

CLEMENTINE LOUISE RUMPPFF

‘THE GERMAN LADY’



Every graveyard has a story to tell, and Melling Churchyard is no exception. Tucked in a corner near the SW entrance to the churchyard, just a few yards from Ivy Cottage where she lived, is the grave of Clementine Louise Rumpff:

www.findagrave.com/memorial/191696503/clementine-louise-rumpff

She died in Melling on 19th December 1898.

‘A FAMOUS NURSE’

By the time she died, Clementine’s fame had spread well beyond Melling. Here is how the *Morning Post* of 22 December 1898 reported on her death (she was 74, not 64):

DEATH OF A FAMOUS NURSE. — Madame C. Rumpff, a German lady, aged sixty-four, who for her distinguished services as a Nurse during the Franco-German War had honours bestowed on her by the late German Emperor, was found dead yesterday at her writing-table, at which she had been engaged on journalistic work. Madame Rumpff had lived alone in a cottage at Melling, Lancaster, for eleven years. She had written many serial stories on the Franco-German War and other subjects.

Her fame rested on her work in France and Germany as a Red Cross nurse during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 – but how and why did she come to be involved in a devastating conflict which led to the fall of the French Second Empire and the annexation of Alsace and part of Lorraine by the newly-proclaimed German Empire?

Some answers to this question can be found in the memoirs and stories which in the last years of her life, **always under a pseudonym**, she contributed to the *Lancaster Guardian* (in the Children's Corner, as '**Aunt Daisy**') and the *Blackburn Standard* (in the Children's Garland, as '**Patty Byrne**').

In an introduction to her memoirs of the Franco-Prussian War, 'Why Patty went to the war' (*Blackburn Standard* 7, 14 and 21 January 1893), she states that her father Ludovic had joined the Austrian Army in 1799 at the age of 15, and that in 1813 he was an aide-de-camp to Field-Marshal Prince Schwarzenberg at the 'Battle of the Nations' near Leipzig, when the combined armies of Prussia, Austria and Russia defeated Napoléon. Clementine writes that she knew this story by heart from a young age, as told by her father, who had been awarded the Iron Cross after the battle; she prayed God to make her as brave as her father. In England in 1870 at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, she asks herself 'What must I do?' (See below, **1870-71: the Franco-Prussian war**).

1824-53: IN FRANKFURT

One of 13 children, Clementina was born on 23 November 1824 in Frankfurt-am-Main, which from 1810-13 had briefly been part of the French-administered Duchy of Frankfurt, and was from 1816 to 1866 the seat of the German parliament. She was the fourth daughter of a staff Captain in the Prussian Army who was well known in court circles.

Clementine was still a teenager when her mother died in Frankfurt on 24 July 1840. According to her memoirs, her mother Eva Katherina Fleischmann was the daughter of a nobleman.

1853-70: IN ENGLAND

Clementine came to England in 1853 to visit one of her brothers, **Theodor August[us] Alexander Rumpff**, who had settled in England some years previously. When their father died in Frankfurt on 21 March 1855, Clementine decided to stay in England.

There is little record of Clementine in England before 1870; she does not appear in the census return for 1861. A note in the *Blackburn Standard* dated 6 September 1890 tells us that:

THEODOR AUGUST[US] ALEXANDER RUMPPF

In 1851, Clementine's brother Theodor Augustus was an 'Agent of goods' living in the City of London. He soon became a naturalised British citizen, and in the 1860s he held a British passport. In 1857, he married Helen Hardman Pickford; they had three daughters and a son, Alexander Augustus Rumpff.

For half a century, Theodor Augustus was active in business partnerships, mainly in the wine trade, at premises in Cheapside, Crutched Friars and Great Tower Street. By the mid-1870s, he was a Liveryman of the City of London and Steward of a Masonic Lodge, and lived at 82 Highbury New Park, Islington (now a Grade 2 Listed Building). After his wife's death in 1876, he lived at various addresses in NW and SW London.

In 1898, when Clementine died, he acted as her Executor, but 'The deceased lady's brother who resides in London, was not able, on account of his health, to attend the funeral' (obituary in the *Lancaster Guardian*, December 1898).

It would be interesting to know to what extent brother and sister kept in touch after 1855: in the Death Duty register, her residence is given as 'Durley' [*sic*], not Melling, and in the Probate record of 1899 she is recorded as 'of Burlins, Dunley, near Stourport, Worcestershire' (see below, **1872-1881: Worcestershire**).

Theodor Augustus died in 1907. His son Alexander Augustus also became a wine merchant, changing his surname from Rumpff to Rumford in 1917. ('Rumpff & McShane, Wine merchants, 73-75 Lower Thames Street', were still listed in a 1921 directory.)

Her health would not allow her to devote herself entirely to writing, and she accepted different spheres of usefulness: teaching, lecturing, mission and parish work, travelling, nursing, etc. [...] scarcely a week passed by without sending a contribution to "German Magazines".

However, she was well-connected in both Prussia and England:

- she developed a lifelong friendship with the Crown Princess of Prussia;
- she knew and possibly stayed with the family of Canon Erskine Knollys (1816-1898; incumbent from 1865 to 1869 at Holy Trinity Church, Twickenham Common), perhaps as lady's companion to Canon Knollys's sister Catherine;
- she trained as a nurse at St Thomas's Hospital, London, where Florence Nightingale had established the Nightingale School of Nursing in 1860.

