

A ROYAL UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS ON THE ISLE OF WIGHT: QUEEN VICTORIA'S VISIT TO "THE ORCHARD", NITON UNDERCLIFF

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ABSTRACT

Recently discovered correspondence illustrates the impact on the Gordon family and their servants of a decision by Queen Victoria to have an indoor picnic at their unoccupied house. Still in her period of extended mourning for the death of the Prince Consort, the Queen was concerned to avoid any public gaze. The niceties of aristocratic manners, the imperviousness of Queen Victoria to the demands she was making on others and the hierarchical responses from all involved in this simple expedition are illustrated by this episode.

INTRODUCTION

After Prince Albert's death in 1861, Queen Victoria retreated into reclusive mourning. She dealt with essential matters of state at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight and expected her withdrawal to be respected. Recent research, drawing on sources that include uncatalogued and unpublished Gordon family papers in the Isle of Wight County Record Office and on Queen Victoria's *Journals*, reveals an instance of a demand on her neighbours that may have seemed slight to the Queen but which caused them considerable anxiety. The Queen wanted to have a small lunch party at one of the houses of the family of Sir Willoughby Gordon – "The Orchard", Niton Undercliff (Fig. 1) – in their absence. This precipitated a rapid and extensive correspondence to ensure that the royal requirements for a brief private visit were met. The monarch's whim was conveyed by a courtier to the Gordon family steward and resulted in a flurry of agitated preparations, involving the family members, the steward and the cook.

THE INDOOR PICNIC

'A dull foggy morning... At ½ past 12 it having become finer, we started, Louise and I in the open landau for Ventnor, Lenchen, the D[uche]ss of Roxburgh[e], Harriet P[hipps] and L[ord] C[harles] Fitzroy following in the small charabancs. Went by Newport, below Carisbrooke, by Chale and Blackgang Chine, where we changed horses. But alas! There was a thick fog obscuring the distance and we could only catch occasional glimpses of the sea. It is so beautiful along the Undercliff, with the high rocks above. Had not been there since 1831! We lunched at a small quiet little house "The Orchard", with a garden hanging over the sea, but so overhung by the cliff behind, that it is very closed in. A footman had been sent on before to prepare everything' (*Queen Victoria's Journals*, 13 February 1867).

Queen Victoria's brief entry in her diary for 13 February 1867 does not do justice to the excitement, anxiety and work involved in preparing to receive this private visit at which she deliberately avoided meeting members of the Gordon family, who owned "The Orchard".

The six members of the royal party included two of the Queen's daughters, Princesses Louise and Helena (Lenchen), who both, at different times, acted as her unofficial secretary. The Duchess of Roxburghe was a longstanding friend and Harriet Phipps was a Maid of Honour, widely known to be Victoria's confidante. The Queen's Equerry, Lord Charles Fitzroy, squired the ladies.

At the time, the Queen, was still in deep mourning for her husband, Prince Albert, who had died six years earlier. Her household had left London and other royal premises to live for most of the year at the family home,



Fig 1 A near-contemporary colour illustration of "The Orchard"

Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, with some variety provided by an annual autumn excursion to her estate at Balmoral in the Highlands. The couple had bought the house in 1845 to provide a quiet retreat and family home for the expanding Royal family. The Prince Consort re-designed the house and gardens, with Thomas Cubitt completing the building in 1851. Victoria and Albert were very happy there, with the relatively modest rooms, extensive gardens and private beach complete with their own bathing machine. After Albert's death, the house gave some consolation to the Queen, allowing her to wallow in her grief surrounded by mementos of happier times, with the occasional gentle excursion in the surrounding countryside. When staying both here and at Balmoral, the Queen clearly viewed herself as a 'private person', in contrast to her

role at the monarchy's official residences of Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle.

