

姊姊的日記

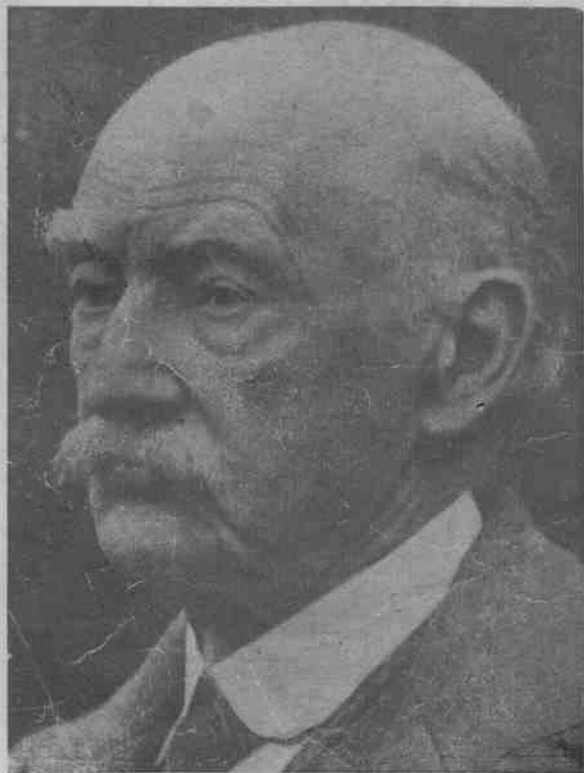
哈提作

方光燾譯註

姊姊的日記

哈 提 作

方光燾譯註



Thomas Hardy

CONTENTS

I	She Misses Her Sister.....	1
II	News interesting and serious.....	6
III	Her Gloom lightens a Little.....	14
IV	She beholds the attractive Stranger.....	18
V	Her Situation is a trying one.....	29
VI	Her Ingenuity instigates her.....	37
VII	A Surprise awaits her.....	44
VIII	She travels in Pursuit.....	50
IX	She witnesses the End.....	63
X	She adds a note long after.....	69

ALICIA'S DIARY

I.—SHE MISSES HER SISTER

July 7.—I wander about the house in a mood of unutterable sadness, for my dear sister Caroline has left home to-day with my mother, and I shall not see them again for several weeks. They have accepted a long-standing invitation to visit some old friends of ours, the Marlets, who live at Versailles for cheapness—my mother thinking that it will be for the good of Caroline to see a little of France and Paris. But I don't quite like her going. I fear she may lose some of that childlike simplicity and gentleness which so characterize her, and have been nourished by the seclusion of our life here. Her solicitude about her pony before starting was quite touching, and she made me promise to visit it daily, and see that it came to no harm.

Caroline gone abroad, and I left here! It is the reverse of an ordinary situation, for good or ill-luck has mostly ordained that I should be the absent one. Mother will be quite tired out by the young enthusiasm of Caroline. She will demand to be taken everywhere—to Paris continually, of course; to all the stock shrines of history's devotees; to palaces and prisons; to kings' tombs and queens' tombs; to cemeteries and picture-galleries, and royal hunting forests. My poor mother, having gone over most of this ground many times before, will perhaps not find the perambulation so exhilarating as will Caroline herself. I wish I could have gone with them. I would not have minded having my legs walked off to please Caroline. But this regret is absurd: I could not, of course, leave my father with not a soul in the house to attend to the calls of the parishioners or to pour out his tea.

July 15.—A letter from Caroline to-day. It is very strange that she tells me nothing which I expected her to tell—only trivial details. She seems dazzled by the brilliancy of Paris—which no doubt appears still more brilliant to her from the fact of

her only being able to obtain occasional glimpses of it. She would see that Paris, too, has a seamy side if ~~you~~^{she} lived there. I was not aware that the Marlets knew so many people. If, as mother has said, they went to reside at Versailles for reasons of economy, they will not effect much in that direction while they make a practice of entertaining all the acquaintances who happen to be in their neighbourhood. They do not confine their hospitalities to English people, either. I wonder who this M. de la Feste is, in whom Caroline says my mother is so much interested.

