

The two lives of Mary, Lady von Haast

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Mary, Lady von Haast (1844–1913) was the wife of Sir Julius von Haast, the founder of Canterbury Museum and Canterbury's first Provincial Geologist. Julius was an energetic man who achieved a great deal, but we know little about his wife Mary, other than that she was married to Julius. Mary Dobson was 19 years old when she married Julius, and the couple were together for 24 years before Haast's sudden death in 1887. Mary was only 43 years old when she became a widow and by the time of her death in 1913 had spent two thirds of her life *not* married to Julius von Haast.

Mary was unwell during the early years of her marriage and had at least three miscarriages. After suffering from problems with her mental health after Haast's death, Mary left New Zealand in 1896 and never returned. In Europe Mary travelled extensively and started a new life. Mary's eldest son, Heinrich wrote that his mother acted as a companion to a young countess in Europe to supplement her small income but according to probate documents Mary was quite wealthy. Although Mary had a good relationship with her eldest son Heinrich, she was estranged from her second son George and didn't see two of her other children for 17 years.

Keywords: family relationships, money, von Haast, widows, women's health

Introduction

When Mary, Lady von Haast (1844–1913) died in Rome after an absence from New Zealand of 17 years, the news of her death was reported throughout the country. She was remembered as the daughter of a Canterbury pilgrim, as the widow of geologist and Canterbury Museum founder Julius von Haast and as “a woman of strong character and wide culture” (*Star*, 30 July 1913: 5).

Despite this, Mary, a relatively well-known and accomplished woman, has remained an enigma for many years. Information about her is sparse and sometimes contradictory. Julius's son, Heinrich, mentions his mother less than 50 times in his biography *The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast* which runs to more than 1,000 pages. He states that after his father's death, Mary was a companion to a young Polish countess “to supplement her small income” (von Haast, HF. 1948: 460) yet when Mary died her estate was considerable.¹

Seeking answers to the mysteries of Mary's life I began a research project, and my initial findings were presented in a recorded public presentation in 2022.² At this stage I had not yet found where Mary's wealth had come from.

More recently Karen Manton wrote a biographical essay about Mary's early life and her widowhood to accompany Sascha Nolden's transcription and translation of letters written by Mary von Haast between 1886 and 1887 (Nolden & Manton, 2024). This provided new information about aspects of Mary's life, accomplishments and personality but questions remained about her finances and family relationships.

This article uses letters found in Canterbury Museum's manuscript collection, information from published letters, and newspapers to provide additional details

about Mary's life, her source of income and her relationships with her children. It also presents details of the bust of Mary von Haast made by sculptor Elizaveta Petrovna Cheremisinova.

Marriage to Julius

Mary Dobson was born in Islington, London in January 1844 and was the eldest daughter of engineer Edward Dobson and his wife Mary Ann Lough. Mary arrived at Lyttelton with her mother, two sisters and a brother in 1851, just before she turned seven.³ The Dobson family lived at Sumner (Fig. 1) where the Dobson children learned to be “hardy and self-reliant” (von Haast, HF. 1948: 320).

Edward Dobson worked with Julius Haast on the Lyttelton Tunnel and no doubt this is how Julius and Mary met. They both loved music, Mary was a good pianist, and even though Haast was more than twice Mary's age (she was 18 years old, and he was 40), the couple were engaged by the end of 1862 (Ferdinand von Hochstetter to Julius von Haast, 16 February 1863, Nolden 2013: 89). Karen Manton has pointed out that it is possible that Mary married Julius against her father's wishes and gives evidence of Edward Dobson's resentment towards his daughter (Nolden & Manton, 2024: 15). Edward Dobson was described as intolerant of the failings of others, a quality that Mary appears to show in later life.

