



Daughter of Empire: My Life as a Mountbatten

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A magical memoir about a singular childhood in England and India by the daughter of Lord Louis and Edwina Mountbatten

Few families can boast of not one but two saints among their ancestors, a great-aunt who was the last tsarina of Russia, a father who was Grace Kelly's pinup, and a grandmother who was not only a princess but could also argue the finer points of naval law. Pamela Mountbatten entered a remarkable family when she was born at the very end of the Roaring Twenties.

As the younger daughter of the glamorous heiress Edwina Ashley and Lord Louis Mountbatten, Pamela spent much of her early life with her sister, nannies, and servants and a menagerie that included, at different times, a bear, two wallabies, a mongoose, and a lion. Her parents each had lovers who lived openly with the family. The house was always full of guests like Sir Winston Churchill, Noel Coward, Douglas Fairbanks, and the Duchess of Windsor (who brought a cold cooked chicken as a hostess gift).

When World War II broke out, Lord Mountbatten was in command of HMS "Kelly" before being appointed chief of Combined Operations, and Pamela and her sister were sent to live on Fifth Avenue in New York City with Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt. In 1947, her parents were appointed to be the last viceroy and vicereine of India and oversee the transfer of power to an independent Indian government. Amid the turmoil of political change, Pamela worked with student leaders, developed warm friendships with Gandhi and Nehru, and witnessed both the joy of Independence Day and its terrible aftermath. Soon afterwards, she was a bridesmaid in Princess Elizabeth's wedding to Prince Philip, and was a lady-in-waiting at the young princess's side when she learned her father had died and she was queen.

Vivid and engaging, well-paced and superbly detailed, this witty, intimate memoir is an enchanting lens through which to view the early part of the twentieth century.

Daughter of Empire: My Life as a Mountbatten Details

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From Reader Review Daughter of Empire: My Life as a Mountbatten for online ebook

Louise says

Lady Pamela Hicks, through her incredibly vibrant parents, was present in the world altering events of the 20th century. Was it intentional that she would write of her first 30 years with such detachment, or is this sum total of what she thought and felt about these experiences? Is she emotionally this guarded or has there been no reflection on her witness to history?

For her early years she describes her grandmother and other caretakers, the marvelous letters she received from her parents (and their respective lovers) and the exotic animals her mother brought from her travels. Exemplary of the narrative, the sentence where she mentions hearing the grownups talking about George V's death is followed by: "We loved to drive out to Uncle Ernie's charming property his hunting boxes, his farms ... magnificent carriage horses..." (p.35).

The two most provocative parts of her childhood are going to New York before WWII and her father's lesson when she was caught in a lie. The Why did the Mountbatten's send their daughters to the US prior to WWII? I would not have been surprised if it was because of the bombing, but that it was the "virulent anti-Semitism spreading across the channel" is all that was said on the topic. There is no word on how this manifested itself or why the Vanderbilt's selected as hosts. Regarding the lie, Lord Mountbatten's response shows that the level her parents were operating on was far different from the level of awareness that Hicks shows in this book.

The section on India, despite its limited scope, was worth the read for its descriptions from the Mountbatten's new home in the Viceroy Palace ("25 indoor gardeners to attend to the flower arrangements" (p. 105)), the visits to India's princes, and the encounters with Gandhi and Nehru. Any opportunities for depth are left unwritten. For instance, she refers to "thought provoking" (p. 113) discussions with the girls from Lady Irwin College: "Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians" are no mention of the topics or, of most interest, what became of the girls after Independence.

The limited world view presented in this book may be defined by Hick's concern after the euphoria of India's independence had given way to the horrors of partition: "In the midst of this devastation I wondered if we would be able to get away for the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and Phillip in November." (p.142).

There is lot of concern with rank... what should the admiral call her father when he returned to the Navy at a lower rank than before? What should the admiral call Prince Philip... especially now that his wife is the queen? In Kenya when "Lisabet" becomes queen, what should she now be called? Hicks describes her different curtsies for different purposes. I wondered what her mother, given her experience among wounded soldiers, refugees, and victims of ethnic violence, might think about her daughter's emphasis on protocol (as well as clothing, her mongoose, etc.) in this memoir.

