

'I Never Wanted to See

By HERBERT HOOVER

IV

BEFORE the first World War the most comfortable place in the whole world in which to live was England—if one had the means. The machinery for joy and for keeping busy doing nothing was the most perfect. The servants were the best trained. The countryside was of unending beauty. To London came the greatest music, drama, art, and the best food.

To an American, the stratified structure of British society was a constant marvel—and grief. The British were governed by the "upper class" and the "upper middle class," whom God had called to their responsibilities. The other 80 per cent were reminded once a week in their prayer book that they must respect their betters.

All this was not "snobbery"; it was just complete belief in breeding and superiority. And that superiority, no matter how politely suppressed, was held equally over Americans, colonials and "natives" in general.

To witness their social superficialities, their fox hunts, their shooting parties, their Ranelaghs and other country clubs, and their week ends was often to believe this upper group was not worth preserving. Yet when war came these same men died bravely; these same women worked their fingers to the bare bone in munitions factories.

In business practices the British were no better or worse than Americans. Wall Street and Throgmorton Street equally performed a useful and necessary economic function; they were equally no place for the unwary and equally free from concern as to public welfare. But most Englishmen held scrupulous regard for personal undertakings. At that time I would rather have had an Englishman's mere confirmation letter of a verbal agreement than the most elaborate contract with any other European national.

I had often to sense the real attitudes of the British toward Americans, for they became so used to Mrs. Hoover and me in some households that they scarcely remembered we were Americans. At times it was hard to bear the attitude of complete condescension to anything American.

In later years the completely false charge was made that I had been a naturalized British subject, and I also lived through a storm of criticism for the alleged "corruption of my national spirit" through having lived for "twenty years" in dreadful England. As a matter of fact, patched together, the times we lived in England did not amount to five full years. The yellow journals and other higher intellectual literature at one time referred to me exclusively as Sir Herbert. On the other hand, when it became my duty to oppose British policies, I was to become in the minds of many British an ingrate anti-Britisher.

But we spent many happy times in prewar England, and became greatly attached to the stream of American and British friends with whom we came and went, and to the delightful house called "the Red House," which we sublet on Camden Hill, London, as our European base. Its original lease was so old that we were required not to hang our laundry in view of the neighbors, and to prevent our cows from wandering in High Street.

In the summer Mrs. Hoover usually brought the boys to England from school in California. For a few weeks during various summers we took country cottages at Swanage, Dorsetshire and at Stratford on Avon. I found Stratford intellectually rather dull after I had absorbed the very full local lore on William Shakespeare. To liven up the neighbors, I boned up on the Baconian theory. It took only a little of it to start a cataract of indignant refutation. Shakespeare's home town is certainly loyal to him.

In England we saw a good deal of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Rickard. He was an American engineer of

