearest Mary

I am very much better. I am up today, but shall have to keep in for some days and live on slops. I had the flu coming on a fortnight before I collapsed, but did not know what it was and I went off to Trebartha for a visit, but was so poorly there that I came away on the third day.<sup>168</sup> I hear you leave on Tuesday<sup>169</sup>. That gives you very little time to drill the artistes in Devonshire twang.

But you really must see them and have a look at the costumes. I want also to know what you think of the artistes. I know only Carr Shaw<sup>170</sup> by name, and I have neither heard nor seen, and do not at all know who the rest are, but Mr. Drysdale<sup>171</sup> has been very particular in his selection I know. A. Bird<sup>172</sup> will drill the men, but the girls will get a better idea from you.

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>167</sup> No address or date given but clearly written very soon after Almond letter Mary02 dated 30 June 1898 in which Sabine wrote that he was ill with influenza, asked Mary to attend in his place and assist the cast of Sabine's opera *Red Spider* with their Devon Accent. Therefore the date of this letter is probably 1 or 2 July 1898. It is likely that Sabine asked Mary to carry out this task because she and Harvey were staying in London although it was to be some years before they took up a permanent residence in London.

<sup>168</sup> The description of an illness coming on for a fortnight does not suggest influenza. More likely to be one of Sabine's recurrent bouts of bronchitis heralded by the common cold.

<sup>169</sup> Tuesday was 5 July, i.e. 5 days after his first letter was written.

<sup>170</sup> Lucy Carr Shaw: singer and actress, sister of George Bernard Shaw.

<sup>171</sup> Learmont Drysdale, composer of the opera *Red Spider*.

<sup>172</sup> The identity and role of A. Bird in the production is not known.

**9807U02**<sup>173</sup>

*Probably a few days after 2 July 1898*

My dear Mary

That will do splendidly.

July 14<sup>th</sup> Leila to bring Sheppard. I will write to her about it. I go up to town on Wednesday next as Red Spider demands my presence.<sup>174</sup> I am decidedly better.

Yours affect  
S. Baring Gould

P.S. You and Harvey must come with us to see the production in Plymth.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> This letter clearly followed closely on 9807U01 and chronicled Sabine's recovery from 'influenza' and his intention to get to rehearsals as soon as possible. Presumably the letter was in response to Mary's reply to Sabine's earlier letter. The implication is that Mary was willing to attend a rehearsal to advise on dialect, as Sabine requested.

<sup>174</sup> It is unclear why and where Sabine's half sister Leila was to escort the Rev Fleetwood Sheppard on 14 July. The first performance was not until 25 July. Possibly he was to attend one of the London rehearsals. As Fleetwood Shepherd had been involved in the early stages of the development of the opera it is quite possible that he asked if he could attend a rehearsal.

<sup>175</sup> Sabine's excitement is evident in his insistence that Harvey and Mary see the Plymouth production.

980803

3 August 1898

3 Aug. 1898  
5 Royal Terrace  
S David's  
Sth. Wales

My dearest Mary

We have had sweltering hot weather both in London and here at S David's. In town the drudgery of the rehearsals<sup>176</sup> was awful, 11- 2, 3 –6, 7.30 – 10.30. I did not attend all only two a day and that not every day. But there were so many little alterations to be made, suggestions to be considered, that my presence was really indispensable. However I was glad to make the acquaintance of all the principal performers who are particularly nice. Honor and Kate<sup>177</sup> are real ladies by birth and education and quite perfect as representing their parts.

At Lowestoft<sup>178</sup> the attendances were only good enough to pay expenses but it was really a rehearsal there, some of the 3<sup>rd</sup> act music had not been rehearsed so it was cobbled up, as best could be; by the time the compy [*sic*] get to Swansea all will go with a swing, I shall be there for a matinée and add a few touches to the dialogue, and at Exeter and Plymouth all will be perfect.

It really is one of the liveliest operas I know, just enough of story, of human interest, of pathos and of fun mixed together. You positively must hear it at Exeter or Plymouth. The company are most sanguine about it – convinced it has all the elements of a tremendous success.

We have been digging at S David's but have not found much yet.<sup>179</sup> Every body in this place now drifts out to see what is being done and we have to harangue on pre-historic antiquities all day long. Today however a drizzle has set in and we can not go out.

Mr. and Mrs. Burnard and Dorothy<sup>180</sup> are here also Mr. Enys of Enys, near Penryn.<sup>181</sup> Remember me very affectionately to Harvey and kiss the dear little boys from me.

I remain  
yours try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>176</sup> The opera, *Red Spider*.

<sup>177</sup> Honor and Kate: Characters in *Red Spider*. Played by Lucy Carr Shaw and Alys Rees respectively. See Moira Harris, *The Comic Opera Red Spider*, Newsletter SBGAS No. 25, October 2006.

<sup>178</sup> Lowestoft: First public performance of *Red Spider*. 25 July 1898.

<sup>179</sup> These excavations were recorded in *Exploration of the Stone Camp on St. David's Head. Archaeologia Cambrensis* 5th Series, Vol. 16, pp. 105-131 (April 1899) Robert Burnard and John Enys were Sabine's co-authors.

<sup>180</sup> Dorothy: The youngest daughter of Robert Burnard and his wife, Frances. Dorothy married Kenneth Lake.

<sup>181</sup> John Davies Enys, 1837-1912: A man of many interests. Sabine's friend, correspondent, and collaborator in archaeological explorations in Cornwall and South Wales. See David Shacklock, *The Baring-Gould – Enys Letters*, Transactions, SBGAS Vol II, supplement, 2002.

**9808U01 (Almond Mary03):<sup>182</sup>**  
*Between 13 and 20 August 1898*

My dearest Mary

“Red Spider” next week in Exeter. Barbie<sup>183</sup> and I go to Cleve<sup>184</sup> and shall be there two nights.

Then the Plymouth week is 28<sup>th</sup> Aug to 3 Sept. Matinee on Saturday Sept.3. Vera and I go to the Burnards for the Monday, - Wed. return Thursday. Could you get Arthur<sup>185</sup> to take you in at Plymouth so as to go with us? I had to run up with Mr. Ward<sup>186</sup> to Leamington on Thursday and back Friday. This hot weather is killing the theatres and there is a dead loss every week. This has to be met by me and the Drysdales – so I went to see and settle.<sup>187</sup> We hope Plymouth may set us up a bit and may show turn of tide. All theatres alike and directed great now

Yours try

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<sup>182</sup> The bottom of the letter, which possibly showed the date, has been torn off. The contents suggest the date was between 13 and 20 August 1898.

<sup>183</sup> Sabine’s daughter Barbara, then aged 18 years.

<sup>184</sup> Cleve House, Exwick, Exeter. Home of Sabine’s friends, the Northmores.

<sup>185</sup> Arthur: presumably Sabine’s half-brother, who was appointed as his curate in June 1898.

<sup>186</sup> Ward: Probably Frank Ward, the agent, of Ward and Chowen.

<sup>187</sup> It is evident from this letter that the production did not get off to a good start. The accumulating losses did not bode well.

**980902 (Almond Mary04):<sup>188</sup>**

*2 September 1898*

Dearest Mary,

“Red Spider” is a tremendous success, and its luck is assured, crowded houses each night.<sup>189</sup>

Your tickets Dress Circle are 49.50.51. You will have to go or send to office the money and the tickets will be yours. I doubt if there will be any left by this evening as they are booked up very fast.

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

2 Sept. 1898

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<sup>188</sup> This letter is reproduced in full in B H C Dickinson’s biography. It is evident from Moira Harris’s research that ‘Red Spider’ was never a tremendous success other than in Devon.

<sup>189</sup> Sabine’s optimism was fired by the experience of the company in Plymouth.

**981003**<sup>190</sup>

3 October 1898

My dear Mary

I have just returned from Cornwall with one of my bronchitis attacks and I was obliged to get little Chitty<sup>191</sup> to take my duty this evening. However I hope I shall get round this week. Mamma has not been heard from, so I suppose is well.<sup>192</sup>

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

Lew Trenchard

N. Devon

Oct. 3

P.S. I go next week to Liverpool for "Red Spider" production and settle about a tour in Spring.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> From the reference to the opera *Red Spider* it can be confidently inferred that the year was 1898.

<sup>191</sup> The Rev. Chas. Chitty was Sabine's curate.

<sup>192</sup> Evidently Grace was away from home when this letter was written. It is not known where she was staying.

<sup>193</sup> The production of *Red Spider* closed for good in November 1898. There was to be no 'Spring tour' in 1899. As Sabine implied in earlier letters, the production did not attract large audiences and financially was not a success. A cautious change of heart by D'oyly Carte to the effect that they might take an interest in the opera if it came to London was both too late and too lukewarm to save the production.

981226<sup>194</sup>

Probably 26 December 1898

My dearest Mary

Many many thanks to you and Harvey for having found out my weak point and pampered it. I shall enjoy the snipe and no mistake.

We have a very merry happy party here. Yesterday the church was lovely 44 communicants, and the church so crammed in the evening that many could not get in. All Coryton was there as well as Lew.

I have had a curious collection of Xmas cards, one from an actress, one from two little children of a washer woman in Edinburgh, I have never seen, one from an innkeeper, one from a butler, one from a bagman and one from a potter. The actress is Alys Rees (Kate in *Red Spider*) the innkeeper, Whittaker in London<sup>195</sup> and the butler Harry "The Dock."<sup>196</sup> The bagman is a young socialist Commercial I made great friends with in the potteries, and the potter is a "hand" in these latter.<sup>197</sup>

Do you know who is the contractor for Poundstock<sup>198</sup> church. I fear shortly havock is being wrought there under the abused term "restoration", the old bench ends if about to be turned out I shd. like to secure. I think if you will have me I may run to you for a night or two and see about them.

I remain  
with best wishes for a New Year  
your affect father  
S Baring Gould

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<sup>194</sup> No address or date given but from the references to Lew church, Christmas and Christmas gifts from the cast of *Red Spider* the address is clearly Lew House and the date almost certainly 26 December 1898.

<sup>195</sup> Whittaker's Hotel was where Sabine was wont to stay when in London.

<sup>196</sup> The identity of the butler, alias Harry "The Dock" is not known.

<sup>197</sup> Sabine visited the Potteries to research the location of his novel *The Frobishers: a story of the Staffordshire Potteries* (First published as a serial in *The Queen*, 1900, under the title *Our Joan*), pp.viii and 308. London: Methuen & Co, 1901.

<sup>198</sup> Poundstock is located 4 miles south of Bude. Ideally situated to be visited by Sabine from Mary's house in Bude.

**981229**

29 December 1898

Dearest Mary

Many thanks for the laver, and for your good wishes. What a splendid crossing Daisy must have had.<sup>199</sup> We expect a wire now almost hourly. Best wishes to you and Harvey and my darling little boys.

You would be amazed to see me smoking. I have taken to a pipe and Pinoza.<sup>200</sup> It relieves my chest, but one pipe – half at breakfast, half in the evening – is enough for me.

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

29 Dec. 1898

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<sup>199</sup> Presumably this reference to Daisy's 'splendid crossing' refers to a channel crossing in fine weather. The circumstances of this journey are not known.

<sup>200</sup> Pinoza: The following entry in *The Nursing Record and Hospital World*, June 22, 1895. p. 447, gives further insight into the reasons why Sabine smoked Pinoza "An inventor... has treated tobacco with the essential oil of pine, and has produced a form to which he has given the name Pinoza, and which has been found by experience, not only to increase and improve the quality and aroma of the tobacco, but at the same time to subserve a most useful process in fumigating apartments and clothing, and thus acting as an excellent disinfectant and safe guard against contagious diseases. The advantages of the pine oil which are so well recognised in the treatment of pulmonary complaints, are thus obtainable by smokers, and in many cases it has been found that persons who are unable to smoke ordinary tobacco, because the nicotine irritates the throat, are able to use the Pinoza tobacco, not only with pleasure, but also with benefit to the mucous membranes of their throat and lungs."

**9901U01**<sup>201</sup>

*Probably early January 1899*

My dearest Mary

I am so much obliged for the woodcock and snipe, they were simply delicious. Thank Harvey for me. I enclose cheque.<sup>202</sup>

My tall curate has come, he is very nice – I am sure he will be liked.<sup>203</sup>

What gales!

I go to harangue in Plymouth on Tuesday the Incorporated Society of Musicians<sup>204</sup> are coming there for a Musical Week, and I have to talk about folk music in Devon and Cornwall.

Then – last week in Jan. I go up to London to yarn before the Cymmrodorion<sup>205</sup> on prehistoric castles, and before the Cornish Society on “The Cornish Saints”<sup>206</sup>

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>201</sup> It has not been easy to date this letter. The pattern of sending Sabine woodcock and snipe at Christmas seems to have been established in 1898 when he wrote on 25 December: “*Many many thanks to you and Harvey for having found out my weak point and pampered it. I shall enjoy the snipe and no mistake.*” So presumably this letter dates from after then. Possibly around Christmas.

<sup>202</sup> Almost certainly payment of Mary’s quarterly allowance.

<sup>203</sup> Sabine’s tall curate was probably the Rev. William Whitwell who also stood in for Sabine during his year in Dinan.

<sup>204</sup> Attempts to date the IMS meeting have been unsuccessful. Enquiries to staff and officers at the Incorporated Society of Musicians have been repeatedly ignored.

<sup>205</sup> *The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* was founded in 1751 and received its Royal Charter in 1951, on the occasion of its bicentenary. Established for the encouragement of Literature, Science and the Arts as connected with Wales, the society continues to promote the practice and development of literature, the arts and sciences insofar as they are of special interest to Wales, the Welsh people and those interested in Wales. Meetings of the Society are usually held in London. Transactions have been published since 1822 but in the early years, only sporadically. However in 1900 Sabine’s ‘*Early Fortifications in Wales*’ did appear in *The Transactions of The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion 1898-1899*.

<sup>206</sup> In 1899, an article *The Celtic Saints* appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, Vol. 14, pp. 11-47. Taking all the above into account, the sending of the quarterly allowance, and the reference to lecturing in January, on balance this letter was most probably written in early January 1899 after Sabine had eaten the snipe and woodcock referred to on 25 December 1898.

**000420**

*20 April 1900*

My dear Mary

With best wishes for your birthday.<sup>207</sup> I am sorry it is a day late but a man dipped in to see me yesterday and remained all afternoon from 2 to 6.15 and I could not get time to pick the flowers. And even now I send but a few as we are run short of boxes in which to pack them. Thanks for your enquiries relative to rent of houses. I shall want some more details later<sup>208</sup>

I remain yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

20 Apl 1900

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<sup>207</sup> Mary was 31 on 20 April.

<sup>208</sup> The reference to *the rent of houses* is of uncertain significance. It is known that in October 1900 Sabine closed up Lew House and moved to Dinan with the family. It is also known that, from his letter to Mary dated 2 December 1900, he was trying to rent out Lew House during his absence. It is possible that he had asked Mary, while she was staying in London, to make enquiries about what he might be able to ask as rent for Lew House.

001202<sup>209</sup>

2 December 1900

My dearest Mary

We are still in our hotel<sup>210</sup> "Taking our ease as we can," but I have taken a villa for a twelve-month from Christmas. It is a pleasant house with a pretty garden.

Fancy, there are Arscotts here, who give themselves out as being members of the Arscott family, but of which branch I do not know. Mr. Arscott plays the organ at S. Malo's church and gives music lessons, but the mother was a member of a noble Breton family. I shall call on him and ascertain something more about his claims and whether he can sing "Arscott of Tetcott."