(Curiously, the only record of Clementine in Twickenham is a report in the *Windsor & Eton Express*, 1 May 1869: Clementina Rumpf [*sic*], of Twickenham, was summoned at Brentford for having used abusive and insulting language towards one Emma Chaffer (the wife of a house painter). The court was told that the 'defendant was in a delicate state of health, and, indeed, had been very ill'. A female witness heard Clementina 'call complainant a foul name, and told her to go home to her own country. She also called her a stinking old cat. She was inside her gate. Case dismissed.' Without further evidence, it is difficult to be sure of the accuracy of this report.)

1870-71: THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

When the Franco-Prussian War broke out in 1870, the Crown Princess of Prussia asked Clementine to volunteer as a nurse at the front. She left England on 14 August:

While at St Thomas' Hospital she was selected to take charge of the Crown Princess's Home for wounded soldiers in the Franco-Prussian War and subsequently at HRH's request joined the army at Metz, to specially look after the Crown prince, and thus marched to Paris. Her valuable work in the Palace of Versailles, converted for a time into a hospital, was rewarded by the Emperor William with a small pension, the Iron Cross, and other honours, at the close of the war. (*Lancaster Guardian*, December 1898)

Writing to Florence Nightingale from hospitals in France, Clementine made repeated efforts to draw the attention of the newly formed British National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded to the plight of the Prussian sick and wounded, and to the fact that money sent from London was not reaching 'those for whom it was intended'. In response, Florence Nightingale, on behalf of the Society, arranged for £50 to be paid in French gold to '**Miss Rumpff**'.

In a remarkable series of articles in the *Blackburn Standard* between January 1893 and June 1894, '**What Patty did in the Franco-Prussian War 1870-71**', Clementine takes her young and not-so-young readers on an epic 7-month journey (August 1870 to March 1871) to military hospitals, first in Germany and then in war-torn France. The material for these articles probably draws on three unpublished volumes of memoirs, *Madame Rumpff's Diary of War of 1870-1*, written after her arrival in Melling in 1887. (Alas, these precious documents are no longer in Melling, or even in England, but currently in New York, available from a seller of rare books at the modest price of \$15,000...)

Until the end of 1870, she is based in Prussian-occupied Versailles, where hundreds

of wounded and dying soldiers lie in the Salle des Glaces. At various times, the Crown Prince and the King of Prussia put in appearances, and Clementine plays for Bismarck 'A firm tower is our God' on the harmonium (*BS*, 17 June 1893). In the fire-ruined Palais de St Cloud, the Prussian royal party take some damaged items as souvenirs (*BS*, 24 June 1893).

Her descriptions of the extremely poor conditions in several hospitals, and of patients, many grievously wounded and/or seriously ill, make hard reading for adults, let alone the children of the Garland! No wonder that she writes 'the work I had been doing was only like a drop of water in an ocean' (*BS* 22 July 1893). When news comes through in November 1870 that 'the Knights of St John had received £20 000 from the English National Funds' (*BS* 19 August 1893), she writes that 'after 23 years, I can write this account in the enjoyment of health' (*BS* 26 August 1893).

In one of a series of instalments on 'Christmas-time at Versailles', she describes a 'sortie' of the French from Paris, and the ensuing Prussian bombardment, only to discover that the next day 6 inches of her hair had turned white (*BS* 18 November 1893). **On New Year's Day 1871, the King of Prussia decorates her with the Iron Cross**, and is himself proclaimed Kaiser of the German Empire. She travels to Le Mans and surrounding villages to visit the wounded, setting up a temporary hospital at the railway station (*BS* 30 December 1893). Returning to Versailles, she is confronted by further scenes of suffering: 'poor invalids, crawling and creeping about, the lame leading the blind' (*BS* 13 January 1894).

Her next mission is to Paris, with a French government pass signed by Jules Favre, stating that 'I resided in London, and was sent by the English National Society to nurse the sick and wounded' (*BS* 17 February 1894); a French policeman reads her pass and remarks 'Très bien, Madame, pourtant votre nom sent la Prusse'. 'The beautiful city was changed into a bedlam'; six of the 20 districts had suffered massive damage (*BS* 24 February 1894). She encounters countless cases of massive hardship and suffering 'During that fearful, cold winter' (*BS* 10 March 1894). Back in Versailles, she reports on her mission, and is told that she must be sure to leave Paris by the end of February; when the Crown Prince asks her what was her vocation in England, she replies 'Well, I suppose I would say "I am a Jack of all trades"' (*BS* 21 April 1894).

She makes a second visit to Paris during the Armistice; although parts of the city are returning to normal, there are tensions as people await the entry of German troops;

she sees the first barricades. On her return to Versailles, she hears a German speak of Home sweet home: '**Little he guessed that there was no real home in this world for me**' (BS 9 June 1894). On 1 March 1871, she enters Paris with the German army, and attends the Emperor's review of the troops at Longchamp (BS 9 June 1894).

The last instalment of these extraordinary memoirs bears the title 'Return to the Fatherland in 1871'. She chooses to travel in the train with the convalescent soldiers, instead of going with the royal party, whose train, she learns later, was in an accident... On the platform at Nancy, her brother (possibly Carl Ludwig Franz Rumpff, Frankfurt police superintendent) is waiting to accompany her to Frankfurt (BS 30 June 1894).