Previously called "Orchards", taking its name from the family who lived there for many years, the renamed "The Orchard" at Niton Undercliff (recently renamed yet again as "Swinburne Villa", though Swinburne never lived there), on which the Queen had her set her sights, had been bought in 1817 by Colonel (later, General) Willoughby Gordon as a country retreat. The Queen's previous visit to Niton Undercliff in 1831 had been when, as Princess Victoria, she and her mother, the Duchess of Kent, had stayed nearby at the Sandrock Hotel – later renamed Royal Sandrock Hotel in honour of their visit. The Queen may have known about the ownership of 'The Orchard' as Willoughby Gordon had at one time been private and military secretary to her father, the

Duke of Kent, when he was Commander-in-Chief of the army in North America.

"The Orchard" had originally been quite a modest residence, but the colonel transformed it into a fashionable *maison ornée*, an elaborate rusticated villa in the Picturesque style. The eight acres of gardens, which sloped down to the sea, were laid out with walks and terraces offering panoramic views of the English Channel, shaded walks and a spectacular fountain.

The conversion met the most exacting standards of contemporary taste. An article in one of the leading magazines that commented on architectural style and fashion was full of praise:

'...its orange-walks of considerable extent, its terraces and richly sculptured vases etc., give it an air that would seem to say the luxuriant in art shall blend with the grand in nature. The building is irregular, and though perfectly a whole, bears the stamp of continual additions. The entrance is a pleasing vestibule, which communicates with the hall, breakfast-room and library, pleasantly fitted up with rich, carved furniture. The dining room is in the same taste, and of fine proportions; connected with the latter are several small apartments, containing cabinets of rare shells, &c. A circular stone staircase leads to a very elegant small room, containing richly inlaid cabinets and rare birds...the drawing room ...contains some rare and fine pieces of china, with alabaster figures after Canova. Three French windows, of large dimensions, open into a verandah, which, being furnished with glass, forms a sitting-room, commanding beautiful views of nearly the whole of the Undercliff. The roof, projecting considerably over the verandah, throws a bold shadow, which in the summer season, renders it truly delightful' (*Ackermann's Repository*, 1826, quoted in Hutchings and Turley, 1978, 22).

The Gordons were patrons of the arts and J.M.W. Turner and David Wilkie, two of the leading painters of their generation, were among the visitors who enjoyed their hospitality. Indeed, Sir Willoughby Gordon, whose status as a member of the landed gentry had been affirmed by the award of a baronetcy in 1818, had commissioned a picture from Turner that was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1826 and is now in the Boston Museum of Fine

Arts. It was the 'View from the Terrace of a Villa at Niton ... from sketches by a Lady' and shows the garden of 'The Orchard' stretching down towards the sea. The sketches were by Gordon's wife, Lady Gordon (born Isabella Julia Levina Bennet, first cousin to the 3rd Duke of Northumberland), an accomplished amateur artist who had benefited from advice and tuition from Thomas Girtin and David Cox, as well as from both Turner and Wilkie. She also produced designs for china made for the family by Josiah Wedgwood. Other paintings on the walls of "The Orchard" included a vivid representation of the Battle of Badajoz (1812) in the Peninsula War, showing Wellington directing the Anglo-Portuguese armies, accompanied by his quartermaster-general, Willoughby Gordon. Reinforcing Gordon's link with Wellington, there was a bust of the national hero in the hall.

Willoughby Gordon had died in 1851 and by the time of the Queen's visit his widow was herself terminally ill at the family's town house in Chelsea (which later became Gordon House, the nurses' home at the Royal Hospital). "The Orchard" was in the care of the two adult offspring of the marriage, Sir Henry Percy Gordon (1806–76) and Julia Emily Gordon (1809–96).

In his youth, Henry Percy Gordon had had a meteoric academic career at Cambridge. In 1827 he was Senior Wrangler – that is, he was awarded the highest overall marks among all those taking the Mathematical Tripos, the undergraduate mathematics course. To achieve the status of Senior Wrangler was widely recognised as an immense intellectual accomplishment. In keeping with tradition, 1827 was known in Cambridge as "Gordon's Year" and he was elected an Honorary Fellow of Peterhouse, the first ever.