It should be noted that the writing style and scope work in the chapters devoted to the 1953/4 Commonwealth Tour is appropriate. This is a tour of pomp and protocol with no dramatic historical events to be interpreted. Unfortunately, the whole book is written in this monotone.

Is Hicks too guarded or does it just seem this way? Does she think expressing an opinion or point of view might offend? Is she trying to be too modest about her parents' achievements? Is she as blinded by titles and

rank as she appears? What does she think precipitated her parents' sending her to the US in 1940? Has she noticed the changing role of the European aristocracy? Whatever the source of her detachment from the momentous events she witnessed, what c/should have insightful book was a pleasant, but very light collection of anecdotes.

Michelle says

This memoir gives insight into the Mountbatten family in England. She was raised with wealth and privilege, but with some unconventional pets due to her parents' travel, including a wallaby. Her parents stayed together, but each had lovers who were part of the family and lived in from time to time. During WWII, she and her sister were sent to New York, where they got to experience life as guests of the Vanderbilts. Her mother was active in war support while her father was a key figure in naval operations. Pamela had to step up to responsibility when her father took the key posting as the last viceroy of India and she shares her experiences with Gandhi and Nehru and the trauma and chaos of the transition to home rule. The book closes with her return to England and her role in support of Princess Elizabeth as a lady-in-waiting during her Commonwealth tour which ended abruptly due to the death of the king, instigating their return to England with Elizabeth becoming queen.

Sharon Huether says

Lady Pamela, wrote about what she witnessed and participated in. She was realated to all the European Royalty. It was a very interest read; not like something a historian would write. It was so personal.

Read Ng says

This was a GoodReads giveaway.

Break out you tea set and sit down to a wonderful time with a true and proper English Lady. A wonderful story. This story is written just like you are sitting across the table from Lady Pamela Hicks as she tells you the tale. So much rich history. I wish I had a sample recording of her voice, since it is so easy to imagine I was sitting directly across from Lady Pamela. I'm sure she is a great conversationalist. There are so many details I would have loved for her to expand upon.

I was so lucky to win this Uncorrected Proof. It came across at such a personal level. The only regrets are that the Uncorrected Proof lacks the photos in finished book and that the story ended so soon.

UPDATE

Finalially got around to obtaining a published copy with photos. Some great photos, just not enough. I am still longing for a recorded sample of Lady Pamela's voice. That would have been the perfect topping.

Go get this book and have a GoodReads.

Frances Johnson says

This is an entertaining book about and by the younger daughter of Lord Louis Mountbatten and his beautiful and talented wife Edwina. I read the e-book version. She had an interesting if not somewhat lonely childhood but knew that she was greatly loved by her very busy, globe trotting parents. She lived in India during the time that her father was the last viceroy and supervised the process where India and Pakistan gained their independence. She was a bridesmaid in Princess Elizabeth's (later Queen Elizabeth II) wedding and her daughter India was a bridesmaid in Princess Diana and Prince Charles' wedding. Her granddaughter was a bridesmaid in Prince William and Kate's wedding. If you enjoy history and the British royals you will enjoy this.

Linda says

A wonderful companion read for the show "The Crown". Lady Pamela Hicks is a cousin of Prince Philip and a Mountbatten. The book gives an account of her younger life before and during WWII and then life in India while her father brokered the independence of India from Great Britain. Then it moves into her being a lady-in-waiting twice to Queen Elizabeth as well as one of her bridesmaids. Several scenes from the tv series are described by Lady Pamela as a first hand witness. The book predates the show and gives a less stern and serious impression of Elizabeth. Very interesting. Gave me a brief glimpse into India and Pakistan politics.

Ghost of the Library says

Having always had a love for History, especially British, it was with some curiosity that i approached this one - being not an expert, but neither a stranger, in what concerns the Mountbatten family and its role in 20th century England.

Well i can tell you this was most certainly worth my time - its a fascinating window to a time not yet out of living memory, but that slowly starts to fade and will in a generation's time be relegated to history books and documentaries.