After their marriage in June 1863 at St Mary's Church in Heathcote Valley, the couple initially lived at Sumner in the Dobson's house, but 6 months after their marriage they were living in their own home, which they named Glückauf (good luck) with Mary saying that “we are, if possible, still happier than we were then [at Sumner]” (von Haast, HF. 1948: 325). Their first child, Heinrich



Figure 1. The Dobson family home at Sumner in 1867. Photograph by Alfred Charles Barker. Canterbury Museum, 1957.13.43

Ferdinand Haast (Fig. 2), was born on 11 May 1864 and Haast reported that Mary was very happy and proud of her baby (von Haast, HF. 1948: 329). Unfortunately, Mary had a miscarriage in January 1865 and another five months later.⁴ In September 1865 Mary was pregnant again and, as she was not feeling well and Julius was away, she went to live with her parents at Sumner (Haast to Hooker, 15 December 1865, Nolden et al, 2013: 97).

A son was born prematurely in February 1866 and died a few hours later leaving Mary weak and grief stricken (Haast to Hector, 23 February 1866, Nolden et al, 2012: 96). Four months later Mary's brother George disappeared while he was working as a surveyor on the West Coast. George had been murdered by the Burgess Kelly Gang on 28 May 1866 and his body was not found until 6 July (*Grey River Argus*, 7 July 1866: 2).

Around the time of her brother's disappearance Mary became pregnant and was again unwell (Haast to Hector, 15 January 1867, Nolden et al 2012: 111). A son was born in February 1867 and named George Augustus to remember her beloved brother. James Leopold (Leo) was born 16 months later and then, after a gap of nearly two and half years, a daughter Eva Veronica was born. The couple's last child Julius Hermann (Hermann) was born in December 1873.⁵ Three months after Hermann's birth Mary was seriously ill with "low fever" or post-partum fever (Haast to Hooker, 3 June 1874, Nolden et al, 2013:

172). The symptoms of this include abdominal pain, fever and general weakness and would now be treated with antibiotics but in the 1870s it was difficult to treat and could be very serious.

In October 1874, Mary went to Melbourne where she was "under careful medical treatment" (Haast to Hooker, 9 January 1875, Nolden, Nathan et al, 2013: 176). Heinrich later wrote that his mother had a "severe nervous breakdown" (von Haast, HF. 1948: 735) but his father described it as a womb inflammation which was probably of long standing as she was "now better than she was for years" (Haast to Hooker, 6 May 1875, Nolden, Nathan et al, 2013: 179). Womb inflammations can be caused by sexually transmitted infections (such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea), and this may be why Haast wrote that Mary "was suffering from a disease common to married ladies" (Haast to Hooker, 9 January 1875, Nolden, Nathan et al, 2013: 176).

After 7 months of treatment Mary was described as completely recovered and in April returned to Christchurch where she was reunited with her children (Haast to Hooker, 6 May 1875, Nolden, Nathan et al, 2013: 179). Mary did not return to Glöckauf, which had been sold not long after Hermann's birth, and the family moved several times before renting Latimer House near the town centre. Heinrich remembered the rambling two story building as perfect for the family with lawns,



Figure 2. Mary Haast with her first child, Heinrich Ferdinand, 1864. Photographer unknown. Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-2160

gardens and plenty of rooms. A large drawing room had a Bechstein grand piano while the dining room featured a Lipp upright piano which Mary dragged into the drawing room if she wanted to play duets with her friend Julia Wilding or her son Heinrich. The family had two servants which meant that Mary (Fig. 3) could practice her music in the morning and in the afternoon visit or entertain friends (von Haast, HF. 1948: 843). Music was Mary's passion, but she also studied languages and could speak French and Germany fluently and later learned Italian (*Dominion*, 30 July 1913: 4).

Mary's First Return to Europe

In May 1885, Haast's appointment as Commissioner in charge of Exhibits at the Colinderies Exhibition in London was announced and plans began for Julius and Mary to go to Europe for a temporary stay. George, who had shown talent for painting and drawing, was to accompany his parents so that he could study at Düsseldorf with Adolf Schill, an architect and artist. Eva who was 15 years old would be sent to a boarding school at Bonn close to Haast's widowed sister Veronica Rossum (von Haast, HF. 1948: 916). The three brothers remaining in Christchurch went to live with Mary's parents.⁶ The family's departure from Latimer House would be the last time they were all together.

