

Morning - Highnoon + Evening

in the vicinity of St Petersburg, Russia a place called Alexandroffsky -

I woke up skating ^A I couldn't have been more than three years of age ^{on my skates}

It must have been a startling experience to have registered, so long ago -

I remember a great big lady holding me up + trying to show me where my feet were ~~belonged~~ - This lady developed in later years to ^{be} my aunt Addie, Taddie for short -

~~was to find out~~ She was I believe just about 5 ft. high + was the personification of good cheer ^{each one of us} + comfort ^{at the age of eleven} to all my brothers ~~at the time~~ + myself when we were sent to school ^{being by far the youngest first}

my brothers to George Watson's College Edinburgh + myself to London, Brookhurst Hill Essex, then Liverpool High (the same school as the great Gladstone dad attended) + then

last but not least the funny little University of those days which has grown to be one of the finest buildings in Liverpool - but ~~my~~ there hangs a tale - My

brother Jim (my Jonathan) was a gifted ^{amateur} musician, one of the plodding kind, infinite patience, endless practise, a ravenous concert +

opera goer - Improviser + dreamer - was my first teacher without

giving me any sort of technical lessons - I just lived his life with him

+ got all the teaching I could assimilate that way - He was six or a bit years

older than myself - All my brothers, except my eldest brother, who I actually

met for the first time in 1910 when I became chief conductor ^{at the age of 27} of the Imperial Operahouse -

- Such is often the case when families migrate away from their own lands - as I was saying

all my other brothers used to come + spend their summer holidays at home in

Alexandroffsky + a happy, very happy, time we all had of it - Cricket, tennis

boating, on that superb river the Neva, - bicycling then in its infancy, solid tyres +

such like atrocities but ^{at the time} we all thought it grand - Music, singing, chor ~~practising~~

organ recitals, Violin with Gerlach Cello with Snuff afterwards with Verjeblovitch, a strident

personality -

the Coates'
 we actually
 play the
 1st game of
 tennis in
 Russia +
 could only
 get
 3 1/2 miles
 until the
 Nobody had
 ever seen a real
 racket in
 up to the
 time
 of the
 1st
 world
 war

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as for the tennis court, it was built the same way (~~blocks of wood~~ ^{blocks of wood cut into} ~~lightly~~ ^{quarters} ~~interwoven~~) as the pavements on the great Nevsky prospect, & we had ^{about middle of April usually} the same experience as the Nevsky prospect when the frost ^{was} about to abate & the rains & the warmth loosened all the blocks & we had the ^{efficiency} of a time settling them down again in their proper order but when that was accomplished my, what a sly game it became —

Cricket too was something never to be forgotten — To this day I cannot drink a lemonade from the bottle without the sweet scent of mown grass & see a pavilion ~~actually a two storied one~~ full of happy & excited faces & the smell of the pads & bats & the shouts of the coach ^{on} practise evenings & the fuss & bother which mother & all the other ladies made when there was a real ^{match} game on — especially when we had challenged another club from across the river — The next day in church my brother Jim, who was our ^{closed} organist, used to improvise all sorts of rollicking tunes ^(preludes & postludes) if we had won our match, but oh what grim ones if we had lost the match — Expostulations ^{followed} during ^{dinner} Sunday ^{by both pugy & nudgy (my love names for our parents)} ~~lunch~~ ^{on that day} ~~lunch~~ (we never, in my memory, sat down to less than 12-16 people) but my brother used to ^{just} grin, & the younger ones were always the first ^{to} to side with him & so it went on — Football passed us by, the season being the heavy snows & esp. frosts that gripped this northern city down the winter ^{Autumn} & Spring were very short affairs, Summer seemed ^{to just pramble up & wassily wash upon us —} to come all at ^{again after a} once after the ice had broken & cleared the Neva for navigation — ^{short spring}