Lady Pamela Hicks (nee Mountbatten) was a front row spectator to some world changing events in the past 100 years - most notably the independence of India - and here we get a chance to share her front row seat as she shares impressions, memories and opinions about some of the places she visited and the people she met. Younger daughter to the famous (infamous/notorious) Lord Mountbatten, last viceroy of India, Pamela was born into the british aristocracy at the start of the 20th century and would, thanks to her parents career, be privy to events as important as India's independence or the ascension of Queen Elizabeth II to the throne upon the death of her father, while she was touring Africa (Pamela was a lady in waiting to her for that trip). Naturally, as one would only expect and quite rightly, the quintessential british spirit and sense of duty shines through these pages, making this a fascinating, even if at times slightly confounding read.....she is very direct, bluntly so but also with an underlying sense of self deprecating irony.

Highly recommended for any lovers of England, Downton Abbey and the royal family that might be on goodreads!

Have fun

Happy readings!

Ani says

I should start off this review by stating that I won this book over at www.goodreads.com. I am not normally a person who wins contests, so this was quite exciting for me. Not to mention I was notified that I had won on my birthday! However, the fact that I won this book in no way influenced my opinion on it.

This book, *Daughter of Empire: My Life as a Mountbatten* is the autobiography of Lady Pamela Hicks. She is the second daughter of the famous Lord Louis Mountbatten. I knew a little bit about her father because he is one of my grandfather's favorite historical figures, but I knew next to nothing about his daughters. However, I am fascinated by their family because they are so closely related to the British monarchy, and because of Queen Victoria, many other royal families as well. The book begins with her birth in Barcelona and concludes with her returning from her honeymoon. In between, she experiences the Second World War, the transition of power in India, and the Commonwealth Tour.

I thoroughly enjoyed the style in which this book was written. Instead of being dry, like most biographical/autobiographical works, it had the flow of natural conversation. I felt as if Lady Pamela was telling me her story one-on-one. This made the book a quick, but entertaining read.

I immediately became engrossed in her story because her life is so different from my own. Her parents were famous, she got to travel all over the world, and she also got to be a part of many historical events. I must admit, I was a little jealous of her! However, I never felt as if she was bragging. I got the feel that she was simply trying to tell her story.

Overall, I am rating this book at 4 stars because of the way it was written. I loved hearing Lady Pamela's story and how she got to experience so many amazing things! Thank you to the publisher, Simon & Schuster for sending me this book!

Lynn Hart says

Not quite as gossipy as I'd hoped, but an interesting and quick read. recommended for anyone who enjoys royal biography or early 20th century aristocrat/manor house-type stories. I wish she would write the "next volume," there is a lot of story left to tell from her later life.

Armelle says

I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

This is a fast, easy read describing the early life of Pamela Mountbatten.

Pamela Mountbatten had an interesting childhood - on many levels. With multiple ties to the British royal family - and many other European royal families - and a war-hero father, she led an incredibly privileged life, and had an insider's view of events most of us only read about in history books.

Her family was frankly unconventional. While she seems to have been close to her father, her mother was "brittle" and difficult. Both parents spent long periods of time away from the family, pursuing both their careers/duty, and their love affairs.

Many reviewers have remarked on her detachment. In my opinion, it's her detachment when discussing her parents' marriage that strikes the oddest note.

I found the book both oddly boring, and oddly fascinating.

Debbie Craft says

Thought it would be an interesting glimpse inside the privileged life of the upper class during wartime in Europe. It was hardly interesting. As previously mentioned, the words sounded like Ms Hicks recorded them and they were written down. She just casually goes through her many trips, her parents many affairs, her relationships with these new "friends" of both mummy and daddy. Her menagerie of animals, people, servants, cooks, teachers, schools and foreign friends were intermingled throughout the chapters while reminiscing about the war years away in New York City staying with the Vanderbilt family. I guess I was looking for substance and I never found any.

Pearl says

In this memoir Pamela Hicks, or if I am to be proper, Lady Pamela Hicks, recounts the first thirty years of a life of extraordinary privilege. Her father, Lord Louis Mountbatten, was much lauded, closely related to the British royal family, given and succeeded at a variety of important posts, had an enormous capacity for forging friendships, and was so dashing that the young Grace Kelly kept a picture of him before she fell for a someone higher than a lord. Her mother, Edwina Ashley, was a very wealthy heiress, highly unconventional, globe-trotting, hedonistic, beautiful and stylish, and recognized and admired in high society. Such was the life Pammy, as she was called, was born into.