Although she saw herself as a 'Jack of all trades' with 'no real home in this world', her respected position in society, and her role in the War, are confirmed in this passage from a contemporary memoir:

One lady, well known to many persons in England, Fräulein Rumpff, was also amongst those whom I very frequently met. At first she was in the Palace, and I never shall forget finding her in the splendid Galerie des Batailles, in the midst of piles of soldier's clothing. The clothes of all the wounded men in the château were sent to this gallery, and under the direction of Miss Rumpff they were sorted and mended, so that every man on leaving the hospital should have his outfit [...].

At a subsequent period I often saw Miss Rumpff in the Lycée, where there were from six to eight hundred men, the majority of whom were typhus cases, or sick with fevers of a typhoid or gastric character. (Sir John Furley, *Struggles and experiences of a neutral volunteer in the late War*, vol. 1, 1872 p. 171)

'After the war I spent considerable time in idleness, travelling to visit old kindred and friends, till I felt a longing to go back to dear, peaceful England.' (*Blackburn Standard*, 6 September 1890); in 1888, she writes in her *Diary of the War of 1870-1* 'I returned to England once more in June 1871'.

1872-1881: WORCESTERSHIRE

According to her obituary notice in the *Lancaster Guardian*, December 1898, 'On her return to England she passed several years in the family of Canon Knowllys [*sic*], brother of the late Sir Francis Knowllys, Comptroller to the Prince of Wales.'

However, it has not been possible to find any record of links between Clementine and the Knollys family after her return to England (Canon Knollys was Rector of Saltwood, Hythe, Kent from 1869-79 and of Wrotham, Sevenoaks, Kent from 1879-98). Instead, records for this period show her at various addresses in Worcestershire.

In 1872, we find Clementine in Oldbury, Worcestershire where, on Christmas Day, she speaks at a breakfast for 140 beneficiaries of the Sunday 'Adult class' (a non-sectarian institution for youths and working men), talking about her voluntary work with the poor and her own Sunday class with 46 working men, 'making some exceedingly interesting allusions to her personal history, and narrating some incidents in connection with hospital life'. The Chairman of the proceedings, 'introducing **Miss Rumpff**, remarked that she had come to Oldbury to create "peace and goodwill" amongst the residents, and especially amongst the working classes. [...] Miss Rumpff urged the scholars of the class to persevere in their studies, assuring them that it was ignorance which made men love the public-house so much.' (*Birmingham Daily Post*, 27 December 1872)

At the annual General Assembly of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England, held on 24 June 1873 in the Royal Chapel at the Savoy, London, **Fräulein Rumpff** is one of the 29 members or associates of the Order, who are nominated for the committee, charged with carrying into effect proposals for nursing the sick (*Worcester Journal*, 28 June 1873).

It would be interesting to know more about Clementine's whereabouts and activities during the years 1872-79.

In 1879, 'Madame Clementina Louisa **Brentano**' was the principal of a school known as the 'German College' at Crabb's Cross, Feckenham, Worcestershire, and which had opened in 1877. In September 1879, however, the property was put up for sale by auction.

By the time the 'German School' closed, Clementine had moved some 12 miles

WHAT'S IN A NAME? 1: BRENTANO

From 1879-81, Clementina Rumpff added or adopted the title '**Von Brentano**'. She would have been familiar with the works of the Romantic poet and novelist **Clemens Brentano** (1778-1842), which were published in Frankfurt after his death, including in 1852 his *Romanzen vom Rosenkranz* ('Rosenkranz' – 'garland of roses'). Brentano's sister Bettina (1785-1859), born in Frankfurt, was a writer and composer, and a close friend of Goethe and Beethoven.

to the west, to Uphampton, Ombersley, where the 1879 *Littlebury's Worcestershire Directory* lists, among Private residents: 'Von Brentano, Madam', and the 1880 *Kelly's Directory, Worcestershire* lists 'Madam Von Brentano, Uphampton' among 'Clergy & Gentry'.

She was now the keeper of 'German College'; in the *Worcestershire Journal* dated 13 December 1879, we find this announcement by 'Madame L von Brentano':

GERMAN COLLEGE, SUNNYSIDE COURT, OMBERSLEY.—Terms for Boarders moderate. There is a Vacancy for a GOVERNESS PUPIL.—Apply to Madame Lvon Brentano.

Giving evidence in a court case involving the parents of a pupil, 'Madame Brentano said she kept a boarding school at Ombersley, near Droitwich' (*Worcestershire Chronicle*, 13 November 1880).

The 'German College' seems to have been no more successful than the 'German School': the *London Gazette* dated 7 October 1881 carries a notice of a meeting of creditors of 'Clementina Louisa Rumpff von Brentano [...] Schoolmistress and Teacher of Languages, carrying on her business or profession under the style of Madame C. L. Rumpff':

The Bankruptcy Act, 1869.
In the County Court of Worcestershire, holden at Kidderminster.
In the Matter of Proceedings for Liquidation by Arrangement or Composition with Creditors, instituted by Clementina Louisa Rumpff von Brentano, formerly of Sunnyside Court, in the parish of Ombersley, then of Highfield Villa, Alcester-lane End, King's Heath, then of Redditch, and now of the Burlins, Dunley, in the parish of Areley Kings, all in the county of Worcester, Schoolmistress and Teacher of Languages, carrying on her business or profession under the style of Madame C. L. Rumpff.
NOTICE is hereby given, that a First General Meeting of the creditors of the above-named person has been summoned to be held at the office of Messrs Miller and J. J. Corbet, Solicitors, situate at Baxter-chambers, No. 27, Church-street, Kidderminster, in the county of Worcester, on the 18th day of October, 1881, at half-past three o'clock in the afternoon precisely.—Dated this 3rd day of October, 1881.
MILLER and J. J. CORBET, Kidderminster, Solicitors for the said Clementina Louisa Rumpff von Brentano.