We had an excellent concert here on Tuesday, and a picnic yesterday up the road. This last was not a great success as there reigned a dense white fog so that we could see nothing. There were 28 sat down to lunch at a little inn and a capital lunch we had. The bicyclists found the road horribly greasy and arrived beplastered with mud.

I really think that Barbie and Di<sup>211</sup> are happy here. Di is blooming like a rose in June and the mother at the convent would not believe that she had not painted her cheeks, so conceive how blooming she must be.<sup>212</sup> She has a prodigious appetite whereas Barbie eats hardly anything.

We had last Saturday week a very pleasant dinner at the club,<sup>213</sup> the members and their wives – and for once the grass-widows who swarm here were out in the cold. There is to be a ball at the club on the 17<sup>th</sup> when Diana will come out, and another after Xmas. So – you see – the place is not absolutely stagnant. Mamma goes out a walk every free day with me, and the pretty walks here are numerous.

I hear that in the garden of our villa is a lovely chromatella<sup>214</sup> rose, a kind that does not flower in England, and is becoming scarce in France. I shall get cuttings of it and try whether I cannot acclimatise it at Lew, where it ought to do.

I have not as yet been able to let Lew House,<sup>215</sup> I wish that I could, it would be a great relief to my mind, and free me of the expense of the garden.

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<sup>209</sup> Undated letter from Dinan written on Advent Sunday. From the content and from entries in the Family Bible this was 1900 when Advent Sunday fell on 2 December.

<sup>210</sup> According to the entry in the family bible for 1900, the family arrived in Dinan 20 October 1900.

<sup>211</sup> Barbara was aged 20 and Diana 19.

<sup>212</sup> The mother at the convent was right. In her notebook memoirs for this period, Sabine's daughter Joan Priestley wrote *my sister Diana, used to buy or borrow 6d novels always in red – she used to lick these to rouge her cheeks. My dear father (thoroughly taken in) used to say "At least this move has done Diana good, from being a pale child she has now a beautiful complexion."*

<sup>213</sup> The nature of the 'club' is not known. Possibly a group of ex-patriots.

<sup>214</sup> Chromatella Rose: In her *Roses for English Gardens* first published in 1902, Gertrude Jekyll wrote in the chapter for English Gardens in the Riviera: *R. Chromatella or Cloth of Gold. - A grand Rose, so rarely seen now that it should not be forgotten. Its individual blooms are unsurpassed in size and colour by any yellow Rose, and its December flowers are most beautiful of all when in a rich soil and sheltered position. The fact that its lovely buds bruise so easily, and that it is a special prey to mildew, are the reasons why it is now only to be found in a few gardens where it is extra happy. This is one of the Roses for which this coast was famous until the advent of Maréchal Niel entirely displaced it.*

I am glad to say we have at last got a nice chaplain here who will remain three years, he is a good churchman and is a gentleman. I am helping him.

Love to Harvey and to the bairns

I remain  
your affect father

S. Baring Gould

Hôtel des Voyageurs

Dinan

Cotes du Nord

Advent Sunday

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<sup>215</sup> Lew House: Sabine's worries over the failure to let Lew House endorse the likelihood that at this time, according to Bickford Dickinson in his biography and Joan in her unpublished memoirs, Sabine's finances were precarious.

**010125**

25 January 1901

My dearest Mary

Very many thanks for the sealing wax and for the pretty calendar.<sup>216</sup>

Edward and Marian have arrived and are going out down the road for a long walk and back by train this afternoon.

Unless I can let Lew House I shall not remain here after next October but return home,<sup>217</sup> and in that case I shall let the children remain at Miss Smith's and only come out for the holidays.<sup>218</sup>

I have been touring about in Lower Brittany last week to collect material for my book,<sup>219</sup> and enjoyed myself greatly, but had to be careful, all the sheets were damp so I had to pull them off and I slept between the sheets<sup>220</sup>

With best love to Harvey and the children

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

Villa Penthievre  
Porte S Malo  
Dinan  
Côtes du Nord  
25 Jan 1901

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<sup>216</sup> Sabine and family were now settled in the villa in Dinan and in this letter he thanked Mary for his birthday gifts. He was 67 on 28 January.

<sup>217</sup> Sabine actually returned to Lew on 17 December rather than October but this early return, nevertheless, does suggest that Lew House did remain unlet.

<sup>218</sup> The reference to the children at Miss Smith's confirms the younger children were boarding at an English school. The location of this school is not known.

<sup>219</sup> The book Sabine was researching was '*A Book of Brittany*' published by Methuen in 1901.

<sup>220</sup> This appears to be a slip of the pen. Having removed the sheets it may be that Sabine slept between the blankets.

**010401***1 April 1901*

Villa Penthièvre  
 Dinan  
 Cotes du Nord  
 France  
 April 1. 1901

My dearest Mary

I enclose cheque<sup>221</sup>

The children arrive on Thursday morning and we are looking forward to their arrival.

I take Gracie to S. Malo on Wednesday, for an oculist to see to her eyes, as there is a tendency to squint.

The steamer arrives on Thursday morning at 4 a.m. but no one is allowed off the boat till 8 a.m. when the Customs House opens. I shall be on the spot to pass their boxes thro' the customs, and I have an omnibus chartered,<sup>222</sup> and we all drive thence to Dinan, about 2 hours by road and as near it by train driving to round about road.

We have now lovely spring weather, I hope it will be same for their passage. Best love to Harvey and the dear little boys. I wish you a happy Easter.

We reckon on Bligh<sup>223</sup> as best man to Laurence, a Dr Newton here will act father and give Barbara away.<sup>224</sup>

Yours very try  
 S. Baring Gould

Mamma is teased with Nettle Rash and her face is swollen with it<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> Payment of the quarterly allowance.

<sup>222</sup> It is not possible to tell which children were due to arrive by the steamer – apparently a sufficient number to require a horse drawn omnibus! It is, however, possible that other guests for the wedding were also on the steamer. Evidently daughter Grace was already in France as were Diana, Barbara and possibly Joan.

<sup>223</sup> Bligh: Presumably this was Sabine's cousin, Bligh Bond, then aged 37, who in August 1889 had been a suitor for the hand of Daisy. It is likely that he was a good friend of Laurence Burnard.

<sup>224</sup> Barbara, then aged 21, was married to Laurence Burnard on 8 April Easter Monday. See Family Bible entry for 1901. See also *Never Completely Submerged*, pp 204-5 for a draft letter to Laurence dated 4 November 1999 suggesting Barbara was not ready for marriage.

<sup>225</sup> It is not clear what condition Sabine's wife, Grace, was experiencing. Possibly an allergic reaction.

**010521**<sup>226</sup>  
 21 May 1901

Villa Penthièvre  
 Dinan  
 Côtes du Nord  
 May 21, 1901

My dear Mary

I shall be in London the first S in Trinity.<sup>227</sup> I hear something about you being in London about that time. Is it so? I shall go onto Guildford<sup>228</sup> and see those there, then down to Lew, and Plymouth, and if I do not see you in London I shall go onto Bude.<sup>229</sup>

Tell Harvey that Mr. Arscott is vastly keen about the pedigree. Would you mind copying it out and sending him a copy of the Arscott arms? The family came from Devon, but two generations ago. I have promised him the pedigree so I hope Harvey will let me have it.

We have glorious weather here but too hot for comfort, and can only go out in the evening after tea.

Kindly let me know soon about your movements

Yours very truly  
 S. Baring Gould

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<sup>226</sup> There are no more letters from Dinan in this collection. According to the entry in the Family Bible for 1901 the family returned to Lew on 17 December 1901 having spent 14 months in Dinan. It is probable that Lew remained unlet.

<sup>227</sup> First Sunday in Trinity: 2 June 1901.

<sup>228</sup> Sabine's cousin, Francis, son of the Rev Charles Baring-Gould and his family who lived at Merrow, Guildford.

<sup>229</sup> This letter suggests that at this time Mary and Harvey were still resident in Bude but spending time in London.

**021202**

2 December 1902

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
Dec.2 /1902

My dearest Mary

Thank you so much for the offer of the cardigan, which I shall be delighted to have, especially as worked by your dear fingers.<sup>230</sup>

A nice letter from Felicitas<sup>231</sup>

“I love it here, if only my feet did not get so frightfully sore and swollen, the first day I could not put on my shoes. I am in the men’s ward, some of them are awfully nice and others are sulky beasts, grumbling horribly, and whatever you do for them it is not right. We have to be up at 6 and breakfast at 7. Then we go on till 10.30 and then lunch; then go on again until 1.30 then lunch [*sic*] then on again until 4.30 tea, and then on until 8.30 supper, and then to bed. I have 50 spittoons to wash out twice a day. Some of the men are fearfully ill, one man in the ward with typhoid fever. Early in the morning I make bed, after that sweep out the ward and wash the spit-pots and oil the fireplaces, give medicine, take temperatures, then wash the men and give them breakfast and one’s mornings or any part of the day is not long enough to get the work in. My sister is an awful dear, she told me not to make friends in the place, as they are not all nice. We have 3 days in the week from 3-5, one day from 1 pm to 10 am, and Sunday afternoons off. So we do not do at all badly.”

I am so thankful that Felicitas has taken up useful work, it will do her all the good in the world. I wish I had seen more of you but the morning you were over I had some business with regard to the school that had to be done.

I remain  
Your try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>230</sup> The cardigan may have been intended as a Christmas present.

<sup>231</sup> This letter is of particular interest because it includes a copy of a letter, or part of a letter from Sabine’s daughter Felicitas (Titus) then aged 18. From the content it can be inferred that Felicitas had recently taken up a position as a trainee nurse. She gives a fascinating description of the daily life of a junior nurse in 1902. It is in many ways not dissimilar to the daily round of a junior nurse in the mid-1900s although it does include more domestic chores. Sabine’s satisfaction with her commitment is consistent with his attitude to his children generally and his belief in the character forming benefits of menial work.

**Section II**  
**March 1903 to October 1911**

## March 1903 to October 1911<sup>232</sup>

The number of surviving letters from this decade is significantly less than in the previous decade, with a reduction from around one letter every ten weeks to about one every twenty weeks. There are no series of letters referring to any one subject apart from three letters written in 1911, in which Sabine expressed his concerns for Mary's health following an operation for a tumour that proved not to be malignant. Apart from these letters, the correspondence generally gives no more than an infrequent snapshot of Sabine's activities and preoccupations at this time. In this decade rather more of the letters refer to episodes of ill health in him, while one letter commented on Grace making herself ill with worry waiting for news of the birth of her daughter, Diana's first child.<sup>233</sup>

In general the correspondence has the same buoyancy and mix of reporting family affairs, sending Mary her quarterly allowance and exchanging birthday or seasonal greetings as was seen in the 1890s. Reference was made to Diana being happy with her future husband Hugh Maxwell-Batten<sup>234</sup> and to news of the birth of Joan's first child in India.<sup>235</sup>

The four letters to Mary from trips abroad in this decade are just as detailed and illuminating as those written from abroad in the previous decade. They are particularly remarkable for demonstrating that on these trips he was always accompanied by his wife, Grace and on a visit to Munich also by two of his children, Felicitas and John.<sup>236</sup> Sabine was evidently combining business with pleasure as these trips were also used to research the books he was in the process of writing. In the letter from Munich written in 1908 Sabine commented that, with regular walking, Grace's ability to walk had improved as had her general health. It can be inferred that the need for Grace to take exercise was caused by the rheumatoid arthritis she which she suffered and which eventually led to her death.

There are seven references to Sabine's daughter Felicitas,<sup>237</sup> some of which are less favourable than that given by Sabine in letter 021202 when she had just embarked on a nursing career. In the letter from Munich, what Sabine regarded as the somewhat frivolous attitudes of Felicitas are in contrast with the industry and enthusiasm described by Sabine in her younger brother, John.

There are two caring but critical letters about the employment placements Sabine had found for his son, Henry.<sup>238</sup>

One letter written in 1906 referred to the financial success of the Oatine toiletry business that his son Edward had established.

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<sup>232</sup> No letters from 1912 have survived.

<sup>233</sup> Letter 110309.

<sup>234</sup> Letter 060312.

<sup>235</sup> Letter 0906U01.

<sup>236</sup> Letter 081025.

<sup>237</sup> Letters 030330, 080207, 080624, 080813, 081025, 091230 and 110309.

<sup>238</sup> Letters 030330 and 060312.

Occasional letters referred to problems with servants at Lew House. Sometimes Mary was asked to visit agencies in London on Sabine's behalf to find suitable domestic staff.

There are two letters from Grace to Mary.<sup>239</sup> One was written in 1911 at the time of Mary's surgical operation, The other letter is an illuminating missive penned in 1909 in which she anxiously expressed her hopes that Mary had not been offended by Sabine's reluctance to have Mary's children to stay at Lew House. This reluctance, she explained, arose simply because he found their noisiness at table irritating.

Also in 1911 Sabine described the extensive disruption of the household caused by his final major building work at Lew House, the creation of his gallery. He made the puzzling comment *Edward is altering the back of the house and going to turn bedrooms over into a gallery.*<sup>240</sup> The restoration of the gallery, which began in 1888, was undoubtedly Sabine's project. One possible explanation for this statement could be that Edward, now a successful businessman,<sup>241</sup> was providing the finance to enable this part of the restoration to be completed thus relieving the family and especially Grace from perpetually living on a building site.

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<sup>239</sup> Letters 0906U01, 111013.

<sup>240</sup> Letter 111006.

<sup>241</sup> Letter 060325.

**030309***9 March 1903*

Lew Trenchard

N Devon

Mch 9, 1903

My dearest Mary

Thank you so very much for the delightful cardigan<sup>242</sup> you have sent me, I shall be warm indeed in it. I am thankful to say that my voice is again right. I spent a fortnight on the Moor with the Burnards, and it completely restored me, and now I feel quite fit.<sup>243</sup>

Mamma would like to go to you on Friday and stay till Monday, taking Gracie with her.

I shall not be able to get away for a month, as I have to deliver a novel by 1 April and shall be hard at work copying.<sup>244</sup> It is as much as I can get through in the time.

I remain

Yours truly

S. Baring Gould

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<sup>242</sup> Mary appears to have enjoyed knitting for her father. It seems unlikely that this is the same cardigan promised in letter 021202.

<sup>243</sup> Sabine often referred to retreating to the Moor to recover from his frequent chest infections etc. This is the only reference to where he stayed on the moor. The Burnards did live at Postbridge for a time.

<sup>244</sup> *In Dewisland*, published in *The Treasury* 1903-1904, is most likely to be the novel that had to be delivered by 1 April.

**030330**

30 March 1903

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
Mch 30, 1903

Dearest Mary

I enclose cheque less income tax.<sup>245</sup>

Mamma returns from Guildford today.<sup>246</sup> She and I saw Felicitas who is blooming as a rose and very happy. Also Harry who has gone through hard times. He has to sit in the kitchen and has no room to himself. Even his bedroom is not his own for the man and his boy also sleep in it. I have told him to shift to Erith where he can have lodgings to himself. It will cost me about 15/- a week but I cannot let him be so uncomfortable. He has borne it gallantly, and without complaint – devoured by fleas and it has done him good. He has learned to know and to be able to be on a footing with the British working man, and that is an asset for life. And he has admitted to Alex Baring that he had thrown away his chances and must do his best to revive them. He comes home for a week at Easter<sup>247</sup>

Your affect  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>245</sup> The cheque is Mary's quarterly allowance.