Pamela, the second of the Mountbatten's two daughters, was born in Barcelona in 1929 and delivered by a doctor sent by King Alfonso XIII of Spain, who was selected to be one of her godfathers. During WW II, while her father commanded a naval fleet and her mother worked in the war effort, Pamela and her sister Patricia were sent to the United States to live with Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt who, according to Pammy, loved to attach herself to British royalty and who had once selected Louis Mountbatten as a fine catch for her daughter. Although Mrs. Vanderbilt is described as being very kind to Pamela and her sister, Pamela describes her as imperious, pretentious, and a snob; she did not enjoy her stay in America.

The book is filled with stories of famous people and events, not because Hicks is name-dropping but because those are the people with whom she grew up and the events through whose times she lived and got to see up close and personally. She was in Kenya, as a lady-in-waiting, for the then Princess Elizabeth when the news came that her father, King George VI, had died. She was a bridesmaid at Princess Elizabeth's wedding and a lady-in waiting at the Queen's coronation. She reports on how calm and controlled the Queen remained amidst mix-ups and how she could barely hold up her head with the heavy crown on top of it (it weighed 7 pounds). She recounts, at some length, two Commonwealth tours. You learn that they are very arduous, very meticulously planned, and very exhausting. She also gives Prince Phillip high marks for his ability to help

everyone, including the Queen, to relax and have some fun. Phillip comes across much better in Hicks' account than he does in many, if not most, accounts. Of course, he's also Pamela first cousin.

Perhaps the most interesting person in her book is her grandmother, Queen Victoria's granddaughter and sister to the last Czarina of Russia, and also Prince Phillip's grandmother, among other famous relations. Her name was also Victoria. She was outspoken, brilliant, adventurous, an expert in naval law, a voracious reader, and an odd mix of egalitarianism and insistence on rank. She loved to argue with everyone and usually bested everyone. Pamela credits her with the total lack of prejudice the family had toward others and which stood them in good stead in India and other foreign places where her father served.

One of the most interesting accounts is of the Mountbatten's time in India where her father presided as the last Viceroy of India. From her descriptions and the contacts they kept, it is clear that the entire family fell in love with India and was reluctant to leave. At least mother and daughters were. Father Louis had a most daunting task in handing over the "jewel in the crown." Hers is not a history book but the memories of an eighteen year old girl at this momentous time in the history of India. Still there are interesting details and insights from a first person observer. Historians may disagree about whether breaking up India and making of a separate country for the Muslims in Pakistan was inevitable or forced on the viceroy, forced by a promise made previously by former Prime Minister Churchill. Or was it simply the correct action to take? As Pamela describes the situation, it did not seem possible that a united India could be achieved; therefore the partition had to be made and the transfer of power from Britain to the separate states had to be made quickly because the country was in turmoil and the new leaders, not the British, needed to make the decisions. There is a sense of the anguish her father felt, the admirable role that Gandhi played in trying to keep peace, the riots and the suffering notwithstanding, and most of all the family's deep and abiding friendship with Jawaharlal Nehru. He comes off very well in this book. He's described as kind, intelligent, warm, charming, and idealistic. And also impeccably dressed. He and Pamela seem to have established a lasting friendship; she received letters and gifts from him long after the family had left India.

Of course the special bond was between Nehru and Pamela's mother, Edwina. There has been much speculation that Nehru and Edwina had an affair. Pamela is sure they didn't. She certainly was aware of their deep friendship when the family was in India. Rumors about an affair between her mother and Nehru persisted long after the family left India. When her mother died and she was going through her mother's things, she read the letters her mother had received from Nehru over the years. Now, as an adult, she wondered if she would still feel that the friendship between her mother and Nehru was not physical. She did. She concludes they were soul mates with a profound connection to each other. Not lovers.

Her memories and connections to Mr. Jinnah, the head of the Muslim League, are not as fond. Even her father, with his formidable charm, could not win him over. She describes him as extremely sophisticated, a perfect English speaker, and immovable. Unknown to almost everyone at that time, Jinnah was ill. When he died a few years later, Pamela's father speculates that may have been one reason Jinnah was so unyielding. He wanted to hand the Muslims a country of their own. The family was also in India when Gandhi was assassinated and attended his funeral.