While Haast was busy in London with the Exhibition, Mary spent some of the time travelling in Europe. It is evident from Mary's letters to Julius when they were apart



Figure 3. Mary von Haast, c. 1880. Photograph by Peter Schourup. Canterbury Museum, 1982.12.18

that her love for him had in no way diminished during their marriage. Mary counts the days till she will see Julius again and closes her letters with "Goodbye my dear husband, Ever your loving wife, Mary" (Nolden 2013, p. 82, 85, 91). After the Exhibition Julius and Mary were in Europe visiting friends and museum colleagues. In Vienna they made the acquaintance of Georgiana, the widow of Julius's great friend Ferdinand von Hochstetter. Mary and Georgiana quickly developed a warm friendship, one that would be very important to Mary in the years to come. Finally, on the 18 July 1887, after 16 months away, Mary, Julius, and their daughter Eva arrived back in New Zealand (*Lyttelton Times*, 18 July 1887: 5). Without a home to go to, they lodged at St Elmo House on Worcester Street, opposite Mary's parent's house, where their sons were living (*Star*, 16 August 1887: 2).

Although not a well man, having exhausted himself in Europe, Julius went straight back to work at Canterbury Museum. He died of heart failure during the night of 16 August, just a month after arriving home. Mary was devastated to lose the kind and jovial husband that she was still in love with. Aside from the emotional pain, the family was said to be left financially distressed as well. Although Julius left his estate, valued at £2,858, to his "dear wife" most of the value was in land at Hororata (von Haast, HF. 1948: 324) and there was little cash available.⁷ Mary made the decision to sell "some very superior household furniture and effects" to generate some immediate income (*Lyttelton Times*, 26 October 1887: 8).

On 8 September a meeting of Christchurch residents who wished to create a memorial to Julius, resolved to establish a scholarship or prize for science at the University of New Zealand. It was proposed that initially the interest would be given to Mary, who had been left “very slenderly provided for”, to supplement what she was able to earn teaching music (*Evening Star*, 8 October 1887: 2). Subsequently Julius was awarded a posthumous Honorarium by the New Zealand Government of £200 which no doubt eased Mary’s situation.⁸

Four months after Julius’s death Mary was described as not well enough to teach and went to stay with her brother Robert in Napier (*Lyttelton Times*, 29 December 1887: 4). She returned in February 1888 but then appears to have been in seclusion, perhaps living quietly with her sister Caroline Todhunter in Merivale or even at a nursing home (*Star* 28 February 1888: 3). Heinrich was already working for a law firm, but Leo (19) and Hermann (15) remained in Napier with their uncle for two years or more.⁹ Hermann recalls his Aunt Caroline Todhunter (Fig. 4), his mother’s sister, coming to visit but doesn’t mention his mother.¹⁰ It is not known where Eva was, perhaps with her grandparents.

Mary was still unwell in 1890 when Julius’s friend William Young wrote to mutual friend William Warner “I was very concerned to read what you mentioned of poor Lady Haast, the last I should have thought to suffer from mental

aberration. I hope she has returned to her right mind”.¹¹ By mid-1895 Mary had recovered sufficiently to organise the sale of most of her property including high quality china, cutlery, carpets, curtains, Māori weaving, paintings by John Gully and Haast’s library (*Lyttelton Times*, 5 July 1895: 8, 6 July 1895: 8). Mary had evidently decided to quit New Zealand, perhaps partly to escape gossip about her mental health. On 25 November 1895 she wrote from Comberton at Upper Riccarton, the home of Sibella Wilson, the widow of Archdeacon James Wilson, requesting a passport as she intended to travel in Europe.¹²

Mary’s Return to Europe as Mary, Lady von Haast

For many years there has been some mystery about why Mary, who became Mary, Lady von Haast after Julius received a knighthood in 1886 (Nolden & Manton, 2024: 67), went to Vienna and how she could have afforded to go. The mystery has been solved with the discovery of a letter written by Anne Todhunter (1804–1899) of Campions, England, the mother-in-law of Mary’s sister Caroline. In the undated letter Anne writes “I am sorry to hear so poor an account of Mary Von [sic] Haast perhaps the necessities for exertion may be good for her but I suppose the addition to her means caused by the death of the sister of her husband will relieve her of so much anxiety about money”.¹³