<sup>246</sup> It seems that, while Sabine was writing the novel mentioned in 030309, Grace, having spent time with Mary at Bude, went on to visit the family of Francis Baring-Gould at Guildford. Francis was a son of Sabine's uncle, the Rev Charles Baring-Gould. At some point Sabine joined Grace and they visited both Harry and Felicitas in London. It would seem that Felicitas was still nursing and enjoying it.

<sup>247</sup> To understand the significance of Harry's 'hard times' and Sabine's concern for his son's well being, it is necessary to refer to the letter written by Sabine to his son Edward on 2 January 1902: "*I am taking Harry away from Winchester at Easter, he is doing nothing there, and I shall apprentice him at a foundry in Plymouth I think to make him work with his hands as he will not with his head, but he must also attend to technical education classes in the evening if he is to get on. He is so inert, and shows so little disposition for any particular line of work, that it is disheartening.*" The reference that Harry will 'shift to Erith' suggests that Sabine did not send Harry to a foundry in Plymouth but to a firm near Dartford in Kent. If so this could well have been the Railway Repair works of the South Eastern Railway to which his brother Willy was sent in 1896. (See letter 960611) This is another example of Sabine's belief in the character forming benefits of menial work and roughing it.

**040219***19 February 1904*

Hotel de l'Europe  
 Pau  
 Basses Pyrenées  
 Franc  
 19 Feb. 1904

My dearest Mary

We have arrived safely at Pau after 10 days spent on the journey. We halted for a day at Orléans to recruit and then went on to Perigueux where we halted again for a day.

Then we spent Sunday at Les Eyzies a little village that I know well, and where the people know me. My friend Gaston, the son of the innkeeper, who used to go walks and drives with me ten years ago is dead; but his father and mother were there and welcomed us most cordially.

Then we came into Pau halting at Agen and Auch.<sup>248</sup> Rain, rain, rain all the way, we had one fine day at Perigueux and one half day of fine weather at Les Eyzies.

We have encountered thunder, lightning and hail. Yesterday was too wet and stormy for us to leave the inn, but this morning was bright so we went for a walk, but rain came on again in the afternoon. The mountains are enveloped in clouds and will not let themselves be seen.

We are in a nice inn but it is more expensive than Wiesbaden.<sup>249</sup> There we paid 6/6 a day without wine, here 8/4 including wine. But we were at Wiesbaden out of the season, and here it is the height of the season.

In the gardens are palms flourishing, and there are everywhere signs of spring. If we do have sunshine and brightness then the flowers will soon be out.

We were in the train on Shrove Tuesday so saw next to nothing of the carnival. Only at one station a cartload of maskers under umbrellas in a persisting rain. There was to have been a grand Carnival procession here, but all was spoiled by the weather. A great circus here was blown head over heels last Sunday and reduced to inaction on Shrove Tuesday.

They say that it has been raining here for three months with hardly any intermission. As we came from Paris the whole country seemed to be under water. At Perigueux the lower town was submerged and the people were occupying the upper storeys of their houses. The valleys are all sheets of turbid brown water.

I got a nasty cold in London and have been much worried by my cough, but it is rather better now. In some of the inns the sheets were damp and we had to sleep in our clothes, and Mamma was in a panic lest we should have rheumatic fever.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>248</sup> Agen and Auch are both on the direct route from Perigueux to Pau.

<sup>249</sup> Visit to Wiesbaden, also with Grace, October-November 1903 – See family bible entry for that year.

<sup>250</sup> This suggests that Grace shared Sabine's pre-occupation with illhealth.

At Les Eyzies Mamma was vastly astonished when I showed her an inn in the face of the cliff 100ft high the rooms caves scooped out of the rock and reached by ladders or by galleries projecting from the face of the cliff. It is called l'hotel du Paradis.<sup>251</sup> We did not feel disposed to sleep in a cave in this weather.

Give my best love to Vera<sup>252</sup>; Mamma sends you both hers

I remain  
Your affect. father  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>251</sup> Hôtel du Paradis: Described by Sabine in *Cliff Castles and Cave Dwellings of Europe*, published in 1911.

<sup>252</sup> Vera, then aged 29, was probably staying with Mary either at Bude or at Dunsland House to which she and Harvey moved in 1904.

**050101 (display)**<sup>253</sup>

*1 January 05*

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
Jan 1, 1905

My dear Mary

Best wishes for a New Year. I have begun mine badly with heavy cold and cough and loss of voice.<sup>254</sup> I enclose quarterage less income tax.<sup>255</sup> All our party save Grace<sup>256</sup> have gone to the meet at Bridestowe.

I remain  
Yours try  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>253</sup> For reasons which are unknown, this letter has been framed and the number 8602 appears on the back of the frame.

<sup>254</sup> Many of Sabine's letters to Mary refer to coughs, colds, bronchitis, loss of voice.

<sup>255</sup> As was often the case this letter accompanied Mary's quarterly allowance.

<sup>256</sup> This reference to 'Grace' was to Sabine's daughter Grace, then aged 13.

**050606***6 June 1905*

Lew Trenchard

N. Devon

June 6, 1905

My dear Mary

We will be delighted to see you, but you will have to take the children away before ours return from school, because of whooping cough. I could not otherwise guarantee that they had not been in contact with those who had an infectious disease.<sup>257</sup>

I remain

Yours truly

S. Baring=Gould [*ic*]

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<sup>257</sup> This letter would have been written in response to a request by Mary to visit Lew with her children. It is unclear which children had or had not been in contact with whooping cough – or, as all his own young children had whooping cough in 1895, it could be that Sabine was simply making an excuse not to have his peace disturbed by 3 noisy grandsons, Arscott, then aged 12, Edward aged 10 and Bickford aged 5.

**060312***12 March 1906*

Grand Café Maguelone  
 6 Rue Maguelone  
 Claude Jallet  
 Propriétaire  
 (*address printed on hotel paper*)

Montpellier le 12 Mars 1906

My dear Mary

We have pottered along south. We went to Perpignan, the town furthest south in France, but were woefully disappointed. The plane trees and olives all bowed from the necks showed that it was subject to bitter winds from the snow clad Cevennes.<sup>258</sup> We remained there a week and then fled north under the shelter of the limestone precipices of their range. Now we are slowly making our way homewards and I trust we shall be back before Easter.<sup>259</sup> We shall wriggle in and out by side lanes among the Cevennes for I am determined to know them well so as to write a book upon them.<sup>260</sup> I have already collected a heap of information on a bit of country hardly visited at all by Englishmen, and yet which abounds in interest and beauty.

We have been in the midst of the trouble over the inventories of the churches. Everywhere the church doors have been smashed by agents of the government. We were at Heis<sup>261</sup> when the inventory was taken, but there the curé and the commissary of police were both conciliatory and no conflict took place, though more than half the town had swarmed out to what would happen. In some places there has been bloodshed, the soldiers firing on the people happily not where we were present. If I had seen rifles pointed, I would have retired into a café and called for a petit verre de Benedictine till the slaughter was over. Mamma and I are particularly comfortable here, where we have been a week, but tomorrow we go to Nimes, only for a couple of nights, then we plunge into the mountains, and what sort of inns we shall be in and what the sanitary arrangements will be, Heaven only knows. Mamma will have to growl and swear and put up with them. I must admit that I am longing to get home to see how that the new Rectory<sup>262</sup> is getting on. I suppose Di is adhering like a happy – leech to the Battens. Hugh<sup>263</sup> is working in Edward's office and is working well there. Harry is working at Lew for Mr. Little<sup>264</sup> at a small salary.  
 Love to Harvey and the bairns

I remain ever

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<sup>258</sup> Sabine was once more abroad with Grace. On this occasion they were touring through the South of France and in particular the Cevennes. This was a mixture of business and pleasure and clearly he was prepared to rough it in the mountains whatever Grace might think, so that he could gather material for his book. It is unclear how long Sabine was abroad and this tour is not mentioned in the family bible but Sabine appears to have kept himself aware of what was happening at home.

<sup>259</sup> Easter Sunday 15 April.

<sup>260</sup> *A Book of the Cevennes*, London: J. Long. 1907.

<sup>261</sup> Heis: South of Pau, close to the Spanish border.

<sup>262</sup> The New Rectory – now known as the Old Rectory – was built in 1906, to Sabine's own design.

<sup>263</sup> The Maxwell-Battens. Hugh Maxwell Batten was Diana's future husband. They married 3 October 1907. This was a double wedding, Joan also being married that day. It is of interest that Hugh Maxwell-Batten was working for Edward.

<sup>264</sup> It would seem that Sabine had finally given up getting Harry trained as an engineer. It has not been possible to identify a 'Mr Little' in Lewdown or to deduce what Harry, then aged 21, was doing for 'a small salary.'

Your affect father  
S, Baring-Gould

If you do write – write to  
Hotel de la Croix d'or  
Privas<sup>265</sup>  
Ardèche

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<sup>265</sup> Privas: North of Avignon.

**060325***25 March 1906*

Paris 25 March 1906

Dearest Mary

I enclose a cheque.<sup>266</sup> We return to England on Tuesday.<sup>267</sup> We have had very cold weather in the south and no comforts, so we thought best to return. I am thank God, very well and longing to be back at Lew and see how the new Rectory is getting on.

You know, I suppose, that Edward has been to the States about business. His Oatine<sup>268</sup> is getting on splendidly. I wish Harvey had shares in it, but I doubt if Edward will take in any more shareholders. He had an order from Boots the other day for £1,500 of Oatine preparations.

Mamma is mad over the hats and dresses in Paris shop windows. She is very well and very happy.<sup>269</sup> Best love to dear Harvey and the boys.

Your loving father  
S Baring Gould

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<sup>266</sup> As is so often the case, this letter accompanied the quarterly allowance.

<sup>267</sup> Tuesday: 27 March.

<sup>268</sup> Oatine: A range of cosmetics and toiletries produced by Edward's successful business enterprise

<sup>269</sup> It is of interest that in 1906 Grace was described as very well and very happy.

**070302***2 March 1907*

Lew Trenchard,  
N. Devon  
Mch. 2, 1907

My dear Mary

Tell Harvey that I am sorry that I can not accept his kind offer of the loan of carriage and horses.<sup>270</sup> I have only Chas. Dustan in the stable and 4 cobs to look after Czar<sup>271</sup>, Robin, Winnie and one lent to Grace.

Tell him also that I have written to Mr. Basset of Watermouth<sup>272</sup> about a curious ghost story connected with the Basset family, of a Francis Basset in Geo II's reign who haunts Heanton<sup>273</sup> There is some story about his misdoings that I want to get hold of.

I am better, but far from well, and not well enough to venture on going out yet.<sup>274</sup>

I remain  
Yours affect  
S Baring Gould

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<sup>270</sup> The reason for the offer of a loan of carriage and horses is not known. It is possible that Sabine had suffered a mishap with his dogcart. A carriage and horses would not be an appropriate replacement for that!

<sup>271</sup> Czar: Daughter Joan's favourite horse. He featured in Joan's memoirs.

<sup>272</sup> Watermouth Castle, near Ilfracombe Devon, once the seat of the Bassett family. For more about Watermouth and the Bassetts: See the following letter to Harvey dated 070313.

<sup>273</sup> Heanton Punchardon, near Braunton, Devon.

<sup>274</sup> It is not known in what way Sabine was far from well. Possibly bronchitis and loss of voice.

**Sabine to Harvey**

**070313**

*13 March 1907*

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
Mch. 13, 1907

My dear Harvey

Many thanks for your extract. It is not quite correct. The “oak gallery was demolished” is a mistake, it was never oaklined, but the gallery upstairs over the dining room that my father reduced to a passage by making three bedrooms out of it.<sup>275</sup>

It was in Deep Way that she was thought to appear combing her hair over the brook and throwing the water over her head.<sup>276</sup>

I could not get what I wanted from the Bassetts of Watermouth, they do not know any story of Francis Bassett.<sup>277</sup>

Best love to Mary. We had a meet on Monday in front of the house, a lovely day, and the largest meet of the season.<sup>278</sup>

I remain  
Yours truly

S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>275</sup> This account does not tally with the account in the Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould. 3 September 1880 and 31 May 1896. From these entries it is evident that in 1720 the house which had been a single room thick at Hall and Dining room was enlarged by the addition of an 8' wide corridor at ground and first floor. At some point Old Madam had converted the upstairs corridor into bedrooms. Then in 1850 Sabine's father had extended the house further to the rear. This enabled him to create a new dining room below and to restore a corridor above while still retaining the bedrooms.

<sup>276</sup> Presumably Harvey had written something about Lew, possibly in an article, and Sabine had been asked to correct it.

<sup>277</sup> The Bassetts of Watermouth: See Mary 070302.

<sup>278</sup> Although no huntsman, Sabine was content to permit hunting on the estate. His friend and neighbour at Coombe Trenchard, Henry Sperling, was FMH to the Lamerton Hunt.

**080207**

7 February 1908

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
Feb 7, 1908

My dearest Mary

Thank you so much for the jersey. It is just what I needed. Now tell me what I owe you for the wool.<sup>279</sup> I have been away staying with my friend Enys of Enys near Falmouth and had lovely weather there.<sup>280</sup>

Felicitas has gone to Teignmouth to visit Mr Finzels<sup>281</sup> but returns on Monday.

Mamma is unhappy. She loses house and kitchen maid, and we hear that Edith our parlour maid will not come back she felt run down and went home. So we may be left without any other servant than Polly<sup>282</sup>

I remain  
Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>279</sup> The proximity to Sabine's birthday might suggest that the jersey was a birthday gift, but as Sabine wanted to know the cost of the wool that is unlikely.

<sup>280</sup> John Davies Enys, 1837-1912: See Mary 980803: A man of many interests. Sabine's friend, correspondent, and collaborator in archaeological explorations in Cornwall and South Wales. See David Shacklock, *The Baring-Gould – Enys Letters*, Transactions, SBGAS, 2002 Vol II, supplement.

<sup>281</sup> The identity of Mr Finzels is not known. It is of note that the family bible entry for 1908 records the engagement of Felicitas to F. Fiske. The spelling is quite distinct in both entries but it could be one and the same person and that Sabine made a mistake. Felicitas married neither Fiske or Finzel. In 1915 she married Capt. Sydney Eyre.

<sup>282</sup> Lew House seems to have been in yet another domestic crisis with the loss of housemaid and kitchen maid. Was the household left with Polly Pengelly Sawmills, Polly Pengelly Wye or another Polly altogether?

**080420***20 April 1908*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 Easter Monday  
 1908<sup>283</sup>

My dearest Mary

I ought to have written yesterday to wish you many happy returns of your birthday, but could not. I was not only crippled with lumbago<sup>284</sup>, but obliged to do most of the services, preach twice and take the funeral of Mrs. Lee, though bent double and hardly able to crawl about. But not only was it Easter Day, but also I had such a love and respect for the dear old lady and for her people, that I could not do other than take the funeral and preach to the mourners. They wd. not have been satisfied if the curate had done this — a dry-as-dust man, without any tender or human feeling.<sup>285</sup>

We had such a fright on Saturday. Grace<sup>286</sup> had been hunting on the moor, and at 10 pm had not returned home. We heard at the kennels that the hounds had long been back so Julian rode to Lydford to organise a search. However she arrived after 10 pm in a trap from the Hare and Hounds at Sourton. Her horse had got “stogged” in a bog. She managed to extricate her horse but he broke his bridle and got away. So she walked to Sourton and there got a trap. Yesterday afternoon the cob was found and brought back; but we did have a fright I can assure you.