1885: PLANS FOR A RETURN TO FRANKFURT

It would be interesting to know the outcome and the consequences for Clementina of this meeting of her creditors. In the absence of further evidence, we must assume that her life in the 1880s was no more settled than in the previous decade. Indeed, in 1884 or 1885, one of her brothers, Carl Rumpff, an army officer, Privy Councillor and police superintendent in Frankfurt (who had lost his young wife in 1872, leaving two infant children) ‘asked me to come and reside with him. The day before I was to leave England he was murdered by Socialists, and my plans were crushed, and my health shattered by the sudden shock.’ (*Blackburn Standard*, 6 September 1890)

1887-98: THE MELLING YEARS

So it was that ‘Eleven years ago in broken health she came to Melling, and there – in quiet contentment, engaged in a work she loved – she passed the remainder of her days.’ (*Lancaster Guardian*, December 1898)

Why Melling? A note in the Melling archive provides some clues:

Her arrival in Melling was a result of answering an advertisement for the position of companion to the sister [in fact, the aunt, Catherine Remington] of the Rev. [Reginald] Remington [1827-1909]. She advertised for a “Christian Worker”, and succeeded in engaging a German Lady **Madame Clementina Rumpff the Baroness von Bratiano** at the time living in a Village in the Trent Valley [we have no record of her presence in the Trent Valley], who shortly after came into Residence. She had passed through the Franco German war and received at the Emperor William’s hands the Iron Cross and a small Pension. She remained as Tenant 18 months – differences arose and she retired to the Cottage opposite.

Catherine Remington (1815-1898) had from 1876 to 1884 been the owner-landlord of the Temperance inn known as The Shakespeare. By 1887 Miss Remington was living, with a cook and housemaid, at nearby Church Gates, opposite St Wilfrid’s church. As her tenant, Clementine probably lived next door, at Church Gates Cottage.

Despite their shared commitment to Temperance and their firm Christian beliefs and practices, it is perhaps not surprising that ‘differences arose’ between the two women, each capable of holding and expressing firm views. In the last year of their life, when Clementine is preoccupied (as ever) with her poor health, and Catherine with her family’s properties in Melling, here is Clementine writing to one of her many correspondents:

Miss Remington said she hoped good Christian people would take the “Crow Trees”, and “Swallow Nest”, and I said, I wonder if “Miserable Sinners” would not do quite as well. (from a letter to Miss Lilian Warden of Greta Bridge House, 19 May 1898, in the Melling Archive)

So, in **1889**, Clementina moved across the road into Church Cottage (now Ivy Cottage), her last earthly abode, next to her final resting-place on the other side of the churchyard wall:

It is a cot by the wayside standing near the wide-open gate which leads to the adjoining Church and God’s acre. It is a grey stone dwelling, with small prefatorial garden. [...] At least one half of the wall space is covered by clinging ivy. (*Blackburn Standard*, 30 August 1890)

A RESIDENT PRESS CONTRIBUTOR.

There is a lady residing in Melling respecting whom a few words may as modestly as possible be said at this juncture. The lady is a well known contributor to one or two weekly journals, her subjects being chiefly of an instructive nature and in many instances written for the rising generation. This authoress can likewise turn out some pretty serial stories and she appears to have a vast amount of experience of the busy corners of the world. The lady is the Baroness von Bratiano, and no wonder her mind is such a repository of knowledge for she has fulfilled important duties during some of the most critical of national and international epochs. The Baroness has been to the Germans what Florence Nightingale has been to the English, and to her was entrusted not only the nursing of the Emperor William, the veteran grandsire of the reigning monarch, but also the well-being and care of the late lamented Crown Prince of Prussia (as we can best think of him) and her commission included the request of the Empress to follow the Imperial Prince wherever he went during the terrible war of 1870. The Baroness, I hear, has now at her quiet Melling home, all the telegrams which passed between the old Emperor and his heir at the period of the campaign. This esteemed lady evinces much interest in the children of Melling, and is cultivating a love of flowers amongst them getting each to choose for herself or himself the name of some little symbol of natural beauty. The instruction imparted should do much towards supplementing the work of both day and Sunday school teacher.

Here is how the *Lancaster Gazette* presented Clementine to its readers in 1890, in a series of detailed articles about Melling, its buildings and its people:

(*Lancaster Gazette*, 6 September 1890)



A drawing in the *Blackburn Standard* dated 11 October 1890, shows Clementine outside her new home:

'The little girl she is holding by the hand at the garden gate is one of the Primrose Bank children, who goes to see Patty* nearly every day. How many children in East Lancashire would do the same, were not Melling so far away?'

*1890 is the year in which Clementine began to be well-known, under the pseudonyms 'Patty Byrne' in and around Blackburn and, from 1893, 'Aunt Daisy' in and around Lancaster. Her 'real' name, however, is always given as '**Madame (or Baroness) von Bratiano**': "Patty Byrne" is an assumed name, a name of the pen, [...] her real name is Madame Von Bratiano.' (*Blackburn Standard* 6 September 1890)

WHAT'S IN A NAME? 2: BRATIANO

According to the New York bookseller's description of her War Diary, 'Clementine Louise Rumpff was created Baroness von Bratiano, of Bratiano near Krajova, Roumania, on May 12, 1872, by the German Emperor and King of Prussia, William I, "In virtue of her noble Ancestry, and in consideration of the valuable Services she has rendered to the Fatherland, shall be henceforth authorized, to adopt in addition to her family Name the Title and Rank of Freifrau (Baroness) von Bratiano."'