As there were ~~no~~ hills of any kind for miles around St. P. I geared my bicycle to a very slow turnover & so was able to go miles further than the others whose legs were ^{not} so long or so strong — It was thanks to my bike that I nearly became an astronomer — On one of those exquisite May evenings when the

sun only sets for a couple of hours I found myself ^{at the age of 13} miles in the country (having visited ^{some} a near relation of mine on their farm) + the suns slanting rays seemed to be hitting a small hill the only one in the vicinity of St P + lighting up some sort of copulas, as I thought then a whole lot of monasteries or convents which are so prevalent in the south of Russia - I was greatly intrigued to know + set forth, encountering the most atrocious roads I ~~had~~ ever in my life ~~type~~ experienced - At long last I got to the bottom of the hill + had to dismount - quite a formidable length of rise ~~in~~ coupled with the bad roads nearly made me turn round + aim for home 15 Kilometres away, but something prompted me to go on + I am very grateful that I did so - Coming into a sort of Square surrounded by what I now ~~saw~~ were not churches but ^{dome like} conical shaped towers. I realized that I had stumbled quite unwittingly into ^{the} Pulkova Observatory - Gazing around not knowing quite what to do, I was accosted by a kindly gentleman ^{accompanied} by a few boys ^{who spoke to me} in Russian - My Russian was very limited at that time, so he called to a lady some distance away + in no time we were talking English - I wish I could remember their names He was actually the astronomer ^{imperial} general to the Emperor + this lady was his wife - They invited me in + soon I was absorbed in watching him lecture - When the boys had to find a ^{certain} star, he showed ^{them} ~~me~~ ~~how~~ ~~to~~ find it which since 1834 has been published by ^{the} Admiralty

how to find any star even with the sun still shining brightly using

that the British Nautical Almanac ~~was~~ ^{is} the only ^{any given} authorized book giving latitude + longitude of every known star at all times a really mystifying phenomena of ~~book~~ the power of the human brain -

K...

I was completely fascinated + when he turned to me + said in quite good english, Find Venus, I gasped, did as I had watched the other boys do, latitude so + so longitude so + so - Pathfinder forward - + to there ~~in all its glory~~, despite a blazing sun outside, Venus, in all her glory - When I got home ^{that evening} they must have thought I had got sun stroke - I shouted + jumped around like a distracted thing-me-jig - despite having ridden miles + miles on unbelievable roads - My brother Jim now a mighty man of business, leastwise that's what he said he was, was anxious to know something about the stars himself, but as he was not supposed to ride bicycles or ~~do~~ ^{make} any strenuous exertions + his days were full of ~~work~~ tiresome office work he could only go Fridays + that by steam tram to St P then horse tram to the Tsarski Celoki Station + out at Pulikova, a village cart ^{from start to finish} from the station to the observatory a distance altogether of about 50 ~~50~~ kilometers instead of 15 on the bike + we had it all to be done again the next morning - ^{after a night with the stars} It was well worth it, nothing but kindness + affection from our leader who often spoke about the people who would garner the results of his researches in 300, 400, or even 1000 yrs hence, It meant nothing to him, he seemed to live in the 4 1/2 dimension where there is no time + no space - Among other wonderful inventions he took us to see Prince Galitzin's Seismograph - The Princess in later years when I was chief at the Imperial Observance became a most fascinating + loyal friend, ^{to us} thanks to her great scientist husband, the Bolshakovs in their turn gave her a splendid pension to live on -

Prince Business Galitzin great scientist inventor of the Seismograph) Jan going too fast -