I remain  
 Your affect father  
 S. Baring-Gould

*On the reverse of the letter is the following sum<sup>287</sup>:*

3. 19. 10

3. 19. 3 ½

7. 19. 1 ½

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<sup>283</sup> Easter Monday 1908: 20 April.

<sup>284</sup> The transcriber is not aware of other references to Sabine suffering from lumbago.

<sup>285</sup> The identity of the ‘dry as dust’ curate is not known.

<sup>286</sup> The reference is to Sabine’s daughter, Grace, then aged 17.

<sup>287</sup> The sum appears to be in Sabine’s hand; presumably he was adding up money but the sum does not appear to have any bearing on the contents of the letter. Unusually for Sabine the arithmetic is correct!

**080624 (display)**<sup>288</sup>  
 24 June 1908

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 June 24, 1908

My dearest Mary  
 I enclose cheque.  
 You were quite a family party at Boxgrove<sup>289</sup>

We have felt parting with dear Julian.<sup>290</sup>

I am not sending out Felicity to Bombay, I have heard from Bill Priestley and he clearly does not want her, besides Mrs. P is dying of cancer and has not many months to live, so Bill and Joan may hurry home sooner than they intended.<sup>291</sup> Another reason if another was needed is – that I cannot afford the expense.<sup>292</sup>

Best love to Harvey and all  
 Yr affect father  
 S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>288</sup> Pasted onto Miscellaneous A4 sheet 2 alongside 4 other letters.

<sup>289</sup> Boxgrove, near Chichester: The reason for a family gathering there is not known.

<sup>290</sup> According to Sabine's diary, Julian first sailed to Sarawak in February 1897. A family bible entry for 1907 records his return home in that year. It is likely that this 1908 letter records his return to Sarawak. It is possible that there were other unrecorded sailings. He was certainly in England in 1910, as his marriage to Joan Ramsden at Bridestowe is also recorded in the family bible.

<sup>291</sup> According to family bible entries, Sabine's daughter Joan married Bill Priestley at Lewtrenchard in October 1907. It is not clear when they sailed to Bombay but they did not return to England until the summer of 1910.

<sup>292</sup> It is of interest to learn that, in 1908, Sabine was, as was often the case, short of money.

080813

13 August 1908

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
Aug 13, 1908

My dear Mary

I am very sorry, but I do not see that we can take in the three boys in September when you ask.<sup>293</sup>

Felicitas is mending fast. I was a little alarmed at first lest her eye should have suffered, but it has not, and I trust that the scars were not deep enough to leave their mark when healed.<sup>294</sup>

We are running very short of water here. I have brought another stream into the reservoir but even that is scanty and all baths have to be cut off. Today it looks much as if there would be a thunderstorm<sup>295</sup>

I remain  
yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>293</sup> At the time of this letter Mary's older children were getting to an age where the nursery was no longer appropriate for at least 2 of them. In 1908 Arscott was 15, Edward was 13 and Bickford was 8. It would seem from Grace's undated (apart from 'June') letter to Mary, written a year later in June 1909, that whereas when the children were small enough to be taken to the nursery Sabine would write of 'longing' to see the boys, he now tended to be irritated by their presence and preferred not to invite them to the house where they disturbed his peace. Grace was clearly distressed by this situation and seemed not to know how to resolve the conflict of loyalties. She wrote: "*When can you and Harvey come and stay with us. I am sorry I cannot ask the dear boys, but Papa does not seem able now to bear the noise of children at table, it is different if they are in the nursery, I am sure you will understand my darling. I thought you would be hurt if I asked you and not the boys, now you know the only reason why you have not been asked lately, you may be quite sure there is nothing else, I have wanted to write and tell you ever so long the reason but have kept putting it off, but I could not any longer, please write and tell me you understand I cannot bear that you should feel hurt or slighted in any way. Phyllis said Grannie had said something to her about it, she did not say anything to me.*" There is however another compelling explanation for refusing to have the children to stay in September. It is evident from the entry in the family bible for 1908 and from letter 081025 that on 29 September, he, Grace, Felicitas and John left Lew for Munich where they stayed until the following March.

<sup>294</sup> There is no other reference in known correspondence or in the family bible to indicate what may have happened to Felicitas.

<sup>295</sup> This is a unique reference to a failure of the water supply to the house in dry weather. In 1876 Sabine first created the reservoir that was fed by local springs. The reference to bringing another stream into the reservoir is puzzling. In 2010 the location of this second stream is not clear.

081025

25 October 1908

Pension Fernsems (?)  
 1 Ohm Strasse GH  
 Munich  
 Bavaria  
 25. Oct. 1908

My dearest Mary

We are settled in very comfortably in a pension kept by an English lady widowed of a German.<sup>296</sup> If you want to know what GH means after the name of the street, it is Garden House, for every house here is double, at its back divided from it by a small garden is a second house of same size, which is numbered like that in the street but has GH to distinguish it.

John goes to his studio for 5 hours a day and has one hour as well for German lessons. After 15 November his drawing lessons are extended to 7 hours daily. Felicitas has also an hour a day in German, but I think she will do nothing as she objects to grammar, doing exercises, and the money is so much to run away, I fear.<sup>297</sup>

We have had a week of hard frost but also sunshine, and I really do not dislike this cold at all, and take some 4 or 5 hours walk every day. Mamma has also developed walking powers and does her two hours easily. She is looking so much better.<sup>298</sup>

We have three rooms, the largest is that of Felicitas that we use as sitting room, and there is a central store on wheels that in the evening can be rolled into Mamma's and my bedroom, as Felicitas objects to the heat and likes to have all the windows open. John takes very zealously to his drawing lessons. Here a lad has to begin from life models and not as in England to drudge at busts and plaster casts. He is in buoyant spirits and has made friends in his studio with people who can speak a little English and more French. I think this time in Munich will be the greatest use to him. Before the cold set in we went for three days to the mountains that John and Felicitas might see real snowy Alps, and they enjoyed it, immensely. John is in love with the Tyrolean costume and the picturesqueness of everything in Germany. In the Xmas holidays he and Titus want to go to the Alps for skying [*sic*] and tobogganing.

I remain

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<sup>296</sup> Sabine records in the family bible that he went to Munich 29 September 1908 and returned to Lew in March 1909. It is evident that he was accompanied on this occasion by Grace and two of his children John, then aged 21, and Felicitas aged 25. After a long sojourn in Munich, the only publication that could be attributed to this visit was a Guardian article *A Bavarian Nativity Play*, 29 December 1909.

<sup>297</sup> Sabine's approval of John's industry and disapproval of Felicitas's half-hearted attitude is patent. It is possible that Sabine was disappointed that Felicitas had abandoned a nursing career but it is evident from the family bible that, while the family were residing in Munich, Felicitas became engaged to F. Fiske so perhaps she had other things than nursing on her mind. It is not known what happened to that engagement, but 7 years later she married Capt. Sydney Eyre.

<sup>298</sup> It is of interest that Sabine wrote that Grace was looking so much better, had developed her walking powers and easily managed two hours walking very day. A similar beneficial effect derived by Grace through regular walking with Sabine is recorded in a letter to parishioner Polly Davey from Montpelier written on 8 March 2006. A likely explanation is that, when at home in Lew, Sabine was often too busy elsewhere to find time to motivate Grace by walking with her.

Your affect father  
S. Baring-Gould

**Grace to Mary**

**0906U01**

*Between 12 and 17 June 1909*

Lew House  
June<sup>299</sup>

My dearest Mary

When can you and Harvey come and stay with us. I am sorry I cannot ask the dear boys, but Papa does not seem able now to bear the noise of children at table, it is different if they are in the nursery, I am sure you will understand my darling, I thought you would be hurt if I asked you and not the boys, now you know the only reason why you have not been asked lately, you may be quite sure there is nothing else, I have wanted to write and tell you ever so long the reason but have kept putting it off, but I could not any longer, please write and tell me you understand I cannot bear that you should feel hurt or slighted in any way. Phyllis said Grannie had said something to her about it, she did not say anything to me.<sup>300</sup>

I hope dear Arscott's arm is getting on, Mrs Sperling told me about it last week when they came back, poor dear you seem to have had a worrying time altogether.

Have you heard that Joan has a little daughter, we had a telegram from Bill on Friday,<sup>301</sup> both doing well, I am so thankful it is safely over, I suppose we shall hear soon.

Aunt Kate<sup>302</sup> was with Grannie for a few days last week, she is not looking at all well, poor dear she has too much to do, Aunt Emily<sup>303</sup> is much the same, but her nurse has been ill so that had given her extra bother, they are going away next month so I hope the rest and change will do her good.

With loads of love

Your ever loving mother

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<sup>299</sup> Joan's eldest daughter was born on 10 June 1909. The telegram would probably have been sent on Friday 11 June. The date of this letter must therefore be between 12 and 17 June 1909.

<sup>300</sup> The entries in the family bible for 1909 do not suggest any particular pre-occupations to explain why Sabine, then in his mid-70s, should have been reluctant to have his three grandsons, Arscott, aged 16 in 1909; Edward, 14; and Bickford, 9, to stay. Neither was there any significant building in progress at Lew House. Presumably at that age the children were too old to banish to the nursery and may well have been too boisterous for Sabine who may have found that they intruded on his studies. What is particularly evident from this letter is the extent of the distress and unhappiness of Grace at this situation, whatever the cause, and her inability to influence the situation.

<sup>301</sup> Grace's daughter, Joan and her husband Bill Priestley, then resident in Bombay.

<sup>302</sup> Presumably aunt Kate Bond, of 4, Colleton Crescent, Exeter, then aged 78.

<sup>303</sup> Possibly Emily Bond sister of Kate Bond, Sabine's maternal aunt.

**090930***30 September 1909*Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
Sept. 30, 1909

Dear Mary

I enclose cheque.<sup>304</sup>

I went out to the moor last Monday but got very unwell and had to return in haste Wednesday morning. I am not well yet and today is our Harvest Thanksgiving, and I cannot get about much.<sup>305</sup>

We have got a new cob, the girls are delighted with it, poor Robin is failing.<sup>306</sup>

Yrs try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>304</sup> Another letter to accompany Mary's quarterly allowance.

<sup>305</sup> Once more Sabine was unwell – but on this occasion he did not give details. Unusually, he became ill on the moor and had to return home. More often than not he described becoming ill at home with bronchitis and or loss of voice and escaping to the moor to recover!

<sup>306</sup> A rare description of horses then held in the stables at Lew. Robin is mentioned in letter 070302.

**091001***1 October 1909*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 Oct 1, 1909

Dearest Mary

I enclose quarterly payment less income tax 1/- in pound.<sup>307</sup>

I think now that Mamma and Gracie will go with me abroad. I am glad as I am far  
 from well.<sup>308</sup>

I remain  
 Yours truly  
 S Baring Gould

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<sup>307</sup> This letter is difficult to understand as it is written the day after another letter also said to be enclosing a cheque. Perhaps Sabine forgot to enclose the cheque with the earlier letter.

<sup>308</sup> Sabine wrote that he was still far from well and was therefore pleased to know that his wife and young Grace would accompany him abroad. His fears were prophetic. According to the family bible for 1910 he left Lew for France on 27 January 1910 but, en route, became ill and was held up in London for a month. It is not clear from the family bible if he was accompanied but, as being accompanied on trips abroad had by now become a regular pattern, it is more than likely that he was accompanied.

**091230***30 December 1909*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 Dec. 30, 1909

My dearest Mary

I enclose quarterage<sup>309</sup> and wish you a very happy New Year and many of them.

I am not a little worried that Felicitas has had notice to quit her situation on 27. January. She has been having words with Miss Grieg the housekeeper who doubtless has found fault with her gadding about going to dances and neglecting her duty. Of course F. can not see that she is at fault.<sup>310</sup>

John had a nice letter from Edward on Xtnas Day saying how pleased he was with his work.<sup>311</sup>

I remain  
 Yours truly  
 S. Baring Gould

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<sup>309</sup> Yet another letter enclosing the quarterly allowance.

<sup>310</sup> Sabine expressed his concerns over the attitude of his daughter, Felicitas, who had been dismissed from her employment. The high regard Sabine showed for Felicitas's application to her work in letter 021202 when she was nursing in London is no longer present. The nature of her employment at this time is not clear here or anywhere else in these letters or the family bible. Possibly she was employed as a private nurse in a household.

<sup>311</sup> It is not clear whether Sabine was referring to his own son Edward or to Mary's son, Edward. It seems most likely however that the letter was from Mary's son, then aged 14. Sabine does not say what the work was. It is likely that at this time Mary and Harvey were resident in London, not far from Dulwich College where Edward was at school.

**100929***29 September 1910*Lew Trenchard  
September. 29. 1910

My dearest Mary

I send you cheque for the quarter. I went up to town on Monday to see the Duke of Teck, and found him very pleasant.<sup>312</sup> I came home WednesdayI remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>312</sup> In this letter Sabine described a visit to London to meet with the Duke of Teck. It is evident from the entry in the family bible that he had visited Teck 3 months earlier in June 1910. It seems likely that the two events are linked. In the following year, 1911, his book *The Land of Teck and its Neighbourhood* was published by John Lane. Sabine had previously visited Teck in 1891 in anticipation of the marriage of Princess May of Teck to the Duke of Clarence. On the death of the Duke of Clarence in 1892, Sabine wrote in his diary that the visits and his work resulting from them were wasted. However nothing was wasted as his articles about Teck and a poem '*The Sprig of May*' were published in 1903 on the occasion of the marriage of Princess May of Teck (Queen Mary) to the future King George V who was the brother of the Duke of Clarence.

**110309**

9 March 1911

Hotel Rother Hahn  
Munich<sup>313</sup>

9 March 1911

My dear Mary

Will you post the enclosed to Di<sup>314</sup> I do not know her address. I was so glad to hear from you and hear of her – as I have had no letters for near 3 weeks from Edward and was getting very anxious. Mamma has been worrying a good deal about Di<sup>315</sup> and this has brought on her indigestion and sleeplessness again.<sup>316</sup> At first she was so much better. I am sorry to say my being well again did not last many days and then I again caught cold and am suffering again from bronchitis.

Tell Felicitas that Frau Pfenninger and Oscar<sup>317</sup> have called on us at last. Oscar comes to England in July and I have asked him to visit us at Lew.

Mamma was delighted today to see the frieken<sup>318</sup> princes and princesses etc, and the cardinal archbishops drive in state to a reception of the Prince Regent. It is his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Sunday, and the whole town is in festoons and banners, white and blue and preparations for illuminations. The poor old man I think will be spared much speech making, he spends most of his days asleep, and when aroused thinks he is chamois hunting and levels his walking stick as though it were a gun. The king<sup>319</sup> I suppose you know is insane and is in confinement in one of the country palaces. One never sees his photograph anywhere. It would be too sad I fancy.

The Ober Ammergau [*sic*] Passion Play is quite losing its original simplicity – it is now a commercial speculation run by Cooks and other agents. The profits made this year after paying the performers £38,330 amounted to £21,795.<sup>320</sup>

Soltan wrote this epigram:-

Held no great prophet by his own  
As proof whereof his death sufficed  
Bavaria's peasants, to atone

<sup>313</sup> In the Family Bible Sabine wrote for 1910 – *went for winter months to Munich*. It is evident that in March the following year he, and Grace, were still there.