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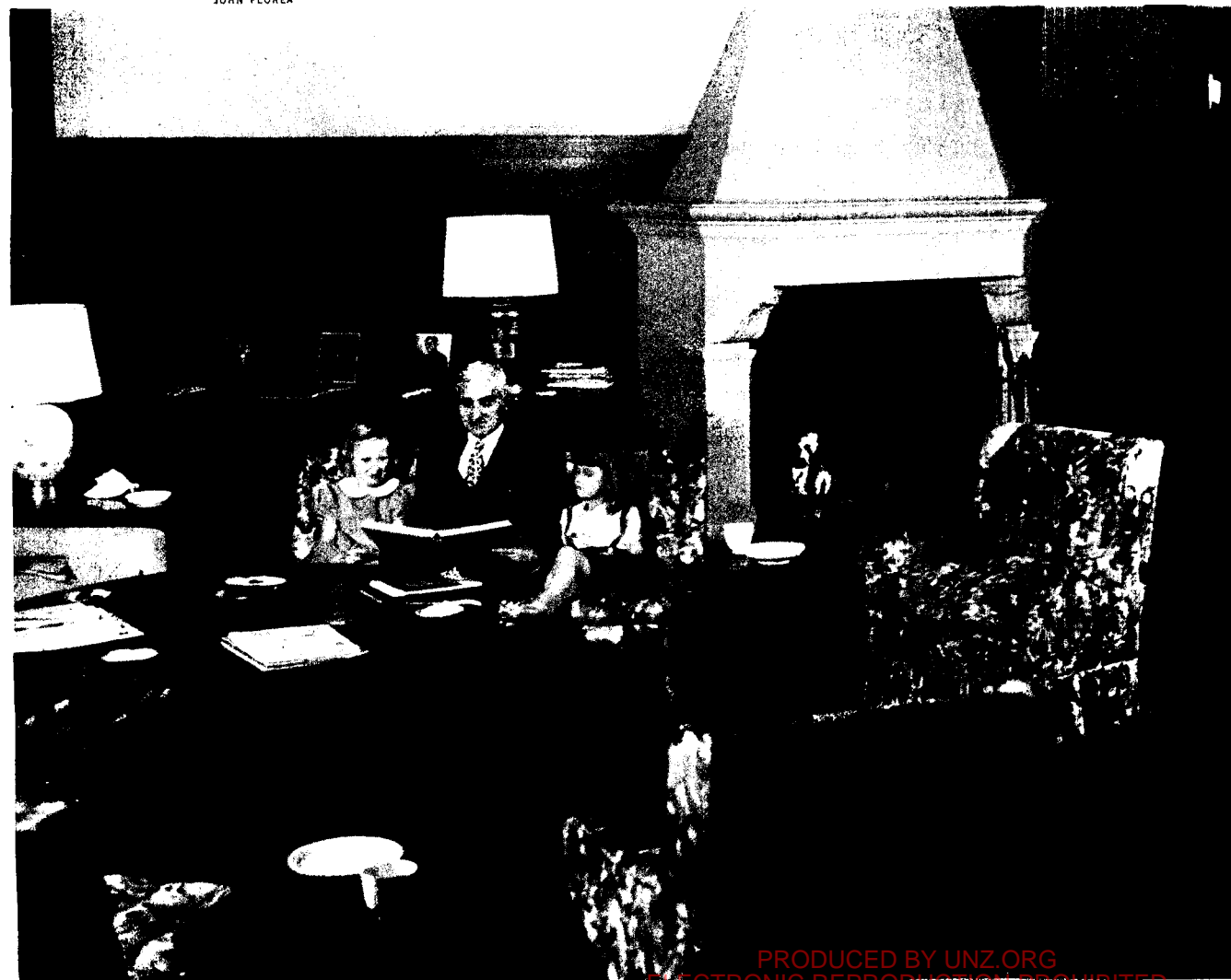


JOHN FLOREA

Realizing an old dream, Mrs. Hoover built this house, on the Stanford University campus, when she and Mr. Hoover returned from Europe in 1919. After her death it was given to the university

Living room of the Lou Henry Hoover House, now a home for Stanford's presidents. Kosta Boris, a Hoover ex-gardener, reads to President Wallace Sterling's daughter Judy (l.) and Jill Vanderhoof

JOHN FLOREA



Again'

wide experience who had come to London to take charge of a group of technical publications. Here began an intimate friendship that lasted without a flutter over the years until his death some weeks ago. Abby, whose nickname with us was "Abby-his-wife," was one of the sweetest and most cultivated of women. She was a glorious natural blonde but would have preferred any other color, for she was in eternal tumult that she might be thought to be artificial.

We undertook many joint expeditions with the Rickards, establishing a fund called "Seeing Cairo" to cover all joint traveling expenses. Into it we paid any windfalls that came our way. Neither of us was interested in speculation, but we operated it in a small way for this fund. At one time its assets rose to five or six thousand dollars.

Out of it we saw all the cathedrals, museums, galleries and restaurants of most of Europe—England, Germany, France, Russia, Italy and every way station. The agreed method was to resolve on a date for departure, have no destination until a few hours before, and then choose the first stop.

In after years I had occasion to say, "To many Americans' eyes, Europe consists of magnificent cities, historic cathedrals, art, music, literature, great universities, monuments of human heroism and progress. But under this 400,000,000 people of a score of races lie the explosive forces of nationalism, of imperialism, religious antagonism, age-old hates, memories of deep wrongs, revenges, fierce distrusts, repellent fears and dangerous poverty."

I confess that prior to 1914 we were among the "many Americans," and that we were not searching for "explosive forces."