July 18.—Another letter from Caroline. I have learnt from this epistle, that M. Charles de la Feste is 'only one of the many friends of the Marlets'; that though a Frenchman by birth, and now again temporarily at Versailles, he has lived in England many years; that he is a talented landscape and marine painter, and has exhibited at the *Salon*, and I think in London. His style and subjects are considered somewhat peculiar in Paris—rather English than Continental. I have not as yet learnt his age, or his condition, married or single. From the

tone and nature of her remarks about him he sometimes seems to be a middle-aged family man, sometimes quite the reverse. From his nomadic habits I should say the latter is the most likely. He has
5 travelled and seen a great deal, she tells me, and knows more about English literature than she knows herself. 1

July 21.—Letter from Caroline. Query: Is 'a friend of ours and the Marlets,' of whom she now
10 anonymously and mysteriously speaks, the same personage as the 'M. de la Feste' of her former letters? He must be the same, I think, from his pursuits. If so, whence this sudden change of tone?
.....I have been lost in thought for at least a
15 quarter of an hour since writing the preceding sentence. Suppose my dear sister is falling in love with this young man—there is no longer any doubt about his age; what a very awkward, risky thing for her! I do hope that my mother has an eye on
20 these proceedings. But, then, poor mother never sees the drift of anything: she is in truth less of a mother to Caroline than I am. If I were there, how jealously I would watch him, and ascertain

his designs!

I am of a stronger nature than Caroline. How I have supported her in the past through her little troubles and great griefs! Is she agitated at the presence of this, to her, new and strange feeling? But I am assuming her to be desperately in love, when I have no proof of anything of the kind. He may be merely a casual friend, of whom I shall hear no more.

July 24.—Then he *is* a bachelor, as I suspected. 'If M. de la Feste ever marries he will,' etc. So she writes. They are getting into close quarters, obviously. Also, 'Something to keep my hair smooth, which M. de la Feste told me he had found useful for the tips of his moustache.' Very naïvely related this; and with how much unconsciousness of the intimacy between them that the remark reveals! But my mother—what can she be doing? Does she know of this? And if so, why does she not allude to it in her letters to my father?.....I have been to look at Caroline's pony, in obedience to her reiterated request that I would not miss a day in seeing that she was well

cared for. Anxious as Caroline was about this pony of hers before starting, she now never mentioned the poor animal once in her letters. The image of her pet suffers from displacement.

- 5 *August 3.*—Caroline's forgetfulness of her pony has naturally enough extended to me, her sister. It is ten days since she last wrote, and but for a note from my mother I should not know if she were dead or alive.

II.—NEWS INTERESTING AND SERIOUS

- 10 *August 5.*—A cloud of letters. A letter from Caroline, another from mother; also one from each to my father.

- The probability to which all the intelligence from my sister has pointed of late turns out to be a fact.
- 15 There is an engagement, or almost an engagement, announced between my dear Caroline and M. de la Feste—to Caroline's sublime happiness, and my mother's entire satisfaction; as well as to that of the Marlets. They and my mother seem to know
- 20 all about the young man—which is more than I do, though a little extended information about him,

considering that I am Caroline's elder sister, would not have been amiss. I half feel with my father, who is much surprised, and, I am sure, not altogether satisfied, that he should not have been consulted at all before matters reached such a definite stage, though he is too amiable to say so openly. I don't quite say that a good thing should have been hindered for the sake of our opinion, if it is a good thing; but the announcement comes very suddenly. It must have been foreseen by my mother for some time that this upshot was probable, and Caroline might have told me more distinctly that M. de la Feste was her lover, instead of alluding so mysteriously to him as only a friend of the Marlets, and lately dropping his name altogether. My father, without exactly objecting to him as a Frenchman, 'wishes he were of English or some other reasonable nationality for one's son-in-law,' but I tell him that the demarcations of races, kingdoms, and creeds, are wearing down every day, that patriotism is a sort of vice, and that the character of the individual is all we need think about in this case. I wonder if, in the event of

their marriage, he will continue to live at Versailles, or if he will come to England.

August 7.—A supplemental letter from Caroline, answering, by anticipation, some of the aforesaid queries. She tells me that 'Charles,' though he makes Versailles his present home, is by no means bound by his profession to continue there; that he will live just where she wishes, provided it be not too far from some centre of thought, art, and civilization. My mother and herself both think that the marriage should not take place till next year. He exhibits landscapes and canal scenery every year, she says; so I suppose he is popular, and that his income is sufficient to keep them in comfort. If not, I do not see why my father could not settle something more on them than he had intended, and diminish by a little what he had proposed for me, whilst it was imagined that I should be the first to stand in need of such.