<sup>314</sup> In earlier letters to Mary, Sabine refers to his daughter, Diana Amelia, as 'Emily.' Now when she is 30 years of age and married, she is 'Di.'

<sup>315</sup> Diana had married in 1907. In 1911, then resident in Malaya, she was pregnant with her first child William. Sabine and Grace were anxious for news of the pregnancy.

<sup>316</sup> This is firm evidence that Grace was prone to worry over her children to the point of bringing on physical symptoms.

<sup>317</sup> The identities of Frau Pfenninger and Oscar have not been established.

<sup>318</sup> It has not been possible to confirm the definition of '*frieken*' with any certainty, but it probably means 'freakish.' it would hardly be surprising if the Bavarians had formed a somewhat negative view of their royalty!

<sup>319</sup> King Otto I followed his better-known elder brother mad King Ludwig onto the throne of Bavaria and was the king referred to in this letter. Because of insanity he never ruled and died in 1916. It seems the elderly regent was not much better!

<sup>320</sup> The description of the Oberammergau Passion play as a tourist rip-off is interesting. The identity of Soltan has not been established.

Make no small profit out of Christ

I remain  
Your affect father  
S. Baring-Gould

**110401***1 April 1911*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 1 Apl. 1911

My dear Mary<sup>321</sup>

So sorry you went to Whittakers in vain. Edward had transported us to Portland Hotel, as Mamma and I were very unwell. She is bad [?] and has been in bed with feverish cold and I am voiceless with bronchitis.<sup>322</sup> I enclose cheque<sup>323</sup>

yrs try  
 S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>321</sup> Mary was at this time resident in London to be close to her elder boys who were day pupils at Dulwich College.

<sup>322</sup> It is probable that Mary had arranged to meet up with her father and mother on return from the visit to Munich described in letter 110309. She would have gone to Whittaker's hotel where they usually stayed on return from the continent. Presumably Edward, who was also resident in London, had met the boat train and was so concerned by their condition he had taken them instead to the Portland Hotel – possibly because it was more up market and more able to cope with two very ill people. Clearly they had continued their journey to Lew while still unwell.

<sup>323</sup> Yet another letter enclosing the quarterly allowance.

**110720***20 July 1911*

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
July 20, 1911

My dear Mary

Do you think you could kindly go to Mr. Hunt, 36 High St. Marylebone W. agency for foreign servants and see if you can get us either a parlour maid at £24 or a butler at £34. I should prefer the former, Swiss or German not French. We have been advertising in W. Morn. News to no response and are in despair.<sup>324</sup>

I remain  
Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>324</sup> Problems with servants seem to have been a recurring problem. It is of interest that at this time Sabine preferred foreign to local servants. Here, as elsewhere in this correspondence, he takes advantage of Mary's residence in London to enlist her help in his search.

**110730 (display)**<sup>325</sup>  
*30 July 1911*

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
July 30, 1911

My dearest Mary

Thank you so much for taking trouble for me about the butler. I have engaged one whose Xtian name is Marius. The maids can't address him as Marry-us but must call him Marry-me. The one you recommended liking his appearance turned out to have a wife and 3 children and could not come unless the wife were taken as a lady's maid and the children given the pig waste from the kitchen.

We are dissolved with that<sup>326</sup>

Yrs try  
S. Baring- Gould

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<sup>325</sup> Pasted onto Miscellaneous A4 sheet 1.

<sup>326</sup> Mary's search for foreign servants prompted by letter 110720 produced some questionable results and not a little amusement.

**111006***6 October 1911*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 Oct 6, 1911

My dearest Mary

We have, I need not say it, been in the greatest anxiety and distress abt. you these last few days. I do hope this operation will finally and fully relieve you. I must thank you dear for the jersey and sleeves such a comfort in this cold weather and whenever I put the jersey on it calls you up in my mind.<sup>327</sup>

We expected the Guildford cousins down tomorrow but now hear poor Nellie has croup and Sophie a bad cold.<sup>328</sup>

We are not in very good trim for visitors, as dining room, 2 bedrooms and box room are dismantled and we are having meals in the library. Edward is altering the back of the house and going to turn bedrooms over into a gallery.<sup>329</sup>

I hope to hear continual news of your progress. We send you some grapes.

Yrs try  
 S Baring Gould

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<sup>327</sup> Mary's operation was for a tumour that proved to be non-malignant. See Sabine's letter 111020. The operation did not prevent her knitting for her father.

<sup>328</sup> It is known that Sabine's cousin, Francis Baring-Gould, then aged 72, and his wife, Flora lived at Merrow Grange, Guildford. Francis was the 4<sup>th</sup> son of Sabine's uncle, the Rev. Charles Baring-Gould. It is however apparent from this letter that the Guildford cousins referred to in this letter were Francis's sisters, Eleanor, then aged 49, and Sophia, aged 65. It is not known where in Guildford they resided.

<sup>329</sup> The disruption of bedrooms and dining room was the result of the work involved in the completion of the gallery. Sabine had started this 23 years earlier in 1888 and abandoned it in 1889 because of a shortage of funds. The involvement of Edward in this work is surprising. It is unlikely that Edward was directly involved in the completion of what was patently Sabine's project. It is more likely that Edward, who was by then a successful businessman, had agreed to provide the necessary finance to complete the gallery so that all major work on Lew House could be brought to a close and the family at last enjoy the whole of their home.

**Grace to Mary**  
**111013**  
*13 October 1911*

Lew House  
 Oct 13<sup>th</sup> <sup>330</sup>

My dearest Mary

I hope my darling that you are still getting on as well as can be expected. Dear Vera wrote me such a nice long letter telling me all about you, and we had news from Edward this evening. It will be very nice for you to have Daisy – I am so glad you are going to the cousins, you will like that, they are so good and kind. They are coming here on Tuesday, or if it rains on Monday, <sup>331</sup> I hope we shall have fine weather when they are here, just now it is lovely, and some of the trees have turned a beautiful colour, I went into Tavistock in the motor with Marian, this morning and quite enjoyed the drive, it was so mild.

Marian is going to London on Monday, so you will be seeing her sometime next week. I hope you are keeping as quiet as possible and not seeing too many people – Mrs Ramsden is coming tomorrow to the Dower House with her son Geoff, to see about his garden. <sup>332</sup>

Dear Grannie was down yesterday, she is much better again. <sup>333</sup>

I was so delighted to get your dear card but please do not write if it hurts you to do so, though I should love to hear every day how you are. I hope you are not suffering much now.

Love to Harvey and the dear boys. I wish I could do something for you my darling, could not you send me a parcel of mending to do, I do not mind how much the socks and stockings want doing to them, I should love to do it. With loads, and loads of love my dear, dear one. <sup>334</sup>

Your ever loving mother

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<sup>330</sup> This letter can be accurately dated from letter 111006 by Sabine to Mary, in which he writes about Mary having had an operation and hoping it was successful. The operation, according to letter 111020 to Mary from Sabine was for a tumour that proved non-malignant. Sabine also wrote that the Guildford cousins, spinsters Eleanor and Sophie Baring-Gould were due to visit.

<sup>331</sup> It can be deduced that Mary, then living in London intended to visit the Guildford cousins to convalesce. Meanwhile, as also described in Sabine's letter 111006, the cousins are imminently to visit Lew. It seems that Vera, Daisy and Edward had visited Mary, possibly in hospital. Now Edward's wife Marian was to join her husband in London and also visit Mary.

<sup>332</sup> The Ramsden's, parents of Joan, who was the wife of Sabine and Grace's son Julian, had recently leased the Dower House, probably as a holiday home. Their permanent residence was S Maida Hill West, London W.

<sup>333</sup> Sabine's step-mother, Lavinia, known as 'Granny Ardoch.'

<sup>334</sup> A caring, affectionate letter from Grace to Mary.

**111020**

20 October 1911

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 20 Oct. 1911

My dearest Mary

I do hope you are getting on well. You have been very much in our thoughts and our hearts have been aching because of you. I was thankful to God when I heard it was not a case of malignancy.<sup>335</sup>

I believe the Guildford cousins are to arrive this evening, but not coming to us as they have not been going in for the open air cure and we have all the landing out in the back of the house and part of the roof off. If bitter weather sets in we shall suffer seriously. When the roof is not off we have the ceiling down and look up to open rafters.<sup>336</sup> The cousins are coming over the moor and as it has come on to rain hard, I fear they will have a bad run.

We have not heard from John since he left the Suez canal, indeed not from Aden, but we hardly expect to hear till he reaches Columbo.<sup>337</sup> [*sic*]

Harry says he is almost confident he will be back at Xtmass.<sup>338</sup>

The tints of the trees here are glorious. A number of crimson oaks I have put in past years have come to show us a blaze of scarlet.<sup>339</sup>

I remain  
 Your affect father  
 S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>335</sup> It is evident that the operation mentioned in letter Mary 111020 was for a tumour that proved to be non-malignant.

<sup>336</sup> Work on the gallery continued to cause considerable domestic disruption.

<sup>337</sup> Presumably Sabine meant *Colombo* and that John was heading there en route for Malaya.

<sup>338</sup> It is not clear from the letter where Harry was living at this time. Most probably he was in the United States, prior to a brief return prior to being sent to Malaya, where he died 18 months later.

<sup>339</sup> There are still scarlet oaks and red oaks on the estate. Neither is now known as a crimson oak. They do not often give a blaze of scarlet in the West Country climate.

**Section III**  
**December 1913 to September 1923**

## December 1913 to September 1923

The 30 surviving letters written to Mary in the last eleven years of Sabine's life cover a period of great change and much distress. Overall there was a considerable reduction in the number of topics touched on in each of his letters and although there were occasional flashes of humour or unexpected activity, the letters generally lack the buoyancy and enthusiasm of earlier years. Towards the end of his life exchanging seasonal and birthday greetings, thanking Mary for gifts – usually of either game or knitwear – and sending the quarterly allowance became the principal reasons for correspondence.

The correspondence recommenced in December 1913<sup>340</sup> after a gap of just over two years. No obvious reasons for such a long gap present themselves although it is likely that the health of Sabine's wife, Grace, who suffered from rheumatoid arthritis, was becoming an increasing cause of anxiety and may have played some part in this. The tragic death from a fever of his son, Henry in Malaya on 10 May 1913 may also have had an effect. Sabine's reactions to this death do not appear to have been recorded anywhere, possibly because his emotions at this time were too painful to express easily on paper. References by Sabine to Harry in family correspondence were always affectionate, if sometimes critical, although others have been troubled by the firmness with which Sabine dealt with what he regarded as Harry's lack of application.<sup>341 342</sup> Harry's death was mentioned briefly in this correspondence in 1915 when Sabine was soliciting contributions from members of the family towards the cost of part of the new screen at St. Peter's Church which is dedicated to him.<sup>343</sup>

Surprisingly there are relatively few references to Sabine's own health in these eleven years although there are many comments and often anxious enquiries concerning the health of family members and parishioners.

The letter from Pau written on Christmas Day 1913<sup>344</sup> is remarkable for the reversal of the trend established in the previous decade for Sabine to be accompanied by Grace. On this visit to Pau Sabine was accompanied by his friend the Rev. J M Gatrill. It is probable that Grace was no longer well enough to accompany Sabine. It was unusual for Sabine to be away from home at Christmas as the pattern that had previously been established was for him to take off for the continent in January and return to Lew around April. The letter gave no particular reason why Sabine may have wanted to be in Pau at Christmas. Apart from describing the weather and his future travel plans he referred only to the English church in Pau. It is however possible that it was on this visit that he picked up the four Basque carols he later translated and published in 1916. The letter implied that Cicely was at Lew House with Grace while Sabine was away. It is unclear how long Sabine was away from Lew although, in the entry for 1913 in the family bible, he wrote that he *spent part of the winter in the South of France, at Bordeaux, Bayonne and Pau*. It is not known when this tour began – possibly early December – but it is evident from this letter that he planned to be

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<sup>340</sup> Letter 131225.

<sup>341</sup> Briggs Cicely, *The Mana of Lew*, 1993. Praxis, p 19.

<sup>342</sup> Dickinson B H C, *Sabine Baring-Gould*, 1970, pp 87,88.

<sup>343</sup> Letter 150609.

<sup>344</sup> Letter 131225.

home by 15 January 1914. This was to be Sabine's last visit to the continent as the Great War broke out 8 months later and by the time it finished Sabine was probably physically too frail to venture again to the continent.

1914 saw the first overt expression in a letter of Sabine's concerns for the health of Grace. Grace's rheumatoid arthritis had not responded to a trip they had both taken to Bath and she was now so crippled that Sabine felt unable to leave her and asked Mary to visit a sick Miss Biggs on his behalf.<sup>345</sup> This letter was quickly followed by the outbreak of war and a series of letters marked by Sabine's concerned advice for those members of his family who were on active service. Two anguished letters chronicle the final deterioration of Grace's health before her death in April 1916.<sup>346</sup> Thereafter the letters that were written over the following 18 months or so, were notable for anxious enquiries or comments about his son John, grandsons Edward and Arscott Dickinson and son-in-law, Charles Calmady-Hamlyn.

After the war several letters comment on the activities of his Dickinson grandsons, Arscott and Edward and include advice on their careers.

It is known that on his return from the war in 1919, Sabine's eldest son, Edward together with his wife Marian, moved into Lew House and took over management of the house. There are brief references to decisions, apparently made on Edward's advice, to dispose of some properties on the estate and to henceforth require tenants to be responsible for their own repairs.<sup>347</sup> It is known from other correspondence<sup>348</sup> that Sabine resented the loss of his independence and that tension developed between him and his son and daughter in law. Only one letter, written on Christmas Eve 1921,<sup>349</sup> in which Sabine regarded himself as unreasonably neglected by Edward and Marian at Christmas, gave any hint of these resentments and it is quite possible that, if there was more overt evidence of problems in this correspondence, this was contained in those letters that were diplomatically destroyed by Bickford Dickinson. Certainly in the letter written from Colleton Crescent, Exeter where he was staying with his aunt Kate Bond for the following Christmas 1922, he seemed to go out of his way to write to Mary<sup>350</sup> and at least two other correspondents<sup>351 352</sup> and tell them what a good time he was having there.

There is a solitary surviving letter from the year 1923.<sup>353</sup> This was written on 10 September and asked Mary and two other daughters to comment on the chapter he had reluctantly written for his second series of Reminiscences. Taking into account that the frequency of his writing to Evelyn Healey had increased during this final year of Sabine's life, this paucity of letters to Mary is surprising and it is possible that other letters from that year may have been destroyed.

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<sup>345</sup> Letter 140724.

<sup>346</sup> Letters 160323 and 160326.

<sup>347</sup> Letters 190324 and 201004.

<sup>348</sup> Ron Wawman, 2011, *Sabine's Last Thirty years*.

<sup>349</sup> Letter 211224.

<sup>350</sup> Letter 221222.

<sup>351</sup> Letter to Hilda Piper (a parishioner) dated 22 December 1922, Held at Devon Record Office, Box 5203. Owned by Almond M.

<sup>352</sup> Letter to Evelyn Healey dated 24 December 1922. Ron Wawman, 2011, *Sabine Baring-Gould's Correspondence with Evelyn Healey*.

<sup>353</sup> Letter 230910.

131225<sup>354</sup>  
25 December 13

Hôtel Henri IV  
Pau  
Xtmas Day 1913<sup>355</sup>

My dear Mary

Thank you and the boys for letter and cards with their pictures. I wish you and Harvey and them a very happy New Year.