Figure 4. Caroline Todhunter nee Dobson (1845–1932). Photograph by Hemus & Hanna. Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-0871



Figure 5. Julius von Haast’s sister Veronica Rossum (1820–1887). Photographer unknown. Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-2126



Figure 6. Postcard sent by Mary von Haast to Miss Cora Wilding. The text reads “I send you greetings from Vienna where I am currently staying a short time on my way to England. M.v.H. 8.11.1901”. Canterbury Museum, ARC1989.124, folder 199, item 143

Veronica Rossum (Fig. 5), Julius’s much older sister, whom the family had stayed with in Bonn in 1886, had only survived her brother by six weeks, dying in Bonn in September 1887. It hasn’t proved possible to locate her will, but as Veronica had no surviving children, it is probable that she had left her estate to her only brother, or if she had heard of his death, altered her will to make Mary the beneficiary and possibly also her niece Eva. Either way Mary’s finances were significantly improved.

In late January 1896, Mary sailed to Melbourne and left there for Bremen on the steamship *Oldenburg* (*The Australian Star*, 25 January 1896: 4). When Mary left New Zealand, she appears to have started her life anew. Letters from this period of Mary’s life have not been located but some of her travels around Europe were reported in New Zealand newspapers.

From her base in Vienna, Austria, where her friend Georgiana von Hochstetter lived, Mary travelled widely, including to Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Russia, Switzerland and Germany. Six of the postcards that Mary sent to Eva are held by the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington and are described in Nolden & Manton (2024). Canterbury Museum has one that Mary sent to Cora Wilding from Vienna in 1901 (Fig. 6). A Mr Rhodes of Christchurch was looking after Mary’s financial affairs in New Zealand and two of Mary’s letters to him are at Canterbury Museum. In July 1903 Mary wrote thanking Rhodes for sending a letter from the Bank of Australia and for forwarding £10 to her daughter.¹⁴ Three weeks later she wrote that she was in “a rather out of the way part of

Russia, not very far from Moscow, where I am spending the summer with some friends”¹⁵

While in Europe Mary organised for a suitable plinth to be made for the bust of her husband which was on display at Canterbury Museum. The plinth was designed by Professor Albert Küppers of Bonn, who had made the bust itself, and was produced by James Tait in Christchurch (*Star*, 28 June 1899: 3). Mary also sat for (and presumably commissioned) a bust made by sculptor Elizaveta Petrovna Cheremisinova (also known as Elisabeth Tcheremissinof, 1877–1963).¹⁶ The bust was titled “Portrait de Lady Mary van [sic] Haast” (Fig. 7) and was first exhibited at the Paris Salon, France, in 1909.¹⁷ Later that year Heinrich, who had a successful law practice in Wellington, had the bust at his house where it was much admired by his wife’s visitors (*Evening Post*, 22 October 1909: 9). In 1911 the bust was included in an exhibition at the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts in Wellington where it was described as “the most beautiful thing in the room” (*Manawatu Standard*, 20 October 1911:2). Heinrich von Haast presented the bust to Canterbury Museum in 1938.¹⁸ The donation was not entered into the accession register at the time, but the bust was rediscovered during a search of Canterbury Museum’s collection in 2023. Made from Carrara marble, the bust depicts Mary as a very determined and somewhat severe woman.

When Mary’s great friend, Georgiana von Hochstetter died in Vienna in May 1905, Mary was with her (*Otago Daily Times*, 21 June 1905: 2). This was probably a momentous change in Mary’s life as it appears that Georgiana had been



Figure 7. *Portrait de Lady Mary van [sic] Haast* by Elizaveta Petrovna Cheremisinova. Canterbury Museum, UD2023.1.266

her anchor. Mary's children were spread across the globe and her connections to them were somewhat tenuous. Mary's life was in Europe, and she doesn't appear to have considered returning to New Zealand. Eight months after Georgiana's death Mary wrote to her friend Julia Wilding that:

I am always busy with my books & music & enjoy my life. I have got so accustomed to being alone that I really like it, & I have so many interests¹⁹

Mary and Her Five Children

Mary's relationship with her children is worth exploring. She evidently loved children and, after her two miscarriages in 1865, wrote to her aunt saying how disappointed she was, and that she agreed with the saying "the more the merrier".²⁰ Having suffered a long period of ill health during her childbearing years and having been separated from all her children for 7 months when they were young, Mary may have been a good mother rather than an affectionate one. Mary was ill for about 16 months after Hermann's birth and out of the country for seven of those and the pair don't appear to have formed a bond. In his recollections of his childhood, Hermann, said that he felt closer to his father, though he was "fond" of his mother.²¹

It was important to Mary that her children were successful. Her letters to her younger children contain encouragement to continue practising their music and to improve their writing. In May 1886, Mary wrote to Hermann, "I wish dear Hermann that you would try and write a little better ... I saw a letter from little Nan the other day and her writing is really a great deal better than yours although she is so much younger" (Mary von Haast to Hermann, 17 May 1886, Nolden & Manton, 2024: 60). When Mary wrote to Heinrich to advise him that Julius had been given a knighthood she followed this with more encouragement for her sons, "I hope that this new distinction that your father has gained will be an additional incentive to all of you to keep up the good name he had made for you and to follow in his footsteps" (Mary von Haast to Heinrich, 27 June 1886, Nolden & Manton, 2024: 68). Mary would sign the letters to her children "Always your loving mother, Mary von Haast" (ibid).

In 1891, while his mother was in seclusion after Julius's death, Heinrich made his first trip to England. When he arrived, George was still studying in Germany but later that year the brothers were both staying at Illfracombe in Devon and this may have been when George moved to England (*The Colonies and India*, 20 June 1891, p. 17; *The Illfracombe Chronicle*, 17 October 1891, p. 6). Heinrich was in England again for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee and decided to stay for a year or two (*Lyttelton Times*, 1 October 1897: 3). In February 1898 Mary travelled from Austria to London to see her sons and was described by her friends as "looking younger than ever" (*Lyttelton Times*, 21 March 1898: 3).

By the time of Mary's visit George was already engaged to Maud Elizabeth Young of Bournemouth who was

described as "both charming and clever" (*Evening Star*, 28 February 1898: 1). Born in Scotland, Maud was the daughter of Elizabeth Mozzi and Dr Henry Young, who owned a large cattle ranch in Uruguay (*Evening Star*, 28 February 1898: 1; *MN Southern Daily Echo* (England), 9 November 1898: 4). Heinrich was George's best man, but Mary is not mentioned as attending the wedding at St Michael's Church, Bournemouth on 8 November 1898 (*Evening Star*, 24 December 1898: 1 supp).

Mary visited England again for several months during the summer of 1900, initially staying with Heinrich and his wife Helen (whom he had married in England in 1899) and then visiting old friends Nicholas and Caroline Chevalier and ex-Canterbury residents such as Canon and Mrs Stack, J D Enys, and Walter and Alicia Kennaway (*Evening Star*, 31 August 1900: 6, 27 October 1900: 2; *Lyttelton Times*, 28 September 1900: 3). No mention is made of a visit by Mary to see her first grandchild, George and Maud's son Julius, who was born at Bournemouth on 25 June 1900. In 1902 she was noted as visiting London but only a visit to see Heinrich was commented on (*Auckland Star*, 11 January 1902: 6).