If Edwina and Nehru did not have an affair that did not mean Edwina did not have many others. Indeed the number and confusion of suitors coming and going make the Mountbatten household appear like a Noel Coward play. And maybe Noel Coward fashioned one or more of his plays on Edwina – they were friends after all. Only two of her affairs appear to have been serious and those men were incorporated into the Mountbatten household as was Louis Mountbatten's one serious affair, a French woman who also became a good family friend and on whom the novella and musical "Gigi" is based. It was a most unconventional household but seemed to work. Pamela clearly loved her father but, perhaps, she admired her mother more

than she loved her. Her mother could never stay home, even when or especially when her children were very young. But during WW II and after, she seems to have found a vocation. Pamela writes of her mother's enormous capacity for work, for organizing, for getting things done and how she threw herself unstintingly into charity work all over the world in the direst situations.

In this book, Hicks takes us up to her 30th year, the year of her marriage. There are many details in her book that interested me and I felt that I liked her. Despite her privileged upbringing, she never seems snobbish, clearly has a sense of humor, and seems to have inherited her father's capacity for making friends. Her writing style is chatty; yet the tone is somehow flat and everything is too neat and tidy. It's interesting but not emotionally involving. Maybe that's just her upbringing. She does give you some of the tidbits you like to read in gossip columns about the royal family. For example:

- Princess Elisabeth liked having Pamela around so she'd have someone to giggle with.
 - She depicts Elizabeth and Phillip's leaving their children in order to carry out their royal duties as being much more difficult for them than we are usually led to believe.
 - In Ceylon/Sri Lanka, she writes about how unbearably hot it was (torture), especially for Princess Elizabeth who had to wear heavy robes to open Parliament and how she was burnt, even through all her stiff petticoats.
 - She describes an incident that nearly brought an end to a church service. At the close of a Sunday service aboard the Britannia, the priest offers a prayer for the Royal Family naming all except Princess Anne. When he came to the end, Anne's small but furious voice was heard, "He hasn't prayed for me, Mummy."
 - The Mountbattens always had a menagerie of all sorts, mostly brought back to England from some foreign port – dogs, lions, wallabies, an anteater, and always ponies and horses. In fact, I often couldn't figure out if Pamela was talking about one of her beloved pets or a person. They brought a mongoose, whom they named Neola, back to England from India. He seemed to have the run of their house, regardless of who were the guests. On one visit by Princess Elizabeth, she told Pamela, "Pammy, I am quite fond of Neola and I don't mind him coming into my bedroom. I don't even mind him opening my box of chocolates. But must he take a bite out of every single one of them?"
-

Orsolya says

Won this on Goodreads Giveaways. Unedited Copy

Lady Pamela Hicks may not be a name everyone is familiar with. However, the people she been affiliated with (Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip, the Vanderbilts, Winston Churchill, Douglas Fairbanks, Gandhi); are certainly recognizable to all. Hicks attempts to reveal her life story to the memoir-loving masses in "Daughter of Empire: My Life as a Mountbatten".

"Daughter of Empire" immediately jumps into the lives of Hicks's parents (Lord Louis and Edwinda Mountbatten) foregoing a "proper" introduction to Pamela herself, causing a filter between the reader and a lack of connection. This absence of cling dribbles into the storytelling which is merely a recap of events i.e.: this happened, then this, and then that. Hicks lacks an emotional insight into her psyche and therefore is more of a narrator to her own life than a key player. As a result, "Daughter of Empire" is one dimensional and less-than-captivating.

Speaking of dimensions, "Daughter of Empire" can be described with one word: shallow. Immediately with the first page and continuing onwards is constant namedropping. Hicks's privileged life is close to sickening and although she doesn't necessarily seem elitist about it; she has a void of depth and intimacy. It is fine (and

even entertaining) that she led an aristocratic and high-society life but she could have at least shared personal feelings and life lessons regarding the people and events. Instead, the memoir follows the pattern of an issue of “Entertainment Weekly” following the latest celebrity.

The writing in terms of sentence structure and grammar is well-written and flows with ease and a fast pace. The problem is with the content and empty stories. Despite all the namedropping, Hicks makes her life seem boring without any substantial thoughts in that pretty little head of hers. One major frustrating point? Instead of reflecting on her temporary relocation to America during World War II (due to Jewish blood); Hicks instead emphasizes how the Vanderbilts didn’t approve of her clothing during this time. *REALLY?!*

Oftentimes, Hicks is choppy and doesn’t answer questions in chronology (for example: someone is missing and then suddenly that person reappears with no explanation or acknowledgement). “Daughter of Empire” lacks a cohesive sense throughout the memoir both in terms of writing style and content (perhaps indicative of a ghostwriter?) and refuses to fully open up Hicks’s character or life. “Daughter of Empire” reads like a school report versus a personal account. Not to mention, a report concerning the lives of her parents instead of that of her own.