We have ideal weather here, cloudless skies and brilliant sunshine and balmy airs. The anemonies [*sic*] are already out in the flowerbeds. Palms thrive here.

There is a very nice English church here, with Mr. Acland Froyte, a Devonshire man, as chaplain. I preached for him last Sunday. There are in fact 3 English chapels here one low, one moderate Anglican, and the third High. The first gets hardly any congregation. At the last this morning the 7.30 am celebration there were some 40 communicants, and at the 8.15 some 55.

We go on Monday into the mountains for some three or four days and then turn our faces homeward by Toulouse, Limoges and Orléans. Gatrill has to be back by the 15<sup>th</sup> Jan. and I do not want to remain alone.<sup>356</sup> Besides I want to see Joan before she sails for Bombay.<sup>357</sup>

I have sent your cheque with all the others to Cicely in a registered envelope.<sup>358</sup> At this season with the rush in the post office that is the safest place.

I remain your affect father  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>354</sup> On the reverse of the letter there are scribbled notes, some in pencil to do with measurements of picture frames and some in ink more in the nature of a shopping list. Neither is by Sabine. Presumably the back of the letter was at some point used as scrap paper in the Dickinson household.

<sup>355</sup> It is of interest that Sabine was in Pau over Christmas 1913. Did he perhaps hear some Basque carols at this time including *The Angel Gabriel*? He translated the four Basque carols and published them in 1916.

<sup>356</sup> According to the Family Bible, Sabine *spent part of the winter in the South of France, at Bordeaux, Bayonne and Pau*, returning to England by way of Toulouse. It is evident from this letter that his friend the Rev. J M Gatrill accompanied him. It seems likely that this was Sabine's last trip abroad as war was declared 8 months later.

<sup>357</sup> Presumably Joan, who lived in India with her husband Bill Priestley was returning there after being home on leave.

<sup>358</sup> A rare mention of Cicely, who appears to have been the go-between for the delivery of quarterly cheques to several other members of the family. This suggests she was resident at Lew House at this time. It is evident from Sabine's letter 140724 that 7 months later Grace was markedly crippled. Presumably that is why she did not accompany Sabine on this visit abroad. It is apparent from *The Mana of Lew* by Cicely Baring-Gould's daughter, Cicely Briggs, that her mother nursed Grace at some point during her terminal illness. Perhaps this was why she was at Lew at the time of this letter although it is evident from letters that other daughters also helped in the care of Grace.

**140724***24 July 1914*Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
July 24, 1914

My dear Mary

I enclose a note from Molly Barnes.<sup>359</sup> I think someone ought to go if possible and see Miss Biggs. I cannot leave with Mamma so crippled and Felicitas planning to leave. I do not think Mamma is a bit better for Bath.<sup>360</sup>

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>359</sup> The identity of Molly Barnes is not known. It is probable that she had written on behalf of, or about Miss Priscilla Biggs who had been governess to the Baring-Gould children since around 1870. In 1914 she would have been elderly and was, probably, also unwell. It is unfortunate that so little is known about Miss Biggs. Joan's Notebook memoirs suggest that one reason for the lack of any personal references to Miss Biggs is that Sabine's children found her at best very strict and at worst, cruel.

<sup>360</sup> It is evident from this letter that Grace was now very crippled by her rheumatoid arthritis. The letter suggests that Sabine and Grace had both been to Bath for her health but with no benefit. It can be inferred that Felicitas had been home nursing her mother but was now preparing to leave. Felicitas married Capt. Sydney Ayre in May 1915.

**150317***17 March 1915*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 17 Mch. 1915

My dear Mary

I enclose Joan's last letter and address.<sup>361</sup>

I am so glad that Arscott is going to John

John is at Exmouth. He has commission in R. N. Devon Hussars. Charles Hamlyn is now Major. Cicely and John spent ten days at Exmouth and had lovely weather. Wally Hamley is given a commission in Ld. Kitchener's army, and Dickie is going with him.<sup>362</sup>

I remain  
 Yours truly  
 S. Baring Gould

I cannot tell you what a Lieutenant gets. John does not know but he gets £50 for his outfit. I fancy pay covers all but drinks. He keeps to water for economy.

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<sup>361</sup> Joan had returned to England when war was declared and was living in London and, according to the recollections of her daughter, Joyce Rawstone, working as a VAD.

<sup>362</sup> The Baring-Goulds at war. Sabine's son John had a commission with the Royal North Devon Hussars but was later attached to the Royal Flying Corps. Sabine was relieved to learn that Mary's son, Arscott, then aged 22, was to join John in the R N Devon Hussars. Charles Calmady-Hamlyn, the husband of Sabine's daughter Grace, was also in the R N Devon Hussars. Presumably Cicely was visiting John at his unit in Exmouth. The identity of Wally Hamley is not known but it is possible that 'Dickie' was Richard Munday, a Naval medical officer and husband of Robert Burnard's daughter, Olive.

**150609***9 June 1915*

Lew Trenchard

N. Devon

June 9, 1915

My dear Mary

The gallery front of the screen is up and done as a memorial to dear Harry. There is still a debt on it of £12. Will you give something towards this, so that it may be a memorial from his brothers and sisters as well as his parents? I am sorry to ask, but otherwise it would hardly be a memorial, and I can not have a collection for it in the church.<sup>363</sup>

I remain  
Yrs truly  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>363</sup> In 1913 Harry had died of fever in Malaya at the age of 28. The gallery front of the screen in the North aisle was dedicated as a memorial to him from the immediate family.

**151215***15 December 1915*

Lew Trenchard

15 Dec. 1915

My dear Mary

Do get a supply of sterilising tabloids from Boots, for Arscott; he is to put a tabloid into water and let it dissolve, before drinking, as a precaution against dysentery.

Also some chlorodine and opium<sup>364</sup> in the event of his having an attack.

John is taking out a supply. It is no use to try later, consignments to those in the Dardanelles do not reach them. They are appropriated by the Army Service Corps.

John tells me that things to the value of £20 have been sent out by those whom he knows, that have never reached those to whom consigned. He must take out with him.

Dysentery is killing more than shells.<sup>365</sup>

I remain  
Yours affect  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>364</sup> Chlorodyne The active ingredients were laudanum, tincture of cannabis and chloroform. It was therefore a very effective sedative and painkiller as well as a symptomatic treatment for diarrhoea! As such its popularity for many years as a proprietary medicine is hardly surprising.

<sup>365</sup> This is the second of several references to World War I in this collection of letters. Sabine had two sons, two grandsons and a son-in-law serving in the forces. Here he gave astute advice to Mary for his grandson Arscott based on John's experience. He also made the acute observation that dysentery was killing more men than shells.

**160323***23 March 1916*Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
23 Mch 1916

My dear Mary

I enclose  $\frac{1}{4}$  annuity less 3/- in the pound income tax.<sup>366</sup>Mamma is worse. We have now to have 2 nurses with her, as she may not be left night or day. She will be tapped for dropsy tomorrow.<sup>367</sup>Yrs try  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>366</sup> Yet again a letter enclosing the quarterly allowance. Income tax was creeping up – to meet the cost of the war.

<sup>367</sup> It is evident that, in March 1916, Grace was gravely ill and in need of constant attention. Dropsy (peripheral oedema, ie fluid retention, that would have been particularly, but not exclusively, in the legs) was caused by heart failure, a not uncommon complication of severe and longstanding rheumatoid arthritis. When oedema was severe, draining the fluid by tubes inserted through the skin might have given some relief. Grace died 16 days later on 8 April 1916.

**160326***26 March 1916*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 26 Mch 1916

My dear Mary

Mamma was tapped on Friday,<sup>368</sup> since then the water has been discharged profusely. It has weakened her and she is in more pain. Both the sheets have to be continually renewed, and this entails moving her, this causes her much pain.<sup>369</sup>

I will let you know if she gets worse – but Dr Hillyar<sup>370</sup> says there is no immediate danger.

I am so glad that John and Arscott are such friends. Every letter he writes home is to the effect that Arscott is such a dear fellow. Now Chas. Calmady Hamlyn is out there, so there is a little family gathering.<sup>371</sup>

Your affect father  
 S.B-G.

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<sup>368</sup> Friday would have been two days before the letter was written, ie 24 March.

<sup>369</sup> Grace had little if any relief from tapping for the dropsy. In all probably it caused more discomfort than it relieved. It had a limited place in the treatment of heart failure because of the loss of electrolytes and protein from the body caused by the process. This may well have contributed to her death soon after the procedure.

<sup>370</sup> Dr Hillyar attended both Grace and Sabine in their last illnesses and signed their death certificates.

<sup>371</sup> Sabine continued to follow the fortunes of the three members of the family who were now serving in the army together in the Middle East, probably Egypt as is indicated in letter 160507.

**160507**<sup>372</sup>  
7 May 1916

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
7 May 1916

My dear Mary

I am so distressed to hear that Arscott is down with diphtheria. Do pray let me know particulars and whether the case be serious or no – so soon as you hear from Egypt – we got the news first from Chas. Calmady-Hamlyn – but he did not say – probably did not know – more than that Arscott was in hospital.<sup>373</sup> We have not heard from John for he is at a distance doing patrol duty.

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>372</sup> Grace had died on 8 April 1916, just over a month before this letter, and the notepaper used for the letter had a black border to denote mourning.

<sup>373</sup> Diphtheria was a killer and Sabine's distress at news of Arscott's illhealth would have been compounded by the recent death of Grace.

**160629***29 June 1916*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 June 29, 1916

My dearest Mary

Very many thanks for the beautiful and warm greatcoat you and the other sisters have given me.<sup>374</sup>

I heard yesterday from John and he had not seen Arscott and did not know exactly where he was.<sup>375</sup>

I have a scheme on hand to get Arthur to leave Haverford West and take the curacy of Tavistock. It is not quite so good as the vicarage at Haverford, but it would be near his mother, and a step towards preferment in the diocese. I believe the Tavistock folk would be delighted.<sup>376</sup>

I remain  
 Your affect father  
 S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>374</sup> It is a little surprising that his daughters had given Sabine a warm greatcoat in June. However, at 82 years of age he could be forgiven if he felt the cold all year round. No doubt the gift was also an expression of affection at what was undoubtedly a difficult time following the death of Grace two months previously.

<sup>375</sup> It must have been very frustrating wanting firm news of sick members of the family at war but being unable to get it.

<sup>376</sup> It seems that Sabine's scheme for his half-brother, Arthur came to nothing.

**16U01**<sup>377</sup>*Probably summer 1916, but later than 29 June*

My dear Mary

I am so glad to hear that Edward is getting on well, and that you can see him every day. How was he wounded and where – I mean not in his body – but in France.<sup>378</sup>

All at once hot weather has come in today and I hope it will take away my lumbago, or what ever it is in my back – is only old age – it will not remove that.

– Grannie the other day slipped her keeper and got into the wood on the Ramps, lost her way, and got nearly hung up in a tree. She supposed she was in Lew Wood, and coming on a pretty cottage supposed it was one that Mr. R. Newman had built. She saw a paper on the door, read it as Not At Home – actually the house was that of the Arundells and the paper was one to the butcher relative to their meat card. She ought not to go about by herself but she is wilful. She had sent off her keeper to pay her butcher's bill, and took the opportunity to go a roving in the wood. It was like Hansel and Grethel without the Hansel, and the pretty cottage was not of marzipan and sugar-candy to be eaten.<sup>379</sup>

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>377</sup> Clearly written at some point during World War I. The date is uncertain. Relating this letter to the reference to Mary's son, Edward, in Sabine's letter of 161017 suggests the year was 1916 but there can be no certainty. The reference to warm weather suggests it was written in summer. It also seems likely that it was written after the letter of 29 June.

<sup>378</sup> This is the first indication that Mary's son, Edward, was serving in France at this time. He had evidently been injured there and was now in England. Sabine was again desperate for information as to how, why and where. It is known within the family that the injury was a piercing bullet wound of the neck with entry and exit wounds, but miraculously not involving any vital structures. Elizabeth Dickinson, personal communication.

<sup>379</sup> Granny (Ardoch ie Lavinia Baring-Gould) was evidently dementing and causing concern having slipped her minder. The house she visited was Rampenstein, Sabine's cottage in the woods on Lew Quarry Ramps where the curate, the Rev. Gilbert Arundell and his family lived.

**161017***17 October 1916*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 17 Oct 1916

My dearest Mary

Very many thanks for the jersey you have knitted for me all the more precious because done by your dear fingers.<sup>380</sup>

I am so glad you saw Edward. He is looking strong and fine.<sup>381</sup>

I am glad to hear that Arscott is out of hospital and doing easy work.<sup>382</sup>

We are anxious to hear how Felicitas is getting on<sup>383</sup>

I remain  
 Yours truly  
 S. Baring Gould

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<sup>380</sup> Yet another Jersey knitted by Mary.

<sup>381</sup> It is evident that Mary's son, Edward had made a good recovery from the bullet wound to his neck.

<sup>382</sup> Arscott was at last out of hospital 5 months after being admitted with diphtheria. No doubt the length of hospitalisation reflected the seriousness of his condition.

<sup>383</sup> Felicitas had been married 18 months previously. Sabine's concerns suggest that Felicitas may have been pregnant.

**161115 (display)**<sup>384</sup>  
*15 November 1916*

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
Nov. 15, 1916

My dearest Mary

I send you, what I think you will value a photo of the miniature of dear Mamma when she was a girl. I hope you get good news of Arscott and Edward<sup>385</sup>

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>384</sup> Pasted onto miscellaneous A4 sheet 1 together with 3 other letters.

<sup>385</sup> A poignant letter. Sabine was still worrying over his grandsons. It is not evident what thoughts or feelings prompted him to send Mary the miniature of Grace. It is quite possible that copies of the photograph were also sent to Sabine's other children.

**170125**

25 January 1917

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
25 Jan. 17

My dear Mary

Thank you very much for your kind wishes and for the wood-cock.<sup>386</sup>Cicely left this morning. I suppose you will see her in town as she goes to Joan's. We are to have a wire on Saturday if she gets her passport visaed.<sup>387</sup>John is moved to Market Drayton.<sup>388</sup>

His address

1/1 R. N. Devon Hussars<sup>389</sup>  
attached Royal Flying Corps  
Market Drayton  
SalopWhat a relief it was to hear that Charles Cal. Hamlyn was not wounded, as the wire from the War Office said. A case of ulcers such as are sure to come after a year in the heat of Egypt when the blood gets thoroughly out of order.<sup>390</sup>

Vera is to look after the house and me.

Our little parlour maid is to be married on Saturday and we shall be short handed for a bit as our between maid leaves the same day.

I remain  
Your affect father  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>386</sup> The kind wishes and woodcock were on the occasion of Sabine's 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

<sup>387</sup> This letter would suggest that Cicely required a visa because she was possibly travelling to India but according to her daughter, Cicely Briggs, in her book, *The Mana of Lew*, Cicely remained at Lew until 1919 and then went to India. It is evident from this letter that with the departure of Cicely, care of Sabine and the house had passed to Vera.

<sup>388</sup> John was now attached to the Royal Flying Corps. On 1 January 1918, Sabine wrote to Evelyn Healey telling her that John was seriously wounded flying over France. It is known from an RFC log book that his injuries were sustained on 25 May 1917.

<sup>389</sup> Royal North Devon Hussars.

<sup>390</sup> Evidently there was a false alarm over the possibility that Charles Calmady Hamlyn had been wounded. The succession of illnesses and injuries in one family must have been a source of great anxiety for those members of the family left at home.