It appears that Mary and her son George had become estranged. George who had met his half-brother Mathias Robert (Julius's son from his first marriage) while studying in Germany was left a significant amount of money by Mathias who died in May 1895 (Eddy, 2025, 13). Descendants recall that Mary and George fell out because George wouldn't share the money he received from his half-brother with his mother.²² It is not known if Mary ever met her only grandson, but it is evident from her writing that the estrangement was complete. When Mary wrote to her friend Julia Wilding in 1906 in response to the death of Julia's daughter she wrote "Believe me, dearest Mrs Wilding, there are separations & estrangements in life which are far more cruel and bitter than those caused by death". She also stated that, despite her son and grandson living there, that she would "not be coming to England now that Heinrich is not there".²³

Apart from Heinrich, Mary saw little of her children. Her son Leo (1868–1956), who had found work in gold dredging operations in Central Otago married Helena (Lena) Alloo, a half-Chinese New Zealander in 1900 and later lived in New South Wales. As Mary did not return to New Zealand after her departure in 1896, she did not see Leo again, nor meet his wife or her two granddaughters. Mary also did not see her only daughter Eva (1871–1909) (Fig. 8) again after her departure. Eva graduated from Canterbury College with a BA, was on the council of the Graduates' Association and was keen on the outdoors (*Lyttelton Times*, 2 May 1908: 7; *New Zealand Herald*, 31 March 1906: 6). Eva managed Hermann's house for him in Christchurch during the mid-1890s and later joined him when he was working in Cromwell.²⁴ In about 1902 Eva's grandparents Mary Ann and Edward Dobson (Fig. 9) wrote asking her to keep house for them. Hermann pointed out that it would be a difficult life for her but "she thought it was her duty to go to them and so she went".²⁵



Figure 8. Eva Veronica von Haast, c.1900. Photograph by John Richard Morris. Alexander Turnbull Library, PA2-1159

In subsequent years Eva suffered from depression and insomnia and spent a lot of time with her aunt Caroline Todhunter. Eva committed suicide at her aunt's place in March 1909. She had apparently had a breakdown and while she had recovered, she was terrified of a reoccurrence and of being sent to a "nursing home or other place".²⁶ This fear may have been a result of her mother's experiences after Julius's death. Eva, who had written her will in December 1899, left her estate to her mother but if Mary pre-deceased her, it was to be divided equally between *all* her brothers.²⁷ Eva's estate was substantial – £3,161 – further adding to Mary's financial resources (*Lyttelton Times*, 31 May 1909: 6). It is not clear where Eva's income had come from but a bequest from her Aunt Veronica Rossum seems a likely source. After Eva's death Mary wrote a new will in London. Heinrich, Leo and Hermann, their wives and Leo's children were provided for, but not even a keepsake was left to George or his son.²⁸

Mary had a memorial window (Fig. 10) made in London for Eva and in April 1911 this was installed in Holy Trinity Church, Avonside, where Mary and Julius's children had been baptised (*Press*, 10 April 1911: 6). One light represented the good shepherd and the other the parable of the Sower while the lower panels contained a representation of Youth ministering to Age. The epitaph underneath could be described as respectful recognition of Eva's best efforts despite the constraints of her life and her struggle with mental health.



Figure 9. Mary Ann and Edward Dobson, outside of their house on Papanui Road, Christchurch. Photographer unknown, Canterbury Museum, 1990.407.2

To the glory of God and in loving memory of Eva Veronica, only daughter of Julius and Mary von Haast. Born 25 Feb 1871, Died 30 March 1909. "She did what she could"

Mary's youngest child, Hermann (1873–1941), went to Central Otago and, like his brother, also worked on gold dredges. In 1902 he married Queenstown woman Margaret Gudgeon. After their marriage the pair went to Burma to work for a gold dredging business and in 1904 to London, where Hermann presumably saw his mother (*Press*, 18 August 1904: 8). By 1906 Hermann and Margaret were in Alberta, Canada, developing a homestead in the newly established town of Vermillion. Mary visited the couple there and was interviewed by the local paper, who described Mary as having "the charming accent and voice of an English gentlewoman with the animation of a Viennese and the practical viewpoint of a Canadian" (*The Bulletin* (Edmonton), 20 November 1906: 12).

Between April and October 1912 Mary made a leisurely tour of the Italian lake district and Genoa with Heinrich and his wife before going to Palermo in Sicily to spend the winter (*Dominion*, 31 December 1912: 3). In the spring Mary was on her way to Vienna via Rome and George took the opportunity to visit. This may have been to try and make amends.