It has not been possible to find confirmation of this elevation; certainly, from her arrival in Melling in 1887 onwards, Clementine added or adopted the title '**Von Bratiano**'. Nor has it been possible to find evidence of a family connection with someone of this name.

In 1853, in the feverish period preceding the Crimean War, **Ion Constantin Bratianu** (1821-91; prime minister of Romania in 1876-88) was convicted in Paris for his part in a plot to assassinate Napoléon III. He became a champion of Romanian unity, helping in 1866 to secure the election of Prince Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen to the throne of Romania. An assassination attempt on prime minister Bratiano in December 1886, and the trial in January 1887 of his would-be assassins, were widely reported in the English press.

1890-1896: THE CHILDREN'S GARLAND AND THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

Patty Byrne and the Children's Garland (Blackburn)

The Children's Garland 'For the Promotion of Kindness to all Living Things' was, from January 1890 to October 1896, a regular feature in the *Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express*. 'A good lady was in the habit of sending the editor selections for his columns, many of which were of a quite pleasing, suggestive, and original character' (*BS*, 25 March 1893). It was the Vicar of Melling, the Rev. W. B. Greside 'who first stimulated Patty, a parishioner of his, to undertake literary work, and who has stood at her right hand strengthening her by his wise counsel and advice' (*BS*, 25 March 1893).

The idea of a 'Children's Corner' was not new, as the *Blackburn Standard* makes clear:

These "children's corners" are no new feature in connection with journalism, either at home or abroad. We make no secret of the fact that we borrowed our idea from the pages of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, whose Children's Corner, conducted by Uncle Toby, is read weekly by Anglo-Saxon children all the world over. [...] Not only in

English journalism are children's corners now a recognised feature, but in connection with American and German journalism there are similar organisations. In Germany, the boys and girls join together in making the Children's Corners amusing and instructive (BS, 25 March 1893).

Here is how this ambitious project was announced:

TO OUR READERS.

*Our arrangements for our **Children's Corner** are now complete, and under the Heading of the*

CHILDREN'S "FLOWER GARLAND,"

On and after next week "Patty Byrne" will discourse to our little folk on such matters as are of interest to them and are likely to give them a thirst for deeper knowledge.

Amongst other features "The Flower Garland" will contain:—

THE NEWS BAG,

THE LETTER BOX,

A FAIRY TALE,

A PLEASING STORY,

PUZZLES, RIDDLES,

QUERIES, ETC.

*Parents are requested to interest their little ones in the "GARLAND," which will be woven weekly by a lady who has during a long life made the literary wants of **children** her special study.*

The "GARLAND" will commence on SATURDAY NEXT. January 25th. 1890.

(Blackburn Standard, 18 January 1890)

The first week's column ends with this message: 'Don't forget to write to your loving friend, Patty Byrne, Church Cottage, Melling near Carnforth' (*Blackburn Standard*, 25 January 1890).

On Whit Monday 1892, a trip to Melling for members of The Children's Garland included a visit to 'Patty' in her 'cot'; a year later, one little Garland Captain recalled the visit in verse:

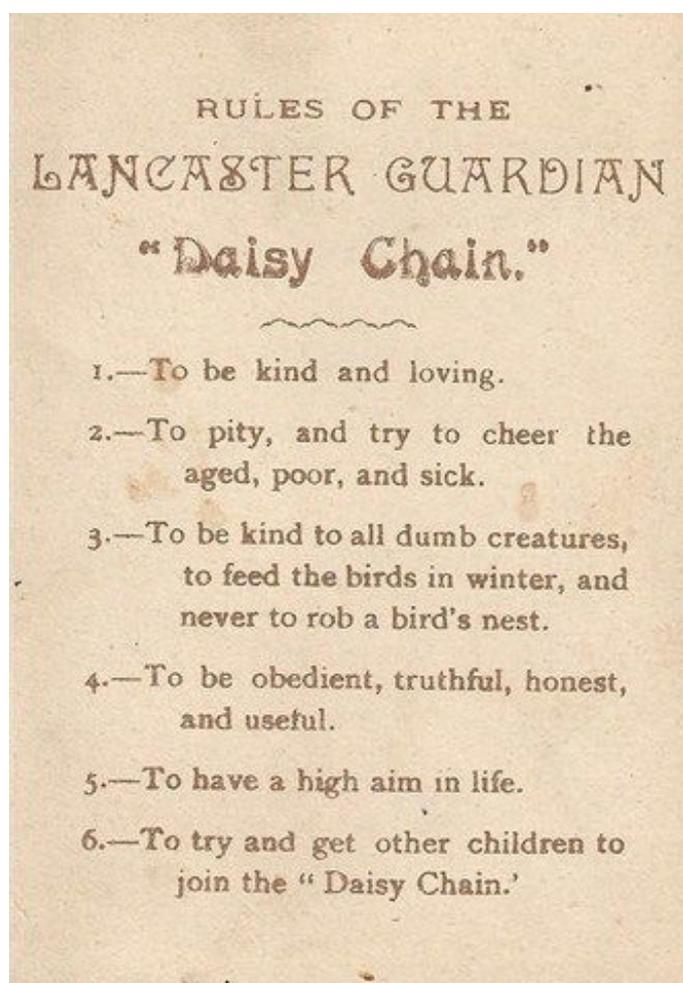
By Patty's Cot, with ivy fresh and green,
Was as grand a sight as ever I've seen.
So snug within, in fact a model dwelling;
'Twas the dearest spot throughout all Melling.
(*Blackburn Standard*, 25 March 1893)

By early 1894, membership of the Garland had reached 10 000 (*BS*, 17 March 1894), rising to 14 000 by the end of 1896 (*BS*, 7 November 1896). Meanwhile, a similar 'young readers' club' had been set up by the *Lancaster Guardian*.