There was a variety of other extracurricular activities to absorb Mrs. Hoover and myself when I was not engaged in my seven-time globe-girdling engineering profession. We formed quite a collection of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century books on early science, engineering, (Continued on page 50)



INTERNATIONAL

When Belgium's royal family visited the U.S. in 1919, Hoover arranged to entertain party of 60 in California. On a ferry are (l. to r.) Prince Leopold, Hoover, Queen Elisabeth and King Albert

Hoover as he looked when he was director of Belgian relief, which fed, clothed 10,000,000

IL THOMPSON



World War I leaders: Standing (l. to r.), Hoover, E. N. Hurley, Vance McCormick, James Garfield; seated, Benedict Crowell, W. G. McAdoo, Woodrow Wilson, Josephus Daniels, Bernard Baruch

INTERNATIONAL



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Reverse Formation

It would stir any patriot's blood to see Hot Dog and Bingo, side by side, fighting the good fight for life, liberty, and the pursuit of Emily

By S. W. M. HUMASON

I CAN'T remember ever not knowing Bingo. The first thing I can remember distinctly about him and me is our having whooping cough together. We had mumps together too and we fell in the pond together one January and we both played halfback on the high-school team and we both played forward on the basketball team. So when we fell in love together it only seemed kind of natural. Things being what they are, of course we couldn't both marry the girl. We thought quite a lot about marrying her but neither of us would be seventeen for several months so we didn't think either of our families would be reasonable, and we could talk about it to each other without making any plans for any fight to the death for her favors.

We'd only known her for less than one evening when we got in love. We met her (together) at 8:18 P.M., on the evening of November 18th. She was visiting Marilyn Grant. Marilyn Grant is a girl who our parents tell us we must be nice to for many reasons, none of them involving our feelings.

This particular night I had been drafted into taking Marilyn Grant to a high-school dance and got no deferment on account of a lot of things like a bent fender on the car and forgetting for three weeks to take out the rubbish can and other little odds and ends that made my family unfriendly and firm. The day before the dance Marilyn Grant's mother called up and said this girl was visiting and couldn't Barclay (that's me—known as Hot Dog, though not to Marilyn Grant's mother) bring a friend? Bingo was going stag, but he still owed me three bucks that he'd bet on the Phillies and besides we were used to helping each other out in emergencies knowing that the next time the emergency might be on the other foot.

Just as Bingo and I got inside Marilyn's house, she—not Marilyn, but *She*—this dream, this creature—came down the stairs. I quickly made signs to Bingo that he rightly took to mean that he could forget all about the three bucks if he'd switch partners, but Bingo was past caring about three bucks. But Bingo is a very right guy and he didn't take all the dances with her but occasionally answered my signals to take over Marilyn Grant. When we could get somebody else to be nice to Marilyn Grant (we had ways) we took turns cutting in on Her. Emily her name was. Emily!

She went away after three days and I wrote to her every day for a week. Bingo did, too, and one day twice. She wrote to each of us just once and sent us each a picture—same picture, same size, same inscription: In Memory Of A Gala Evening.

In January I got another letter from her. I looked at it a long time. Then I opened it. She had invited me to her home to a Valentine Dance. "Holy smoke," I said out loud. Then I started over to Bingo's house, which is two doors away, to tell him I was the one she liked. I met Bingo halfway. He had a letter and was invited too. The whole problem made us so hungry that we went into my house and ate three doughnuts apiece and drank a quart of milk.

"What gives?" said Bingo. "Does she think only one of us will come, or does she plan to hand one of us over to another pigeon? She says go with me."

"She wants us both," I said. "She wants me because I am handsome, rich and smart and she wants you because she is as kind and good as she is beautiful and doesn't want to hurt your feelings."

"Vice versa," said Bingo, which brought us, though only temporarily, to the fact that we hadn't

studied the next day's Latin which is a language which I don't see why as long as it's dead they don't leave it buried. It being a good half hour before supertime we went down to Jenkins' to soothe our mounting fever with a couple of sodas. The joint was full of people who were not going to a dance with Emily and the sodas tasted fine.

We wrote and said we were coming and Emily wrote back and said she was delighted. I went around with the inside of my head full of the thought of Emily being delighted because I was coming to the dance. Bingo had an expression that told me that his insides felt like mine and our fathers, who were playing bridge one night with our mothers, said they didn't know what made us look so happy, considering.