**170323**

23 March 1917

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
23 Mch 1917

My dear Mary

I enclose quarterly cheque.

Edward is here in most despondent mood abt. the war. Thinks all is going wrong and that we shall be driven to accept German terms of peace. Germany in better financial position than England. Our losses 3 times as many as the German. U boats will starve us out. Russia become a prey to civil war. Salonica [*sic*]as grievous a blunder as the Dardanells, [*sic*]the great advance on the Somme not worth what it has cost us. It quite knocks the heart out of one.<sup>391</sup>

Yours try  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>391</sup> There can be no absolute certainty but it seems most likely that this pessimistic but in some ways accurate assessment of the war was made, not by Mary's son, Edward, but by Sabine's own son, Edward, who held a commission in what was then the Army Service Corps.

**190128***28 January 1919*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 28 Jan. 1919

My dear Mary

Many thanks for the bottle of Brandy – which may come in very useful.

The other day I ate some sausages from Plymouth and they made me bad for a couple of days, and could not get any brandy.

Roger Arundell went into Plymouth with his father<sup>392</sup> about his eyes, and at lunch had some sausages and he has been laid up for over a week with potomaine<sup>393</sup> (I don't know how to spell it) poisoning. So no more sausages for some time. Very thankful I am to have a bottle of brandy in the house in case of emergencies. We could get some from Chinges<sup>394</sup> in Tavistock or Plymouth.

Grace has gone to town and Vera is here looking after me.<sup>395</sup>

Remember me affectionately to Harvey  
 I remain  
 Yours truly  
 S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>392</sup> The Rev. Gilbert Arundell, curate at Lew Trenchard, and his son Roger.

<sup>393</sup> Ptomaine. Sabine's spelling was not far out. An obsolete term for food poisoning.

<sup>394</sup> Chinges: The writing is indistinct. Shops of this name or similar in Tavistock and Plymouth at this time have not been identified. Sabine's preoccupation with brandy may reflect his increased use of alcohol at this time, said to have been a factor persuading his son to take over the management of the house later in 1919. On the other hand brandy has been used for many years to settle mild gastro-intestinal upsets.

<sup>395</sup> Grace and Vera, Sabine's daughters, aged 28 and 44 respectively.

**190324**

24 March 1919

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 24 Mch. 1919

My dear Mary

I enclose cheque. Edward and I have resolved on selling Orchard, Holdstrong and Warson. Things are looking so threatening for landlords in England, and of investing abroad. Besides repairs on outlying farms are ruinous at present cost of wages.<sup>396</sup>

Yours truly  
 S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>396</sup> It would seem that Edward, very soon after his return from the war and the Middle East was bringing to bear his knowledge of finance and business to the management of the estate. The following entry in the family bible for the year 1921, suggests slight changes to the resolve in this letter:

*During this and last year have been engaged in repairing cottages and farms, settling the farmers of 3 farms Orchard, Wooda and Holdstrong. Henceforth the farmers will do their own repairs, so that Edward will come into the estate unencumbered. It seems to me that since my father's death in 1872, forty-nine years ago I have been employed incessantly in executing repairs. Edward will reap the advantage.*

This suggests that only Warson, otherwise known as Waddleston, was sold at this time.

**190701***1 July 1919*

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 1 July 1919<sup>397</sup>

My dear Mary

I am sorry that Edward [*Dickinson*]<sup>398</sup> has refused the offer of Faber to take him on in his school in N. York. After a few years there he might have set up a school of his own, and made a fortune, as an Oxford University man with a degree can command any number of pupils, and in a few years he would have made a fortune. I do hope it is not too late for him to change his mind. It might be a turning point in his fortunes. Opportunities are offered, and if we do not snatch at them, they are lost for ever.

With Edward [*Baring-Gould*] in the Oatine business he [*Edward Dickinson*] may make enough to live upon but not gain a fortune as he might by grasping Faber's offer. I am troubled about it.

Edward [*Baring-Gould*] is ill in bed with malaria.<sup>399</sup> Interestingly – nay providentially he came here before he fell ill. He has been three days in bed and his temperature is still very high.

I remain  
 My dearest Mary  
 Your ---- [?]/father  
 S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>397</sup> According to the family bible entry of 1919, the date of this letter was also the day on which Edward and Marian moved in and took over the management of Lew House. In the bible Sabine wrote: *Change of household. Edward and Marian came to reside in Lew House.* This letter should also be read in conjunction with letter XVI to Evelyn Healey dated 1 June 1920 where he wrote: *I suppose you saw when you last came here, (August 1919) that I am passing over the care of the house and house-hold to my eldest son and daughter-in-law. I was no longer able to manage affairs; and was being robbed by my servants.* It is suggested by Dr Merriol Almond that one of the concerns of Edward and Marian was that, since the death of Grace, Sabine had been drinking unwisely and the high level of alcohol consumption in the house probably had nothing to do with the servants.

<sup>398</sup> Mary's son Edward had gone to work for his uncle Edward Baring-Gould in his Oatine brand toiletries business and Sabine had doubts about the wisdom of this move, wanting instead for him to work as a teacher in New York. Edward was a writer at heart and as such had tried to earn a living, before giving up and moving to work in his uncle's toiletries business. It was probably this move away from writing that disappointed his grandfather. Edward Dickinson did make enough to live on from his writing, but was never wealthy. Personal communication: Elizabeth Dickinson.

<sup>399</sup> According to Sabine's letter XI to Evelyn Healey dated 28 Jan 1919, Sabine's son Edward was then expected back from Palestine and Syria, presumably the source of the malaria – if malaria it was. There is no independent mention of Edward suffering from malaria. All that can probably be deduced from this letter is that Edward had a high temperature of unknown origin.

**200128**

28 January 1920

Lew Trenchard  
 N. Devon  
 28 Jan. 1920

My dear Mary

Thank you so much for your good wishes;<sup>400</sup> I am delighted to hear that Ted has had a drawing<sup>401</sup> accepted. I hope the pay is good.

We have a scourge of measles<sup>402</sup> in the place, and the schools are closed for 3 weeks. Mrs. R. Palmer has had it, followed by pneumonia and she was in such a critical state I had to her prayed for [*sic*] on Sunday. Today she has taken a turn for the better.<sup>403</sup>

I remain yours truly  
 S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>400</sup> Sabine was thanking Mary for her birthday wishes to him. He was 86 on 28 January.

<sup>401</sup> It is known from Bickford Dickinson's biography that Sabine's grandson Arscott Dickinson was a fine caricaturist. Elizabeth Dickinson in a personal communication states that all three of Mary's sons were artistically gifted. Edward was a fine artist as well as a good writer.

<sup>402</sup> This outbreak of measles is mentioned in Sabine's letter to Evelyn Healey XVII also dated 28 January 1920.

<sup>403</sup> The identity of Mrs R Palmer is not known.

**200624**  
24 June 1920

Lew Trenchard  
Lew Down  
24 June 1920

My dear Mary  
I enclose cheque for quarterly less Inc. Tax. <sup>404</sup>

Julian<sup>405</sup> broke his arm last Saturday at a cricket match, and has had it set, but goes into Tavistock every day to have it massaged.

Simultaneously or about so, I had a fall and sprained my left hand, and Fox the Colly<sup>406</sup> [*sic*] lanced<sup>407</sup> his left leg, so there have been three cripples in the family.

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>404</sup> Another letter written to accompany Mary's quarterly allowance.

<sup>405</sup> It was probably not Sabine's son, Julian, then aged 43, who had broken his arm. There were 2 more Julians in the next generation of Baring-Goulds.

<sup>406</sup> There are references in other correspondence to 'Fox' having disappeared. Evelyn Healey letter LX dated 1 September 1923 and Miss Hilda Piper AL06 dated 6 October 1923. This letter to Mary is not the only confirmation that 'Fox' was a collie dog. In an old photo album there are several photos of Merriol Almond's uncle, Edward Darroch, known as Teddy, probably taken around 1914 by his brother, Sabine, who was Merriol Almond's father. In one photo Teddy is in a rowing boat together with an unknown young woman and a collie dog referred to in the annotation as 'Foxy' However, in view of the difference in dates, it is possible there was more than one Collie called 'Fox.'

<sup>407</sup> The handwriting is indistinct but 'lanced' seems to be the most likely interpretation.

**201004 (display)**<sup>408</sup>  
4 October 1920

Lew Trenchard  
N. Devon  
4 Oct. 1920

My dear Mary

Thank Arscott for me. His picture is admirable, could not be better; and will be a great addition to my book.<sup>409</sup> Though I do not intend my middle age Reminiscences, if ever they do see the light, to be published till 15 years after my death, so as to make sure that no corns are trodden on.

What a storm yesterday and last night all the apples blown off the trees, the poor magnolia torn in half, and several boughs of trees down. I expect slates will be off on Lew Down. Happily for myself, the cottages were made over to the tenants on Michaelmas day so that they are responsible for repairs.<sup>410</sup>

You ought now to be able to let Dunsland for a big sum. Now is the chance.<sup>411</sup>

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

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<sup>408</sup> Pasted onto miscellaneous A4 sheet 1 along with 3 other letters.

<sup>409</sup> An important letter referring, as it does, to Sabine's 'middle age Reminiscences,' ie *Further Reminiscences*, although, if Bickford Dickinson is correct, the drawing by Arscott, which appears in his biography, *Sabine Baring-Gould*, at page 72, was intended for the final volume of Reminiscences that never appeared and the manuscript for which was almost certainly destroyed by Sabine's son, Edward after his father's death. There may have been other drawings by Arscott.

<sup>410</sup> The reference to tenants being responsible for their own repairs as from 29 September 1920 is echoed in the entry in the family bible for 1921:

*During this and last year have been engaged in repairing cottages and farms, settling the farmers of 3 farms Orchard, Wooda and Holdstrong. Henceforth the farmers will do their own repairs, so that Edward will come into the estate unencumbered. It seems to me that since my father's death in 1872, forty-nine years ago I have been employed incessantly in executing repairs. Edward will reap the advantage.*

<sup>411</sup> It is unclear why Sabine made reference here to Harvey Dickinson's ancestral home, Dunsland. Perhaps Mary had told Sabine that she and Harvey were struggling to keep the house going?

**201017**<sup>412</sup>

17 October 1920

To: Mrs. Dickinson, Dunsland House, Brandis Corner, N. Devon

Very many thanks for the photo. Yesterday I had the 8<sup>th</sup> and last of my sittings for my portrait each 2 ½ hours long. Mr. Fisher has carried off the picture to town where it will be photographed, and you will receive a copy.<sup>413</sup>

The painting is to be exhibited in the Royal Academy so we shall not have it till the end of July. As a painting it is fine. Whether a likeness or not I am unable to say. It is a picture of an old decrepid [*sic*] toad.<sup>414</sup>

17 Novr. 1920.

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<sup>412</sup> Postcard: The date on the postmark is 17/10 but Sabine has written 17 Nov 1920. It seems unlikely, although not impossible, that the post office would be using an incorrect date stamp in the middle of a month. Sabine was probably incorrect

<sup>413</sup> The painting referred to by Sabine is the well-known portrait, by Melton Fisher RA., in which Sabine wore his academic hood.

<sup>414</sup> Dickinson quoted this letter in his biography but read '*old decrepit boat.*' The writing is not distinct but, by enlarging the scanned image on a computer screen, the present transcriber read '*decrepid toad.*' He has no doubt about 'decrepid;' and cannot see 'boat' at all; He is reasonably confident about 'toad' and this is a more appropriate interpretation.

**201217**

*17 December 1920*

Lew Trenchard  
Lew Down  
17 Dec. 1920

My dear Mary

I send the cheque Early [*sic*] to avoid the crush of letters at Xmas.<sup>415</sup>

By the way if Arscott does not want the photo. of Cruickshank [*sic*] of the gathering of the servants I shd. like it back. I have described it in my *Reminiscences* with my comments.<sup>416</sup>

Yours try  
S. Baring-Gould

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<sup>415</sup> Another letter written primarily to accompany the quarterly allowance.

<sup>416</sup> Sabine was probably referring to a print of a gathering of servants by George Cruickshank, entitled '*Loo* [the card game] *in the Kitchen or High Life below Stairs*' The title *High Life Below Stairs* appears with a further print by George Cruickshank as well as with paintings and writing by others. The transcriber has been unable to locate this reference in either *Early* or *Further Reminiscences*. It may have been intended for the missing chapter of *Early Reminiscences* or for the missing final volume.

**210128**<sup>417</sup>

28 January 1921

*Postcard to:* Mrs. Dickinson, Dunsland, Brandis Corner, DevonMany thanks for your letter and kind congratulations.<sup>418</sup>

“Stogged in the mud” is that still your condition? Here the ground is so sopping that I cannot sow the flower seeds, they would rot in the soil.

Fancy! I went into Tavistock last Sunday evening to help the vicar. He is left without a curate and it is too much of a strain for him, so I went to help him.<sup>419</sup>

Yours try  
S Baring Gould

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<sup>417</sup> A Postcard addressed to: *Mrs. Dickinson, Dunsland, Brandis Corner, Devon*. From the post mark the date is 28 January 192\*. The last figure is indistinct and could be 1,2 or 3. However the bold scrawl on the postcard in another hand, possibly that of Mary, of the words ‘*Look for Cruickshank*’ points to a direct link with the letter 201217. This would confirm the card was posted on 28 January 1921.

<sup>418</sup> The letter acknowledged Mary’s best wishes for Sabine’s 87<sup>th</sup> birthday on 28 January.

<sup>419</sup> A lively letter in which Sabine was delighted to show that at his age and despite frequent periods of incapacity, particularly in the winter months, he could still help out the vicar of Tavistock.

211224

24 December 1921

Lew Trenchard  
Lew Down  
24 Dec.1921

My dear Mary

Very many thanks for the wood-cock and snipe, the latter I had for my lunch yesterday, and uncommonly good it was. I have a distaste for butcher's meat, so these birds came in very gratefully.

So you have Edward and his wife with you, I wish they would come over and see us, but B.G. says this is impossible as they have not the time.

I wish you all a happy New Year, it is too late to wish you a glad Christmas, as you will not get this letter till Tuesday. [27 December] I enclose the quarterly cheque.<sup>420</sup>

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring-Gould

#### Transcriber's Note:

Ostensibly a thank you letter for the Christmas gift of woodcock and snipe. However Sabine also used the letter to express his displeasure that Edward '*and his wife*' had chosen to abandon Lew House and Sabine, to spend Christmas with Mary and Harvey at Dunsland. Significantly he did not refer to Marian by name and coldly referred to Edward as B.G. (ie *the* Baring-Gould.) It is likely that Bickford Dickinson destroyed any letters to Mary that referred to tensions between Sabine and Edward and Marian. These tensions are apparent from several of Sabine's letters to Evelyn Healey and are hinted at here. In this instance however Sabine's criticism was possibly unjustified because it is clear from a postcard to Evelyn Healey XXXI dated 13 Dec. 1921 that it had been Sabine's intention to spend Christmas with aunt Kate in Exeter. He wrote:

*Yes. I received your letter on my return from Exeter where I had been staying for a few days; and I go there again for Xmas. I have an aunt there aged 96 and this will probably be her last Christmas on Earth, so I wish to pass it with her. I can never forget her goodness to my mother in her last trying illness.*

It is not known why Sabine did not do as he intended, perhaps he was unwell, but it is possible that, believing his father was spending Christmas away from Lew, Edward felt free to make plans to spend Christmas with Mary and Harvey and saw no reason to change them once he knew Sabine would be at Lew after all. Unfortunately it seems that no one thought to tell Sabine that he would be on his own!