The 'Daisy Chain Lady' and the Children's Corner (Lancaster)

She loved children and began writing letters and stories for them in the *Lancaster Guardian* and became known to all the children in the area as Auntie Daisy. A readers club was formed called the Daisy Chain hence her title the Daisy Chain Lady (typed note in the Melling archive).

The Children's Corner, featuring The Daisy Chain, conducted by Aunt Daisy, first appeared in the *Lancaster Guardian* in March 1893; a complete record is available only for 1894. The Lady President of the Garland was Mrs Adam Dugdale; the Rev W B Grenside was chaplain. Children's letters were to be addressed to the *Guardian* office in Lancaster.



Did Clementine move house again?

At the end of 1892, Patty's address is still given as 'Church Cottage' (*BS* 31 December), but in March 1894, she writes that she will respond to letters 'as soon as I am settled in my new cottage' (*BS* 24 March), and in April 1894, there are references in readers' letters in both the *BS* and the *LG* to 'your new house' and that she has moved into a new home 'with a beautiful garden'. In the absence of further evidence, it is not clear which house this is or indeed whether she did move house again.

What did Patty/Aunt Daisy write about?

As well as the many **letters** to and from her young readers, and her **reflections** on her life in Melling and on life in general, there are fascinating glimpses of her life before coming to England. For example, she recalls watching with her father the Shrove Tuesday Carnival procession in Pisa, from the balcony of the hotel where they were staying (*BS*, 27 February 1892), or seeing her father wearing his decorations, and in particular his Iron Cross, on State occasions (*BS*, 6 January 1893).

In both the *BS* and the *LG*, Patty/Daisy retells long stories from **German folklore**; in the *BS* of 25 March 1893, there is a list of the 18 **stories and fairy tales** that Patty has contributed to the Garland.

Poetry has a substantial place in the Children's Garland and in the Daisy Chain. In Victorian England there was a long-standing tradition of poetry for children, thanks in large part to the popularity of *The Children's Garland from the best poets*, first published in 1862 and constantly in print for the rest of the century. In his December 1861 Preface the editor, Coventry Patmore, makes clear his criteria for selection: 'The test applied [...] has been that of having actually pleased intelligent children. [...] The application of the above test has excluded nearly all verse written expressly for children, and most of the poetry written about children for grown people.'

It is not clear whether Clementina was herself a poet, though one week 'Clemens R. Bratiano, Melling, Carnforth' was awarded 3rd prize in the weekly poetry competition (*BS*, 7 July 1894) for a sonnet which is, alas, identical to the 2nd sonnet of 'August Fancies' (1850) by Mrs Newton Crosland (1812-1895)...

'ROSENAU'

Several items in the Garland and the Daisy Chain refer to **Rosenau**, or **Rosenau Castle**:

- In her account of 'Why Patty went to the war', Clementine states that it was from her grandmother that she learnt the story of their ancestors, who 'lived for generations at Castle Rosenau, near Schemnitz' (*BS* 14 January 1893; Chemnitz is 40 miles north of Bohemia)
- A story entitled 'Elsa, or the string of pearls', set in Bohemia, mentions Rosenau (*LG*, 6 January 1894)
- A Christmas treat for children: 'I will tell you what some little nieces and nephews of mine did last Christmas' (making gifts of dolls and toys for children of an orphanage). 'These orphans will never forget the happy day at Castle Rosenau, provided by these kind-hearted little friends of mine' ('Our letter from Aunt Daisy', *LG*, 17 November 1894)
- A letter to 'Dear Aunt Daisy' from 'Your loving Nephew and Niece Juan and Alma Bratiano, Rosenaw, Bohemia' describes how they decorated a fir-tree with garlands of food for the 'birdies' on Christmas Eve (*LG*, 29 December 1894)
- Among several letters from 'Juan Bratiano', there is an account of a children's party at Rosenau, where they perform Haydn's 'Children's symphony' (*BS*, 16 February 1895); there are other letters in *BS* 31 December 1892, *BS* 21 September 1895 and *BS* 12 and 19 September 1896.

'Rosenau' is a common place name in and around Bohemia, and there is more than one 'Rosenau castle'. By far the most famous of these is **Rosenau Castle**, near Coburg, which was in the news in January 1893, when Princess Marie of Edinburgh, a granddaughter of Queen Victoria, married Crown Prince Ferdinand of Romania. It was in the news again in April-May 1894, when Queen Victoria visited the castle, which she had first visited with Prince Albert in 1845. Victoria once said of Rosenau Castle: 'If I were not what I am, this would be my real home'.

It has not been possible to establish any link between Clementine's ancestors and this or any other castle. By including stories and letters by or from 'Juan (and Alma) Bratiano', and associating them with Rosenau Castle, it is possible that Clementine sought to reconnect in her imagination with the Imperial and aristocratic world which she had heard about from her grandmother. Perhaps we should understand 'Your loving Nephew and Niece Juan and Alma Bratiano' as idealised versions of all the nephews and nieces in Blackburn and Lancaster for whom she was their 'Aunt'.