However, rather than pursuing an academic career, Henry Percy Gordon turned towards the law. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1828 and was called to the bar three years later. He then worked as a specialist barrister drafting legal documents concerned with land and trust proceedings in the Court of Chancery. Dickens's near contemporary account of the fictional Jarndyce v Jarndyce case in *Bleak House* gives a vivid impression of how numbingly

tedious this kind of work must have been and in 1840 Gordon turned away from it to live the life of a public spirited country gentleman. He cherished his estates in Aberdeenshire and on the Isle of Wight, where he was appointed magistrate and, in 1841, Deputy Lieutenant.

The life of Henry Percy's younger sister, Julia Emily Gordon, followed a very different path. Family tradition has it that in 1834 the painter David Wilkie, who was then fifty years old, asked her father for the hand of the twenty five year old Julia in marriage, but that his request was turned down. No doubt Willoughby Gordon had his reasons. Wilkie suffered from persisting ill-health. Moreover, he was still recovering from severe financial difficulties caused by the collapse of his printer and publisher, Hurst, Robinson & Co. There is evidence of Wilkie's preoccupation with Julia in his two portraits of her, now in Tate Britain, fetchingly attired in a Middle Eastern cloak and red fez. Julia never married but lived a vigorous and fulfilled life, travelling extensively through France, Italy and Germany with her friend Mary Radcliffe Chambers and five cage birds. Her etchings had appeared in book form, notably as illustrations to an edition of Milton's *Penseroso*, published by the Colnaghis, probably the oldest commercial art dealers in the world and still in business today in Old Bond Street, London.

On 9 February 1867, William Sheath, the gardener and steward who was looking after "The Orchard" in the family's absence, wrote an agitated letter to Julia Gordon about a visit he had received:

'Madam – I write to say that a gentleman called at the Orchard today in a hurried manner and I was called to him. When he said that he had just called to tell me privately that Her Majesty the Queen wished privately to come to this part of the Island to take luncheon at some quiet place, and thinking there were no family at the Orchard she would prefer coming here, if there were no objection. I told him I was sure there would be no objection and he said he would write that evening either to you or Lady Gordon, but I was so upset by his manner at first that I thought he had some bad news to tell me of some death, and in my embarrassment I made a mistake in your address and told him "Woodlands, Regent Street" but after I had collected my thoughts I knew it

was wrong. And the gentleman hurried off to the carriage and did not give his name, but I hope that by enquiring you may get the letter. I am very sorry that I should have made such a mistake. He begged me not to mention it to anyone as no "ado" should be made, and her Majesty wished to come privately' (Gordon family papers).

In fact, the "gentleman" who had called at "The Orchard" to announce Queen Victoria's private visit was Lord Charles Fitzroy, Equerry to the Queen. As he had told William Sheath he would, later that day he wrote to Julia Gordon, asking her to get her widowed mother's agreement for the visit to take place:

'Lord Charles Fitzroy presents his compliments to Miss Gordon and would feel very grateful if she would obtain Lady Willoughby's consent to allow Her Majesty when driving round by Niton to go into the Orchard and take her luncheon in with her without any person taking any notice of Her Majesty. If the Queen goes over he w[ould] like to have Lady Willoughby's leave to send a groom on before, merely to have a fire lighted in the room looking on the garden, but Her Majesty would prefer having no other preparations made & no notice taken of Her & the gardener not to publish it if he hears the Queen is coming' (Gordon family papers).

We do not know the wording of Julia's answer to the Equerry's request, but it must have been favourable, as he replied to her two days later, on 11 February:

'Lord Charles Fitzroy presents his compliments to Miss Gordon and begs to acknowledge the receipt of her kind letter and to say that the Queen is very grateful indeed for the kindness accorded to Her Majesty on stopping at the Orchard privately and without ceremony during any drive she may happen to take in that direction and regretting the indisposition of Lady Gordon herself keeping her confined to bed' (Gordon family papers).