What is known from letters XLV and XLVI to Evelyn Healey on 16 and 24 December 1922 is that Sabine did spend the *following* Christmas with aunt Kate in Exeter and in these letters he still wrote that she was 96 and that this would be her last Christmas on Earth. On 22 December 1922 he wrote along similar lines to Miss Hilda Piper in Lewdown.

---

<sup>420</sup> A somewhat brusque New Year greeting coupled with reference to the quarterly allowance.

**220204***4 February 1922*

Lew Trenchard  
 Lew  
 Lew Down  
 4 Feb. 1922

My dear Mary

Thank you and Harvey so much for the snipe. It will indeed be a treat.<sup>421</sup>

No bells tomorrow, four of our ringers down with 'flu. I am not sure of the organ as Mr. Dawe is sickening, but perhaps he will get his daughter Mrs Brimacombe<sup>422</sup> to come and play.

I am very well and get about a good deal on foot now that Charlie Dustan is laid up, and cannot drive me.<sup>423</sup>

We are having our bells clamped the next week. The hot dry weather of last summer warped the frames and loosened the holdings. It will cost me £25 and some extra

I remain  
 Yours truly  
 S. Baring-Gould

---

<sup>421</sup> Probably a belated thank you for snipe sent to celebrate his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday on 28 January.

<sup>422</sup> Mrs Gladys Brimacombe, daughter of the schoolmaster, William Henry Dawe.

<sup>423</sup> Sabine did not manage well on foot for long. In letter XXXIV to Evelyn Healey, 28 March 22, Sabine wrote: *We have had much sickness in the house and in the parish, but I have kept wonderfully well, and have knocked about a good deal on foot, as my groom was down with influenza and so I could not use the dogcart. The consequence was that I got rather crippled in my feet and had to go into Plymouth last week to have them put to rights.*

220601<sup>424</sup>  
1 June 1922

Lew Trenchard  
Lew Down  
Ascension Day  
1922

My very dear Mary

Thank you so much for the delightful photograph of yourself, which I found waiting for me on my return to Lew yesterday. And oh! I am so glad to be at home again. I was not well all the time I was in Exeter, bronchitis as usual, but this spell of hot weather has set me up again.<sup>425</sup>

Some char – a – bancs from Bude packed with methodies and their ministers are arriving this morning to see the church, grounds and the house. I hope they will not depart singing “We are not divided, all one body we,” for it would be a lie.<sup>426</sup>

I remain  
With renewed thanks  
Yours ever sincerely  
S. Baring-Gould

---

<sup>424</sup> This letter can be accurately dated to 1 June 22 from the reference to Ascension Day.

<sup>425</sup> Sabine complained in letter XXXV to Evelyn Healey, dated 27 April that he was required by Marian, his daughter in law, to move to Exeter for the month of May. He wrote:

*I leave for Exeter on May 1. My da-in-law is shutting up Lew House and giving holiday for 3 weeks or a month to the servants, so I have been told to shift for myself. I have to go but am only just recovering from a bronchitis attack and have lost my voice. My address in Exeter will be the R. Clarence Hotel, The Close.*

Sabine wrote to Evelyn Healey from the Royal Clarence on 6 and 26 May, letters XXXVI and XXXVII, repeating the circumstances that brought him to Exeter and the fact that although he had many visitors there he was too unwell to accept invitations to visit friends in Exeter.

<sup>426</sup> On 7 September 2006 a photograph appeared in the Devon and Cornish Post of a group of men and women from Bude standing outside Lew House with Sabine. From the caption, the photograph was thought to have been taken between 1919 and 1923. It seems likely that this group was the one described in this letter. Unfortunately the person who submitted the photograph has since died and although it has been confirmed that those in the photograph were Methodists no further information has been forthcoming.

**220929***29 September 1922*Lew Trenchard  
Michaelmas Day  
1922

My dear Mary

I enclose cheque.<sup>427</sup> Alas! The reduction on the income tax is not to come into effect till next April if it does then, which is questionable.

When are we likely to see you again?

I am off to Exeter to see Aunt Kate, tomorrow, before winter cold and dark days come in and send me up to my bedroom. I shall however be back for harvest festival on October 5.

I remain  
yours truly  
S Baring-Gould

---

<sup>427</sup> Payment of quarterly allowance.

**221222 (display)**<sup>428</sup>  
 22 December 1922

Lew Trenchard (nominally)  
 Actually 4 Colleton Crescent  
 Exeter  
 22 Decr. 1922

My dearest Mary

So many thanks for the wood-cock.<sup>429</sup> They arrived just as I was starting for Exeter, so I took them with me, as aunt Kate loves game, as do I so we shall gobble up the woodcock on Sunday<sup>430</sup> and Xmas day.

I have come to be with aunt Kate on what will be her last Xmas in this world;<sup>431</sup> as also to be at the services in the Cathedral which are so solemn and beautifully performed. On Xmas Eve at 6.30 there will be a service of Xmas Carols and a procession.

I saw today 400 rabbits and as many plum-puddings given away, and also oranges and toys, by a Mr. Plummer, a well-to-do tradesman in Exeter,<sup>432</sup> whilst the band played Good King Wenceslas, and the children sang it – all seemed to know the carol. But it was characteristic, the Charitable One was no longer a king but a clothier.

I go back to Lew on Tuesday<sup>433</sup> [*Boxing Day*] - you know I presume that there is to be a ball at Lew on Jan 10<sup>th</sup> the eve of Sabine's<sup>434</sup> coming of age. It will be a joy to see you there.

I remain  
 Yours very sincerely  
 S. Baring-Gould

---

<sup>428</sup> Pasted into miscellaneous A4 sheet 3.

<sup>429</sup> Another thank you letter for game.

<sup>430</sup> 24 December was on a Sunday in 1922.

<sup>431</sup> Sabine would seem have been keen to let others know how thoroughly he was enjoying the Christmas events in Exeter with Aunt Kate. A contrast with the bitterness expressed over feeling abandoned at Lew for Christmas 1921. See 211224.

<sup>432</sup> The identity of Mr Plummer is not known.

<sup>433</sup> Tuesday was Boxing Day in 1922.

<sup>434</sup> Sabine: Edward's eldest son and father of Merriol Almond.

**221228**

28 December 1922

Lew Trenchard  
 Lewdown  
 28 Dec. 1922

My dear Mary

I enclose cheque for the quarterly, and £25.0.0 towards allowance for Felicitas, who is in a clamorous condition (as usual) for money.<sup>435</sup>

We ate the woodcock at 4 Colleton Crescent and enjoyed them greatly

I can write no more my fingers are frozen into icicles.<sup>436</sup>

Yours very truly  
 S. Baring Gould

---

<sup>435</sup> This letter was written to accompany not only Mary's quarterly allowance but some of that for Felicitas who it seems was again short of money. Sabine gave no indication of the nature of Felicitas's problems but presumably she was spending the festive season with Mary.

<sup>436</sup> This letter was written after Sabine's return to Lew having spent Christmas with Aunt Kate in Exeter. Letters to Evelyn Healey on 16 December and Hilda Piper written on 22 December 1922 also describe his pleasure at spending Christmas (*probably her last on Earth*) with Aunt Kate. Was Sabine trying to bring attention to the contrast between this Christmas and the lonely one he spent at Lew the previous year? See letter 211224.

230910 (Almond Mary05)<sup>437</sup>

10 September 1923

Lew Trenchard  
Lew Down  
10 Sept 1923

My dear Mary

I send you the chapter on dear Mama, that I have reluctantly been obliged to write for the second series of my Reminiscences. When you have read it please send it on to Vera, and ask her to forward it on to Grace at Leawood.<sup>438</sup> I should also wish to hear your and their strictures upon the chapter.<sup>439</sup>

The interviewer has at last gone, after a week at Tavistock, and a fortnight on Lew Down staying with perhaps the most gossiping woman in the parish. My annoyance has been great. He even tried to worm matters out of the butler here as to my private life. I have dressed him pretty well in the chapter I think.

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring-Gould

---

<sup>437</sup> The date given in Dickinson's biography for this letter, 13 Sept, is incorrect. In his biography, Bickford did not mention that the missing chapter was also to be seen by Sabine's daughters, Vera and Grace, as well as Mary. Nor did Dickinson make clear that Sabine wrote that he had *reluctantly been obliged* to write the chapter.

<sup>438</sup> Sabine's daughter, Grace, then Mrs Calmady Hamlyn, resided at Leawood House, Bridestowe.

<sup>439</sup> Clearly Sabine had considerable reservations concerning this chapter. Dickinson seemed to infer that Mary might have welcomed the chapter but we do not know how Vera or Grace might have viewed it. The fact that it was never published may have meant no more than that Sabine decided not to do so but in a personal communication, Mrs Merriol Almond indicates that the chapter was burnt by Sabine's eldest son Edward. This act was witnessed by Edward's daughter Adele.

## **Section IV**

### **Undatable Letters**

**U01**<sup>440</sup>

*Probably early 1900s. No earlier than 1902*

My dear Mary

I enclose Harvey's ticket.<sup>441</sup>

Will you kindly send the pocket handkerchiefs to

M. Le Revd. L'abbé Duine

Collège Libre

Juilly

Seine et Marne

France<sup>442</sup>

The abbé whilst here said he had lost most of his pocket handkerchiefs he must have himself mislaid them.<sup>443</sup>

I went to Warson<sup>444</sup> yesterday, and feel better. My voice however is not yet returned. We all miss you and Harvey and the dear little boys so much.

I remain  
Yours truly  
S. Baring Gould

---

<sup>440</sup> This letter gave no address and was not dated. The reference to Warson, a farm then on the estate, suggests the letter was written at Lew. The reference to 'dear little boys' suggests late 1890s or early 1900s when Mary's sons were small. Another possible clue is that Sabine is missing Mary, Harvey and the little boys. The reference to M. Le Revd. L'abbé Duine points to the early 1900s and no earlier than 1902.

<sup>441</sup> It is not possible to say for what event the ticket was intended.

<sup>442</sup> 'France' is written in pencil by an unknown hand.

<sup>443</sup> Sabine first met M. Le Revd. L'abbé Duine when the family were resident in Dinan between October 1900 and December 1901. Following the return of the family to Lew the Abbé made several visits to Lew House. L'abbé Duine wrote an important critique of Sabine. See Bernard Heudré, editor, *Souvenirs et observations de l'abbé François Duine*, 2009 Presses Universitaires de Rennes. pp 113-9, Section on Sabine Baring-Gould, translated by Alan Payne. [www.nevercompletelysubmerged.co.uk](http://www.nevercompletelysubmerged.co.uk).

<sup>444</sup> Warson, or Waddlestone was a farmstead on the Lew Trenchard estate. Usually Sabine went to Dartmoor in the hope that the air there would cure his respiratory complaints. It is unclear what part Warson might have played in this process.

**U02**<sup>445</sup>

*29 September. The year is uncertain. Possibly 1908*

Dearest Mary

I enclose cheque.

The harvest thanksgiving went off very well here. We had fine weather and a great number of people.

The Maxwells are so cheerful and happy here. They leave on Monday but we expect them to stay with us some time before leaving for Borneo. Daisy returns to London on Monday, she has a cold – so Barbie and I suppose it will go through the house. Tell Harvey that if he likes to have the Royal descent of young Arscott from Edward III.<sup>446</sup> and from several of the Welsh princes I can let him have it.

I remain  
Yrs truly S Baring Gould

S. Michael and all Angels<sup>447</sup>

---

<sup>445</sup> Although undoubtedly written on 29 September, The year is at present uncertain. Diana was married to Hugh Maxwell Batten in October 1907 and they spent some years in Borneo. This letter presumably postdates the marriage. The existence of letters 090930 and 100929, which enclosed quarterly cheques for those years, rules out 1909 and 1910. The absence of a fully dated letter around Michaelmas 1908 suggests this could be the year but according to the family bible Sabine, Grace, Felicitas and John left Lew for Munich on 29 September in that year. It is possible that the date entered in the bible is incorrect. Bible entries were all made at the end of a year and were sometimes incorrect.

<sup>446</sup> Through Sarah Hunt, wife of Colonel Joseph Sabine. Their daughter Diana Amelia was Sabine's paternal grandmother.

<sup>447</sup> St Michaels and All Angels: Michaelmas, 29 September.

**U03**<sup>448</sup>

*Undateable. The reference to Willy suggests it could have been written in the 1890s.*

My dear Mary

Many thanks for the jersey It will be a comfort, that I am now wearing is too thick as the milder weather comes on. What do I owe you for it?

Willy has had a spill from horseback on his head, but I think nothing serious. He is in bed and resting

Yours try  
S Baring Gould

Lew Tr.

Mch. 4,

---

<sup>448</sup> Although written on 4 March, there is nothing in the letter to indicate the year. Possibly in the 1890s.

**U04<sup>449</sup> (display)<sup>450</sup>**

*Undateable. A quarterly payment date in an unknown year.*

My dear Mary

I enclose cheque.

The wind here has rent the roofs on Lew Down so the masons are all taken from the house to repair them. But ours suffered. The two pigeon houses that had been planted on the parapet, were blown over and through the roof, so that during the night I had to be up putting basins and pails to catch the water.

Yours try  
S. Baring Gould

---

<sup>449</sup> It has not proved possible to date this letter beyond it being a quarterly date for Mary's allowance. Masons would have been working on the house in the 1890s, the 1900s and the 1910s. In his diary Sabine commented on severe storms on 22, 23, 24 February 1897 and wrote that '*most of the houses in Lewdown had roofs ripped*'. At this time masons would have been working on the new west wing but February does not coincide with a quarterly date. No doubt there were other severe storms not recorded in Sabine's letters.

<sup>450</sup> Pasted into Displays A4 sheet 3, alongside 2 other letters.

## **Inventory**

## INVENTORY

### **Letters to Mary Dickinson**

108 letters from her father, the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould.

But also including:

1 letter from Sabine Baring-Gould to Mary's husband, Harvey.

2 letters to Mary from her mother, Grace Baring-Gould.

Total number of letters: 111.

### **Also in the collection:**

An envelope inscribed by Mary's son Bickford Dickinson

2 pages of manuscript presumed, from the handwriting, to be by Sabine's daughter, Joan Priestley. These are not included in this transcription but will be published separately together with Joan's notebook memoirs and other loose manuscript notes. The loose notes were probably written by Joan for her nephew Bickford when he was writing his biography.

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**1890s**

930117  
 93U01  
 931105  
 931207  
 940127  
 940129  
 940213  
 941109  
 941208  
 941213  
 9501U01  
 95U02  
 9503U03  
 950419  
 950510  
 950512  
 950929  
 951117  
 951229  
 960412  
 9604U01  
 9604U02  
 960611  
 961231  
 970117  
 970228  
 970309  
 97U01  
 971006  
 9804U01  
 980630  
 9807U01  
 9807U02  
 9808U01  
 980902  
 980803  
 981003  
 981226  
 981229  
 9901U01

**1900s**

000420  
 001202  
 010125  
 010401  
 010521  
 021202 a&b  
 030309  
 030330  
 040219  
 050101  
 050606  
 060312  
 060325  
 070302  
 070313 To Harvey  
 080207  
 080420  
 080813  
 081025  
 0906U01 From Grace  
 090930  
 091001  
 091230

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 110309  
 110401  
 110720  
 111006  
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200624  
201017  
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**Undated**

U01  
U02  
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