'La bêtise consiste à vouloir conclure' (Flaubert).

After Patty

A final instalment of 'Patty's Story' appeared in the *BS* on 7 November 1896, along with an 'Important Notice' announcing that 'After this week considerable alterations will be made in this column', and that 'It is hoped to give a more local character to the children's column'. From the following week, the Children's Garland was conducted by 'Aunt Chloe' (the name of Tom's wife in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), under the heading 'Entre nous'. Could it be that the 'Germanic' character of many of Patty's stories was becoming out of step with public opinion, just a few years before the *Entente cordiale* between Britain and France in 1905?

The last 'Aunt Chloe' column was on 17 September 1898, and from 24 December 1898 to 29 November 1900, the Children's Garland was conducted by 'Uncle Peter'. It would be fair to say that the length and variety of these Garland columns did not match those of Aunt Patty.

A prolific letter-writer

During her years in Melling, Clementine wrote 'thousands of private letters' (*BS*, 25 March 1893) to the children of the Garland and the Daisy Chain.

She also maintained a wide correspondence with adults, but it has not been possible to trace any of these letters, with the exception of two that are in the Melling archive.

Here are the first and last pages of these two letters, dated 19 May and 9 June 1898:

Melling, Carnforth.
May 19/98.

My sweet Lillian

It was so good of you to write me such a long letter, and send me such beautiful thoughts. It is indeed true, "The lonely in their solitude feel often the near Presence and Protection of the God of Love." Thomas-a-Chempain says, "Man approaches so much the nearer unto God, the further he retireth from all earthly comfort. Without

Melling, Carnforth.
June 9/98.

My dear friend Lillian

I thank you very much for your beautiful letter, I fancied you must be busy, when I did not hear from you. — Why, dear, don't you know, I shall never get strong again in this world, I am not worse, than I have been for some years, and I am very thankful, I really suffer no pains, except a little discomfort, in my swollen feet, and they are obstinate and refuse putting on boots. I am just like a flickering

very nice
makes real uses of her life. It is so to see, it when modern life has such a tendency to make butterflies of us all," — I thought it would please you to know this, and I will add as remarkable a cause of my favourite poet Shiller. —

What shall I do to be for ever honored?

Thy duty even, ^{unknown}

This did full many, and yet slept

O, never, never,

Thinkest thou, perchance, that they ^{remain unknown}

When thou knowest not

By angels trumpets in heaven their

Divine ^{praise is blown} their lot,

Good bye, and God bless you!

With much love, I remain

Your grateful old friend Madame.

of love and sunshine, she is quite determined to make me comfortable the rest of my life, and as I am persuaded, it is an answer to prayer, and that God put it in her heart to help me, I did not hesitate to accept her great kindness. Please, dear, you must not expect always such a long letter, — I would neglect necessary work. —

May God bless you, and strengthen you in all good ways and works.

With much love I remain

Your sincere friend
Madame.

'Lilian' is Lilian Mary Elyston Warden (1872-1950), the daughter of Thomas Fawcett Warden (1843-1919), a Land Agent and JP, and his wife Elizabeth (1848-1945), both from Liverpool.

Inside St Wilfrid's church, next to the font on the East wall of the South side, is this marble memorial, erected in 1900:

Clementine Louise
Fourth daughter of FRANZ KARL
RUMPF,
Staff Captain in the German Army.
Born at Frankfort, Nov. 23rd, 1825
Died at Melling, Dec. 19th, 1898
FULL OF LOVING SYMPATHY.
Her life was spent in work for others.

(Note: Her father's name was probably Johann Ludwig Andreas Rumpff[f], and she was born in 1824, not 1825.)

DON

**TWO LETTERS FROM:
CLEMENTINA RUMPF (‘MADAME’) TO LILIAN WARDEN**

Melling, Carnforth.
May 19/98.

My sweet Lilian

It was so good of you to write me such a long letter, and send me such beautiful thoughts. It is indeed true, The lonely in their solitude feel often the near presence and Protection of the God of Love. Thomas a Kempis says, “Man approaches so much the nearer unto God the farther he retireth from all earthly comfort. Without Me friendship hath no strength.”

I have always tried, “To love the Lord, and keep him for my friend, who when all go away will not forsake me.”---

I have written a letter to dear Mrs Greg, and given her your messages. Melling is very quiet now, and one can not help missing the familiar faces. Miß Remington said, she hoped good Christian people would take the “Crow Trees”, and “Swallow Nest”, and I said, “I wonder if “Miserable Sinners”, would not do quite as well. ---

The weather is lovely today only not very warm; every thing seems to grow as by magic, I have been very well, I am thankful to say, since Sunday, when we had early Service. I have been quite busy this week putting my little Cot straight, and when working sang my favourite hymns, with my cracked voice, they are “Jesus lover of my soul,” “Rock of Ages” and “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds.” ---

The Bishop’s Sermon interested me very much, but it is sad that these Missions are generally so jealous of one another, I mean the different Denominations, with the result, that the good they do, is not worth the immense expenditure. And there is so much to be done at Home. --- But I am no judge. The Falkland Islands are full of poisonous bogs, that accounts for epidemics, I dare say the poor natives had to be content with the unhealthiest part of the islands. --- Britain has much to answer for! I did think of you very much on Sunday afternoon / If our hopes are disappointed / And withheld our heart’s desire / Hope, lain dormant as in winter / Blossoms as the flowers in spring.