Supervision of the arrangements for the royal visit was then taken over by Julia's elder brother, Sir Henry Percy Gordon (who had inherited the baronetcy on his father's death). He was not at the nearby family home of Northcourt, Shorwell, and his daughter Mary, not long married and with an infant child, her

six month old son Alex, was almost certainly at her husband's estate in Aberdeenshire. On Tuesday, 12 February, Sir Henry wrote to William Sheath at "The Orchard" with highly detailed instructions about the Queen's forthcoming visit, for which apparently no date had yet been fixed:

'Her Majesty may be expected any day – do be on the watch. Let the grates in the Breakfast & Drawing Rooms be well laid with plenty of coal & wood – so as to burn up well at once.

And let the best wine glasses and glass water jugs be put on a tray upon the round table in the Breakfast Room & the best linen tablecloth and napkins which may be out. Kept all ready in that room.

You had better have some corn in the stables and offer what accommodation the stables may afford if it can be of use, for you know Lady Gordon and myself are very anxious to treat the horses well whenever we can.

It will be well too to keep the Turkey carpet down in the Dining Room – it can take no harm.

Be sure at once to lay down the scarlet Drugget at the entrance door & steps. I think there is some in the passage closet (East side) upstairs.

Please to carefully attend to all, but nothing is to be done to show a bustle should the Queen arrive before it is done, as Her Majesty wishes no preparations to be made' (*"Niton Calling"*, 1959, 24).

The letter was signed 'Yr. Wellwisher, H. Gordon', perhaps indicating an element of friendship in the relationship between master and servant. On the Wednesday morning, 13 Feb 1867, Lord Charles Fitzroy had a note sent across the island to "The Orchard" – presumably addressed to Sheath, the Steward – emphasising yet again the private nature of the visit:

'If the day continues fine the Queen will drive to "The Orchard", and I should feel obliged if you would have a fire lighted in the room Miss [Julia] Gordon ordered & also *not* let any persons know the Queen is coming.

The luncheon will be sent on and a person with it to arrange it all'

(*"Niton Calling"*, 1959, 24).

Apart from the brief entry in Queen Victoria's journal cited above, we have no record of

what the members of the royal party thought of their visit to "The Orchard" or of the arrangements made for their indoor picnic. However, the following day William Sheath reported back to Sir Henry, saying that he himself had not seen the Queen but assuring him that everything possible had been done for the comfort of the visitors – and, not least, their horses – and that the visit had indeed been kept private:

'Her Majesty honoured the Orchard with her presence yesterday (Wednesday) but I was very sorry that a thick fog continued throughout the day, and it was too wet for Her Majesty to walk on the turf after she had walked on the West Terrace. Sir Charles Fitzroy came to the stable to ask me if there was a grand walk where Her Majesty could get from the house into the grounds without going on the turf, but there was not.

Everything was ready and comfortable before Her Majesty arrived. A messenger came in the morning about ½ past 9 o'clock and brought your order and also a letter from Osborne to say that Her Majesty would drive to the Orchard if the weather was fine, & about ½ past 1 o'clock a carriage came containing the provisions and the Sergeant Footman, who would not allow Mrs Moorman to leave. He said he could not do without her help. A large fire was wanted immediately in the kitchen and potatoes boiled, soup, rice etc warmed which Mrs Moorman had the honour of doing while the servant laid the luncheon cloth. She also helped him to unpack as their coming was delayed on account of the weather, and Her Majesty arrived an hour after him with her four grey horses and the sergeant told Mrs Moorman that she must go and show Her Majesty into the rooms as there was no one else to do so, the second carriage did not arrive till some time after, but Mrs Moorman refused to do so saying that she had been charged to keep away, but he told her she must go and he would make alright. She therefore reluctantly went as it was against your wish.