Music with my beloved brother Jim surrounded by the rest of the family + many friends + relations was the entertainment of the evening after dinner - ~~Jim~~ We had a Mason + Hamlin organ, quite a ^{good} ~~large~~ one + several pianos in different parts of the big house but on the evenings it was always in the music room with the organ + piano all our unforgettable improvisations took place - Everybody has heard of one person improvising on a random theme but when two people on 2 different instruments start it is a very different event + events they usually turned out to be - We changed instruments also at random - To show how close we two brothers were in thought + action, I only have to tell the reader of the 1st time either of us had heard ^{The} Tchaikovsky Pathétique Symphony - It was in the great Conservatorium hall of St P + Saffonoff (the ^{Latin} ~~starkless~~ conductor on % of an affectation of both his thanks) was the conductor, we had had a grand season of music under him + were thrilled with everything he had done, so when it came to ^{the} Tchaikovsky Pathétique we looked forward with eager anticipation but not more eagerly than other Symphonies we had ^{already} enjoyed - The Pathétique was the 1st thing on the program why I cannot tell you at this ^{great} distance of time - but it was + as the last bars ^{were played} to quote Tennyson "And on the mere the waiting died away" sounded we both mutually got up + without a word we drove all that distance home, over ten kilometres, by sledge + ~~stabled~~ horse muffled up over our heads ^{it bears the depth of winter} which made talking quite impossible - We got home, had out midnight tea + went to our several rooms silently ^{driving} + full of the stupendous work we had just heard the boy of 19 I, 13, We stayed up all night ^{unbroken} to each other + wrote out

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from memory all he could remember ^{of the symphony} The next morning we
 astonished each other by producing manuscripts scribbled
 over, nearly incoherent, but when we put the two together
 I found Jim had remembered what dad passed me ^{by} & I
 vice versa - Father had this document in his pocket
 for many & many a year -

It is time I told you something about my family - Father was born in
 Bridlington Quay ^{near Hull Yorkshire} - His grandfather had been a wealthy man but
 had lost all his fortune in the tragedy of the South Sea Bubble -
 My grandfather was a man of action & immediately turned to the sea
 for a living - becoming ^{long last} a captain of a ^{steamer} freighter which plied between
 Hull & St Petersburg - His eldest son my uncle William remained in Eng
 but my father & his sister Aunt Frances were both brought over to Russia
 at a very early age My father being only eleven & Aunt Frances 8 1/2 younger
 Grandfather married again this time the daughter of a sea captain - I remember
 her very well & her whole family Grandma Rose - Aunt Polly Poly for short -
 I never saw my grandfather, he passed on ~~before my years of long~~ before I grew up -
 My mother was born in Russia - Pavloffsky was a summer resort & much
 frequented by the upper classes for its wonderful music - Since my
 youngest recollections I was often there for the big symphony concerts
 with 1st class conductors & soloists - Mother was born a few Kilometres from
 this beautiful place, in Analova on the river - Her parents ~~were~~
 also immigrants & her whole family, eldest brother to her, the 7th child, were

all born in that small village - Grandpa Gibson being director of the
 Nevsky Spassky Steamworks there - Grandma Gibson was of a ^{very} different
 calibre altogether, her ancestors had evidently had Tartar blood in
 them despite her ^{Irish} name of Pondall & she brought ^{to} our family, an amazing
 virility & fearlessness which was the chief asset of all my Gibson Uncles
 & Aunts incl my own mother - My Younger Uncle ^{of the last war hero} Gibson, as Mr Weston Churchill
 called him, was a direct descendant of this great family & my 2^d cousin -
 Father & mother were married (He 19 she 18) in ~~St~~ St Petersburg by old daddy Key
 who at a very advanced age was also my teacher & friend - ^{At his marriage} Father had the
 amazing ^{small} sum of 75 roubles a month to live on ~~(about £4.10-0)~~ ^{at the time I was born for a baby sister} to live on & rear
 a family - ~~Had~~ He & I was the 7th son (no sisters) & an eighth son
 Frank was born after me but died within the year - By the time I was 13
 Father had become ^{one of the} director of the Thornton Woollen Mills, ^{in which he had started from rock bottom} an entirely English
 enterprise ^{built for the directors} until 1917 & had one of the three great houses ^{on the river front}
 with beautiful large gardens laid out by English landscape gardeners ^{with tennis court}
 Incident of growing taller -
 > > Q.V. organ playing -
 > > English language art is spoken! -
 > > 2 letters of Jim's -
 How I followed Ernest -
 How I kept father well for many years -