Also, what is the reasoning behind the constant use of the term ‘partying’? The tone/voice does not sound like that of a senior citizen in her 80s looking back at her life. Another complaint: I found Hicks’s habit of including foreign language phrases without translations to be distracting and too assuming that the average reader will have any clue what they mean.

On a positive note, Hicks occasionally includes snippets of diaries or personal letters which adds a certain pizzazz to “Daughter of Empire”. The memoir also improves slightly when Hicks describes her time/work in India during the country’s independence, revealing the political climate and some of her emotions. This still lacks the desired depth but is better than the former achieved.

The ending of “Daughter of Empire” is rather weak and not memorable of Hicks in any way (and again focuses more on parents). Plus, Hicks concludes her tale before she is in her 30s and states that “not much occurred” after that time making the title of her memoir including the word “life” misleading.

The final copy of “Daughter of Empire” will include 24 black and white photos throughout which my copy did not contain.

Overall, “Daughter of Empire” is a shallow and weak report of various events in the life of Pamela Hicks void of emotion and true insight. One will never feel like Hicks reveals her true self nor tells her life story in a compelling way. “Daughter of Empire” is not worth reading, as one can find the same recap of events in a Google search.

Kathleen Sams says

My favorite way to learn about history is through the reading of biographies and autobiographies. I enjoyed Lady Pamela Hicks's tale of her childhood and was bemused by her mother, who left her children with a nanny in a hotel near Budapest while she traveled the world with her lover - during the Abyssinian crisis. The mother at one point lost the piece of paper on which she had written the hotel's name and had to retrace her steps through Europe to find her children. Lady Hicks's father also had a lover with whom he traveled.

Despite this unusual arrangement, the mother and father seemed to love each other and stayed married. Lady Hicks served as Queen Elizabeth's lady-in-waiting and told stories of the young monarch - who is married to Hicks's cousin, Prince Philip - as they conducted a royal tour for several months - leaving young Prince Charles and Princess Anne behind in England. To escape the dangers of World War II, an eleven-year-old Lady Hicks stayed in New York with Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, whose friends thought the young aristocrat was very badly dressed. I enjoyed Lady Hicks's down-to-earth manner as she told stories of her unusual and privileged life. I had hoped to learn about her marriage to the celebrated designer David Hicks. Perhaps that is a story for another book.

Orinoco Womble (tidy bag and all) says

(I had to repost this review as I mistakenly filed it under the Kindle edition and couldn't change it.) This was a good read. For someone with no political leanings to speak of, born and raised in the US, it was interesting to read about someone who is related to a large percentage of European royalty (not hard, they're all interrelated anyway) and has a couple of saints in her pedigree. Her take on "normal family life" growing up was curious...she apparently felt it was fine that Mummy and Daddy both had their steady lovers, because "at least they stayed together." Interesting definition of "staying together" when Mummy is away for months at a time, travelling around China with her boy-toy (who rejoices in the nickname "Bunny"okaaaay....) or whatever, and Daddy is off to France with his bit of fluff. But the girls both adore their parents' respective lovers, so it's all in the family, I guess. (Don't expect a working-class gel to understand the mores of the upper crust. It's different, down here among the grass-roots. It sure is.)

I did get a bit weary of the hero-worship of Nehru and particularly so of Prince Phillip's "hilarious" antics. But then from what I saw and heard of the Beeb before it vanished from the airwaves where I live, I wasn't alone on that one. Perhaps it was HTBT.

Strangely enough the book comes to a rather abrupt end at the end of the Queen's tour of Australia and The East. There is some mention of Lady Pamela's later-to-be husband, but nothing of her adult life, though she mentions a couple of adult children in passing, as if they weren't important characters in her life. Don't know if this is down to British upperclass reserve about "personal things" or if there's another volume of memoirs out there somewhere. Or perhaps like her own parents, she was too busy with her own life to really notice.