I did not see Her Majesty. I had enough to do to find accommodation for eleven horse which I managed very well with Beauchamp Stables. I put the Queen's fine grey horses in the Orchard Stables, as you requested. I had got some corn which was very fortunate as Sir Charles Fitzroy came and asked me if I could accommodate them.

And as none of the horses left the place it kept

the affair so private people were surprised the Queen had passed away [sic] & as we knew that she was coming.

W. Sheath'

(Gordon family papers)

Sir Henry had also heard from the Equerry that the visit had passed off successfully, in spite of the fact that the wet grass and a thick fog had prevented the Queen from seeing the magnificent views of the Channel from the terraces. He wrote to William Sheath on Friday, 15 February:

'Last evening I received a letter from Lord Charles Fitzroy with a very gracious message from the Queen in which Her Majesty thanks 'Lady Willoughby Gordon very much for the kind way in which she was enabled to visit "The Orchard" and assures her that her instructions to the servants were carried out to the letter.'

This is very satisfactory to us all, and I daresay Her Majesty was amused to find Mrs. Moorman's scruples nearly prevented her getting into the House.

It was most disappointing that the weather should have been so bad – perhaps the Queen *may* come on a finer day, as I have written to tell Lord Charles Fitzroy I have desired the stables to be kept aired and ready to accommodate & feed Her Majesty's horses.

You managed very well altogether but I am very sorry you should not have seen the Queen.

The Queen graciously gave me the glass out of which she drank. Please take care that it is very carefully locked up till I can take it myself, and put by it the enclosed card (*not* into it for fear of breaking it).

The vegetables came yesterday – the plants are not yet arrived.

You had better keep this letter.

All well here.

Your Wellwisher H.GORDON

To William Sheath "The Orchard"

P.S. Were you able to put flowers on the table?
H.G.'

(*"Niton Calling"*, 1959, 24–5).

An anonymous note accompanying the file of original letters to William Sheath says that these were preserved by his grand-daughters, who recalled that when Queen Victoria was about to leave to return to Osborne, she wanted to see the steward and asked Lord Charles Fitzroy

to fetch him. However, as Sir Henry had said beforehand that no one was to see the Queen, William Sheath was placed in a difficulty – was he to obey the Queen or his master? Eventually he stood firmly by his master's orders and the Queen, when the matter was explained to her, commended his decision and sent him a handsome gift of two guineas – roughly the equivalent of £200 today. The ultimate fate of the drinking glass that had been pressed to the royal lips, which Her Majesty so generously gifted to Sir Henry, and which he was so anxious should be carefully preserved, remains unknown.

All the preparations and anxieties over royal protocol were for an indoor picnic that lasted no longer than an hour and a half. It was the custom for the aristocracy and the landed gentry to expect hospitality from those they knew or to whom they had been introduced. The Gordon family themselves were accustomed to making extended visits to their relatives. For example, Julia Gordon's diary for 1854 records a lengthy visit by members of both the Gordon and Swinburne families to their relatives, the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, at Alnwick Castle (Gordon family papers). Her niece, Mary Gordon, writes that 'The family always spent the late summer and autumn...' with the Swinburnes at Capheaton in Northumberland – ...'A large cousinhood gathered there' (Leith 1917, 11). In 1875 it was the Swinburne family's turn to travel north and stay with the Gordons on their estate at Knockespock, in Aberdeenshire. Visits could last for weeks on end so this modest request from Her Majesty was not especially demanding, though it was unusual, if not unique, in being timed deliberately to avoid meeting the absent host family. However, the outing must have been a little disappointing, as the weather had prevented the Royal party from enjoying the gardens and the views. The Queen wrote in her Journal:

'...at 1/4 to 4 started on our homeward drive, going through the town, which reminded me much of former happy times, up above, passing Appledorcombe [sic], & changing horses at Arreton. We had 3 relays of my own horses & the others had post horses. Got back by 1/4 to 6. — was distressed at hearing that dearest

Feodore [Queen Victoria's half-sister, Princess of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, 1807–72]. was not at all well, & that her heart, which alas! is not very strong, had been affected, but she is already much better. May God preserve her!' (*Queen Victoria's Journals*, 13 February 1967).