On 2 July 1913 Mary wrote a new and very brief will leaving everything to her eldest son Heinrich. It is now impossible to know if she wrote this before or after

George arrived. Mary may have already been ill when she wrote it, and she died on 27 July 1913 with George by her side. She was 69 years of age – only 4 years older than her husband had been when he died – and had been a widow for 26 years. Her death was noted in England and in New Zealand.

Even though Heinrich wrote that Mary had to supplement her small income by acting as a companion in Europe (von Haast, HF. 1948: 460), Mary was quite wealthy when she died. She left an estate worth about £8,500, well over NZ\$1,000,000 in today's money. In New Zealand Mary had more than £4,000 worth of shares, principally in the Christchurch Gas Coal & Coke Company, she was the mortgagee for two properties along with smaller amounts held in trust including, rather astonishingly, £6 9s in the Sir Julius von Haast Memorial Fund. In London Mary had more than £2,000 of shares in the New Zealand and River Plate Land Mortgage Company and £60 in the bank. In Vienna Mary had nearly £1,000 in the bank, £125 of jewellery in safe deposit and the balance left on a loan that she had made to Professor Paul de Conne (1874–1959), a Russian concert pianist and piano teacher.²⁹

Heinrich, as the son who had inherited everything, was aware of his family responsibilities but George was never brought back into the fold. After Mary's estate was settled Heinrich set up "The von Haast Trust Fund" with a deposit of £2,000. The interest was distributed to Hermann and Leo and after their deaths, to their spouses and Leo's two daughters.³⁰

Unusually for the time, Julius and Mary's children had few children themselves. Their five surviving children only produced three grandchildren between them. Leo and Lena's two daughters and George and Maud's son Julius Henry. Julius dropped the name von Haast after the outbreak of World War Two and used his mother's maiden name of Young. This caused a rift with his father, who was proud of the name von Haast and signed his paintings GVH (Fig. 11), and the rift was not resolved until shortly before George's death in 1954.³¹ Julius Henry's son, Robert Charles, born in 1936, was a von Haast in the birth notice in *The Times* (16 March 1936: 1) but would not be known by that name until his death notice in 2014 which gave his name as Robert Charles Young née von Haast (*The Times*, 8 February 2014: 84).

Conclusion

Mary was 19 years old when she married Julius, and the couple were together for 24 years before Haast's sudden death in 1887 when Mary was 43 years old. By the time of her death in 1913 Mary had spent two thirds of her life *not* married to Julius von Haast, yet her life has hitherto been defined by her relationship to Julius.

Despite marrying for love the following 12 years contained a significant amount of heartache for Mary. The birth of her first child brought Mary great joy but was followed by two miscarriages and then a son who died a few hours after his birth. During the following seven years Mary had another four children but