After we had been some time in a rose-colored fog, we got down to plans. We got out maps and looked at the name of the lucky town where Emily lived and realized that it was five hundred miles away and that the dance was on a Friday night. My jalopy wouldn't go five hundred miles. My family's car and Bingo's family's car had recently undergone considerable body repair. We thought if we asked our respective fathers for the loan of a car plus the finances for the trip, plus permission to miss a day of school, they would each and both say no. But we finally asked them and without any time to think about it, no is what they said. They said it in a way that you get to recognize as one which you'd better not bother them any more, at least for a time.

They were both mad anyway just then on account of something that had just been done by a character my father always calls that stinker Starrett. His name is really Starrett, Samuel W. He is a big-shot politician in our small town. My father and Bingo's father hate him and so do a lot of other good Joes. He rules things with a rod of iron. My father says the rod of iron is tin and is as crooked as a broken gutter pipe and smells worse. The muttering from our fathers and others was getting louder and they hoped that someday Mr. Starrett would find himself coasting down some other hill on his ear.

I don't like him either and I don't like his son also. Of course it was neither right nor just that our fathers being mad about that stinker Starrett should reflect on Bingo and me. We had nothing to do with that stinker Starrett. In fact except that I once, when I was younger, collected three hundred and seventy-six campaign buttons, I never had anything to do with politics. But Bingo and I decided that even if their irritation about that stinker Starrett was removed, they would still have enough left over for us.

WE GOT a timetable and studied trains and saw the only way we could get there would be to take a night train on Thursday. Even sitting up in a day coach it would take a lot more money than either of us had had for a long time and it meant missing a day of school. There was only one thing that we did not consider for a moment and that was not going. We decided to get finances out of the way first. We borrowed a dollar here and a dollar there and I collected some old debts and I sold my jalopy and Bingo hocked his radio and we washed cars and ran errands and still we didn't have enough.

One day when we were eating chocolate cake to help us think I remembered something. "Holy smoke," I said, "we're in!"

Every birthday since I'd been born my grand-

father had sent me twenty dollars toward my education. The checks were made out to my father but he put them in a savings account in my name and I knew where he kept the bankbook. It had seemed a holy sort of money and even I had never thought of touching it before—but this was a big-time issue.

"I don't believe it," said Bingo when I'd explained. "They'd never leave that money where you could get at it."

I got the book out of my father's desk drawer and the next day at lunch hour Bingo and I went to the bank. I found a teller who didn't know me and after I had signed a thing and showed my driver's license for identification, he handed over a hundred dollars as calmly as if he did it every day which I suppose he did, though not to me. I put the book back in the drawer. My next birthday was six months away and the future could take care of itself.

We bought the railroad tickets and I never had anything in my wallet that felt so good. There remained the matter of school. It seemed incredible that to miss one day of such a common occurrence as school should seem important to anybody but it did. We tried for parental permission. We didn't get it. We tried for permission from the principal. We didn't get it.

IN FACT, in both cases, we got instead a lecture, accompanied by everything but television, on our general behavior and social standing. We were in the wrong with all the authorities at school except the athletic coach and even he was getting irked at our dangerously low marks. There was this and that. There was the matter of the alarm clock in the piano at morning assembly, of three rolls of confetti in the principal's umbrella, of the rubber cement on the bottom of all the galoshes in the girls' cloakroom—and so on. All trifles, but they added up.

"We could get suspended easy," said Bingo. We were studying geometry at the time and eating chocolate bars and popcorn. We could, too. We had been warned. Just one more thing, however minor, we had been warned, and we would be suspended for a month. It could be that simple. We had plenty of ideas. We could pick out the best one. I was for the one that called for short-circuiting the fire alarm, but Bingo was for putting beer in the water cooler.

"We don't need to do anything," I said. "We can just go. Then we'll be suspended anyway."

"We might as well have some fun first," said Bingo, and I agreed.

But still and all we were neither of us coming out with the thing that was really in the way. That was basketball. The team was well headed not only toward the league championship but maybe toward an unbeaten season. Of course, if we got suspended, we couldn't play basketball, and of course if we didn't play, the team wouldn't have an unbeaten season.

"We can't do it," said Bingo.

"Can't do what?" I said, though I knew.

"Get suspended. On account of the team."

That was it. I've heard my father talk about a social conscience and I (Continued on page 47)

Bingo and I asked Cynthia to go to the other drugstore after school. She was very enthusiastic about the invitation. She is not a wench I could care for, but has her points

ILLUSTRATED BY MAURO SCALI