Living a secluded life at Osborne in 1867 symbolised the Queen's physical withdrawal from public life. It was a time of growing concern and comment about her 'invisibility' and absence from public view. A radical magazine featured a cartoon showing an unoccupied throne draped with a cover to look like furniture in an empty house (Baker, 1996, 113). There was even a resurgence of republicanism: by the early 1870s there were over 100 republican clubs in London, Sheffield and other cities and towns throughout the country (Rumsey, 2000, 95; Smith, 1979, 1). The disquiet culminated in 1872 in Sir Charles Dilke's parliamentary motion aimed at a complete reform of the civil list and was only finally put to rest when Disraeli became Prime Minister in 1874 and persuaded the Queen that appearances in public were an integral part of the monarch's role.

However, the Queen's earlier reluctance to engage in official public occasions such as the State Opening of Parliament or to be seen by her subjects – even, on this occasion, when being driven the few miles from Osborne House to Niton Undercliff – did not entail any diminution in her behind-the-scenes involvement in affairs of state. That evening, at dinner, refreshed by her outing to "The Orchard", she was involved in discussing the most pressing domestic political issue of the time, the extension of the electoral franchise, to be incorporated in the Second Reform Bill that was about to be introduced in Parliament:

'The D[uchess] of Roxburghe, L[ord] Halifax & the Gordons [a different Gordon family] dined. He repeated much of what he said yesterday, & promised to do all he could, to keep matters straight. But M^r Gladstone, though he was moderate, deferred to L[ord] Russell, who had neither tact or judgment. Still everyone was anxious for a settlement of the question. — The Duchess read to us afterwards' (*Queen Victoria's Journals*, 13 February 1867).

Queen Victoria's life at Osborne at the time involved reading official papers, signing documents, receiving reports on matters of state and dictating business and personal letters. For example, the day after the visit, Victoria received a dispatch from the Prime Minister, Lord Derby, that in Ireland the long-threatened armed insurrection by the Fenian nationalists had finally broken out in Killarney. It looked very alarming, but prompt measures were being taken. Lord Naas, Chief Secretary for Ireland, had crossed to Dublin and Lord Strathnairn, Commander in Chief of the Army in Ireland, had been sent for and had gone over at once. Troops had been dispatched from the Curragh and Cork (*Queen Victoria's Journals*, 14 February 1867). The following day, she was photographed in the Council Room at Osborne for the opening of Parliament before going down to the sea with Princess Louise, and then doing a little painting. She studied reports from Parliament that signalled better chances for settlement of the Reform Bill crisis. For the last few evenings, the Duchess of Roxburghe had been reading the final chapters of *Christian's Mistake*, by Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, one of that prolific author's morally improving bestsellers, which the Queen thought was '...so well written' (*Queen Victoria's Journals*, 15 February 1867). The excursion to "The Orchard" had been just one brief incident in Queen Victoria's life at the time, a short break from her official duties and preoccupation with affairs of state – and, in spite of Sir Henry Gordon's hopes, she never returned. It was, though, a momentous event for the family who owned the house and their servants, taking a notable place in the collective memory of the village of Niton.

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APPENDIX THE ROYAL PARTY

Queen Victoria (1819–1901)

Princess Louise (1848–1939), sixth child and fourth daughter of Victoria and Albert. Unofficial secretary to the Queen at the time of the visit. Married John, Marquess of Lorne, heir to the Dukedom of Argyll, on 21 March 1871.