I always hope you will come back again some time. --- I have not seen the Vicar, since I received your letter, he went somewhere yesterday, and on Monday he was nearly thrown

out of his trap, his horse bolted, I did not see it, but Mrs Gibson said, she sat trembling for half an hour after. I wish he would not be so reckless driving.

Now, I think my stock of news is at an end, and I want my tea. Mrs Greg wrote, "Lilian is a dear earnest girl, and does long to be helpful, and make a real use of her life. It is so very nice to see it when modern life has such a tendency to make butterflies of us all." --- I thought it would please you to know this, and I will add a remarkable verse of my favourite poet Shiller. ---

What shall I do to be for ever known? / Thy duty ever, / This did full many, and yet slept unknown, / Oh never, never, / Thinkest thou, perchance, that they remain unknown, / When thou knowest not / By angels trumps in heaven their praise is blown. / Divine their lot.

Good-bye, and God bless you!

With much love, I remain

Your grateful old friend

Madame.



Melling, Carnforth.

June 9/98

My dear friend Lilian

Thank you very much for your beautiful letter, I fancied you must be busy, when I did not hear from you. --- Why, deary, don't you know, I shall never get strong again in this world. I am not worse than I have been for some years, and I am very thankful I really suffer no pains, except a little discomfort in my swollen feet, and they are obstinate and refuse putting on boots. I am just like a flickering candle, one day very well and cheerful, the next day down but still happy and hopeful. ---

There was no early Service on Trinity Sunday at Melling. I am afraid you think me very wrong not to go to Church on Sunday, "the Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." I am unable to follow the Service, because I am in constant dread, lest one of these sudden spasms is coming on. However I enjoy the peaceful rest of Sunday, only now I miss your chats. --- You are quite right, dear, let every one please themselves, how to worship God, whether High or Low Church, I think nothing of doctrines. My faith is like the poor man's, who when asked, if he was ready to die,

answered Three in One, and One in Three, / And He in the midst, has died for me. --- Or take the poor Scotch woman, who when denied admission to the Communion table because she was unable to answer certain doctrinal questions, turned to the brethren saying, "You may keep me out, but as the lint-bell turns to the sun, so my soul turns to the Saviour." Right joyfully they welcomed her then. ---

It was indeed a sad loss for the Sedgwicks, poor Annie, I talked with her only two days before her death, as her father drove her in the trap past my cottage, I don't think the poor girl, nor any one else had an idea that she was so near death, she said, "I hope I shall soon get better." My idea was all along, that she suffered from slow blood poisoning, her parents ought to have taken her to a good physician when she started to be so poorly, two years ago. The young doctor who attended her did not understand her state. But no doubt her time had come, whilst the nine old people between 76 and 94 go on living in Melling.

I am always refreshed, by the enthusiasms of dear young Christians, who try to win souls for Christ. I wonder how often during a day, your dear heart starts up the short sweet path to the mercy-seat ~~during the day~~ to lay in Christ's hand the name of the last soul you spoke to for Him? --- I was only sixteen when I gave my heart to Christ, and consecrated my life and talents to His service and Glory. I have never regretted my choice, and though I have not done all I might Have done, but whatever my hand did find to do, I did it with my might, and His Grace was sufficient for all my needs.---

Do you know I don't like the Epistle of Trinity Sunday, in fact, none of the Chapters in Revelation, I dare say I do not understand it, but there seems something of the Heathen Ages in it, I dislike the four beasts, but I like the two last chapters, the New Jerusalem, the pure river of Life. I rather like Swedenborg's description of Heaven.

You can see enough wickedness and misery in the Liverpool Slums, I often wonder what will become of all these lost people living an ungodly life. On the other hand, it is lovely to find in the midst of misery and vice, a ministering angel, a true child of God. Like poor Susan in Paradise-Court in the East End of London. She had a brown tea-pot, it only cost threepence as there was a chip on the spout. The sick, and poor mothers with babies were each convinced it was the best cup of tea that ever was. And, Oh, who can tell how many sweet words of comfort and Christian counsel were uttered when old Susan brought her brown tea-pot to these wretched homes.

I am glad the Bells are here for the Vicar's sake, I love them dearly, but they have

so many friends, I have only seen them twice, Nellie has not come yet. --- I was very sorry to hear of Mrs Lorimer's death, she was a nice kind old lady. Mabel tells me the Sunday School is getting on very well, the children like Miß Wynne and there are more children attending, Mabel has now nine in her class.

I was so pleased to hear you were coming to live at Casterton in the midst of your many friends, and I'm glad you will try and spare time to see poor lonely Madame. It is kind of you to value my love for you and it is with much gratitude I thank God for having given me the friendship of two sweet and sincere young Christians to cheer my last days. ---

Mrs Greg came to see me this morning on her way to Leck. --- What a clever angel she is, so full of love and sunshine, she is quite determined to make me comfortable the rest of my life, and as I am persuaded, it is an answer to prayers, and that God put it in her heart to help me. I did not hesitate to accept her great kindness.

Please, dear, you must not expect always such a long letter; --- I would neglect necessary work. ---

May God bless you, and strengthen you in all good ways and works.

With much love I remain
Your sincere friend
Madame.

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[Source: the original letters in the Melling archive, deposited by June Fawcett. In her later years Lilian Mary Elyston Warden (1872-1950) lived with her mother at Greta Bridge House; her father Thomas Fawcett Warden (1843-1919), a land agent and JP in Westmorland, was born in Liverpool.]