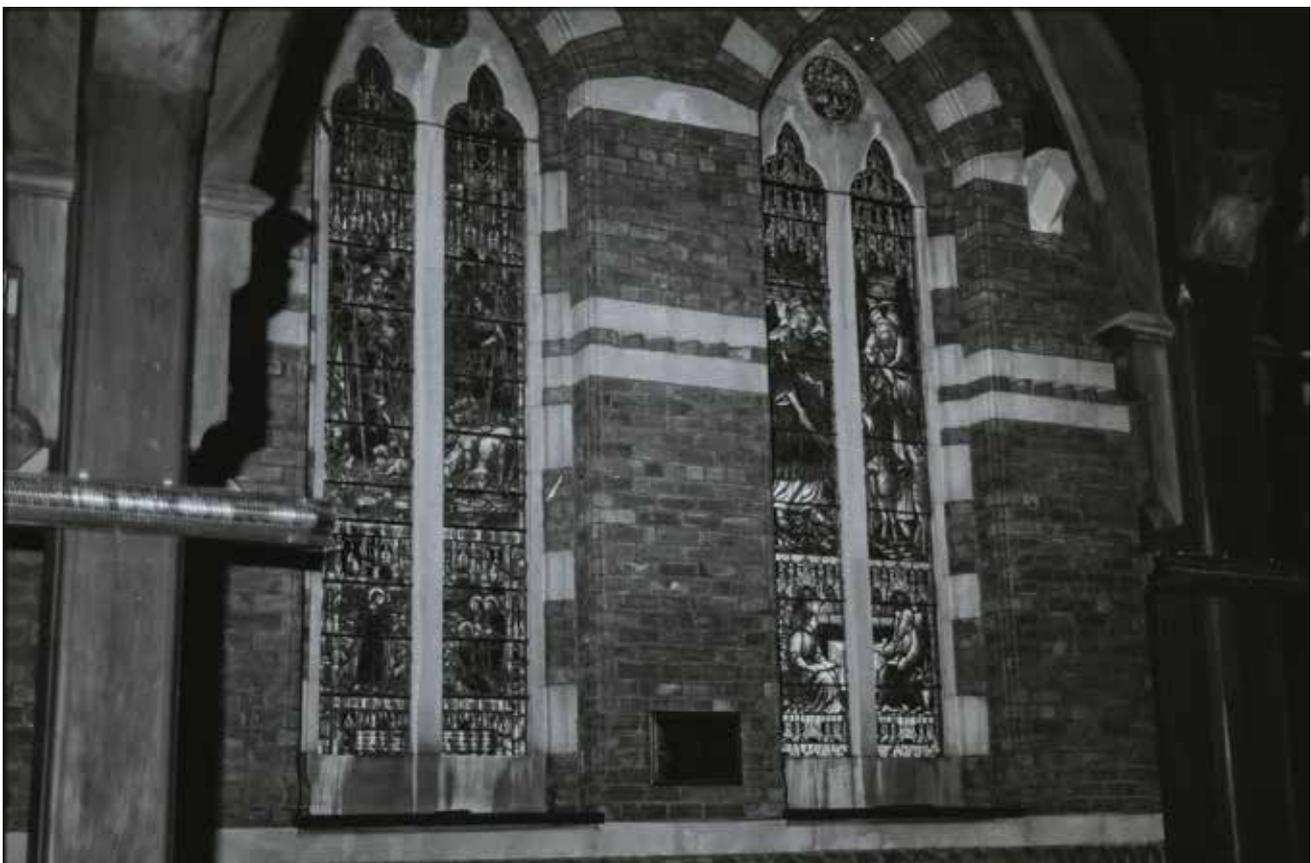


Figure 10. Memorial window at Holy Trinity Church, Avonside which was demolished in 2011. Eva's window on right. Canterbury Museum, 2017.79.3673



Figure 11. An untitled work by George von Haast signed GVH, not dated. Courtesy of the family of the late Robert Young (previously von Haast)

suffered from womb inflammations which were not successfully treated until 1875.

Once recovered, Mary enjoyed a life of comfort and culture and a visit to Europe in 1885 expanded her horizons. The shock of her beloved husband's sudden death in 1887 appears to have undone Mary completely and she was basically a recluse until 1895.

It is then that the second phase of Mary's life begins. After the settling of her husband's sister's estate, Mary packed up her life in Canterbury and went to Europe, never to return. In Europe Mary based herself in Vienna where her friend, the well-to-do and well-connected Georgiana von Hochstetter, lived. Mary reinvented herself as a woman of wealth, culture and leisure and travelled extensively throughout Europe, living a life filled with music and high society.

While Mary maintained her relationship with Heinrich, her eldest child, and visited her youngest (Hermann) in Canada in 1906, she was estranged from her son George, did not see her other children (Leo and Eva) after she left New Zealand and did not meet any of her three grandchildren.

It is clear that Mary was a strong woman who was uncompromising in her feelings. This article has cast some light on Mary's finances and a dim glow on her relationships with her children, but she remains an enigma. It is hoped that additional scholarship, and perhaps the discovery of more correspondence, will provide further illumination.

Endnotes

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5. Dobson Family Tree, Canterbury Museum, 1983.187.1.
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8. AJHR, 1888, session 1, B-1, p. 44.
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13. Anne Todhunter to Charlie Todhunter, not dated, Canterbury Museum, ARC1999.8.
14. Mary von Haast to Mr Rhodes, 5 July 1903, Canterbury Museum, ARC 1998.49.
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