Princess Helena (1846–1923), fifth child and third daughter of Victoria and Albert: family nickname Lenchen, diminutive of Helenchen (German). The Queen’s unofficial secretary until her marriage to Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, a third cousin, on 5 July 1866. Her eldest son, Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein, was born two months after the visit to “The Orchard”.

Susanna Stephenia Dalbiac (1814–95). Married James Innes-Kerr, 6th Duke of Roxburghe, on 29 December 1836. They had four children. Appointed Lady of the Bedchamber in 1865.

The Hon. Harriet Lepel Phipps (1841–1922), younger daughter of Sir Charles Beaumont Phipps, Keeper of the Privy Purse, and Margaret Anne Bathurst. Confidante of the Queen, appointed Maid of Honour in 1862 and later Woman of the Bedchamber from 1889 until the Queen’s death in 1901.

Augustus Charles Lennox Fitzroy (1821–1918). As Lord Charles Fitzroy, he was Equerry to the Queen 1849–82, when he succeeded his brother as 7th Duke of Grafton.

THE FAMILY

General Sir (James) Willoughby Gordon (1772–1851). Enlisted as an ensign when 11 years old and served in Ireland, the West Indies and Gibraltar. Promoted lieutenant 1789, captain 1795, major 1797, lieutenant-colonel 1801, colonel 1810, major-general 1813, lieutenant-general 1825, general 1841: at various times military secretary to both the Duke of Kent and his brother the Duke of York (Commander-in-Chief). Commanded the 85th Regiment in North America, Jamaica and Portuguese Madeira. Quarter Master General of Wellington's forces in the Peninsula War 1812, subsequently Quarter Master General of the Army at the Horseguards. Fellow of the Royal Society 1801, Baronet 1818, Member of Parliament for Launceston 1829–31, Privy Councillor 1830. Married in 1805 Isabella Julia Levina Bennet (1775–1867), cousin of the 3rd Duke of Northumberland.

Sir Henry Percy Gordon (1806–1876). Elder child and only son of General Sir Willoughby and Lady Gordon. Married Mary Agnes Blanche Ashburnham (1816–99), daughter of the 3rd Earl of Ashburnham and Charlotte Percy. Senior Wrangler, M.A. and Honorary Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge. Fellow of the Royal Society 1830. Barrister, Lincoln's Inn 1831. Deputy Lieutenant, Isle of Wight, 1841, and Magistrate.

Julia Emily Gordon (1809–96). Younger child and only daughter of General Sir Willoughby and Lady Gordon. Artist, poet, translator and traveller.

Mary Charlotte Julia Gordon (1840–1926). Only child of Sir Henry Percy and Lady Gordon. Married Colonel (later, General) Robert William Disney Leith at St Peter's, Shorwell, Isle of Wight, in 1865. Two sons and four daughters were born of the marriage. Author of fifteen novels (one jointly with her cousin, the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne), three volumes of verse, two books on Iceland, two translations from the Icelandic, in which she was self-taught, and a memoir of Swinburne. In her 50s, 60s and 70s she made fourteen visits to Iceland, trekking across country on pony-sized Icelandic horses.

THE SERVANTS AT "THE ORCHARD"

William Sheath (1813–87). Born at Whitwell, Isle of Wight. Married Jane Wills (born Niton 1825) at St. John's, Niton, 1845. Gardener and steward at "The Orchard". At the time of the royal visit he and his wife lived in the coach house with their seven children. After his death, his widow became a lighthouse keeper at St. Catherine's Lighthouse, assisted by two unmarried daughters, and then went on to keep a lodging house at "Springvale", St. Catherine's Road, Niton Undercliff. (Decennial Census Returns, 1861–1911).

Ann Moorman, née Chessel. Born 1822 at Chillerton, Isle of Wight. Married James Moorman (1814–84) from Chale, Isle of Wight, in 1841. Cook and housekeeper at "The Orchard". (Decennial Census Returns, 1861–1911).