20 'Of engaging manner, attractive appearance, and virtuous character,' is the reply I receive from her in answer to my request for a personal description. That is vague enough, and I would rather have

had one definite fact of complexion, voice, deed, or opinion. But of course she has no eye now for material qualities; she cannot see him as he is. She sees him irradiated with glories such as never appertained and never will appertain to any man, foreign, English, or Colonial. To think that Caroline, two years my junior, and so childlike as to be five years my junior in nature, should be engaged to be married before me. But that is what happens in families more often than we are apt to remember.

August 16.—Interesting news to-day. Charles, she says, has pleaded that their marriage may just as well be this year as next; and he seems to have nearly converted my mother to the same way of thinking. I do not myself see any reason for delay, beyond the standing one of my father having as yet had no opportunity of forming an opinion upon the man, the time, or anything. However, he takes his leave very quietly, and they are coming home to talk the question over with us; Caroline having decided not to make any positive arrangements for this change of state till she has seen me. Subject

to my own and my father's approval, she says, they are inclined to settle the date of the wedding for November, three months from the present time, that it shall take place here in the village, that I, of course, shall be bridesmaid, and many other particulars. She draws an artless picture of the probable effect upon the minds of the villagers of this romantic performance in the chancel of our old church, in which she is to be chief actor—the foreign gentleman dropping down like a god from the skies, picking her up, and triumphantly carrying her off. Her only grief will be separation from me, but this is to be assuaged by my going and staying with her for long months at a time. This simple prattle is very sweet to me, my dear sister, but I cannot help feeling sad at the occasion of it. In the nature of things it is obvious that I shall never be to you again what I hitherto have been: your guide, counsellor, and most familiar friend.

M. de la Feste does certainly seem to be all that one could desire as protector to a sensitive fragile child like Caroline, and for that I am thankful. Still, I must remember that I see him as yet

only through her eyes. For her sake I am intensely anxious to meet him, and scrutinise him through and through, and learn what the man is really made of who is to have such a treasure in his keeping. The engagement has certainly been formed a little precipitately; I quite agree with my father in that: still, good and happy marriages have been made in a hurry before now, and mother seems well satisfied.

August 20.—A terrible announcement came this morning; and we are in deep trouble. I have been quite unable to steady my thoughts on anything to-day till now—half-past eleven at night—and I only attempt writing these notes because I am too restless to remain idle, and there is nothing but waiting left for me to do. Mother has been taken dangerously ill at Versailles: they were within a day or two of starting; but all thought of leaving must now be postponed, for she cannot possibly be moved in her present state. I don't like the sound of hæmorrhage at all in a woman of her full habit, and Caroline and the Marlets have not exaggerated their accounts I am certain. On the receipt of the

letter my father instantly decided to go to her, and I have been occupied all day in getting him off, for as he calculates on being absent several days, there have been many matters for him to arrange before setting out—the chief being to find some one who will do duty for him next Sunday—a quest of no small difficulty at such short notice; but at last poor old feeble Mr. Dugdale has agreed to attempt it, with Mr. Higham, the Scripture reader, to assist him in the lessons.

I fain would have gone with my father to escape the irksome anxiety of awaiting her; but somebody had to stay, and I could best be spared. George has driven him to the station to meet the last train by which he will catch the midnight boat, and reach Havre some time in the morning. He hates the sea, and a night passage in particular. I hope he will get there without mishap of any kind; but I feel anxious for him, stay-at-home as he is, and unable to cope with any difficulty. Such an errand, too; the journey will be sad enough at best. I almost think I ought to have been the one to go to her.

✓ *August 21.*—I nearly fell asleep of heaviness of spirit last night over my writing. My father must have reached Paris by this time; and now here comes a letter.....

✓ *Later.*—The letter was to express an earnest hope 6 that my father had set out. My poor mother is sinking, they fear. What will become of Caroline? O, how I wish I could see mother; why could not both have gone?

Later.—I get up from my chair, and walk from 10 window to window, and then come and write a line. I cannot even divine how poor Caroline's marriage is to be carried out if mother dies. I pray that father may have got there in time to talk to her and receive some directions from her about 15 Caroline and M. de la Feste—a man whom neither my father nor I have seen. I, who might be useful in this emergency, am doomed to stay here, waiting in suspense.

August 23.—A letter from my father containing 20 the sad news that my mother's spirit has flown. Poor little Caroline is heart-broken—she was always more my mother's pet than I was. It is some